
Article:
Connolly, N. (2017) I'm Here Now, But I Won't Be Here When You Get This Message. Dialectica , 71 (4). pp. 603-622. ISSN 0012-2017

https://doi.org/10.1111/1746-8361.12208

I'm here now; but I won't be here when you get this message

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ABSTRACT

Answering machine messages allegedly refute Kaplan's 'classical account' of the semantics of 'I', 'here' and 'now'. The classical account doesn't allow that a token of 'I am not here now' can be true; but these words in an answering machine message can communicate something true. In this paper I argue that the true content communicated by an answering machine message is extra-semantic content conveyed via the mechanism of 'externally oriented make-believe'. An answering machine message is associated with a game of make-believe whose rules prescribe making believe that the agent who recorded the message is speaking there (at the end of the line) and then; and it thereby conveys that the circumstance that would make the message fictionally true obtains.

1. Indexicals, the classical account and the answering machine paradox

It is widely accepted that the 'classical' account of the semantics of indexical expressions like 'I', 'here' and 'now' - which has its basis in Kaplan 1989 - is refuted by answering machine messages. Although the classical account is acknowledged as the 'received' (Cohen 2013, 5) treatment of the semantics of

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indexicals, the consensus in the literature generated by the 'answering machine paradox' is that it is mistaken as it stands.

This paper is a defence of the received treatment. The 'classical account' discussed in the literature adapts Kaplan's formal treatment to natural languages, and to linguistic tokens that can persist over time (e.g. written sentences). It holds that an indexical has a character or linguistic meaning which, in a given context, fixes the content/referent of a token of the indexical. Kaplan defines a context as comprising a time, a location, an agent and a world. The character rules for 'I' 'here' and 'now' stipulate that tokens of 'I', 'here' and 'now' refer respectively to the agent, location and time of the context. It is stipulated – in keeping with the 'special relationship' (Kaplan 1989, 509) between 'I', 'here' and 'now' - that in any 'proper' (Kaplan 1989, 509) context the agent of a context is present at the time of the context in the location of the context.

The classical account, in line with this stipulation, takes the context with respect to which a token indexical is semantically evaluated to be the 'context of production' of the token: the time, location and world at which the token is created as the intended vehicle of a semantic content[1], and the agent who creates it. And it deems that every token of 'I am here now' is true - 'I am here now' is a 'logical truth' (Kaplan 1989, 509) - and every token of its negation, (1), is false.

(1) I am not here now.

[1] I am elaborating here somewhat on the not very clearly defined notion of 'production'. The context of production is sometimes glossed as the context of utterance/inscription. But Dodd & Sweeney (2010) maintain that in the case of answering machines messages the utterance is only completed when the message is broadcast, and others e.g. Cohen (2013) speak of 'deferred utterances'. However Stevens (2009, 217) argues against the propriety of speaking of deferred/delayed utterance. It is at least as intuitive, he argues – and I agree – to insist that the utterance made by the recorder of an answering machine message is made when it is recorded. At any rate the classical account as I understand it is bound by the constraint on proper contexts. The special relationship between 'I', 'here' and 'now' that rules out a true token of 'I am not here now' is taken to be part of the meaning of these terms (even though Kaplan's formalisation takes the easy option of representing it as a separate stipulation rather than building it into the character rules). My gloss on 'production' attempts to ensure that the context of production is a proper context but shouldn't be taken as the final word.

Hence the 'answering machine paradox'…. If you phone when I'm out and you hear a token of (1), what is communicated to you is that I am not at the location at which the message is played back at the time the message is played back - the time it is 'tokened', not the time it is produced - and this is true!

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The consensus in the literature generated by the answering machine paradox is that the classical account is mistaken.[2] That is where the consensus ends though. There is no unanimity on how to amend or replace the classical account.

Suggestions include the 'intended context view' and the 'recognised context view'. The 'intended context view' (Predelli 1998, 2011) has it that token indexicals refer to elements of the context of intended interpretation: the context with respect to which the agent who utters/inscribes the token intends them to be interpreted. If I intend my utterance of 'I am not here now' to be interpreted with respect to the time you hear it, then that's the time my token of 'now' refers to. But also, according to this view, if I intend it to be interpreted with respect to 1971, then that's the time my token of 'now' refers to. The 'recognised context view' (Romdenh Romluc 2002, 2006) is that token indexicals refer to elements of the recognised context of interpretation: the context that an ideally informed and attentive audience would recognise as the context with respect to which they should be interpreted. My token of 'now' refers to 1971, according to this view, if and only if an ideally informed and attentive audience would recognise that it should be interpreted with respect to 1971.

These two views give more power to the mental states of individual speakers and hearers to determine semantic content than many would wish to grant to them (Michaelson & Cohen 2013, 587). I direct the reader to further criticisms by Cohen (2013, 14-24) but I will restrict my own critical remarks to

[2] Graham Stevens (2009) is a dissenting voice. But Stevens is criticised by Cohen (2013, footnote 8) for dismissing the conveyed content of an answering machine message as extra-semantic without explaining how this content is conveyed. Åkerman (2017) outlines a pragmatic framework that could be harnessed by the classical account, but also potentially by rivals. The pragmatic story I will tell, in contrast, assumes the correctness of the classical account.

targets that are closer to the view I am defending: accounts that can claim to 'inherit the advantages' (Cohen 2013, 14) of the received view. The 'context of tokening view' mooted by Sidelle (1991) and defended by Cohen drops Kaplan's requirement on 'proper' contexts, and takes tokens of 'here' and 'now' to refer respectively to the location and time they are tokened[3], rather than the location and time they are produced. In cases of face to face communication the context of production and the context of tokening coincide. The context of tokening view therefore agrees with the classical account on the reference of tokens of 'here' and 'now' that occur in face to face communication. Cohen calls it a 'conservative extension' (Cohen 2013, 14) of Kaplan's semantics. It is only in cases - like the answering machine case - where the context of production and the context of tokening come apart, that the theories disagree over the reference of token indexicals. The context of tokening view takes 'now' in answering machine messages to refer to the time of tokening – the time the message is played back – rather than the time the token is produced by the agent who records the message.

We interpret answering machine messages as concerning the time of tokening, not the time of production. This might be thought to vindicate the small tweak to the classical account urged by Cohen. The context of tokening view would be more completely vindicated if whenever the context of production and the context of tokening of a token indexical come apart, it is the context of tokening, prima facie, rather than the context of production, that is the context with respect to which the token should be interpreted. But this is not so. Cohen draws attention to Michaelson's (2011) objection that the token indexicals in an inscription - on a postcard - of 'it's beautiful here now' don't refer to the time and place of tokening, but to the time and place of inscription.

> In response, I propose that the "indexicals" … are either anaphora/bound variables, bound to the place/time made salient by the picture, place-name, and date on the postcard (cf. the treatment of free indirect discourse occurrences

[3] Cohen doesn't explain exactly what he means by 'tokening', and I won't attempt to put words in his mouth. I will only note that the context of tokening view must understand 'tokening' such that the location of tokening of an answering machine message is the location at which the recording device plays back the message, rather than the location at which the message is heard.

> in note 21), or demonstratives, for which the postcard itself serves as a completing demonstration. (Cohen 2013, 27 footnote 32)

A typical postcard with a picture and postmark can arguably serve either of the roles envisaged by Cohen's proposal. But imagine a token of (S) inscribed on plain paper, or left as a voice recording on some recording device (I'm thinking - to keep up the 1980s theme - a tape recorder) to be played back when you arrive.

(S) I'm about to go out now but I should be back before you arrive. But just in case I'm not there's beer in the fridge.

The paper or tape is ill suited to serve as a completing demonstration or to make salient a time to which the token of 'now' is anaphorically linked. It is hard to dispute that in this case the token of 'now' is a pure indexical that refers to the time it was produced.[4]

A narrow survey of alleged problem cases for the classical account might encourage the thought that the classical account requires Cohen's proposed modification to deal with all or most cases in which the context of production and the context of tokening come apart. But this is not at all the situation. The use of the token of 'now' in the imagined token of (S) to refer to the time of the token's production is not untypical of uses of 'now' in letters, emails and podcasts. The cases that pose a prima facie problem for the classical account are cases in which something special is going on. I trust that this will become clear when I explain what exactly is going on in these cases.

[4] O'Madagain (2014) defends the context of tokening view from a range of apparent counterexamples with a strategy that relies on the assumption that the intentions of users of semantic tokens determine when the sounds or shapes they produce/deploy count as semantic tokens. 'Outside of the time and place at which it is intended by [its user] to express something…' he asserts, a sound or shape '… loses its semantic token-hood' (O'Madagain 2014, 76). But assume – not unrealistically – that the time you read/hear the message is not 'outside of the time … at which it is intended to express something'. Assume that the message is intended to express something to you when you read it. Then the context of tokening view must wrongly predict that 'now' in the message refers to the time it is read/played back.

Let me mention another of these cases, which surprisingly has received little attention in the recent literature though Dodd and Sweeney (2010) acknowledge it represents a 'problem' (Dodd and Sweeney 2010, 342) for their own account[5]. Consider a voicemail message (for a landline number) of 'I am not here now'. This conveys the same content as the same phoneme played back on an answering machine. It conveys that the person who recorded the message is not at the location associated with the number the caller has dialled at the time the message is played back. 'Now' is understood as the time the message is played back: the time 'now' is tokened. But consider the token of 'here'. In the case of voicemail the location at which the message is played back is not the location associated with the number the caller has dialled. The call is re-routed to the phone company's processing centre which sends the 'I'm not here' message. Imagine both the caller and the owner of the number called are aware of how the mechanism works. Still, when the caller gets the message 'I'm not here now' she interprets 'here' to refer not to the processing centre but to the address associated with the number she dialled. But according to the context of tokening view 'here' refers to the location at which the message is tokened, that is, the location at which it is played back[6]: the processing centre.

The context of tokening view seemed to explain answering machine messages but it cannot straightforwardly explain voicemail messages! Neither can any view that has it that either one of the context of production or the context of tokening is the context relevant to the semantic evaluation of both tokens of 'now' and 'here' in a voicemail message. As well as the classical account and the context of tokening view, these views include 'character shift' views[7] that have this consequence.

The classical account cannot straightforwardly explain many puzzling uses of indexicals. But the same goes for rival accounts of the semantics of indexicals like (as I've argued) the context of tokening

[5] Dodd & Sweeney (2010) maintain that semantic evaluation of indexicals is with regard to either the context of production or the context of tokening, with the speaker's intentions determining which of these is the relevant context. Michaelson and Cohen class this view along with 'doxastic control' views like the intended context view.

[6] If 'tokened' s understood such that the location at which an answering machine message is tokened is the location at which the recording device plays back the message (see footnote 3), then I assume the location at which a voicemail message is tokened is also the location at which the recording device plays back the message.

[7] E.g. Michaelson (2014), Corazza, Fish and Gorvett (2002). Character shift views associate more than one character-rule with a type indexical, positing a metarule that determines which of the 'shifting characters' is associated with a given token of the indexical.

view. No account of the semantics of indexicals[8] can explain all the puzzling cases without the help of a story or stories about how the conveyed content in some cases is extra-semantic. If this is so then the classical account cannot be faulted for appealing to such a story or stories if it there is a plausible story it can appeal to. I will defend the classical account by telling a plausible story it can appeal to.

2. *It's all in the game.*

A token of 'now' in an answering machine message, I maintain, if it refers at all[9], refers to the time the message was recorded. But the message conveys extra-semantic content concerning the time the message is played back. How? The key notion my account of the interpretation of answering machine messages employs is the notion of pretence. When you hear an answering machine message you can recognise a salient game of make-believe whose rules prescribe that you imagine that the agent who recorded the answering machine message is speaking to you at the place you're calling at the time you're hearing the message.

I will fill in the details below. But let me motivate my proposal with a couple of cases in which the interpretation of token indexicals obviously involves pretence. Imagine Emma wants to tell us about a new colleague, Todd. She imitates Todd's voice and manner – she pretends to be Todd – and utters a token of (2).

(2) I'm the new global marketing director.

If we recognise that Emma is pretending to be Todd and recognise the point of the pretence we will understand what Emma wants to impart: that Todd is the new global marketing director.

[8] This includes the intended context view and the recognised context view. See Michaelson & Cohen 2013.
[9] I am inclined to follow Stevens (2009) in denying that tokens that are not asserted have semantic content.

Or imagine a token of (3) finger-scrawled by Emily on a dirty car[10].

(3) I need a wash.

Emily's action invites us to make believe that the car can communicate. If we recognise this - the familiarity of the conceit that cars can talk will help - and recognise the point of the game of make-believe, we will understand what Emily wants to impart: that the car needs a wash.

These examples are instances - obvious instances I would urge - of externally oriented prop based make-believe. In a game of prop based make-believe, according to Kendall Walton's influential account (see Walton 1990, 1993), what is true in the game – what is fictional – depends on real facts about features of the world that are utilised by the game as props[11]. For instance Walton describes a game in which the location of a tree stump makes an utterance of 'there is a bear at the bottom of the garden' true in the game. The 'principles of generation' that determine how what is true in the game depends on features of the real world are implicitly understood by participants. The dependence of fictional truths on real facts allows for fictional truths that participants may not recognise as such. It is true in the game that there is a bear behind the laurel bush even though no one has seen the tree stump lurking there. But this dependence also allows utterances of fictional truths to be used to convey real truths. It allows us to 'pretend that the world is a certain way, not in order to pursue the imaginative thought that the world is that way, but to say something about the real world that provides the occasion of the pretense' (Kroon 2009, 247).

Walton and others distinguish 'content oriented make-believe,' participants in which pursue the imaginative thought that the world is a certain way, from 'prop oriented' or 'externally oriented' make-believe, participants in which exploit the pretence to convey information about the real-world facts that facilitate the pretence. Take an example from Catherine Wearing. Annie is pretending that her bicycle is

[10] This example is appropriated, and repurposed, from (O'Madagain, 2012).

[11] Semantic tokens can count as props. Walton takes the semantic tokens that constitute works of fiction to be props. We pretend that these tokens are true accounts of real events. In the cases I will discuss the relevant games involve imagining token indexicals to have different contexts of production.

a horse. She can make utterances like 'my horse is going to win the Derby' 'with an eye to the make-believe itself' (Wearing 2011, 502) as Wearing puts it. But imagine now that Annie's mother sees that Annie has left her bicycle out in the rain. She says 'the horse is getting wet: you should put it back in its stable'[12]. This is a case of prop oriented make-believe. Annie's mother wants to convey to Annie that her bicycle is getting wet. Her utterance has this serious purpose. But she achieves this purpose by joining in the game. 'The horse is getting wet' is true in the game just if in reality Annie's bicycle is getting wet. The information Annie's mother's utterance conveys is thus that the real-world circumstance that would make the token of 'the horse is getting wet' true in the game obtains.

When a linguistic token is deployed in externally oriented make-believe the audience's understanding of the 'principles of generation' that dictate the real-word circumstances under which the linguistic token is true in the game allows for the identification of what the token is intended to convey, which is that the real-world circumstance that would make the token true in the game obtains. This account precisely captures what happens in the 'global marketing director' and 'talking car' examples. In the former example the wider conversational context (we may have asked Emma 'so who's this Todd guy?') makes obvious that the point of the pretence is to impart information about Todd: the pretence is externally oriented. The rules of the game prescribe that participants make believe that the words coming out of Emma's mouth are uttered by Todd, and so a self-referential utterance is to be imagined to refer to Todd and is true in the game just if it would really be true if uttered by Todd. Because we understand the principles of generation of the game, Emma's utterance succeeds in conveying that the circumstance that would make the token true in the game obtains. That is, it succeeds in conveying that Todd is the new global marketing director. In the 'talking car' example the remarkable filthiness of the car is plausibly itself a clue that the point of the pretence is to draw attention to this external circumstance. The rules of the game of make-believe instigated by Emily prescribe that participants make believe that the car has uttered any linguistic tokens that appear on it, and so the token inscribed by Emily is true in the game just if it would

[12] I've modified Wearing's example slightly so that the mother asserts and doesn't merely command.

be true if uttered by the car. Because we understand the principles of generation of the game, Emily's inscription succeeds in conveying that the circumstance that would make it true in the game obtains. That is, it succeeds in conveying that the car needs a wash.

The car's needing a wash makes the token of (3) true in the game because the token of (3) is fictionally uttered by the car. And Todd's being the new global marketing director makes the token of (2) true in the game, because the token is fictionally uttered by Todd. The token of 'I' in each case, as per the classical account, is calculated to refer to the producer of the token - the agent of the context of production - it's just that, fictionally, the agent is someone (or thing) other than the real producer of the token. In the case of a linguistic token involving indexicals that is uttered in the course of a game of make-believe we may speak of the 'fictional context' – the fictional agent, fictional time and fictional place – that determines the 'fictional content' of the token. If a token that is pretend-asserted can be said to have a real content this can differ from the fictional content of the token. If Emma's utterance has a real content for instance then its content is the proposition that Emma is the new global marketing director.

This is a good point at which to let slip that my proposal about the interpretation of answering machine messages is not completely original. The suggestion that interpretation of token indexicals can involve pretence is considered and rejected by Corazza, Fish and Gorvett (2002), and Mount (2008)[13], and defended by Voltolini (2006). But Corazza, Fish and Gorvett assume that in the cases they discuss the communicated content is semantic content. They argue that neither a token's producer's pretending, nor the audience's believing that the token's producer is pretending, elevates fictional content to the status of semantic content (Corazza, Fish and Gorvett, 2002, 9). Voltolini's reply to Corazza, Fish and Gorvett correctly points out that the rule governed nature of games of make believe ensures that there can be a prescription to pretend that p even if no one is pretending or believed to be pretending that p (for instance the prescription to pretend that there is a bear behind the laurel bush). The fictional context associated with

[13] Mount maintains that for a pretence-invoking account to explain away her counterexamples to Kaplan and other theorists who assume that there are 'pure indexicals' 'a lot more must be said' (Mount 2008 p208). I try in this paper to say enough to make it obvious how the counterexamples can be explained away – at least those that need to be (I am open to the possibility that tokens of 'I', 'here' and 'now' are not always used as pure indexicals).

a token indexical is determined independently of the speaker's communicative intentions and the audience's beliefs about those intentions and in line with conventions governing the fiction. This, Voltolini maintains, is sufficient to elevate fictional content to the status of semantic content. Voltolini's 'fictionalist' account has it that 'whenever the context relevant for the semantic interpretation of an indexical sentence is not its proper context of utterance, that context is … a fictional context.' (Voltolini 2006, 27)

But Voltolini's 'fictionalist' account of the interpretation of indexicals has not won wide support. It is not at all evident that the conventions governing a fiction can elevate fictional content to the status of semantic content. These conventions can make a tree stump a pretend-bear but they can't make a tree stump a bear. And pretence is most evidently involved in cases that, in Cohen's phrase, seem 'ripe for treatment by some standard story about the conveyance of extrasemantic content roughly in the tradition of Grice (1975)' (Cohen 2013, 9 footnote 10). While giving due credit to Voltolini for what I think is the key insight into the interpretation of puzzling uses of indexicals - that it involves pretence - I want to make another use of this insight, by invoking the distinction between content oriented and externally oriented make-believe. There is no need to elevate fictional content to the status of semantic content. Because externally oriented make-believe is a means of imparting extra-semantic content.[14]

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In externally oriented make-believe, a semantic token is used to convey that certain real-world circumstances obtain: those circumstances whose obtaining would make the token true in the game. The proposition that these circumstances obtain is, I am maintaining, not the semantic content of the utterance used to convey it. As Stanley points out, whereas the semantic meaning of an expression is plausibly a function of the meanings of its parts, 'the mechanism of pretense certainly does not respect compositional

[14] I am going to argue for this against those who would – implausibly – deny it. But let me be fair to Voltolini in distinguishing what he says from how others take the suggestion that pretence can affect the semantic content of linguistic tokens. Voltolini, unlike others who make this claim, only applies it to token indexicals, and his account has it that the character of the token indexicals is not affected by pretence, only the context on which the character rules operate to yield the semantic content.

interpretation of the truth-conditions expressed by a sentence relative to a context' (Stanley 2001, 41). Think about Wearing's example. The proposition conveyed by Annie's mother is true only if a bicycle is getting wet. The sentence used to convey this proposition doesn't include the word 'bicycle'. It includes the word 'horse'. We can easily avoid saying that this sentence – compositionality be damned – semantically encodes a proposition about a bicycle, if we allow that the proposition conveyed by Annie's mother is extra-semantic content.

I suggest that it is obvious that a content conveyed via externally oriented make-believe is not the semantic content of the utterance used to convey it. But David Hills, who invokes externally oriented make-believe to explain the interpretation of metaphors, doesn't find this obvious in the cases he is interested in. According to Hills we understand 'Juliet is the sun' to convey that Juliet has the real-world features that make it fictional, in a game with certain principles of generation, that Juliet is the sun. Hills argues (1997, 127) that this proposition is the token's semantic content, by making a comparison with a typical case of conversational implicature. A token of 'Mr X is punctual and has beautiful handwriting' conveys that Mr X is not a good philosopher but, as Hills puts it, 'I can't properly register my disagreement' (Hills 1997, 127) with the implicated proposition by replying 'no he doesn't'. The reply 'no he doesn't' would be taken to express disagreement with the semantic meaning of 'Mr X is punctual and has beautiful handwriting', rather than with the extra-semantic content the author of the token intends to convey. But if Romeo utters 'Juliet is the Sun' you can register your disagreement with the proposition Romeo intends to convey by replying 'no she isn't'. Hills concludes from this that '…it would appear that Romeo's meaning gets lodged in Romeo's words in a way that Grice's meaning (in the letter of recommendation example) never gets lodged in Grice's' (Hills 1997, 127).

Hills' explanation of why I can register my disagreement with the conveyed content of 'Juliet is the Sun' by using a form of words that is appropriate to express a denial of the semantic content is that the conveyed content is the semantic content. Hills' argument fails because there is an alternative explanation. The alternative explanation is that my utterance of 'no she isn't' is also uttered in pretence: I'm joining in the game. The semantic content of 'no she isn't' contradicts the proposition that Juliet is the sun. I pretend

to deny that Juliet is the sun. I thereby convey, extra-semantically, that it is not the case that Juliet has the features that would make it true in the game that Juliet is the sun.

In cases like the letter of recommendation case the denial 'no he doesn't' is taken to deny the semantic content of the token the denier is responding to. But that's because in these cases the denial is taken literally. If my reply to Romeo's utterance was taken literally it would be taken to deny the semantic content of Romeo's utterance. Imagine a pedant or a literal minded child (Juliet's sister) replying 'no she's not: she's a human being'. A denial of this sort denies the semantic content: that Juliet is the Sun. But if the option of joining in the pretence is open to me I can use the same form of words to deny another proposition.

The comparison with conversational implicature thus fails to show that the content conveyed by means of externally-oriented make-believe is semantic content. This content in fact bears the hallmarks of a conversational implicature. Implicatures[15] are cancellable: if an utterance whose semantic content is P implicates Q, it is possible for the speaker to add a clause that denies Q and thereby commit herself to P without committing herself to Q. Adding a clause that denies P would result in a contradiction. But because the implicated content Q is only loosely linked to the semantic content P, adding a clause that denies Q does not yield a contradiction (unless the utterance is contradictory to start with). To 'Mr X has beautiful handwriting,' Grice can consistently add 'but he's also an excellent philosopher'.

The content conveyed by means of externally-oriented make-believe is cancellable. Annie's mother can consistently add 'don't worry, your bicycle isn't getting wet, the rain is also just part of the game'. Neither would Romeo contradict himself if he uttered 'Juliet is the sun. She doesn't make me feel warm and happy; that's not what I mean. My monist metaphysical theory entails that Juliet is literally identical to the sun'.

Conversational implicatures are also typically non-detachable. Unlike conventional implicatures (e.g. the implicature of 'A but B' that it is unusual for 'A' and 'B' to both be true) conversational

[15] The exception being implicatures of utterances that are entailed by the utterances' semantic contents.

implicatures are 'not triggered by the use of particular lexical items in the sentence uttered' (Blome Tillman 2013, 173) (e.g 'but' in the above example). So, as Grice (1975, 39) puts it, 'it is not possible to find another way of saying the same thing, which simply lacks the implicature in question'. The content conveyed by Annie's mother in Wearing's example is non-detachable. 'The champion steed in yonder field will get wet' would convey the same information.

An implicature isn't linked to an utterance by a semantic meaning-convention, but rather by the fact that knowledge of semantic meanings, speaker intentions and general principles of rational communication allow interpreters to work out what is being implicated[16]. Thus the third hallmark of conversational implicatures, for Grice, is calculability.

When the audience recognises externally-oriented make-believe they recognise an intention to convey information about the world[17]. But at the same time the rules of conversation that anyone with such an intention is assumed to be following are recognisably flouted. These rules demand truth and relevance but it isn't literally true that there is a relevant horse that is in danger of getting wet. The audience can conclude that they must look past the literal meaning of the speaker's words for the content that the speaker intends to communicate. They can then bring to bear their understanding of the principles of generation of the recognised game of make believe to identify a relevant proposition - the proposition that the circumstance that makes the speaker's utterance true in the game obtains - as the speaker's intended meaning[18].

I don't want to insist – against any interpreter of Grice who would say otherwise – that the contents conveyed by externally oriented make believe can be classed as a type of conversational implicature. But Grice's framework stands as the canonical treatment of the conveyance of extra-semantic content to the

[16] 'Calculable' means calculable in principle. In many cases of implicature – especially, as I will note below, generalised conversational implicature – it is implausible that interpreters perform the calculations.
[17] Even when externally oriented make believe occurs in the midst of content oriented make believe the serious communicative intent can be evident from a tone of voice – imagine Annie's mother's suddenly concerned tone as she utters 'the horse will get wet' – or some obviously remarkable feature of a prop. These are the sort of clues the audience relies on in figuring out that an instance of pretence is externally oriented and is thus intended as a means of communicating information about the world.
[18] I am inclined to agree with Rysiew (2000) that the calculation in many cases of conversational implicature is an inference to the best explanation rather than a deduction.

extent that it is expected that an account of an alleged case should be 'roughly in the tradition of Grice'. And there is an aspect of Grice's framework – the notion of a generalised conversational implicature - that I will invoke below. I am thus not at all reluctant to suggest that the content conveyed by a piece of externally oriented make-believe may be categorised as a conversational implicature; and the utterances involving indexicals that I am urging are examples of externally oriented make-believe are certainly no exception here. In the talking car case and the global marketing director case the conveyed content is calculable. In each case it can be seen that the token is not intended to/cannot be taken literally. The literal meaning if there is one is false or irrelevant. I have described above how in each case the recognition of prescriptions to believe in certain ways allows for the identification of a relevant content as the speaker's intended meaning. And in each case the conveyed message can be cancelled. Emma can add 'but Todd isn't the global marketing director' without contradiction, and Emily can append 'I'm really dirty; and unlike this car, which is quite happy to be dirty, I'm not'.

But in any event - and this is the important point - even if Grice's framework is not a good fit, the content conveyed by externally oriented make believe is extra-semantic content. This means that my story is not an alternative to the classical account. It is instead an attempt to pass off the content conveyed by certain utterances involving indexicals – that differ from the contents predicted by the classical account – as extra-semantic.

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Can the story that, I suggest, obviously applies in the cases of the imagined utterances of (2) and (3), be applied to other controversial cases? In particular to the case of answering machine and voicemail messages? I will work my way towards the case of answering machine messages by applying the account to two more cases from the literature.

First a case from Corazza, Fish and Gorvett.

> Joe is not in his office one day and Ben notices that a number of students keep approaching his door and knocking. They then stand around and look bemused for a while before leaving. Taking pity on these poor souls wasting their time, Ben decides to attach his "I am not here today" note to Joe's door. The trick works; the students, instead of knocking and waiting, take one look at the note and then leave. . . . (Corazza, Fish and Gorvett 2002, 5)

If the token of (4) has a literal meaning it is the proposition that Ben is not here today.

(4) I am not here today

The token conveys the intended meaning - that Joe is not here today - to students who are unaware that Joe didn't write the note himself. The 'trick' works on these students because they take 'I' to refer to the person they assume wrote the note.

But imagine the students are aware that Ben wrote the note (it's not Joe's handwriting) and are aware that he isn't just hoping they won't realise this. The students can discount the semantic meaning as the intended meaning. Ben's absence - even if he was absent - would be irrelevant. The students grasp the intended meaning by recognising the note as a prop in a salient game of make-believe whose rules prescribe that they imagine that the note was written by Joe. They can recognise the pretence has a serious purpose: it's externally oriented. They can thus recognise the intended message: that the circumstance that would make the token of (4) true in the game obtains. That is, that Joe is not in his office today.

The second case is due to Cathal O'Madagain (2014, 72). Consider a recorded or transmitted message on the bus tour of Jurassic Park.

(5) Here you can see T-Rex

If this has a literal meaning it is the proposition that T-Rex is visible at the place the message was recorded. The tourists can discount this irrelevant proposition as the intended meaning. There is a natural

tendency, I suggest, when you hear a recorded voice, to imagine the owner of the voice is speaking there (or if you are listening through a telephone, at the place you're calling) and then. The message exploits this. The tourists can recognise a salient game whose rules mandate the pretence that the token of (5) is being uttered at the time and place it is heard: that a tour guide is there in person uttering it[19]. The game has a recognisable serious purpose: to convey information about the environs of the bus. The pretence can thus be recognised for what it is, and the information that it is intended to convey identified. What it conveys it that the circumstance whose obtaining would make the token of (5) true in the game obtains, that is, that T Rex is visible in the vicinity of the bus.

Finally then, to answering machine and voicemail messages…. Let T_R and L_R be the time and location at which a token of (1) is recorded. Let T_P be the time at which the message is played back and let L_C be the location associated with the phone number that is called. In the case of answering machine messages, but not in the case of voicemail messages, L_C is the location at which the message is played back: the location at which it is 'tokened'. The literal content of the token (if it has one), is that the agent who recorded the message is not at L_R at T_R. But this false and irrelevant proposition is not what the played-back message conveys. The played back message conveys that the agent is not at L_C at T_P.

How does it convey this? Like the tour bus message, answering machine and voicemail messages exploit your natural tendency, when you hear a recorded voice, to imagine the owner of the voice is speaking. In this case, as you're listening through a telephone, the tendency is to imagine the owner of the voice speaking *at the place you're ca*lling. You can recognise a salient game whose rules mandate the pretence that the owner of the voice is uttering the token of (1) at L_C at T_P.

You can also recognise that the make-believe is externally oriented. Its purpose, you can recognise, is to convey the information that a real-world circumstance obtains: the circumstance whose obtaining would make the token of (1) true in the game. Because the game involves imagining that the agent is uttering 'I am not here now' at L_C at T_P, the absence of the agent from L_C at T_P is the only circumstance

[19] Or that the device that plays/transmits the token is the utterer of the token.

that would make the token of 'I am not here now' true in the game. The message thus conveys that the agent is absent from L_C at T_P.

Participants in externally oriented make-believe, remember, 'pretend that the world is a certain way, not in order to pursue the imaginative thought that the world is that way, but to say something about the real world that provides the occasion of the pretense' (Kroon 2009, 247). It is not then a problem for the account I've just given that fully imagining how things would have to be for the token of (1) to be true if uttered by the agent who recorded it would involve imagining something impossible. For the token to be true the agent would have to be absent but also, in order to utter the token, the agent would have to be present. Bear in mind that fully imagining how things would have to be for a car to be an agent capable of producing semantic tokens is also difficult. We are very good at bracketing the strange or impossible consequences of the things we make-believe. However the key point is that there is no onus on you when you hear an answering machine message to imagine an impossible situation. Calculating the extra-semantic content associated with the message involves deploying knowledge of the rules of a salient game of make-believe to identify the circumstance that would make the token of (1) true in the game. And this is easy. The absence of the agent from L_C at T_P is the only circumstance that would make the token true in the game.[20]

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[20] A reviewer has drawn my attention to the objection that if my account is accurate then a token of 'I am here now and also not here now' could successfully communicate what a token of (1) communicates. The absence of the agent from L_C at T_P is the unique circumstance that suffices to make this token true in the game. But this token cannot be used to communicate that this circumstance obtains. My reply to the objection notes that whereas the second conjunct of this token is true in the game on account of a real-world circumstance (the absence of the agent), the first conjunct is true in the game because it follows by the internal logic of the game. If the purpose of the token is to draw attention to the agent's absence then it is unnecessary – a breach of conversational rules – to use the conjunction. Use of the conjunction forces an interpreter to try to identify two external circumstances: one that would make the first conjunct true in the game and one that would make the second conjunct true in the game. But there is no extra external circumstance that makes the first conjunct true in the game. The conjunction thus sows confusion. That explains, consistently with my account, why it can't be used to communicate a truth.

I follow Walton in refraining from insisting that the interpreter of an utterance deployed in externally oriented make believe must actively imagine what it would take for the utterance to be literally true.[21] Walton says that it is enough that by 'recogniz[ing] [an] implied game [of make-believe]' she is 'aware of prescriptions to imagine in certain ways' (Walton 1993, 49).

What sort of phenomenology then, does my account predict for the interpretation of answering machine messages and the other linguistic tokens I would apply it to? I would point to plausible examples of externally oriented make-believe like Wearing's example and metaphorical speech and say 'that kind of phenomenology'. But that kind of phenomenology, I suggest, is not a unified kind. In examples like Wearing's and in cases of interpretation of unfamiliar metaphors (like 'Juliet is the sun') it is plausible that the audience's experience reflects an awareness of prescriptions to imagine in certain ways and a process of calculation of the imparted content that draws on these prescriptions. But in other cases – cases of familiar metaphors (like 'he was boiling') for instance – this phenomenology seems to be lacking.

What I predict then is that in some of the cases my account applies to – the global marketing director case for instance – the audience's experience reflects a calculation of the conveyed content of the sort detailed in my discussion of that case. But in other cases – the case of answering machine messages is a prime example[22] – because the association of a certain type of token and a certain type of content are routine, the audience's grasp of the imparted content may be more or less instantaneous.

The association between answering machine messages and the contents they convey, I am granting, is conventional. But it is important to be clear about the nature of the convention. The contents conveyed by answering machine messages, I suggest, are what Grice called generalised conversational implicatures, or are the sort of thing Grice attempted to capture with this notion. Conversational implicatures come in two kinds….

[21] In my own case I can report that hearing an answering machine message prompts me to imagine that the owner of the voice is speaking to me, and most of those who I've asked about this – but not all – report similar phenomenology.
[22] This may not have been the case in the early days of answering machines. I postdict that it wasn't.

> [P]articularized conversational implicatures [are] cases in which an implicature is carried by saying that p on a particular occasion in virtue of special features of the context, cases in which there is no room for the idea that an implicature is normally carried by saying that p. But there are cases of generalized conversational implicature. Sometimes one can say that the use of a certain form of words in an utterance would normally (in the absence of special circumstances) carry such-and-such an implicature or type of implicature. (Grice 1975 [1989], pp. 37-40)

Tokens of (GCI) (Blome Tillman's example), if the speaker is married to a man, typically carry the implicature that the dinner date is not the speaker's husband.

(GCI) I'm meeting a man for dinner tonight.

Blome Tillman explains that 'GCIs need to be carefully distinguished from conventional implicatures: even though GCIs may seem to be triggered by default, they are not part of the conventional meanings of the words used in the utterance.' (Blome Tillman 2013, 181)

The association of answering machine messages with the content imparted by the externally oriented make believe described above is so routine, I suggest, that this content counts as a GCI. GCIs, though like all conversational implicatures calculable in principle, are not typically calculated. And so it is not to be expected that the phenomenology of the interpretation of answering machine tokens of (1) should reveal a process of calculation of the sort I have suggested could be deployed to work out the communicated content.

3. An Objection

The content conveyed by an answering machine messages is calculable. If it is a conversational implicature then it is also cancellable. But Michaelson and Cohen maintain that the content conveyed by an answering machine message is not cancellable.

An answering machine token of (1) conveys a proposition regarding the whereabouts of the agent at T_P. Michaelson and Cohen point out that the result of adding a 'cancellation clause' that contradicts this proposition is an overall utterance - a token of (1') - that is 'infelicitous'.

(1') I am not here now, but I might be when this message is played back.

Michaelson and Cohen take the infelicity of the token of (1') to show that the truth conveyed by the token of (1) is not cancellable, extra-semantic content. But as Jonas Akerman points out this is a mistake. Michaelson and Cohen assume that the explanation of the infelicity of the token of (1') is that the token of 'I am not here now' has as its semantic content a proposition that is contradicted by the semantic content of the cancellation clause 'but I might be when this message is played back'.[23] But Akerman points out that there is another explanation of the infelicity of the token of (1'). If a token of (1) expresses a 'logical falsehood' as Kaplan maintained, but nonetheless pragmatically conveys a truth, then the effect of cancelling this truth by adding a clause that contradicts it is to force the interpreter to go back to the semantic meaning of the token of (1). The interpreter is forced to take the token of (1) literally and taken literally it is incoherent.

In other words, if the classical account is correct and the true content conveyed by an answering machine token of (1) is cancellable extra-semantic content, then there is an alternative explanation of the infelicity of a token of (1') to the explanation assumed by Michaelson and Cohen. To assume, as Michaelson and Cohen assume, that the infelicity of a token of (1') shows that the content conveyed by an answering machine token of (1) is not cancellable extra-semantic content is to assume the first explanation is the right explanation. But the classical account allows for an alternative explanation, so unless the

[23] The attempted cancellation of a conventional implicature also results in an infelicity (e.g. 'she was poor but happy; not to suggest poor people usually aren't happy') but Michaelson and Cohen rightly dismiss the suggestion that the content conveyed by an answering machine message is a conventional implicature.

classical account has already been refuted this assumption 'beg[s] the question against the Kaplanian view' (Akerman 2015, 473).

(Akerman 2015) is a discussion of the standard 'felicity test' for cancellability. In most cases, if the addition of a cancellation clause that contradicts conveyed content results in an infelicity, it can be concluded that the conveyed content is not cancellable, extra-semantic content. But not in this case. In this case the infelicity doesn't show what an infelicity normally shows, because there are two available explanations of the infelicity, and the explanation according to which the conveyed content is not cancellable cannot be assumed to be the correct explanation.

That's as far as Åkerman (2015) goes. Åkerman (2017, 132–133) goes further and I will go further in the same vein. The felicity test applied to a token of (1) doesn't show that the content conveyed by the token is not cancellable. But if neither explanation of the infelicity of a token of (1') can be ruled out, the test also doesn't show that the content conveyed by the token is cancellable. The test applied to a token of (1) helps neither the enemies nor the friends of the classical account. However I will argue that the test applied to another token yields a decisive verdict, and the verdict in this case carries over to the case of an answering machine token of (1).

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The other token I will apply the test to is an answering machine token of (P).

(P) I am not at home now.

Consider, it is the interpretation of 'now' in answering machine tokens of (1) that is at issue. Does the token of 'now' refer to $T_{P,}$ or is the proposition that is conveyed regarding T_P cancellable, extra-semantic content? The same question arises for 'now' in an answering machine token of (P); and because 'now' in

both tokens is interpreted the same way, the answer in the case of this token should carry over to the case of a token of (1).

The only significant upshot – given the purpose of determining this answer – of replacing 'here' with a phrase which lacks the 'special relationship' that 'here' and 'now', according to the classical account, possess, is that the classical account doesn't take a token of (P) to be 'logically false'. But this means that adding a clause that contradicts the content imparted by this token will either result in a coherent utterance – indicating that the imparted content is not the token's semantic content[24] – or result in a contradiction and so conclusively show that it is.

Imagine then an attempt to cancel the proposition concerning the whereabouts of the agent at T_P that is imparted by an answering machine token of (P). Imagine the agent is not at home when she makes the recording on her answering machine. Imagine she records a token of (P') in the answering machine shop (imagine we're in the 1980s and there are not only answering machines but answering machine shops where they can be bought) before bringing the device home.

(P') I am not at home now: I'm recording this in the shop. And when this is played back I probably won't be home; although I might be home but just not bothered to pick up.

A token of (P') is a bit baffling. But after being initially baffled you will understand it as making a pedantic joke. The pedant, you will surmise, recorded the message in the answering machine shop and left it on the machine as a joke. Pedants, of course, insist on strict and literal truth. If you would recognise a token of (P') as a pedantic joke you would take it to be true. You would understand the first clause to convey the

[24] It doesn't show that the imparted content is a conversational implicature. Cancellability is only a necessary condition for conversational implicature. But I hold it safe to say that if the content imparted by the token of (P) was its semantic content, then a token of (P') would express but then gainsay that content and thus would fail to express a coherent proposition. I thus go beyond Åkerman (2017, 133) in taking the felicity of tokens like (P') to show that the imparted content of answering machine tokens of (1) is non-semantic.

pointless (even if accurate) information that the agent is not at home at T_R, the pragmatically imparted content that she is not at home at T_P having been cancelled.[25]

The crucial question is whether the bafflement or sense of inappropriateness provoked by a token of (P') is the sort of bafflement or sense of inappropriateness occasioned by an outright contradiction. I suggest it is obviously not. Rather it is precisely the sort of bafflement and sense of inappropriateness that is occasioned by the cancellation of a generalised conversational implicature. Consider the attempted cancellation of Blome Tillman's example of a GCI.

(GCI*) I'm meeting a man for dinner tonight. It's my husband.

As Blome Tillman puts it, while utterances of the likes of (GCI*) 'may seem somewhat odd or conversationally misleading, they crucially do not express contradictions….' (Blome Tillman 2013, 182) This is precisely what I would say about a token of (P'). Blome Tillman's example is an example of just the same kind of pedantic joke that a token of (P') can be used to make.

The notion of generalised conversational implicature and examples of the phenomenon this notion tries to capture allow for a precise explanation of our intuitions about tokens of (P') that allows that these are successful cases of cancellation. That the content conveyed by answering machine tokens of (P) is cancellable non-semantic content shows that the same goes for the content conveyed by answering machine tokens of (1).

4. Conclusion

I have argued that answering machine messages and other alleged counterexamples to the classical account are no such thing. The results of the test for whether the true content conveyed by answering machine

[25] Another pedantic answering machine message, which has the advantage of being recordable at home by the pedant, might go: 'I'm here now, but I won't be when you get this message'.

messages is semantic content or extra-semantic content corroborate the classical account's insistence that it is extra-semantic content. How is this content conveyed? I have told a story that invokes a recognised mechanism for the conveyance of extra-semantic content. The classical account, supplemented with this story, comfortably handles all examples of puzzling uses of indexicals and explains our intuitions, even our intuitions about puzzling locutions like (P'). I haven't considered all the examples, only a handful. But I will ask you to consider any alleged counterexample to the classical account you can find in the literature or think of yourself and then ask yourself, is there an ad hoc game of make-believe of the sort being played in the survival expert case, or is there a type of make-believe conventionally associated with semantic tokens like the one in your example, that the audience could recognise in working out the content conveyed by the token? For every alleged counterexample[26], I submit, the answer is yes.

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[26] With the possible exception of alleged counterexamples in which the 'indexicals' turn out not to be pure indexicals.

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