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Grice's Frown: On Meaning and Expression

1. Introduction

Paul Grice's writings suggest that he views conversational implicature as a species of speaker meaning, and many writers concerned with implicature have endorsed that suggestion.¹ The myriad challenges facing the explication of speaker meaning raise some doubt, however, whether it is an adequate framework for the notion of conversational implicature. In particular, the "reflexive communicative intentions" (intentions to produce an attitude in an audience by means of the audience's recognition of those very intentions) that Grice and his followers have taken to be crucial to speaker meaning do not, on closer scrutiny, seem to be necessary features of that concept at all.² At the same time, little consensus has emerged on how properly to understand speaker meaning

1. See for instance Levinson 1983, p. 131; Neale 1992, p. 512, p. 523; Green 1998, p. 86. Research on this paper was supported in part by a USEM Research Grant from the University of Virginia, and is here gratefully acknowledged. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the University of Virginia, July 2000, and at the Workshop on Saying, Meaning and Implicating, part of the Gesellschaft für Analytische Philosophie, Bielefeld, Germany, October 2000. I am grateful to both audiences for their comments on those occasions. I have also benefited from comments from members of my Expression and Meaning seminar at the University of Virginia, particularly Joe Milton, Jacob Pease, and Kranti Saran.

2. Other challenges for the Gricean analysis of speaker meaning, such as whether the commonly invoked reflexive intentions are sufficient for their analysandum; whether an adequate analysans would involve attribution of a psychologically realistic set of attitudes; whether communicative intentions can be taken as logically prior to the notion of meaning that they are used to shed light on; these challenges will not detain us in the present study. For treatment of these challenges see Avramides 1989 and Clark 1996.

once it is recognized that this reflexive component is not mandatory.

One may resist these concerns in the hope that conversational implicature can be understood on its own terms without adverting to its relation to the broader category of speaker meaning. However, as will emerge below, if we renounce the claim that implicature is a species of speaker meaning, the very phenomenon of implicature is liable to challenge. We thus do well to get clear on what, if any, communicative intentions are involved in conversational implicature.

In what follows, I argue first that reflexive communicative intentions are not necessary for conversational implicature. Next, the Gricean framework for speaker meaning will be used to throw into relief a pervasive feature of communication that is invoked in a wide variety of philosophical discussions (as well as in the arts, in social psychology, psycholinguistics, and linguistics) but little explicated, namely the notion of *expression*. That notion is then shown to be important for another area of inquiry than that of implicature, particularly for our account of the phenomenon of Moorean absurdity. Finally, I argue that the notion of expression, construed as intentionally and overtly showing one's intentional state, is a core concept in terms of which conversational implicature may be understood.

2. Grice's Hierarchy

Commentators on Grice's work on speaker meaning often impatiently run through the examples he gives to motivate his positive analysis. Putting on a coat, even if it leads an observer to believe that I am going for a walk, is not a case of speaker meaning. (More colloquially, it is not an instance of meaning that I am going for a walk.) Thus performing an action that influences someone's beliefs is not sufficient for speaker meaning. Nor is performing an action with the intention, successful or

not, of influencing someone's beliefs sufficient for speaker meaning: I might leave Smith's handkerchief at the crime scene to make the police think that Smith is the culprit, but whether or not I am successful, in so doing it is not plausible that I mean that Smith is the culprit.

Is performing an action with the intention of influencing someone's beliefs, while intending that the aforementioned intention be recognized, sufficient for speaker meaning? Grice offers the example of Herod, who presents Salome with St. John's severed head, intending that she believe that St. John is dead and intending that this intention be recognized. Grice observes that in so doing Herod is not *telling* Salome anything, and concludes that Herod's action is not a case of speaker meaning. In lieu of an argument that telling is a necessary condition for speaker meaning (at least for the indicative case), we cannot infer that the Herod example is beyond the pale of speaker meaning. It is slightly unnatural to say that in presenting the severed head, Herod meant that Salome is dead. However, it is difficult to know whether this unnaturalness is due to the fatuity of the remark rather than some conceptual gaffe therein.

In rejecting the conditions met by the Herod case as sufficient for speaker meaning, Grice tells us that what we want is an account of the difference between *openly and deliberately letting someone know*, and telling. This way of putting the wanted distinction is not quite apt, since one can inform, and thereby let someone know that P, by telling them that P. Grice seems rather to be after the distinction between openly and deliberately *showing* someone that P, and telling them that P. That said, however, why should we balk at the idea that openly and deliberately showing someone something can be a case of speaker meaning? Even in his 1972 work, *Meaning*, Schiffer expresses

sympathy with the idea that the Herod case exemplifies speaker meaning. As an example to bolster that intuition he supposes that A asks B for a game of squash, to which B replies by showing his bandaged leg. (1972, 56). In a similar spirit, Vlach 1981 offers examples involving mathematical proof: One who, at the end of a proof of the Pythagorean Theorem, utters, “And so, $a^2+b^2=c^2$,” does not intend to produce a belief in an audience by means in part of their recognition of this intention.³ Most of us would be disappointed if an addressee accepted the theorem for this reason. The audience’s reason should rather be the conclusive evidence assembled on the chalkboard. That is, the speaker seems precisely to be openly and deliberately showing the audience that $a^2+b^2=c^2$. At the same time the speaker means that $a^2+b^2=c^2$.⁴

Again, in his 1957 article Grice asks us to distinguish between the case of my showing Mr. X a photograph of Mr. Y displaying undue familiarity with Mrs. X, and my drawing Mr. X a picture of the same situation. Here again the mild unnaturalness of our, in the former case, describing me as meaning that something suspicious is going on between Mrs. X and Mr. Y, is difficult to diagnose. Is this due to a conceptual bar, or to the fact that normally it would be roundabout at best to describe me as meaning, rather than showing, that Mrs. X and Mr. Y seem to be having an affair? Further, even the drawing case does not oblige us to understand it in terms of telling or testimony.

3. Vlach 1981 shows that the theories propounded in Grice 1957, Grice 1969, Armstrong 1971, and Bennett 1976 founder on one or another version of the “proof” example.

4. Schiffer 1972 (p. 56), Neale 1992 and Recanati 1986 contend that the Herod example is one of speaker meaning. Recanati also offers the following case: “My friend and I are walking in a crowded place, and she loses track of me although I am not at all far. I tell her, “I am here”. I thereby communicate to her that I am here, but to her my utterance is also a natural sign of the fact that I am here.” (p. 225) More generally, many recent authors (such as Avramides 1989; Schiffer 1982, 1987; Neale 1992; Davis 1992; Recanati 1986) jettison reflexive communicative intentions (intentions to produce effects on an audience by means of the audience’s recognition of those very intentions) as not being necessary for speaker meaning while providing quite divergent accounts thereof.

Grice writes, "...it will make a difference to the effect of my picture on Mr. X whether or not he takes me to be intending to inform him (make him believe something) about Mrs. X, and not to be just doodling or trying to produce a work of art." This is quite true. However, it will also make a difference to the effect of the picture whether or not Mr. X takes me to be manifesting my beliefs about his wife's extramarital activities. My picture may be influential with Mr. X even if he merely takes me to be manifesting my belief about this situation. What is more, one can manifest one's belief without asserting, stating, telling or intending to inform anyone of anything. I can manifest my belief that it is raining outside by taking an umbrella from the closet, but in so doing I am performing no speech act and I need not intend to convey any information.

These remarks are not meant to undermine the importance of assertion or its cousin, testimony. The contention here is rather that a speaker S can mean something, even something having propositional content, without intending that their addressee's beliefs be influenced even in part by their recognition of any of S's intentions. It may well be true that assertion and testimony require these reflexive intentions. Even for the case of communication involving propositional contents, however, assertion and testimony are not the only form that speaker meaning can take: Conjectures, suppositions, and even putting forth thoughts simply for the sake of being entertained can instance speaker meaning as well, yet it is doubtful that any of these require reflexive communicative intentions. It is not clear to me that every conversational implicatum must be "marked" with some illocutionary force or other. Whether or not this is so, the question that now arises is whether one who conversationally implicates that P, as it were silently asserts that P. I shall argue that this contention is not borne out by examples.

3. Showing and Telling While Implicating

Consider a standard case of scalar implicature. In saying, “Somewhere in Kentucky”, U may fail to be as informative as he can have been expected to be in answer to the direct question, “Where is John?”. So far it is not clear that U means that he can be no more informative, since U may have been reticent for any of a variety of reasons. However, if U is attempting to be a cooperative interlocutor, U’s reticence can be justified if he believes that he can be no more informative without infringing a conversational maxim such as Quality. Given the presumption that U is attempting to be cooperative, U may reasonably intend his reticence to show his belief that he can provide no more information than he has given. He might also intend to make A aware of his inability by means of recognition of this very intention, but this further intention is not mandatory. It seems sufficient for U to mean that he can be no more informative that U intend his reticence to show his belief that he can be no more informative. Rather than showing a bandaged leg, U deliberately manifests the infirmity of his information; in both cases something is meant.

This last case involves a speaker knowingly violating a conversational maxim (Quantity) due to their inability to fulfil it without violating a more stringent one (Quality). Other cases of implicature involve not merely violating but flouting a maxim, and we do well to consider the form of speaker meaning that they characteristically involve. What a person says might contain less information than required, but if they also may be expected to be fully informed about the situation they are discussing, and can be assumed to be cooperative, then their reticence cannot be due to a clash of conversational maxims. A more likely hypothesis is that their reticence is aimed at avoiding a clash with another maxim, say of etiquette (they fear offending someone) or of prudence (they fear

liability for a lawsuit). Only those considered authoritative about their subject matter damn with faint praise. Thus one writing a letter of recommendation, or one giving a verdict on a dish they are sampling (“Well, it was nicely presented on the plate”), most likely knows all she needs to about her subject matter. In such cases speakers implicate that the object they are assessing falls on the low end of the scale salient in that conversation. This way of describing what they are doing, however, is undecided between construing them as manifesting the belief that the object in question falls on the low end of the salient scale, or as asserting (without saying) this. Since, in attributing a simpler set of communicative intentions, the former characterization is more parsimonious while being equally explanatory, we do well to accept it.

In both cases we have considered, it is of course possible for the speaker conveying the implicatum in question to harbor reflexive communicative intentions. Nothing prevents a speaker having more complex communicative intentions than what is necessary for implicature. Our claim is not, then, that telling and implicating are incompatible. Rather, it is the weaker contention that a speaker may convey a conversational implicatum merely by using her presumed adherence to conversational norms, together with her failure to adhere to all conversational requirements, to manifest her state of mind. She might also intend to make a claim on her addressee’s views, but doing so would go beyond what is strictly necessary for implicature.

It might be suggested that we can trim down the attribution of communicative intentions even further than I have been advocating, along the lines proposed by Gauker 2001. Gauker argues that alleged standard cases of conversational implicature do not require description in terms of implicature at all. Rather, he suggests, communication can succeed by means of a speaker putting

forward a propositional content and the addressee inferring a conclusion on the basis of that content together with situational factors. (This inference he calls “situated inference”.) For instance, one looking for her friend might ask, “Where’s Mary,” and receive the reply, “I’ve heard gardening noises out back.” From the proposition that gardening noises are coming from the back yard, together with other background knowledge about the current situation, the addressee may with little difficulty infer that Mary is probably in or near the backyard. According to Gauker, no reference to the speaker’s intentional states, to say nothing of intentions to produce beliefs in the addressee by means of recognition of those very intentions, need be made by that addressee. Rather, he writes, “...in all of the sorts of cases where Grice finds a conversational implicature [sic], we might instead suppose only that the hearer draws an inference from what the speaker literally says and the external situation.” (2001, p. 164.)

I have no doubt that in certain cases communication can succeed by means of a speaker’s uttering a sentence and an addressee’s drawing an inference from the content of that sentence together with facts about the situation in which it is uttered. However, in many cases it is doubtful that these two factors will be enough for the speaker to convey the wanted message. Sometimes the addressee will need to consider hypotheses about why the speaker is asserting one content rather than some other, and in so doing she will need to attribute communicative intentions to the speaker. For instance, A might say, “The dog has done something on the carpet.” It is far from clear how this content, together with situational factors, will allow the addressee B to infer that the dog has relieved itself on the carpet, rather than any of the many other things that it might have done on the carpet, such as scratching itself, panting, eating a bone, or barking. For B to discern what A is trying

to convey, B will have to consider why A asserts an otherwise unremarkable fact. Barking, scratching, panting and bone-eating on carpets are generally dog actions not requiring responses from their owners, whereas voiding on carpets is. This fact will help B determine why A has made the remark that she has, namely to manifest her belief that the carpet has been soiled, this attribution to A being required for communication to succeed in this case. Grice sometimes speaks of calculating conversational implicature as requiring an inference on the part of the addressee not from what a speaker has said, but from her saying of it, and Gauker's proposal fails to respect this crucial element.

Manifesting a feeling, emotion, or state of mind are activities closely allied to the phenomenon of expression. In what follows I will attempt to understand certain cases of conversational implicature as cases of expression, to whose elucidation I now turn.

4. Expression as Self-Revelation

We express conative states (love, fear, anger), though as I shall argue presently we also express cognitive states. Taking for now just the conative case, expression of a state is to be kept distinct from an assertion that one is in that state. A facial expression or a tone of voice might express anger but is not, intuitively, a statement that one feels angry. This is supported by the fact that while an expression of anger can be criticized for being insincere, it is much less easy to see how it can be criticized for being incorrect (as opposed to inappropriate).

Again, an expression of emotion is a publication of that emotion. We do not express anger by swearing in "mental speech", but can only do so by making that emotion public. (Davis 1988) If,

however, a scowl publicizes an emotion, it cannot but show it, and I shall approach the notion of expression by means of the phenomenon of showing. A concept that immediately strikes one in elucidating the notion of showing is that of natural meaning. However, A might mean-n that B, or mean-n B, without showing B. It is not sufficient to show anger that a scowl be a natural indication thereof. Dark clouds might be natural indications of rain without showing it. (Of course they might show *that* rain is impending.) For A to show B it must at least be the case that A displays B or some of B's important characteristics. The dark clouds don't display the rain. By contrast, the line on the X-ray shows the fracture by displaying it.

I suggest that events and processes show things in at least two different ways. First of all, under certain conditions an object, event or process A that is a component part of object, event or process B can show B. Someone who presents to me the facing surface of an apple has thereby shown me the apple even if I do not inspect the other side. Likewise, a grimace can show pain even if the grimacing is not itself the pain and even if one can grimace in the absence of pain.

Another way in which one object, process or state of affairs might show another is by being iconic relative to that object, process or state in such a way that that iconicity is a consequence of characteristics of that state or feature. Iconicity is a matter of resemblance, that is of sharing properties, so that the shape of a curve on a graph is iconic relative to an earthquake by virtue of sharing the property of *being jagged* with the temporal progression of the magnitude of the earthquake. If the shape of the curve is due to the progression of the earthquake, then the curve shows that progression, and is not just a natural indication thereof. So too the firmness of a person's grip can show (and not just be a natural indication of) her degree of excitement, if it is a

consequence of that excitement and shares with that excitement the property of being intense.

So called iconic theories of semantic representation have been known to be indefensible since at least the time of the *Cratylus*. Resemblance (construed simply as the sharing of properties) is not sufficient for semantic representation: identical twins and pairs of cars fresh off the assembly line are easy counterexamples. Iconicity plus causality suffices to rule out some of the cases that beset a simple-minded iconic account. Moreover, since every two objects share some property or other, and since there is little hope of identifying a single cause of a given event, we should expect to find that if E shows some state or characteristic S, then it will also show some distinct state or characteristic S'. The EKG might show not just the person's heart rate but also her blood pressure. Since we are not trying to harness iconicity to fuel an account of semantic representation, however, I doubt that facts such as these are cause for alarm.

Some phenomena show one's intentional state without expressing it. Blushing shows, perhaps also betrays, one's embarrassment, but unless one can blush at will one does not express embarrassment by blushing. To be an expression, the physical manifestation of emotion must be intentional. (Benson 1967, Wollheim 1968) Now two species of expression correspond to two ways in which this manifestation might be intentional. On the one hand, if a person scratches out the eyes in a photograph of a rival, she is expressing hatred (and probably exorcizing some of that hatred) as well.⁵ Assuming that she is not attempting to practice voodoo, she is not intending to communicate and her action is not a case of speaker meaning. In contrast with the non-communicative variety of expression, we also express ourselves for the sake of manifesting to others

5. The example is from Hursthouse 1991. For further discussion see Goldie 2000.

our cognitive or conative state. One line of thought in Grice, however, would seem to challenge the possibility of this latter phenomenon, so I shall now turn to Grice's point of view.

5. Expression and Testimony

A view of self-expression as intentional self-revelation suggests a treatment of it as falling within a broadly Gricean framework. A scowl produced involuntarily is not an expression of anger but, at least if the causal chain from anger to scowl is non-deviant, reveals it. Further, the transition from an involuntary to an uninhibited scowl does not vitiate the inference characteristic of natural meaning. As a result, U, who is angry, may intend to make A aware of this fact by allowing himself to scowl in plain view of A. A, if he asks himself what this scowling means, may come to believe that U is intending to make him aware of U's anger. However, the recognition of this intention need be no part of A's reason for concluding that U is angry. A's reason need only be U's angry face, together with the belief that the scowl is an uninhibited manifestation of anger. Hence even an intentional scowl, when discernibly sincere, reveals one's anger without relying on testimony.

Grice seems to hold that one producing a frown intentionally can only reasonably intend it to provide an audience good reason to infer that the frowner is displeased if she has reflexive communicative intentions. He writes,

“If I frown spontaneously, in the ordinary course of events, someone looking at me may well treat the frown as a natural sign of displeasure. But if I frown deliberately (to convey my displeasure), an onlooker may be expected, provided he recognizes my intention, *still* to

conclude that I am displeased....[Though in general a deliberate frown may have the same effect (as regards producing belief in my displeasure) as a spontaneous frown, it can be expected to have the same effect only *provided* the audience takes it as intended to convey displeasure. That is, if we take away the recognition of intention, leaving the other circumstances (including the recognition of the frown as deliberate), the belief-producing tendency of the frown must be regarded as being impaired or destroyed.” (1957, p. ???)

This passage comes in the course of an argument for the necessity of reflexive communicative intentions for speaker meaning. For this reason, Grice seems to be construing ‘intended to convey displeasure’ as ‘intended to produce in the audience belief in the frowner’s displeasure by means of recognition of this intention’. The claim, then, is that the deliberate frown can only be expected to have a belief-producing tendency if it is produced with the intention of serving as a testimonial of the frowner’s displeasure. I do not know whether Grice considered another reading of ‘intended to convey displeasure’, but one is available. Since ‘conveying displeasure’ could also be read as ‘manifesting displeasure’, an intention to convey displeasure could also be taken as an intention to manifest it rather than testify to it. Whether or not Grice considered this question, we do well to ask whether one intending to manifest displeasure can reasonably expect her frown to have a belief-producing tendency.

Back of Grice’s reasoning seems to be the assumption that if A perceives U’s frown as intentional but not involving reflexive intentions, A will be led to conclude that U’s intention is instead to deceive, or at least will have strong evidence in favor of this conclusion. I don’t think this

is true, however. Displeasure has natural manifestations that can be inhibited, and when those manifestations are not inhibited but, at the time they are manifested, could have been, they merit treatment as intentional. Now if A has reason to think that frowning is not willed but is rather something that U has refrained from inhibiting, awareness of the frown's intentional nature need not undermine its belief-producing quality. What is more, if A has doubts about the sincerity of U's facial expression, it is not clear how they will be assuaged by belief that it is produced with the intention that A come to believe that U is displeased by means of recognition of that intention.⁶

Self-expression, in the present sense of the locution, is not a form of testimony. We may still place self-expression within a Gricean framework for speaker meaning by relating it to an oft-neglected rung on his hierarchy of examples, namely that involving Herod and Salome. This fact may have escaped our notice because this communicative variety of expression exists alongside a non-communicative variety. Because the notion of expression has traditionally been associated with non-cognitive aspects of behavior, the distinctive features of communicative expression may perhaps have been occluded. One aim of the present essay is to articulate some of those features.

6. Moorean Absurdity and Expression

Not only is self-expression a pervasive phenomenon, at least one phenomenon of interest to

6. Social psychology, particularly that influenced by Goffman, has come to appreciate the importance for smooth social interaction of deliberate manipulation of expressive behavior. For further discussion see DePaulo and Friedman, 1998. We note here also that, as argued in Frank, *et al*, 1993, there may well be physiological markers distinguishing involuntary smiles from those produced in part by voluntary means. This does not imply, however, that detection of smiles in the latter category must be detection of dissimulation.

philosophers is best explained with aid of the notion of self-expression. For some speech acts S and intentional states I, it can be pragmatically paradoxical for a speaker to perform S while disavowing state I by asserting that she is not in that state. Because S may characteristically express state I without being an assertion that the speaker is in I, the speaker is not asserting a necessary falsehood in performing speech act S while disavowing I. Indeed, unlike ‘I am not now uttering any words’, which we might also describe as pragmatically paradoxical, the sentence tokened by one performing S while disavowing I is one that the speaker could utter and thereby say something true. (Cargile 1967) Nonetheless, such a performance as an assertion of Moore’s, “P but I don’t believe it”, can be absurd,⁷ and one way to account for that absurdity begins with the observation that assertion characteristically expresses belief. Now I take the following to be a conceptual truth:

Expression/Sincerity

If speech act S characteristically expresses intentional state I, then a speaker performing S is sincere only if that speaker is in state I

With the aid of Expression/Sincerity and the assumption that assertion characteristically expresses

7. Such utterances appear not to be absurd when we take the speaker to be changing her mind in mid-utterance. As observed in Jones 1991, an utterance of ‘P but I don’t believe it’ also appears not to be absurd when P is put forth as, for instance, a *guess* rather than an assertion. Such utterances also appear not to be absurd when we have reason to think that in asserting P the speaker acts as a mouthpiece for someone else, or in some other way disassociates himself from his speech act. This appears to be the case in Wittgenstein’s example of the railroad announcer who, convinced of the tardiness of the train but still trying to perform his duties says, “Train no... will arrive at...o’clock. Personally I don’t believe it.” (1974, §486; Williams 1996 discusses these cases in greater detail.) I take it that while in some cases we may conclude that the speaker is either changing her mind in mid-utterance, putting forth P with an illocutionary force other than assertoric, or dissociating herself from her speech act, in other cases such charitable interpretations will be unavailable, so that we will have no choice but to take the speaker’s utterance as absurd.

belief, we may infer that one who asserts P is sincere only if she believes that P. Further, following the suggestion of Williams (1996) that believing a speaker requires not only believing what he asserts to be true, but also believing him sincere, the absurdity of this performance may be accounted for on the hypothesis that even leaving aside the truth of P, we cannot believe one who asserts, “P but I don’t believe it” without falling into contradiction. For doing so requires taking the assertion of P to be sincere, and thus taking the speaker to believe that P; but it also requires accepting his second conjunct as true, and hence accepting that it is not the case that the speaker believes that P.⁸

Speech acts exhibiting Moorean absurdity can in fact take at least two forms. Not only is it absurd to assert P while disavowing the belief that P; it is also absurd to assert P while avowing the belief that P is false, as in, “P but I think P is false”. (Williams 1979) This is a pragmatically paradoxical but semantically coherent utterance conjoining a sentence used to perform speech act S having content P with an avowal of an intentional state borne toward P’s negation. In asserting P in the first conjunct the speaker expresses belief that P; in asserting in the second conjunct that she thinks P false, the speaker has in effect represented herself as being incoherent by representing herself as believing both conjuncts of a contradiction. Where A is an attitude type not having mind-to-world direction of fit, that is, not governed by the constraint that A’s content be true, there need be no incoherence in bearing A toward content P while also bearing A toward not-P. Consequently,

8. Discussing approaches to Moorean absurdity that stress a conflict between a state a speaker expresses and a proposition that speaker asserts, Shoemaker has rightly questioned whether a genuine conflict can be found to obtain between a state (such as belief) and a proposition (such as that the speaker is not in that state), remarking, “...beliefs *qua* mental states don’t contradict anything.” (1995, p. 74) Williams’ (1996) approach to Moorean absurdity has the virtue of locating the conflict in the two propositions that must be believed by one who takes a person uttering a Moorean sentence to be sincere, rather than attempting to discern a conflict between a state and a proposition. For further discussion see Green 1999a.

a speaker does not represent herself as incoherent merely as a result of indicating (by means either of expression or assertion) that she has both such attitudes. An utterance in which the speaker expresses attitude A borne toward P but also asserts that she is not in that attitudinal state will, however, still be paradoxical in the first way that has been discussed.

An utterance's sharing the distinctive paradoxicality of at least one of the two sorts of Moorean speech acts may be accounted for with the aid of the hypothesis that some component of that utterance characteristically expresses an intentional state. Our best account of Moorean absurdity, then, motivates employment of the notion of expression. It is thus not ad hoc to employ this notion in the understanding of conversational implicature as well.⁹

7. Streamlining Implicature

I propose construing conversational implicature as a species of the more general category of intentional, ostensible manifestations of an intentional state, either cognitive or conative. Intentionality is here required in order for the implicatum to fall within the range of speaker, as opposed to natural, meaning. I say 'ostensible' here because an agent might conversationally implicate something she does not in fact believe. In the Kentucky example above, for instance, U might very well know where in Kentucky John lives, and may be intentionally misleading his addressee in withholding information. In such a case he cannot be showing his belief that he does not know where in Kentucky John lives because he has no such belief. Further, with suitable

9. Recent research on Moore's Paradox has also explored the relation between expression of attitudes on the one hand, and consciousness on the other. For representative discussion see Rosenthal 1995.

background information, in the course of ostensibly manifesting an intentional state an agent might also make a claim upon the intentional states—such as beliefs—of an addressee, but doing so is over and above what is required for implicature.

The category of intentional, ostensible manifestations of intentional states is wider than that of conversational implicature because it makes no crucial reference to the exigencies of conversations and the psychological attributions of attitudes therein. For all that has been said thus far, conventional implicature also falls within this category. I have argued for this elsewhere (Green 2000b) but will not depend on that claim in what follows. To arrive at the notion of conversational implicature we must require that the putatively expressed intentional state is one whose attribution is required given the speaker's speech acts and in light of the conversational context in which those acts occur. One cannot conversationally implicate a content simply by intending to do so; one must also make that content manifest in such a way that its attribution is enjoined upon interlocutors in light of one's conversational behavior. This motivates the following construal of conversational implicature:

One who, in saying or making as if to say that P, conversationally implicates that Q just in case

- (a) she is presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the cp;
- (b) the supposition that she bears propositional attitude Ψ toward Q (of which a special case is belief that Q) is required to make her saying or making as if to say P consistent with the

presumption mentioned in (a);

c) she intends the facts mentioned in (a) and (b) to be publicly discernible.

Observe first of all that condition (c) does not go so far as Grice's cognate condition given in "Logic and Conversation" in attributing intentions that are either reflexive, or very close to being reflexive in nature. (The analogue of our (c) in Grice is, "The speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (b) is required." (p. 31)) Grice's third condition has the speaker ascribing to the addressee either actual or potential thoughts to the effect that the speaker ascribes certain thoughts to the addressee.¹⁰ On the present approach the speaker need not ascribe to the addressee any thoughts, either actual or potential, about what the speaker thinks about the addressee.

Observe second, that if the speaker also in fact bears Ψ toward content Q, then in meeting our conditions above she will also express that attitude. We are, then, construing conversational

10. We note also that Grice's gloss on an implicit line of reasoning leading to the attribution of a conversational implicature goes as follows: "A general pattern for the working out of a conversational implicature might be given as follows: "He has said that q; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle; he could not be doing this unless he thought that p; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that p is required; he has done nothing to stop me from thinking that p; he intends me to think, or at least is willing to allow me to think, that p; and so he has implicated that p." (1975, 31) Grice is not here construing the addressee as ascribing to the speaker intentions to produce belief in the addressee by means of recognition of those intentions. However, he is thinking of the addressee as ascribing to the speaker claims upon the addressee's assent, and is thereby going beyond what we are ascribing to the addressee in the present proposal. Our formulation of the notion of conversational implicature is for these same reasons not susceptible to objections that have been raised against the traditional formulation. Davis (1998, Chapter One) has argued that a speaker can implicate a content without intending that her audience understand her as doing so. He rightly observes that this is a challenge to Grice's definition of conversational implicature, but it is not a challenge to the definition being proposed here.

implicature, at least when sincere, as a form of communicative expression. However, conversational implicature, unlike conventional implicature, is characteristically cancelable. Can an implicatum be both cancelable and such as to manifest an intentional state? Yes. If the implicatum *would* have manifested an intentional state in the appropriate conversational circumstances, then canceling it will result in that state's not being expressed. However, if the present approach is correct, then the state will still be there to be expressed.

It has been stressed here that in streamlining our account of what is necessary and sufficient for a speaker conversationally to implicate that she is in a certain intentional state, we are simplifying our treatment of that phenomenon by eschewing reflexive communicative intentions. In addition to this gain in parsimony, the present proposal has the advantage of squaring with our intuitions about the kind of illocutionary status that is had by conversational implicata. On the one hand, it does not seem that implicata typically come "marked" with one or another illocutionary force in addition to the semantic content that they express. It would seem that only after further interrogating a speaker do we generally know whether an implicated content is to be thought of as an assertion, a conjecture or a guess. Furthermore, a speaker responding to such interrogation will not be seen as only reporting on her earlier intentions; her answers will be as much stipulative as descriptive. On the other hand, it makes little sense to suppose that a speaker implicates some content, for instance a proposition, without that content having anything resembling illocutionary force. Doing so would be merely expressing a proposition or cognate semantic content without endorsing it in any way, and would not allow us to distinguish someone's conversationally implicating that P from, for instance,

their asserting that if P then Q.

Neither of the aforementioned options seems acceptable. However, the present approach offers a third alternative in the framework of manifesting one's intentional state. The crucial idea is that manifesting an intentional state is not itself an illocutionary act. Unlike, for instance, asserting and promising, one cannot manifest one's intentional state, or for that matter any state of affairs at all, by saying that one is doing so. Manifesting one's intentional state can be communicatively important but is not a speech act in the traditional sense of that notion popularized by authors such as Austin and Searle. If this is correct, then the domains of speaker meaning and speech acts are not coextensive. It is more plausible that the latter is a proper subset of the former, though it will not undermine the present approach if instead it turns out that the two domains overlap without either one properly including the other.

8. Implicature and Conversational Dynamics

An account of implicature is not complete unless it suggests how implicata contribute to the progress of a conversation. We are particularly in need of such a suggestion in the present case because we are not here taking it for granted that implicata always come as “marked” with an illocutionary force. To begin to sketch a positive account, observe first of all the distinction between the expression of an attitude and, for instance, an assertion. As Green 1999b argues, an assertion of A calls upon the addressee to accept A or not. In the latter case the addressee might challenge the assertor to provide some ground for acceptance of A or for a resolution of some

ambiguity or unclarity in her words. In the former case A is entered into the conversational record with the result that interlocutors may presuppose A's truth in their subsequent speech acts. In either case, the assertion of A has made a claim upon the addressee's assent.¹¹ By contrast, one who expresses her commitment on an issue, for instance by means of conversational implicature, does not *thereby* make a claim upon her addressee's assent.

A powerful approach to the progress of conversation, particularly for theorists of presupposition, implicature and indexicality, is what we may call the *scorekeeping model*. On this model, speakers uttering indicative sentences have those sentences entered into the conversational record unless there is a demurrer from an addressee, and once in the record the content of those sentences may be used as fodder for future inference as well as be presupposed by their speech acts.¹² This model has been further developed in the direction of dynamic *intrasentential* semantics to account for how conversational score can change even in the course of a speaker's uttering a single sentence: Thus, it is explained how

11. Norms governing assertion and its interaction with the conversational record are developed more fully in Green 1999. In that work, it is argued that where if *S*, addressing *H*, asserts that *A*, then

- a. *H* is obliged to indicate her acceptance or non-acceptance of *A*. (This may be indicated by non-verbal means, and may be preceded by requests for clarification of the content of *S*'s words.)
- b. *S* is committed to giving reasons for *A* if presented by *H* with a legitimate challenge,
- c. If no legitimate challenge to *A* has been raised and gone unmet, then *A* is entered into the conversational record;
- d. If a legitimate challenge has been raised and gone unmet, then *S* is obliged to retract *A*.

S is not obliged to respond to an illegitimate challenge, but if such a challenge is raised then until *H*'s acceptance is secured the asserted content will remain off of the conversational record. Also, if case (b) arises then *S*'s task is to convince *H* of *A*, adhering to the norms for debate. If *S* succeeds in securing *H*'s acceptance of *A*, then that debate is complete and the disputed content is entered into the conversational record. If *S* does not succeed, then case (d) applies. Further, clauses (c) and (d) make no specific mention of *H* because other addressees may pose challenges as well.

12. See Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 2000 for an overview of much of this work.

(a) John has children, and all of his children are asleep

differs from

(b) All of John's children are asleep, and John has children

in that utterance of the first conjunct of (b) presupposes that John has children, whereas utterance of the second conjunct of (a) does not presuppose this.

The scorekeeping model has not been much developed to take account of indicatives (or their contents) put forth with other than assertoric force. One route of potential development involves appreciating an “expressive” dimension of language use such as has been discussed above. Such uses are not, characteristically, proffered for entry into the conversational record, but are instead aimed at manifesting a speaker's commitments to contents and the attitudinal modes determining the nature of such commitments. While a detailed construction is beyond the scope of the present study, a development of the scorekeeping model to represent the expressive uses of language of which conversational implicature is a special case, would advert not only to a concept of conversational record, but to idiosyncratic commitments, some of which will be publicly available, as well. Manifesting one's idiosyncratic commitments will facilitate communication in part by making clear an interlocutor's dialectical status, that is, it will help indicate to other interlocutors what sorts of utterance an interlocutor is apt to accept or, on the other hand, to challenge. Similarly, it will

make clear what sorts of questions an interlocutor is apt to reject or, alternatively, to endorse and attempt to answer. For the comparatively simple case of dialogue between speakers α and β , this will therefore involve a construction that keeps “score” on the commitments of α , of β , and of the conversational record. (For the more complex case of more than two interlocutors, there will in principle be many sets of commitments to keep score on as there are non-empty subsets of the set of all interlocutors in the conversation.)

Let Σ_i be a commitment store for interlocutor I , containing all those propositions to which interlocutor I is committed, together with a register of the mode under which each such commitment is held. Σ_i is thus a set of propositions P such that for each proposition $P \in \Sigma_i$, I is committed to P . (Each such pair represents a commitment undertaken in the course of the conversation or following from such an undertaking, or is a commitment with which the interlocutor entered the conversation.) Assuming that commitment is deductively closed, we stipulate that commitment stores are closed under the relation of logical validity.

The notion of conversational record may be arrived at as a construction from that of the commitment store. According to the present treatment conversational record will be construed as that set of propositions P such that all parties to the conversation are committed to P and to the very thesis that they are all so committed. More exactly, where $1, \dots, n$ are interlocutors, we may define $\Sigma_{1 \cap, \dots, \cap n}$ as $\Sigma_1 \cap, \dots, \cap \Sigma_n$. If $c \in \Sigma_{i \cap j}$, it does not follow that c is in the conversational record of I and j , for neither may have any commitments with regard to the other's commitment to c . Rather, where s_1, \dots, s_n are a group of interlocutors, we say that

c is in the conversational record among s_1, \dots, s_n (written $c \in \Sigma_{1\dots n}$) iff

(a) for all $s_i \in \{s_1, \dots, s_n\}$, $c \in \Sigma_i$, and for all $s_i \in \{s_1, \dots, s_n\}$, $(a) \in \Sigma_i$.

$\Sigma_{1\dots n}$ will in general be a proper subset of $\Sigma_{1 \cap \dots \cap n}$. We note that although speakers' commitment stores are closed under deductive validity, $\Sigma_{1\dots n}$ is not.¹³

Conversational implicata often do not enter the conversational record, but rather remain among the idiosyncratic commitments of those who generate them. However, the present framework allows us to see how conversational implicature can oil the wheels of conversation by making clear to interlocutors how the speech acts available to them as conversational strategies will be received by their audience. In other work, such as Green 2000a and Green 2000b, I have argued that certain expressions, such as parentheticals attitudinatives, also serve primarily to indicate commitments rather than to aid in the performance of speech acts. An important difference between these parentheticals and conversational implicature is that the former carry out the “sub-illocutionary” task I ascribe to them by means of conventional meaning whereas conversational implicata are not generated conventionally. Nevertheless, if the present approach is correct, then while we must acknowledge the importance of speech acts for the progress of conversation, it is a mistake to hold that all significant conversational “moves” are of an illocutionary sort.

The parameters characterizing the progress of a conversation include more than

13. For further discussion of the way in which common knowledge is embodied in this definition, see Clark 1996. Also, the present construction is a much simplified version of that offered in Green 2000b, in which commitments always come with one or another “mode”, and in which a notion of illocutionary validity is used as an alternative to and generalization of that of logical validity.

conversational records and commitment stores. At any given point in a conversation they will include also the aim or aims of the conversation as well as the proffered speech act (if there is one). The notion, appealed to in the Cooperative Principle, of what a conversation requires, makes crucial reference to the joint product of these parameters.¹⁴ What a conversation requires, as well as permits, then produces a space of “legal” illocutions from which an interlocutor chooses. Navigating within this space, a judicious balance of what is said together with what is conveyed by virtue of what is left unsaid, oils the wheels of conversation and thereby of social life, exemplifying Longfellow’s characterization of eloquent restraint:

“He speaketh not; and yet there lies
A conversation in his eyes.”

14. Green 1999b develops these points in further detail.

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