‘Yo’ and ‘Lo’

the pragmatics of the space of reasons

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“‘Lo, a rabbit’” [WVO Quine]
“Yo! Word up!” [Dead Prez]

That speech acts essentially express thoughts should not be controversial. What is legitimately controversial is the question of which term in this connection is explainer and which explained (perhaps along each of several different dimensions of explanation.) Some, Descartes for example, would make use of this connection to understand what it is for a public linguistic action to be meaningful – to count as language is to express a thought. The other order of explanation – one arguably in line with Kant and Hegel, but certainly with Sellars – holds that we should understand what it is for something to be a thought in terms of the relation. To classify a state of an individual as mental is to classify it as that which (defeasibly) (ought to) lead to a speech act.

I believe the second order of explanation to be right-headed. I do so largely because I believe that language is essentially a normative system, and that the relevant sorts of norms cannot be understood except in the context of social practice. Once a sufficient view of social normative practice is given, a number of important features of the mind fall into place as clear and explainable in a way that is quite impossible on any account that begins with independently meaningful mental states.

I won’t be arguing for any of that here, not because that’s too big a project, but because I’ve chosen a different overly large project to tell you about, one which arises well into the pragmatic order of explanation. What I’m going to discuss today is normative pragmatics, the specific structure of norms that makes speech acts speech acts. At the end, we’ll see what this investigation tells us about the mind, its normativity, and its autonomy.

When philosophers turn their attention to pragmatic distinctions between speech acts, they typically focus on ‘performative force,’ a blanket term covering

something like whatever a speech act *does*. The pragmatic/semantic distinction is between something like the doing, or the linguistic performing, and the content produced by the performance. Thus, salient pragmatic categories for philosophers have included imperatives (which give orders), declaratives (which make truth claims), interrogatives (which ask questions), Austinian performatives (which constitute truths), and so forth. While this approach has shed some light on certain phenomena, it has also generated little philosophical excitement. In the philosophy of language, it is fair to say, semantics is where the action is (even for pragmatists), and the semantics of declaratives is where the semantics is. We hope to challenge all this.

§1: a typology of speech acts

As a result of the work of such philosophers as Wilfrid Sellars and Robert Brandom, it is now commonly noted that speech acts constitute changes in normative status. Thus, to assert that P is to undertake a commitment to P, to take up the role of one to whom challenges of P may be directed, and of responder to those objections. To order someone to see to it that P is, by contrast, to undertake to incur upon her a *prima facie* obligation to see to it that P. On the part of the speaker, furthermore, the performance of any speech act is the sort of thing one can be entitled to, or not.[1]

If speech acts constitute changes in normative status, then we can distinguish the norms governing their proper production from the norms articulating the difference that their proper production makes. For instance, declaratives are properly performed if they are, or can be, epistemically justified. Imperatives, on the other hand. are properly performed if the speaker occupies, or can secure occupation of, the relevant sort of authoritative social position *vis a vis* the person(s) to whom the imperative is issued. In terms of the norms consequent on proper production,

[1] Though this cluster of ideas about the normative difference that speech acts make is obviously a generalization of ideas drawn from the work of Robert Brandom, it is a generalization of only an implication of Brandom's position, and for present purposes, we commit ourselves only to this generalized version of the weaker claim. Brandom's project – developed in admirably excruciating detail – is to explain semantics in terms of normative pragmatics. Our present claim is merely that such normative pragmatics exist in the case of every speech act, and that the pragmatics of language includes something roughly like the Brandomian normative structure. We make no claim regarding the explanatory priority of normative pragmatics over semantics. Even if one thought that semantics were grounded in substantive language-world relations, we take it that Brandom has articulated normative pragmatic structures that must be accounted for in one way or another. Whatever the explanatory priorities, that is, it is *true* that assertions are undertakings of justificatory commitment. It is a criterion of adequacy on any account of language that it incorporate this fact. (Of course the astute reader of this work – not to mention the minimally competent reader of other work by the authors – will recognize that our sympathies with the Brandomian project go, in fact, a great deal deeper than this. (See, for example, Lance 2001, 2000, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1995, Lance and Kremer 1996 and 1994, and especially Lance and O'Leary-Hawthorne 1997. fnord RK articles.)

declaratives are inferentially fecund. One who justifiably asserts is *thereby* entitled to draw conclusions from the claim asserted, and committed to withdrawing commitment to incompatible assertions. In the case of an order, entitlement to the performance carries with it a commitment on the part of the one ordered, to so act.

We label this distinction between the normative statuses constitutive of entitlement to a given speech act, and those other normative changes – in the status of the speaker, or of others in the linguistic community – that result from such a warrant status the 'input' and 'output' normative statuses. [Slide 2] So for example, in the case of an imperatival speech act,

Rebecca: "Mark, revise this example!"

the normative input is simply Rebecca's entitlement to issue this imperative, something she has in virtue of facts such as that she and Mark are co-authoring, have agreed to collaborate in certain ways, etc. The output, or the primary normative status resulting from the input, is a normative burden upon Mark to revise the example (or to defend his refusal to do so.) It is essential to being an imperative that this output follows from this input.

Now notice that normative statuses can be divided into two structural categories, depending upon whether they are *de jure* universal or 'idiosyncratic', as we shall put it. That is, we ask whether, in order to be the normative status it is, it must *in virtue of its very pragmatic structure* (as opposed to in virtue of semantic content) apply to everyone in the relevant linguistic community, or whether it is applicable to specific people inhabiting specific normative positions. [Slide 3] In our above example, it is in virtue of *Rebecca's* position within a structure of relationships that she is entitled to issue this order. Nothing about this entitlement even suggests a similar entitlement on the part of other people to issue a similar order.

On the other hand, a declarative – Mark says: "I have revised the example." – has a universal input. In virtue of the objective purport of the sentence, it is a speech act that finds grounding in the world in a way that is in no sense specific to who is asserting it. In rough and ready terms, the input is universal in the sense that what entitles it is 'true for everyone', and is *impersonally* available, even though not everyone will be in a position to take advantage of this availability, because of ignorance, inferential ineptitude, etc.

This point is closely related to another observation Brandom makes about assertion. When one asserts, Brandom reminds us, one issues a universal re-assertion license. The current point is simply that if this is correct, then correct assertion (of a declarative) must issue a valid universal license.

An imperative also has an idiosyncratic *output*: it changes the normative status of those people to whom the order is directed. The point is that, as an element of the structure in virtue of which it is the speech act it is, the imperative targets a specific, personalized audience. In reality, it may be that not everyone at whom the order is directed obeys it, or that some passerby 'obeys' the order inappropriately, but regardless of how smoothly the concrete normative uptake goes, it is part of the *functional design* of the speech act, as it were, that it target specific people upon whom it makes a normative claim. In contrast, our declarative has a *universal* output: its assertion imputes to *everyone* the entitlement to re-assert it, and demands that they allow it to constrain their inferences and beliefs.

Though we have focused for illustration on only two speech acts, we have distinguished two independent dimensions on which they vary. Thus, in theory and, we will argue, in practice we have the resources to divide speech acts into four categories by placing them within a 2x2 grid: [Slide 4]

By way of clarification, let us emphasize that for a speech act to have a universal input or output is for it to be a *regulative ideal* built into the functioning of the speech act that everyone ought to have that status, and hence that it is in some formal sense a defect (albeit often a minor or easily exculpated one) if someone does not partake in that status. We can say that the universality or idiosyncrasy of a normative status is *itself* a *normative* status – to be universal is not for everyone to actually have it, but for the status to be one that everyone *ought* to have. If Jones successfully asserts "Paris is the capital of France" the status achieved is *knowing-that-Paris-is-the-capital-of-France*, not Jones-knowing-that- *Paris-is-the-capital-of-France*. Of course, Smith might still not be in a position to know this – either by virtue of having committed himself to "Berlin is the capital of France" or by simple ignorance of Jones's achievement. But in either case, that which blocks universal availability is *a defect* – ignorance or false belief. And it is a feature of the defining pragmatics of the act in question that successful performance of it *just is* success at

making such other statuses into failures. (Hence, the ideal entitlement in question is clearly to be distinguished from justification.)

On the other hand, no such ideal is built into an imperative. Nothing in the structure of the colonel's entitlement to order the lieutenant to stand at attention suggests that everyone ought to be able to issue this order (nor that everyone be a colonel), nor that everyone ideally ought to respond to the order. The key insight is that pragmatic norms include not merely constraints on what individual speakers can do and say, but also ideals transforming the normative position of entire linguistic communities. And these ideals are built into the pragmatic structure of the speech act types themselves.

Similarly, we need to keep in mind that not every change in normative status that is caused by an utterance is one that is integral to the (as it were) 'pragmatic meaning' of the utterance. In these post-Wittgensteinian days, it would be foolish to think that we could draw a hard and fast line or specify in advance a litmus test, but we need to hold onto an intuitive, reasonably robust, distinction between the normative effects that are integral to a given pragmatic structure, and those that are its external normative 'fallout', as it were. When Rebecca orders Mark to revise his example, many changes in normative status occur: Maggie, who overheard the comment, now justifiably believes that Mark and Rebecca are working together; Karen, who also overheard, now is entitled to order both Rebecca and Mark to close the door to keep the noise down; and so forth. But the change in normative status that Mark undergoes – namely, his new responsibility to revise the example – is, it is intuitively clear, integral to the imperatival structure of the original speech act in a way that the rest of this normative fallout is not. (Note, for one thing, that it remains constant across a range of contexts across which the other changes are variable.)

We turn now to our as-yet vacant boxes. Though for pedagogical reasons we tend to focus on speech acts that exemplify one or another of the normative patterns, this is actually an oversimplification. There is no reason why a given linguistic performance need have only one such structure, and in what follows we argue that it is crucial that speech acts exemplify more than one. Thus, while we identify speech acts as fitting into positions on our 2x2 grid, this is to be understood as identifying the nature of that normative structure most central to the speech act type, as that type.

That caveat aside, we have already given examples of imperatives as belonging in box 4, and of declaratives as belonging in box one. [Slide 5] *Most* everyday speech acts that have the surface grammar of a declarative are in fact this kind of declarative. However, we will argue below that not all assertions or truth-claims – we use 'declarative' and 'truth claim' interchangeably, for substantive reasons that we go into in the longer work – in fact function this way, and also that surface grammar can never be a perfect indicator or guarantor of pragmatic structure (including location on the grid).

Consider box 2. In an effort to avoid both implausible naturalistic reductions as well as any commitment to super-naturalism, much of 20th century ethics has sought to give a non-cognitivist reading of ought-claims, in which their pragmatics was modeled on imperatives. Thus, "You ought to raise your hand" is read as importantly analogous to "Raise your hand!" In line with the prevailing tendency to understand pragmatics in terms of what is done, rather than said, with a speech act, one could then note that the uttering of this sentence involves an attempt to accomplish something, to make the target of the speech act raise her hand. Thus was born Hare's "prescriptivism," the theory that ought-claims are imperatives.

Such a view had the virtue of easily avoiding both the temptation toward naturalistic reduction, and also any whiff of commitment to super-natural entities or facts, for it was claimed that the speech act is not a fact-stating performance at all. Unfortunately, the view also had the fatal vice of deeply misrepresenting the nature of moral dispute. If ought-claims are imperatives, then contrary ought-claims do not stand in relations of inferential incompatibility. There is *something* in conflict between Fred's statement "Joe, raise your hand!" and Mary's statement: "Joe, don't raise your hand!" but it is not the conflict of P and ~P. Similarly, the structure of argument for and against imperatives seems to involve a caricature of that involving ought claims.[2]

From the point of view of the present typology, *prescriptivism got it exactly half right*. The crucial insight – obscured by traditional pragmatic theory – is that one must distinguish between features of the normative status constitutive of entitlement to an ought-claim, and features of the normative changes in status consequent upon

[2] See David McNaughton's discussion of the problems non-cognitivism faces in adequately explaining moral disagreement in his *Moral Vision* (Blackwell 1989).

such an entitlement. The former work just as they do for declaratives. Precisely the difference between "Joe ought to raise his hand" and "Joe, raise your hand!" is that entitlement to the former is universal, not a status-based entitlement of an individual, but an entitlement which – like that of a declarative – is ideally available to the entire linguistic community. On the other hand, one thing that distinguishes "Joe ought to raise his hand" from "Joe's hand is raised" is that entitlement to the former brings with it essentially a specific idiosyncratic commitment on the part of Joe, namely to raise his hand.[3]

Thus, ought-claims are neither declaratives nor imperatives, but what we will call "normatives". One of the advantages of understanding ought-claims as normatives is that it runs a good chance of preserving the crucial insights of both cognitivism and prescriptivism. Normatives 'reflect how things are' in the sense that they have universal inputs – we discuss this connection in detail in the longer work from which this is drawn – but they place idiosyncratic demands rather than just passing on universal entitlements, like prescriptions. And they belong in box 2 of our grid.

In the case of box 3, in contrast to the normative, which involved a securing of a non-agent-relative entitlement so as to bring about idiosyncratic normative statuses, we are looking for a sort of idiosyncratic, agent-specific, entitlement that generates agent-neutral normative statuses.

Much of traditional pragmatic theory has been concerned with a class of speech acts that seems to fit this category. We have in mind Austinian performatives. In the larger work that this talk is drawn from, we argue that the category of Austinian

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[33] This raises an interesting and important question concerning the status of something like (the misnamed, as we can now see) 'categorical imperatives', or normative claims that (*de jure*?) address themselves to everyone. One possibility is that such speech acts (such as 'Never act so as to commodify the labor of another') are universal only in virtue of their content: they are true ought claims that just happen to pick out everyone. In this.case, they are canonically regimented as "Y'all: Never act so as to commodify the labor of another," are normatives, and belong in box 2. The other possibility is that somehow the very universality of the claim that they make upon us is built into the kind of speech act that they are, in which case they would belong in box one, and would form an interesting class of box-one speech acts other than the usual declaratives. Which of these possibilities is correct, and what to make of the second interesting possibility, is a fertile topic for another time. But note that there might certainly be normatives that are 'boingly universal' in virtue of their content – we can easily imagine that it just happens to be the case, at some moment, that *everyone* ought to devote more time than they do to volunteering for disaster relief – and this would not be a categorical "imperative" in the pragmatic sense. Such a speech act would be a box-two normative whose universality was based on its content (and contingent empirical facts) and not its structure. The fact that there could be such boringly universal normatives does give some weight, by contrast, to the

performative is actually a bit of an incongruous cogery, and that the typical examples involve multiple structures from different boxes. For now, let us merely note another type of speech act – consistently overlooked qua pragmatic type – that forms quite a clear inhabitant of box 3.

Consider the difference between the declarative "Willard is on the mat", and the speech act "Lo, Willard is on the mat." We claim that while both imply the existence of a cat on the mat – and indeed that this exhausts the semantic content of each – they differ crucially in pragmatic structure. They do so in precisely such a way as to make the latter – a speech act type we will call an "observative" – occupy box 3. That is, though "Lo, Willard is on the mat" shares with its declarival half-sister a universal output, its input is idiosyncratic. Entitlement to the observatival speech act itself is inherently one's own, although the accomplishment of observing Willard on the mat consequentially provides to everyone a universal entitlement to the claim that he is. Related to this is the fact that though one becomes commited to a truth claim whenever one utters an observative, the observatival act is not itself a truth-claiming.

The idiosyncracy of observatives is rooted in the fact that they express a moment of *recognition* of something, where this recognition ineliminably involves a component of receptivity. When I comment, "Lo, Willard is on the mat", I expresses not only *that* Willard is on the mat (which is the semantic content of my assertion), but also that *I* recognize this fact on the basis of my reception of features of the world. While others may well see the same thing as I do, and hence while my entitlement to such an observative may well not be unique, *this* reception and recognition are *mine* and not shared, and hence the entitlement that grounds my speech act is idiosyncratic. Given this, let us introduce the term 'recognitive' for any speech act whose primary function is to give expression to a recognition *of something*. (As will become clear below, there are many somethings one can express recognition of.) Thus, all recognitives have idiosyncratic input, for acts of receptivity are essentially personal. [Slide 6]

That observatives have not been studied as such is odd, since they have frequently been pressed into distinct *pragmatic service* from declaratives. Davidson and Quine, in particular, have assigned "observation sentences" or "occasion sentences" privileged positions as anchors in their epistemology (in Quine's case) and

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possibility that there is something else going on in the case of categorical "imperatives," and perhaps

interpretive semantics (in Davidson's case). Indeed, Davidson takes the recognition of observative speech acts as a nearly primitive precondition of the beginnings of interpretation. It is odd, given this special pragmatic place that Davidson assigns to the special speech acts that express observation, that he has not concerned himself with giving any kind of pragmatic analysis of these acts. For example, Davidson proposes no mechanism for differentiating between proper observatives, in our sense, and speech acts that declaratively describe, in the first person, that someone is observing something – both of these simply count as observation sentences. But it's hard to imagine how the latter could anchor interpretation in any special way that other objective truth-claims could not, so presumably what Davidson would really like to do is isolate the former.[4]

Note that observatives have *objective* purport just as much as do declaratives, despite their idiosyncratic inputs. They are responses *to* objective facts about the world; you can't see something that isn't there. Part of the reason why we believe that observatives are particularly useful exemplars of box-2 speech acts is precisely because their expression of a receptive recognition and their implication of objective truth-claims eliminates any possibility of holding onto a prejudice that box-one speech acts, or more generally truth claims, are the ones that are 'really' about the world.

Just as the case of normatives suggested avenues for the exploration of meta-ethical issues regarding ought claims in terms of the pragmatic structure of the utterance, so a great deal of illumination regarding the epistemology of observation reports is forthcoming from an investigation of the pragmatics of observatives. But, another time.

§2: Vocatives

Consider the vocative:

Yo, Wilfrid.

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this something could be understood pragmatically.

[4] One barrier to his drawing this distinction properly lies in his use of the term 'occasion sentence', as opposed to, perhaps, 'occasion speech act'. For a *sentence* expressing an observative can easily be one which in other contexts expresses a first-person declarative. "I see a rabbit" can easily be either an observative or a declarative, depending on context, and hence the category of observational sentences does not track a single pragmatic category. Davidson and Quine, despite their lack of pragmatic analyses, famously tend instead to use much more explicitly observative locutions such as 'Lo, a rabbit!', which perhaps enables them to focus in on speech acts that tend to do the pragmatic work they want without having properly isolated them.

Vocatives are hails. To utter a vocative is to *call* another person – to *recognize* them *specifically* by *calling upon* them to recognize in turn that they have been properly recognized. To hail someone in this way is both to grant them a normative status – as *that person* who is properly called in this way – and to place a normative demand on them, namely that they acknowledge that they have been called. Vocatives thus always demand acknowledgments, which is a separate type of speech act.

Though the term 'yo' explicitly marks vocative force, a vocative can take the form of anything from a slight nod of the head, to a formal greeting, to a declarative utterance whose point, in context, is to recognize someone by calling them and demanding an appropriate acknowledgment ("I see a cute little boy in a red sweater!").

Notice that ordinary language distinguishes between two kinds of recognitional speech acts, which may at first seem different enough to be only homonymous. We can 'recognize' a fact, in the sense of noting it or marking it – a sense of recognition that seems somehow 'passive' – or we may 'recognize' a person or nation, in the sense of calling upon it or acknowledging it's status as such. The latter sense seems to be more 'active' in that it makes demands and grant rights to the objects of recognition. But careful attention reveals that the 'passive' vs. 'active' distinction doesn't really get at the deep difference between these two cases. For notice that *both* types of recognition actually change the normative status of others in the linguistic community as well as making demands on those others. When we recognize a fact, using an observative or a declarative, we demand that others accept the truth of the content of what we recognized, by reasserting it, taking account of it in inference, recognizing the legitimacy of our recognition, and so forth. When we recognize a speaker or entity, we again shift normative statuses and make demands through our recognition, only this time we *specifically target the agent we recognize* in our recognition: we call upon the speaker to speak, or upon the new nation to assume the duties and entitlements of nationhood (and, as collateral, we call upon others to similarly recognize them).

At this stage, we have at our fingertips an elegant way of drawing this distinction: we can say that *all* recognitives are idiosyncratic in their input and *all* recognitives (like all speech acts!) shift normative statuses and demand recognition of

their legitimacy. But in some cases these demands and shifts, are *universal*, whereas in other cases they are *idiosyncratic*. In particular, when what we are recognizing *is* specifically the normative status, position and identity of an agent who herself belongs to the linguistic community and is capable of recognitive speech acts in her own right (an individual, a nation, a corporation), then we typically direct that recognition *at* that agent, who is differentially called upon to recognize our recognition appropriately.[5]

The demand, in a vocative, that the one called acknowledge the call is not a separate pragmatic component of the hail over and above its recognitive function. Rather, it is *how it carries that recognitive function out* – i.e. **by expressing the recognition in the form of a speech act targeted at the object of the recognition. The pragmatic structure that makes a vocative speech act the speech act that it is, includes the obligations that it places – if successfully performed – on a particular person, or on several particular people, to respond as the person or people called.**

It is crucial to the form and function of the vocative, therefore, that it recognizes someone by *taking her to be a person*, that is, the kind of being who can be the target of speech acts in the first place, and can have a normative status that can be altered, universally or idiosyncratically, by a speech act for which they are (among) the audience. You can only hail such a being, and hailing inherently recognizes the hailed as such a being and calls upon them to acknowledge themselves – and hence you – as such.

The semantic content of a vocative call may be more or less specific – we can call "Hey, you with the red sweater and the big nose", or "anyone who is willing to volunteer please raise your hand", or just "Hi!". But in terms of its pragmatic function, the vocative is always *individuating* in the sense that (regardless of how many individuals it calls), its job is to call upon *you* as *this particular person* who was recognized by the call. This goes hand in hand with the idiosyncracy of the output. In order for the call to be effective, its intended audience needs to recognize: "that's *me*

[5] We do not mean to suggest that these conditions on recognitives are sufficient as well as necessary. Certain performatives exhibit idiosyncratic input normative transitions that meet all these conditions. Recognitives must, of course, be recognitions. That is, they must be excercises of receptivity, responses made appropriate by influences from outside the agent. It has not been part of our purpose to give an account of receptivity here. We do claim, however, that no account of receptivity can be adequate which does not attend to the distinctions arising within the normative structure laid out here.

who is being called." A third person, who hears and notes the correctness of a call, is not claimed by it in the same way – there is no demand on her to recognize herself as having been called. This means that in order for the call to reach its target, the one called has to recognize not only that the call has happened or even that it has correctly recognized the person that satisfies some definite description of her. Rather, her response has to be essentially *deictically indexed*: she has to recognize, "that's *me* being called."

But this requirement of an essentially first-personal recognition of a vocative only makes sense insofar as the vocative, like any imperative, itself is essentially *second-personal* in its pragmatic force. It cannot do what it is supposed to do as a mere generalized address. Its function is to target, not just someone who happens to meet some conditions or description, but *you*. Thus, the vocative call is always second personal – even if second person plural (Yo, y'all!) – never third personal. (We return to this crucial point shortly.)

§3: Acknowledgments

Vocatives, then, stand in a symmetrical relation of mutual dependence with acknowledgements. You cannot make sense of either except in their interrelation, for vocatives are essentially demands for acknowledgment which, in turn, are essentially responses to vocatives. This raises the need to explore acknowledgments as a broad category that recognizes another speech act, and also the more specific case of acknowledgments of vocatives.

An acknowledgment, in general, is a (more or less) explicit *taking on* of the normative status and responsibilities demanded of one by a given speech act. In acknowledging a speech act, you mark that the speech act itself was appropriate or legitimate, and claim the responsibilities that it imputes to you, whether they are imputed to you merely as a member of the universal linguitic/normative community, or as idiosyncratically targeted by it. We can, for instance, acknowledge an imperative by uttering 'ok', while carrying out whatever action was demanded of us. We can acknowledge a declarative by marking that we accept that we are committed to the claim made and entitled to use it, paradigmatically by uttering 'You're right'.

We can acknowledge a vocative in various ways: by returning the hail, nodding our heads, etc. Because the acknowledgment involves *recognizing* that a normative status has been appropriately imputed to us, along with expressing the

acceptance of that status, the acknowledgment is itself a (third) type of *recognitive* speech act. Here, though, what is recognized is not a fact or an object but the force of a normative claim (from a particular claim-maker). The input of the acknowledgment, like that of all recognitives, is inherently idiosyncratic: what is acknowledged is the claim that a speech act makes *on me* given my particular position, even when everyone is part of the audience targeted by a speech act with universal output.[6]

This type of acknowledgment should therefore be distinguished from another kind of speech act that might also be called an acknowledgment. *Anyone*, regardless of whether they are targeted by a speech act, might note that the speech act succeeded – the declarative was true, the imperative was justified in placing a normative burden, the vocative properly recognized the one it hailed – and to note this evaluation in speech. But noting that Rebecca has hailed Mark appropriately, stated a truth, or given him a legitimate order – third personal truth-claims all – should not be confused with acknowledging that Rebecca has hailed *me*. The acknowledgment *recognizes* a claim made on me by her (better, *your*) speech act, and as the speech act it is. It marks the *uptake* of the normative status change. To genuinely acknowledge a speech act is to take on the commitment *out of* a recognition of the entitlement and success of the assertor; it is a taking on of the personal normative upshot *as* essentially a taking on in virtue of the attribution of entitlement to the original speech act. Notice, then, that no set of beliefs, even about normative statuses, could ever amount to an acknowledgment, for an acknowledgment *performs* the concrete acceptance, in practical and not just theoretical reason, of a normative status imputed by a speech act.

Just as vocatives are essentially first personal (idiosyncratic) acts, with second personal content, so acknowledgments are first personal recognitions of normative status which are taken up as second personal, i.e. as from the one whose speech act is acknowledged. That is why we said that the paradigmatic acknowledgment of a

[6] Testifying provides a nice, vivid example of the working of acknowledgments. When a preacher calls out and demands an acknowledgment ('Let me hear you say 'God is great''), this is an explicit call upon the members of the congregation, not only to endorse the position (consider how inappropriate and underwhelming it would be for the congregation to respond, 'you're right, minister'), but to express how the preacher's words have made a claim on *them*, and to express and highlight (and celebrate) *their* personal new (renewed) commitment to this claim and all it entails. They make explicit not just their acceptance of the claim but their *act of taking up and taking on his* claim.

declarative is "You're right," a bit of colloquial English which incorporates all three key features of declarative recognition:

- It functions as an anaphoric re-assertion, taking on the declarative content – "You're right" entails "that is true".
- It explicitly incorporates the second-personal nature of the uptake.
- And "right" is usefully ambiguous between the normative recognition of justified performance and the normative undertaking of the content of the speech act. So, as colloquially used, "you're right" implies also "you're justified".

In the case of the vocative, for instance, I cannot respond (usually) to the hail, 'Hi Mark' by *stating* to no one in particular 'What was just expressed there is correct, because in fact I am Mark'. Instead, I must say 'hi' back, or smile and grunt, or do any of the myriad of other context-dependently socially acceptable things that count as taking up and expressing my taking up of the claim that has been made on me by the vocative.

Reflection on the pragmatics of first personal uptake of second personal normative holdings is quite fruitful. In the case of an imperative, we said that we can acknowledge it by *following* it. But it is essential not to conceive of this as merely doing the thing that was ordered. One could do something that was ordered without knowing that the order was given, or recognizing the appropriateness of the order. Nor is following an order a conjunction of a mere success evaluation plus doing the relevant act. One could, as it were, recognize that the Colonel has entitlement to order one to raise one's hand, and also raise one's hand without doing the latter *because* of the former, without, that is, doing it as an acknowledgment of the authority of the imperatival speech act.[7] Similarly, following an order is not a combination of recognizing authority to utter, and being obliged to perform the act in question.

Analogous to the case of an imperative, reassertion is not sufficient for acknowledgment of the normative call of the declarative speech act. One can undertake a commitment to that sentence someone asserted, that is, without even acknowledging that the asserting was warranted. ("Wow, what a coincidence. Bush accidentally said something true.") But here too, acknowledgment is even more than a

[7] Nor do we think that what is missing is a causal relation. Clearly the mere fact that the evaluational recognition causes the arm to raise – say by startling you in such a way that you raise your hands in a

conjunction of a recognition of authority and a reassertion. One must acknowledge a recognition of the propriety of drawing reassertional commiment *from* the original assertor's entitlement. While as before it would take us beyond the scope of this paper to pursue the matter, we note that standard Gettier style cases involve situations in which the attributor is willing to grant justification and belief, and acknowledge truth, but is not (and should not be) willing to take the agent's justification as itself her own grounds of truth. Attributions of justification (entitlement, in the absence of defects) and truth (re-assertion, taking up the demanded status) are both present, but the latter is not endorsed as a legitimate taking *from*, or manifestation of, attribution of the former. So, we claim, the sort of pragmatic analysis of acknowledgment put forward here shows the phenomenon of the Gettier gap between knowledge and justified true belief, to be simply a species of a general pragmatic phenomenon which includes, for example, also the gap between, on the one hand, acknowledging that someone gave an order, that they did so appropriately, and doing the thing ordered, and, on the other hand, following the order. Knowledge ascriptions, that is, are acknowledgments, not declaratives. (So as something of a corollary we see that mainstream epistemology is based on a grammatical confusion.)

Acknowledgments may be in box 3 or box 4. We have already seen that they have idiosyncratic inputs (and hence cannot be in box 1 or 2). But whether they have idiosyncratic or universal output depends upon the specific speech act being acknowledged and the acknowledgement offered. Hence when we respond to a hail with another hail, our acknowledgment is a box 4 speech act. The essence of the acknowledgment of the vocative, when it is not contingently in the form of another vocative, seems to be a box 3 speech act, and indeed, more specifically, an observative. One observes that one has been successfully called by another.[8]

§4: Transcendental Vocatives

In this section, we will make a bold claim: *all* speech acts include a vocative element. Suppose that there just *were* semantic contents, existing prior to human uses of language, some sorts of *things* floating free of the production of speech acts. Suppose you ran into one, saw it perhaps. What would it be like? What would one's

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reflexive gesture of surrender – is not sufficient, but we do not think the Davidsonian strategy of filling in the "right sort" of causal relation is at all on the right track.

[8] Given what we will have to say in the final section of this paper about the importance of vocatives in constituting communities, this discussion suggests that Hegel was not only right, but *literally* right, in assigning pride of place to mutual recognition.

mode of relation to it have to be in order for one to see it *as* a content, to take it up cognitively as linguistically meaningful?

We suggest that precisely two things are required: that it be recognized as placing some sort of pragmatic normative demand – taken up as demanding upon one – and crucially that this normative demand be perceived as arising out of an agentially specific producing of the content. That is, for a content to be understood as such, it must be seen as the content of a speech act which is confronted as a normative transaction from speaker to hearer. For something to be a speech *act* and not just an abstract proposition, then, it must have a pragmatic structure, but we argue that a speech act cannot have *any* pragmatic structure at all unless one part of its pragmatic function is to hail or call out to an audience in a second-person voice, and to demand acknowledgment from this audience. In other words, we claim that every speech act contains a *transcendental vocative* – a vocative dimension or moment that is the condition for the possibility of the speech act's doing or meaning whatever else it does or means. We will build up to this conclusion slowly.

Let us begin by noticing that while hails are the *pure* cases of vocatives – that is, speech acts whose primary purpose is to recognize someone in and through calling upon them to acknowledge appropriately that they have been recognized – almost all vocatives in actual use are impure, in the sense that they serve this particular peculiarly self-referential recognitive function by doing more than just carrying it out. A teacher may issue a vocative by taking attendance, issuing the order: raise your hand when your name is called. Though this order clearly functions also as a vocative, not any old acknowledgment will do. A student who acknowledges the call with a chatty 'hello', is being a bit transgressive and not properly responding.

But once we see this, we see equally that all imperatives have a vocative moment. As idiosyncratically authorized, idiosyncratically targeted demands, they have to be demands *on someone* in order to count as demands at all. And they cannot be a *demand* on someone unless they call upon that person to recognize that *she* is the one being targeted and to respond appropriately, that is, by following the order that the imperative articulates. You do not actually issue an imperative, for instance, if you whisper "close the door" in the privacy of your own room, either to no one in particular, or 'to' someone who couldn't possibly recognize that they have been called. In order to issue an imperative, you must *recognize* an appropriate target for

your imperative, whose normative status you wish to idiosyncratically alter with your speech act, and you must *demand* something of him, and in demanding, you must *call upon him to recognize himself* as the one targeted by your demand and to respond appropriately. Furthermore, his compliance with your order (or, for that matter, his pointed refusal to comply), itself serves to express his acknowledgment of the normative claim made on him by your demand. Thus, in order to function as an imperative, your speech act must also function as a vocative, where the acknowledgment generally takes the form of following the order.

All this is fairly straightforward in the case of imperatives which are, after all, explicitly second personal speech acts. Box 1 and 3 speech acts (those with universal outputs) may seem to have much less of a claim on having a necessary vocative element, since what makes them universal is that they make the same claim on the normative status of everyone in the linguistic community. This is, however, just where we come to see the main point about linguistic pragmatics. Following Brandom and Sellars, we have taken it as a guiding premise that from a pragmatic point of view, what a speech act *does* is to draw upon the entitlement of its speaker in order to alter the normative status of others in the linguistic community, which is to say that all speech acts *make normative claims* upon those whose status they aim to alter. But it is crucial to see that these normative statuses, changes in commitments and entitlements for example, are not abstract entities that shift automatically in some kind of ideal space when a speech act occurs. Not only is this false, but thinking about language as mere score-keeping undercuts the whole point of putting pragmatics front and center, which was to recognize language as a *concrete*, *active* normative phenomenon, grasped in the first instance as a skillful interaction with other speakers. Instead, a speech act only succeeds in having pragmatic force and in shifting normative statuses if (a) it actually is the kind of thing that can be concretely recognized and taken up as having normative force, and (b) it is part of the structure of the act that it strives to be recognized and taken up in this way, and in normal circumstances is.[9]

Declaratives and observatives target everyone in the same way, and do not draw upon any special normative features of their audience beyond mere membership in the linguistic community for their applicability. It might, therefore, be easy to

[9] For a detailed account of how to understand such (normative) uses of 'normal,' see Lance and Little.

think that they essentially target *no one in particular*, but this would be a scope error. When we make a claim – "Lo, a rabbit!' – part of what it is for this to be a *claim* and not just noise is that it seeks normative uptake from agents capable of recognizing normative claims, or in this case, ideally, from all such agents.

But this uptake-seeking function makes no sense except to the extent that the speech act expresses recognition of the audience from which it seeks acknowledgment and uptake. This of course need not be anything like the recognition of direct perception, but it does need to involve some kind of responsiveness to the existence and normative position of an appropriate audience for the speech act. Likewise, such a speech act succeeds in being fulfilled only if others *acknowledge* the legitimacy of this claim. The truth claim succeeds only insofar as others manifest their normative uptake of the claim made on them (by reasserting it in the right way, drawing reasonable inferences, withdrawing incompatible judgments, and acting appropriately. And note as well that while the particularities of members of the linguistic community are irrelevant to the fact that they are called by a universal output speech act, they are quite relevant to the consequences of a common call being taken up by them. Thus, different people will be required to make quite different changes to their stock of antecedent commitments by virtue of having taken up a given assertion.

Why can't a speech act succeed in claiming its target audience without being fundamentally second-personal in this way? Why can't it just be *true* that the claim issues from person A and makes a claim on person B, without the first and second person perspectives being *fixed* and concretely located by the speech act? Why, that is, can we not capture the normativity of linguistic acts as a running language-game score? Notice that in *your* case, *no* set of theoretical, third-personal beliefs about normative statuses or even changes in normative statuses brought about by a speech act could ever amount to or capture *a recognition* of those changes in normative statuses themselves. One can amass all the impersonal knowledge about normative statuses you like, and they will make no claim on *you* unless you can deictically place *yourself* in normative space, know that these are *your* statuses.

This much is just a normative correlate of John Perry's famous argument of the essential indexical. But there is a further subtle and crucial point: even the *theoretical* belief that A has had a demand of a certain sort placed upon her *and the theoretical knowledge that you are A* will not add up to your actually being practically

subject to a normative claim. Indexicals place one on a map – "I am here, now" – but they provide neither scale nor orientation in a form deployable in practical inference. This job is done by "deictic knowledge": "*that* is the lake," "*this* much is one foot," "my right arm is *over here*." Similarly, you can only deictically locate yourself in *normative* space – given that one must do things like respond to *his* assertion, follow *her* order – if you can practically identify *from whom* a speech act that makes a claim upon you is issued. Thus, to *place* yourself in normative space is to be able to place yourself *in relation to other* normatively placed linguistic agents, and hence to be able to identify not just a 'me' but many 'you's. Thus the first- and second-person perspectives, as they grip practice, are ineliminable to the pragmatic functioning of any speech act, including a third-personal truth claim.

The upshot of this section is that a vocative structure is embedded in every speech act. Speech acts, including those with universal outputs, have a pragmatic structure at all only in virtue of involving the *recognition* of a concrete appropriate audience and a claim upon this audience to *acknowledge* the force of the speech act *upon them*, and if we acknowledge as well that this recognition and demand have to be essentially second-personal, and designed to be received as a first-personal demand upon *me* for acknowledgment, then every speech act must, in addition to whatever other functions it has, function as a vocative.

At this stage of our analysis, this can indeed seem like an almost trivial conclusion (and so much the better for us). We suggest that it has been overlooked in the past, not because it is contentious, but because (analytic) philosophers who have attended to pragmatics have not *begun* by thinking about *who* is entitled to speech acts, *who* they are targeted at, and how such normative transactions occur. Since we began with a typology that puts these distinctions front and center, we naturally ended up with an analysis that makes vivid the essential role of the speaker-audience relationship in language, and likewise naturally ended up talking about speech acts in a way that showed off their vocative component.

§5: Conclusion

So where does this all leave us *vis a vis* "Nature, Normativity, and the Autonomy of Mind". I began by claiming, uncontroversially, that language necessarily expresses thought. I also claimed, more controversially, that this connection should be seen as clarifying the nature of thought – of what it is for a state

of an agent to count as thinking. If something like this is right, than any project of attempting to understand the mind is a project of attempting to understand aspects of the individual from within a conceptual scheme of linguistic meaning. When we call something a judgment, then, we understanding it in terms of its normative functional relation to assertions, a relation that is – so conceptualized – essential to it. The space of the mental is the space of the conceptual is the space of the linguistc.

So if the pragmatic framework of this paper is correct, we can say this about the Mind:

- Though it is most certainly not *super*natural, the commitments we undertake in characterizing the mental include speech acts other than declaratives, especially normatives (in identifying mental states by content) and observatives (in the use of phenomenal concepts). Hence, assuming that a scientific theory of the biological organism will be composed entirely of declaratives, no such theory will adequately capture the mental.
- The mind is deeply and essentially normative in a far more complex and rich way than is typically recognized.
- If "autonomy" implies that the mind is understandable in abstraction from its relations to other agents, or from its embedding in society, then the mind is not autonomous. Only a structure of mutual recognition, and a complex array of essentially interpersonal – first and second personal – normative transactions, makes such a thing as a mind even conceivable. (On this at least, Hegel turns out to have been right.) As for other senses of "autonomy," that will have to await another paper.