

Replies to My Critics

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I thank my critics for time, thought, and effort put into their commentaries. Since obviously I can't respond to everything, I will try to address what strike me as the most important questions they ask and objections they raise. I think I have decent answers to some questions and decent responses to some objections, in other cases it seems enough to clarify the relevant view, and in still others I need to modify the view in question. One complication, which I won't elaborate on, is that the views under consideration have evolved, or at least changed, over the years, so that my critics are aiming at a moving target, albeit a slowly moving one. Before responding, I will sketch some of the main ideas behind my view, including their unifying motivation, and mention a few key distinctions that are particularly relevant to topics addressed by my critics.

Key words: pragmatics, semantic-pragmatic distinction, linguistic meaning, speaker meaning, explicature, standardization.

In philosophizing about language and about its use, first and foremost we need to distinguish information that is linguistically encoded (or at least partly determined by such information) and information associated with acts of using language. This roughly corresponds to the semantic-pragmatic distinction.

I take semantics to be concerned with certain properties of linguistic expressions, that is, sentences and their constituents. These properties are linguistic meanings and what these meanings determine as a function of context.¹ Semantic properties are roughly on a par with syntactic and phonological properties, that is, properties of linguistic types. Also, as is widely held, the semantic properties of complex linguistic expressions depend on their syntactic structure and the semantic properties of their constituents within this structure. In contrast,

¹ The prototypical example is the pronoun 'I'. As used in a given context, semantic content (reference) relative to that context is the speaker.

pragmatic properties belong to acts of uttering linguistic expressions, typically sentences, in the process of communicating.²

On this conception of the semantic/pragmatic distinction (spelled out in Bach 1999), it makes no sense to ask where semantics leave off and pragmatics takes over. That's because there is no one thing that has properties of both types. Sentences have semantic properties, and speakers' acts of uttering them have pragmatic properties. Unfortunately, confusion arises when theorists use the term 'utterance' for both what is uttered and the act of uttering it.

This confusion is compounded with the use of the phrase 'utterance content', as if it describes some one thing. One should distinguish the (semantic) content of an uttered sentence from pragmatic content, i.e. what a speaker means in uttering the sentence. This respects the distinction between *linguistic meaning* and *speaker meaning*.³ We need that distinction to accommodate the fact that one can speak nonliterally. In the jargon of speech act theory, the linguistic meaning of a sentence determines the content of the locutionary act the speaker performs in uttering it, whereas speaker meaning is the content of the illocutionary act she is performing. (As usual, for clarity and convenience I use the pronoun 'she' for the speaker and 'he' for the hearer. And 'hearer' is used to mean the intended audience, not eavesdroppers.) In fact, she may be performing more than one illocutionary act, one directly and another indirectly.⁴ Paul Grice's (1989) celebrated distinction between saying and meaning one thing and meaning something else as well is a special case of this.

The distinction between *linguistic reference* and *speaker reference* parallels the distinction between linguistic and speaker meaning. Referring can be something an expression does, but it can also be something that a speaker uses an expression to do. Saul Kripke (1977) invoked this distinction (in his terms, "semantic" vs. "speaker's" reference) to defend Russell's theory of descriptions, according to which definite descriptions are denoting phrases, not referring expressions. He was concerned to reconcile Russell's theory with Keith Donnellan's (1966) referential/attributional distinction. If construed semantically this distinction threatens to undermine Russell's theory, since it would seem to work only for attributional uses. Kripke argued that referential

² This is not to suggest that there aren't difficult questions to ask about the semantic properties of sentences and their constituents. Philosophers tend to assume, vagueness aside, that words, though often semantically ambiguous, have a definite number of distinct meanings, and they assume that declarative sentences semantically express propositions, at least relative to contexts. These assumptions are, to say the least, debatable.

³ Also, note that there are at least two ways of taking the linguistic meaning of the phrase 'speaker meaning': what a speaker means by an expression X or what the speaker means in uttering X. In terms of speech act theory, the first comes in at the locutionary level, the second at the illocutionary level.

⁴ See Bach and Harnish 1979: ch. 4 for a general account of the distinctions between literal and nonliteral, and between direct and indirect, illocutionary acts.

uses can be explained in terms of speaker's reference rather than as a distinctive sort of semantic reference. I have argued similarly, extending the pragmatic approach to incomplete definite descriptions, something for which Michael Devitt takes me to task. Also, the distinction between linguistic and speaker reference is central to my disagreement with Jeff King about demonstrative reference.

As mentioned, linguistic meaning comes in at the level of the locutionary act, speaker meaning at the level of the illocutionary act. And J. L. Austin (1962) included the level of the perlocutionary act when he introduced the locutionary/illocutionary distinction. I call these *levels* because this trichotomy is not a distinction between different utterances but a distinction within a single utterance. It corresponds to the different intentions with which a speaker normally utters something, and these intentions have different conditions of fulfillment (for an overview on all this, see Bach and Harnish 1979: ch. 1).

As I use the term 'say', to say something is to perform a locutionary act. What one says does not depend on one's communicative intention. For me, unlike for Grice, saying does not require meaning what one says. One can say one thing and mean something else or something more. When one uses all of one's words literally but does not make what one means fully explicit, the content of one's locutionary act (what one says) is an impoverished version of what one means, either because it falls short of comprising a proposition or because the proposition it does comprise is not specific enough to capture all that one means. Esther Romero and Belén Soria raise questions about how to categorize different cases of this (what I call *conversational implicature*), and I take up these questions in my reply to them.

As for illocutionary acts, in most cases they are acts of communication, performed with communicative intentions.⁵ They are acts of meaning something *in uttering* one's words, not acts of meaning something *by* one's words. Their condition of success is that one's intended audience recognizes the very intention with which they are performed. With communicative intentions their fulfillment consists in their recognition. Bach and Harnish defined a notion of expressing an attitude in terms of such intentions (1979; 15) and developed a taxonomy of illocutionary acts in terms of different types of expressed attitudes (1979: ch. 3). Our primary aim was to incorporate Austin's main categories into a Gricean framework rather than a conventionalist one like Austin's. Our general motivation was to explain the role in communication of speakers' intentions and hearers' inferences about speakers' intentions. Here it is important to appreciate that in our view speakers' communicative intentions do not play a role in determining the semantic contents of sentences they utter. Communicative intentions are audience-directed,

⁵ The exception to this are conventional illocutionary acts, such as christening, voting, and ruling. See Bach and Harnish 1979: ch. 6.

not language-directed, though of course speakers also have intentions that determine how they are using ambiguous expressions.

It is a platitude that what a speaker can mean in uttering a given expression depends on the context. However, people have read too much into that platitude, partly because of not appreciating the ambiguity of the phrase ‘utterance content’. This has led to widespread claims about the context sensitivity of expressions of various sorts (for a diagnosis of this trend see Bach 2005, and for a survey of examples see Bach 2012). Moreover, the mere fact that how a certain expression is used can vary from one context to another does not show that the context is what makes the difference. For an expression to be context sensitive, something in its meaning must specify some parameter whose variation makes for variation in the expression’s semantic content. Otherwise, what might appear to be variation in semantic content is really variation in something else, and is not attributable to the expression in question. Indeed, it need not be variation in the semantic content of something else, namely an unvoiced constituent of some sort. Positing unvoiced constituents may be warranted in special cases, for principled syntactic reasons, but positing them willy-nilly, just to fill in apparent semantic gaps, is gratuitous. It is to treat at the level of semantics or, if you like, at the level of what is said something that is pragmatic, something that is really situated at the level of use (speaker meaning). Moreover, it overlooks the fact that many sentences, though syntactically well-formed are semantically incomplete: they do not fully express propositions, even relative to contexts. Unfortunately, it is all too common for philosophers to confuse semantic incompleteness with pragmatic context sensitivity. In philosophizing about language and its use, one needs to separate information that is linguistically encoded and information associated with acts of using language.

1. *Reply to Esther Romero and Belén Soria on Implicature*

Esther Romero and Belén Soria pose basically two strong challenges to how I classify different kinds of conversational implicatures. I think one of their challenges can be met and that the other forces a revision. I thank them for posing these challenges and forcing me to rethink how to view the different cases.

Romero and Soria are mainly concerned to refine my classification of the ways in which what a speaker means can be distinct from what she says, even when the uses of all the words and phrases in the sentence she utters are literal. My generic term for this phenomenon is conversational ‘implicature’, to be contrasted, obviously, with Grice’s ‘implicature’. In typical cases of implicature, the speaker says and means one thing and means something else as well.⁶ With implicature, the speaker means an enriched version of what she says.

⁶ Grice also regards figurative utterances as cases of implicature, even though the speaker does not mean what she says but only what she implicates. (In fact,

In “Conversational Implicature” (Bach 1994) I distinguished two main cases of implicature, depending on whether or not what the speaker says, i.e. the semantic content of the uttered sentence as used by the speaker in a given context, fully comprises a proposition. If it does, then what the speaker means is an *expansion* of what she says. If it does not, it is a *completion* of what she says. Romero and Soria suggest some finer divisions, as well as a modification of how I apply my distinction. These suggestions concern what I have called ‘local’ and ‘phrasal’ completion (briefly discussed in Bach 1994: sec. 7), and they devise the term ‘explicature’ to mark these cases. They also discuss the case of metonymy and, because it is a figure of speech and so not a case of speaking literally, they reject my classifying it as an instance of expansion. They regard it as a case of completion. I now think it is not a case of either, for reasons I will explain.⁷

From the standpoint of communication and its success, it seems to me that there’s a more important question than how to classify these different cases. What matters most is to understand how speakers can make their communicative intentions evident to their hearers and how hearers can identify these intentions, given what speakers say. Regardless of whether what a speaker means is an expansion or a completion of what she says, whether it involves the inclusion of an unarticulated propositional constituent or the specificization (or even modulation, as in the case of metonymy) of the meaning of a sentential constituent, the process whereby the hearer figures out what the speaker means is essentially the same. The hearer still has to figure out what the speaker means given what she says, and that requires identifying, if the speaker cannot plausibly be thought to mean what she says, a way of enriching what she says that can plausibly be what she means.

Varieties of Implicature

My examples of the different cases will be limited to ones in which the speaker is not using any particular word or phrase nonliterally and yet still does not make what she means fully explicit.⁸ The most straightforward and widely recognized case of this occurs when what the speaker means includes some propositional constituent that does not correspond to any constituent of what she utters. This is obviously

since for Grice to say something entails meaning it, to speak figuratively is merely to “make as if to say” something and to mean and implicate something else instead.

⁷ I don’t think this affects any of their important points, but I must note that Romero and Soria misleadingly describe my taxonomy as a “classification of contents.” What I classify is, rather, different relations between what is meant (the content of the speaker’s communicative intention) and what is said.

⁸ It should be noted that inexplicitness, hence implicature, can co-occur with nonliterality. For example, if one utters “Frank can’t finish his battery acid,” one might mean that Frank can’t finish drinking his bad-tasting smoothie.

the case if what she utters is just a word or phrase, as with (1) and (2), with what might be meant given in parentheses.

- (1) Plavac! (The wine I am tasting is made from Plavac Mali.)
 (2) Around the corner! (There is a mailbox around the corner.)

I will not discuss such cases, often described as pragmatic ellipsis, or the issues they raise (see Stainton 2006 and Bach 2008). More relevant are utterances of full sentences, whether or not they fully express propositions:

- (3) I haven't done my homework. (I haven't done my current homework.)
 (4) Larry was late. (Larry was late for his wedding.)

(3) fully expresses a proposition, but not the one the speaker is likely to mean, that she hasn't done her current homework. That's an *expansion* of what she says. (4) falls short of expressing a proposition, because it needs a specification of something for Larry to be late for. The intended *completion* of what the speaker says might be that Larry is late for his wedding. Notice that in both cases there is no requirement that some particular word or phrase provides the enrichment. Both cases can be loosely described, as Romero and Soria put it, as "a matter of leaving words out," but this misleadingly suggests that the speaker must have had certain specific words in mind, and that is certainly not necessary.

What is the difference between expansion and completion? Since completion involves uttering a semantically incomplete sentence (one that does not semantically express a proposition, not even relative to the context of utterance), what the speaker means *must* be an enriched version of what is said (in the strict, locutionary sense of 'say'), at least if the speaker means something that is propositional (capable of being true or false). In this case, the hearer's inference to what is meant is triggered by the hearer's recognition that the speaker *must* have left something out.⁹ In contrast, if what is said fully comprises a proposition, for an inference to be triggered the hearer must think that the speaker means something more specific, as in the case of (3).

In the previous cases, something that the speaker means does not correspond to anything in the uttered sentence. The case of discretionary indexicals and demonstratives is obviously different. In uttering sentences like (5) or (6),

- (5) *She* is a great leader.
 (6) I want to see *that* movie.

the speaker is presumably referring to a certain woman or to a certain movie, and understanding what the speaker means requiring identify-

⁹ Note that the hearer might fail to recognize this and, indeed, that the speaker might not intend a completion. For example, in uttering 'It is midnight', the speaker might not realize that time of day is relative to time zones, and the hearer might not realize that either. Ditto for a possible utterance of 'Smoking is legal,' since legality is relative to jurisdictions.

ing which woman or which movie the speaker is referring to. Whether or not I am correct in claiming that these referents are not semantic values of the relevant indexical or demonstrative (see my reply to King, who insists that they are), clearly linguistic meaning does not determine the reference as a function of context. What does so is the speaker's referential intention. Either way, part of what is meant, namely the referent, is not made explicit. After all, the hearer has to figure it out. Even so, the referent, as a constituent of the proposition that the speaker means, does correspond to something in the sentence, namely the indexical or demonstrative used to refer to it. So to that extent the reference *is* explicit. Let's say that it is signaled but not specified.

The same sort of thing occurs with what might be called *phrasal incompleteness*, as in the italicized phrases in (7) and (8):

- (7) *Bill's company* is no longer innovative.
 (8) Zeke wore a *giraffe tie*.

Sentence (7) also falls short of expressing a proposition, this time because no specific relation between Bill and his company is specified. The genitive or so-called possessive construction need not signify ownership. The speaker *might* mean that the company Bill owns is no longer innovative, but she could also mean this about the company that Bill works for or the one he has hired for a job. As for (8), the nominal compound 'giraffe tie' does not specify a specific giraffe-tie relation. It can be used literally in several different ways, such as to mean tie with images of giraffes on it, tie in the pattern of giraffe skin, tie shaped like a giraffe, or even tie made to be worn by a giraffe (if that seems implausible, suppose that Zeke is a giraffe).

In my view (7) and (8) do not semantically express propositions, even relative to a context in which they are uttered. Of course, a speaker who utters (7) or (8) will use it with a certain intended completion. But that proposition is what she means, not what she says. And, to repeat one of my main themes, semantic incompleteness is not a kind of semantic context sensitivity. The phrases 'Bill's company' and 'giraffe tie' do not have contents that vary with context of use. Rather, a speaker who uses such a phrase must intend some specific relation to connect the denotations of the two nouns.¹⁰

Another kind of incompleteness arises because of a particular lexical item that is semantically underdeterminate. This occurs with certain words whose core meanings are too impoverished to comprise any particular things that a speaker could mean in using them. Typically these are very short and commonly used words, such as the verbs 'put'

¹⁰ This is my view anyway. Some have argued, most thoroughly Daniel Weiskopf (2007), that nominal compounds contain covert indexicals whose context-sensitive value is the intended relation, though Lenny Clapp (2012a) has offered strong arguments against this view. Note that even if nominal compounds did contain covert indexicals, these would be discretionary indexicals, which would make them intention-sensitive, not context-sensitive.

and ‘get’ and the prepositions ‘on’ and ‘in’. Consider the differences between the (a) and (b) cases in the following examples.

- (9) a. Al *put* the beer *on* the table.
 b. Al *put* the burden *on* the lawyer.
- (10) a. You’ll *get* a sandwich *in* a bag.
 b. You’ll *get* a good idea *in* an hour.

It is arguable (see Ruhl 1989) that the words ‘put’, ‘on’, ‘get’, and ‘in’ have the same meanings in the (a) and (b) cases, even though they are put to different uses. If this is right, then the use of such terms involves what is sometimes called *specificization*, that is, requiring the speaker to mean something more specific than the word’s meaning.

Semantically Underdeterminate Words and Phrases: Expliciture?

Romero and Soria are concerned mainly with how to classify cases of completion required by semantically underdeterminate words and phrases. Here the source of the incompleteness is not the absence of an expression needed for a complete proposition to be semantically expressed but, rather, the presence of an expression (word or phrase) whose meaning is too impoverished. Now Romero and Soria agree with me that uses of semantically underdeterminate words and phrases involve what I called “local completion” (Bach 1994: sec. 7), since the meaning of such an expression does not fully determine anything a speaker could mean in using it. However, rather than classify what the speaker means in such cases as implicature, they cleverly propose to it an “expliciture.” Their reason is evidently that, unlike the classic cases of implicature, when semantically underdeterminate words and phrases are involved, obviously the speaker means does correspond to something in the uttered sentence (that word or phrase), though not fully determined by its linguistic meaning.

I won’t complain about Romero and Soria’s use of the term ‘expliciture’ (though I wouldn’t use their self-contradictory phrase ‘explicit in-explicit content’) to describe these cases and to distinguish them from the central cases of implicature. Both words play on Grice’s term ‘implicature’. I would register two cautionary notes, however. First, the use of ‘expliciture’ should not mislead one into supposing that in these cases the speaker makes what she means fully explicit. The hearer still has to figure out, because it is not being made explicit, how the speaker intends to fill out the semantically underdeterminate meaning of the word or phrase,

Secondly, although Romero and Soria compare semantically underdeterminate expressions with demonstratives, calling them both “context sensitive”. I think they overstate the similarity. After all, the meanings of demonstratives are not shifty. With demonstratives, the question of semantic variability concerns their reference, not their meaning. Indeed, it is their fixed meaning that is supposed to explain how their reference varies with context. What varies from one context

to another is what they are used to refer to, not their meanings. In contrast, semantically underdeterminate expressions require specification, whereby their meaning is filled out, in accordance with the speaker's intention. The speaker uses such an expression as if it has a more specific meaning than it actually has. Subject to the above caveats, I have no objection to using the term 'expliciture' for the intended completion in the case of demonstratives as well as semantically underdeterminate expressions, since the additional element does correspond to a constituent of the sentence.

The Case of Metonymy

My only truly substantive disagreement with Romero and Soria concerns the status of metonymy, where a term for one thing is used in place of a term for something else closely associated with it. Utterances of these two sentences are typical:

- (11) Paul is parked in a tow-away zone.
 (12) The hospital announced a new chief of staff.

Romero and Soria propose to treat such cases as instances of local completion rather than local expansion, as I suggested in Bach 1994 (sec. 7). In order to justify this proposal, they first have to argue that sentences like (11) and (12) are semantically incomplete and that this is due to the occurrence of the expression that is used metonymically. Their idea is that these sentences involve a category mistake, hence that they are neither true nor false and therefore semantically incomplete.

In my view category mistakes do not give rise to semantic incompleteness. Rather, they give rise to metaphysical nonsense. The problem with sentences like (11) and (12) is metaphysical, not semantic. However, I won't press this point here, since there is a simpler difficulty with Romero and Soria's proposal. Consider sentences like these:

- (13) The ham sandwich is getting eaten.
 (14) The ham sandwich is getting cold.

It is possible for a speaker of (13) to use 'the ham sandwich' to mean the ham sandwich orderer. Suppose the speaker is a cook located safely behind a glassed-in kitchen and the restaurant has been invaded by a lion. An utterance of (13) makes perfectly good sense whether 'the ham sandwich' is being used literally or metonymically. So there is no category mistake here, and (13) has a truth value whichever way it is taken. Indeed, it could be true in both ways at once, say if the ham sandwich orderer is holding the ham sandwich he ordered and the lion is very hungry. In (14) 'the ham sandwich' could obviously be used in either way and could be true in either way, at least if the ham sandwich had been toasted and was served hot.

Moreover, there is a grammatical reason why metonymic utterances should not be construed on the model of completion. The speaker of (13) intends the phrase 'the ham sandwich' to be taken as short for

‘the ham sandwich orderer’. The phrase ‘the ham sandwich’ is not being given an implicit complement, in which case it would still be used literally. It would also be used literally if it were being specificized, but it is not – a ham sandwich orderer is not a particular kind of ham sandwich. When ‘the ham sandwich’ is used as a metonym as in (13), the nominal ‘ham sandwich’ is used as if it were a modifier of another nominal (say ‘orderer’), but no such expression is there for it to modify. And the determiner ‘the’ is used as if it introduced that absent nominal, not ‘ham sandwich’. So ‘the ham sandwich’ is not being used literally, and completion is not involved in this case.

2. Reply to Jeff King on Demonstrative Reference

Jeff King and I have a fundamental disagreement. He takes for granted that demonstratives have referential semantic values, and I don’t. Given this assumption, which is widespread and certainly not idiosyncratic to him, he makes a good case for his particular account of what determines their references. However, this common assumption is highly questionable. Ironically, the distinctive features of King’s own account, along with the reasons that make it initially plausible, highlight what is wrong with that assumption.

According to King’s “coordination account,” the referential “semantic value” of a demonstrative as used by a speaker on a particular occasion, is the object that the speaker intends it to refer to *and* what a competent, attentive, reasonable (etc.) hearer would take to be what the speaker intends it to refer to. Importantly, the intention here, as King characterizes it, is not the intention that *she* refer to a certain object but that the demonstrative refers to a certain object. This account obviously entails that a demonstrative has no reference¹¹ unless there is some object the speaker intends it to refer to and some object a competent (etc.) hearer would take the speaker to refer to, and unless these objects are one and the same. King supports his view by appealing to intuitions about cases, including cases in which the object a competent hearer would take the speaker to intend the demonstrative to refer to is not the one the speaker intends.

King’s view seems plausible given two assumptions, that speakers have intentions regarding the referential semantic values of the demonstratives they use, and that hearers attribute such intentions to them. However, King offers nothing by way of support for these assumptions. I will argue that they are unwarranted and that, indeed, speakers do not have such intentions. Nor I do think hearers attribute such intentions to speakers. Rather, in using a demonstrative speakers intend to refer, and this is the referential intention that the hearers attribute to speakers. Moreover, intentions by speakers to refer in using demon-

¹¹ I will sometimes use the term ‘reference’, when attributed to demonstratives, as short for ‘referential semantic value’.

stratives are not the same as intentions by speakers for demonstratives themselves to refer. It seems to me that King just conflates the two. Moreover, I will suggest that the intuitions King relies on are intuitions about reference by speakers, not reference by demonstratives, and therefore do not really support his account. Finally, I will argue, even if we attribute referential properties to demonstratives themselves (as opposed to what speakers do with demonstratives), the notion of reference by a demonstrative has no role to play in communication.

King's Account

King's account concerns "*the semantic value of a use of a demonstrative in a context.*" Specifically, an object *o* is the value of an occurrence of a demonstrative in context just in case "1) the speaker intends *o* to be the value; and 2) a competent, attentive, reasonable hearer with knowledge of the common ground of the conversation at time the speaker uses the demonstrative would take *o* to be the object that the speaker intends to be the value" (King 2013: 162).¹² The idea is although the speaker's intention is, as specified by condition 1), necessary for a certain object to be singled out as the semantic value (what else could do the trick?), the intention itself must satisfy a rationality condition. Condition 2) in effect requires that the intention be recognizable, at least by a ideal hearer, one who is "competent, attentive, reasonable" and suitably informed. Thus, even though King dubs his the "coordination account," reference by a demonstrative does not require that the reference be successfully communicated to the actual hearer.

So it is slightly misleading for King to label his view the "coordination" account, since that label suggests that the demonstrative's reference is determined by the speaker and hearer in concert. Still, King's point is clear: the speaker's intention cannot be covert or arbitrary. In effect, the condition that the intention be recognizable (by a competent, etc. hearer) is a rationality constraint. However, this suggests that the intention has more to do with communication by the speaker than reference by the demonstrative.

This suggestion is borne out by the fact that the two conditions laid out on the coordination account are connected, although King is not entirely explicit about this. Presumably the hearer's recognition of the speaker's referential intention is based, à la Grice, partly on the supposition that he is intended to recognize it. Otherwise, the speaker could have a private (rather than audience-directed) intention for what the

¹² King adds this: "We can abbreviate this by saying that an object *o* is the value of an occurrence of a demonstrative in context just in case the speaker intends *o* to be the value and the speaker successfully reveals her intention." Here, I take it, we must read "successfully reveals her intention" as entailing that the hearer should identify *o*, not that the hearer actually does. He might be incompetent, inattentive, or whatever. Also, I should note that King defends his account much more fully in King (forthcoming).

demonstrative is to refer to and yet that object could turn out to be the very thing an ideal hearer would take the demonstrative (to be intended) to refer to. But if this right, it amounts to treating the intention as part of the speaker's total communicative intention. That is, in order for King's coordination account to make sense, it must require that how the speaker intends the hearer to recognize her intention be congruent with how an (ideal) hearer would recognize her intention. However, once we connect the two conditions in King's account, it is very tempting to rephrase this account as pertaining to reference by the speaker in using a demonstrative rather than reference by the demonstrative the speaker is using. The speaker could have an obscure, impossible to recognize intention to use the demonstrative to refer to an object that just happens to be the very thing an ideal hearer would take her to intend her to be using it to refer to.

Of course, King's account does not allude to speakers' intentions to refer when using a demonstrative. He uses phrases like 'intention that an object be the semantic value of the use of the demonstrative'. This raises the question of whether as speakers we even have intentions that can accurately be described in such terms. An intention to refer to an object by way of using a demonstrative is not obviously a case of intending the demonstrative (or, as King sometimes says, its "use" or its "occurrence") to have that object as its semantic value. Perhaps there is a more colloquial way to characterize the sort of intention that King has in mind, such that it is plausible to suppose that ordinary speakers, as opposed to philosophers of language, have such intentions, but I don't know what it is, and King doesn't offer a candidate.

So far I have assumed that it is one thing for a speaker to intend to refer to a certain object in using a demonstrative and another for a speaker to intend the demonstrative to have a certain object as its semantic value. But perhaps King would contend that they come to the same thing and that only one intention is involved, one that can be described in two different ways. However, they do not come to the same thing. For suppose a speaker uses the pronoun 'she' (or the complex demonstrative 'that woman') to refer unwittingly to a man dressed as a woman. As so used, the phrase 'she' (or 'that woman') could not have a man as its semantic value. Even so, the reference is to a man: the speaker is referring (albeit unwittingly) to a man and a competent hearer would take that man, though mistaken for a woman, to be the intended referent. Indeed, the crossdressing man would indeed *be* the referent, that is, what the speaker is using 'she' (or 'that woman') to refer to, and she would successfully convey that to a competent hearer. But this intention cannot also be the intention that the demonstrative has that man as its semantic value, much less an intention that a competent hearer would attribute to the speaker. If it were, the two conditions in King's account would be fulfilled, and it would falsely pre-

dict that ‘she’ (or ‘that woman’) has that man, neither a female nor a woman, as its semantic value.¹³

More importantly, this example suggests that whether a demonstrative has a referential semantic value or not plays no role in the speaker’s communication of what she is referring to. In particular, the hearer can recognize the speaker’s referential intention without having to identify a certain individual as being the semantic value of the expression the speaker is using to refer to that individual. Neither the property of being the semantic value nor the process of recognizing a certain object as being the semantic value play any role in the communication of the reference, from either the speaker’s side or the hearer’s.

So King’s coordination account of how demonstratives semantically refer has some serious problems. He needs to show that speakers have referential intentions of the sort he assumes they have, and that hearers need to recognize these intentions (that the demonstrative being used has a certain referential semantic values) in order to identify what the speaker herself is referring to. One reason for thinking that they do not, as we just have seen, is that a speaker can use an expression to refer even when the expression itself cannot have that object as its referential semantic value. This suggests that whether or not it does makes no difference to the process of conveying the speaker’s reference.

Now, for the sake of argument, let’s pretend that speakers do have intentions regarding the semantic values of the demonstratives they use to refer. Given that, according to King, “The central insight behind the coordination account is that in order to successfully secure *o* as a semantic value for a demonstrative in context, a speaker must intend that *o* be the value and make his intention accessible to a reasonable attentive, competent hearer who has been following the conversation. Speakers tacitly know this in virtue of grasping the lexical meanings of demonstratives” (King 2013: 163). This last sentence is important. It is essential to King’s account of reference by demonstratives, and indeed to any serious claim that expressions of a certain sort are context sensitive, that variation in semantic value be explained by lexical meaning. Otherwise, what varies can only be something pragmatic, namely, what the speaker means in using the expression.

However, there is something decidedly odd about supposing that particular expressions, not just demonstratives but the “wide variety of contextually sensitive expressions” that King suggests there are, all have as part of their lexical meaning the requirement that a speaker

¹³ The situation would be different if the speaker realized that the man dressed as a woman is man and it was common ground that this is so. Then the speaker would not be using ‘she’ or ‘that woman’ literally, in which case it would not matter that the man could not be the semantic value.

“make his intention accessible to a reasonable attentive, competent hearer who has been following the conversation” (King 2013: 163). This sounds much more like a rational constraint on a speaker’s communicative intention, one that applies across the board to any rational utterance. To impute it to particular expressions seems to miss a generalization, one that is not specific to utterances of particular expressions. Stephen Schiffer has made this point in regard to Kaplan’s account of demonstratives:

Meaning-as-character may initially seem plausible when the focus is on a word such as ‘I’, but it loses plausibility when the focus is on other pronouns and demonstratives. What “contextual factors” determine the referent of the pronoun ‘she’ in a context of utterance? ... Evidently, the meaning of ‘she’ (very roughly speaking) merely constrains the speaker to refer to a female. ... [T]he speaker cannot intend to refer to a particular female unless he expects the hearer to recognize to which female he is referring, and the expectation of such recognition itself entails that the speaker takes the referent to have an appropriate salience. (Schiffer 2005: 1141).

King’s Objections

After sketching his coordination account, King takes up my view that a speaker’s referential intention cannot “contribute to determining the semantic value of a demonstrative relative to the context” (King 2013: 163) because only “objective” features of the context can play that role, and the speaker’s referential intention, in contrast to the speaker, the addressee, the time, and the place, is not such a feature. It is not an element of what I call “narrow” context, the kind I take to be semantically relevant context. This is in contrast to pragmatic, “wide” context, which includes mutually salient information that the speaker can intend, and the hearer can presume the speaker intends, the hearer to take into account in figuring out what the speaker means. Moreover, the meaning of an allegedly context-sensitive expression must determine what feature(s) of the context its semantic content depends on.

Now obviously if a speaker intends to refer to a certain object in using a demonstrative, that is an objective fact, in which case, so it would seem, the speaker’s intention can be a feature of the context as well.¹⁴ But that doesn’t show that is a feature of context of the semantically relevant sort, narrow context. And, as already mentioned, the meaning of the expression must determine this. It must somehow require that a speaker using the expression have the right sort of intention. In the case of a demonstrative, its meanings must be what requires the speaker not just to intend to refer in using the demonstrative but also intend for it to have a certain referential semantic value. And, as argued earlier, it is implausible that speakers even have such intentions.

Let me elaborate on the theoretical point of the distinction between narrow and wide context. Its point is to contrast two fundamentally different roles that information can play in connection with uses of

¹⁴ Indeed, Andreas Stokke (2010) has argued as much.

language. Narrow context plays the semantic role of determining, in the *constitutive* sense, the semantic values of particular expressions whose semantic contents can vary with features of the context in a way provided by the expressions' meaning. There is no *a priori* restriction on what sorts of features determine this. It's just that the expression's meaning must be what determines the contextual feature(s) on which the semantic content depends. In contrast, wide context consists of information that hearers use to identify speakers' communicative intentions and that speakers exploit to make their communicative intentions evident. Any information that can play that role can be part of wide context. Its relevance to the epistemology of communication is, as the passage quoted above from Schiffer explains, that it comes into play by virtue of general, rational requirements on communicative intentions. Such an intention, to be rational, needs to be identifiable by the intended audience, partly on the supposition that it is intended to be recognized. That's what makes it communicative.¹⁵

King points out that in my view a speaker's communicative intention determines what the speaker means but not what the speaker says, which is the semantic value of the sentence she utters in the context in which she utters it. He does not contest this view but has a more specific objection. He objects to my contention that a speaker's referential intention, because it is part of the communicative intention, cannot determine the semantic value of a demonstrative. In order to sustain this objection, he proposes to "identify Bach's referential intentions involved with uses of demonstratives with speakers' intentions that, according to the coordination account, play a role in determining the semantic values of demonstratives in contexts" (King 2013: 164–5). He is right to claim that it doesn't follow from the fact that a speaker's communicative intention does not determine the semantic content (what is said) of the sentence in the context in which the speaker utters it, that a component of that communicative intention, the referential intention, does not determine a constituent of what is said. However, he does not explain how "Bach's referential intentions," which are intentions to use an expression to refer, automatically qualify also as intentions for the expression to have a semantic value. Short of that, he needs to make a plausible case for the claim that ordinary speakers even have intentions regarding the semantic values of demonstratives.

What do I mean when I say that a referential intention in using a demonstrative is part of the speaker's communicative intention? I am not making a metaphysical claim about the relation between two inten-

¹⁵ Keeping this distinction in mind should make one wary of attributing a semantic or constitutive role to information that plays a merely epistemic or evidential role. The point of invoking the notion of narrow context is not to impose some sort of arbitrary restriction on what factors can determine semantic values (e.g., by limiting them to the usual parameters of speaker, hearer, time, and place of utterance), but to insist that they be specified by the meaning of the context-sensitive expression in question.

tions. Rather, I am claiming that if when a speaker attempts to communicate a singular proposition, say (to take the simplest case) that a certain object *o* is *P* and the sentence used to convey it is of the form ‘*d* is *F*’, the speaker is using ‘*d* is *F*’ with the communicative intention of conveying that *o* is *P*. This is just one intention, albeit a complex one, insofar as the constituents of the proposition the speaker is trying to convey correspond, in accordance with the speaker’s intention, to constituents of the sentence the speaker is using to convey it.

Recall that King’s coordination account is based on intuitions about what a demonstrative refers to (has as its semantic value), in the context in which a certain sentence containing it is uttered. What do these intuitions track? They are responsive to what a reasonable speaker is likely to intend to refer to, and that, moreover, is what a reasonable speaker could expect to be taken to intend to refer to. Which object that is depends on the context in which the sentence is uttered. But the role of context here is to constrain rational referential intentions and rational inferences about them. It is not to fix the semantic value of the demonstrative being used, since there is nothing in the meaning of the demonstrative to determine what the relevant contextual feature is. There is just a general rational constraint on intentions, a constraint that is not specific to the particular expression being used.

This is not the place to repeat my positive account of the meanings of discretionary indexicals and demonstratives. However, as I see it, their meanings merely impose referential constraints on their literal use (Bach 1987/1994: ch. 9; see Soames 2009 for a similar view). For example, the meaning of ‘she’ constrains its literal use to refer to a female, and the meaning of ‘we’ constrains its literal use to refer to a group including the speaker. To use such an expression literally is to use it with the intention of referring to something that satisfies the constraint, but the reference here is by the speaker, not by the indexical or demonstrative. You can attribute referential semantic values to these expressions if you’d like, say for formal semantic purposes, but they play no role in the process whereby speakers make references and hearers identify what speakers use them to refer to.

3. Reply to Michael Devitt on Meaning and Reference

Michael Devitt thinks, as many do, that there are “two sorts of properties of an utterance,” semantic and pragmatic. “What is said by utterance” (his phrase, not mine) is its main semantic property, in his view comprising its truth-condition (he assumes that all declarative sentences have truth-conditions). What is merely implied by the utterance (I would say by the speaker) is its main pragmatic property. Devitt contrasts this view with the increasingly popular “contextualist” view that the truth-condition of an utterance is subject to a pragmatic contribution, something that depends in part on the context in which the sentence is uttered, where this context dependence is not limited

to the presence of indexicals, demonstratives, and tense markers. He recognizes that my “distinctive” view does not fall into either camp.

What makes my view distinctive is that I do not assume that what is said is always a proposition. A sentence can be semantically incomplete—fall short of expressing a proposition, even relative to a context—in which case what is said is merely a propositional radical. On my strict, semantically constrained conception of what is said, if a speaker utters the sentence ‘Enoch has had enough’ and means that Enoch has had enough enchiladas, she will have asserted that but will not have said that. She has said merely that Enoch has had enough. This strict conception of what is said is unproblematic for anyone who accepts the distinction between illocutionary and merely locutionary acts, which I have tried to vindicate in various places (most thoroughly in Bach 2001).

Before taking on this semantic conception of what is said, Devitt presents some methodological considerations about semantics and semantic intuitions. He rightly insists on sound theoretical motivations for semantic claims, and derides excessive reliance on purportedly semantic intuitions. I don’t trust them either, and that’s because they tend to track phenomena that are not entirely semantic. In particular, seemingly semantic intuitions are responsive to pragmatic factors, including pragmatic regularities (Bach 2002, 2005: 20–34).

Despite his insistence on sound theoretical motivations for semantic claims and for introducing particular notions, Devitt completely neglects the theoretical motivations underlying my semantic notion of what is said, which include making conceptual room for saying one thing and meaning something else instead or even meaning nothing at all (for other motivations see Bach 2001, especially 17–18). Also, he exaggerates the difference between my notion of what is said and his own, despite making perfectly clear that the difference resides solely in my unwillingness to count as semantic any sort of “reference fixing” that is not determined by values of parameters provided by linguistic meaning and my insistence that determination of reference by speakers’ referential intentions counts as pragmatic, not semantic. As explained in my reply to King, there are theoretical motivations for my restrictive view, despite the fact that it has the counterintuitive consequence that discretionary indexicals (including demonstratives) are not treated on a par with automatic indexicals.¹⁶

What is said is, in my view, the content of a locutionary act. A locutionary act, considered in abstraction from the total speech act, is that aspect whose content is not determined by the speaker’s communicative intention. In contrast, the aspect whose content is so determined is the content of the illocutionary act(s) the speaker is performing. Speaking

¹⁶ King and Stanley (2005: 132) understandably complain about the disparity between my treatment of pure indexicals and discretionary ones, but I am willing to let the semantic chips fall where they may.

of utterance contents without distinguishing the contents of locutionary and of illocutionary acts can only cloud things.¹⁷ The main rationale for my restrictive notion of saying is to reserve a level of content (the locutionary level) that depends just on properties of what the speaker is uttering and not on her communicative intention in uttering it.¹⁸

Whereas the meaning of automatic indexicals like ‘I’ and ‘today’ determine their (semantic) reference as a function of some contextual parameter, such as the identity of the speaker or the day of the utterance, discretionary indexicals have a different kind of meaning. The meaning of an indexical consists of a referential constraint, that is, a constraint on how speakers can use them to refer. And the reference here is speaker reference, not semantic reference. There is no semantic reference to be “fixed” or, if there is (for the purposes of a formal semantic theory), it plays no role in communication, as I argue in my reply to King.

Devitt thinks that it “is just a verbal point whether we should say that speakers use demonstratives to refer or demonstratives themselves refer” (Devitt 2013: 176, n. 11). In fact, it makes a real difference. The difference determines whether the relevant information (what the referent is) is or is not carried by the linguistic expressions being used. Similarly, Devitt uses locutions like ‘what is said by an utterance’ as if it doesn’t matter whether the speaker making the utterance or the sentence being uttered is doing the saying. But it does matter, if only because the speaker might use an expression to refer to something to which the expression cannot apply (as pointed out in my reply to King).

In the third section of his paper, Devitt mounts a sustained attack against a number of targets, including Grice’s Modified Occam’s Razor, my account of referential uses of definite descriptions, something I call the “Syntactic Correlation Constraint” and he calls the “Tyranny of Syntax,” and my notion of standardization.

Grice’s Razor

According to Devitt, “Grice’s Modified Occam’s Razor, as commonly construed and as construed by Bach, cannot be right because *it would make all metaphors immortal*. The metaphorical meaning of a word is derived from its conventional meaning. Over time, a metaphorical meaning often becomes regularized and conventional: the metaphor ‘dies’. A large part of natural languages is made up of dead metaphors.” (Devitt 2013: 182). That may be so but, as I made clear when I first discussed Grice’s Razor (Bach 1987/1994: 77–79), I do not hold that all metaphors are immortal. What Devitt calls “Bach’s Semantic Club” has plenty of

¹⁷ For the same reason it is important to distinguish nonliteral from literal illocutionary acts and indirect from direct ones. See Bach and Harnish 1979: ch. 4.

¹⁸ Of course, what sentence the speaker chooses to utter and with what linguistic meaning (if it is semantically ambiguous) is motivated by his communicative intention. But that does not mean its semantic content is determined by the speaker’s communicative intention.

space for a burial ground for dead metaphors. His ghoulish fixation on them leads him to miss some important points.

Devitt is right to insist that “the mere existence of a pragmatic derivation of a meaning does not show that the meaning is not conventional” (Devitt 2013: 182). However, his suggestion that Grice’s Razor “cannot be right because it would make all metaphors immortal” conflates historical explanation with pragmatic explanation. Obviously, phrases like ‘kick the bucket’ and ‘spill the beans’ acquired their distinctive meanings long ago. No doubt there is a historical explanation for why ‘kick the bucket’ came to mean *die*, but that explanation, whatever it is, plays no role in its current use. That is fortunate, given that there is no consensus about this idiom’s origin. The same goes for ‘spill the beans’ and many other idioms.

Though often confusing historical explanations with pragmatic derivations, Devitt wisely warns against indiscriminate wielding of Grice’s Razor. Unfortunately, the main tool he uses to constrain its use, Devitt’s Machete, is much too crude to clear a path toward semantic progress. For example, he alleges that Grice’s Razor advises making an indiscriminate across-the-board effort to avoid attributing extra senses to expressions at all costs. He does not document this unwarranted allegation. He is of course correct to insist that a possible explanation of an expression’s multiple uses is not necessarily a good one, but who would argue with that? In fact, Grice was cautious about how widely to wield the Razor and uncertain about how much semantic stubble it might leave behind. He acknowledges that “what starts life, so to speak, as a conversational implicature [may] become conventionalized” (1989: 39). His discussion of specific locutions and their putative derivative or figurative uses and his identification of methodological issues makes this abundantly clear (1989: 47–50). Indeed, he thought that there are many open questions about “the existence or nonexistence of putative senses of a word,” and even acknowledged an apparent “paradox: if we, as speakers, have the requisite knowledge of the conventional meaning of sentences we employ to implicate, when uttering them, something the implication of which depends on the conventional meaning in question, how can we, as theorists, have difficulty with respect to just those cases in deciding where conventional meaning ends and implicature begins?” (Grice 1989: 49). Even so, it is important to appreciate the rationale for appealing to pragmatic explanations of certain regularities of use. Robert Stalnaker aptly describes “the classic Gricean strategy” as “to try to use simple truisms about conversation or discourse to explain regularities that seem complex and unmotivated when they are assumed to be facts about the semantics of the relevant expressions” (Stalnaker 1999: 8).

Devitt misses the point of appealing to pragmatic derivations to disallow second uses as semantically significant, as comprising additional senses. The point is not to keep the semantic universe free of entities of dubious pedigree. Grice’s Razor, unlike Occam’s, has no ontological

significance. It's not as though some great ontological disaster would befall the world if more senses were posited than necessary. There are tens of thousands of words in ordinary spoken English (and in each of hundreds of other languages), and a large number of them are uncontroversially ambiguous. So what's a few thousand more senses? Grice's Razor is methodological. Devitt overlooks the fact that most applications of Grice's Razor pertain not to senses of individual words but to classes of words and to forms of words. They involve certain pragmatic regularities that are not plausibly attributable to the meanings of individual words. (As we will see, the same is true of standardization.)

Many apparent examples of additional senses turn out to be instances of something else. This can happen in different ways. First, the additional use may involve an implicit qualification of the basic use, something that could be made explicit with a modifier (an adjective, a prepositional phrase, or a relative clause). Second, it can involve an implicit complement. Third, it can involve the difference in meaning between that of the word in question and that of some more restrictive term. In this case, it is the *use* of the word in question rather than the one with the stronger meaning that carries the additional import, namely that the stronger meaning does not apply. I will give examples in the course of responding to Devitt's other main complaints. I will start with his attack on standardization, because it is closely related to his problems with Grice's Razor.

Standardization

Devitt begins his assault on my notion of standardization by assuring us that he puts "great deal of evidential weight on regularities in usage," which he takes to be "evidence of an expression's conventional or literal meaning" (Devitt 2013: 189). He proceeds to quote a number of passages in which I contrast the meaning or semantic content of a *sentence* with its typical use or regularities about its use. So he might have pointed out that my focus was not on individual expressions (words and lexicalized phrases) and their typical uses, but on complete sentences. For example, as speakers we commonly intend to convey propositions that are only partly expressed by the sentences we utter. That is, we don't bother mentioning glaringly obvious elements of what we mean, at least when that does not render what we utter ungrammatical.¹⁹ Devitt seems to assume that in the passages he quotes the pragmatic regularities I was talking about involve uses of individual expressions. In fact, I was talking about what I classified as (standardized) *sentence nonliterality*" (Bach 1987/1994: 79–85).

Citing Bach and Harnish (1979) Devitt notes that we have "lengthier accounts of conventional illocutionary acts and standardized ones"

¹⁹ Sometimes we don't even utter a complete sentence and utter a mere phrase instead (this is sometimes called "pragmatic ellipsis"). But here I am concerned with utterances of complete sentences, recognizing of course that not all well-formed sentences fully express propositions.

(Devitt 2013: 191, n. 32), but he ignores what was at issue there, especially in our discussion (in chapter 10) regarding the status of certain locutions characteristically used to perform indirect illocutionary acts, such as ‘Would you mind ...?’ and ‘I would appreciate it if ...’, as well as common forms of so-called hedged performatives, like ‘I can assure you ...’ and ‘I regret to inform you ...’. The issue concerned whether typical utterances of them count as, e.g. acts of requesting and apologizing by virtue of linguistic meaning (semantic convention), speech act convention, or standardization. Harnish and I argued, contrary to other influential views at the time, that appealing semantic conventions or speech act conventions, is not only not necessary but not explanatory and contrary to various bits of linguistic evidence. Standardization, we argued, is not only the more parsimonious account but also the one that provides the most generalized explanation.

What’s the difference between conventionalization and mere standardization? A form of words has a standardized use just in case it is mutually recognized among speakers that it is so used. However, its having that use does not depend on this recognition. A conventionalized use does. That’s why I say, as Devitt quotes me, “Conventionalization entails that an utterance of a certain form of words would not have the force it has but for the existence of a general mutual belief that it counts as such. Standardization entails no such thing” (Bach 1995: 683). He seems to think that this difference doesn’t matter, psychologically or otherwise or, perhaps, that if it does matter, it is empirically vacuous, because there is no case of standardization without conventionalization.

Devitt compares my notion of convention, along with Lewis’s and Schiffer’s, to his own. Whereas they speak of “common knowledge” or “mutual knowledge” (and I of “mutual belief”), Devitt finds such talk “too intellectualized” and prefers talk of dispositions. But his only hint of what it is for him for an expression to have a certain conventional meaning if “any speaker has her disposition [to use the expression in accordance with that meaning] *because other speakers have theirs*, which admittedly “leaves a lot to be explained” (Devitt 2013: 190). The ‘because’-clause here suggests that a speaker wouldn’t have such a disposition unless other speakers had it. This makes his notion sound pretty close to mine, except for replacing the notion of mutual belief with that of what we might call “reciprocal dispositions.” However, clearly he resists the idea that such mutuality or reciprocity is necessary for a certain use of an expression to be conventional. So it’s not clear what he thinks.

Devitt is certainly correct to insist that the mere fact that one use of an expression derives from another doesn’t show that the second use fails to constitute a linguistic meaning of its own. But a historical derivation is not a pragmatic derivation. The issue in any particular case is whether the use (by the speaker) and understanding (by the hearer) relies on pure memory (rote learning) or learning plus heuristics. Devitt quotes me in this regard, but leaves out a key portion (italicized) of the passage:

Pragmatic regularities include regularized uses of specific expressions and constructions that go beyond conventional meaning... as well as general patterns of efficient communication, *which involve streamlining stratagems on the part of speakers and inferential heuristics on the part of hearers*. These regularities are pragmatic because it is the speaker's act of uttering a given sentence, not the sentence itself, that carries the additional element of information. (Bach 2005: 31)

To appreciate the difference between conventionalization and standardization it helps to recall Grice's distinction between conventional and generalized conversational implicatures and the idea behind it. As is well known, Grice insists that a conversational implicature, at least if it is to be recognized (as something the speaker means), must be calculable. It "must be capable of being worked out" (1989: 31), even if in a given case it is not actually calculated but is merely intuited. The point is that it not be a matter of convention, the arbitrariness of which would render it not calculable. One would have to know the convention in order to grasp the implicated meaning.

Consider that even when the standardized use is of a particular word, that word retains its usual meaning. The word itself is not used as if it meant something else. Rather, the use involves the speaker meaning something that accompanies the meaning of the word. Familiar examples include using 'and' to mean *and then*, using 'or' to mean *or ... and not both*, and using 'not' to mean *not merely*, as in likely utterances of the following sentences (with the implicit elements of what the speaker means given in parentheses):

- (1) John grabbed a pen and (then) signed his name (with the pen he grabbed).
- (2) You can have soup or salad (and not both).
- (3) I do not (merely) like you, I love you.

Notice that in all these cases specifying what the speaker means in the course of using the word in question involves using that very word along with what the speaker means implicitly, for example, using 'not' to mean *not merely*.

Devitt also fails to appreciate that standardized features of use are sometimes the result of using one expression *rather than another*. In such cases, it is not the meaning of the expression being used but the difference between its meaning and the meaning of the expression not used that carries the additional information. So-called scalar implicatures (I classify them as implicatures) provide the paradigm of this phenomenon. For example, in typical utterances of sentences like the following the speaker implicitly means is that the stronger expression (included in the parentheses) does not apply:

- (4) I believe (but am not *sure*) that Zagreb is the capital of Croatia.
- (5) That dress looks (but *is not*) expensive.
- (6) Some (but not *many*) people like Webern.

In each case it is the failure to use a stronger expression, not the meaning of the weaker one actually used, that conveys the additional information. The fact that a stronger expression is not used is obviously a pragmatic fact.

Referential Uses of Incomplete Definite Descriptions

As Devitt correctly points out, most (singular) definite descriptions we use are incomplete, in the sense that they are not uniquely satisfied, and most uses of incomplete descriptions are referential. Examples like ‘the table’ and ‘the boss’ come to mind. However, supplementing a use of a definite description with some implicit restriction to apply to one individual is just one case of a much more general phenomenon, conversational implicature. Also, basically the same process operates whether the incomplete description referentially or attributively. That is because a definite description, if singular rather than plural, is normally used to single out or refer to one individual.

Before going to details, I should note that Devitt’s analogy of referentially used descriptions with dead metaphors is quite misplaced. It suggests that definite descriptions were initially used attributively only and gradually came to be used referentially until that use became so common and widespread that it was codified conventionally. But this is highly implausible, and not Devitt or anyone else has presented evidence for this. If definite descriptions have referential as well as quantificational meanings, then it would seem to follow, implausibly, that the word ‘the’ is ambiguous, and likewise for definite articles in other languages. That would implausibly suggest a massive cross-linguistic coincidence (Bach 2004: 226). Otherwise, there ought to be languages with two different definite articles, one corresponding to the attributive use and one to the referential, but so far as I know, there are not.

Now I will summarize, rather abstractly, my view on incomplete definite descriptions. Whether using an incomplete description referentially or attributively, a speaker uttering a sentence of the form ‘The F is G ’ says but does not mean that $[\text{the } x: Fx] Gx$. If she is using the description attributively, she means that $[\text{the } x: Fx \wedge Hx] Gx$, where the property of being H completes the content of the description, so that ‘the $x: Fx \wedge Hx$ ’ is uniquely satisfied. And if she is using it referentially, she means $[\text{the } x: Fx \wedge x = a] Gx$, where a is the F that she is referring to. The property of being identical to a is just another way of completing the content of the description.²⁰

²⁰ This view, which I defended in Bach 2004, looks similar to the view defended by Stephen Neale (2004). The difference is that Neale treats uses of incomplete definite descriptions, whether referential or attributive, as literal, at least if ‘ F ’ is used literally. In my view, on the other hand, these uses do not count as literal, since in neither case does the speaker mean that $[\text{the } x: Fx] Gx$.

Moreover, the hearer need not base his inference to what the speaker means on the fact that the speaker says that [the $x: Fx$] Gx . Nor must the speaker intend him to make such an inference, for it is not the fact that the speaker could not plausibly be supposed to mean that [the $x: Fx$] Gx that triggers his inference. Rather, it is the incompleteness of the description itself, with its unfulfilled promise of uniqueness. The implication of uniqueness is generated by the presence of the definite article 'the' and the fact that the nominal ' F ' is singular, together with its being obvious that there are many F s. The task for the hearer is to identify the relevant F (in the referential case) or the relevant way of distinguishing one F (in the attributive case). A rational speaker will use an incomplete 'the F ' only if she takes it to be mutually evident either that she has in mind a certain F or that she has in mind a certain way of singling out a unique F .

In the referential case, what the speaker means is that [the $x: Fx \wedge x = a$] Gx , even though all she says is that [the $x: Fx$] Gx . Suppose, for example, that she utters (7).

(7) The killer is crazy.

If she says this in a situation where it is mutually obvious who the relevant killer is (in the attributive case it might be mutually obvious who the relevant victim is), she will intend the hearer to take her to be referring to that killer. Referring to him with 'the killer' is enough to single him out. Moreover, the speaker need not intend some completion of this description, and the hearer need not think of the referent under some completion of it. It suffices for the speaker to intend a certain individual and for the hearer to think of that individual as the intended referent.

Interestingly, discussions of definite descriptions tend to neglect the question of why we have occasion to use definite descriptions to refer and under what circumstances. Obviously, we use them referentially to enable our audience to pick out who or what we are talking about. Beyond this truism, consider that if we always had other means by which to refer, we would never need to use a definite description. In fact, when we wish to refer to a person or thing, under the circumstances often there is no other linguistic means available or suitable for doing it. If we want to refer to something that lacks a name or whose name is unfamiliar (to us or to our audience), is not perceptually accessible and thus not suited for being demonstrated, or has not just been mentioned, in which case a pronoun or a demonstrative will not do the job, we must resort to using a definite description. Even using a complex demonstrative (of the form 'that F ') will not do the trick if there are many F s around and it is not feasible to demonstrate the F we have in mind. That leaves using a definite description.

A complete description will single out a unique object, but generally we do not have to resort to using one. An incomplete description will normally indicate the type of thing we wish to refer to, and the topic of conversation and other mutually evident contextual information give

us good reason to think the hearer will know which F we intend. We then can exploit our audience's ability to take this information into account, partly on the basis that we intend them to, to identify the relevant F . This will work if indeed there is an obviously distinguished F for the hearer to identify as the one being referred to (in the attributive case there must be an obviously distinguished way of singling out some F). Since the speaker is using the description referentially, she need not mean any general, descriptive proposition involving some sort of completion of 'the F '. Normally she means only an object-dependent proposition about a certain uniquely salient F .

The description does not play its role of helping the hearer identify the intended referent by virtue of its contribution to the descriptive proposition expressed by 'The F is G '. That is, the route the speaker takes in forming his intention to convey the object-dependent proposition that the referent a is G by uttering 'The F is G ' is not via the descriptive proposition expressed by 'The F is G '. And the hearer's inferential route from hearing 'The F is G ' to thinking that the speaker means the object-dependent proposition that a is G is not via this descriptive proposition. Rather, the hearer figures out that the speaker is using 'the F ' to refer to a and then infers that she means that the F that is a is G .

The uniquely salient thing that she is referring to could be something that she mistakenly takes to be F , takes the hearer to mistakenly take to be F , or takes the hearer to take her to mistakenly take to be F .²¹ By the same token, there are cases in which the hearer can identify the referent, even if it is not F , by correctly taking a certain object to be something the speaker thinks is F , or thinks he thinks is F (and so on).²² Clearly the fact that a speaker can successfully use 'the F ' to refer to something that is not F requires a pragmatic explanation. And, if a pragmatic account is needed in cases where ' F ' does not apply, then it would seem, as Soames has argued, that it might as well be extended to cases in which ' F ' does apply (2005: 13).

These cases illustrate that the important thing with referential uses is that the speaker's use of the description enables the hearer to identify something as what she is using the description to refer to, not as that which satisfies the description's nominal. Of course, if the speaker means that the F that is a is G and a is not F , then she means something that is strictly speaking false. However, since she is using 'the F ' primarily to enable the hearer to identify what she is referring to, then practically speaking it will be enough if a is G . Although the content of 'the F ' is normally part of what the speaker means, it is of secondary importance. The speaker's primary aim is to predicate something of a certain object.

²¹ It is also possible that the speaker mistakenly takes the hearer to take the intended referent to be F , or even that the speaker takes the hearer to mistakenly take him to take it to be F . This need not vitiate communication, for there may be no other plausible candidate for what the speaker has in mind.

²² For more on these aberrant cases, see Bach 1987/1994: 126–9.

The Tyranny of Syntax

I don't know where Devitt gets the idea that in my view conventional meaning is "under the tyranny of syntax." Some simple symbols express complex propositions and do so as a matter of convention. I agree that "it is always an open question to what extent, if any, a meaning is to be explained in terms of a syntactic structure," insofar as not all symbols are as complex as their contents. For any symbol, people can adopt a convention that that symbol expresses some arbitrary proposition. A couple might have a code that when, after having spent considerable time at a party, uttering "Salami" means that one wants to leave.

I'm not sure what Devitt means by the "tyranny of syntax" that he thinks I want to impose arbitrarily. Yes, I do insist that constituents of the semantic content of a sentence be semantic values of constituents of that sentence and, yes, I am reluctant to posit hidden syntactic elements just to appease some people's intuitions about contents of utterances. Considering Devitt's professed skepticism about semantic intuitions, I'm surprised that he relies on intuitions, along with semantic convention, to account for the fact that quantifier phrases are commonly used as if they were implicitly restricted. Suppose someone utters "Everyone went to Paris," Devitt's example (4), and means and successfully conveys that everyone at a certain conference went to Paris. The explanation for how such a thing can rationally be meant by the speaker and understood by the hearer does not have to invoke a specific convention about quantifier domain restriction. That is because so-called quantifier domain restriction is but one instance of a very general phenomenon, conversational implicature, as illustrated by all sorts of utterances in which what the speaker means includes elements that do not correspond to overt sentential constituents. There's nothing special about the case of quantifier domain restriction.

In general, positing a syntactic slot that needs semantic filling does not explain much. Indeed, positing it can lead to trouble. Suppose that the speaker makes explicit what she means and utters, say, "Everyone at the QDR Conference went to Paris." This sentence contains a more elaborate quantifier phrase than the one in Devitt's example ("everyone"), but according to Devitt's imagined convention there should still be a slot to be filled. If it is objected that once the speaker makes explicit her intended restriction on the domain of the quantifier, the slot is filled automatically, the obvious reply is that there is no guarantee that (in this example) there is only one QDR Conference, hence no guarantee that nothing more needs to be made explicit.²³

Devitt mentions some nice examples of specialized symbol systems, such as road signs and naval flags, which he uses to support his claim that symbols can semantically express propositions without containing constituents that correspond to each component of the proposition.

²³ See my reply to Stanley and Szabó 2000 in Bach 2000, and for a recent and more comprehensive reply see Clapp 2012a.

However, these systems lack the systematicity, productivity, and compositionality of languages. He also mentions phone books, which list people (and organizations) by name and pair them with phone numbers (and addresses in many cases). The information that so-and-so's phone number is such-and-such is, as Devitt rightly claims, conveyed only by virtue of a convention that this is what such pairings indicate. Then Devitt writes, "No syntactic theory could nullify the conventional meanings of street signs and phone books. These examples, along with many idioms, suggest that although the explanation of the complex propositional meaning of a symbol often involves ascribing a matchingly complex syntax, *it often does not*. Conventional meaning is not under the tyranny of syntax in the way Bach claims. ... [T]here is no simple inference from a symbol having a complex meaning to its having a matchingly complex syntactic structure." (Devitt 2013: 189)

Devitt may be right about street signs and phone books, but their symbol systems lack the recursive compositional productivity of languages. He does not take into account the widely (though not universally) accepted claim that English and other human languages are semantically compositional. As I have argued in various places, philosophers and formal semanticists who freely posit hidden slots in the structures of sentences, the contextual filling of which yields a proposition, implicitly make the assumption that every declarative sentence semantically expresses a proposition, if not independently of context then at least relative to a context. I dub this assumption *propositionalism*, and argue making it leads to gratuitous semantic theses. Devitt is evidently subject to this tyranny of propositionalism. Otherwise, he would not reflexively opt for the "slot-filling response" to account for what a speaker might mean in uttering a sentence like his example (6), 'I'm not ready'.²⁴

Devitt claims that the meaning of a word like ready, as in (6), "requires a slot to be filled when it is properly used." Believing that, he thinks we then "need to consider what syntactic structure, if any, has to be ascribed to the expression to explain its meaning; for example, to explain the fact that it has a slot to be filled." He does not make much of a case that anything syntactic is needed to explain how one can use 'ready' in ('I'm not ready') to convey what one is claiming one is ready for. The fact that one cannot be just plain ready but only ready for something or other is a metaphysical fact, not a semantic fact. This is a fact about readiness, not a fact about 'ready'. So the onus is really on Devitt to show the need for positing a syntactic slot (and thereby cre-

²⁴ Taking propositionalism for granted can have unfortunate consequences. In an interesting and characteristically provocative paper, Jerry Fodor (2001) argued that because sentences are typically used to convey propositions that compositionality would not lead one to predict they are typically used to convey, natural languages are not semantically compositional. It is obvious that in putting forth his argument he implicitly assumes propositionalism. He does not even mention this assumption, much less defend it. For other criticisms of Fodor's arguments, see Clapp 2012b.

ating the need for a semantic value). To insist on something syntactic to play the role of a covert indexical is to fall to the tyranny of syntax. Even Jason Stanley, an arch-advocate of covert variables, recognizes the need for an independent, syntactic motivation for positing them, as when he writes, “Syntactic structure cannot simply be postulated on semantic grounds. Rather, evidence of a syntactic sort must be available for the existence of domain variables” (Stanley 2002: 338).²⁵

There is a simple, alternative way of thinking about what goes on when a speaker utters a sentence like ‘I am ready’ and what she means (e.g., that she is ready to go to work) includes something not corresponding to anything in the sentence. This extra element is an “unarticulated constituent” in John Perry’s (1986) sense, not articulated even syntactically, let alone phonologically. That is, the proposition meant by the speaker includes a constituent that is not the semantic value of any constituent of the (semantically incomplete) sentence.

Finally, consider adjectives like ‘relevant’, ‘qualified’, and ‘legal’ and what they semantically express. A topic can’t be just plain relevant, a person can’t be just plain qualified, and an action can’t be just plain legal. That is, being relevant, being qualified, and being legal are not properties but what might we might call *property functions*. These are metaphysical facts about being relevant, being qualified, and being legal, not linguistic (lexical) facts about the words that express them. These facts do not require the lexical entries for these adjectives to include a variable (or slot) which, when given a value (or filled), specifies that for which the topic, person, or action is being said to be relevant, qualified, or legal. Being metaphysical, not lexical, these facts bear on what the speaker must mean, not on the lexical structure of the words the speaker uses. For example, the fact that ‘legal’ expresses a property function rather than a property is a matter of what being legal is, not a matter of what ‘legal’ means. It is fallacy to conclude from such metaphysical facts that the lexicon has to incorporate metaphysics.

Reply to Mirela Fuš on the Scope of Singular Thought

While my other critics have addressed certain of my views about language use, Mirela Fuš raises some good questions about my view on the challenging subject of singular thought. I’d like to be able to answer them but, unfortunately, my views are in a state of flux, as my last paper on the subject makes clear (Bach 2010). I’ll state the view I’ve long held, but since I’m not confident about it, for reasons I’ll explain, I don’t have decisive answers to Fuš’s questions. I’ll rest content with spelling out the problem as I see it.

If we didn’t have singular thoughts about things in the world, our view of the world would be entirely qualitative. We would never be

²⁵ To this end Stanley relies on the so-called Binding Argument. This argument has been challenged by me (in Bach 2000) and many others.

related in thought to anything in particular. From our perspective at any particular time, we could think that there exists a unique thing of a certain sort, but the actual thing of that sort would not itself enter into our thinking. As Russell would say, we could know it only by description.²⁶ But it seems that we do, somehow, have singular thoughts about things in the world.

On the other hand, it is deeply puzzling how we *could* have such thoughts. How can physical objects be constituents of our thoughts? How can we literally have something in mind? How can we do better than think of an object under a description (or via a Fregean sense), whereby the object being thought of is that which satisfies the description (or the Fregean sense)? Do we have to think of the object *directly* (whatever that might mean)?

I have long maintained that the difference between descriptive and genuinely singular thought consists not in the difference between mediated and unmediated thought but between descriptive and *de re* representations. *De re* representations function as mental indexicals. Thoughts containing them need not have objects to be singular (or *de re*) in *character*, but they must have objects to be singular in *content*. Having a singular thought about something does not require knowing who or what it is but, rather, being *representationally connected* to it. Unlike the “objects” of descriptive thoughts, the objects of singular thoughts are determined not satisfactorily but relationally, via such a connection.

There are different sorts of singular (or *de re*) representational relations, based on perception, memory, or communication, but however remote and many-linked they are, they must be grounded in someone’s perception of the represented object. According to the view I have defended, singular thought about a certain object requires having a representational connection to that object, near or remote. Although I do describe this relation as an “extension of acquaintance,” contrary to what Fuš suggests when she asks about “the possibility of remote acquaintance” (Fuš 2013: 204), I do not mean that this relation is still acquaintance when it goes beyond one’s own acquaintance with an object. Remote “acquaintance” is not acquaintance but a weaker relation. Nevertheless, just as Russell says about knowledge by description, being in the extended relation of a representational connection to an object “enables us to pass beyond the limits of our experience” (Russell 1912: 59).

²⁶ This is how Russell (1912: 53) explains knowledge by description: “We shall say that an object is ‘known by description’ when we know that it is ‘the so-and-so’, i.e. when we know that there is one object, and no more, having a certain property; and it will generally be implied that we do not have knowledge of the same object by acquaintance. [...] We shall say that we have ‘merely descriptive knowledge’ of the so-and-so when, although we know that the so-and-so exists, yet we do not know any proposition ‘*a* is the so-and-so’, where *a* is something with which we are acquainted.”

The obvious challenge here is how to characterize this representational connection in full generality and to spell out and motivate the constraints on it. The challenge is not analogous to a Sorites paradox, as Fuš suggests. The problem is not where to draw the line beyond which having a representational connection to an object is too remote to put one in a position to have singular thoughts about it. Rather, the challenge is to give an adequate, fully general account of the relation that comprises *any* sort of genuinely representational connection, however remote. All I am confident of here is that thinking of something under a description, any description, does *not* put one in a position to have singular thoughts about it.

I tried to meet the above challenge long ago (Bach 1987/1994: ch. 1), but I can't say I'm still satisfied with the result. And that is not just because I limited my account to singular thoughts about physical objects. Nor is it just because my account of how singular thoughts can be communicated was too narrow (it required that names be used rather than anything that can be used as if it were a name). At any rate, my short and very unsatisfactory response to Mirela Fuš regarding this challenge is to insist that perceiving mere causal traces, such as shadows, footprints, and products of an object do not put one into the right relation. Rather than expand on this, which I would do if I had an adequate response, I would like to highlight what I take to be the fundamental issue in regard to singular thought. Short of having a solution I'm satisfied with, I will merely indicate what I think it takes to appreciate what the problem is and why it seems intractable.

Go along for a moment with Russell's insistence that one can have singular thoughts only about things and persons with which one is acquainted (in his very strict sense). In a famous paragraph he contrasts the situation of Bismarck himself, who "might have used his name directly to designate [himself] ... to ma[k]e a judgment [i.e. have singular thoughts] about himself" containing him as a constituent (1912: 54), with our situation in respect to Bismarck:

When we make a statement about something known only by description, we often intend to make our statement, not in the form involving the description, but about the actual thing described. That is, when we say anything about Bismarck, we should like, if we could, to make the judgment which Bismarck alone can make, namely, the judgment of which he himself is a constituent. [But] in this we are necessarily defeated. ... What enables us to communicate in spite of the varying descriptions we employ is that we know there is a true proposition concerning the actual Bismarck, and that however we may vary the description (as long as the description is correct) the proposition described is still the same. This proposition, which is described and is known to be true, is what interests us; but we are not acquainted with the proposition itself, and do not know *it*, though we know it is true. (1912: 57)

We don't have to agree with Russell about the case of Bismarck to agree that there is a distinction to be drawn here, although some philoso-

phers deny that there is anything like Russell's distinction to be drawn. These *latitudinarians*, as they used to be called, or *liberals*, as Hawthorne and Manley (2012) call them (and themselves), doubt that there is any such distinction to be drawn, never mind a solution to the problem of how to draw it. But if there is such a distinction, the problem is how to draw it. Assuming we can have singular thoughts about at least some persons and things we are not acquainted with, what does that require? At what point are we in the position that Russell thought we are in with respect to Bismarck?

In my framework, the question is this: how does having a representational connection to an object enable one to think of it in a way that merely being causally connected to it does not? For example, regarding the basic case of thinking of something via perception, why does seeing a raccoon put one in a position of thinking of it, whereas seeing merely the raccoon's footprint does not put one in a position to think of the raccoon itself? (Or does it?) Does seeing a photograph of the raccoon put one in that position? How about an artist's drawing of it? I have certain intuitions about how to answer these questions, but I don't put much weight on them. My indecision about them is due to the fact that I have long been convinced that having merely a descriptive relation to an object does not put one in a position to have singular thoughts about it. That's only good enough to have a unique-existential thought "about" whatever satisfies that description, in the way in which Russell claimed we could have thoughts about Bismarck. If the object of a thought is determined descriptively, the thought about that object is not singular. The object of a singular thought must be determined relationally, and the only plausible relation I can think of, at least as far as singular thoughts about concrete things are concerned, is the representational connection relation. The problem is that once we consider the idea of singular thought about objects beyond those with which we are or have been acquainted, subjectively it becomes difficult to see how the difference matters. This is the difference between being able to have thoughts about Bismarck, for example, and thoughts that are merely made true (or false) by facts involving Bismarck. Still, it seems that the difference must matter, because if the relevant object is determined merely satisfactorily rather than relationally, then, as Donnellan characterized Russell's worry, "we introduce an element of generality which ought to be absent if what we are doing is referring to [or thinking of] some particular thing" (1966: 304).

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