‘Yo’ and ‘Lo’
the pragmatics of the space of reasons

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"'Lo, a rabbit'" [WVO Quine]

"Yo! Word up!" [Dead Prez]

"You talking to me?" [Travis Bickle]

I begin with the question of what an inference is, or, of what inferential propriety is. Inferentialists have had oddly little to say about this. Enormous effort has been devoted to the question of which inferences are proprietous, but very little has emerged from the inferentialist camp on what such propriety consists in. Non-inferentialists have answers – in terms of truth conditions, verification or proof conditions, etc., but it is pretty universally agreed that these are not fit answers for the projects of the inferentialist.

Brandom is an exception to this trend of neglect, understanding inferential propriety in terms of the two normative dimensions of commitment and entitlement. Thus assertions, on Brandom's account, are undertakings of commitment to act as defender of a claim, an act which requires engaging in further contextually necessary responses to challenges, and if such defenses are appropriately carried out, one gains entitlement to the claim in question. Two sentences can then stand in one of two inferential relations: when commitment to P is, in part, commitment to Q, and when entitlement to P is, in part, entitlement to Q.[i] Brandom aims to use these normative dimensions to provide the bridge between pragmatics – the structure of normative constraint governing speech acts – and semantics – the postulated contents that emerge from and codify pragmatic norms. In doing this, however, Brandom says very little about the underlying structure of linguistic practice, certainly offering nothing like a survey of the variety of speech acts which take place within it. Rather, he tell us enough about assertion to get his notion of inference off the ground, and then he is off and running with the semantic story, venturing nary a look back to see what might have been left out of the pragmatics.

In so doing, Brandom commits a version of what Belnap has called "the declarative fallacy," namely the assumption that content in general can be understood solely in terms of declarational content. It isn't, of course, that Brandom fails to notice the existence of imperatives, interrogatives, etc., but that he tacitly assumes that these will fall into place straightforwardly, once the account of declaratives is completed. Belnap is

deeply suspicious of this approach, and so am I. Instead, I suggest we begin with a more thorough look at normative pragmatics.

§1: a typology of speech acts

If we generalize on Brandom's view that 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, 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 in virtue of the fact 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* 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, Rebecca's entitlement to issue this order accrues to her as the

inhabitant of a specific normative position. 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.

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. 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.[ii]

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, but 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, inference, and argument.[iii]

From the point of view of the present typology, *prescriptivism got it exactly half right*. The crucial insight 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 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.[iv]

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. We discuss this in detail in the longer work from which the current paper is drawn.

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 – Austinian performatives – that seems to fit this category. From the present perspective, the category of Austinian performative is actually a bit of an incongruous cogery, but 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 declarative 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*. Thus, all recognitives have idiosyncratic input, for acts of receptivity are essentially personal. [Slide 6]

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.

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*.[v]

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. 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* who is 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, are essentially demands for acknowledgment which, in turn, are essentially responses to vocatives. (Compare questions and answers.) 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 legitimate, and claim the responsibilities that it imputes to you. We can, for instance, acknowledge an imperative by uttering 'ok', while carrying out whatever action was demanded of us. We acknowledge a declarative paradigmatically by uttering 'You're right'. We can acknowledge a vocative in various ways: by returning the hail, nodding our heads, etc. Because 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).

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 *performs* this 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.

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.

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.[vi]

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 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. It is just this which is done colloquially by "you're right," or more generally by knowledge attributions. While as before it would take us beyond the scope of this paper to pursue the matter, we note that what we are seeing is a pragmatic analysis of the Gettier gap between justified true belief and knowledge, an analysis that shows the phenomenon of the Gettier gap to be simply a species of a general pragmatic phenomenon – the gap between description or evaluation, and acknowledgment – which includes 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. (So as something of a corollary to our central line of thought, we see that mainstream epistemology is based on a grammatical confusion.)

§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 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, to place upon them an obligation to recognize the accomplishment of the

speech act. 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 transgressing.

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 to no one in particular. On the other hand, if you do demand something of someone, then either his compliance or, for that matter, his refusal to complyserves to express his acknowledgment of your linguistic accomplishment. To recognize something as the giving of an order, that is, is to take on a status in which you can only (try to) follow or refuse to (try to) follow the order. You can no longer simply fail to.

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.[vii]

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 think that they essentially target *no one in particular*, but this would be a scope error. Rather, they seek uptake by *everyone* in particular.

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 more than mere behavior only if others *acknowledge* the the accomplishment by concretely accepting it as significant. 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, or alternatively objecting to it, denying that it's true, etc. Mere assertion doesn't guarantee that others will grant entitlement, of course, but to

succeed in being a speech act at all, others must take up the act as having significance for them in their relations to the speaker.

This latter is a crucial point. While what we have called the output of a speech act grips its target only in virtue of the input entitlement – epistemic justification in the case of a declarative, for example – the very act of performing a speech act is itself an accomplishment. Not just any entity capable of producing the English noise succeeds in uttering a declarative. One does so, by virtue of a particular sort of agentive entitlement, an entitlement typically gained by coming to demonstrate competence in the relevant linguistic neighborhood. Such idiosyncratic entitlement is parlayed, in the production of a speech act, into a change in the normative status of one's audience, specifically into an obligation to treat one as if one has uttered a meaningful speech act. So even a wholly irrational declarative pronouncement, is a normative accomplishment which calls forth a change in the score others keep of one – it obliges them to take one to hold an unwarranted belief, with all that follows from this.

But we have claimed further that this claim made on others must be *second-personal*, that the claim cannot issue from person A and make a claim on person B, without the first and second person perspectives being *fixed* and concretely located by the speech act. We cannot, that is, capture the normativity of linguistic acts as an abstractly characterizable running language-game score. But why exactly?

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, which showed that no set of categorical propositions could capture the practical inferential content of "I am here" – a content without which no knowledge is practically deployable. But, although Perry did not make this clear, notice that indexicals alone are insufficient. Indexicals may place one on a map – "I am here, now" – but they provide neither scale nor orientation in a form deployable in practical inference. I am

here now, and there is a bottle three feet off to my right. But how much is three feet? Which way is right? This job is done by "deictic knowledge": "*that* is the lake," "*this* much is one foot," "she is *over there*."

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, so that you can place yourself *in relation to other* normatively placed linguistic agents. But in the case of normative placing – of location among a community of agents – more is needed. To have such a normative place is to be able to alter concrete normative statuses in others and have one's own normative status concretely shifted by them. That is, the relevant form of relation – without which we cannot speak of us as being placed in normative space at all – is one in virtue of which one is able to make claims of others and in virtue of which they make claims upon one. Like Lewis Carroll's tortoise, your grasp of your normative status must be fundamentally practical in order for you to actually take on that normative status at all, and for this to be so, you must grasp *first-personally* that *this* is where *you are* in normative space and *this* is the claim the speech act makes on *you*.

Similarly, noting that someone is obliged to do such and so is not the same as holding her to doing it. The latter requires a direct recognitional commerce with the other person. If transferring normative status requires holding others to them, we must see all such relations as inherently second personal.[viii]

The upshot of this extended argument 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 it comes into view that every speech act must, in addition to whatever other functions it has, function as a vocative. The *transcendental vocative* is, as it were, a formal structural part of every particular, concrete speech act.

§5: from pragmatics to semantics

There is much more that could be said about the structure of normative pragmatics, and many important philosophical issues which can be investigated in light of this structure. For now, let us return to semantics, and take seriously Brandom's methodology: "The explanatory strategy pursued here is to begin with an account of social practices, identify the particular structure they must exhibit in order to qualify as specifically *linguistic* practices, and then consider what different sorts of semantic contents those practices can confer on states, performances, and expressions caught up in them in suitable ways." [MIE, xiii]

We have been working with a notion of speech acts – as the fundamental moves in linguistic practice – which understands their significance as lying in the move from entitlement to its own performance, to normative changes in the status of various agents and their acts (both speech and otherwise.) Inferences form, then, a special case of normative transition, a move from universal entitlement to other universal status. Thus, we should not expect that the contents instituted by inferential relations to exhaust the array of contents implicit in a linguistic practice. Indeed, we have already seen a range of counterexamples to inferentialism, and in each case, seen not only why it is a counterexample, but how we might go about accounting for its content in a broader "normative transitionalist" framework.

The argument of the last section can be adapted rather easily to show that neither first personal nor second personal idioms can be understood in terms of inferential role. The understanding of first and second personal concepts, that is, requires a skillful grasp of essentially idiosyncratic act proprieties, as well as moves to and from these.

Our box 3 provides a rich array of counterexamples to inferentialism. Most obvious is the word 'Lo' itself. What does this term contribute to the inferential role of any sentence? What can an inferentialist say about "lo, P" except that it implies P?, even assuming that this is grammatical. (Note, for example, that 'Lo: P' does not imply 'I see that P'. From the perspective of normative pragmatics, 'Lo' functions to make explicit the recognitive character of the speech act that incorporates it. Thus "Lo P" has to be understood as moving from idiosyncratic entitlement to universal entitlement, that is not as an inference.)

Things do not stop there, however. We are now able to put more specific flesh on the bones of the Sellarsian claim that "It appears to s that P" (or "It looks to s as if P") as logically more complex than "s sees P". With the present discussion of normative pragmatics at our disposal, we can see that "It appears that P" is related specifically to "lo, P". Where "s sees that P," as the (visual) perceptual species of knowledge-claim, is the form of the acknowledgment of s's "lo, P", "it appears to s that P" is a more complex recognitive, one which attributes the recognitional uptake that – of its essence – defeasibly justifies "lo,P", while withholding attribution of entitlement. Again, much more could be said, but the point is that normative relations to idiosyncratically warranted recognitive acts is essential to the content of empirical concepts. No inferences – no normative relations between declarativel contents – will capture such relations.

Finally, in the box 3 realm, we can consider inherently phenomenal terms, eg "red". While it may be that the *extension* of such terms is given by some secondary quality formulation – e.g. any structure that produces red sensations in humans – such is most certainly not its *meaning*. No such inference must be grasped in order to understand the meaning of "red," and its grasp is in no case sufficient for phenomenal understanding. Rather, what one must grasp, in order to understand 'red', would seem to be precisely the recognitive moves from idiosyncratic receptive acts of seeing red, to the universal propositional content "that is red." One knows red, that is, when one sees it.

One could say as much about 'yo' as about 'lo'. Does 'yo' even have an inferential content? Yet it is far from meaningless. (Indeed, in a section of our work I didn't have time to go into, we argue that a vocative is an element, or moment, in every speech act.) But for now let us discuss the another important box 4 inhabitant, the imperative. The idiosyncratic outputs of imperatives – for example obligations to perform acts in the case of orders – institute a relation analogous to entailment. We can say that an imperative p commitively compels imperative q when the commitments consequent upon an entitled production of q are all contained in the commitments consequent upon entitled production of p. Equivalently, in order to follow p one must follow q. So, since to walk to the store, one must move, ordering x to walk to the store committively compels them to move. We say "Joe: walk to the store!" compels "Joe: move!"

Now let us write p! for an imperative, and let P be the declarative which says that the action ordered by p! has been performed. Thus if p! is "Joe: walk to the store", then P is "Joe walked to the store." Give this, one might hypothesize that p! compels q! iff P entails Q for some appropriate entailment relation – eg commitment entailment.[ix] This would, however, be wrong. The declarative "Fred has walked to the store" entails, for example, "the store exists". (That there is a P for every p! does not, we see, imply the converse. Only agentive P have a corresonding p!.) But there is no corresponding entailment in the case of the imperatives. So it seems that there are distinct imperatival contents, instituted by relations among idiosyncratic commitments to follow orders.[x]

Equally important is the fact that such imperatival contents embed. An important class of embeddings are ought and obligation claims which typically contain nested imperatives. Thus "Bill Gates ought to help the homeless," contains the nested imperative "Gates: help the homeless," and its content is a function of this imperatival content. Many accounts of deontic operators ignore this fact, to their peril. Thus, if one equates "Bill Gates ought to help the homeless" with "It ought to be the case that Bill Gates helps the homeless," one will be inclined to produce a theory licensing the inference to "It ought to be the case that there are homeless" since the claim that there are is entailed by the claim that Gates helps them. Of course there are many moves that have been made in response, but if we simply begin with contents generated by specifically idiosyncratically applicable normative commitments – contents that relate to, but are not reducible to, inferential ones – then such difficulties do not arise. All that follows from the fact that Gates ought to help the homeless is that Gates ought to perform every action performance of which is part of performing the act of helping the homeless.[xi]

Again, *much* more could be said; and one day will be. But for now, I think a conclusion is called for. I do not take myself to have *shown* much of anything here. I have, however, tried to motivate and make plausible a normative pragmatic framework, and offer tantalizing hints of the fruitfulness of that framework. The upshot of pursuing the current pragmatic framework is that inference emerges as a non-autonomous species of a broader genus of normative transition. A semantic framework that tried to take seriously the entire integrated structure of that genus would begin at least with a set of actions and a set of agents who perform them, would respect input-output and

idiosyncratic-universal distinctions, would distinguish an array of relevant normative statuses, would then define sets of transitions between normative statuses attaching to one sort of act and normative statuses attaching to another, and would understand semantic contents in terms of such transitions. I have, of course, given nothing remotely approaching such a structure. What I hope I have done is offer enough tantalizing, half baked but philosophically motivated, clues to keep a fair army of clever young semanticists off the streets for some time.

Appendix: First baby steps toward a normative transitionalist semantics

Let A be a set of Agents with elements a, b, c
Let Γ be a set of act-types, with elements α,β,χ
Let S, be a set of normative statuses.
Let an "act" be a pair $<x, y>$ where $x \varepsilon A$ and $y \varepsilon \Gamma$.
We call a set Σ of acts "universal" if for any $<a, \alpha> \varepsilon \Sigma$,
$<x, \alpha> \varepsilon \Sigma$ for every $x \varepsilon A$.
A normative transition is a function from Σ x {s} to Δ x {t},
where Σ, Δ are sets of acts, and s and t are normative statuses. We write $\Sigma s \Rightarrow \Delta t$, or when only one status is at issue, simply $\Sigma \Rightarrow \Delta$. We call Σ x {s} the "input" of the transition and Δ x {t} the "output".
An interpretation will begin by designating a set of normative transitions as licensed.
Speech acts will be assigned sets of normative transitions as their significance.
Declaratives can be identified with acts assigned normative transitions in which both input and output are universal.
This institutes an equivalence relation on acts in which two acts are equivalent when replacing one for the other never turns a licensed transition into an unlicensed.
Semantic contents are equivalence classes of speech acts
Propositional contents are universal equiv. Classes.

Etc. :)

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[i] See Lance [1995, 2002] and Lance and Kremer.

[ii] 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.)

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

[iviv] 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 possibility that there is something else going on in the case of categorical "imperatives," and perhaps this something could be understood pragmatically.

[v] 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.

[vi] 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 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.

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

[viii] The second-personal is, we might say, the normative correlate of the deictic.

[ix] See Lance and Kremer, and Lance (2002).

[x] It does appear that the converse relation holds. If p! compels q!, then P entails Q.

[xi] I do not believe that Belnap's STIT analysis gets things right here, and think that the problems arise, ironically, as a result of his committing the declarative fallacy. Though Belnap doesn't treat declaratives as all there is, he nonetheless utilizes generic declarativel content to generate imperatival. There are several problems with this.
(i) Though STIT (a, P) is an action for any P, the converse is not correct. Joe's walking to the store is not equivalent to any STIT sentence. STIT (Joe, Joe walks to the store) could take place well before Joe walks to the store, and be a quite distinct action. STIT (Joe, Joe has just walked to the store) Can take place after the walking, or be quite a different action. (Say Joe arranges a sale of a vacant building as he is walking so that five minutes after he walks to that building, it becomes the case that the building is a store.) Similarly, if there are, prior to Joe's walking, an even number of people at the store, it seems wrong to say that Joe saw to it that there are an odd number of people at the store. Someone could have chosen not to go and Joe didn't prevent it. But we can't say that the conditions on STIT (a, P) are that a acts in a way that guarantees P no matter what others do, or one will walk to the store without it being the case that STIT (Joe, Joe just walked to the store) being true, as there could be a bomber sitting outside deliberating whether to blow it up. Similar issues nest into the deontic sentences which embed such imperatives.