Bearers of Truth and the Unsaid

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The standard view about the bearers of truth—the entities that are the ultimate objects of predication of truth or falsity—is that they are propositions or sentences semantically correlated with propositions. Propositions are meant to be the contents of assertions, objects of thought or judgement, and so are ontologically distinct from assertions or acts of thought or judgement. So understood propositions are meant to be things like possible states of affairs or sets of possible worlds—entities that are clearly not acts of judgement. Let us say that a sentence *S encodes* a proposition «P» when linguistic rules (plus context) correlate «P» with *S* in a manner that does not depend upon whether *S* is asserted or appears embedded in a logical compound. The orthodox conception of truth-bearers then can be expressed in two forms:

TB1: The primary truth-bearers are propositions.

TB2: The primary truth-bearers are sentences that *encode* a proposition «P».

I use the term *primary truth-bearers*, since orthodoxy allows that assertions or judgements, etc, can be truth-bearers, it is just that they are derivatively so; they being truth-apt depends on other things being truth-apt. Some orthodox theorists prefer **TB1**—Stalnaker (1972)—some prefer **TB2**—Richard (1990). We need not concern ourselves with the reasons for their preferences here. Rather, our concern shall be this: why accept orthodoxy at all in either form: **TB1** or **TB2**?

There is without doubt a strong general reason to accept the propositional view. Reflection on the conditions required for a sentence to be *truth-apt* seem to show that orthodoxy is right. A sentence *S* is truth-apt if and only if it is a candidate for truth or falsity. To be truth-apt *S* must be contentful in some minimal sense. It seems reasonable to hold that the content *S* requires to be truth-apt does not depend on its being asserted, or conceived of as being performed potentially in an assertion or judgement. Two facts suggest this is right:

F1: Truth-apt sentences can be embedded in logical compounds, but sentences embedded in logical compounds are unasserted.

F2: Appeal to assertion seems to do little work in explaining truth-aptness. Indeed we might appeal to truth to explain assertion.

Thus *S*'s truth-aptness depends on *S*'s possessing content fixed independently of facts about assertion. But what is the content *S* possesses independently of assertion? Here orthodoxy steps in with the idea it's the proposition encoded by *S*. Thus a truth-apt sentence is just a sentence encoding a proposition, and *S*'s truth, it seems, just resides in that proposition obtaining (or doing whatever propositions do when they match reality). That means that the primary truth-bearer just is «P» or *S* encoding «P».

This is a nice argument, but it cannot be right, since the conclusion, I shall argue, is false. Truth-bearers cannot be understood terms of propositions. Several independent paths of argumentation converge on this conclusion. This paper concentrates on one path. That path focuses on the semantic status of conventional implicatures.

Conventional implicatures are meanings introduced by conventional-implicature operators like *even*, *but*, *nevertheless*, *therefore*, etc. Conventional-implicature operators introduce non-truth-conditional contents to sentences. The orthodox view is that conventional implicatures, as part of non-truth-conditional meaning, are not elements of semantic content in the sense of content that can embed in sentential compounds and can enter into logical arguments. But that is wrong. In Barker (2003), I argue that conventional implicatures are components of semantic content. This fact has the following significant implications: *(a)* We need to give up the thesis of semantic *content monism* according to which semantic content only have one form—truth-conditional content. *(b)* The T-schema cannot generally be valid. *(c)* We must abandon the idea that the primary truth-bearers are propositions, thought of as extra-linguistic entities. Truth-bearers must be capable of having not only truth and falsity, but also *felicity* and *infelicity*, where the latter are the kinds of evaluative properties that sentences bearing conventional implicatures can have. That means, as I shall show below, that **TB1** above is false.

Such are the conclusions of Barker (2003). But now I want to push these implications further. In relation to truth-bearers, the conclusions of Barker (2003) are conservative; I understated the threat facing the orthodox view. Admitting the presence of conventional implicatures as semantic contents really means that both **TB2** and **TB1** need to be abandoned. In short, purely non-pragmatic views of said-content, the content that captures the truth-conditions of a sentence, cannot be right. Having argued for this negative claim, I offer a positive pragmatic account of said-content and of conventional implicature.

1. Conventional Implicature, the T-schema, and Content monism.

Sentences featuring conventional implicature operators are sentences like *Even Granny danced*, *She is poor but nice*, *Therefore, we are finished*, etc.[1] I shall treat conventional implicature operators as sentential operators. So an implicature-bearing sentence can generally be represented as a sentence $N[..S_j..]$, which comprises a sequence of sentences S_1, S_2,… combined with an implicature operator N. The sentence $N[..S_j..]$ has dual content, possessing a truth-conditional content, which determines application of the truth-predicate, and an implicature content. To illustrate this idea, take (1):

(1) Even Granny got drunk,

(1) has the truth-conditional content ε and the implicature contents ι_1 and ι_2, as in,

ε: Granny got drunk.

ι_1: Granny is a particularly surprising instance of drunkness relative to the class of individuals C. (C is fixed by context.)

ι_2: Other individuals in C got drunk.

Thus if Granny was a notorious boozer (1) would be odd. If Granny was the sole person to get drunk, then (1) would be odd. But in neither cases would (1) be false. Neither ι_1 nor ι_2

[1] The most philosophically interesting implicature operator is 'if'. Though, it is controversial that it is an implicature operator—see Barker (2004) and Jackson (1988). Given the controversy I will not treat include it in my class here.

contributes to truth-conditions. Rather, as I argue in Barker (2003), (1) is true iff ε is the case, and *felicitous* if and only if ε is the case and both ι_1 and ι_2 hold, where *felicity* is a kind of correctness that incorporates both truth and implicature content satisfaction.

This portrayal of implicature needs an important refinement. The implicature component ι_1 of (1) involves probability. The probability is subjective and not objective. We are not concerned with the objective chance of Granny's getting drunk, compared with others, but with an epistemic matter. It is surprising for us, given what we expect, that Granny got drunk. Thus the implicature ι_1 relates to subjective probability, which is a personal matter. But note: the implicature ι_1 is not that the speaker has a certain subjective probability. In judging (1) right, an audience does not determine if the utterer U has a certain subjective probability state. Rather H judges utterance of (1) right, if and only if, she has a subjective probability state of a certain kind, and accepts the other elements ε and ι_2. This means that ι_1 is not so much associated with a condition in the sense of a state of affairs, but with a property: the mental property of having a certain subjective probability state. An audience judges (1) to be felicitous if and only if she accepts that Granny got drunk, and defends the subjective probability state and the belief that other (relevant) people were drunk. I argue in Barker (2003) that this shows, generally speaking, that it is better to conceptualize conventional implicatures in terms of mental properties, like subjective probability states and belief-states, rather than propositions.

To get a clear representation of this, let us generalize. Let ε be a proposition, and ι a mental property, which may be quite complex. If so an implicature-bearing sentence $N[..S_j..]$ encodes two contents. We shall distinguish between the kind of encoding involved by calling one, in the case of the proposition, *α-encoding*, and the other, in the case of the implicature, *β-encoding*. We can then say:

Dual: $N[..S_j..]$ α-encodes a proposition: ε.
$N[..S_j..]$ β-encodes a property: ι.

Dual records the fact that $N[..S_j..]$ is a dual content sentence. Moreover, **Dual** assumes, given the technical notion of encoding introduced above, that implicature is semantic content in this sense: it is content fixed by rule and content, which, is embeddable in logical compounds. I

have not yet shown this, but will do so shortly. Given **Dual**, we can specify the following inter-subjective conditions for evaluation:

> **IF**: An utterance by U of $N[..S_i..]$, which α-encodes ε and β-encodes ι, is judged assertable by audience H iff H believes that ε obtains and H accepts ι.

IF captures the idea that implicatures are not like propositions, which we can talk of in terms of either obtaining or not, depending on what the states of affairs in the world are, but mental properties, which speaker and audience can instantiate.

Implicatures and Embedding

That is the first major claim about the nature of implicature. The second concerns its embeddability. Sentences of the form $N[..S_j..]$ can embed and enter significantly within logical compounds and valid arguments. Thus conventional implicatures can enter into logical form. Here are some cases of such embedding:

> (2) Either Misha went *but* left early, or *even* he didn't go.
>
> (3) *Either Jane is deeply religious *but* pious *nevertheless* or she is not religious.
>
> (4) It is not that she dislikes him *but* dates him *nevertheless*. She dates him because she dislikes him.
>
> (5) Either she dislikes him *but nevertheless* dates him, or she dates him because she dislikes him.
>
> (6) If there was a keg of beer, then *even* Granny would have got drunk.
>
> (7) If he is wearing a Union Jack, Union Jack wearers are Englishmen and all Englishmen are brave, then he is English, and *therefore*, he is brave.
>
> (8) If *even* John is given amnesty, there will be a peace deal.

There is a lot to discuss about what's going on here. First, there is the issue of *projection*. Sometimes implicatures project; they become implicatures of the whole utterance. (2) is a case of that. The implicature about contrast is an implicature of (2) as a whole. We can see this in (3) which is infelicitous because the projected implicature is unacceptable, and so the (3) is unacceptable.

The other cases, (4) to (8) are cases in which the implicatures are not projected. Nevertheless, the implicatures are present and *active* in the sentence, and, furthermore, the logical operators concerned are sensitive to the implicatures. At least some of the implicature content of each embedded implicature-bearering sentence is semantically embedded. Thus the logical operators do not function purely truth-conditionally. (4) is a case in which negation takes an implicature in its scope. In (5) disjunction takes an implicature in its scope, and so on. The logical compounds here depend for their assertability on the presence of implicature. Remove the implicature, and the result alters entirely with respect to its assertoric content. Take (8). It simply may not be the case that if *John* is given amnesty there will be a peace deal. What *even* in (8) adds to that the supposition encompasses everyone in a certain class being given amnesty with John as the extreme case. Under those circumstances there will be a piece deal. Implicature then is entering into the scope of the operators, and they in turn are sensitive to its presence—see Barker (2003) for some relatively detailed considerations about how this works and further arguments of support for this conclusion.

That means that implicatures are components of semantic content—implicature is associated in a rule governed way with a sentence, and can enter into the scope of logical operators—and so we can say, in my technical sense, that is it *encoded*, or, as I say, the implicature property ι is β-encoded.

If that is correct, then we can draw a significant conclusion about the nature of semantic content of sentences. Semantic content is content encoded by sentences that enters into the scope of logical operators. So some components of semantic content are non-truth-conditional and thus **Content Monism** is false.

> **Content Monism**: The semantic content of a sentence *S*—the content *S* possesses by virtue of linguistic rules and context, and upon which logical particles may potentially operate—is to be identified with *S*'s truth-conditional content.

According to **Content Monism**, a given sentence *S* only has one type of content associated with it; its truth-conditional content. This is wrong. Rather words like *even*, *but, nevertheless*

can contribute another content which is semantic, in that is embeds and enters into logical form.

The demise of **Content Monism** is serious for orthodox thinking. The main casualty is the T-schema. Most theorists take the T-schema, one version of which is given below, to be a truism or platitude, a philosophically neutral fact, one whose correctness needs to be recognised by any adequate account:

> **Disquotation**: Where a quotational expression of the form *'S'* denotes an interpreted sentence type, all instances of the following schema are assertable: *'S' is true iff S*.

But the T-schema is not valid—**Disquotation** is false if **Content Monism** is false. It is possible for sentences $N[..S_j..]$ to be true but infelicitous—its implicature condition fails. In which case it is possible for *'*$N[..S_j..]$*' is true* to be assertable for U but not $N[..S_j..]$. To give an example: *Even Hitler was evil* is, technically true, but it is infelicitous, and thus assertable, in the relevant sense of unassertable. Thus we must reject the disquotational principle **Transparency** below—which is a natural counterpart to **Disquotation**:

> **Transparency**: Where a quotational expression of the form *'S'* denotes an interpreted sentence type, the assertability conditions of *"'S' is true"* are identical to those of *'S'*.

The rule-based commitments of *S* and *'S' is true* can differ. Semantic assent has the affect of altering content. Semantic assent and descent are not contentfully innocent. Because that is so, there can be no equivalence between *'S' is true* and *S*. **Disquotation** is false.

Rejection of the T-schema has many consequences. First, minimalism about truth cannot be maintained. Our grasp of the truth-predicate cannot reside in asserting all instances of the T-schema.[2] Secondly, disquotational semantics of the Davidsonian kind cannot be right. According to disquotational semantics, theories of meaning are truth-theories or a Tarskian kind fitted to natural languages—constrained by principles of interpretation.

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[2] It might be objected that one might re-express minimalism as the claim that a given sentence *S* is true iff S^{-} is true, where S^{-} is *S* minus its implicature operators. But this will not work, since some negations take implicature in their scope, and so their truth-value depends on the presence of implicature. Thus *S* is true, but S^{-} may not be.

However, no semantics can work this way, since not all instances of the T-schema for a given language are affirmed.[3]

A third consequence of rejection of **Disquotation** and **Content Monism** pertains to how we should conceive of truth-bearers: the objects to which truth-judgements are applied. As the consequences of this argument will concern us greatly, I will now focus on the argument, laid out below:

(i) The canonical form in which we denote truth-bearers in a language is through that-clauses, as in *that the sky is blue*.

(ii) Implicature-bearing sentences can be content sentences of *that*-clauses, as in *that **even** the best philosophers get confused*.

(iii) *That*-clauses featuring implicature operators can enter into truth-ascriptions, as in *It is true that even the best philosophers get confused*. But they can also equally have other kinds of evaluation. Consider *That even Elvis was famous is an odd thing to think*.

(iv) Given that truth-bearers are canonically picked out by *that*-clauses, the former are open not only to truth and falsity evaluation but also felicity and infelicity.

(v) Propositions have only one evaluative pole—truth and falsity. There is no room for a second polarity—felicity and infelicity.

(vi) The bearers of truth cannot be propositions. They must be entities that can incorporate both said-content and unsaid (implicature) elements. The one thing that can do that is something like sentences encoding a proposition and potentially an implicature.

The conclusion of this argument entails that **TB1** is false. To be capable of both truth/falsity and felicity/infelicity polarities, truth-bearers have to be things like sentences encoding both propositions and potentially implicatures. Which is to say that they are meaningful sentence types or kinds of speech-act types, and not propositions in any extralinguistic sense.

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[3] Another consequence is that since logical connectives are not truth-conditional, validity cannot be defined in terms of truth—as for example necessary truth-preservation. See Barker 2003.

If this is right, then the right view about truth-bearers must be closer to **TB2**: sentences encoding propositions. Though now we have to complicate this a bit. We need to introduce a distinction between two kinds of encoding. As proposed above, we used the terms α-encoding and β-encoding. Truth-bearers are sentences that α-encode a proposition and potentially β-encode a mental property.

2. Truth, Truth-Bearers, and Propositions

Based on that analysis, it seems that we should now investigate the α-encoding/β-encoding distinction. To be complete, a theory of truth-bearer and semantic content needs to provide a theory of α-encoding, which is a theory of said-content, and a theory of β-encoding, which is a theory of implicature, that is, of the rule-based but unsaid—non-truth-conditional—components of sentences. However, I now want to show that this task cannot be completed. The main problem here is that once we have given up **Content Monism** and the T-schema, we lose any ability to account for said-content in terms of the theoretical construct of a proposition. This means that not only must **TB1** go, but also **TB2**. We must completely re-conceptualise how we look at truth-bearers.

Let us assume **TB2**—now rewritten in terms of the concept of α-encoding, which is a refinement of encoding. That is, **TB2** reads: *a truth-bearer is a sentence α-encoding a proposition*. Propositions are assertion-independent entities that through the relation of α-encoding are associated with sentences as their said-contents, enabling those sentences to be truth-apt. What is α-encoding? It seems reasonable to suggest that facts of α-encoding are underpinned by facts about the norms speakers follow in using sentences. What is the norm that speakers follow that determines that a particular proposition «P» is α-encoded by a sentence *S*? A natural suggestion is that a norm invoking truth underpins encoding, something like:

> **E1:** A sentence *S* α-encodes «P» if and only if speakers conform to the norm that they utter *S* with the intention that *S* be true if and if «P» obtains.[4]

In order for speakers to be able to follow **E1**, they need to have access to some concept of truth. We need some independent specifications of what truth is. We cannot say that truth is just the property that a sentence *S* has if and only if the proposition encoded by it obtains. That is too tight a circle to provide any illumination. We are looking for features of truth prior to the stipulation of **E1**. The property picked out by *true*, assuming it picks out one, cannot be the disquotational property, since the T-schema is not generally correct. Why not propose that truth is the goal of assertion, the property we want our assertions to have? This won't work. As well as being true, we also want our assertions to be felicitous, and generally conversationally correct. So the description, *aimed at in assertion*, does not isolate truth. What of the idea that truth is that feature of beliefs that makes them useful, such that no matter what our desires are, by having such beliefs we will be successful? Again, it is not evident that success distinguishes truth from other forms of correctness. Implicature-bearing sentences are such that believing them aids achievement, but not all their content is truth-apt. Thus being a truth-bearer cannot be constituted through conventions about success. The concepts of the goal of assertion and success are too coarse to distinguish truth from other kinds of evaluation.

The problem with invoking truth is that we have not yet a means of distinguishing it from felicity—the value sentences have if their said-contents and implicatures are met. It might seem however that the concept of truth as correspondence provides the key to distinguishing said-content from implicature. Suppose that truth is the property a sentence has when it represents how things are. More precisely, let us propose that sentences can represent actual states of affairs, which we can treat as propositions that obtain. We might now

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[4] See Lewis (1975) for a detailed theoretical framework in which a version of such a general approach would be couched. None of the arguments I give below depends upon the details of the account. Furthermore, none of the arguments below particularly depends on an entity-interpretation of propositions. The arguments also apply to views according to which a sentence's α-encoding a proposition means that it is has certain truth-conditions.

distinguish said-content from implicature by invoking two kinds of rules. First there is the rule for said-content:

> **Rep**: In using *S* speakers conform to the norm that they utter *S* if and only if they intend to represent by *S* that «P» obtains.

So «P» is the said-content of a sentence just in case it is uttered according to such a norm of representation. That is we accept:

> **E2**: A sentence *S* α-encodes «P» if and only if speakers conform to a norm that they utter *S* if and only if they intend to represent by *S* that «P» obtains.

Implicatures work according to a different norm. One idea is that we invoke what we might call *when*-rules, rules that specify what speakers can utter when they have a certain state. Let '*N*'∩'*S*' by the act of attaching an implicature operator *N* to a sentence *S*. Suppose that *S* has the propositional content «P», and that *NS* carries the implicature associated with the property Σ. We now invoke a *when*-rule to characterise the content of '*N*'∩'*S*':

> **W**: In using '*N*'∩'*S*' speakers confirm to the norm that they utter '*N*'∩'*S*' when they have the state Σ.

Speakers following *when*-rules, we might claim, enable them to correlate properties such as possessing Σ to be correlated with their utterances of sentences *NS*. The sentence *NS* then has the truth-condition that «P» obtains—given by **Rep**—and an implicature condition introduced by '*N*'∩'*S*' with respect to the property of possessing Σ—given by **W**. *NS* does not have the truth-condition that «P» and «U has Σ» obtain. In short, we analyse the distinction between said-content and implicature by appeal to the distinction between rules of representation and *when*-rules.

The main objection to this approach is that the distinction between rules of representation as opposed to *when*-rules is not clear. Jackson and Pettit (1998) argue that if there is a regularity linking U's believing that she has Σ and uttering *S*, then that constitutes that S represents that U has Σ. If so, where there is a *when*-rule, U's utterance of *S* will

represent that she has Σ. Consequently, U's utterance of '*N*'⌢'*S*' will be true if and only if «P» and «U has Σ» obtain. But that, of course, is exactly what we do not want, since implicature is not truth-conditional. There is a more cogent way of arguing that '*N*'⌢'*S*' functions as a representation of U's having Σ. In uttering '*N*'⌢'*S*', U intends that H take away the information that U has Σ by noticing that U has uttered '*N*'⌢'*S*'. U's utterance of '*N*'⌢'*S*' clearly functions as an indicator for H that U has Σ. Representations of states of affairs for intentional creatures are symbols intended to give information about states of affairs. How then can U not be intending that '*N*'⌢'*S*' function as a representation? It seems, '*N*'⌢'*S*' just is a representation. If so, '*N*'⌢'*S*' and *I have Σ* both function as representations. Thus sentences carrying implicature end up being reports about the speakers' subjective states. But this they are not.

Another objection is that truth cannot be representational in this sense, as **Rep** requires. After all, are logically complex sentences representational? If they are that commits us to features in reality corresponding to negation, universal quantification, etc. It would seem we must accept that logically complex constituents in reality. I think, however, that is highly objectionable.

Appeal to truth in analysing α-encoding is not proceeding well. Why not suggest that truth is primitive and has no analysis, and simply affirm **E1**? Bringing in truth as a primitive concept is perhaps acceptable when we have the T-schema in place. Then at least we have some access to the truth-predicate. We can say it conforms to the T-schema, is a kind of success condition, and has such entities as its bearers. But the T-schema fails (as I argued above), and so we cannot say that. If that's right, using a primitive conception of truth to provide a theory of said-content, or α-encoding, is not plausible.

There is another way of analysing α-encoding that might seem to be available. That is to appeal to belief, namely, the idea that content is attached to sentences by virtue of the practice of correlating having a belief with content «P» with utterance of *S*. That is, we accept something like:

E3: A sentence *S* α-encodes «P» if and only if speakers conform to a norm that they utter *S* if and only if they believe that «P» obtains.[5]

However, **E3** is falsified by all those sentence whose utterance are correlated with belief, but which possess content that is not truth-conditional, implicature-bearing sentences being in this case the prime example. In asserting (1)—*Even Granny got drunk*—a speaker manifests beliefs, conveyed by the sentences:

(i) Granny got drunk.

(ii) It is comparatively surprising that Granny got drunk.

(iii) Others got drunk.

Furthermore, one could argue that in using the sentence *Even Granny got drunk*, U conforms to a norm like that specified in the right hand side of **E3**. If so, given **E3**, all the commitments of *Even Granny got drunk* are truth-conditional. It might be objected that in the case of the subjective-probability component of (1)—corresponding to sentence (ii) above—that there is no proposition in the offing, since, as we argued in §1 above, it is better to look at implicatures in terms of properties rather than propositions. The problem for the orthodox view wielding **E3**, however, is that there must be a proposition corresponding to (ii) since it is a truth-apt sentence, and so, given **E3**, it follows that the probability component of (1) does correspond to a proposition. If so, our conclusion stands: (1) is entirely truth-conditional. But evidently it is not. And so, **E3** cannot be the correct explanation of propositional encoding.

E3 is inadequate as it stands but can it be supplemented by some further condition enabling us to isolate truth-bearers? Some theorists—e.g., Wright (1992)—have been attracted to the idea that embeddability as a means of identifying discourse with *assertoric* content. Wright (1992) proposes that truth-apt sentences can enter into the scope of negation, the antecedents of *if*-sentences, and believe-that contexts. These thoughts inspire the following improvement on **E3** as an account of encoding:

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[5] We can think of variations of this analysis such as: *S* means that P in L iff speakers of L conform to a convention to utter *S* with the intention of getting H to believe that P. (See Schiffer (1972)).

> **E4**: A sentence *S* encodes «P» if and only if speakers conform to the norm that they utters *S* if and only if they believe that «P» obtains, *(ii) S* embeds in the antecedents of conditionals, can enter into the scope of negation, and be an object of belief.

E4 is just as bad as **E3**. Implicature is non-truth-conditional content that should, if **E4** is right, be truth-conditional content. First there are rule-based regularities that link utterance of $N[..S_i..]$ with beliefs that certain conditions obtain. Secondly, sentences of the form $N[..S_i..]$ can embed along with their implicatures. Implicature can come within the scope of negation. In short, implicature meets all the embeddability criteria set out by Wright. If so, **E4** fails to isolate truth-bearers.[6]

Another idea is to bring in assertion to define encoding, but not to define assertion in terms of truth or belief. One suggestion is Brandom's (1983) analysis. Brandon contends that U asserts that *S* iff *(i)* U undertakes to justify *S*, if asked to, and *(ii)* permits speakers to use *S* as a premise in arguments. So we might propose:

> **E5**: A sentence *S* encodes «P» if and only if U can use *S* to literally assert that P.

Again there are problems. The first is the appeal to literalness: to say that U is literally asserting that P with *S*, we mean that «P» is part of semantic content of *S*. But that means that *S* encodes «P», which involve the very notion we are trying to explicate. The second is that implicature-bearing sentences can meet both *(i)* and *(ii)* of Brandom's conditions. *(i)* In uttering $N[..S_j..]$, U will undertakes to justify acceptance of ι if asked to. *(ii)* In uttering

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[6] There are other problems for **E4**. Rhetorical questions are true but don't embed. Embeddablity is not a defining feature of truth-aptness. A more general matter is whether facts of embedding constitute truth-aptness. It is hard to see how. Why is it that we accept this kind of embedding pattern rather than another? Is this an arbitrary, conventional fact about languages? If so, we might expect different languages from English to allow different kinds of embedding. But in fact, I expect, we do not find this. If so, we need to explain the actual pattern of embedding. But to do that we need an independent account of the nature of embedded contexts, and an independent account of the nature of potentially embeddable sentences, declaratives, imperatives, and interrogatives, resulting in an account of the pattern of embedding we do find. But that means we need an independent account of truth-aptness. But this is exactly what **E4** does not give us.

N[..S$_j$*..]*, U permits speakers to use *N[..S*$_j$*..]* as a premise in arguments. Take the case of *but*-sentences and the following inference:

> Fred was poor but nice. Jane was poor but nice, etc. Therefore, everyone was poor but nice.

In this case, implicature-bearing sentences are premises in an argument. If so, implicatures pass both of Brandom's tests, and so must be asserted content. If that is so, by **E5**, then they must correspond to propositions encoded by sentences. But they do not.

Could it be that our problems so far in providing an adequate theory of said-content be the result of not having a specific theory of what propositions are? Let us assume a structured meaning approach to propositions. On this view, a proposition is a set-theoretic object made up of entities denoted by constituents of sentences. So the sentence, *T is F* encodes ⟨T, F⟩ because these constituents are denoted by *T is F*. *T is not F* encodes ⟨Neg ⟨T, F⟩⟩ because its constituents denote those in the n-tuple. What is Neg? We might propose that Neg is a function from a structured meaning onto a truth-value. But structured meanings cannot be truth-bearers for, as argued in §1, truth-bearers must be subject to two kinds of evaluation: truth and felicity. We may also ask what is truth such that ordered n-tuples can be true? It seems we should construe Neg as a function from the truth of one sentence to the falsity or another, etc. But this understanding invokes truth. Again, we need some independent handle on truth if the whole exercise is not merely an empty formal exercise. Unfortunately, for reasons already given, we have no such independent handle on truth.

These last remarks should put in doubt another option, which is that we can explain encoding in terms of some structural view of propositions, that is:

> **E6**: A sentence *S* α-encodes «P» if and only if *S* has a constituent isomorphic structural relation to «P», generated by the constituents of *S* denoting constituents of «P».

This kind of approach fails for reasons that should be clear; we need a theory of propositional constituents, but as we saw, in the case of negation, we do not have one that does not already invoke truth.

Conclusion:

Our goal in this section has been to find an analysis of said-content, understood as the proposition α-encoded by a sentence. The problem is that we have not been able to provide an analysis of α-encoding. The usual tools for explaining truth-aptness and said-content, the T-schema, embeddability, correlation with belief, disciplined use of language, syntax, etc. all fail to provide illumination. If this is right, the conception of truth-bearers captured in **TB2** is unworkable. Said-content cannot be a semantic notion, which is to say, one that is constituted by a proposition's being semantically connected to a sentence. What kind of a phenomenon is said-content? It has to be a pragmatic phenomenon, which is to say, one that is constituted by speech-act dimensions of language use. The next section attempts to answer provide just this sort of account.

3. A Pragmatic Treatment of Truth-Bearers

The theory I propose is that said-content is a pragmatic or speech-act based phenomenon, one whose explication is linked to the analysis of assertion. Thus I reject the idea that the nature of said-content is something prior to, independent of, assertion. To understand said-content, and truth-bearers, we must first analyse assertion. But, if the conclusions above are correct, we need to analyse assertion without appeal to propositions. That means we need to analyse assertion without appeal to the distinction between sense and force, since this distinction, applied to assertion, discerns in assertion a sense-component, a proposition, and a force-component, some action-type that involves deployment of the proposition.

I now examine a line of enquiry that shall lead to the kind of theory of assertion we need: one without the force/sense distinction. Let me first offer what I think is a neutral characterisation of the kind of act assertion is: Assertion is an act in which U utters a sentence and thereby *defends* a mental state Π. To *defend* a mental state Π is to manifest

through a symbolic act, like uttering a sentence, epistemic authority for Π. Manifestation means that an audience can interpret the speaker as taking on epistemic authority. Epistemic authority is being disposed to offer (what U takes to be) sufficient reason for Π.

So much is relatively uncontroversial—see Alston (2001). What is controversial, as we shall see, is the character of the mental state Π defended in assertion. The orthodox view is that Π is a belief state. Thus, in asserting that P, U utters a sentence *S* and defends a belief that P. But here is the problem. By treating Π as a belief state, we are doomed to re-introduce propositions as bearers of truth. If Π is a belief state, then as Π is prior to assertion, belief states are prior to assertions. But then as beliefs are truth-apt states, there are truth-apt states prior to assertions. The idea will inevitably arise that belief states are truth-apt because they are propositional attitudes. Their truth-aptness resides in the fact that they have propositions as objects, and those propositions are truth-apt. In which case, propositions will be the primary bearers of truth, as **TB1** proposes.

If we are going to escape propositions then we cannot identify the Π-property, the state defended in assertion, with a belief state. Indeed we must adopt the view that Π, although a mental state, is not one capable of being judged true or false: it is pre-truth-apt or pre-doxastic. Instead, we only get to the level of truth-accessible content when we get to acts of assertion: the act of defending a mental-state property Π. The primary truth-bearers are assertions: acts of defending Π-properties, and not Π-properties themselves. This is the line taken by the pragmatic concept of truth-bearers. The difference between the orthodox view and the pragmatic view is summed up in the table below:

		Orthodox Semantics	**Pragmatic Conception**
Act	Assertion: Production of *S* defending Π.	Truth-apt (Secondary)	Truth-apt (Primary)
State	Π	Truth-apt (Primary). Belief-state ontologically prior to assertion.	Not a belief-state. Non-truth-apt.

How could the mental property Π defended in assertion, the Π-property, not be itself a truth-apt state? I give some idea of how this might work by looking at the case of representational states. Suppose that some assertions involve defending states that are

representational. Say that in uttering *Snow is white*, U defends a representational state: representing snow's being white. A representational state like this is not, as such, a belief state. Consider the desire state of wanting snow to be white. This is not belief state, but it is, apparently, a representational state. This fact suggests that that a representational state, *in itself*, is not truth-apt or a belief state. Of course, one might object that if we think of assertion of *Snow is white* as involving defence of a representational state, this will be a representational state with a certain *direction of fit*—in the sense of Searle (1983). The direction of fit will be the opposite of that possessed by the representational state that is connected with the desire that snow be white; the former will be state-world—the state must fit the world—the latter world-state—the world must fit the state. But what is direction of fit beyond the metaphor of fitting? There is no obviously adequate way of cashing out the idea—see Sobel and Copp (2001). It is here that the pragmatic view, according to which Π-properties are not truth-apt as such, can begin to look attractive.

The representational state defending in the assertion of *Snow is white* is not, per se, a belief state or truth-apt. It is only when this representational Π-property becomes associated with *defence* that there is a truth-apt state. It is the relational property of being defended that renders representational states belief-states. Which is to say, what is truth-apt is the disposition to defend the representational state, not the representational state *in itself*. But this is synonymous with the view that it is acts of defending Π-properties—which may or may not be representational—that are the truth-apt states, and not the Π-properties themselves.

The basis bearers of truth are dispositions to defend Π-properties. But to really understand this claim we need to understand how the truth-bearer functions. The truth-predicate is that device we use to express our commitment to the Π-property defended in an assertion or belief. That means that in asserting *N is true*, where *N* denotes some truth-bearer, U defends commitment to the Π-property of *N*. Truth is not a property of correspondence or coherence, nor is it the metaphysically lightweight property of Horwichean expressivism. We

might dispense with talk of properties altogether. That is because the present theory is a theory of the function of the truth-predicate, rather than a theory of what truth is.[7]

It is not part of the pragmatic view that all Π-properties are representational. Far from it. There is a significant plurality of states. For example, in asserting value-sentences, such as *Haggis is tasty* or *Murder is wrong*, speakers defend Π-properties that are affective states, states of gustatory approval or moral disapproval. Logically complex statements involve the defence of various kinds of dispositional state, which are not representational in themselves. Negations, disjunctions, universal-statements, and so on, are all characterised in terms of the kinds of functionally complex dispositional Π-property states that are defended in their assertion. The task of language activity is to characterise these functional states. I will not attempt to do that here—see Barker (2004, 2007a) for details.

To get this approach to work we must treat reason relations as capable of holding between mental states that are not truth-apt, but that this cannot be: reason is analysed, partially, be appeal to truth. But the pragmatic view rejects this idea. Reason relations can hold between states that in themselves are not truth-apt. For example, relations of reason, rational connection, can hold between desire states, which are not truth-apt states. Thus desiring something salty, oaty, and with kidney-oniony flavour is a reason for desiring haggis. Of course, there is still the question of how to analyse the reason relation. I will not attempt that here. But I show in Barker (2004, 2007a, 2007b) that an analysis is possible that makes no reference to truth.

If this treatment of assertion can be made to work, it would constitute an analysis of assertion without appeal to propositional content. We have made the first step towards an analysis of truth-bearers without appeal to propositions. But, it might now be objected that we still need propositions. That is because we need propositions to explain the embedding of declarative sentences in the scope of logical operators, where they are contentful but unasserted.

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[7] One can still talk of the property of truth, if one wants. But that comes later, when we develop a theory of property talk that allows us to talk of properties even where, as is the case with the truth-predicate, there is no property in the metaphysical sense. See Barker (2007a).

There is no major problem here. We solve the problem of embedding through by invoking the concept of a *proto-assertion*. To proto-assert is to *present oneself as having*, or *advertise*, defence of a Π-property. To advertise is to intentionally engage in a behaviour characteristic of a speaker who, given she wants to defend a certain Π-property, utters a sentence *S*. It does not follow from the fact that she so utters *S*, advertising the defensive stance, that she actually has it, or that she intends her audience to believe that she has it. She may in fact intend that her audience believe she lacks it. For example, in asserting ironically that Bush is a genius, the speaker utters a sentence *Bush is a genius* and advertises a defensive state. But she lacks that stance, and intends that her audience recognize this fact, meaning to communicate that she has the opposite stance.

Think now of logical embeddings as being like irony. In asserting *either P or R*, the sentences *P* and *R* are embedded and unasserted. But that does not prevent them from being performed in proto-assertions: the speaker advertises defensive purposes, which she lacks. The particular tokened sentences *P* and *R* within *either P or R* are not uttered with the purpose of defending a Π-property. (Of course, U may in fact have a disposition to defend the Π-properties concerned, that is, she may belief *P* and *Q*. It is just that in the embedded instances, U is not in fact undertaking to defend the states there and then.)[8]

4. Said and the Unsaid: Conventional Implicature

I have argued for the view that said-content is a pragmatic notion that can be articulated through the idea of defence of a Π-property. This theory will be open to dispute if we fail to provide a theory of implicature, which entails that implicatures are not said-content. Let us then turn to the theory of implicature. Instead of the picture we developed in §1 above, according to which an implicature-bearing sentence $N[..S_j..]$ encodes in one way a proposition, ε, and in another way a mental state property, ι, the view sketched in the last

[8] See Barker (2004, 2007a) for extensive discussion of proto-assertion. I provide there a causal reduction of proto-assertion.

section is that *N[..S*$_j$*..]* is associated with two properties. One of these properties Π is that which is defended in uttering *N[..S*$_j$*..]*. That act of utterance with the purpose of defence is the assertion. But the other property ι cannot be defended in this way for then implicature would just be part of the assertion and hence contributory to truth-conditions. The problem of conventional implicature boils down to specifying U's dialectical relation to ι, if it is not defending.

In asserting (1), U produces an utterance with two implicatures, whose mental properties are Ψ1 and Ψ2 below:

(1) *Even Granny got drunk*

Ψ1 : having a high relative subjective probability that Granny did not get drunk.

Ψ2 : believing that others (in some class) got drunk.[9]

As I have argued, in making an assertion, U utters a sentence *S* with the purpose of defending a mental state Π. In contrast, U does not concatenate *even* to *Granny got drunk* with the purpose of defending the states Ψ1-2. If U is sincere and clear-minded in uttering (1), she will, in fact, take epistemic authority for Ψ1-2; U will have reasons for those states. But the purpose behind concatenation of *even* with *Granny got drunk* is not to defend Ψ1-2. That is, the purpose of her act is not to manifest her epistemic authority—to display reasons—and thus her openness to dialectical dispute about instantiating Ψ1-2. In uttering (1), U may manifest the fact that she has reasons for acceptance of Ψ1-2. But that is a bi-product of her act. Compare using a name. In asserting 'Bush is president', U manifests that she believes Bush exists, but she is not asserting *Bush exists* despite manifesting her belief that he does.

If U's purpose in implicating is not to defend the properties Ψ1-2, what is it? Implicature is tied up with what is taken for granted, that is, with presupposition. On the standard conception of pragmatic presuppositions—given by Stalnaker (1974)—presupposition are parts of background beliefs that speakers bring to conversations.

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[9] I say *belief state*. But really the state here is the Π-property corresponding to the sentence *Others in class F got drunk*. I shall retain the reference to belief-state to make things a little expositionally easier.

Pragmatic presuppositions trigger use of such background beliefs. But there is a major problem with this idea. We can assert implicative statements and inform people. For example, I inform you that she is poor but nice, indicating that there is a contrast between poverty and niceness. You may not have believed in this contrast before my utterance, but then go on to accept the utterance. But if presupposition accesses background beliefs brought to conversations this must be infelicitous. A possible solution to this difficulty is the idea of *accommodation*—Lewis (1989). Hearers update their beliefs. But this solution creates its own problem: what is the contrast between assertion and presupposition if updating is possible? Lewis does not really say.[10]

There is another view about implicature offered by Blakemore (1987). This is that the function of implicature is securing the relevance of illocutionary acts. Implicatures help us process the utterance in relation to its purpose. We might then accept something like:

> **Implicature**: In performing an act of implicating in attaching *N* to *[..S_j..]*, U intends that H appeal to her acceptance of ι in determining *[..S_j..]*'s relevance.

To illustrate this idea, in uttering (1), U intends that H use her acceptance of Ψ1-2 in determining the relevance of her assertion of *Granny got drunk*. That is, given that Ψ1 is the state of finding Granny's drunkenness comparatively surprising, and Ψ2 is believing others got drunk, U is offering in asserting *Granny got drunk* a surprising instance of a generality. Of course, U is presupposing that H has these states to draw upon. H may not instantiate Ψ1-2. If so, H will either accommodate or dispute acceptance of such states. In the latter case, H will judge U's utterance of (1) to be infelicitous, and not false. It is not judged false because U is not defending Ψ1-2. Rather, U is taking acceptance of Ψ1-2 for granted. **Implicature** then explains why implicatures are not truth-conditional. The dialectical stance towards the mental properties concerned is not that of defence but of taking for granted.

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[10] See Gauker (2001), who provides an interesting critique of the Stalnaker/Lewis analysis of presupposition along these lines.

An objection to this theory is that it is overly intellectual: it requires U to have a conception of implicature properties, like Ψ1-2, having a role in determining a speech-act's relevance in a conversation. However, it is not clear that U has to explicitly grasp the character of the intended state in order for it to be said that U intends this state. U's explicit grasp may simply be to induce in H a state, that which is associated with utterance of application of *N* to *⌈..S*$_j$*..⌉*. In so, given that speakers do in fact act as **Implicature** specifies—they appeal to acceptance of ι in determining the relevance of assertion of *⌈..S*$_j$*..⌉*—U will in fact, achieve the goal laid out in **Implicature**.

Again, as in the speech-act analysis of said-content in terms of defended states, this treatment of implicature has no difficulty in explaining the embedding of implicature. The content of implicature-bearing sentences is given by proto-act types—in the sense specified in §3 above—and implicative proto-acts can be components of such types. Utterances of logical compounds are expressions of commitment to the performance of proto-illocutionary acts within their scope.

Conclusions

What does the present analysis offer that is not provided by orthodox semantics? It provides an analysis of the said-content, unsaid-content (conventional implicature) distinction, which is a distinction falling within semantic content, which is to say, content that is rule-based and embeddable in logical compounds. The proposed analysis drops reference to propositions, encoded be sentences, as an explanatory tool, and replaces it with mental properties, Π-properties, that have a distinct functional role in production of speech-acts depending on whether they underpin said-content or unsaid-content. In the case of said-content the properties are defended, in the case of implicature they are taken for granted, which is to say, their defence by audiences is assumed.[11]

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[11] This paper argues that truth-bearers are pragmatic, in the sense that their characters cannot be understood independently of assertion. The simplest view is that this means that truth-bearers are assertions, or assertion-types, or even proto-assertions, or types. There are various reasons to be unhappy with the idea that truth-bearers are acts in this sense. See MacFarlane (2005). In Barker (2007a) I propose an alternative in which, although truth-bearers can only be understood by appeal to a prior notion of assertion, we do not identity truth-bearers

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with acts. They are neither propositions, in the orthodox semantic sense, nor acts. This alternative view requires the development of apparatus that cannot be discussed here, for reasons of space.

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