Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

_____   _____

Jared A. Millson   Date

How to Ask a Question in the Space of Reasons:
Assertions, Queries, and the Normative Structure of Minimally Discursive Practices

By

Jared A. Millson
Doctor of Philosophy

Philosophy

_____

Mark Risjord
Advisor

_____

Michael Sullivan
Committee Member

_____

Nicholas Fotion
Committee Member

Accepted:

_____

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

_____

Date

How to Ask a Question in the Space of Reasons:
Assertions, Queries, and the Normative Structure of Minimally Discursive Practices

By

Jared A. Millson
B.A., Boston University, 2005
M.A., Emory University, 2009

Advisor: Mark Risjord, Ph.D.

An abstract of
a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy
in Philosophy
2014

Abstract

How to Ask a Question in the Space of Reasons

By Jared A. Millson

Robert Brandom's normative-pragmatic theory is intended to represent the minimal set of practical abilities whose exhibition qualifies creatures as speaking a language. His model of a minimally discursive practice (MDP) is one in which participants, devoid of logical vocabulary, are only capable of making assertions and drawing inferences. This dissertation argues that Brandom's purely assertional practices are not MDPs and that speech acts of asking questions (*queries*) must be included in any practice that counts as an MDP. I propose several novel alternations to Brandom's *deontic scorekeeping* model of discourse, which I then utilize to generate a normative-pragmatic analysis of inquisitive practices. This analysis supports the claim that agents who can assert need to be able to ask questions and *vice versa*. The upshot is that intentionality belongs to those who can ask and answer questions.

How to Ask a Question in the Space of Reasons:
Assertions, Queries, and the Normative Structure of Minimally Discursive Practices

By

Jared A. Millson
B.A., Boston University, 2005
M.A., Emory University, 2009

Advisor: Mark Risjord, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Philosophy
2014

Acknowledgments

Writing a dissertation is a torturous exercise. If one is lucky, the anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt is pockmarked by intense yet fleeting moments of inspiration, wonder, joy, and even confidence. I consider myself one of the fortunate ones— above all, fortunate to have the support and encouragement of friends, family, colleagues, and faculty. For this, I will be forever grateful.

I would like to thank my advisor, Mark Risjord, without whose expertise, guidance, and constant feedback this dissertation would not have been possible. I am indebted to my committee member, Michael Sullivan, for his support and patience through the many missteps and pitfalls that marked my search for a dissertation topic. I would also like to thank my committee member, Nicholas Fotion, for his stubborn defense of John Searle's speech act theory, and my external reader, Kareem Khalifa, for his penetrating and insightful questions at my oral defense.

The greatest intellectual debt is owed to my external reader, Robert Brandom. When I a visiting scholar in the Philosophy Department at University of Pittsburgh he was willing to meet with me every week and to provide prompt and throughout feedback on my work. He has done more than anyone else to mold the way I approach philosophical questions and figures, and set the standards of rigor and novelty which I seek to apply in my own work— standards which I confess I have yet to reach.

I have been fortunate to have the support of exceptional colleagues. In particular, I would like to thank Preston Stovall and Jacob Rump with whom I had numerous fruitful conversations. They are some of the best interlocutors an aspiring philosopher could hope for. I would also like to thank the philosophy faculty at Agnes Scott College, Lara Denis and Hal Thorsrud, for their support and encouragement.

None of this would have been possible without the support of my parents and family. I am grateful above all for the unwavering faith and limitless patience of my loving wife, Erin, and my beautiful daughter, Hazel.

Contents

1 Meaning, Use, and Questions

1.1 Representation v.s. Practice

1.1.1 Two Models of Language

Why do some performances have meaning while others do not? Normally, when I vocalize the sounds associated with the English sentence "Hazel has chickenpox," I assert something, namely, that Hazel has chickenpox. When my one-year-old daughter makes the same sounds, she does not. Why? This is the classical question of intentionality, at least in its linguistic guise.

For centuries philosophers have answered it by appealing, first and foremost, to the idea that expressions (states, performances, etc.) are meaningful in virtue of representing features of the world. The meaning of any particular expression or utterance can be explained in terms of the objects or states of affairs that it represents and the manner in which it represents them. To understand the meaning of a singular term is to know what it refers to; to understand the meaning of a sentence is to know what the world must be like in order for it to be true. Call this model of linguistic meaning REPRESENTATIONALISM.

In the early twentieth century representationalism was elaborated in detail. The position was systematically articulated by Bertrand Russell and the young Ludwig Wittgenstein, blossomed in the hands of Rudolph Carnap and his followers, and reached maturity in the work of Richard Montague. Russell analyzed the way our names come to represent objects, and attempted to generalize his findings to

the whole of language: we get acquainted with entities of our world and let our expressions represent them; it is in this way that our expressions come to have their meanings.

> We must attach some meaning to the words we use, if we are to speak significantly and not utter mere noise; and the meaning we attach to our words must be something with which we are acquainted (Russell 1912, Ch. 5).

The idea was perfected in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, where language is portrayed as representing the world by means of sharing its form:

> In propositions thoughts can be so expressed that to the objects of the thoughts correspond the elements of the propositional sign... In the proposition the name represents the object... The proposition is a picture of reality (Wittgenstein 1961, §§3.2, 3.22, 4.01).

The early Wittgenstein's articulation of representationalism prompted Rudolph Carnap to isolate semantics as that part of the theory of language which has to do with expressions' denoting objects.

> When we observe an application of language, we observe an organism, usually a human being, producing a sound, mark, gesture, or the like as an expression in order to refer by it to something, e.g. an object. Thus we may distinguish three factors involved: the speaker, the expression and what is referred to, which we shall call the *designatum* of the expression... If we abstract from the user of the language and analyze only the expressions and their designata, we are in the field of *semantics*... *Semantics* contains the theory of what is usually called the meaning of expressions... (Carnap 1942, 8-10).

For Carnap, the centrality of representation, or designation, to semantics was to be contrasted with the study of language-use or *pragmatics*. The latter he defined as any investigation of language in which "explicit reference is made to the speaker, or, to put it in more general terms, to the user of a language (Carnap 1942, 8)." Since the meaning of expressions and utterances lies in their representational properties, the representationalist program gives explanatory priority to semantics over pragmatics. In other words, the representationalist holds that in order to

understand the way in which speakers use linguistic expressions and any notion of 'meaning' derived therefrom, we must first understand the semantics of those expressions.

However, in the last century, another model of linguistic meaning has begun to flourish. According to it, expressions are means of interaction and their meanings are their functions within interaction, their aptitudes to serve it in distinctive ways. The meaning of any particular linguistic expression or performance is to be explained in terms of the role it plays in social practices in which it is used. This view thus denies that semantics is conceptually autonomous from pragmatics. Language-use must be understood in order to understand what linguistic items purport to represent. Call this view LINGUISTIC PRAGMATISM or simply PRAGMATISM.

At the beginning of the 20th century, linguistic pragmatism pervaded especially the philosophy of language of the American pragmatists. John Dewey, for instance, claimed that "meaning...is not a psychic existence, it is primarily a property of behavior" (Dewey 1925, 179). G.H. Mead offers a more representative articulation:

> Meaning arises and lies within the field of the relation between the gesture of a given human organism and the subsequent behavior of this organism as indicated to another human organism by that gesture. If that gesture does so indicate to another organism the subsequent (or resultant) behavior of the given organism, then it has meaning. ... Meaning is thus a development of something objectively there as a relation between certain phases of the social act; it is not a physical addition to that act (Mead 1934, 75-76).

This a very different conception of language and consequently a very different concept of meaning than that on offer from the representationalist. Language is not conceived of as a set of substitutes for entities and meanings are not the entities substituted; language is rather a means of practical transaction and meaning is the ability to facilitate such transaction. Knowing what a linguistic expression

means is not a matter of knowing *that* something is or is not the case. Rather, it is a matter of practical ability: knowing *how* to *do* something.

The later Wittgenstein repudiated his tractarian "picture theory;" opting instead for a pragmatist view. Language ceases to be seen as a set of pictures. Instead, it is conceived as "a collection of various tools":

> In the tool box there is a hammer, a saw, a rule, a lead, a glue pot and glue. Many of the tools are akin to each other in form and use, and the tools can be roughly divided into groups according to their relationships; but the boundaries between these groups will often be more or less arbitrary and there are various types of relationship that cut across one another (Wittgenstein 1978, 67).

Pragmatists also characteristically deny that there can be semantic differences that are not publicly accessible, since these would be semantic distinctions without pragmatic difference. Manifestations of this view include Michael Dummett (1978)'s denial that we can grasp contents that go beyond what could, in principle, be verified, W.V. Quine (1960)'s denial that there is any objective basis for choosing between competing translation manuals that predict the same patterns of use, and Donald Davidson (2005)'s more limited embrace of the indeterminacy of meaning and reference. All of these consequences are supposed to follow from the requirement that facts about meaning do not extend beyond what is, in principle, publicly accessible.

Representationalism and pragmatism are the two dominant alternatives in philosophy of language. The work presented here lies squarely in the tradition of pragmatist, and hence anti-representationalist approaches to language. As with any tradition, linguistic pragmatism is home to a range of diverse views. This work engages one view in particular. Which one?

1.1.2 Cashing Out Metaphors

Both representationalist and pragmatist models are constructed with the help of metaphors. Language is a *representation* of reality. Language is a *tool* of social interaction. Advocates of both models form a motley. Each distinguishes himself or herself from others by the way he or she cashes out the respective metaphor.

Some representationalists, like the early Wittgenstein, understand 'representation' as a picturing relation, which in turn is explained in terms of isomorphism between sentences and facts. Others construe 'representation' along causal lines. In "informational semantics," for example, semantic concepts are explained in terms of lawlike correlations between external things (or property instantiations) and mental items, plus counterfactuals or evolutionary histories (Dretske 2000; Fodor 1990). These views take semantic concepts to be conceptually dependent on the causal, counterfactual, and explanatory resources of the "special sciences." Informational semantics' representationalist *bona fides* lie in its insistence that the basic concepts of semantics can be understood in abstraction from proprieties of thought and language use.

On the pragmatist side, the metaphor of language as a tool for social engagement is sometimes taken quite literally. Tools are designed as means for certain ends. So, it would seem, language must serve some particular end. Some, like Dewey and Mead, see language as an instrument of social coordination, a peculiar adaptation of human biological evolution. Others, like Paul Grice (1991), think of language as an instrument for expressing thoughts. But even Wittgenstein, who, as we have seen, also appeals to the metaphor of language as tool, is not committed to its literal interpretation. Indeed, (one of) Wittgenstein's proposal(s) is that we should see the relation between an expression and its meaning on the model of that between a wooden piece we use to play chess and its role in chess (pawn, bishop, etc.). This is a rather attenuated sense of 'tool,' one that is more in line with notions of 'function' or 'role'.

At base, the pragmatist is committed to the idea that the meaning of linguistic expressions lies in the *use* of those expressions in social *activities*, whether such use is strictly analogous to the use of 'tools' or not. Thus, a better way to classify the pragmatist alternatives is to consider the ways in which one might specify the kinds of activities for which language is 'used'. A 'way of specifying an activity' may, in turn, be thought of as a choice of *vocabulary* for describing language-use.

Thus, a pragmatist who sees language as an adaptive resource for satisfying the demands of species preservation, such as Dewey, Mead, and more recently Ruth Millikan (1984), can be understood as specifying language-use in *biological* terms. Likewise, to treat language as an instrument for expressing and communicating thoughts, as Grice does, is to adopt an *intentional* vocabulary for the description of linguistic activity—the vocabulary of intentional states such beliefs, intentions, desires, etc. A pragmatist like Quine, for whom non-verbal stimuli and verbal responses form the basic evidence of 'radical translation', endorses a strictly *behaviorist* vocabulary for describing the use of linguistic expressions.

A pragmatist who adopts semantic vocabulary to specify language-use trivializes the pragmatist approach. For instance, one may describe the use of a given expression by saying that it enables one to refer to a certain item or to express a certain content. This way of proceeding will surely identify and fully describe the meaning of the expression, as well as ensure its definition in terms of use. However, it will achieve this aim at the price of triviality and lack of any explanatory power whatsoever.

There is room, however, for a pragmatist to include semantic terms within a larger set of vocabularies she deploys to describe language-use. Davidson is a pragmatist and notorious critic of representationalism who might be read as doing just this. For Davidson (2001), radical interpretation involves the the simultaneous deployment of behavioral-physical vocabulary in the identification of external stimuli and correlated responses; intentional vocabulary in the ascription of be-

liefs and desires; normative vocabulary in the satisfaction of rationality-constraints placed on interpretation (though also in the ascription of desires or evaluative attitudes more broadly); and semantic vocabulary, fundamentally, in the formulation of truth-conditions for sentences. None of these vocabularies, taken individually, is sufficient to provide an adequate description of language-use. Nor is any of them fully intelligible in advance of thinking about the use of linguistic expressions. Indeed, Davidson does not think that we grasp the concept of truth by grasping a definition or analysis of it. It is, in that sense, primitive. We grasp it by understanding its role in a larger theory that combines psychology, semantics, and decision theory, and that is tested ultimately by its capacity to make sense of others as rational agents.

Linguistic pragmatism is thus a big-tent position. There are numerous, often incompatible ways to adhere to it. The approach to language that this work focuses belongs under that tent, though it is notably distinct from its compatriots.

1.2 The Space of Reasons

1.2.1 Wilfrid Sellars' Normative Pragmatism

The pragmatism I have in mind describes language-use by applying *normative* concepts like *obligation, permission, responsibility, authority, entitlement,* and *commitment.* More precisely, the position treats linguistic activity as one in which participants *do* things that can be describing using these terms—for example, *undertaking* commitment, *granting* entitlement, *discharging* responsibility, *acknowledging* authority, and so on. Such activity necessarily has a causal-behavioral dimension to it. But the features of it that appear uniquely under normative descriptions are, on this view, those that serve to distinguish it as *linguistic* activity. Call this position NORMATIVE PRAGMATISM.

Although it has roots in the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, the *locus classicus*

of normative pragmatism is the work of the 20th century American philosopher Wilfrid Sellars. Sellars encapsulated the central idea of normative pragmatism in an image: the space of reasons. At an important moment in his *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, he writes that "in characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says" (Sellars 1997, §36). Specifying an episode or state as one of knowing would be claiming, to use language Sellars exploits elsewhere, that an *epistemic* fact obtains. Sellars sees the attempt to analyze epistemic facts into non-epistemic or 'natural' facts without remainder as a "radical mistake" of a piece with the so-called 'naturalistic fallacy' in ethics. For one to know that things are thus and so is, rather, to be in a position that *entitles* one to *endorse* the statement that things are thus and so. To claim knowledge of something is to be *responsible* for providing reasons that justify one's claim.

The image of a 'space of reasons' has a wider scope than its application to the concept of knowledge. Although he is not so kind as to make the claim explicitly, Sellars makes a number of moves in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* suggesting that the space of reasons in which epistemic states are properly situated is also home to intentional states more generally. Something very close to if not identical with this proposal is audible in Davidson's claim that concepts of propositional attitudes operate under a "constitutive ideal of rationality," which appears in the context of his attempt to persuade us not to expect applications of concepts of propositional attitudes to line up in an orderly way with descriptions of their manifestations in terms of, say, neurophysiology.

Sellars glosses the logical space of reasons as the space of justifying and being able to justify what one *says*. This does not imply that a knower must say that things are thus and so in order to know it. The point is just that if she were to say this, she would be entitled to her claim.

It does matter that Sellars introduces the space of reasons as a space occupied

by *speakers*, people who can say things and justify what they say. From what has been said so far, it might seem that justificatory relations between things one can say figure only as a particularly striking case of justificatory relations in general, which, on this account, might equally hold between postures or attitudes adopted by non-language-using animals. To read Sellars this way, however, would be to ignore the role in his thinking of what he calls "psychological nominalism," the thesis that "all awareness of sorts, resemblances, facts, etc., in short all awareness of abstract entities—indeed, all awareness even of particulars—is a linguistic affair" (Sellars 1997, 60). According to this view, intentional states such as beliefs, intentions, and desires are to be understood in terms of normative proprieties which specify the kinds of linguistic performances in which one expresses such states. Thus, what it is to believe that things are thus and so ought to be understood in terms of what authorizes one to assert that things are thus and so and what one becomes responsible for in doing so. This doesn't mean that properties of belief can be exhaustively *reduced* to properties of asserting—just that the concept of *asserting* has explanatory priority over that of *belief.* Psychological nominalism thus prohibits adoption of the Gricean understanding of language-use in terms of the expression of antecedently intelligible mental states.

On the Sellarsian picture, using a language is a matter of doing things that can be described as normatively significant, i.e. in terms of the authority one has or the responsibility one incurs in making a claim. In the image of the space of reasons, this normative significance appears as the role or function that linguistic tokens play in a network of *inferential* relations. Justifying a claim can be thought of as offering another claim from which one is entitled to *infer* the first.

Sellars distinguishes formal inferences, which are a matter of the syntactic rules of the language, from material inferences, which are not a function of syntactic structure alone (Sellars 1997, 3-27). The inference from 'This is red' to 'This is colored' is one example of a material inference, but, in Sellars's view, so is the inference from 'It is raining' to 'The street will be wet'. Material inferences

are not enthymemes waiting to be made good by supplying an explicit principle; rather, they articulate the meaning of the expressions that make up their premises and conclusions. In in the final analysis, it is the web of material inferences an expression is involved in—not the putative representational relation it bears to the world—that determines its core meaning.

Inference is not the only normatively significant performance in Sellars space of reasons. Indeed, Sellars has an expansive view of what counts as the usage of an expression. He distinguishes three different generic dimensions of usage: language-entry transitions, language-language transitions, and language-exit transitions. Perception and observation are paradigmatic contexts in which one enters a language in response to some form of sensory stimulation. The announcement of an intention followed by an action that attempts to carry it out is a case of exiting a language. Transitions within language are paradigmatically inferences, material or formal.

Like Wittgenstein, Sellars sees the language-as-tool metaphor as way of highlighting the functional role linguistic expressions play in social practice. For him, the functional role of bits of language is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that reflects the position of an expression-type within an intricate network of stimulatory inputs, permissible inferential moves, and behavioral outputs.

Sellars even introduced a special notation to facilitate talk about functional roles: the dot-quote. The expression '•N•' is a common noun applicable to any linguistic item in any linguistic environment that plays the role played by the expression displayed between the dots. Just as the common name 'pawn' properly applies to certain pieces of wood by virtue of the licenses that govern their use within the game of chess, '•triangular•' applies to certain linguistic items that occupy the role occupied in our language by the expression 'triangular'.

Sellars' reflection on linguistic roles and his dot-quote notation permitted him to make pragmatist inroads into the heart of representationalist territory. Since the representationalist understands the meaning of singular terms as the refer-

ential relation words bear to objects, the representaionalist account of *abstract* singular terms entails realism about abstract entities. Words like 'triangularity' refer to entities that are eternal, immutable, nonlocalizable in space-time, multiply instantiable, and not dependent for their existence upon mental or linguistic activity.

Equipped, with his dot-quotes, Sellars reconstructs "Triangularity is a property" as "•triangular•s are (one-place) predicates." The upshot is that metaphysical claims—for example, the claim that a certain object exemplifies triangularity—are portrayed as implicitly *metalinguistic*. There appears a single semantical pattern at work in sentences incorporating abstract singular terms: talk involving an abstract singular term, 'F-ness,' is always talk about •F•s, linguistic expressions (in the sense of tokens) that are, in their own languages, functionally equivalent with 'F's. More broadly, metaphysical claims that initially appear to state language-world connections—e.g. claims about the relation between abstract singular terms and abstract objects or between predicates and properties—are, on Sellars's theory, construed as normative claims about appropriate linguistic usage.

Sellar's extends the metalinguistic strategy for dealing with talk of universals to the alethic, causal, and deontic modalities. Each is revealed as material mode metalinguistic speech about the inferential commitments and priorities embedded in language. Moreover, when this same treatment isn applied to intentional vocabulary, it yields the position of psychological nominalism.

Sellars' metalinguistic nominalism demonstrates, or at least intimates how the normative pragmatic approach to linguistic intentionality might provide the resources with which to tackle the full range of semantic phenomena that representationalism purports to explain. It promises to do so by exploiting the idea that our linguistic capacities stand in complex relationships to one another—that our ability to use abstract singular terms, for example, are 'built upon' or perhaps 'built up from' our ability to use predicates. It is an inspiring vision of what is otherwise a seemingly routine activity.

1.2.2 Robert Brandom: Pragmatism's Thermidor

Up to this point pragmatism has been portrayed as a radical rejection of the representationalist picture. To be a pragmatist it seems, one must be *anti*-representationalist in the sense of repudiating *in toto* the idea that words represent reality.

This is certainly the way some advocates of linguistic pragmatism see the position. Richard Rorty (1989, 2009) is an outspoken defender of the view that all talk of our words or thought corresponding to or 'mirroring' facts and objects is not only misguided; it actually turns philosophy into a resource for authoritarian elements in society. As he bluntly puts it: "Representationalists, because they believe that there are objects which are what they are apart from the way they are described, can take seriously the picture of a track leading from subject to object. Anti-representationalists cannot" (Rorty 2005, 141). The notion of representation, according to Rorty, cannot be rehabilitated; it must be abandoned.

It is not obvious, however, that an adherent to the big-tent position of linguistic pragmatism needs to follow Rorty's path. As defined above, linguistic pragmatism only commits its proponents to denying that word-world relations do the work of *explaining* what makes for propositional content and semantic significance independently and in advance of understanding the use of significant expressions. Denying representational concepts priority over pragmatic ones in the explanation of meaning does not (in any obvious way) commit the pragmatist to denying that our words can be coherently understood as standing in some representational relation to nonlinguistic reality. After all, Sellar's metalinguistic nominalism does not repudiate our talk of abstract entities. Rather, it explains precisely what it is that makes such talk legitimate. Could not the linguistic pragmatist apply the same sort of strategy to talk of 'representation' more broadly?

In *Making It Explicit* (1994), Robert Brandom offers just this kind of rehabilitation of representation. Following out Sellars' insights, Brandom looks to provide

a normative-pragmatic account of the sense in which our talk can be *about* objects and our claims about them ultimately be *constrained* by some array of facts. We might say that Brandom is the thermidor to Rorty's pragmatist revolution.[1]

The project of *Making It Explicit* is to give a normative-pragmatic account of intentionality as such, including, crucially, the representational dimension of thought and speech. Brandom's aim is to be able to specify in non-intentional, normative terms what creatures must do, or be capable of doing, in order to qualify as *using* intentional vocabulary—that is, as interpreting one another as thinking and speaking beings. In order to accomplish this task, Brandom believes that the normative pragmatist must be able to describe what agents are doing when they use distinctly *representational* locutions. If the normative pragmatic approach to language is to be genuine rival to representationalism, it must be capable of saying what we are *doing* when we treat our words as representing an independent reality.

The project does not amount to a *reduction* of semantic or intentional to normative-pragmatic vocabulary. A reductionist account would involve the claim that everything that can be said by means of intentional vocabulary can equally be said by means of a suitably constructed non-intentional normative-pragmatist vocabulary—thus implying that everything that can be done by using the first can also be done by using the second. Brandom's ambition is to construct a pragmatist metavocabulary for any discursive practice whatsoever. In this metavocabulary one must be able to *say* what counts as engaging in a practice that is sufficient in itself to deploy another vocabulary, i.e. sufficient to count as *saying* something. It is possible that things that can be said using the target vocabulary cannot be said in the metavocabulary. The normative pragmatic understanding of intentional vocabulary might be thought of as representing this sort of situation: the normative-pragmatic metavocabulary that allows one to say what counts as using the language of ascribing intentional states to others is expressively *weaker* than that intentional vocabulary. Thus no reduction is possible.[2]

---

[1] This would not be the first time Brandom has be described this way. See (Price 2013).

[2] In his Locke Lectures published as *Between Saying and Doing*, Brandom calls this situation

Brandom's project begins with an effort to interpret the Sellarsian space of reasons as a necessarily *social* practice in which performances acquire normative significance in virtue of the way participants anticipate and respond to them. What gives one agent's action the status of, say, incurring a responsibility, is a matter of the kinds of attitudes other agents adopt toward it. Participants hold one another responsible by being disposed to sanction, positively or negatively, one another in light of the actions she performs.

Normative social practices qualify as *discursive* practices—that is, as practices in which participants interpret one another as thinking and speaking creatures—and thus as instantiations of the 'space of reasons' when the normative statuses conferred upon performances exhibit a certain structure. Roughly, agents must treat each other as being committed to justifying their deeds if challenged to do so and as being committed or authorized to do other things in light of what they have legitimately committed themselves to. When a practice exhibits these features (though with a bit more detail filled in), the agent's 'deeds' can be interpreted as *assertions*, and the normative transitions from one to another can be interpreted as *inferences*. In other words, the normative metavocabulary of *commitment* and *entitlement* is sufficient to describe what creatures must do in order to assert and infer. A practice that satisfies this description constitutes a 'game of giving and asking for reasons.'

The justification for this claim that a practice consisting solely of assertings and inferrings counts as discursive is to be found in the explanatory line that can be drawn from it to the diverse features of ordinary discourse, most dramatically its representational dimension. The challenge Brandom sets for himself in the second part of *Making It Explicit* is to explain in inferential terms what the representational dimension of ordinary discourse is, by specifying the inferential roles of the representational, semantic, and intentional locutions that make it explicit: terms such as 'true' and 'refers', and 'of' and 'about'. There is, of course, much more

------

one of "expressive bootstrapping" (Brandom 2008, 11).

than these locutions that Brandom explains with the inferential architecture. The highlights include: logical vocabulary of conditionals and negation, singular terms and predicates, identity locutions, anaphoric initiators and dependents, deictic expressions, pronouns, object-dependent indexicals such as 'I', and propositional attitude ascriptions. Since these linguistic elements appear to be so central to our ordinary discursive practices, the explanation of their significance on the basis of inferential relations strongly supports the idea that the inferential practice he begins with is indeed discursive, even if it is only marginally recognizable as such. The proof that the original practice is discursive lies, as Brandom himself says, in the pudding (Brandom 1997, 191).

What does it mean to make something explicit? Brandom gives a particular sense to this turn-of-phrase. To make something explicit is to *say* (describe, specify, etc.) what one *does*. One of Brandom's core insights is that the function of certain bits of language is to make features of our linguistic practice explicit. Vocabularies that play this role are said to be *expressive*. This idea is prefigured in Sellar's claims that some apparently referring expressions are in fact devices for talking about the norms governing certain linguistic expressions. But Brandom's notion of expressive vocabulary is importantly different from Sellar's position. For what makes a vocabulary expressive of some underlying practice, at least paradigmatically, is not just its power to describe that practice. It is also the capacity, in principle, of those who have mastered that practice to *extend* or *elaborate* their repertoire of skills to include the use of the vocabulary in question.

Here is an illustration of the expressive role played by traditional logical vocabulary—in particular, conditionals. In Brandom's primitive linguistic practices, participants are capable of treating certain performances as assertings and certain transitions between moves as material inferences. Recall that material inferences are those whose correctness depends not on their logical form but on the meaning of the expressions that make up their premises and conclusions. The question that Brandom asks is: How could participants in such an inferential

practice come to use logical vocabulary like conditionals?

This is a sketch of the answer.[3] We assume that participants are able to sort material inferences into those that are correct or 'good' and those which are not (according to the underlying practice, regardless of whether they are correct or incorrect according to some other, external standard). Treating a material inference from, say, p to q as good can be thought of as being disposed to assert q if one is disposed to assert p. One way for agents to extend or elaborate their practical abilities is to substitute one kind of response for another, so long as they already capable of performing both response-types. Since participants are already capable of making assertions by producing tokenings of p and q, it ought to be possible for them to produce assertive tokenings of a new form: "if p then q." The agents can now substitute these tokenings for their dispositional response to correct material inferences. Likewise, they can respond to their own assertion of the conditional "if p then q" by treating the inference from p to q as a good one— again, by being disposed to assert q if disposed to assert p. These new differential responsive abilities are nothing but a rearrangement of prior ones. But whereas in the original practice agents could only *do* something to endorse an inference, now they can *say* something that has the same practical significance. Indeed, being able to say what they otherwise could only do permits speakers to *do* more. Now they can make inferences involving conditionals. For Brandom, all traditional logical vocabulary plays this expressive role of *codifying* inferences or *specifying* underlying inferential practices and thereby making possible the development of new inferential skills.

One of the central claims of *Making It Explicit* is that our talk about the representational properties of semantic contents can be understood as a way of making explicit the essentially social character of inferential practice.[4] The idea that our words represent features of the world and that our claims answer to

---

[3]Brandom lays out this answer in several places. See (Brandom 1994, Ch. 4), (Brandom 2000, 19-20, 86-87), (Brandom 2008, 44-48).
[4]See (Brandom 1994, Ch. 8)

mind-independent facts is, in part, explained by the way certain vocabularies enable us to talk about the attitudes people have toward objects in two ways: one in reference to what people *say* about objects and another in reference to the objects *themselves.* More specifically, Brandom suggests that the sense in which our assertions are about one object rather than another may be articulated by a regime of *de re* and *de dicto* ascriptions of propositional attitudes. A *de dicto* ascription such as

(1.1) Empedocles believed that water is a chemical element.

      contrasts with a *de re* ascription like

(1.2) Empedocles believed of water that it is a chemical element.

      Where (1.1) includes a dictum ("water is a chemical element") that the speaker in question would endorse in its present form, it is quite possible that the speaker would not endorse all the inferences from that dictum that we would endorse, or that she should endorse in an ideal sense. Thus, it is surely not the case that

(1.3) Empedocles believed that H_2O is a chemical element.

      and it surely is the case that

(1.4) Empedocles believed of H_2O that it is a chemical element.

      What the *de re* ascription adds here is the sense that we are speaking not merely of the various dicta that speakers would endorse but of the things of which they say them, that is, the stuff, H_2O itself, and not merely the various signs or expressions or even concepts of it. It is a mode of expression familiar to us from everyday speech and serves as a way of clarifying and explicating what we take ourselves and others to be talking or thinking *about.* The key difference here is that in cases of *de dicto* ascription we are attributing a set of commitments to a speaker—those things she would have to defend in order to be entitled to the claim, inferences that she should be prepared to make, actions to take, and so on— whereas in the case of *de re* ascriptions *we* are undertaking at least some of those

commitments ourselves, while often withholding attribution of them to the other speaker. So we take on the commitments of asserting that there is something we call "H_2O" but we do not attribute those commitments to Empedocles in (1.2). We could do so, of course, but the important role such locutions play here is allowing us not to do so, and thus emphasizing that we differentiate between the referent of someone's thought and talk and the thoughts and talk itself.

In the basic linguistic practice of asserting and inferring, participants can treat one another as making claims, that is, they can attribute commitments to them. Attributing beliefs or commitments is a practical attitude that is implicit in the practice. *Ascribing* beliefs or commitments, on the other hand, is making that implicit practical attitude explicit in the form of a claim. Propositional attitude-ascribing locutions make it possible to express that practical attitude as the content of a claim, and therefore as something which can be offered as a reason, and for which reasons can be demanded. Attitude-ascribing locutions are thus a kind of expressive vocabulary, functioning in a manner similar to but distinct from the way the logical vocabulary of conditionals functions. The expressive function of *de re* ascriptions of propositional attitudes is to make explicit which aspects of what is said express commitments that are being attributed—the part of the content specification that appears within the *de dicto* 'that' clause—and which express commitments that are undertaken (by the ascriber)—the part that appears within the scope of the *de re* 'of'.

This brief sketch of the expressive role played by representational vocabulary, specifically *de re* attitude ascriptions, reveals the way in which various features of ordinary discourse can be thought of as 'building upon' or 'enriching' a more basic practice, one that strictly consists of asserting and inferring. In the basic practice, assertions have no structure; there are no singular terms or predicates, no quantifying expressions or logical connectives. Utterance-types are interpreted *holophrastically.* But the complex of normative statuses conferred upon perfor-mances and the differentiation of social perspectives that structure that practice

already contain, implicitly, the significance that is made explicit by the 'missing' vocabularies. Our familiar ways of speaking and thinking form a vast edifice that can be thought of as built upon and built up from more basic practical abilities.

1.2.3 Primitive Language Games

The role that assertional practices play in Brandom's theory can be expressed by two distinct claims.

1. Assertional practices are *sufficient* to qualify as discursive.

2. Assertional practices *must* be part of any practice that qualifies as discursive.

The first claim concerns the minimal set of social capacities that creatures can exhibit and, thereby, qualify as speaking a language. Let's call such a set a MINIMALLY DISCURSIVE PRACTICE (MDP). The second claim concerns what set of social capacities discursive agents must exhibit *qua* discursive. Let's call such a set a NECESSARY DISCURSIVE PRACTICE (NDP).

For Brandom, these sets coincide. Purely assertional practices, those that instantiate the 'game of giving and asking for reasons,' are both MDPs and NDPs. Exhibition of these sets of social capacities is both necessary and sufficient for creatures to qualify as discursive. It should be noted, however, that from the theoretical existence of MDPs and NDPs it does not follow that a single practice is both. There may be several that qualify as both or some which qualify as MDPs but not as NDPs and *vice versa*.

Brandom does not use the expression 'minimally discursive practice' in *Making It Explicit*, but he does use it later to characterize the project pursued in that work. (Stekeler-Weithofer 2008, 223). In his Locke Lectures, Brandom (2008) uses the term AUTONOMOUS DISCURSIVE PRACTICE (ADP) to refer to "a language-game one could play though one played no other" (Brandom 2008, 3). He claims that "every autonomous *discursive* practice must include core practices of *giving and asking for reasons*" (Brandom 2008, 111). This claim expresses clearly the

idea that assertional practices are NDPs, as I have defined them. But, in *Making It Explicit* we can see Brandom claiming that the game of giving and asking for reasons is an MDP. In the Preface, he describes his inquiry as one for which "'the aim is to offer sufficient conditions for a system of social practices to count as specifically linguistic practices" (Brandom 1994, 7). We can infer that, for Brandom, all MDPs are ADPs, though not all ADPs are MDPs. The reason for denying the converse is that there will be discursive practices that are sufficient in themselves to qualify their participants as discursive (i.e. autonomous), though they involve the exercise of *more* practical abilities than those needed to qualify as such. The kinds of practices of representational, intentional, and normative discourse, which Brandom describes at the end of *Making It Explicit* would be an example of ADPs that are not MDPs.

As we have seen, the way Brandom proposes to redeem his claims about assertional practices is to demonstrate how, in principle, speakers who only have the social capacities to assert and infer, in the sense of making material inferences, are capable, in turn, of extending or elaborating these basic abilities into those needed to exhibit many of the familiar features of ordinary discourse. This way of thinking about the possible 'extension' of linguistic use is not unique to Brandom. Philosophers of language in the pragmatist vein have a tradition of considering the ways in which practices of using one sort of linguistic expressions might be achieved by extending a more basic practice which lacks them.

The *locus classicus* for this approach can be discerned in Wittgenstein (1953). In §2 of his *Philosophical Investigations* he famously invites his readers to imagine what he a calls a "primitive language game" that consists of four calls uttered by a builder A and his assistant, builder B. B hands over a slab, a pillar, a block, or a beam, depending on whether A calls out "Slab," "Pillar," "Block," or "Beam." In later passages of the text, Wittgenstein has his readers consider various expansions (*Erweiterungen*) of the practice described in §2. Their primitive practical abilities are expanded to include some numerals, some demonstratives, a set of

color-samples (§8); later they acquire tools and proper names to refer to them (§15); later still, they are described as coming to use vacuous proper names by developing a pretend or *as-if* language game-extension of the one they engaged in with non-vacuous proper names. (§41-42). In many cases, we are asked to consider both whether the abilities the builder's begin with are sufficient to achieve the expansion of their practice and the ways in which such expansions alter the meaning of expressions.

Wittgenstein's fascination with the ability to extend primitive language games does not, however, lead him see any particular practice as one that is either minimally sufficient or necessary for language-use in general. In a famous passage of *Philosophical Investigations*, he writes that

> Do not be troubled by the fact that languages (2) and (8) consist only of orders. If you want to say that this shews them to be incomplete, ask yourself whether our language is complete;—whether it was so before the symbolism of chemistry and the notation of the infinitesimal calculus were incorporated in it; for these are, so to speak, suburbs of our language. (And how many houses or streets does it take before a town begins to be a town?) Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses.

Wittgenstein's parenthetical question about how many houses constitute a town is analogous to the question of how many and what sorts of practical abilities creatures need to qualify as linguistic. He appears to be suggesting that there is an indeterminacy surrounding limits of the application of the concept 'town' with respect to the number of houses occupying a certain geographic region— i.e. the concept of 'town' is vague in the sense associated with forms of the sorites paradox. It follows analogously, that the concept 'speaks a language' is vague with respect to the number and kind of practical abilities creatures need to exhibit in order to have it correctly applied to them. Wittgenstein can be

thus read as claiming that there as no clear answer to the question of how few abilities creatures need in order to count as speaking a language. Rather there are lots of minimal or primitive discursive practices that can be imagined, some of which may not intersect with others, many of which may not even be extended to incorporate others. Indeed, in the next section of the text, he claims to find it "easy to imagine a language consisting only of orders and reports in battle.—Or a language consisting only of questions and expressions for answering yes and no. And innumerable others.—And to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life" (Wittgenstein 1953, §19). In other words, there are innumerably many practices which count as genuinely discursive but which exhibit only a fraction of the pragmatic and semantic features we associated with our ordinary linguistic activities.

The metaphor of the ancient city, on the other hand, is Wittgenstein's way of claiming that there is no necessary practice that linguistic creatures must participate in—i.e. there are no NDPs. There is no 'downtown' in the city of language; no necessary discursive practice in the sense that one must master *it* in order to master any others. Instead, there is a motley of practices, some extended to incorporate others, some quite distinct from yet dependent upon others.

What the example of Wittgenstein shows is that the claim that there is a single practice that is both minimally sufficient and necessary for language-use is a contentious one, even for those committed to normative pragmatism. Brandom is more than aware of this fact. Indeed, he goes to great lengths to distinguish himself from Wittgenstein on the question of whether language has a 'downtown':

> It certainly can coherently be denied that there is any core of practices-or-abilities common to all autonomous discursive practices. Wittgenstein seems to do so in thinking of such practices as language-*games* (*Sprachspiele*), given his insistence that the concept <u>game</u> does not have an essence or a definition, but is structured rather by family resemblances. That is why he does not see language as having a 'downtown', by more or less peripheral relation to which something else can count as linguistic. But I think there is a relatively bright

line to be drawn in the vicinity, marking a good thing to mean by 'linguistic' or 'discursive'. Specifically, *linguistic* practices are those in which some *doings* have the practical significance of *sayings*. The core case of *say*ing something is making a *claim*, *asserting* something. The practices I will call 'linguistic' or 'discursive' are those in which it is possible to make assertions or claims. Although, as Wittgenstein is concerned to point out, their occurrence can have other kinds of import, the home language game of what are for that very reason called 'declarative' sentences is their free-standing use in asserting (Brandom 2008, 41-42).

Given the centrality of assertion in Brandom's picture, he is also committed to denying that Wittgenstein's builders-game is genuinely discursive.

By this assertional pragmatic criterion of demarcation of the discursive, many of Wittgenstein's *Sprachspiele* are not really **Sprach***spiele*. They are *vocal* practices, but not *verbal* ones. ... These 'calls' [of builder A to builder B] are properly so-called. They are *signals*, appropriately responded to, according to the practice, in one way rather than another. But they are not *orders*. For an order specifies *how* it is appropriately responded to by *saying* what it is one must *do* in order to comply. "Shut the door!" can be a saying of the imperative kind only as part of a larger practice in which "The door is shut," can be a saying of the declarative kind (Brandom 2008, 42).

For Brandom, then, Wittgenstein's builder-game is not a genuine MDP because it's pragmatic repertoire does not include speech acts with distinctly assertional significance. Indeed, this passage shows that he is committed to the claim that in order for the performance of a non-assertional speech act to qualify as a *speech* act, it must be part of a practice that includes the making of assertions. In contrast, assertional practices are autonomously or self-sufficiently discursive; they need no supplementation by non-assertional speech acts to qualify as discursive.

The work presented here deals primarily with the claim that pits Brandom against Wittgenstein, namely, that the ability to make assertions and take others as doing so is sufficient for speaking a language. For ease of reference, I will call this claim, or, more precisely, the position it articulates, ASSERTIONAL FUNDA-

MENTALISM. A good deal of effort will be put to establishing that this position is untenable because *purely assertional practices are not MDPs.*

But while I contend that assertional practices, considered apart from any auxiliary language-games, do not qualify as linguistic practices, I do not advocate Wittgenstein's pluralism. I follow Brandom in holding that it is not just any normative practice that counts as discursive. Only those that possess a certain normative structure will fit the bill. There are I believe, practices we can imagine which have just those structural features that are needed to qualify their practitioners as discursive, and no more. *There are MDPs, but they aren't purely assertional.*

My focus on the nature of MDPs is not meant to reflect a lack of interest in questions concerning the social abilities *necessary* for language-use. On the contrary, I agree with Brandom that the ability to make and recognize others as making assertions is a necessary component of any autonomous language-game. Asserting sits in the linguistic downtown, but *it is not alone.* If assertions do constitute an NDP, then demonstrating that practices of asserting and inferring are only intelligible as part of a (slightly) broader practice, it follows that *this broader practice is an NDP*. Thus, while it is not the primary goal of this work to show that an expanded, more-than-assertional practice is a necessary component of any autonomous discursive practice, it does, nonetheless, have this claim as one of its consequences.

Getting a proper theoretical grip on the minimally sufficient capacities for language-use is critical to the viability of the inferentialist project and to the entire normative pragmatic approach. Providing use-theoretic explanations of those intentional phenomena long thought to be the exclusive explanatory domain of representationalism puts linguistic pragmatism in real competition with representationalism. The most successful attempts to generate such explanations have come from the normative pragmatic approach developed by Sellars and Brandom. Since these explanations rely on the notion that primitive practices can

be extended and elaborated into ones that exhibit the representationalist's choice phenomena, explanatory success depends upon correctly identifying those primitive practices. I do not believe that Brandom has done so. Here, I offer what I take to be a better account of minimally discursive practices.

1.3 The Fate of Questions

1.3.1 An Ancient Prejudice

I am by no means the first to challenge Brandom's picture of MDPs. A number of critics have raised objections to Brandom's claim that a purely assertional practice—one devoid of non-assertional speech acts and of all the logical, intentional, normative, and representational vocabulary associated with ordinary discourse—may be rightfully described as *discursive.* Bob Hale and Crispin Wright (2010), for instance, argue that the norms governing such purely assertional practices must include one that is truth-*like* in order for the performances within them to be genuine assertions. John McDowell (2008) argues (repeatedly) that one cannot engage in assertional practices without engaging in explicitly representational and logical ones.

While these critics find problems with normative structure and austere linguistic capacities that characterize Brandom's MDP, others have focused on the consequences that the absence of non-assertional speech acts has for the *pragmatics* of Brandom's game of giving and asking for reasons. Mark Lance and Rebecca Kukla argue in (2010), and more extensively in (2009), that, with respect to perception and action, Brandom's account severs "the agent-relative, voiced dimensions of linguistic practice," in particular the first-person "recognitives" ("Lo, a rabbit!") and "vocatives" ('Yo, Emma!'), which they argue are "constitutive of any language with the expressive capacity to make meaningful empirical assertions" (Lance and Kukla 2010, 127). They claim that "[Brandom's] focus on

assertions to the exclusion of other pragmatic acts is problematic— it distorts our understanding of discourse as a normative phenomenon, including our understanding of assertion itself" (Lance and Kukla 2010, 117). Jeremy Wanderer (2010a) also challenges the sufficiency of assertions for discursivity, arguing that any Brandomian linguistic practice must include something that plays the functional role of challenging as well as asserting. If assertions are to play this role, then, according to Wanderer, they must have the pragmatic structure of a second-personally addressed act.

The challenge I pose to Brandom's account can be seen as a contribution to this pragmatic line of criticism. Like Lance, Kukla, and Wanderer, I too see difficulties with the idea that a practice devoid of non-asssertional speech acts could be considered autonomously discursive. This type of criticism may be motivated by pointing out a prejudice that Brandom's inferentialism shares with the many traditional approaches to intentionality.

While philosophers have long privileged representation as the lens through which to view intentional phenomena, they have also tended to draw their conclusions from a relatively small set of linguistic and mental data. Historically, this set has consisted of mental states expressed by, speech acts typically realized by, and the meanings paradigmatically associated with the utterance of *declarative* sentences. The preoccupation among philosophers with mental states of belief, mental events of judgment, speech acts of assertion, and, in general, the meaning associated with the grammatical form of declarative sentences has led many to see these categories and the phenomena that fall under them as representing the site of intentionality *per se*. Consequently, the other forms of sentences (e.g. interrogatives, imperatives, etc.), speech acts (e.g. asking questions, giving commands, etc.), and mental states (e.g. wondering-wh, knowing-how, intending-to, etc.) are secondary or derivative, even unnecessary.

Wittgenstein once said that the main source of mistakes in philosophy is a one-sided diet: one feeds oneself only one kind of examples. This is the sort of

mistake that underlies the assumption that the content of declarative sentences provides the model on which all intentional states, acts, and expressions are to be understood.

Nuel Belnap (1990) calls this mistake the 'declarative fallacy.' He urges us to reject it and implores us to "recognize that from the beginning there are not only declarative sentences, but, at least, both interrogatives and imperatives." Studying declaratives, their associated meanings (propositions) and speech acts (assertions), is not enough to yield an adequate theoretical account of language and linguistic communication.

Brandom's picture of MDPs is unabashedly declarativist. His adherence to what I am calling 'assertional fundamentalism' is the pragmatist face of Belnap's fallacy.[5] As with any fallacy, avoiding the declarativist trap requires one to identify where its operative assumption fails. So, we may ask, where does assertional fundamentalism run aground?

The central claim of this work is that assertional practices are not intelligible apart the role they play in a game of asking and answering *questions*—nor are such *inquisitive* practices intelligible apart from assertional ones. Asking questions and making assertions are *reciprocally-dependent practices.* One cannot know how to ask a question without knowledge of how to make an assertion, and one cannot make an assertion without the ability to ask and to take others as asking questions. Thus, purely assertional practices are not MDPs—but *inquistive* practices, to which they properly belong, are. Recognizing the centrality of questions to discursive practice is how one avoids the declarative fallacy that assertional fundamentalism commits.

---

[5]I argue this point in Chapter Four

1.3.2 Forgetting the Question

Despite invoking Sellars' phrase of the 'game of giving and asking for reasons' to describe inferential practices, Brandom has little to say on what constitutes 'asking for reasons,' and what he does say has virtually nothing to do with questions. He describes 'asking for reasons' as *challenging* another to provide support for her claim. In keeping with his assertional fundamentalism, these acts of challenging another to produce reasons are themselves nothing but assertions incompatible with the claim in question. So in Brandom's MDP assertions, not questions, do the work of 'asking for reasons.'

Brandom's failure to acknowledge the possibility that 'asking for reasons' might be a distinctly inquisitive or interrogative performance is of a piece with the broader tendency in philosophy to relegate the significance of questions, often quite literally, to a footnote. Even if the topic of questions is seriously broached, the philosopher will insist that whatever significance questions have lies in their resemblance to assertions or judgments, and whatever resemblances they lack can by accounted for in terms of the familiar 'declarative' forms.

It is not, of course, as if the significance of questions has gone wholly unnoticed by philosophers. The 20th century British philosopher, R.G. Collingwood placed the relationship between questions and answers at the center of his metaphysics. Even Aristotle tells us that philosophy begins in *wonder* and Heidegger says that we are beings for whom Being is a *question.* But from the philosophical anthropologies produced over the two and half millennia of the enterprise there is not one that has attracted followers to the notion that it is an engagement with questions—their posing, asking, investigating, resolving, etc.—that distinguishes the human as such. There is certainly no ready-made and explicit account of *homo quaerens* in the western philosophical canon. The idea that we are the questioning animal may be no more hyperbolic then the claim that we are the rational animal. And yet, it is not the word 'question' that appears so frequently in philosophical

accounts of human nature. Instead, it's concepts of *knowledge*, *judgment*, and *choice* that get pride of place.

There is, to be sure, a tradition running from Plato to Kant that speaks of the *desire* or *interest* of reason, which might be read charitably as an acknowledgment of the centrality of questions in human life. But even here, there is an assumption that whatever is really important about questions can be captured in terms of a certain kind of desire, a desire to know. Thus, the significance of questions is at best a product of the dominance of knowledge, judgment, and choice or desire in the understanding of human nature. A discipline as prone to revolutions as philosophy is should not rest comfortably with this assumption, and yet, it appears again and again if and when philosophers attend to the nature of questions.

One might expect this attitude of relegation, assimilation, and reduction of the interrogative to the declarative to evaporate when philosophers turned *en mass* to the study of language. But for the most part this was not the case. For many philosophers of language, the semantics of interrogative sentences is reducible to, if not identical with, that of declarative sentences. David Lewis (1970), for instance, holds that interrogatives are adequately paraphrased as performatives. Thus, the sentence, "Are you going to the party?" is paraphrased as "I hereby ask you whether you are going to party." The truth conditions of performatives are treated straightforwardly as any other kind of declarative, so the above paraphrase is true if and only if I ask you whether you are going to the party. (The fact that the paraphrase retains the interrogative clause "whether..." appears not to have troubled Lewis.)

According to Davidson (2001), the sentence "Are you going to the party?" is analyzed as a sequence of two declarative sentences, one, a mood setter, the other, a neutral declarative. The result is the sequence "My next utterance is interrogatival in force. You are going to the party." This sequence can then be submitted to a truth conditional analysis. If the original interrogative is not used to ask a question, then the sentence containing the mood setter is simply false.

(Note that in Davidson's analysis the declarative sentence must be force-neutral, on pain of circularity.) Again, the semantics of interrogatives is reduced to that of declaratives.

The early Frege was an exception to this reductive and assimilationist tendency. In his important paper "On Sense and Reference" (1977) his view was that the contents of interrogative clauses do not express thoughts, i.e. propositions, because "the question of truth does not arise" for them. Rather, interrogatives express what he called *questions*, where a question is not a proposition but something that "stands on the same level" as a proposition. But later, in "Thoughts" (1991) Frege retracts his earlier position, claiming that cognate declaratives and yes-no interrogatives (what he calls 'sentence-questions') "contain the same thought; but the assertoric sentence contains something else as well, namely an assertion. The interrogative sentence contains something more too, namely a request." In other words, the sentences "Henry is going to the party" and "Is Henry going to the party?" express the same proposition. The difference is that the declarative sentence includes the force of assertion, in the form of the declarative mood, and the interrogative sentence contains the force of request, in the form of the interrogative mood.

The tradition of speech act theory might be considered another departure from the norm. J.L. Austin railed against the idea that non-assertional speech acts are somehow derivative of assertional ones. Austin's pioneering thought, which found its fullest development in the work of his student John Searle is indeed one of the few areas in philosophy that pays due attention to uses of language other than assertion. But even here there is a tendency to assimilate non-assertional uses of language to assertional ones. For Searle (1969, 7, 8), the content or 'locutionary meaning' attributable to assertions and to (askings of) questions, indeed, to all speech act types, is of a uniform nature, i.e. propositions. It is only the type of illocutionary force respectively associated with assertions and questions that distinguishes the two kinds of speech acts. (In Chapter Three of this work, I show

that these claims are baseless.)

A distinctly non-declarativist, yet thoroughly reductionist approach to questions was proposed by Lennart Åqvist (1965) and Jaako Hintikka (1976). Rather than paraphrasing interrogatives into truth-conditional expressions, Åqvist and Hintikka appeal to sentences with epistemic and imperatival operators. By combining principles of imperative and epistemic logic, Åqvist and Hintikka both formalize the sentence "Is it raining?" as a command: "Bring it about that either I know that it is raining or I know that it is not raining." On this approach, the semantics of interrogatives is not reduced to that of declaratives, but to that of imperatives. (Despite its reductionism, there some important insights that this approach yields. I explore these in Chapter Five)

1.3.3 The Rise of Questions

There have been, however, genuine rejections of the reductionist bias in 20th-century philosophy of language. In 1958, C.L. Hamblin proposed that "To know the meaning of a question is to know what counts as an answer to that question," and that the set of possible answers to a question consists of an exhaustive set of mutually exclusive propositions. These 'Hamblin postulates' represented the first systematic attempt to do justice to the fact that interrogatives are not truth-apt. In place of a truth-conditional analysis, Hamblin's approach provides an account of the meaning of interrogative sentences in terms of their answerhood-conditions.[6]

Subsequent work by Belnap and Steel (1976) developed Hamblin's suggestion that interrogatives have an independent meaning, distinct from that of declaratives, by proposing a semantics for questions expressed in formal languages. For Belnap, a question 'presents' a set of 'alternatives' (i.e. a set of propositions) to-

---

[6]There is an entire approach to the semantics of interrogatives that rejects the Hamblin postulate that answers form sets of propositions. For this 'categorial' or 'structured meaning' approach, which has been developed in various semantic frameworks, interrogatives denote functions that, when applied to the semantic value of an appropriate *term*-answer to the question, yield a proposition. See Ginzburg (1995a); Hausser (1983); Krifka (2001); Manor (1982); Tichy (1978); Von Stechow and Zimmermann (1984).

gether with a set of restrictions on which kinds of selections among them qualify as possible answers. This system of representation is flexible enough to capture a wide array of formal question-types, but it is not designed for analysis of interrogatives in natural languages. Nor is it capable of representing inferences among interrogatives or among interrogatives and declaratives. The latter was no problem for Belnap (1990), as he was convinced that such inferences are illusory. These limitations of Belnap's theory would be overcome in subsequent work on the semantics of interrogatives.

With the rise of formal semantics in the 1970's, research into the meaning of natural language interrogatives began to take shape.[7] Utilizing the model-theoretic semantics for natural languages developed by Richard Montague, Hamblin (1973) proposed a compositional semantics for wh-words (*who, what, when, where*). Hamblin's main idea was that the intension of an interrogative is a function from possible worlds to sets of answers, where answers are propositions. The extension of an interrogative at a possible world is thus a set of propositions. Hamblin showed how this set is determined compositionally from the parts of the interrogative.[8]

Lauri Karttunen (1977) extended the empirical coverage of Hamblin's propositional approach and introduced the notion of the *true/weakly exhaustive answer*. Unlike Hamblin, however, Karttunen's approach requires that each member of the extension of an interrogative be true. In other words, the intension of an interrogative is a function from possible worlds to sets of true answers. Each of the statements in a set is a *partial* true answer and the conjunction of all partial true answers is the *weakly exhaustive* true answer—it is *weakly* exhaustive because it

---

[7]See Higginbotham (1996) for a good if dated overview. For a more recent overview, see Ginzburg (2011).

[8]For Hamblin (1973), wh-words like *who* are taken to denote sets of individuals. Since, in standard semantics, *who* cannot compose with one-place predicates because it is not of the right type (it is not an individual, but rather a set of individuals), Hamblin introduced a new composition rule—the rule of pointwise function application. The input to this rule is not *who* itself, but, in a "pointwise" (step-by-step) fashion all the individuals contained in the denotation of *who*. The result is the derivation of a set of propositions: each member of the set being the result of a function application of one of the individuals with the predicate.

does not contain negations of each false answer.

Citing some natural language examples in which Kartunnen's true/weakly exhaustive answer approach clashes with intuitions, Jeroen Groenendijk and Martin Stokhof (1984) treat the answerhood-conditions of interrogatives as *strongly exhaustive*, in that they capture both what actually is the case and what actually is *not* the case. A consequence of this position is that, on their view, the intension of an interrogative is a function from possible worlds to single propositions, that is, the unique, complete answers in each world. Suppose that in the actual world only Martha and Henry run. Then the extension of "Who runs?" in the actual world is the single proposition that Martha runs and Henry runs and no one else runs. On their view the intension of an interrogative *partitions* the set of possible worlds into jointly exhaustive, non-overlapping subsets, one for each possible complete answer. One advantage of this model is that it captures intuitions surrounding knowledge-wh ascriptions, such as the apparent fact that if Jim knows who runs, he knows both who runs and who does not run.

Groenendijk (1999) went on to develop an account of questions in the framework of *dynamic semantics*. The latter is a model of meaning representation where pieces of text or discourse are viewed as instructions to update an existing context with new information. Meanings are thus identified with *context-change potentials*, i.e., functions over discourse contexts. Following Stalnaker (1973, 9, 2002) a discourse context is modeled as an equivalence relation over a set of possible worlds. The domain of this relation is the set of all worlds that are compatible with the information established in the discourse so far; this is called the *context set*. Both assertions and questions can then be taken to have the potential to change the context in which they are uttered. Assertions restrict the context set to those worlds in which the asserted sentence is true by removing all pairs of worlds such that the asserted sentence is false in at least one of the two. Questions disconnect or 'partition' worlds, i.e., they remove any pair of worlds in the context set where the true exhaustive answer to the question in one differs from the true

exhaustive answer to the question in the other.[9]

In the past 15 years, the formal semantic study of interrogatives has rapidly expanded, so much so that even a brief overview of recent developments is well beyond the scope of this chapter. The logical study of questions has also made significant advances. The analysis of inferences involving questions, so-called 'erotetic inferences,'[10] has been pioneered by Andrzej Wiśniewski (1995). Using a model-theoretic semantics for classical propositional logic, extended to include sets of propositions as erotetic formulas, Wiśniewski has been able to represent inferences in which a set of premises consists of declarative sentence(s) only, and an agent passes from it to a question (*Erotetic Evocation*) as well as those in which a set of premises consists of a question and possibly some declarative sentence(s) (*Erotetic Implication*).

As the study of questions in formal semantics and logic grows, the omission of an analysis of questions in the inferentialist framework is ever more glaring. The lack of a 'space of questions and answers' in the overall 'space of reasons' is a missed opportunity for both inferentialists and those engaged in the formal study of questions. The work presented has as one of its loftier ambitions the goal of recouping this opportunity for inter-theoretic development.

1.4 Toward a Normative Pragmatics of Questions and Answers

The dynamic semantics of questions and the inferential erotetic logic both offer potential points of contact with Brandom's inferentialism. According to the

---

[9]More recently, Groenendijk and a number of other scholars at University of Amsterdam's Institute for Logic, Language and Computation has developed a research program called *inquisitive semantics*, in which a sentence is taken to express a proposal to update the common ground of a conversation in one or more ways. If a sentence proposes two or more alternative updates it is inquisitive, inviting a response from other participants that establishes at least one of the alternative updates. See `http://www.illc.uva.nl/inquisitivesemantics`.

[10]*Erotetic* comes from the Greek *erőtésis*, meaning 'that which pertains to questions.'

dynamic-semantic view, a sentence, whether it contains indexical elements or not, is not truly intelligible apart from its role in *transforming* contexts. As such, dynamic semantics belongs to the genus of use-theoretic approach to meaning that I have been calling *linguistic pragmatism*, of which Brandom's normative pragmatism is a species. But, to the extent that contexts are understood as sets of sets of possible worlds and the function of assertions, for instance, is conceived as eliminating from contexts those sets of worlds in which they are *false*, the use of expressions is described in *representational* terms. Dynamic semantics might thus stand as a kind of hybrid representationalist-pragmatist approach to linguistic intentionality.

Of course, as an abstract framework, dynamic semantics is compatible with many philosophical ways of viewing meaning and interpretation. From a purely mathematical perspectives, the representation theorems of dynamic semantics, and of formal semantics in general, are just statements about the correspondence between structures of one kind and those of another. The formal models that dynamic semanticists offer are thus not wedded to any particular philosophical conception of the primitives 'context', 'information state' and 'update'. There is no theoretical obstacle to offering a *normative* interpretation of these terms in line with Brandom's inferentialism. In order to do so, the inferentialist would need to deploy a normative pragmatic analysis of the contextual features of discourse relevant to acts of asking and answering questions.

Inferential erotetic logic provides formal framework for modeling inferences among questions and statements. Its success at doing so suggests that an inferentialist theory need not restrict itself to declarative inferences as semantic interpretants. It is at least possible for such a theory to appeal to both familiar inferences among declaratives and those studied by erotetic logic.

There is, however, an obstacle confronting the inferentialist application of erotetic-logical insights. As I have explained, Brandom's inferentialism provides the semantics of logical terms by appealing to minimally discursive agents' ability

to track proprieties of material—i.e. non-formal—inferences. But the simplest inferences represented by IEL—those involving atomic yes-no questions—still require the negation operator to be expressible in the object language. More seriously, there do not appear to be any intuitive grounds for holding that there are material inferences among questions and assertions. A candidate for this status might be the inference from the claim 'X is a triangle' to the question 'Is X equilateral, isosceles, or scalene?' It is plausible that the content of the terms 'triangle,' 'equilateral,' 'isosceles,' and 'scalene' determines the propriety of this inference. And yet, even if the possible answers to the conclusion-question consist of materially incompatible assertions—e.g. 'X is equilateral'; 'X is isosceles'; 'X is scalene'—thereby removing the need for negation, comprehending the conclusion requires the agent to understand the meaning of logical disjunction. Without material erotetic inferences available to minimally discursive agents, it would seem that questions themselves will be absent in MDPs, only appearing in those practices that engage the use of logical vocabulary.

In reality, this problem is not nearly as daunting as it first appears. The notion of 'inference' with which Brandom's model operates is quite liberal. Deferring to the authority of an interlocutor, issuing observation reports, even acting intentionally are all performances that get analyzed in terms of dispositions to adopt normative attitudes, and are, thus, the exercise of broadly inferential capacities. So long as normative statuses and attitudes can be coherently associated with acts of asking questions, what I will call *queries*, their content ought to be explicable within an extended inferentialist framework.

Indeed, the question-answer relation looks custom-made for normative-pragmatic analysis. Just as agents inherit commitment or entitlement to certain claims which follow inferentially from others to which they are committed, so too do agents inherit a responsibility to make certain claims that answer a question when it has been addressed to them. I will come to call this type of responsibility *apokritic*—from the Greek verb *apokrino*, which, in the middle voice, means 'to give an an-

swer' or 'to reply to a question'. An apokritic commitment obliges the addressee to answer the speaker's question.

Answers are also amenable to assessments of appropriateness relative to questions, much in the way that conclusion-claims can be evaluated as correct or incorrect relative to the set of initial premises. Admittedly, the appropriateness of answers comes in various flavors. Some claims are not even possible or putative answers to question. Others are possible answers to a question but not ones to which the speaker is entitled. Still others may serve to reject the question itself, say, by challenging one its presuppositions. The normative statuses need to represent the propriety of question-answer pairs may well require a more fine-grained set than that which is need to analyze assertions, but this is no obstacle to the possibility of a coherent normative-pragmatic analysis.

There is still at least one important difference between the pragmatics of queries and that of assertions which seems to demand a dramatic addition to the inferentialist's conceptual toolkit. Queries appear to have a distinctly *second-personal* character insofar as they are typically directed at a particular individual, '*you*'. To tackle this problem, I will propose that we introduce a deontic *attitude* to MDPs—a third attitude that agent's can adopt to normative statuses in addition to those of *acknowledging* and *attributing*. This new attitude, call it *addressing*, makes a demand upon its addressee to recognize her new status. Kukla and Lance (2009) propose this sort of analysis of second-personal addresses, according to which the demand for recognition is 'inescapable'—no matter what subsequent performances an addressee undertakes, they will either have the significance of acknowledging the demand or rejecting it; there is no way to passively ignore it. The pragmatic force of queries can be understood as involving an *address* of commitment, namely *apokritic* commitment. Addressing a commitment to another agent would thus be quite different from attributing one, since in the latter case, there is no *prima facie* deficiency incurred by ignoring an attributed status.

With some modification and augmentation, Brandom's normative-pragmatic

model of language-use can provide an adequate analysis of queries in MDPs. The practical repertories of agents engaged in these practices consists solely of the ability to ask questions and to make assertions. (Chapter Five is devoted to substantiating this claim.) Since assertings are, in part, what agents must do in order to answer questions, and since the pragmatic force of queries is understood, again, at least in part, by the responsibility they impose on agents to give answers, the analysis of queries depends upon that of assertings. In fact the claim is stronger still. Not only must we have a theoretical grip on assertings if we are to understand queries; speakers themselves must be able to treat one another as capable of making assertions if they are to accord them the statuses associated with asking questions.

Conversely, I will show that understanding the pragmatic significance of assertings requires a correlate comprehension of the pragmatics of queries. On Brandom's view being able to assert something is a social capacity partly constituted by the ability to take on a responsibility to give reasons if challenged. Issuing a challenge, I contend, is not something that can be understood strictly in terms of assertings. Rather, making a claim should be conceived as submitting oneself to the conditional responsibility of having to answer certain questions—a responsibility that is conditional upon actually being *asked* those questions. Reason-seeking queries are those whose practical consequences include a responsibility to justify the queried claim. Thus, we do not get an accurate picture of asserting without taking queries, in particular, reason-seeking queries into account. Again, the claim here is not just about analytic dependence of assertions on queries, but is also about their pragmatic dependence—i.e. agents cannot take one another as making assertions unless they can also take them as asking and answering questions.

Redeeming this claim about the dependence of assertions on queries requires me to demonstrate that purely assertional practices cannot institute the pragmatic force or semantic content of queries. Arguing for the irreducibility of the

pragmatics of queries is relatively uncontroversial, and my general approach to doing so has just been sketched above. But were it only the pragmatic analysis of queries that evaded reduction to that of assertions, the assertional fundamentalist could still argue that assertional practices are needed to secure the content of queries. This type of response plays upon a version of the declarativist fallacy that characterizes speech act theories of questions in the vein of Austin and Searle. The guiding idea of these theories is that grammatically corresponding queries and assertions have the same semantic content, namely, individual propositions. However, as the Hamblin-tradition in formal semantics has revealed, this assumption is implausible. I follow the latter tradition in construing the content of queries and interrogatives as sets of propositions, and therefore deny that assertions and queries share the same type of content. Of course, being able to make propositionally-contentful claims will still be a necessary feature of inquisitive practices. But queries cannot be thought of simply as an inquisitive pragmatics 'tacked onto' the content of assertions. Queries are distinct from assertions both in force and in content. (I argue for this point in Chapter Three.)

I have already suggested that the normative pragmatic account of questions and answers is just what inferentialism needs in order to make use of the insights of dynamic-semantic and erotetic-inferential theories of questions. But the potential for fruitful inter-theoretical exchange runs in the other direction as well. Semantic theories of questions have focused exclusively on so-called *information-seeking questions*. These are questions expressed by sentences like 'Is it raining?' or 'What time does the train leave?' Their answers consist of propositions with familiar truth-aptitude. Deliberately neglected are questions that seek 'information' in a broader sense of that term, such as those whose answers are provided in acts of giving advise, offering recommendations, issuing evaluations, and so on.[11] Since the framework of normative-pragmatics, especially in its expanded form articulated by Kukla and Lance (2009), is capable of representing a wide array of

---

[11]See Groenendijk (1999) for an explicit recognition of this neglect.

non-assertional speech acts, it should be possible to analyze these neglected types of questions.

Finally, running through several discussions in this work (particularly Chapters Three and Four) is a sub-theme regarding the relationship between queries and other non-assertional speech acts, specifically requests and commands. In Searle's taxonomy of speech acts, queries are classified as a species of requests, namely, requests that the hearer perform some speech act. According to Åqvist and Hintikka's logic, queries are a species of commands, namely commands that the hearer bring it about that the speaker knows the answer. Neither of these attempts to decompose the pragmatic force of queries into that of requests or commands does justice to the unique normative structure that the activity of asking questions and giving answers exhibits. Through the lens of normative-pragmatics, it becomes clear that queries perform a basic and irreducible discursive function.

2 Stalemate in the Space of Reasons[1]

2.1 Introduction

In *Making It Explicit*, Robert Brandom provides what is arguably one of the most ambitious non-representationalist accounts of intentionality. What makes the theory so ambitious is, in part, the fact that his pragmatic theory eschews representationalist concepts in specifying relevant features of language-use that are associated with a set of semantic properties, which is, in turn, mobilized to explicate representational locutions like 'is true' 'refers,' 'of' and 'about.' In other words, he attempts to demonstrate how representational vocabulary makes explicit what is implicit in our discursive practices.

One way of understanding this ambition is to see it as incorporating two theoretical moves—one destructive, the other reconstructive—that together form the central project of *Making It Explicit*. The destructive move in this project is one that Brandom himself has likened to that of raiding Neurath's boat, that is, stripping away as many features of ordinary linguistic practice as possible without rendering it unrecognizable as a linguistic or discursive practice. What remains

---

[1]At my oral defense, my external reader, Robert Brandom replied to the criticisms presented in this chapter. As I have been unable to respond to these replies to my own satisfaction, I am at present forced to weaken the modal status of my central claim in this chapter. While I argue that justificatory stalemate is a necessary feature of purely assertional MDPs, in light of Professor Brandom's comments, I feel that I can only defend the claim that stalemate is a possible, and not inevitable, scenario in such practices.

are minimally discursive practices (MDPs). [2] Representational language is not the only thing to be thrown overboard: singular terms, predicates, syncategorematic connectives, and attitude-ascribing locutions, are just a few of the initial causalities.

The reconstructive move, however, is one of building the ship back up at sea (to continue the metaphor), using only the raw materials provided by the skeleton that remains, i.e. seeing how MDPs can be elaborated so as to permit the introduction of the jettisoned locutions. If it can be shown that participants of a toy practice are in principle capable of elaborating their primitive social abilities into those needed to deploy the logical, representational, normative, modal, and intentional vocabulary that we associate with ordinary linguistic practices, then those practices are indeed minimally discursive. The process of elaborating primitive practices into more complex ones, which, in turn allow speakers to describe those primitive practices, is a process of making explicit in speech and thought what is implicit in practice.

The particular set of claims that I shall focus on in this chapter concern the point of transition from destruction to reconstruction. Among the biggest and boldest claims in *Making It Explicit* is that MDPs are games of giving and asking for reasons, that is, they are practices that confer the significance of assertion and inference upon performances. In other words, the task of raiding Neurath's boat ends when the theorist hits upon a practice that is assertional and inferential while lacking any explicitly logical, representational, normative, modal, or intentional vocabulary. And yet, it is these austere practices that contain, implicitly, all the practical resources needed for speakers to come to use those sophisticated bits

---

[2]Brandom does not use this expression in *Making It Explicit*, but he does use it to characterize the project pursued in that work in Stekeler-Weithofer (2008, 223). Brandom (2008) uses the term *autonomous discursive practice* (ADP) to refer to "a language-game one could play though one played no other" (Brandom 2008, 3). He claims that "every autonomous *discursive* practice must include core practices of *giving and asking for reasons*" (Brandom 2008, 111). With this claim in mind, we can say that the game of giving and asking for reasons is an MDP and that all MDPs are ADPs, but not *vice versa*. This interpretation is consistent with the project of Brandom (1994)

of thought and speech. As I will show, the claim is even a bit stronger than it originally appears; for Brandom holds that MDPs are those whose participants can *only* assert (and infer).

The claim or position for which Brandom is perhaps most famously associated is not this one, however. It is rather the claim that MDPs are essentially normative social practices, in the sense that their practitioners should be understood as treating each other as committed and entitled to their performances. These two statuses, commitment and entitlement, form the basic components for Brandom's model of MDPs: DEONTIC SCOREKEEPING. My aim in this chapter is to articulate the motivation and framework of Brandom's deontic scorekeeping account of assertional practice and to present a particular criticism of it. That criticism consists in identifying a potentially fatal flaw in Brandom's account, one I call the problem of justificatory stalemate. This problem ensures that the scorekeeping model of assertional practice fails on its own terms: For any MDP, if it consists solely of performances having the significance of assertions, then no performances in it have the significance of assertions. I demonstrate that this consequence holds so long as Brandom remains committed to the notion that assertions are *the* fundamental speech act, a position I call ASSERTIONAL FUNDA-MENTALISM. In conclusion, I suggest that the simplest and most plausible way of avoiding justificatory stalemate is to renounce this position and to introduce non-assertional speech acts into the model of MDPs.

2.2 The Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons

2.2.1 Three Kinds of Pragmatism

The project of Robert Brandom's *Making It Explicit* is to develop an account of intentionality and meaning in thought and talk. Having intentionality just means being minded or having thought, in the sense of having access to the realm of

Fregean thoughts or what Brandom calls 'propositionally contentful' attitudes. Intentionality is what we ascribe to systems whose practices we can only make sense of by interpreting their doings in the light of ascriptions of beliefs, desires, and the like—i.e. by taking up what Daniel Dennett calls 'the intentional stance'(Dennett 1987). Among those systems towards which the intentional stance can be adopted, there is a subclass consisting of those systems that are themselves capable of adopting the intentional stance by ascribing propositional attitudes to others. These interpreting intentional systems have original as opposed to derived intentionality. Since the explanation of original intentionality is to proceed that of derived intentionality, the project of *Making It Explicit* can be more specifically characterized as offering an account of original intentionality: the mindedness of interpreting creatures. Brandom puts the task this way:

> What features must one's interpretation of a community exhibit in order properly to be said to be an interpretation of them as engaging in practices sufficient to confer genuinely propositional content on the performances, statuses, attitudes, and expressions caught up in those practices?(Brandom 1994, 61).

Echoing Dennett—but for reasons evinced by figures such as Quine, Sellars, and Davidson—Brandom holds that the possession of intentional concepts and the ability to attribute intentional states presupposes specifically linguistic capacities. In other words, interpreting intentional systems are talking intentional systems, and vice versa. This is not to say that Brandom thinks that the concept of an intentional state like 'belief' can be made sense of by reference solely to (dispositions for) linguistic behavior—indeed, he follows Davidson in seeing the concepts of mental intentionality and those of linguistic intentionality as reciprocally intelligible; neither can be understood adequately without understanding the other. The point, rather, is that original intentionality is exhibited by those practices that are genuinely linguistic.[3]

---

[3]This is what I take to be the substance of Brandom's commitment to a "relational version of a linguistic approach to intentionality". See (Brandom 1994, 150-153). The key passage is on p. 152: "The view propounded is like Davidson's in seeing intentional states and speech acts as fundamentally of coeval conceptual status, neither being explicable except in an account

Brandom's approach to linguistic intentionality is guided by a commitment to four kinds of pragmatism. The first is what he calls METHODOLOGICAL PRAGMATISM. This position is expressed by the claim that "the point of talking about the content expressed or the meaning possessed by linguistic expressions is to explain at least some features of their use" (Brandom 2002, 42). According to methodological pragmatism, the meanings of linguistic expressions are to be thought of as theoretical entities postulated by semantic theories for the purpose of explaining, or at least codifying features of their use. Brandom thus likens the methodological pragmatist to the methodological empiricist, for whom theoretical entities are postulated for the sake of explaining observables, and endorses the analogy: "*meaning* is to *use* as *theory* is to *observation*" (Brandom 2008, 4).

Brandom also endorses what he calls SEMANTIC PRAGMATISM, which he expresses with his oft-quoted slogan: "semantics must answer to pragmatics." By 'pragmatics,' Brandom has in mind a very broad inquiry, namely, "the study of Fregean force generally, of the moves one can use utterances to make in language encompassing the study of illocutionary as well as perlocutionary force" (Brandom 2002, 41). This highly inclusive conception of pragmatics gives the position of semantic pragmatism a correspondingly wide scope, one encapsulated in the claim that "the only explanation there could be for how a given meaning gets associated with a vocabulary is to be found in the use of that vocabulary" (Brandom 2008, 9).[4]

The third kind of pragmatism to which Brandom is committed is what he calls FUNDAMENTAL PRAGMATISM. This qualified pragmatism is more general

---

that includes the other. It deserves nonetheless to be called a linguistic view of intentionality (of the relational rather than the analogical variety) because linguistic practice is nonetheless accorded a certain kind of explanatory priority over rational agency. The intentionality of nonlinguistic creatures is presented as dependent on, and in a specific sense derivative from, that of their linguistically qualified interpreters, who as a community exhibit a non derivative, original intentionality."

[4]Thus described, semantic pragmatism appears to prescribe an explanatory strategy that inverts that of its methodological cousin: meanings of linguistic tokens are to be explained by (semantic) rather than deployed to explain (methodological) their use. Indeed, Brandom admits that "there is a real difference of explanatory order between these strategic commitments" (Brandom 2002, 44).

than the first two, which concern the relationship among linguistic expressions, their meaning, and their use. Fundamental pragmatism is a position regarding the relationship between explicit theoretical knowledge and implicit practical ability, one that sees "the capacity to know or believe *that* something is the case as parasitic on more primitive kinds of know *how*—capacities to *do* something that is not yet saying, thinking or believing anything" (Brandom 2002, 46).

These three pragmatisms converge to determine the general shape of Brandom's account of linguistic intentionality. Fundamental pragmatism focuses this account on the practical abilities that creatures must exhibit in order to qualify as speaking a language; methodological pragmatism demands that these abilities fund a notion of semantic content that can make sense of the use of linguistic tokens; and semantic pragmatism insists that these abilities be capable of establishing the association of linguistic tokens with semantic contents. These three commitments provide the framework within which the pragmatic theory and the semantic theory presented in *Making It Explicit* take shape.

2.2.2 Normative Pragmatics

Once these framing commitments are in place, there remain some open parameters by which qualifying pragmatic theories might diverge from one another. One of these consists in the choice of which set of theoretical terms or vocabulary the theorist is to adopt in specifying the abilities whose exercise constitutes the *use* of linguistic expressions. However, some possible vocabularies are ruled out by the commitment to the three brands of pragmatism. For instance, a commitment to semantic pragmatism prohibits a theorist from appealing to explicitly semantic vocabulary on pain of rendering that commitment trivial—e.g., specifying the meaning of a term as 'used to refer to John McDowell'. Likewise, "a semantic pragmatist who is also a fundamental pragmatist cannot use exclusively intentional vocabulary in describing the use of language," since "such an

account leaves out the implicit background of not explicitly conceptual abilities presupposed by the capacity to have explicitly conceptually contentful beliefs and intentions" (Brandom 2002, 47).

Operating within the constraints set up by his commitments to methodological, semantic, and fundamental pragmatism, Brandom develops a pragmatic theory that is distinguished by its employment of *normative* vocabulary to describe the use of language. This means that the practical abilities that qualify agents as language users are specified in terms of what counts as their correct or incorrect exercise. In other words, it is not the actual uses of bits of language but rather the *propriety* of uses—the appropriate circumstances and consequences of linguistic performances—that are articulated by the pragmatic theory.

One of the central challenges that such a theory confronts is that of explaining the 'propriety' of linguistic performances within the framework established by the three brands of pragmatism. And this challenge is a specific form of the more general question: How does a pragmatist understand norms? Seeing how Brandom answers this question is crucial to understanding what distinguishes his pragmatic theory from other pragmatist options.

It will be helpful to begin with an account of norms that is patently unpragmatic. There is an intellectualistic or Platonistic way of understanding normative proprieties like that of appropriateness which thinks of them as being conferred upon performances to the extent that they conform with some explicit rule that *says* what is, e.g., appropriate. On this interpretation of norms, which Brandom calls REGULISM, determining whether a performance, linguistic or otherwise, is correct is settled by reference (directly or indirectly) to some law, principle, or rule that says what is correct. The problem with this approach—a problem that has been articulated by Kant, Wittgenstein, Sellars and even Lewis Carroll—is that if the application of a rule is itself an instance of rule-following and can only be deemed correct by it conforming to yet another rule, then an infinite regress of rules prevents us from ever saying that a rule has been followed in the first place.

Brandom sees this problem as arising from the fact that it takes the explicit form of norms—viz., their appearance as contentful principles, laws, and rules—as the fundamental form of norms as such. The solution is to formulate an account of norms that adheres to the view of fundamental pragmatism—viz., the capacity to know *that* something is the case as parasitic on more primitive kinds of know *how*. Doing so requires us to construe norms as something that not only can be made explicit in rules, but can also operate implicitly in practices.

One way to think about norms as implicit in practices would be to identify the distinction between correct and incorrect performances with that between those that do and those that do not exhibit certain regularities of behavior. A norm implicit in practice would then just be a pattern exhibited by a creature's behavior, and violating that norm would be to break the pattern, to act irregularly. Brandom calls this conception of norms REGULARISM.

The problem with regularism, according to Brandom, is that it cannot make sense of the distinction between what *is* done and what *ought to be* done. One symptom of this difficulty—and a crucial objection to regularism—is the problem of gerrymandering. For any finite batch of behavior, one can dream up an arbitrarily large number of rules of which that behavior would be an instantiation. As a result, when presented with a form of behavior that appears to deviate from a rule, it is always possible to generate some other rule with which that behavior would be consistent. So long as there is nothing about the performance itself that privileges one regularity among all those that it might be thought to exhibit, there is no way to say of any performance that it was incorrect or inappropriate. *Some* regularities must be picked out as the ones that *ought* to be conformed to. The regularist offers no suggestion as to how this might be done and therefore does not settle, but merely puts off, the question of how to understand the distinction between what is done and what ought to be done.

The challenge for Brandom's view is to construe norms implicit in practices in such a way that preserves the distinction between what is done and what ought to

be done. In meeting this challenge, Brandom turns to Kant's distinction between acting according to a rule and acting according to the *conception* of a rule. It is the latter that, according to Kant, characterizes the intentional doings of normative creatures. His point is that it is our understanding or acknowledgement of rules that brings us to act, rather than rules directly compelling us. It is this mediating attitude of acknowledgement that regularism obliterates.

Brandom's conception of norms implicit in practices can be seen as an attempt to render this Kantian insight in pragmatist terms. This is an attempt is to find a kind of doing that can be appropriately understood as an instance of "taking something to be correct," and which thus expresses the right sort of normative attitude, but which is not itself an explicit formulation of the idea that something or other is correct. Thus in order to find norms implicit in practice, Brandom proposes that we first find normative *assessments* of action implicit in practice.

The most obvious candidate for a type of behavior that manifests normative assessment is the *sanction.* We respond to actions that are correct with positive sanctions, actions that are incorrect with negative ones. A positive sanction can be understood here as anything that has positive gratificatory status for the agent acted upon, and hence reinforces the behavior—i.e., a reward. A negative sanction is anything that has negative gratificatory significance, and hence conditions the agent not to repeat the behavior—i.e. a punishment. The most straightforward way of generating an account of norms out of this conception of sanctioning is simply to define a norm as a sanctioned regularity in conduct. According to such a view, agents conform to particular patterns because the pattern is positively sanctioned, or because any deviation from the pattern is negatively sanctioned, or both. Thus their actions are implicitly subject to normative assessment—an action is implicitly deemed to be correct when it is responded to with a positive sanction, and incorrect when it is responded to with a negative one. This sanction is what privileges a particular pattern, elevating it above the level of mere regularity.

Despite its attractiveness, Brandom takes this account to be inadequate. His central concern is that it is still a type of regularist theory, and so "merely puts off the issue of gerrymandering. (Brandom 1994, 36)" The introduction of sanctions allows one to pick out a privileged pattern at the base level of behavior. But the sanctioning itself is just another pattern of behavior, and so can be understood as "enforcing" an arbitrary number of different rules. There is thus no way of telling whether the person doing the sanctioning is doing so *correctly*, and the distinction between "what ought to be done" and "what is done" once again disappears, now at a 'higher' level.

The solution to the gerrymandering problem that arises for sanctions involves getting away from the idea that sanctioning needs to be understood in "naturalistic terms" (Brandom 1994, 42). When sanctions are understood in terms of rewards and punishments, the goal is clearly to explain normative assessment in terms of some set of actions that can themselves be understood in nonnormative terms. But according to Brandom, "commitment to such a reduction is optional" (Brandom 1994, 43). He acknowledges that one way to sanction someone is to do something that carries intrinsic gratificatory or deprivatory significance for that person. However, it can also count as a punishment to have one's normative status changed. Performing an action correctly might affect the range of actions that one is subsequently entitled to perform. Performing an action incorrectly might make it incorrect for one to attempt some further action. Thus the sanction that follows upon an action might be nothing more than a change in normative status.

These 'internal sanctions,' which punish and reward by granting or rescinding entitlement to further performances, might be thought of as linked together into complex webs of interdependent changes in normative statuses. The question that Brandom confronts is whether we are compelled to imagine such webs as anchored by external sanctions specifiable in non-normative terms. If we are forced to accept such an interpretation then there is nothing to stop a reduction of normative status to non-normatively specifiable behavioral dispositions and the subsequent

collapse of the distinction between what is done and what ought to be done. Brandom's remaining task is thus to motivate the idea that normative attitudes of assessment can coherently be construed as sanctions that are in turn subject to other normative attitudes.

In order to motivate the resistance to a reduction of normative statuses to non-normative dispositions Brandom appeals to a cornerstone of Enlightenment thinking about normativity: the idea that what distinguishes genuine normative authority from non-normative compulsion is that the former depends upon the acknowledgment of that authority. The disenchantment of nature wrought by the Enlightenment is coupled with a conception of values as originating in our valuing activities and attitudes. Norms are brought into existence by our taking and treating bits of the world *as* normatively significant.

This way of thinking about the normative goes beyond Kant's claim that our peculiar subjection to norms essentially involves our practical attitudes toward them. The Enlightenment thesis about authority says that normative statuses and proprieties supervene upon and are *instituted* by our normative attitudes. Brandom describes this construal of norms as depending upon attitudes as PHENOMENALIST. It is this phenomenalism that underwrites Kant's notion of autonomy: the bindingness of (moral) rules derives from our endorsement of them as binding. We are free precisely because the laws that bind us are ones we ourselves set up and impose. Crucially, Brandom avers "grounding normative status in normative attitude does not entail relinquishing the distinction between normative proprieties and natural properties" (Brandom 1994, 52).

While the phenomenalism embodied by this thesis that normative statuses supervene on normative attitudes supports Brandom's resistance to naturalistic reduction of norms, it also raises a serious problem for his account. If the correctness of my performance depends upon my taking or treating it as correct, then it would seem that I could ensure that all of my performances go aright simply by treating them as such. In this situation, the distinction between correct and incor-

rect assessment collapses, and without such a distinction it no longer makes sense to say that the performances in question are governed by the norms according to which they are being assessed. These norms are not objective. The upshot here is that the possible discrepancy between what someone takes herself to be bound to and what she in fact is bound to is essential to being bound by a norm at all.

Brandom's solution to the problem of normative objectivity is first to conceive of the practices in which norms are implicit as fundamentally social. For Brandom, the notion of social interaction relevant to normative practices is not that between an individual and a community—what is sometimes called an "I-We" relation—but rather between two distinct perspectives paradigmatically taken up by two individuals toward (the performances of) one another—an "I-Thou" relation. This interpersonal relation funds a distinction between the normative attitude of acknowledging (a normative status) and that of attributing (a normative status). I acknowledge a norm; my partner attributes it (to me), and (potentially) *vice versa.* The social division of labor between these two attitudes is supposed to underwrite the distinction between what an individual takes her normative status to be—what she *acknowledges*—and what it really is—what is *attributed* to her by other practitioners. The kind of objectivity of norms provided by the distribution of normative attitudes among distinct social perspectives is compatible with the Enlightenment view of normative authority as dependent upon the attitudes take up toward that authority, so long as those attitudes are construed according to the I-Thou pairing.

Brandom's intention to specify the use of linguistic expressions in normative terms thus lead him to conceive of linguistic behavior as part of a distinctly social practice that confers normative status upon such behavior in virtue of the way its participants take up and treat that behavior. Normative proprieties of performances cannot simply be read off of their natural properties; rather they are instituted by the attitudes that fellow agents take toward those performances. It is precisely the potential gap between what an agent takes the normative sta-

tus of her performance to be and what others take it to be that accounts for the objectivity that norms exhibit vis-á-vis behavior.

2.2.3 Deontic Scorekeeping

With the pragmatist account of norms having lead, by way of phenomenalism, to an account of normative social practices, we can begin to see how Brandom intends to answer the central question of how to characterize an adequate interpretation of original intentionality (quoted above in § 2.2.1). *Phenomenalism* about norms requires the theorist to interpret community members as taking or treating each other in practice as adopting normative statuses. Brandom claims that, "if the practices attributed to the community by the theorist have *the right structure*, then according to that interpretation, the community members' practical attitudes institute normative statuses and confer intentional content on them" (Brandom 1994, 61. Emphasis added). A normative social practice that can be interpreted as possessing 'the right structure' should thus qualify as originally intentional, that is, as linguistic. A practice that has only those features that make up 'the right structure' will be a minimally discursive practice (MDP).

So what is the 'right structure' that a normative social practice must have in order to qualify as minimally discursive? Brandom's answer is that to count as an MDP, a practice must be interpretable as a GAME OF GIVING AND ASK-ING FOR REASONS. Not all normative social practices instantiate such games. Those that do are distinguished by the fact that their participants "confer on some performances the significance of *claims* or *assertions*"(Brandom 2000, 189). Assertions are performances that can serve as and stand in need of reasons; they are speech acts whose contents function as both premises and conclusions of infer-ences. Since Brandom does not want to grant linguistic intentionality explanatory priority over mental intentionality, he also thinks that participants in a game of giving and asking for reasons must also be interpretable as having beliefs.

The claim is in fact a bit stronger than I have expressed it. Brandom actually thinks that normative practices may qualify as games of giving and asking for reasons even if they *only* exhibit moves with the pragmatic significance of assertions. In other words, a purely assertional practice is sufficient to count as a game of giving and asking for reasons. The basis of this claim is Brandom's insistence that "it is only because some performances function as assertions that others deserve to be distinguished as *speech* acts" and that "asserting is the fundamental speech act, defining the specific difference between linguistic practice and social practices more generally" (Brandom 1994, 173). The fundamental status of assertion in Brandom's system will become a crucial to the argument I develop in the next section.

In order to articulate the 'right structure' exhibited by the game of giving and asking for reasons, Brandom offers a model for interpreting normative social practices that he calls deontic scorekeeping. On this model, normative or deontic attitudes are divided between those in which a participant undertakes a status and those in which she attributes such a status to others. In their capacity to undertake deontic statuses, participants function as players 'making moves'; while in their capacity to attribute such statuses, participants act as scorekeepers capable of tracking changes in players' set of deontic statuses, i.e. their 'scorecards'. By representing participants as both gameplayers and scorekeepers, the deontic score-keeping model is supposed to capture the distinctive notion of sociality, which, as we have seen, characterizes Brandomian practices—the social relation between two distinct perspectives paradigmatically taken up by two individuals toward (the performances of) one another ("I-Thou").

The model of deontic scorekeeping frames Brandom's defense of the big claim that practices of giving and asking for reasons, that is, practices that involve performances having the force of assertions, must involve practically distinguishing between two kinds of deontic status: *commitments* and *entitlements*.[5] The lat-

---

[5]The appeal to two different sorts of normative status is intended to produce a more fine-grained

ter serve as primitives in Brandom's normative pragmatic account of assertional speech acts.

To illustrate the way the deontic attitudes of undertaking and attributing these two deontic statuses can capture distinct aspects a single social practice, Brandom offers the example of promising. To make a promise is to undertake a commitment to perform the promised action. The person issuing the promise has a responsibility to do what she has promised. The promise entitles others who attribute it to rely upon the promised action. But it also conditionally authorizes them to sanction the promisor if she fails to do as she has promised. This sanction may be 'internal' such as that of withholding the attribution of commitment to the promisor. Thus, the single practice of promising turns out to be a complex arrangement of deontic statuses and attitudes.

Arguably, Brandom's example of the toy practice of promising assumes that participants can describe or otherwise explicitly say what performances would count as fulfilling the promise-commitment. Since asserting is supposed to form the core of minimally discursive practices, Brandom's effort to represent the practice of asserting as an interlocking set of deontic attitudes cannot make the correlate assumption that participants are able to say what it is that others assert. Constructing a deontic scorekeeping model of assertional practices must instead look to account for what participants are *doing* in making assertions under the assumption that they cannot yet *say* what they are doing.

The deontic scorekeeping account of assertional practice begins with some relatively straightforward considerations. Brandom starts with the insight that in order to treat a move as an assertion, a scorekeeper would need to take that move as *committing* its player to further moves. He justifies this claim by saying that "to be recognizable as assertional, a move must not be idle, it must make a difference, it must have consequences for what else it is appropriate to do, ac-

_____

account of assertional propriety than Brandom thinks is usually available from semantic theories that rely on an undifferentiated notion of 'assertibility conditions' for linguistic expressions.

cording to the rules of the game" (Brandom 2000, 191). Thus treating a move as the undertaking of a commitment is to treat its player as obliged to undertake further commitments which follow inferentially from the first. More recently, Brandom has referred to this aspect of the normative force of assertion as an asserter's AMPLIATIVE RESPONSIBILITY to extract the consequences of each of her commitments in the context of the collateral premises provided by the rest of her commitments (Brandom 2009, 36-7.). Each commitment gives a reason to accept others, which ought to be accepted in the sense that one has already implicitly committed oneself to them by acknowledging the commitment from which they follow.

But it is not enough to treat a putatively assertional performance as the undertaking of a commitment to undertake further commitments; for assertions not only serve as reasons; they also *stand in need of reason*s. "Giving reasons for a claim is producing other assertions that *license* or *entitle* one to it, that *justify* it," and "asking for reasons for a claim is asking for its warrant, for what entitles one to that commitment" (Brandom 2000, 193). Thus, scorekeepers must distinguish between those commitments to which a player is entitled and those to which she is not.

Adding entitlement to the set of statuses that a scorekeeper can attribute to players is crucial to the characterization of assertions in deontic scorekeeping terms because it permits the scorekeeper to treat players as committed in a sense *other than* that of having undertaken an ampliative responsibility. Being libel to assessments in terms of entitlement means that players who undertake commitments are (also) committed to vindicating entitlement to those commitments, that is, for undertaking commitments that entitle the player to the one in question. It is this liability to demands for justification that distinguishes the JUSTIFICATORY RESPONSIBILITY that characterizes assertional force, i.e. the sense in which assertions are the sort of speech act for which reasons are sought.

We have thus arrived at an initial sketch of Brandom's normative pragmatic

account of asserting. Assertions are "performances with the dual function in the game of giving and asking for reasons of being givings of reasons, and themselves also performances for which reasons can be asked" (Brandom 1994, 173). The pragmatic effect of asserting "consists in the way in which, by authorizing particular further inferentially related performances and undertaking responsibility to produce yet other inferentially related performances, asserters alter the score interlocutors keep of the deontic statuses (commitments and entitlements) of their fellow practitioners" (Brandom 1994, 173).

To get from this sketch to an account of assertional speech acts that begin to resemble those with which we are familiar in ordinary discourse, several features need to be filled in. First, there is a communicative function that assertion performs which has yet to be articulated. When a player undertakes an assertive commitment to which she is entitled she not only entitles others to attribute that commitment to her, she also *prima facie* entitles them to undertake that commitment themselves, that is, to re-assert her assertion.[6] Likewise, if a scorekeeper is entitled to attribute an assertive commitment to a player, then she is *prima facie* entitled to undertake that commitment herself. To understand this point, recall that Brandom identifies assertive commitments with doxastic commitments (the deontic scorekeeping analog to beliefs). To say that an asserter authorizes others to re-assert her assertion is a way of vindicating the idea that in putting forward a claim as true, i.e. expressing one's belief, one is putting it forward as a claim that is appropriate for others to *take* as true, i.e. to believe it themselves. The implicit universality of doxastic/assertional commitments is not shared by the deontic statuses that correspond to other states/performances. For instance, Brandom claims that entitlement to practical commitments—the deontic scorekeeping analog to intentions—often cannot be inherited by interlocutors. My intention to aid the poor, no matter how justified, need not justify your effort to aid the poor. In contrast, my belief that snow is white, to the extent that it is justified, most

---

[6]I say '*prima facie*' because the scorekeeper could always have commitments that are incompatible with the one in question.

certainly does give you a reason to believe that snow is white. Assertional or doxastic commitments are uniquely sharable in the sense that entitlement to them is inheritable across deontic perspectives.

Another feature in need of clarification is that of redeeming or fulfilling justificatory responsibility. Brandom has a very particular way of construing the liability to justify one's assertions. He describes it as a "conditional task-responsibility." It is a task-responsibility because it requires the performance of a task of some kind for its fulfillment, namely, the giving of reasons. But one need not demonstrate entitlement, i.e. need not give reasons, *unless one's assertion is challenged.* The justificatory responsibility that accompanies assertion is conditional on such challenges.

The most obvious way a player can demonstrate entitlement to an assertional commitment when so challenged is by asserting another claim from which the challenged commitment can be appropriately inferred. In other words, one can demonstrate one's entitlement to a claim by *justifying* it. But players may also demonstrate entitlement to an assertional commitment by appealing to the authority of another asserter. Since the communicational function of assertions is to license others who hear the claim to reassert it, a player whose assertion has been challenged can *defer* to the interlocutor who communicated the claim, passing along to that other individual any demands for demonstration of entitlement. As Brandom puts it "the authority of an assertion includes an offer to pick up the justificatory check for the reassertions of others" (Brandom 1994, 175).

Whether justificatory responsibility is redeemed in the justificatory style of undertaking entitling commitments or the communicative style of deferring to the authority of interlocutors, there is the potential for a regress. The assertional commitment that a player proffers as entitling her to her original claim is itself libel to the demand for reasons, and so on. The interlocutor to whose authority a player has deferred may in turn defer to the authority of another, and so on. The combination of justificatory and communicative approaches to vindicating

commitments only holds out the possibility of a more complicated regress.

Rather than attempting to mollify the foundationalist anxiety that gives rise to the threat of regress in the first place, Brandom aims to dissolve this threat by construing the toy practice of asserting in a way that leaves no room for global skepticism to take root. "Even if all of the methods of demonstrating entitlement to a commitment are regressive. . . a grounding problem arises in general only if entitlement is never attributed until and unless it has been demonstrated" (Brandom 1994, 177). If, by contrast, commitments are treated as *prima facie* entitled, i.e. as "innocent until proven guilty," until someone is in a position to raise a legitimate challenge, then the skeptic is forced to participate in the game of giving and asking for reasons before doubt can be cast on any claim. Brandom's solution to or *dissolution* of the problem of entitlement-regress is to think of commitments in the toy practice of asserting as having *default* entitlement. In other words, when a scorekeeper attributes a commitment to a player, she also attributes entitlement to that commitment "by default", unless there is some reason for thinking otherwise, in which case, she can challenge the commitment. Brandom thus speaks of the DEFAULT AND CHALLENGE STRUCTURE of entitlement.

The communicative dimension of assertional commitments and the DEFAULT AND CHALLENGE STRUCTURE of assertional entitlement help to fill out the sketch of assertional force according to the deontic scorekeeping model. On that model, a speech act of asserting is (1) an undertaking of a commitment, which licenses others to attribute it, (2) an authorizing of further undertaking of such commitments, both by oneself and by others, and (3) the undertaking of a conditional task-responsibility to demonstrate entitlement to the commitment undertaken, if appropriately challenged (Brandom 1994, 188). These are the three sides of asserting in a practice modeled on deontic scorekeeping.

This account of asserting is supposed to capture the tripartite structure of the traditional JTB analysis of knowledge. In treating someone as knowing that *p*, the scorekeeper attributes to her interlocutor a commitment to *p* (corresponding

to the belief condition in the classical account), attributes an entitlement to *p* (corresponding to the justification condition), and undertakes the same commitment herself (corresponding to the truth condition). Since Brandom treats asserting as a kind of "implicit knowledge claim", the connection with asserting is direct: in specifying what it is for a scorekeeper to treat someone as a knower, we specify the ideal outcome of a successful instance of a speech act of assertion—namely, being recognized as a knowledge claim (Brandom 1994, 200).

The move from this normative pragmatic characterization of assertional force to the inferentialist account of assertional or propositional *content* turns on the possibility of mapping the relations among deontic statuses onto recognizably *inferential* relations among claims. Brandom's effort to demonstrate this possibility hinges on the specification, first, of two consequence relations among deontic statuses. These are:

- COMMITTIVE CONSEQUENCE: If S is committed to *p*, then S is committed to *q*.

- PERMISSIVE CONSEQUENCE: If S is committed and entitled to *p*, then S is (*prima facie*) entitled to *q*.

These consequence relations can be thought of as codifying scorekeeping moves that preserve in the conclusion (at least some of) the normative proprieties present in the premises. Thus, the committive relation preserves commitment and the permissive preserves entitlement (though not commitment). But Brandom goes on to claim that the abilities to take or treat interlocutors (including oneself) as committed or entitled are in principle sufficient to enable scorekeepers to respond to third sort of deontic status: incompatibility. The relation associated with incompatibility is as follows:

- INCOMPATIBILITY: If S is committed to *p*, then S is not entitled to *q*.

It is not that one cannot undertake incompatible commitments, i.e. make incompatible assertions. Indeed, we find ourselves doing it all the time. But, as Brandom

puts it "the effect of doing so is to alter one's normative status by undercuting any entitlement one might otherwise have had to either of the incompatible commitments, for each commitment counts as a decisive reason against entitlement to the other, incompatible one" (Brandom 2008, 120). Incompatibility can thus be treated as a consequence relation on par with those of commitment and entitlement.[7]

Semantic inferentialism conceives of the content of sentences and speech acts in terms of their inferential role. To see these practical-consequential relations among deontic statuses as inducing inferential relations among claims is to identify the disposition to respond to anyone who is committed (entitled) to p as thereby committed (entitled or precluded from entitlement) to q with the disposition to treat q as a committive (permissive) consequence of (or incompatible with) p. In other words, the first move in explaining the semantic content of claims in terms of the pragmatic force of speech acts is to associate the changes a *scorekeeper* is disposed to make for an *interlocutor's scorecard* with the *deontic statuses*, i.e. commitments, *themselves*.

To understand how these consequence and incompatibility relations serve to represent the content of assertional commitments, Brandom asks us to think of this content as "a mapping that associates with one social deontic score—characterizing the stage before that speech act is performed, according to some scorekeeper—the set of scores for the conversational stage that results from the assertion, according

---

[7]Since the relation of incompatibility does not preserve a deontic status—instead it withholds one—it is not obviously an inferential relation. To induce an inferential relation from that of incompatibility, Brandom hits upon an inclusion relation between the sets of incompatible claims associated with any two claims. The result is what Brandom considers to be a genuinely semantic relation of entailment.

- INCOMPATIBILITY-ENTAILMENT:p incompatibility-entails q just in case everything incompatible with q is incompatible with p.

The relation of incompatibility-entailment is particularly important to Brandom's inferentialism, since he sees it as capturing modally-robust material inferences, which he thinks creatures must be able to track in order to count as concept-mongerers. The 'incompatibility semantics' that Brandom develops on the basis of this entailment relation is supposed to provide the semantics for the propositional calculus as well as S4 and S5 modal systems. See (Brandom 2008).

to the same scorekeeper" (Brandom 1994, 190). Consider, then, a scorekeeper, Susan, and an interlocutor, Jim. Suppose that Jim asserts that p. To treat Jim as asserting that p, Susan must proceed through three stages of alterations to the scorecard she keeps on him. In the first stage, she must add p to the set of commitments she has attributed to Jim. She will also need to add any commitments that she takes to be committive-consequences of p in light of those already attributed to him. In the second stage, Susan adds *prima facie* entitlements to any assertional commitments that are the consequences of good entitlement-preserving inferences that have p (along with any other commitments to which the interlocutor is similarly entitled) as premise. Finally, at the third stage, Susan must consider whether Jim has any commitments that are incompatible with those to which *prima facie* entitlement has been attributed at the second stage. If so, entitlements to those commitments are *subtracted*, and the result is a final score of what Jim is committed and entitled to (now, not just *prima facie*, but *all things considered*), according to Susan, after asserting that p. In this sense, the content of assertional commitments can be thought of as their *deontic score-change potential* conceived in terms the commitment- and entitlement-preserving consequence relations and incompatibility relations connecting commitments and entitlements.

The "final entitlements" that appear in the third-stage of the conversational dynamic are what a scorekeeper attributes to the targeted asserter after going through the three-stage process of computing the deontic significance of an assertional speech act. They are entitlements to commitments with which the scorekeeper has no incompatible commitment. (As we shall see in the next section, this is equivalent to having no reason to challenge the commitments in question). Thus, any assertional commitments to which the interlocutor has "final entitlement" are ones to which the scorekeeper is authorized, by her own lights, to re-assert.

It is important to keep in mind that this three-stage dynamic involves the interaction of *two sides* of the conversational practice depicted by the deontic scorekeeping model. A scorekeeper is responsible for keeping two sets of books:

one of the consequences and antecedents of interlocutors' commitments in light of other commitments she attributes to them, and the other on the consequences and antecedents of those commitments when she lines them up with the commitments she undertakes or endorses herself. The consequential commitments added in the first stage and entitlements added in the second stage of the conversational dynamic are only added to the first book, i.e. against the background of other attributed commitments. But there will be similar additions made in the second book to reflect the consequences an interlocutor's assertions have against the background of the scorekeeper's endorsements. These two books express the way in which a speaker maps another's utterances onto her own so that she can use the other's remarks as premises for her own arguments. When she attributes a belief to someone she can do so either in a *de dicto* fashion according to the first book— i.e. in terms of the other commitments she attributes to that person— or in a *de re* fashion according to the second book— i.e. in terms of the commitments she undertakes herself. The idea that each scorekeeper holds two sets of books is Brandom's way of suggesting that a distinction between what one takes to be the case and what really is the case, between subjective endorsement and objective constraint, is built into the perspective of each linguistic participant. Indeed, it is a fundamental principle of the scorekeeping model that the attributions that one authorizes others to make when one undertakes a commitment can *outrun* what one is disposed to acknowledge.

Ultimately, what entitles Brandom (and what he *says* entitles him) to talk of propositional content and thus of genuine assertions, beliefs, claims, and inferences, is his success at demonstrating that the social abilities to track these primitive relations among deontic statuses provide scorekeepers with the raw materials needed to deploy the logical and representational locutions that are recognizable features of ordinary discourse. In other words, what makes the moves depicted in deontic scorekeeping genuine assertions, and not mere moves in a game—call them *shmassertions*—is contingent upon the possibility for scorekeepers to *say*

what they could otherwise only *do*, for instance, to explicitly ascribe beliefs *de dicto* or *de re*, rather than just treating interlocutors in certain ways. Telling *that story*, however, is beyond the scope and purpose of the present chapter, which is to articulate the motivation and framework of Brandom's deontic scorekeeping account of assertional practice and to present a particular criticism of it. It is time, now, to turn to that criticism.[8]

2.3 Are Assertions Enough to Play the Game?

2.3.1 The Problem of Justificatory Stalemate

According to Brandom, practices that qualify as minimally discursive must exhibit the structure of a game of giving and asking for reasons. Such a structure accords performances the status of assertions and inferences: "Asserting is giving reasons... making sentences available for use as premises in inferences" (Brandom 1994, 168). The deontic scorekeeping model he offers is intended to represent an idealized version of this practice. According to that model, speakers are essentially scorekeepers undertaking and attributing commitments and entitlements. For an undertaking of a commitment to count as the undertaking of a distinctly *assertional* commitment, the practice must treat a performance as obliging the scorekeeper to undertake further commitments, as authorizing her to undertake others, and as rendering her responsible for demonstrating entitlement to that commitment when challenged. The first two aspects of assertional commitment—i.e. obliging and authorizing further commitments—capture the sense in which assertions *serve as* reasons. The latter aspect—i.e. that of justificatory responsibility—captures the sense in which assertions *stand in need of* reasons; they "are what reasons are asked for" (Brandom 1994, 167).

In this section I shall argue that the scorekeeping notion of asserting as a un-

---

[8]For the full story, see chapters 6, 7, and 8 of (Brandom 1994).

dertaking of justificatory responsibility cannot be represented in Brandom's model of MDPs, so long as the latter are purely assertional practices. More specifically, my thesis is that the justificatory responsibility that is partly constitutive of (the normative significance of) assertional force is not a genuine feature of scorekeeping practices in which participants' practical repertoire consists *solely* in the undertaking and attributing of assertional commitments. This restriction, which Brandom implicitly places on the MDPs he models, compels him to treat assertions as doing the work of challenges, rather than to introduce a separate speech act into the practice. The result of pressing assertions into service as challenges is that the MDPs he envisages are locked in a situation I call JUSTIFICATORY STALEMATE in which justificatory responsibility is in principle never discharged.

To see how the problem of justificatory stalemate arises for Brandom's MDPs, consider the significance that challenges have for the scorekeeping account of assertions. In order for commitment-undertaking performances to count as assertions, they must saddle their performer with a responsibility to vindicate entitlement; this responsibility is conditional upon being challenged. If it were not possible to have one's commitments challenged, then the condition for undertaking the task of justification would never, in principle, arise, and thus it would make no sense to say that players were undertaking such a responsibility. In other words, the possibility of having one's commitments challenged is a necessary condition for commitments to carry justificatory responsibility, and hence to count as assertions.

Challenges are, of course, themselves performances in the social practice under consideration. But what characterizes them as such? In a recent article, Jeremy Wanderer has culled three features of challenging from Brandom's scattered comments:

(C1) A successful act of challenging must provide the condition requiring the challenged asserter to undertake the task of demonstrating entitlement to the asserted claim.

(C2) The effect of a successful challenge, according to a scorekeeper, is to remove the default entitlement associated with a claim, suspending entitlement to the claim pending successful defense.

(C3) A challenge itself must be an act that can be performed appropriately or inappropriately; it must be susceptible to being challenged itself, so that successfully challenging the challenge is one way of restoring the default entitlement to a claim (Wanderer 2010b, 100).

The first aspect of challenging stipulates that a challenge must 'detach' the asserter's conditional justificatory obligation; (though not in the sense that would require the asserter to be able to assert conditional *sentences*.) The second aspect may be thought of as elaborating how such 'detachment' occurs, namely, by suspending the default entitlement that assertional commitments are granted in the game of giving and asking for reasons. The third aspect of challenging that Wanderer articulates reminds us that challenges are themselves moves susceptible to normative assessment. This means that it is always possible to challenge challenges and that doing so appropriately is one way to restore default entitlement to the original claim.

This third feature of challenging suggests the need to further specify the first two. If challenges are themselves acts that can be performed appropriately or inappropriately, then the cancellation of an assertion's default entitlement and the subsequent activation of the asserter's responsibility to vindicate her claim will either be the consequence of an appropriate or an inappropriate challenge. Obviously an inappropriate challenge cannot void an assertion's default entitlement or require the asserter to discharge her justificatory responsibility, so it must be an *appropriate* challenge that possesses the first two features. This is clearly what Wanderer means by the phrase "successful challenge" in (C1) and (C2).

Moreover, the idea that default entitlement is only removed by *legitimate* challenges is crucial to Brandom's use of the "default and challenge" model of justification to counter the foundationalist's threat of justificatory regress. A mere

challenge, that is, a challenge considered without regard to its appropriateness, cannot 'detach' the asserter's conditional obligation to demonstrate entitlement, for then any assertion could be deprived of default entitlement without any justificatory cost to the challenger. In other words, if a *mere* challenge could succeed in stripping an assertion of its presumptive justificatory status then there would be nothing to prevent the challenging of all assertions at once, thereby permitting global skepticism. Only by insisting that challenges themselves must be entitled by independent considerations does the default and challenge model succeed in undercutting the threat of justificatory regress.

If (C1)-(C3) stipulate the conditions on which an act counts as a challenge, we should also, in keeping with the Brandomian commitment to phenomenalism, consider what a scorekeeper must *do* in order to take or treat an act as one of challenging. Brandom's answer is suggested in a brief remark.

> For A to treat C's challenge of B's assertion of p as successful is for A to respond to it by withholding attribution of entitlement to B for that claim, pending B's vindication of it ... This has the effect of making the assertion unavailable (according to A's score) to other interlocutors who might otherwise inherit entitlement to commitments to the same content testimonially from B (Brandom 1994, 193).

Notice that the scorekeeper perspective is taken toward the interactions of two other players. To treat an act as a challenge, it would appear, a scorekeeper must have two performances in view: one that is a challenge of the other. (Wanderer takes issue with this feature of Brandom's account. I discuss his criticism below).

Given the central importance of challenging in Brandom's account of assertion and the distinctive features it possess, it is all the more surprising that he relegates challenges to the status of "auxiliary" speech acts whose presence in the game of giving and asking for reasons is entirely optional. At least part of his reason for doing so rests on the conviction that

> the simplest way to implement such a feature of the model of asserting is to require that the performances that have the significance of challenging entitlements to assertional commitments themselves be asser-

tions. One then can challenge an assertion only by making an assertion incompatible with it (Brandom 1994, 178).

In other words, Brandom thinks that an MDP need not confer the distinct significance of challenges upon performances so long as it treats some as assertions according to the statuses of commitment and entitlement, since the latter are sufficient to induce incompatibility among assertions. In the next subsection, I consider some reasons why Brandom might hold this position, i.e. that assertions can do the work of challenging.

My immediate task, however, is to illustrate a particularly debilitating consequence that conceiving challenges as assertions has for Brandom's conception of MDPs as games of giving and asking for reasons. I call this consequence the problem of JUSTIFICATORY STALEMATE.

To illustrate the problem, lets imagine a deontic scorekeeping practice instantiating a game of giving and asking for reasons. In this practice, there are three players: Susan, Jim, and Emma. The normative-pragmatic repertoire of these players consists solely of the ability to attribute and undertake assertional commitments. To add some history to the practice, we can stipulate that each of them has a pre-existing set of commitments and entitlements recorded both for themselves and for the other two. In other words, let's imagine that when we (theorists) arrive on the scene, Susan, Jim, and Emma, already have 'filled in' some of their scorecards. But we do not assume that any demand for reasons has been made or fulfilled. What we want to determine is what an *original* demand to fulfill justificatory responsibility would look like, that is, whether a scorekeeper can take or treat one player's assertion as a challenge of another's such that the latter's conditional responsibility to provide reasons is detached.

When we arrive, three moves have been made. Jim has asserted that p, Susan that q, and Emma that r. The players' scorecards reflect these moves. Having asserted that p, Jim is in a position to attribute entitlement to p to Susan and Emma. Likewise, he attributes default entitlement to their commitments to

q and r, respectively. The same goes for Susan and Emma; each takes the others as having entitlement to their own claims and default entitlement to the claims of others.

Let's look at Emma's scorecard. According to the three-stage conversational dynamic, Emma must first add all consequential commitments that follow from p to the scorecard she keeps on Jim. Next, she will add any commitments that Jim is *prima facie* entitled to as a consequence of committing to p. Table 2.1 on the following page represents Emma's attributes after this second stage.

In the third and final stage, Emma will subtract those *prima facie* entitlements to commitments that are incompatible with others that she has attributed. Let us imagine that in the third stage, Emma finds that Susan's commitment to q is incompatible with p. According to Brandom, Emma ought to treat Susan's assertion that q as a challenge to Jim's assertion that p. Since Emma also takes Susan to be entitled by default to q, she should treat Susan's assertion that q as a challenge to Jim's assertion that p and therefore respond by withholding his entitlement to p, pending his vindication of it. This, after all, is what a scorekeeper must do to take or treat a player as being responsible for his or her commitments. Moreover, since, Emma and Susan only gained entitlement to p communicatively from Jim, they too will need to have their entitlement to it withdrawn. And finally, according to Emma, so long as Jim remains committed to p, whether entitled or not, he is not entitled to assert that q. Emma's updated scorecard is respresented by Table 2.2 on the next page.

But now the consequences of pressing incompatible assertions into service as challenges begin to appear. For incompatibility, or at least the conception of that relation which Brandom mobilizes for his inferentialist semantics, is a symmetric relation; if p is incompatible with q, then q is incompatible with p. This means that if Susan's claim that q is a challenge of Jim's claim that p, then so too is Jim's claim a challenge of Susan's. In order to treat it as such, Emma will need to rescind Susan's default entitlement to q, pending her vindication. These changes

Players	Commitments	Entitlements
Jim	P	P_d, Q_c, R_c
Susan	Q	P_c, Q_d, R_c
Emma	R	P_c, Q_c, R_j

Table 2.1: Emma's scorecard at Stage 2

Note: P_d in the entitlement box indicates that the player is entitled to Q by *default*, P_j indicates that the player has a *justification* for P, and P_c indicates that the player has *communicatively inherited* entitlement to P from another player to whom she can defer.

Players	Commitments	Entitlements	Incompatibilities
Jim	P	$\cancel{P_d}$, $\cancel{Q_c}$, R_c	N/A
Susan	Q	$\cancel{P_c}$, Q_d, R_c	N/A
Emma	R	$\cancel{P_c}$, Q_c, R_j	{P, Q}

Table 2.2: Emma's scorecard at Stage 3 (incomplete)

Note: A crossed out item in the entitlement box indicates that the player is no longer entitled to that commitment. Since we are looking for a point in a toy practice at which a scorekeeper (in this case, Emma) takes one player to challenge another player by making an incompatible assertion, we need only consider the commitments that the scorekeeper in question (i.e. Emma) takes to be incompatible. Thus, we do not need to stipulate what commitments Jim and Susan take to be incompatible.

to Emma's scorecard are depicted in Table 2.3 on this page.

Players	Commitments	Entitlements	Incompatibilities
Jim	P	~~P_d~~, ~~Q_c~~, R_c	N/A
Susan	Q	~~P_c~~, ~~Q_d~~, R_c	N/A
Emma	R	~~P_c~~, ~~Q_c~~, R_j	$\{P, Q\}$

Table 2.3: Emma's scorecard after Stage 3 (complete)

We have at last arrived at the context that gives rise to justificatory stalemate. When the symmetry of incompatibility is combined not only with the condition (C3) that challenges can be challenged, but also with the condition (C2) that legitimate challenges strip challenged assertions of their default entitlement, a troubling situation emerges. For when Emma attributes these two incompatible assertions, i.e. p to Jim and q to Susan, she faces the following problem: to the extent that Jim is entitled by default to claim that p, his assertion succeeds in challenging Susan's claim that q, thereby effectively counter-challenging her challenge and obviating his obligation to vindicate commitment to p. But conversely, in so far as Susan has default entitlement to q, she is in a position of counter-challenging Jim's claim that p, again, deflecting the demand to justify her assertion. From Emma's scorekeeping perspective, there simply is no way of taking either claim as a legitimate demand for reasons: if she attributes default entitlement to Jim's and Susan's assertions, then—as challenges of one another—their default entitlement must be suspended. But if she does not attribute default entitlement to their claims, or is forced to suspend it, then she ceases to treat them as legitimate challenges of one another, and thus there is no detachment of conditional justificatory responsibility for either Jim or Susan. I call the situation that Emma confronts one of JUSTIFICATORY STALEMATE because although both Susan and Jim are permitted to make further moves, doing so remains futile from the perspective of the (scorekeeper's) attribution of justificatory responsibility.

Before hypothesizing Brandom's response to this situation, let me take a

moment to see what consequences the possibility of justificatory stalemate in the game of giving and asking for reasons would have for the account of assertion. As I noted above, it is only *entitled* challenges that have the effect of removing the challenged assertion's default status and thereby providing the condition requiring the asserter to vindicate her claim. But if the appropriateness of any incoming challenge is always itself put into question by the challenged assertion itself, then the condition obliging a speaker to discharge her justificatory responsibility never, in principle, arises. There are no circumstances in which to 'detach' her conditional task-responsibility and thus no way to fulfill that responsibility. A responsibility that is in principle impossible to fulfill is no responsibility at all. So long as assertions are forced to do the work of challenging, and thereby ensure that challenges have default entitlement, there can be no justificatory responsibility in Brandom's toy practice. If scorekeepers are unable to treat players as undertaking a commitment to demonstrate entitlement, then they cannot treat their acts as having assertional force. Thus, if challenges are assertions (in the toy practice), then there are no assertions (in that practice). And since, as we have seen, challenges are treated as assertions in Brandom's game of giving and asking for reasons, it follows that there are no assertions in that practice. The model of MDPs as purely assertional practices is thus bound to fail.

2.3.2 Responses to the Problem

Before hypothesizing Brandom's response to this situation, let me take a moment to see what consequences the possibility of justificatory stalemate in the game of giving and asking for reasons would have for the account of assertion. As I noted above, it is only entitled challenges that have the effect of removing the challenged assertion's default status and thereby providing the condition requiring the asserter to vindicate her claim. But if the appropriateness of any incoming challenge is always itself put into question by the challenged assertion itself, then the condition obliging a speaker to discharge her justificatory responsibility never, in

principle, arises. There are no circumstances in which to 'detach' her conditional task-responsibility and thus no way to fulfill that responsibility. A responsibility that is in principle impossible to fulfill is no responsibility at all. So long as assertions are forced to do the work of challenging, and thereby ensure that challenges have default entitlement, there can be no justificatory responsibility in Brandom's toy practice. If scorekeepers are unable to treat players as undertaking a commitment to demonstrate entitlement, then they cannot treat their acts as having assertional force. Thus, if challenges are assertions (in the toy practice), then there are no assertions (in that practice). And since, as we have seen, challenges are treated as assertions in Brandom's game of giving and asking for reasons, it follows that there are no assertions in that practice. The model of MDPs as purely assertional practices is thus bound to fail.

Now it may be granted that the players caught up in a putative case of justificatory stalemate are permitted, by the lights of the scorekeeper, to undertake a commitment or deferral which vindicates their challenge and thereby shifts the burden of proof onto the interlocutor. But, it is precisely because such moves are permitted and not *required* that makes them incapable of instituting a practice whereby participants are held *responsible* for producing entitlement. The problem of JUSTIFICATORY STALEMATE is that when a scorekeeper records two incompatible claims with default entitlements on the scorecards of two players, she (the scorekeeper) has no reason, in the deontic scorekeeping sense, to treat either as doing something *wrong*. And given normative phenomalism, it follows that neither *is* doing anything wrong. So while players are permitted to demonstrate entitlement, they are not *obliged* to do so on pain of subsequent changes to their deontic score. It is true that were one of the players in the situation to happen to justify her claim, the effect would be to detach the other player's conditional responsibility. However, the original demonstration itself could not be treated as the fulfillment of justificatory responsibility. This reply began by granting the possibility of justificatory stalemate's arising while denying its persistence in the

space of reasons, but in order to break out of the stalemate *the theorist* requires players to make moves that *the game* itself merely permits.

Another way to respond might aim at insulating Brandom's system from the *consequences* of this problem by admitting that justificatory stalemate can indeed arise and persist in the game of giving and asking for reasons, but contend that its appearance is not necessitated by the structure of the game, but rather by the particular 'history' with which my example was established. Recall that in the example, the scorekeeper, Emma, grants default entitlement to Susan's putative challenge. The respondent might point out that default entitlement is not the only sort of entitlement that can be bestowed upon assertional commitments. There is, after all, *genuine*, demonstrated or deferred entitlement. Going back to our example, if Emma's scorecard recorded Susan as inheriting entitlement to *q* either consequentially from one of her previous commitments or communicatively from another participant, say Emma herself, then this would give Emma a reason to rescind Jim's default entitlement pending vindication of his commitment to *p*. Such a scenario would fulfill the condition obliging Jim to discharge his justificatory responsibility. Thus, while stalemate might arise at any point in the game and for any scorekeeper, *it need not*, so long as the history of commitments and entitlements attributed by the scorekeeper license one challenge and not the other.

I think we have to admit that the scenario that this objection appeals to is one in which the consequences of stalemate are effectively averted. If the scorekeeper can attribute *inherited* entitlement to one of the incompatible assertions and only default entitlement to the other, then she is authorized to treat the former as a challenge of the latter and to demand of its endorser that he demonstrate entitlement to it. So long as such scenarios occur in the scorekeeping practice, its participants count as treating each other as performing acts for which they incur justificatory responsibility. Thus the worst consequence of justificatory stalemate is deflected.

This solution, however, carries its own set of consequences for the scorekeep-

ing model of assertional practices. We need to acknowledge the fact that we are considering the scorekeeper's perspective on an exchange between two players in which there is an *original* inducement to demonstrate entitlement, i.e. a demand to fulfill justificatory responsibility, where no demand has already been either made or fulfilled. The stipulation that the laying of justificatory responsibility upon another player be original in this sense is intended to prevent appeal to a regress of responsibility-inducing performances. If in order to say of one incompatible assertion that its asserter inherits entitlement via a previous demonstration of it, then we will have to determine whether that demonstration was elicited in response to a demand for reasons. If it was not, then such demonstration would have to be considered 'spontaneous,' in which case our reflections on the previous response kick in: we would need to posit some *ur*-demonstration whose provider was merely permitted but not obliged to perform. If, on the other hand, the demonstration was an attempt to redeem entitlement in the face of a challenge, then we will need to determine whether that challenge was itself entitled by previous demonstration. The threat of this sort of explanatory regress means that we cannot treat a scorekeeper's attribution of entitlement to one of the two incompatible claims as resulting from the associated player's prior demonstration or deferral.

The only way left to inherit entitlement to a claim, from the perspective of a scorekeeper, is to have undertaken a commitment to another claim, which has the claim in question as one of its permissive consequences. In other words, the scorekeeper must attribute entitlement to the challenger's claim as a consequence of the latter's endorsement of a prior claim to which she was entitled. And, of course, *that* claim must be in turn the permissive consequence a yet prior claim. The potential for this sort of regress, a regress of entitlement attributions, is just the sort of regress that worries the foundationalist and to which Brandom's default and challenge structure is supposed to serve as panacea. To obviate the regress, the scorekeeper must, at some point, attribute a commitment with default entitlement; a commitment that then has the challenging assertion as one of its

consequences.

But now we are right back to the context that gave rise to justificatory stalemate in the first place: two incompatible assertional commitments, both of which are attributed with default entitlement. The fact that one 'inherits' default entitlement does nothing to change the calculus for the scorekeeper. After all, if p is incompatible with q, which is a permissive consequence of r, then p is incompatible with r. Thus, the only path left to introduce a performance that counts as a legitimate challenge—that is, an assertion to which the asserter is entitled and with which another player's assertion is incompatible—requires the scorekeeper to grant entitlement by default, thereby establishing the context of justificatory stalemate. The attempt to obviate the consequences of stalemate for deontic scorekeeping fails.

The two responses I have considered to the problem of justificatory stalemate are not sufficient to salvage the scorekeeping model from its consequences, namely, the unintelligibility of justificatory responsibility in a scorekeeping practice consisting solely of assertions. The last that I will consider is culled from Wanderer's own response to a rather different set of problems he sees in Brandom's account of challenges as incompatible assertions. Wanderer argues that incompatible assertions cannot satisfy (C1) because an act that fulfills that condition must be second-personal. Any speech act whose structural role in discourse is, in part, to call upon its addressee to respond by acknowledging the address is second personal. As a consequence, a second-personal act precludes the possibility of its being ignored by the addressee. (A speech act's having an addressee is different from and independent of its having a target. A speech act is targeted if its scorekeeping consequences discriminate between hearers and over-hearers.) Since the role of challenges in deontic scorekeeping is to require the asserter to respond by evincing entitlement, the latter cannot ignore the address of a challenge. Thus, challenges are second personal. But if assertions are essentially impersonal in that they do not have addressees that are called upon to provide reciprocal recognition, then

assertions cannot serves as challenges. Wanderer's response to this concluding conditional is to provide Brandom's system with a friendly amendment: deny the antecedent by showing how asserting can be construed as being second-personally addressed in a way that "coheres with core aspects of the act as it features in our linguistic practices" (Weiss and Wanderer 2010, 107).

No doubt if there are challenges in a scorekeeping practice, a challenged player must not be permitted to ignore her challengee. Moreover, if assertions are indeed second-personal in Wanderer's sense, then their very status as assertions would hinge upon their ability to serve as challenges to other assertions. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that Wanderer succeeds at demonstrating that assertions are second personal speech acts, would the problem of justificatory stalemate still arise? At first blush, this strategy appears to solve the problem by fiat: the theorist is simply stipulating that it is constitutive of assertions that they call upon asserters of incompatible claims to respond by demonstrating entitlement. But, as far as I can tell, there is nothing about the second personal structure of assertions that requires that they impose an obligation to *justify* incompatible claims. Moreover, there remains the fact that it is only legitimate challenges, i.e. justified assertions, which make demands upon the addressee. So long as one continues to endorse (C2) and (C3) and to attribute default entitlement to assertions serving as challenges, the problem of justificatory stalemate persists. The immediate consequence of stalemate is that neither assertion has entitlement, neither is a legitimate challenge of the other, and therefore no one has been 'called upon' to give reasons. Thus, complicating the scorekeeping account of assertions by adding this second personal dimension does not succeed in weakening the threat of justificatory stalemate for that account.

2.4 Assertional Fundamentalism

In the previous two subsections, I have defended the claim that the scorekeeping notion of asserting as an undertaking of justificatory responsibility cannot be represented in Brandom's model of MDPs, so long as the role of challenges in such practices is filled by incompatible assertions. The latter condition is induced by Brandom's restriction of MDPs to *purely* assertional practices. Thus far, however, I have only stated Brandom's restriction of scorekeepers' practical repertoire to the undertaking and attributing of assertional commitments. I have as of yet made no attempt to indicate his reasons for this restriction. In this subsection, I endeavor to evaluate what reasons Brandom does have for holding this position and to show how it underwrites the problem of justificatory stalemate.

Brandom never comes out and directly insists that MDPs *only* confer assertional force on performances. But, as I've mentioned, Brandom makes it quite clear that a purely assertional practice is sufficient to count as a game of giving and asking for reasons, and hence, as an MDP. For him, asserting is the fundamental speech act in virtue of relation to which all others come to have the significance of *speech* acts. His reasoning here is illustrated by his reflections on the act of promising:

> . . . promises are not just undertakings of responsibility to perform in a certain way. They are performances that undertake such responsibility by saying or describing explicitly what one undertakes to do. One promises in effect to make a proposition true, and the propositional contents appealed to can be understood only in connection with practices of saying or describing, of taking-true—in short, of asserting what are, in virtue of the role they play in such assertions, declarative sentences (Brandom 1994, 172-3).

For Brandom, a practice cannot confer the significance of promising on performances unless there are some on which it confers assertional significance. The idea appears to be that one cannot count as promising to do something unless it is possible for one to explicitly say what one promises to do. In the same way, he

thinks that to issue an order, one must be able to explicitly state what it is that is ordered, i.e., to describe the state of affairs that would count as fulfilling that order.

Brandom is making a claim of pragmatic dependence between non-assertional and assertional practices. This claim can be understood as identifying two relations among those practices. One is a sufficiency relation, what Brandom has called PP-SUFFICIENCY, which "holds when having acquired one set of abilities means one can already do everything one needs to do, in principle, to be able to do something else" (Brandom 2008, 26). In his comments on promising, Brandom appears to be claiming that the practice of asserting is PP-sufficient for that of promising. The converse of this sufficiency relation is that of PP-NECESSITY. Assertional practices are PP-necessary for promising practices in the sense that in order for a creature to be capable (in principle) of promising, it must be capable (in principle) of asserting. For sake of brevity, when one practice is PP-sufficient *and* PP-necessary for another practice, I will simply say that the latter is *pragmatically dependent* on the former.

So Brandom is committed to the claim that non-assertional practices are pragmatically dependent upon assertional practices. Implicit in his comments is a denial that such dependency runs the other way, i.e. that assertional practices might be pragmatically dependent upon non-assertional practices. How else are we to interpret the claim that "assertion is the *fundamental* speech act"? I call the position that non-assertional practices are pragmatically dependent upon assertional ones and not vice versa ASSERTIONAL FUNDAMENTALISM [9]. Since, according to one of the big claims of *Making it Explicit*, MDPs must confer the significance of assertions (and inferences) upon performances, it follows from assertional fundamentalism that the practice with the smallest set of performance types engagement in which is sufficient to count as speaking a language is just a

---

[9]It may already be obvious to the reader that assertional fundamentalism is a species of the declarative fallacy. The relation between the two is explicated in Chapter Four

purely assertional practice.

Evidence of the restriction of MDPs to assertional practices may be found in the fact that the non-assertional performances that Brandom does introduce into the model of deontic scorekeeping are explicitly treated as auxiliary and optional. In addition to challenges, which we have mentioned, other auxiliary speech acts include deferrals, disavowals, queries, and challenges. Brandom's reason for relegating these speech acts to auxiliary status is that "no new sorts of content need be considered in order to specify the significance of deferring [disavowing, querying, or challenging] for social deontic scorekeeping" (Brandom 1994, 192). The idea is that each of these types of speech act involves the attachment of some non-assertional force or significance to assertional contents, i.e. propositions. Thus, the introduction of such acts merely serves to 'enrich' the underlying assertional practice.

In the case of challenges, auxiliary status is supported by the claim that incompatible assertions can perform the same structural role. If, however, the problem of justificatory stalemate arises for a purely assertional practice, that is, one in which challenges are performed by incompatible assertions, then we have a *prima facie* reason to oppose the relegation of challenges to second-class speech acts. Justificatory responsibility only arises in a practice in which some performances count as challenges of others, and if assertions cannot serve as challenges, then the target practice must contain performances whose pragmatic significance is distinctly one of challenging.

It would appear that the consequence of this claim is to fundamentally undermine assertional fundamentalism. Assertions are no longer pragmatically independent if performance of them requires that speakers also be able to perform non-assertional speech acts. This conclusion can only be avoided if the set of practices or abilities that are sufficient for asserting are identical with those sufficient for challenging. Perhaps this is the claim Brandom has in mind when he says that "no new sorts of content need be considered in order to specify" challenges. If

it is, then it follows that the only kinds of pragmatic specifications that are relevant to the relation of pragmatic dependence underlying Brandom's assertional fundamentalism are those that might be explained by different sorts of semantic content.

Wanderer offers a reading of *Making It Explicit* that supports this interpretation of assertional fundamentalism. He argues that the incompleteness of Brandom's account of challenges need not be seen as undermining the project of *Making It Explicit* so long as the aim of providing an idealized artificial practice to model minimally discursive practices is limited by the aim of giving "an explanatory account of the semantic content associated with performances within the practice."

> On this understanding, Brandom does not seek to provide what we earlier termed a complete account of those speech acts whose presence is both necessary and/or sufficient for that practice to be a linguistic one. An incomplete account will suffice, provided that it provides enough of a model of linguistic practice so as to deliver an explanation of semantic content (Wanderer 2010a, 104).

Even if we concede to this interpretation of Brandom's project in *Making It Explicit*, it only preserves assertional fundamentalism in the face of the theoretical need to posit distinct challenging speech acts to the extent that the latter can be thought of as having the same content as assertions while not standing in content-inducing incompatibility relations with assertions. I find it very hard to imagine how this would be possible. Indeed, even the brief account of challenging-as-an-auxiliary-speech-act that Brandom offers still adheres to the view that challenges are assertions: "it might be useful from a scorekeeping point of view to have a way of addressing an assertion as a challenge to another assertion" (Brandom 1994, 193). If challenges are just assertions, which, as Wanderer puts it, *target* certain other assertions and demand demonstration of entitlement, then how are we to conceive of them but as incompatible assertions?

At this point, I think it's best to return to our sophisticated practices of

ordinary discourse in the hope of finding some speech act on which to base the scorekeeping account of challenging. In the next section I argue that when we do so, we find that the best candidate for such a position is the act of asking a question, or querying. It will be shown that introducing queries into the scorekeeping model of MDPs provides a coherent and stable resolution to the problem of justificatory stalemate. But it does so only if we abandon any and all commitment to the position of assertional fundamentalism.

3 Questions, Queries, and the Force-Content Distinction

3.1 Queries and their Content

3.1.1 Auxiliary Speech Acts in Minimally Discursive Practices

For a practice to qualify as minimally discursive, its practitioners must exhibit a set of social capacities whose exercise is sufficient to characterize (at least a portion of) their behavior as linguistic. Brandom claims to have captured minimally discursive practices (MDPs) with his model of deontic scorekeeping, which depicts participants as undertaking and attributing normative statuses such as commitments and entitlements. According to his theory, a practice is minimally discursive if it is an interpretable as one of deontic scorekeeping whose practitioners have a repertoire that includes the ability to perform assertional speech acts, in the sense of undertaking assertional commitments. Crudely put, Brandom argues that creatures that possess the social capacities sufficient for making assertions have everything they need in order to count as speaking a language.

In the last chapter, I attempted to show that this claim of Brandom's is problematic. In particular, I argued that the default-challenge structure that Brandom takes to be a necessary feature of the social capacity to make assertions produces a stalemate among interlocutors in which their justificatory responsibility, which is a constitutive feature of assertional commitments, is never discharged. I contended

that this 'justificatory stalemate' persists so long as the exercise of justificatory responsibility is conditional upon being confronted with a challenge that is itself yet another assertion. Finally, I suggested that the problem of justificatory stalemate is induced by Brandom's commitment to ASSERTIONAL FUNDAMENTALISM—the claim that all non-assertional uses of language are pragmatically dependent upon assertional ones, and not vice versa.

I do not take assertional fundamentalism or the subsequent stalemate in the space of reasons as intrinsic features of the general effort to identify the structure of MDPs in scorekeeping terms. The issue I hope to resolve in the remainder of this work is what a pursuit of this project might look like once commitment to assertional fundamentalism is renounced. One way to strip *assertion*, as well as correlated notions of *belief* and *judgment*, of their privileged explanatory status is to introduce non-assertional speech acts into the essential structure of MDPs. The consequence of doing so would be to relieve us of the need to conceive of challenges as assertions, which, as we saw, produces the problem of stalemate. Instead, challenges might be represented as a distinct, non-assertional speech acts, subject to their own norms. Abandoning assertional fundamentalism could thus provide resources by which to prevent stalemate from arising in the scorekeeping model.

But what non-assertional speech act should we introduce to play the structural role of challenges? As I mentioned in the end of the previous chapter, Brandom suggests that several speech acts which might prove 'useful' for scorekeepers. He calls these *auxiliary* speech acts. The introduction of such act types into the toy practice is consistent with assertional fundamentalism because, according to Brandom, "no new sorts of content need be considered in order to specify [their] significance" (Brandom 1994, 192). In other words, these speech acts are to be understood as consisting of non-assertional force or significance attached to assertible contents, i.e. propositions. The idea appears to be that once assertible content is detectable in the practice, any new speech act types that share that

content can be introduced so as to 'enrich' the underlying assertional practice. These acts are thus not essential to the practice of assigning assertible content.

Among these auxiliary speech acts are challenges themselves. Treating challenges as a speech act with a pragmatic force distinct from assertions, does not, however, clearly resolve the problem of stalemate. First, Brandom continues to insist that challenges are sub-type of assertions, and since their *auxiliary* status hinges on their having assertible content, its hard to imagine what challenges would be other than just incompatible assertions, a view that produces stalemate. Second, taking challenges to have, as part of their 'second personal' significance, the propriety of detaching the challengee's conditional justificatory responsibility, is really an attempt to prevent stalemate by fiat. As such, it merely succeeds in shifting the problem to the level of the pragmatic analysis of challenges. Again if challenges are assertions then the theorist must show how an assertion can make a demand or elicit redemption of a responsibility. But even if this requirement is satisfied, it's still far from obvious what it is about challenges that make them demands for reasons? How does challenging a claim induce a justificatory responsibility? Finally, ordinary discourse doesn't provide many indications as to what constitutes a challenge in the sense of a *sui generis* speech act. While we often make demands for reasons, we do so by performing speech acts that are normally *contrasted* with assertions, rather than forming a sub-type of them.

If auxiliary challenges do not resolve the problem of justificatory stalemate, then what non-assertional speech acts might do the trick? The answer I propose is, I believe, rather intuitive. Ordinary discourse is already home to a distinct speech act that serves the structural role of challenges, namely, asking questions or *querying*.[1] To anticipate a discussion in later chapters of this work, queries

---

[1]The word 'question' is ambiguous, at least when it used as a nominalization of the verb 'to ask'. It can be used to refer either to the act of asking or what is asked. Of course, it is a bit inaccurate to characterize 'question' as a nominalization of 'to ask' *sans phrase*, since the latter has uses other than that in which it refers to asking a question, such as when one asks (i.e. requests) someone to do something. For this reason I have introduced the term 'query' to refer to the distinct speech act of asking a question. Thus, we should say that 'question' is ambiguous between the act of querying and what is queried.

have the effect of saddling their addressees with the responsibility to license others to undertake a commitment, that is, to provide others with an answer. A subspecies of queries, typically those made in English with sentences of the form *"Why* p*?"*, may be understood as imposing a responsibility that is discharged when the addressee demonstrates her entitlement to *p*. These *reason-seeking queries* are capable of doing all the work of challenges without risk of justificatory stalemate because their content does not stand in incompatibility relations vis-à-vis the challenged assertion. By admitting queries into MDPs alongside assertions, as equiprimordial speech acts, we not only salvage the deontic scorekeeping model from the threat of stalemate, but also do justice to the notion of a "game of giving and *asking* for reasons." Indeed, as I shall argue in Chapter Five, assertions and queries come as a "package deal"; they stand to one another in a relation of *reciprocal PP-necessity*. One must be able to ask a question in order to assert a claim, and one must be able to assert in order to query.

A crucial step in redeeming these claims is to generate an account of queries according to the model of deontic scorekeeping. We must specify in normative terms the social capacities needed to count as asking a question, i.e. to engage in *inquisitive* practices. We want to know how it is possible to ask a question in the space of reasons.

It is essential to the argument of this work that such an account also determine whether the social capacities and normative structures sufficient to treat participants in a scorekeeping practice as asking questions are reducible to and hence capable of being elaborated out of those that enable those participants to make assertions (and not vice versa) or whether they are irreducible to and hence just as basic as those needed for asserting. For, if it turned out that queries are acts whose content is identical to that of assertions, i.e. propositions, then the assertional fundamentalist might yet insist that such acts are merely *auxiliary* to the practice of making assertions. So long as the practical significance of queries can be specified in terms of assertional practice, assertional fundamentalism remains

intact, even if queries are needed to dissolve the threat of stalemate.

Relegating queries to second-class status is fundamentally misguided. While I hold querying and asserting to be *reciprocally PP-necessary*, I do not take them to be reciprocally *PP-sufficient*. In other words, I do not think that creatures engaged in assertional practices posses all of the social capacities they need to in principle engage in inquisitive practices or vice versa. Capacities of asserting and querying are basic in the sense that *neither* is pragmatically sufficient for the other—they are equiprimordial. My primary reason for taking assertions and queries to be basic speech acts is that they have distinct types of semantic content. Much of this chapter is devoted to demonstrating this claim.

The position that queries posses a distinctly non-assertible semantic content does not appear to be one that Brandom would endorse. Evidence for this lies in the fact that in addition to deferrals, challenges, and disavowals, Brandom includes what he calls "queries" among the class of auxiliary speech acts. His comment on them is brief.

> It would also be useful to those keeping score if there were some way of eliciting the avowal or disavowal of a particular claim—a way for A to find out whether B acknowledges commitment to *p*. Such a speech act is a basic query: *p?* By itself, such a speech act would have no effect on the deontic score; only responses to speech acts of this kind would alter the score. In the basic model, there is no reason not to allow anyone to be entitled to such a query at any point in a conversation (Brandom 1994, 193).

Brandom never claims that his "queries" are intended to capture even a portion of the significance we associate with the asking of questions in ordinary discourse. But its hard to imagine that his choice of notation—*p?*—is arbitrary. Moreover, his choice of notation makes it clear that Brandom's rationale for relegating "queries" to the class of auxiliary speech acts is again the idea that the content of such acts is identical to that of assertions—namely, *that p*. Given his description, it is likely that Brandom's basic "queries" are modeled on, if not intended to represent, what we often call yes-no questions in ordinary discourse—what I refer to with

the technical term: *polar queries.* If these Brandomian "queries" do capture in scorekeeping terms even part of the significance that polar queries have in ordinary discourse, and if they do have assertible contents as he suggests, then it will be difficult to establish that queries *in general* form a necessary feature of assertional practices and that they constitute a basic type of speech act, not explicable solely in terms of assertions.

In this chapter, I shall demonstrate that the core pragmatic significance we associate with the asking of questions in ordinary discourse—the speech act I am calling *querying*, and in particular *polar querying*—cannot be coherently understood as having the same semantic content as assertions. Consequently, Brandomian "queries" do not represent even the essential features of queries found in ordinary discourse. The auxiliary status of Brandomian "queries" therefore poses no threat to the reciprocal dependence of assertional and inquisitive practices that I attempt to establish in this work.

As I have said, a crucial step toward this goal is a satisfactory characterization of the speech act whose performance we (competent speakers of natural languages) identify as 'asking a question' or performing a *query.* The task of characterizing queries belongs to the theory of speech acts. John Searle pioneered this field of study, and his general theory of speech acts remains among the most influential. Searle's theory provides a useful starting point for our purposes because it both specifies the conditions necessary and sufficient for successfully performing a query and classifies queries according to a taxonomy of speech acts. Although several of the background assumptions of his theory diverge from those of Brandom's normative pragmatics, Searle nonetheless shares with Brandom the view that speech acts are a type of norm-governed behavior and that their theorization must articulate this irreducibly normative dimension. This commonality ensures that lessons learned from an examination of Searle's account of queries can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to Brandom's scorekeeping model.

An adequate characterization of queries, particularly one that is to provide

the basis for their inclusion within MDPs, must settle at least two issues. First, it must specify that feature of queries that distinguishes them from other kinds of speech acts and, most importantly, from assertions. Second, it must identify some aspect of queries that allows us to differentiate particular queries from one another, such as those performed in uttering the (hackneyed example) sentences "Is snow white?" and "Is grass green?" Historically, a speech act's (illocutionary) force has been invoked to resolve the first issue, while its (semantic) content has served to resolve the second. The so-called *force-content distinction* has come to occupy a central role in the theory of speech acts, and Searle's is no exception.

I shall argue that the traditional interpretation of the force-content distinction is laden with questionable assumptions and that another, more liberal, interpretation is both available and preferable. Adopting this alternative interpretation not only allows us to retain certain bedrock assumptions about speech acts, but, more important for our purposes, it enables us to deny a claim that would otherwise prove fatal to the attempt to include queries within an MDP. That claim, which we have already seen Brandom endorse, is that the type of semantic content needed to attribute assertions to creatures in the space of reasons is no different from that which is needed to attribute a host of other speech acts, including disavowals, challenges, and what he calls "queries." The more common version of this claim, and that which we shall see Searle endorse, says that *propositions* form the common semantic content of all or most kinds of speech acts, paradigmatically assertions and polar queries. If assertions and polar queries do in fact share the same type of semantic content, then it is tempting to see the social abilities needed to ask questions as derivative of those more basic ones needed to make assertions. Thus, in this chapter, I will be principally occupied with refuting this claim.

The other focus of this chapter is on the *force* that distinguishes queries from other speech acts. Here, I shall challenge Searle's classification of queries as a species of requests, and hence, as a non-basic type of speech act. I hope to show not only that queries refuse such classification but also that there is in fact no

place in Searle's taxonomy for queries.

3.1.2 The Traditional Force-Content Distinction

In order to specify an utterance as the performance of a particular speech act, it must be possible to distinguish the kind of illocutionary act the speaker is performing from others. That is, it must be possible to identify the act as an assertion rather than a conjecture or an order, etc. The feature of the speaker's utterance that enables us to do this is its *illocutionary force*. But saying that a speaker made an assertion is not (yet) to say *what* she is asserts. Every act of asserting is an act of asserting *something*. The feature of the speaker's utterance that distinguishes it as an act of asserting such-and-such as opposed to one of asserting this-and-that is its semantic content. Thus, illocutionary force and semantic content can be understood as serving two distinct functions in the specification of speech acts.

These two functions are reflected in the structure of the sentences that indirectly report the performance of speech acts. In these sentences, speech act verbs denote the illocutionary force of the respective utterances and the *that*-clauses denote the semantic contents—e.g. *Jim asserted that Bigfooot is real.* But the distinction can be applied to the meaning-composition of speech acts not only from the perspective of the sentences used to *describe* them but also from that of the sentences typically used to *make* them. Indeed, the distinction originates as a distinction pertaining not to speech act meaning but to *sentence* meaning.

The *locus classicus* of the force-content distinction is Frege's *Begriffschrift.* The *Begriffschrift* indicates a judgment with the prefixing of a *judgment stroke* '$\vdash$'. The horizontal line in this symbol represents what follows it as a 'judgeable content' [*beurteilbaren Inhalt*] or what Frege later called a 'thought,' [*Gedanken*] and what we today call a proposition (Frege 1879, 11-12). When a vertical line is added to the content-stroke, the result indicates the judgment that the thought is true, e.g. $\vdash$ p. The vertical line thus symbolizes the judgmental or assertive

force assigned to the proposition. When the vertical line is omitted, e.g. ⊸p, the script represents a "mere combination of ideas [*Vorstellungsverbindun*g]" or as he came to see it later, in his *Grundgesetze*, a pure function from objects to truth-values (Frege 1964, 6). In one of his unpublished manuscripts, Frege articulates the difference between the vertical and horizontal by saying, "when something is judged to be the case we can always cull out the thought that is recognized as true; the act of judgment forms no part of this" (Frege 1979, 294). Frege also refers to the judgement stroke as the *assertion sign*, though he does acknowledge a difference between judgment and assertion. Judgment consists in "the recognition of the truth of a thought-judgment" while assertion is "the manifestation of this judgment" (Frege 1979, 295).

One of Frege's chief arguments for the distinction between force and content relied on the observation that a declarative sentence can be uttered without being judged or asserted, for instance, when it appears as the antecedent of a conditional. An utterance of the sentence "If Paul stole the money, then Jim is innocent" does not assert that Paul stole the money. Geach (1960) christened this "the Frege point" and used it to undermine early twentieth-century expressivism by showing that words like 'good,' 'right,' 'intentional,' 'true,' etc. could meaningfully embed in the antecedents of conditionals and therefore could not serve simply as indicators of expressive force.

For Frege, then, the distinction between assertive force and propositional content served to distinguish that part of a sentence's meaning which expresses a proposition from that which indicates the speaker's recognition of the truth of that proposition. In the *Begriffschrift*, the vertical lie serves to indicate assertive force, while the horizontal line indicates assertible content. In natural language, Frege's saw the declarative mood of a sentence as an indicator of assertive force, albeit, a highly defeasible one.

Thanks to the subsequent insights of, among others, Wittgenstein (1953) and Austin (1962), the upshot of "the Frege point" has been generalized beyond

the scope of declarative sentences and assertive speech acts to cover to all different sentence and speech act types. The idea guiding this move is that, by themselves, propositions are communicatively inert; for instance, merely tokening a sentence expressing the proposition that snow is white is not to make a move in a "language game". Rather, such moves are only made by putting forth a proposition with an illocutionary force such as that of assertion, conjecture, command, etc. Thus, all (illocutionary) speech acts and the sentences typically used to perform them are analyzable in terms of illocutionary forces attached to (otherwise forceless) propositions. Under certain conditions, such as in cases of embedding or non-literal speech, indicators of illocutionary force in a sentence can be defeated or cancelled, leaving the proposition as the core meaning of the utterance.

This generalized Fregean, or traditional interpretation of the force-content distinction has largely become orthodox in semantics and speech act theory. To understand the theoretical commitments behind this interpretation, consider the way its defender would explain the following facts about the meaning of sentences and their associated speech acts. Fact #1 is that an interrogative sentence like (3.1 a), an imperative sentence like (3.1 b), and a declarative sentence like(3.1 c), though meaningful, do not have the same meaning. What accounts for this difference in meaning?

(3.1) (a) Is the window open?

(b) Open the window!

(c) The window is open.

The generalized Fregean distinction views sentences (3.1 a)–(3.1 c) as sharing the same content, i.e., the proposition that the window is open, but as differing with regard to the kind of force that is attached to this content, indicated by the contrasting word-order and punctuation of each sentence.[2] The speech acts typically

---

[2]For the sake of simplicity, let us bracket the question of whether the presence of definite descriptions in these sentences means that there is strictly speaking no proposition that the window is open.

performed in uttering these sentences are thus distinguished by the kinds of illocutionary force each attaches to the proposition that the window is open: querying, commanding, and asserting, respectively.

The other fact, Fact #2, that is accounted for by the distinction is that while sentences like (3.1 a) and (3.2)are both typically used to ask yes-no questions, or to perform what I am calling polar queries, nonetheless they differ in meaning. What accounts for this difference?

(3.2) Is the door closed?

The generalized Fregean response to this phenomenon is to say that what distinguishes the meaning of a typical utterance of the two sentences is the proposition that each expresses. While (3.1 a) expresses the proposition that the window is open, (3.2) expresses the proposition that the door is closed. Since they express different propositions, the traditionalist concludes that utterances of (3.1 a) and (3.2), while both queries, are semantically distinct.

What makes the traditional interpretation of the force-content distinction so seductive is the fact that it mobilizes a single theoretical term to explain both facts: the proposition. In other words, that which accounts for the commonality of speech acts of different illocutionary types such as those in (3.1 a)–(3.1 c) is the very same thing that distinguishes the meaning speech acts of the same illocutionary type, namely the propositions they express. The traditional interpretation of the force-content distinction is forged around an endorsement of what I shall call the Uniform Content Thesis:

Unfiorm Content Theis (UCT): The semantic content of all illocutionary acts is a proposition (or propositional function).

One argument the traditionalist might proffer for UCT goes as follows. Since sentences (3.1 a)–(3.1 c) are composed of the same set of English words, belonging to the same grammatical categories, then, given identical interpretations of these sub-sentential components, the semantic content of all three sentences and their

associated speech acts will also be identical. The semantic content of the assertion performed in uttering (3.1 c) is the proposition that the window is open. Thus, the semantic content of (3.1 a)–(3.1 c) is the proposition that the window is open.

While this argument is valid, I do not believe that it is sound. One of the premises is quite implausible. It is true that (3.1 a)–(3.1 c) are composed of the same set of English words, belonging to the same grammatical categories, and it is almost universally accepted that the semantic content of an assertion is a proposition. But it is not obvious that given identical interpretations of their sub-sentential components, the semantic content of (3.1 a)–(3.1 c) and their associated speech acts will also be identical. I shall call this the Identity of Content Thesis.

Identity of Content Thesis (ICT): If a (polar) query and an assertion have the same sub-sentential components, and these components are given identical interpretations, then the query and assertion are semantically identical, as are corresponding commands, promises, etc.

Determining the plausibility of ICT is crucial not only to the defense of the traditional interpretation, but also to the issue with which we are primarily concerned in this chapter: whether the semantic content of queries differs from that of assertions. In this chapter I shall argue that accepting ICT demands that we reject some bedrock assumptions about the nature of propositions and speech acts. I will suggest that we abandon ICT, as well as UCT, which follows from it. In the next section, I examine John Searle's speech act theory, which is a paradigmatic example of the traditional interpretation, and shall argue that there are good reasons to deny ICT and UCT.

3.2 Searle's Theory of Speech Acts

3.2.1 The Bipartitional Analysis

Next to J.L. Austin, the thinker most associated with the philosophical study of speech acts is John Searle. Searle's seminal contribution to this study was his first major work, simply titled *Speech Acts*. In this work, Searle systematizes Austin's insights by articulating the core structures of linguistic performances.

For Searle, speaking is a rule-governed form of behavior, the basic unit of which, the speech act, consists in the production of a sentence token under certain conditions. On this view, now widely adopted by other philosophers and linguists, the illocutionary act coincides with the complete speech act and its characteristic linguistic form is the complete sentence. The rules of a language serve to provide sentences with meaning so as to enable speakers to send messages and have them understood by hearers. These rules are both regulative, in that they help us to guide and modify the linguistic behavior we already engage in, and constitutive, in that they serve to bring about new forms of behavior.

Searle sees the meaning of illocutionary acts as a function of both linguistic rules as well as the intentions with which the speaker utters a sentence.[3] Following the approach of Paul Grice, Searle thinks that in the performance of an act of meaningful speech the speaker intends to produce a certain effect by means of getting the hearer to recognize her intention to produce that effect. But he departs from Grice by insisting that if the speaker is using words literally, then she intends this recognition to be achieved in virtue of the fact that the rules for using the expressions she utters associate the expressions with the production of that effect. The ability to realize those intentions whose presence is necessary for the production of meaningful speech is thus dependent upon observance of conventions and rules governing linguistic performances. In order for her speech to be

---

[3]Searle's appeal to intentions in the analysis of speech acts is clearly not shared by Brandom whose commitment to what he calls the 'relational' approach to intentionality eschews any prior appeal to contentful mental states in the explanation of linguistic behavior.

meaningful, it is not sufficient that the speaker's intention be to produce just any effect in the hearer. According to Searle, intentions to produce various feelings, states, and (re)actions in a hearer —what Austin called 'perlocutionary effects'— are not essential to the performance of illocutionary acts, since the success of these intentions does not depend upon the recognition of conventions governing the type of expressions used by the speaker. It is the speaker's intention that her utterance count as a certain kind of act which mobilizes conventions to achieve the effect of understanding in the hearer. Searle calls these meaning-constitutive intentions the *illocutionary point* of an illocutionary act.

Among the central moves that Searle makes in *Speech Acts* is to assert that illocutionary acts have a bipartitional structure. Illocutionary acts are composed of sub-acts; a typical illocutionary act consists of two immediate sub-acts: one expressing a proposition and another expressing illocutionary force. Searle calls the former a propositional act and proceeds to decompose it into two subordinate acts: a referring act and a predicating act. Searle doesn't give the force-expressing act a distinct name, but often just refers to it as illocutionary force (which can be a bit confusing).[4]

This terminological choice helps to reinforce the symmetry Searle sees between the structure of speech acts and that of sentence types. According to Searle, the literal meaning of a sentence is derived from—i.e. is a logical construction out of—the illocutionary acts that linguistic conventions allow its speakers to perform in uttering it. (This is the basic claim of his theory of sentential mood). He contends that the bipartitional structure of speech acts is exhibited by two elements in the syntactic structure of the sentence, which he calls the propositional indicator and the illocutionary force indicator. Searle explains that

> The illocutionary force indicator shows how the proposition is to be taken, or ... what illocutionary force the utterance is to have; that is, what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance of the sentence. Illocutionary force indicating devices in English include at

---

[4]Nick Fotion calls these acts illocutionary force indicating acts. See (Fotion 2000, 19-20).

least: word order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood
of the verb, and the so-called performative verbs (Searle 1969, 30).

He also provides the a symbolism to represent the general form of (most) illocutionary acts and their associated sentences: $F(p)$. The variable F takes illocutionary force indicating devices, such as those listed in the passage above, and p takes expressions of propositions. Searle offers some ways of symbolizing paradigmatic kinds of illocutionary acts according to this schema:

- $\vdash(p)$ for assertions

- $!(p)$ for requests

- $Pr(p)$ for promises

- $?(p)$ for yes-no questions (Searle 1969, 31)

This bipartitional analysis of speech acts and their associated sentences represents Searle's unequivocal endorsement of the traditional interpretation of the force-content distinction. The bipartitional schema of illocutionary acts codifies UCT by stipulating that the semantic content attributable across different kinds of speech acts is of a uniform nature, i.e. propositions. The symbolism he offers for this bipartitional structure further confirms his commitment to UCT, since it represents the content of different kinds of speech acts by means of a variable ranging over propositions.

But Searle does not endorse the most radical and universal formulation of UCT according to which propositions constitute the content of *every* type of speech act. For he admits that some illocutionary acts, such as those typically performed in the utterance of "Hurrah," and "Ouch", have no propositional content whatsoever. Of course, these acts are performed in the utterance of isolated words, not complete sentences, so it is not surprising that they fail to express propositions.

> Except for yes-no questions the symbolism for questions must represent
> propositional functions and not complete functions, because except
> for yes-no questions a speaker asking a question does not express a

complete proposition. Thus, "how many people were at the party?" is represented as

?(X number of people were at the party)

"Why did he do it?" is represented as

?(He did it because...)

But "Did you do it?", a yes-no question, is represented as

?(You did it)(Searle 1969, 31)

By insisting that the content of non-polar queries is not a proposition but rather a propositional function, Searle is treating *wh*-questions—questions expressed by interrogative clauses preposed by words like which, where, when, who, why, how, etc.—as having an incomplete content. The content of non-polar queries is only 'completed' when an answer is given, thereby assigning an argument to the function so as to yield a complete proposition as its value. So, while non-polar queries do not, strictly speaking, have propositions as their content, propositions can be derived from their content together with the content of an answer. And as his symbolism suggests, Searle takes propositions to be the content of the vast majority of illocutionary acts and, most importantly, of polar queries and assertions in particular. As he bluntly puts it in his *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*: "propositions are the contents of illocutionary acts" (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 32).

Searle is also quite clearly committed to ICT. Indeed, his endorsement of ICT is evident in the very first examples he offers for the distinction between illocutionary force and propositional content in *Speech Acts*. He claims that in utterances of (3.3 a), (3.3 b), and (3.3 c) where the same individual, Sam, is being referred to and the same property predicated of it, smoking habitually, "the same proposition is expressed," namely, the proposition that Sam smokes habitually.(Searle 1969, 22)

(3.3) (a) Sam smokes habitually.

(b) Does Sam smoke habitually?

(c) Sam, smoke habitually!

In his discussion of predication later in the same book, he assumes that "the man who asserts that Socrates is wise [and] the man who asks whether he is wise" express the same proposition (Searle 1969, 124). A bit further on, in his discussion of Russell's theory of descriptions, he insists that no theory of descriptions would be adequate if it could not acknowledge the fact that the same proposition is expressed by the assertion (3.4 a) and by the yes–no question (3.4 b).

(3.4) (a) The King of France is bald.

(b) Is the King of France bald?

While discussing the problem of opacity in *Intentionality* Searle remarks that, assuming that their subject terms refer to the same individual, exactly the same content is expressed by the complement clauses of the following indirect speech reports.

(3.5) (a) The sheriff asserted that Mr. Howard is an honest man.

(b) The sheriff asked whether Mr. Howard is an honest man.

(Searle seems not to be troubled by the fact that the complementizers in these examples, "that" and "whether," are and grammatically must be different.)

In a more recent book summarizing some of his main philosophical contributions, Searle begins his discussion of language by drawing attention to the significance of the distinction between the force and the content of illocutionary acts with the following illustration.

> To take an obvious example, consider the differences between utterances of the sentences:
>
> Please leave the room.
>
> Will you leave the room?
>
> You will leave the room.
>
> These utterances have something in common, namely, each contains an expression of the proposition that you will leave the room. In each utterance, there is something different from the other utterances. The first is a request, the second a question, and the third a prediction (Searle 1999, 138).

Since according to his taxonomy predictions are a species of assertions, we once again have evidence that Searle endorses ICT. Indeed, he thinks that it is "obvious" that the assertion and polar query above, when provided with equivalent interpretations of their subsentential components, express identical propositions.

3.2.2 Searle's Classificatory Scheme

Searle's efforts at characterizing different kinds of speech acts has evolved over the course of his career, but the basic features of the account, and particularly those that are significant for his characterization of queries, have remained relatively stable. In *Speech Acts*, he presents an analysis of a variety of speech acts according to four structural conditions. The first he calls the propositional content condition. This condition is intended to distinguish speech acts like promising, which, according to Searle, require that their propositional content be formulated in the future tense—e.g. "I promise to help you tomorrow"—from those, like apologies, whose propositional content must be formulated in the past tense—e.g. "I apologize for not coming to your birthday party yesterday."

The second condition Searle calls preparatory conditions (notice the plural). Preparatory conditions are, simply put, those conditions that need to hold before a speech act can be successfully and nondefectively performed. A speaker presupposes that these conditions have been satisfied when she performs a speech act. For instance, an apology requires that a event has occurred which was bad or reprehensible, and for which the speaker was at least partially responsible. But preparatory conditions are not restricted to events; they include the social, psychological, and physical states of either the hearer or the speaker. For example, in order for a captain to successfully issue an order to a corporal, it is necessary that the captain outrank the corporal. Preparatory conditions determine two classes of presuppositions: one peculiar to illocutionary force, and another peculiar to propositional content. Thus, the assertion that the King of France is bold pre-

supposes that there exists a King of France, and this presupposition is part of the preparatory conditions of that assertion.

The third condition Searle calls the sincerity condition. This condition stipulates the kind of psychological state that the speaker must express if his speech act is not to count as an 'abuse.' For instance, the sincerity condition on a promise is that the speaker intends to do whatever it is she promises; the sincerity condition on an assertion is that the speaker believes that the proposition she asserts is true. Unlike the previous conditions, a speech act can still be successfully performed even when its sincerity condition is violated. Jim's promise to help Sara move out of her apartment does not cease to count as a promise just because he never intended to actually help her. The result is a successful, though *defective* illocutionary act.

The fourth condition that Searle offers is not thoroughly articulated in Speech Acts. He calls it, rather uninformatively, the essential condition. It consists in the condition that the speaker intends her utterances of a sentence to count as a token of a particular type of speech act, for instance, as a representation of what is the case or as an attempt to get the hearer to do something. In his later taxonomy of speech acts, we get a Searle better characterizes this condition as the *illocutionary point* of a speech act.

Searle cautions us against confusing illocutionary point with illocutionary force. In a certain sense, illocutionary force is a product of Searle's classificatory schema, though technically it is illocutionary acts that are being classified. With the exemption of a few dimensions, such as that of propositional content, the twelve dimensions serve to distinguish the illocutionary force component of illocutionary acts. As a classifying element within this schema, illocutionary point is just one dimension, though arguably the most significant one, by which illocutionary forces are distinguished from one another.[5] The illocutionary point that partly

---

[5]Searle says that "The other elements of illocutionary force are further specifications or modifications of the illocutionary point or they are consequences of the illocutionary point, but the basic component of illocutionary force is illocutionary point" (Searle and Vanderveken

determines the character of an illocutionary force is the purpose that a speaker cannot fail to have if she is to successfully perform an illocutionary act with that force.

In much of his writings after *Speech Acts*, Searle also appeals to what calls "directions of fit" to articulate the differences among speech act types (as well as those among intentional states). When part of the illocutionary point of an illocutionary act is to get the propositional content of one's speech act to match the way the world is, as is the case for assertions, Searle says that this type of act has a *word-to-world* direction of fit. When the illocutionary point involves an attempt to get the world to match up with the propositional content of one's speech act, as is the case with orders, he says the act has a *world-to-words* direction of fit. Searle insists that there are four and only four possibilities within the concept of direction of fit. Speech acts can have a word-to-world fit, a world-to-word fit, no direction of fit, or both directions of fit.

Searle appeals to the fact that the concept of direction of fit permits only these four possibilities to support a central claim of his taxonomy, namely, that there are five and only five possible illocutionary points that speech acts can have, and, hence, five basic categories to which illocutionary acts belong. Every illocutionary act belongs to one of the following five basic categories: *assertives*, which aim to commit a speaker to the truth a proposition;[6] *directives*, which aim to get the hearer to do something, *commissives*, which aim to commit the speaker to some future course of action; *expressives*, which aim to express a particular psychological state; and *declarations*, which aim in their very performance to bring about a correspondence between the propositional content and the world (Searle 1969). (Searle's reason for insisting on five rather than four illocutionary points is that speech acts with a world-to-word direction of fit can oblige either the speaker [commissives] or the hearer [directives] to bringing about the relevant changes in

---

    1985, 14).
    [6]He calls these 'representatives' in Searle (1979).

the world.)

For Searle, queries are a sort of request, which is itself a type of illocutionary act belonging to the category of directives. Indeed, Searle takes "request" to be the paradigmatic directive verb. Like all directives, requests attempt to get the hearer to do something. But this attempt may or may not permit the hearer the option to refuse. A request is a directive illocution that allows for the possibility of refusal. It is only this "rather polite mode of achievement of its illocutionary point" that keeps "request" from serving as the primitive directive verb in English (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 199). Thus, the rest of the conditions of success for requests are the same general conditions governing directives in general. These include: the propositional content condition that their propositional content represents a future course of action of the hearer; the preparatory condition that the hearer is capable of doing what he is directed (requested) to do; and the sincerity condition that the speaker wants or desires the hearer to do what she attempts to get him to do.

Although he has been consistent in his claim that queries are a type of request, Searle has changed his account of just what type of request they are. In *Speech Acts*, he claims that queries "are really a special case of requesting," and proceeds to distinguish two kinds of request that can be described as 'asking a question': "requesting information (real question) or requesting that the hearer display knowledge (exam question)" (Searle 1969, 69). Real questions have the preparatory condition that "[the speaker] does not know 'the answer,' i.e., does not know if the proposition is true," and the sincerity condition that "[the speaker] wants this information," while in the case of exam questions, "[the speaker] wants to know if [the hearer] knows" (Searle 1969, 66). This distinction between 'real' and 'exam' questions does not appear again in Searle's corpus. In fact, the language of 'information' and 'knowledge' drops out of his later characterizations entirely. For instance, just ten years later, Searle writes, "questions are a subclass of directives since they are attempts by [the speaker] to get [the hearer] to answer, i.e. to

perform a speech act" (Searle 1979, 14). It is this position that Searle repeats in his later contributions to speech act theory.

In the next section, I will present several arguments in an effort to demonstrate that Searle's characterization of queries as a type of request and his classification of them as a species of directive illocutions is untenable. In doing so, I will challenge both his early and his late accounts of the sorts of requests that queries (purportedly) represent. But first, I will show that Searle's commitment to the traditional force-content distinction cripples his account of the content of queries.

3.3 Queries in Searle's Theory

3.3.1 The Failure of the Bipartitional Analysis

In the next two subsections I present some arguments with the aim of demonstrating the inadequacy of Searle's characterization of queries. The first of these targets Searle's endorsement of the traditional force-content distinction, i.e. to ICT and UCT, which underwrites his claim that the contents of queries are propositions. I will attempt to show that commitment to these theses is incompatible with two utterly uncontroversial, bedrock assumptions regarding the identity conditions of propositions and illocutionary acts; claims that are taken for granted not only by Searle but by the vast majority of philosophers of language.

These two background assumptions are at work in Searle's theory of speech acts from its earliest to its latest articulation. However, they are only presented explicitly in his work with Daniel Vanderveken to formalize the logic of speech acts, titled *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic.* In an effort to lay out the basic concepts involved in the illocutionary calculus, Searle and Vanderveken discuss the notion of a proposition, which they intend to deploy as an undefined primitive (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 31). They articulate only two formal features of propositions. The first feature is captured by the following condition.

The Condition of Strict Equivalence (CSE): For any propositions, P, Q, if P
$= Q$, then for all possible worlds, w, P is true in w, iff Q is true in w.
Identical propositions have identical truth-values in the same world (Searle
and Vanderveken 1985, 33).[7]

The second condition, which they call the "condition of illocutionary interchangi-
bility" is later incorporated into the following axiom.

The Law of Propositional Identity (LPI): If the same illocutionary force is at-
tached to propositional contents P and Q, respectively, then the resulting
illocutionary acts are identical iff P and Q are identical propositions, i.e. for
any two illocutionary forces F_1, F_2, if $F_1 = F_2$, then $F_1(P) = F_2(Q)$ iff P
$= Q$ (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 83; 121).[8]

These two principles, CSE and LPI, articulate two quite commonly held and un-
controversial assumptions regarding the conditions of identity for propositions.
While not everyone would admit that it is sufficient for two propositions to have
the same truth conditions in order for them to be identical (indeed, Searle and
Vanderveken do not), virtually no one would deny that it is at least necessary
for two propositions to have the same truth conditions in order for them to be
identical. CSE simply states this widely accepted condition and therefore ought
to be endorsed by anyone interested in speaking of propositions at all. LPI is
just as incontrovertible as CSE. Anyone who thinks that propositions can play a
role in the analysis of illocutionary acts is going to have a hard time denying that
attaching its force to a particular proposition is essential to an illocutionary act's
identity. As we have seen, the notion of semantic or propositional content is crucial
to explaining the difference between illocutionary acts of the same general type. If
two illocutionary acts attach the same illocutionary force to distinct propositions,

---

[7]I have removed the formalism for the set of all possible worlds and formulated the condition
as a conditional to maintain symmetry with LPI.

[8]I have omitted the restriction to *performable*, i.e. non-self-defeating, illocutionary acts which
appears in the original. I have also replaced the relation of strict equivalence among il-
locutionary acts with that of identity because the former is a technical notion belonging
to illocutionary logic and because the "law of identity of elementary acts" establishes the
equivalence of these two relations.

then those acts are going to be distinct, i.e. non-identical. And likewise, if two distinct illocutionary acts result from attaching the same illocutionary force to two propositions, then those propositions must be non-identical. LPI just combines the contrapostives of these two rather obvious consequences of the concept of propositional content as it functions in the analysis of illocutionary acts.

I am now going to show that Searle's endorsement of ICT is incompatible with his commitment to CSE and LPI. I shall do so by discussing an example that is easily to generalize. Consider the assertions represented by the following declarative sentences.

(3.6) Jim has chickenpox.

(3.7) Jim does not have chickenpox.

(3.8) Does Jim have chickenpox?

Again, assuming equivalent interpretations of their subsentential components, it follows from ICT that the assertion of (3.6) and the polar query of (3.8) involve the expression of the same proposition, the proposition that Jim has chickenpox. Similarly, it follows that the assertion of (3.7) and the polar query of (3.9) also involve the expression of the same proposition, viz., the proposition that Jim does not have chickenpox.

(3.9) Does Jim not have chickenpox?[9]

---

[9]My choice of the negative polar interrogative in (3.9) rather than one with preposed negation, e.g. "Doesn't Jim have chickenpox?" is not arbitrary. It is widely held that negative polar interrogative sentences featuring preposed negation (NPIs for short) are pragmatically and perhaps even semantically distinct from their positive counterparts. NPIs are said to have two distinct features: 1.) They convey a background attitude on the part of the speaker toward the proposition expressed by a positive answer, and 2.) As Ladd (1981) points out, they are ambiguous between negatively and positively biased readings, readings that are disambiguated with the help of a polarity sensitive lexical item. Compare: "Didn't Jim read the report too?" and "Didn't Kim read the report either?". The first feature is particularly important because it suggests that NPIs have different sincerity conditions than positive polar interrogatives. Admitting such a difference would undermine a crucial piece of the argument in subsection 3.3.1 below. In principle, these differences are amenable to either a pragmatic or semantic explanation. The pragmatic stance assumes that negation in NPIs serves a pragmatic function rather than a truth-functional one (cf. Groenendijk 1997). The semantic approach, on the other hand, assumes that PPIs and NPIs do not ask the same question, i.e., they have distinct denotations (cf. Romero and Han 2004). Admitting a semantic difference between (18) and a preposed negation version of (19) would undermine the claim that two

Since CSE establishes that these two propositions—that Jim has chickenpox and that Jim does not have chickenpox—are distinct, we know that the polar queries in (3.8) and (3.9) express distinct propositions.

Finally, consider (3.8) and (3.9) in light of LPI. As both are polar queries, the illocutionary force they attach to their propositional contents is the same, and thus the antecedent of LPI is satisfied. Since we also know that their propositional contents are not identical, it ought to follow from LPI that (3.8) and (3.9) are not identical illocutionary acts. But it turns out that this is not the case. In fact, (3.8) and (3.9) instantiate the very same polar queries, or so I shall argue.

Searle thinks that two illocutionary acts are identical when it is not possible to perform the first without thereby performing the second, and vice versa, that is, when they have the same conditions of success.[10] In *Foundations*, Searle describes seven dimensions by which illocutionary acts can be distinguished—this is down from the twelve he offers in an earlier presentation of his taxonomy. But the core factors determining the identity of illocutionary acts remain the same four we discussed above: illocutionary point, propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, and sincerity conditions. A discrepancy in any one of these conditions on (3.8) and (3.9) should establish their non-identity.

The only room left for divergence now between the illocutionary point of (3.8) and (3.9) lies in the specific type of assertion that they attempt to get the hearer to perform. Do they aim to get the hearer to perform the same assertion or different ones? Searle gives a clue to the answer to this question in the analysis of English illocutionary verbs that concludes *Foundations*. When it comes to the verb "ask," he and Vanderveken state

---

are semantically identical, a claim on which much of the argument in 3.3.1 rests. Most of the papers on the subject of Ladd's ambiguity exclude from consideration interrogative sentences with non-preposed negation, as the one in (16) because they are said to permit a neutral interpretation in an unbiased context (cf. Reese 2006; Romero and Han 2004). For these reasons, I have choosen to formulate the polar interrogative in (3.9) with non-preposed negation.

[10]This is the definition of *strict equivalence* among speech acts, which is later shown to the same as that of illocutionary identity. (Cf. Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 78; 121).

> In the sense of "ask a question" ["ask"] means request that the hearer perform a speech act to the speaker, the form of which is already determined by the propositional content of the question. Thus if the question is a yes-no question requesting an assertive, the speaker expresses the propositional content of the answer in asking the question; and all that the hearer is asked to do is affirm or deny that propositional content. For example, to ask someone whether it is raining is to request him to perform a true assertion with the propositional content that it is raining or that it is not raining (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 199).

So Searle thinks that polar queries that request assertions—a category to which we have already established (3.8) and (3.9) belong—actually request that the hearer perform one of two possible assertions: one expressing, and thereby *affirming*, the propositional content of the query or one expressing the negation of, and thereby *denying*, that propositional content. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the propositional content of (3.8) and (3.9) is as ICT tells us it is, i.e. that Jim has chickenpox and that Jim does not have chickenpox, respectively, then it follows that both (3.8) and (3.9) request the hearer to perform a true assertion with the propositional content that Jim has chickenpox or that Jim does not have chickenpox. In other words, the two queries attempt to get the hearer perform an assertion from exactly the same set of alternatives. This means that the two queries aim to get the hear to do the same thing, and thus they have the same illocutionary point.

Similar considerations also serve to close off the possibility of difference between the propositional content conditions of the two queries. According to Searle all directives have the general condition that their propositional content represent a future course of action of the hearer. There is, of course, room for further specification of such conditions within the class of acts belonging to the directive illocutionary point. According to Searle and Vanderveken, the propositional content of polar queries is restricted to

> . . . the set of all propositions whose truth conditions are that the hearer. . . performs

> after the time of utterance. . . a specific speech act, where the form of
> the yes-no question determines the propositional content of the possi-
> ble appropriate answer (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 63-4).

According to the previous analysis of the illocutionary points of (3.8) and (3.9) are both attempts to get the hearer to make a true assertion with the propositional content that Jim has chickenpox or that Jim does not have chickenpox. Thus, both queries have the same set of admissible propositional contents: those propositions whose truth conditions are that the hearer performs after the time of utterance a true assertion with the propositional content that Jim has chickenpox or that Jim does not have chickenpox. (I will return to this account of propositional content conditions in the next subsection).

Let us now examine the preparatory conditions of the two acts. In *Speech Acts*, Searle says that 'real' questions have the preparatory condition that "[the speaker] does not know 'the answer,' i.e., does not know if the proposition is true." Using this claim as a guide, we can reasonably assume that the preparatory conditions for (3.8) and (3.9) are (3.10) and (3.11), respectively.

(3.10) The speaker does not know whether the proposition that Jim has
chickenpox is true.

(3.11) The speaker does not know whether the proposition that Jim does not
have chickenpox is true.

Note that even though Searle believes that an illocutionary act can be performed successfully when one or more of its preparatory conditions fails to be satisfied, he nonetheless insists that such conditions are internal to the performance of illocutionary acts. As evidence for this claim, he points to the fact that paradox results from the simultaneous performance of an illocutionary act and denial that one of its preparatory conditions is satisfied (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 17). Thus, one cannot consistently make a promise and deny that one is able to do the act promised. If (3.8) and (3.9) have different preparatory conditions, then there should be no paradox generated in performing one while denying the preparatory

condition of the other. However, (3.12) and (3.13) reveal that this is not the case.

(3.12) #I know that Jim has chicken pox, but does Jim not have chickenpox?

(3.13) #I know that Jim does not have chicken pox, but does Jim have chicken
        pox?

The resulting paradoxes serve as evidence that the queries of (3.8) and (3.9) are
not distinct illocutionary acts.

Finally, let us look at the purported sincerity conditions for the two acts.
In *Speech Acts*, Searle suggests that non-defective performance of a polar query
expresses the speaker's desire to know whether a proposition is true. As with
preparatory conditions, Searle contends that sincerity conditions are internal to
their illocutionary acts and that it is paradoxical to simultaneously perform an
illocution and to deny that one has the psychological state that it expresses. Thus,
it is paradoxical to say, "I order you to come but I don't want you to come" (Searle
and Vanderveken 1985, 19). As before, we can use the paradox test to see whether
(3.8) and (3.9) have distinct sincerity conditions. In (3.14) and (3.15) one query
is performed while the sincerity condition of the other is denied and vice versa.
(Using the performative verb "ask" is helpful here in bringing out the paradox.)

(3.14) #I'm asking you whether Jim has chickenpox, but I don't want to know
        whether he does not have chicken pox.

(3.15) #I'm asking you whether Jim does not have chickenpox, but I don't want
        to know whether he has chicken pox.

The results are again paradoxical, suggesting once more that (3.8) and (3.9) are
not distinct illocutionary acts.

In each of the four conditions of success for illocutionary acts we have failed
to locate a difference between (3.8) and (3.9). The remaining three conditions
mentioned by Searle in Foundations either do not apply to polar queries or are
identical as a consequence of the identity of the four primary ones.[11] Thus, we

---

[11]The additional elements are: mode of achievement, which degree of strength of illocutionary

must conclude that (3.8) and (3.9) have the same conditions of success and that they are therefore identical illocutionary acts. Whatever differences there remain between the two, they cannot be registered at the level of illocutionary analysis.

We now have a clear violation of LPI. The queries of (3.8) and (3.9) apply the same force to what ICT together with CSE tells us are different propositional contents, and yet the result is two identical illocutionary acts. If Searle is to bring coherence back to his system, he will have to abandon one of these three principles: ICT, CSE, and LPI. I have already suggested that CSE and LPI are bedrock assumptions in virtually any understanding of propositions and their role in linguistic performances, so a denial of either is out of the question. The only viable option is to reject ICT. This would enable us to deny that queries like those of (3.8) and (3.9) are semantically distinct.

By denying ICT, we lose the main reason for holding UCT and the traditional view of the force-content distinction. By abandoning the latter, need not entail an abandonment of any distinction between force and content. As I will suggest at the end of this chapter, there is a perfectly reasonable, *liberal* interpretation of the distinction that permits us to treat the content of polar queries as distinct from that of assertions. We are, of course, still left with the task of determining just what the former content consists of. This issue is also addressed in the last section of the chapter. But before turning to it, we need to see why a commitment to the traditional force-content distinction is also incompatible with claim that queries are a sub-type of directive speech acts.

3.3.2 Queries v.s. Requests

As we have seen, Searle consistently holds that queries are a kind of request and therefore constitute a sub-type of directive speech acts. What does change in Searle's account is the description of the request made by queries. Originally he

---

point, and degree of strength of sincerity conditions.

describes it as a request for information; later he says it is a request that the hearer perform a particular speech act. It is not clear whether he intends two descriptions to be equivalent.

In this subsection, I will argue two points. First, I show that queries cannot be classified among directives, or, in fact, among any of the five primitive categories of illocutionary acts so long as Searle remains committed to the ICT and the traditional interpretation of the force-content distinction. Second, I suggest that queries cannot be adequately construed as derivatives of some more primitive class of speech acts. More specifically, I shall claim that queries are not adequately understood as a species of requests, either for information or for the performance of a speech act. Rather queries form a basic illocutionary act.

In the previous subsection, I appealed to Searle's description of the propositional content condition on queries as part of the effort to establish the identity of (3.8) and (3.9). This condition restricts the set of propositions available to serve as the contents of queries to those "whose truth conditions are that the hearer...performs after the time of utterance...a specific speech act." In other words, the content of a query must be a proposition that exhibits something like the following form: The hearer, H, performs a specific speech act, $F(p)$, after, t. The form for the contents of queries is just a more determinate version of the form that Searle offers for the propositional content conditions on directives in general: H does A, where H is a variable ranging over hearers and A is a variable ranging over future actions. Searle is emphatic that directives can only have propositional contents that represent a future action of the hearer. The action must be performed after the utterance of the directive because directives have a world-to-word direction of fit, and it must be performed by the hearer in order to distinguish directives from commissives. In the case of queries, the requested action is simply restricted to some particular speech act or set of speech acts, which is in turn specified by Searle's bipartional formalization: $F(p)$. Thus, the propositional content conditions on queries follow from their particular classification

among directive speech acts.[12]

These propositional content conditions placed upon queries are incompatible with the propositional content assigned to queries by ICT. To see why, consider the following example. According to ICT, (3.16) is supposed to express the same proposition as (3.17), i.e., the proposition that Susan is at work.

(3.16) Is Susan at work?

(3.17) Susan is at work.

However, according to the propositional content condition placed on queries by their classification as a sub-type of directives, the propositional content of (3.16) must be something like (3.18) or (3.19).

(3.18) that the hearer makes the true assertion either that Susan is at work or that Susan is not at work

(3.19) that the hearer tells the speaker whether Susan is at work

Neither (3.18) nor (3.19) is identical to the proposition expressed by (3.17). The latter is about Susan being at work, while the former are about the speaker doing something. There is thus a serious conflict between ICT and the propositional content conditions that Searle places on queries as a consequence of his classification of them as a sub-type of directives.[13] Indeed, Searle cannot simultaneously apply his conception of the propositional content conditions for directives to queries and remain committed to ICT and the traditional view of the force-content distinction.

But if queries cannot be classified as directive speech acts, it is not clear that they could be housed in any of the other four primitive categories of illocution so

---

[12]It is worth noting that in Speech Acts, before he has fully formed his taxonomy, Searle does not place these conditions on queries but instead thinks that the content of queries can be "any proposition or propositional function" (Searle 1969, 66).

[13]Another problem with these conditions on queries concerns how the propositional content of queries is supposed to determine the specific speech act that the hearer is asked to perform. Searle tells us that, "the form of the yes-no question determines the propositional content of the possible appropriate answer." Its not clear what Searle means by 'form' here. But whatever it is, he owes us a story about how, say, the 'form' of (3.19) determines the appropriateness of an assertion that Susan is not at work, given that the negation does not appear in (3.19).

long as their content is the same as assertions. A query like (3.16) clearly does not aim to commit the speaker to the truth of the proposition that Susan is at work (assertive); nor does it aim to commit the speaker to bring it about that Susan is at work (commissive); nor to express a particular pyschological state, like the desire that Susan be at work (expressives); nor to make actual, simply by presenting it as actual, the proposition that Susan is at work (declaration). So, if queries are to have the same content as their counterpart assertions, then they will not fit in any of the "five and only five" categories of illocutionary acts. (This is a particularly troubling consequence given the fact that the exhaustivity of these categories forms the basis for Searle and Vanderveken's axiomization of illocutionary logic). Since queries refuse such categorization, there is reason to suspect that queries are themselves a primitive, non-derivative speech act.

Let us now turn to Searle's more specific assertion that queries are a type of request. Searle is quite explicit about the identification of queries with a certain class of requests. In *Speech Acts*, Searle claims that "an utterance of the request form, 'tell me the name of the president of the United States,' is equivalent in force to an utterance of the question form, 'What's the name of the president of United states?'" (Searle 1969, 69). In *Foundations*, he and Vanderveken actually use the query-request identity as an illustration of the strict equivalence—identity of success conditions—between two illocutionary acts: "a yes-no question of the form 'Is Julius here?' is strictly equivalent to the request 'Please tell me whether Julius is here!' because the question is just a request that the hearer perform such an assertion" (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 78).[14]

There are several problems with this identification of polar queries with *tell-me-whether* requests. First, in order to for this identity claim to inform the analysis of queries, as Searle intends it to, we would need to know what it means to tell someone whether p, which obviously differs from telling someone that p, but

---

[14]Note the ambiguity even here: what assertion is Searle picking up with the phrase "such an assertion"?

how? Searle doesn't tell us. Ostensibly, the difference is that in telling someone whether p, as opposed to that p, the speaker is answering the question whether p. But if "question" is to be understood, as Searle insists, in terms of the speech act of querying, which is, in turn, be understood as a request to tell the speaker whether p, then the analysis of queries as requests is blatantly circular or, really, no analysis at all.

A more technical version of this problem appears when we consider the fact that Searle's account of queries is intended to double as an analysis of the meaning of interrogative sentences by associating them with the queries typically performed by their literal and serious utterance. The meaning of an interrogative sentence like "Is Julius here?" is supposed to be understood in terms of the query that is typically made by its utterance, which is in turn supposed to be understood as the request typically performed by uttering the imperative sentence "Please tell me whether Julius is here!" But in order to understand the meaning of that imperative, we must understand the meaning of the complementized interrogative clause "...whether Julius is here." We cannot simply iterate the substitution of an imperative for *this* interrogative clause precisely because it is not being used to ask a question. If embedding constructions such as "...whether Julius is here" lack their standard illocutionary force, as Searle, following Frege, believes they do, then Searle's theory presupposes the account of the semantic content of queries that it is supposed to provide. This a truly debilitating problem from the perspective of our interest in Searle's account of queries, which, after all, concerns the semantic content of queries.

A second, but related problem lies in the fact that the *tell-me-whether* imperative construction does not intersubstitute for their purportedly equivalent polar interrogatives *salva significatione*. For instance, despite the fact that (3.20 a) and (3.20 b) are purportedly equivalent when provided with equivalent interpretations of their subsentential components, (3.21 a) and (3.21 b) clearly differ in meaning.

(3.20) (a) Are you going to Jim's party?

(b) Please tell me whether you are going to Jim's party!

(3.21) (a) After class, are you going to Jim's party?

(b) After class, please tell me whether you are going to Jim's party!

Finally, if queries like (3.20 a) and requests like (3.20 b) are identical illocutionary acts, then we should be able to generate certain associated paradoxes. For instance, it ought to be paradoxical to simultaneously perform a query while denying the sincerity condition of the request. Given that the sincerity condition of (3.20 b) is that the speaker wants the hearer to tell her whether she is going to Jim's party, (3.22) is an instance in which the speaker simultaneously performs the query of (3.20 a) while denying this sincerity condition.

(3.22) Are you going to Jim's party? I don't want you to tell me whether you are; I want to figure it out myself.

Clearly, there is no paradox here. In fact, there is not even a paradox produced by the illocutionary conjunction of a query with the denegation of its (supposedly) equivalent request, as in (3.23).

(3.23) Do queries have the same content as assertions? I'm not asking you to tell whether they do; I'm presenting the topic of my chapter.

This example suggests another way in which the identification of queries with requests fails. The latter can only be successfully performed when there is a hearer present to whom the request is directed. But this is not the case with queries. A speaker can successfully perform the query of (3.24) or (3.26) without there being any hearers present.

(3.24) Where did I leave my wallet?

(3.25) What have I got in my pocket?

(3.26) What time did Susan say she was getting home?

The intelligibility (and ubiquity!) of these self-addressed queries provides yet another example in which speakers can literally and seriously utter interrogative

sentences while denying the performance of or obviating the attribution of a request. This *cancellability* suggests that the act of requesting is not part of the conventional meaning of interrogative sentences. Rather, it is more likely that such acts are what Searle calls *indirect* speech acts, that is, illocutionary acts that are performed by way of performing another illocutionary act, one that is associated with the conventional meaning of the uttered sentence.

The case against Searle's request-analysis of queries is thus rather damning. Still, up to this point I have only targeted his later formulation of this analysis. As I mentioned above, Searle's description of the type of request that queries instantiate has changed over the years. In *Speech Acts* he holds that they are a request for information, while in later works he describes them as requests that the hearer perform a particular speech act. Is there a difference between the two? If we construe 'request for information' as a request that the hearer provide the speaker with information and if, ostensibly, 'providing information' is the achievement of assertions, then the first description might just be an adumbrated version of the second. That is to say, Searle's earlier account identifies queries narrowly with requests that the hearer perform an assertion, while his later account treats them as requests that hearer perform a particular speech act, but one which might be of any illocutionary type. This way of understanding Searle's changing account of queries casts that change as progress, since, it would seem that his later view of queries are able to accommodate queries like (3.27), which would be conceived as requests for the hearer to perform a particular promise or its illocutionary denegation, i.e. "I promise to come" or "I do not promise to come."

(3.27) Do you promise to come to my birthday party?

Since we have seen that the analysis of queries as requests that the hearer perform a speech act is ultimately inadequate, treating Searle's early account merely as a restricted version of the latter will not help to salvage his position. Perhaps there is actually a greater difference between his early and later accounts. It is true that promises convey information, most clearly in the form of their sincerity

conditions—i.e. a positive response to (3.27) would provide the recipient with the information that the responder intends to come to the birthday party. But the sense in which such a performance is informative is different and perhaps derivative from the sense in which a positive response to, say, (3.20 a) is informative. In the former case, the information regarding the interlocutor's intention to come is a consequence of the fact that she performs the speech act that she does. But in the case of the latter, the fact that the interlocutor asserts, say, that Susan is at work, normally does not serve as a premise for inferring the information that Susan is at work. In fact requests for information can be satisfied and questions answered without the performance of *any* speech act—e.g. to the question "Where's the whiskey?" an addressee might provide the requisite information simply by opening the liquor cabinet. Again the information provided by such an action is not itself a mere consequence of the fact that such an action is performed. This suggests that there might be a more substantive difference between a request for information and a request that the hearer perform an illocution.

It might be that in requesting information a speaker obliges the addressee to alter her information state, or, in more Brandomian language, t*o update her deontic score.* At this point, the defense of such a reading is premature. But it is worth noting that Searle's concept of requests and of directives in general does not permit the possibility of such a speech act, that is, one whose aim is to update the set of claims acknowledged by the speaker. For Searle, directives have a world-to-word direction of fit, and this means that they aim to bring about a transformation in the world as such. A request such as "Please turn the lights on!" calls for an action that brings about this kind of transformation in the environment, but a query like "Are the lights on?" does not. Rather, it demands that a change be brought about in the speaker's state of knowledge, albeit, a change that is paradigmatically achieved by the performance of an assertion. Of course, any utterance transforms the world in the trivial sense that once the act has been performed it has been performed. This kind of transformation is simply

not the point of queries. The point, or at least *a* point of queries is to affect a change in the speaker's state of knowledge, that is, to update her deontic score. The extent to which such a change might motivate a speaker to perform a request, however, is wholly extrinsic to the illocutionary point of requests themselves.

If queries are requests for information in the sense of demanding an update of the speaker's deontic score, then they cannot be classified as requests that the hearer transform the world. The former seeks an update of information; the latter seeks a change in what information is about. It would seem that there is a difference between asking a question and asking someone to give an answer to a question. The latter might be a request in Searle's sense, but it is not a request for information in the sense needed to understand what counts as asking a question. Of course, in the final analysis, talk of request will need to be severely modified if not abandoned altogether, since, as we have seen, there are perfectly felicitous self-addressed questions. Such queries refuse interpretation as *simply* requests for information, since the speaker would simultaneously need to possess and lack the information she seeks.

We have seen that Searle's analysis of queries as a particular class of requests and thus as a subtype of directive speech acts is untenable. First, queries cannot have the content of their counterpart assertions and still satisfy the propositional content conditions imposed on directives. Second, polar queries cannot be analyzed as *tell-me-whether* requests on pain of circularity. Third, queries can be successfully performed while either the sincerity conditions or the very performance of their supposedly equivalent requests is denied. Fourth, queries can be successfully performed in the absence of hearers, while requests cannot. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, queries do not aim to bring about a change in the world as such but instead seek an update in the speaker's state of knowledge. So, queries are neither requests, nor directives, and since no other category of illocutionary point is capable of accommodating these features of queries, they must be regarded as constituting a basic type of speech act.

3.4 What *is* the Content of Queries?

In addition to demonstrating the primitiveness of queries as a class of illocutionary acts, I have sought to make trouble for the traditional force-content distinction. In doing so, I set out to refute the claim that assertions and queries share the same type of semantic content. I take my arguments in subsection § 3.3.1 to have indicated just how implausible ICT and UCT are. Their implausibility casts doubt on whether the traditional view of the force-content distinction ought to be endorsed. My motive here was to counter the impulse to treat the content of assertions as the universally attributable content of all or most speech acts. I am hoping that by challenging this temptation, we can start to see the set of social abilities needed to ask questions as equipromordial with those needed to make assertions.

More precisely, it is a reliance on the traditional force-content distinction that appears to underwrite Brandom's insistence that his basic "queries"—i.e. deontic scorekeeping performances that (at least) resemble polar queries—are merely 'auxiliary' to the core assertional practices that make up MDPs. By undermining the traditional distinction, and in particular, its application to polar queries according to ICT, I have sought to neutralize the threat that queries might be relegated to auxiliary status. To the extent that I have succeeded in doing so, I have also established the possibility that the content of polar queries, and of queries more broadly, is not a proposition. If queries do in fact have a different sort of content, i.e., a non-assertible sort of content, then their inclusion within assertional practices, as panacea to justificatory stalemate, will require a total abandonment of assertional fundamentalism. In other words, if avoiding stalemate in the space of reasons requires the introduction of a type of speech act that is not only non-assertional with respect to its illocutionary force but also demands the attribution of a non-assertible type of content, then we will no longer be entitled to identify MDPs with purely assertional practices.

At present, however, I have only established the possibility that the content of queries, in particular, polar queries is not a proposition. The nail in the coffin of assertional fundamentalism would be a plausible, positive account of the sort of non-assertible content that characterizes queries. Luckily, Searle and the speech act theorists are not the only ones to have developed an account of the semantic content of queries and interrogative sentences. The interdisciplinary cooperation between philosophers of language and linguists over the past thirty years has lead to sustained and systematic reflection on, *inter alia*, the meaning of interrogatives, which at least implicitly eschews the traditional division between force and content.

Interrogative expressions have long occupied a central place in linguistics. For instance, the behavior of so-called *wh*-words, such "who," "what," "which," "where," and "when," provided an important source of data for early work on Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar. Interrogatives have also received a great deal of attention from linguists working in semantics. Much of this work has been guided by a set of postulates about questions and answers first laid down in Hamblin (1958):

1. To know the meaning of a question is to know what counts as an answer to that question.

2. An answer to a question is a complete sentence or proposition.

3. The possible answers to a question form an exhaustive set of mutually exclusive possibilities.[15]

In these postulates, Hamblin is using the term "question" to refer to the semantic content of interrogative sentences. The tradition in the semantic study of interrogatives has followed him in this choice of terminology. I will adopt it for the remainder of this work.

The first postulate is the analog for interrogatives of the view that to know the meaning of a declarative is to know what the world would be like if it were

---

[15]The order of these postulates and their phrasing has been modified. Cf. Hamblin (1958).

true, i.e., to know its truth-conditions. This idea provides the intuitive ground for the identification of the meaning of an declarative with its truth-conditions. By transposing this idea into the language of questions and answers, we get the claim that to understand an interrogative is to know the conditions under which the question it expresses would be answered. These conditions—call them 'answerhood conditions'—just are the answers to the questions. Thus, this postulate motivates the identification of the meaning of interrogatives, viz., questions, with the set of answers. For Hamblin (1958), this set contains possible answers, not necessarily correct or true answers to the question. Karttunen (1977) rejects this postulate and provides a semantics of interrogatives that identifies their content with the *true* answers to questions. But the vast majority of semantic treatments of interrogatives have adopted the postulate that to know the meaning of a question is to know what counts as an answer to that question.

The second postulate instructs us to turn away from the surface syntax of answers which is often as subsentential: e.g. "Who came to the party?" —"Jim"; "Where is Susan?" —"Atlanta"; "What are the kids doing" —"Playing outside". More importantly, however, this postulate emphasizes that the function of answers, whether sentential or not, or even when supplied by non-linguistic means, is to provide *information*; that is why their semantic status must be propositional. Identifying questions with sets of their answers thus amounts to treating questions as *sets of propositions*, or at least, as constructed out of such sets. This view helps to explain the fact that interrogative sentences do not normally take truth-values: propositions are true or false, but sets of propositions are not.

Hamblin's third postulate demands, first, that the set of answers to a question be exhaustive. Support for this claim draws on the fact that many questions carry presuppositions. To use Hamblin's example, consider the question "In which continent is Honolulu?". This question falsely presupposes that Honolulu is in a continent. According to one position, for the set of answers to this question to be exhaustive, it must include an answer that denies the presupposition, such as

that epressed by "Honolulu is in no continent". Alternatively, one might hold that the presuppositions of a question restrict the range of possibilities to just those in which the presuppositions hold. A set of answers would then be exhaustive if it exhausts this restricted range of possibilities. On this alternative, a denial of the presupposition of a question is not an answer but rather a rejection of the question itself.

The third postulate also requires that answers be mutually exclusive. This is intended to capture the idea that genuine answers are complete, in the sense that possible answers to the question "Which teachers are parents?" must provide information regarding both those teachers who are parents and those who are not. In other words, if Susan, Jim, and Karen are the only teachers (in the domain of discourse), then the proposition that Susan and Jim are parents but Karen is not will count as a complete answer, while the simpler proposition that Susan and Jim are parents will not count as complete.

As I mentioned, Hamblin's first postulate has come to form the basis of most semantic treatments of interrogatives. The same cannot be said of his second and third postulates. Though many subscribe to modified versions of these postulates, some reject them outright. (Hamblin himself later abandoned the strong exhaustivity constraint on answers when providing for the semantics for natural language questions). Still the general framework provided by these postulates has facilitated the study of interrogatives in natural language.

The Hamblin tradition treats the meaning of questions as a set of propositions that represent its possible answers. This view can be imported into the theory of speech acts, and the semantic content of queries can thereby be conceived as a set of propositions. The content of polar queries would thus be regarded as the set consisting of a proposition and its negation. Sets of propositions are a distinctly non-assertible sort of semantic content. One cannot assert a set of propositions, at least not in a single act of asserting. What one asserts, i.e. the content of one's assertion, is naturally thought of as being true or false, and hence,

in so far as propositions are truth-bearer it is easy to understand that content as a single proposition. But sets of propositions are neither true nor false. Treating the content of queries as such sets thus accords with the intuition that what we query or what we ask when we ask a question is neither true nor false. One can, of course, assert a disjunctive proposition whose disjuncts just are the propositions that make up some set, but that set would still not be the content of the assertion. Sets of propositions can be (singularly) queried, though not (singularly) asserted.

If we modify UCT to include sets of propositions as the contents of candidate speech acts, then we abandon the traditional interpretation of the force-content distinction. However, doing so does not entail a rejection of the distinction between illocutionary force and semantic content as such. Utilizing the more liberal formulation of UCT, according to which the content of speech acts might be either single propositions or sets of propositions, we can still invoke the illocutionary force of querying and asserting to explain the difference between utterances of (3.1 a) and (3.1 c). We can also appeal to the notion of semantic content to distinguish (3.1 a) from (3.2). The content of (3.1 a) is just the set of propositions whose members are *The window is open* and *The window is not open*, while that of (3.2) is the set whose members are *The door is closed* and the *The door is not closed*. The only difference between this liberal interpretation of the distinction and the traditional one is that ICT is abandoned—it is no longer assumed that what distinguishes (3.1 a) from (3.2) is also what (3.1 a) and (3.1 c) have in common. Finally, the liberal interpretation of the force-content distinction provides a satisfactory explanation of the identity of (3.8) and (3.9). The two are identical speech acts because they are both queries and they query the same content, namely, the set of propositions whose members are *Jim has chickenpox* and *Jim does not have chickenpox*.

I propose adopting this liberal interpretation of the force-content distinction and endorsing the general approach of the Hamblin tradition to treat sets of propistions as the semantic content of queries. Once it is admitted that queries,

even polar queries, have a different sort of content from that of assertions, the assertional fundamentalist can no longer hope to relegate queries to the class of auxiliary speech acts in the scorekeeping account of MDPs. The path is now open to establish the reciprocal dependence of assertional and inquisitive capacities in MDPs.

4 Queries in the Expanded Space of Reasons

4.1 Introduction

In order for a normative practice to qualify as linguistic, it is not enough that it confer the practical significance of assertion upon certain performances. Indeed, it is not even possible for a normative social practice to consist solely in the making of assertions, where the latter is conceived as undertaking a responsibility to produce justification if challenged. An assertional practice, construed in terms of the undertaking and attribution of this conditional justificatory responsibility, must include a non-assertional practice of challenging. To avoid the problem of justificatory stalemate, the latter ought to permit participants to detach the conditional responsibility of others without thereby undertaking an incompatible responsibility.

These are the bold claims I attempted to defend in the second chapter of this work. In the third chapter, I suggested that the role that challenges play in the game of giving and asking for reasons might be filled by queries—quite literally participants of the game *ask for reasons*. I then attempted to demonstrate that an inquisitive practice, i.e. a practice of asking questions, differs from an assertional one not merely in the type of illocutionary *force* but also in terms of the semantic *content* that is conferred upon speech acts. As a consequence of this difference in content, we cannot follow Brandom in treating queries as an optional, auxiliary

speech act that might be added to assertional practices simply by 'tacking on' a different illocutionary force to assertible contents. Instead, we ought to see whether a normative pragmatic account of queries might be brought in to repair the picture of a minimally discursive practice (MDP) as a game of giving and asking for reasons.

Pursuing the normative pragmatics of querying as a speech act with its own distinctive force and content demands that we abandon what I have been calling Brandom's ASSERTIONAL FUNDAMENTALISM—i.e. the belief that non-assertional practices are pragmatically dependent upon assertional ones and not *vice versa.* It's not hard to see the prejudice of assertional fundamentalism as the pragmatic face of a broader assumption that has long dominated thinking in philosophy of language and mind. The assumption is that declarative sentences—sentences that are paradigmatically used to make assertions and judgments, that express propositions, that have truth-conditions, or that can serve as premises and conclusions of inferences—are essential to language and thought and that the other forms of sentences (e.g. interrogatives, imperatives, etc.) and speech acts (e.g. queries, commands, etc.) are secondary or derivative; perhaps even unnecessary.

As we saw in Chapter One, Nuel Belnap cautions philosophers and logicians to avoid this assumption—what he calls the DECLARATIVE FALLACY—in an article aptly titled "Declaratives are Not Enough." There, he claims that every serious program in philosophy that involves giving important attention to language is defective if it restricts itself to the study of the content of declarative sentences; equal weight ought to be given to interrogatives and imperatives, which deserve to be recognized as having their own distinct semantic contents. But in fact it is not just declaratives that are insufficient, so too are those categories that inform their analysis: propositions, truth-values, truth-conditions, assertions, etc.—even inferences are not enough. Inferences are deemed insufficient by Belnap for the reason that only expressions whose meaning is "essentially propositional or truth-

conditional" are likely to play a role in inferences (Belnap 1990, 8). Thus, strictly speaking, there can be no 'interrogative inferences.'

Brandom is quite clearly of the mind that assertions, and hence declaratives, ARE enough. He is an unabashed declarativist: in order to understand the activity of inferring, the theorist must understand the act of asserting, since "asserting is fodder for inference." Moreover, only propositionally contentful expressions can stand in inferential relations to one another, so fixing inferential relations will yield a semantics of propositionally contenful expressions, i.e. declaratives. Brandom's commitment to assertional fundamentalism is but one manifestation of his commitment to this broader declarativist position or "fallacy."

The challenge I have posed is to consider whether the project of inferentialism might be freed from the yoke of declarativism. Certainly, if inferences only involve propositional or truth-conditional content, then the prospects for extending the approach to non-assertional speech acts and non-declarative sentences are bleak. But the identification of inferential roles with strictly assertible contents is not a fact; it is a stipulation. And while most philosophers and logicians are happy to follow it, the inferentialist is by no means obliged to do so. After all, the notion of inference that Brandom employs is, by his own admission, extremely liberal. Deferring to the authority of an interlocutor, issuing observation reports, even acting intentionally are all performances that get analyzed in terms of dispositions to adopt normative attitudes, i.e. to take up positions in the space of reasons. This broad application of the concept of 'inference' suggests the possibility of extending the inferentialist program beyond the confines of assertional practices and declarative languages.

In their book *"Yo!" and "Lo!": The Pragmatic Topography of the Space of Reasons*, Mark Lance and Rebecca Kukla pursue just this sort of extension. By augmenting the normative pragmatic framework with additional distinctions among normative statuses and relationships, they formulate a pragmatic theory that captures the discursive role of many non-assertional speech acts. In fact,

their distinctions permit a finer-grained typology of speech acts than even that proposed by Searle. Yet, despite the scope and analytic power of their theory, they offer no explicit treatment of queries.

In this chapter, I will mobilize the resources provided by Lance and Kukla's pragmatic theory to construct an initial account of the normative significance of queries. This account should also provide some clues as to the pragmatic typology of queries. It is my hope that the substantive picture of inquisitive practices that emerges under the lens of normative pragmatics will provide evidence that such practices can fill the role of challenges in Brandom's MDPs, thereby resolving the problem of justificatory stalemate. The upshot of this would be to demonstrate that broadly inquisitive practices, that is, practices of asking questions and giving answers, exhibit the minimal set of practical skills practitioners need in order to count as speaking a language. *Pace* Brandom, it would be genuinely *inquisitive* rather than merely assertional practices that constitute a game of giving and asking for reasons.

4.2 The Pragmatic Topography of the Space of Reasons

4.2.1 Normative Functions and the Classification of Speech Acts

The assumption that frames Lance and Kukla's categorization of speech acts is that from the normative viewpoint, a speech act is a function from one set of normative statuses and relationships to another. The inputs to such a normative function may be thought of as conditions that must be fulfilled in order for that act to be correctly realizable. The outputs, on the other hand, are normative statuses and relationships that are established by the realization of the act. Take,

for instance, the act of issuing a command: the input of the normative function instantiated by such an act is that the person who gives the command be entitled to issue it to the person who receives it; whereas the output amounts to the commitment of the latter person to do what the former commands.

According to Lance and Kukla, the outputs of these normative functions represent what speech acts *strive*, by design, to accomplish. They are not suggesting that the pragmatic function of speech acts is 'designed' by anyone. Theirs' is a claim about the structural function of the act as it operates within a discursive community, and is explicitly not reducible to what the speaker intends the act to achieve, nor what any instance of so acting will actually or conventionally achieve.

A token utterance is an instance of particular kind of speech act in virtue of its striving to play the pragmatic function associated with that speech act. The normative changes that a token utterance does *in fact* accomplish may fall short of those that the speech act type, which it instantiates, strives to achieve. An order by a superior to her subordinates, for instance, may fail if the latter refuse to acknowledge her authority to issue it. Speech acts that fail in this sense are *defective* with respect to the fulfillment of their function. Lance and Kukla are quick to point out, however, that such defects might be entirely routine and exculpable.

They introduce the notion of normative function in order to represent and classify speech act types. Token utterances may have various pragmatic functions and thus instantiate more than one type of speech act—much in the way that Searle's distinction between direct and indirect speech acts serves to explain how utterances can token multiple speech acts types. More radically, Lance and Kukla do not intend a strict one-to-one correspondence between normative functions and speech act *types*. Strictly speaking, what they offer is a classification scheme for pragmatic functions. The typology of speech acts is a secondary achievement, one subsequent upon the association of these functions with speech act types. Indeed, they will argue that every speech act *necessarily* instantiates multiple pragmatic

functions. The intelligibility, not to mention plausibility, of this claim rests on the various qualifications and complications that the notion of normative function receives from Lance and Kukla thorough the course of their book.

The first dimension of their classificatory scheme is the distinction between the normative statuses that make up the inputs and outputs of discursive functions. The second dimension is that between agent-relative and agent-neutral statuses. This distinction, originating in ethical theory, marks the contrast between normative statuses that are indexed to particular individuals, and those that are not. Agent-relative statuses depend upon an agent's particular position within a structure of authority and responsibility, while agent-neutral statuses attach to agents irrespective of their location within this space of reasons. The latter are ideally universal in the sense that their uptake by everyone is a *regulative ideal*. It is only in virtue of some defect, though perhaps an entirely exculpable one, that any member of the discursive community fails to have an agent-neutral status.

The distinction between these two types of normative status is not to be confused with one of extensional scope. It is perfectly intelligible for every member of the discursive community, as a matter of fact, to share the same agent-relative status. But such statuses do not apply universally *de jure*. Likewise, so long as it is possible to have multiple discursive communities, it is also possible for discursive creatures to fall outside the scope of agent-neutral statuses. (Lance and Kukla take up the question of the boundaries and ontology of discursive communities later in their work).

Agent-relative statuses may also be subdivided into kind-relative and agent-specific flavors. The former refers to statuses that apply to an agent in virtue of her membership in some general kind. For instance, it is only a member of the class of drivers that is responsible for coming to a stop at a stop sign, though the responsibility may apply to all members of this class. A status is agent-specific when they apply to one particular agent "in light of concrete, particularized facts about her normative position, and have no implications even in the ideal for others"

(Kukla and Lance 2009, 24). When I promise my wife to pick our daughter up from school, she is entitled to expect that I will do as I promised and the responsibility to fulfill this expectation is mine alone.

When the agent-relative/agent-neutral distinction is overlaid with that between inputs and outputs of normative functions, a four-fold classification scheme for basic speech acts emerges. Lance and Kukla represent this scheme with a four-box table reproduced as Table 4.1 on the current page.

Input → Output ↓	Agent-neutral	Agent-relative
Agent-neutral	**1** Neutral input Neutral output ASSERTIONS (DECLARATIVES), CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVES	**2** Relative input Neutral output KANTIAN JUDGMENTS OF TASTE, BAPTISMS, SOME RECOGNITIVES, I.E. OBSERVATIVES, SOME ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Agent-relative	**3** Neutral input Relative ouput PRESCRIPTIVES I.E. OUGHT-CLAIMS	**4** Relative input Relative output IMPERATIVES (PROMISES, INVITATIONS, REPROACHES,...) OSTENSIONS, SOME RECOGNITIVES, I.E. VOCATIVES, SOME ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Table 4.1: Lance and Kukla's classification of normative-pragmatic functions

The first box represents speech acts whose discursive function has both agent-neutral inputs and agent-neutral outputs. The paradigmatic speech acts belonging to this category are assertions (what Lance and Kukla call, rather confusingly "declaratives"). Anyone can become entitled to an assertion given the right epistemic context, and when one does assert something with entitlement, the rest of the discursive community is thereby entitled to re-assert it and to use it as a premises in their own inferences. In their functional language, assertions "aim to make an entitlement to reassertion and inference generally available for public use" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 20). Here, Lance and Kukla may be seen as redeeming a core insight of Brandom's pragmatics—namely, the idea that assertions aim at universal licensing of re-assertion.

The fourth box also represents pragmatic functions with uniform inputs and outputs, those that map agent-relative statuses to agent-relative statuses. Issuing a command, or performing an "imperative," as Lance and Kukla call it, instantiates just such a function. When a colonel orders a captain to advance his unit to the top of the hill, his entitlement to do so is indexed to his rank, and is therefore a kind-relative status. The result of issuing such an entitled command is to saddle the targeted agent—in this case, the captain—with a commitment to do what is commanded. To the extent that they aim to impose commitments upon particular agents or classes of agents, commands may be said to instantiate pragmatic functions with agent-relative outputs.

The second and third boxes in the table represent 'hybrid' speech acts whose pragmatic functions have either agent-relative inputs and agent-neutral outputs or agent-neutral inputs and agent-relative outputs. In the former case (Box 2) we find speech acts, such as baptisms, which can only be legitimately performed by agents that occupy a certain normative position, but which aim at changing the normative status of every agent in the discursive community. It may only be parents or legal guardians who can baptize their children, but the consequence of their successfully doing so is to make *everyone* responsible for calling their children by those names.

A good portion of Lance and Kukla's work consists in making out the case for an oft-neglected speech act located in the second box: *observatives.* These speech acts, typically performed by the utterance of phrases like "Lo, a rabbit!", can be correctly realized only by someone who is confronted with a rabbit; however, their output coincides with that of an assertion. Observatives are, according to Lance and Kukla, what supplies the empirical dimension of language. Moreover, they need not have *propositional* content (though they are still "conceptual").

The final slot, Box 3, houses the other group of 'hybrid' speech acts—those with agent-neutral inputs and agent-relative outputs. Lance and Kukla claim that the paradigmatic members of this class of speech acts are deontic claims or what

they call PRESCRIPTIVES. Claims such as "Jim ought to apologize to Susan" do not have their entitlement-conditions indexed to any particular agent. Ideally, anyone can become entitled to make such a claim. Likewise, for those agents other than Jim, the performance of this entitled prescription has the same effect that a standard assertion would; it licenses re-assertion. This is why Lance and Kukla insist that prescriptives are truth-claims. But for Jim, such a performance brings about a special change in his normative status. He is now committed to apologize to Susan. As Lance and Kukla put it,

> the prescriptive calls to everyone, agent-neutrally, to recognize the truth of the claim it makes, but it also calls to [the agent whose commitments are targeted] to give first-personal practical recognition of the claims her commitments make upon her. This is an agent-relative output of the prescriptive, whose utterance is still agent-neutrally entitled (Kukla and Lance 2009, 102).

The case of prescriptives highlights one more qualification of Lance and Kukla's classification scheme. As I noted above, strictly speaking, the scheme classifies normative-pragmatic functions which speech acts may instantiate. And while these functions are classified according to the kinds of inputs and outputs they accept or generate, these functions are not restricted to taking and giving only one sort of input or output. In other words, there's no reason why a pragmatic function cannot produce both agent-relative and agent-neutral outputs. This is indeed the case with prescriptives which generate both agent-neutral statuses (as truth-claims) as well as agent-relative ones for the person targeted by the speech act. Perhaps, then, a more accurate way to represent the pragmatic function of prescriptives in Lance and Kukla's table would be place them in both Box 1 and Box 3.

4.2.2 The Epistemic Responsibility of Asserting

Before turning to the other key features of Lance and Kukla's pragmatic theory, a note on their conception of assertion and its relation to epistemic responsibility is

in order. There is no doubt that the pragmatics of assertion that Lance and Kukla present incorporates a key insight of Brandom's account. In chapter two, we saw that, according to Brandom's deontic scorekeeping model of discourse, when a player undertakes an assertive commitment to which she is entitled she not only entitles others to attribute that commitment to her, she also entitles them to undertake that commitment themselves, that is, to re-assert her assertion. To say that an asserter authorizes others to re-assert her assertion is a way of vindicating the idea that in putting forward a claim as true, i.e. expressing one's belief, one is putting it forward as a claim that is appropriate for others to take as true, i.e. to believe it themselves. There is an implicit universality to doxastic/assertional commitments, since, in principle, everyone can inherit entitlement to a claim to which someone is entitled.

This implicit universality is precisely what Lance and Kukla's account of agent-neutral normative functions is designed to capture. For them, the entitlement conditions for assertions are, in principle, accessible by any agent, and the normative effect of a successful assertion is, again, ideally such that every agent inherits entitlement to re-assert it. Just as Brandom's analysis is supported by our intuitions regarding the susceptibility of beliefs and assertions to assessment of truth, so too is Lance and Kukla's: "While we are all in different positions of epistemic access to truth, a truth-claim, by its very structure, is not a claim for me or for you but for all of us" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 21).

In articulating the implicit universality of assertion both accounts appeal to the notion of epistemic responsibility; however, they emphasize quite different features of it. For Brandom, the potential for everyone in the discursive community to inherit entitlement to a warranted assertion is underwritten by the legitimate deferral of challenges to the original, or at least previous, asserter. Epistemic responsibility consists in the *duty to justify what one claims*—in the broad sense of justify that includes deferral and appeal to non-inferential capacities.

Lance and Kukla, on the other hand, invoke a very different sense of epistemic

responsibility. For them,

> once it is *known* that P, then anyone who doesn't know P is substantively ignorant, by the standards of the discursive community, and one who believes not-P is unjustified and in a status of disagreeing with something known (Kukla and Lance 2009, 34).

The epistemic responsibility operative in the pragmatics of assertion is primarily a *duty to know what is known*. Lance and Kukla insist that this duty should not be confused with the duty to know *all* that is known. Clearly, I am not responsible for knowing trivial facts like the number of blades of grass in my yard. Rather, my epistemic responsibility extends to the much weaker duty to know *more than I do* at any point in time. "I am responsible for knowing commonly cited facts, noticing brute features of my environment, and drawing straightforward inferences" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 35). These are examples of agent-neutral epistemic norms. Not doing these sorts of things makes me defective in a stronger sense than simply failing to be omniscience; I am falling short of epistemic norms that bind me.

Some epistemic norms, however, may be agent-relative, such as knowing whether my daughter has been vaccinated against chickenpox. What facts I have a duty to know is a function of my abilities, skills, interests, and values; those of the various groups to which I belong; and those of the discursive community as a whole. I am responsible for knowing things that matter to me and to 'us'.

This conception of epistemic responsibility links up with Lance and Kukla's account of assertion in the following way. By adding to our collective body of knowledge, most entitled assertions create new epistemic responsibilities. As long as *p matters*, someone's warranted assertion that *p* makes it my duty to know that *p* and changes my scorecard such that by denying *p* I place myself in a position of normative opposition to the entire discursive community.

The peculiar sense of epistemic responsibility to which Lance's and Kukla's account of assertion appeals will have important consequences for the potential of their theory to accommodate the pragmatic function of queries. I will attempt to

exploit this potential in section 4.3. But before I can do so, I will need to examine other significant features of their theory.

4.2.3 Pragmatic Voice

One of Lance and Kukla's ambitions is to recast the image of the space of reasons as a normative social space in which embodied agents occupy distinct locations and bear concrete normative relationships to one another. Nowhere is this ambition more evident than in their application of the concept of *pragmatic voice*. Although it comes in first-, second-, and third-personal varieties, pragmatic voice is not to be confused with grammatical voice or mood; it refers to the "manner in which an agent takes up her entitlement to [a] speech act and strives to assign statuses to others" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 61). The notion of pragmatic voice in effect provides a third distinction among speech acts, in addition to those between inputs and outputs and between agent-neutral and agent-relative statuses.

Speech acts performed in the first-person voice are those that express the speaker's normative status (on the input side) as *belonging to her*. First-personal speech acts will thus instantiate functions with agent-relative inputs. Observatives are an example of a first-personal speech act found in box 2. They are typically accomplished by utterances like "Lo, a rabbit!" and succeed when they express a speaker's perceptual episode as *hers*. When I utter a *lo*-claim in the proper context, I express my experience as *mine*. My experience is not shareable or transferable, though my observative does license assertions that are agent-neutral and hence transferable. Lance and Kukla argue that any attempt to "translate" observatives into the agent-neutral, impersonal voice of declaratives will fail to capture the latter's distinctly first-personal character. The first-personal voice is supposed to represent an ineliminable, constitutive feature of the agent-specific entitlement-conditions for observative speech acts.

Speech acts performed in the second-person are those that are directed at

you, that is, the agent whose normative status is targeted by second-personal speech is also the audience of the speech act. To appreciate this point, contrast the prescriptive "Jim ought to wear a tie," which targets Jim but which need not have him as its audience—since for agents other than Jim such an utterance provides a license for re-assertion—with the command "Wear a tie!" directed at Jim himself. The latter not only targets Jim as the agent whose scorecard is now altered so as to reflect a commitment to wear a tie, it also *addresses* him. As Lance and Kukla put it:

> An address does not merely shift the normative status of its target; rather, it makes a *demand*. It *calls* upon its target, not only to recognize the force of the normative claims made upon her by the speech act, but also to *acknowledge* her uptake of these claims to the speaker (Kukla and Lance 2009, 161-2).

By addressing a particular subject, second-person speech acts forge a transactional normative relationship between speaker and audience.

The paradigmatic second-person speech act is what Lance and Kukla call the *vocative* or 'hail.' "To utter a vocative is to call another person—in calling out 'Hello, Eli!' I recognize the fact that that person is Eli, and I do so *by* calling *upon him* to recognize that he has been properly recognized" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 136). Successfully hailing someone with an utterance such as "Yo!" establishes a normative relationship between caller and called and places a demand on the latter to respond by acknowledging this relationship. Acknowledgments are speech acts that provide uptake of vocatives by explicitly *taking on* the normative status and responsibilities demanded by the hail. Insofar as they target the hailer and call for her recognition that her demand for recognition has been met, acknowledgments are themselves a kind of vocative.

Vocatives and observatives are a species of a broader class of speech acts that express "recognition of something that makes itself present to the receptive faculties of the speaker" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 137). These *recognitives* all have agent-relative inputs. But as the contrast between observatives and vocatives

serves to illustrate, they can have either agent-neutral (observatives) or agent-relative (vocatives) outputs. The difference in outputs corresponds to the difference between expressing one's recognition of a state of affairs, i.e. *a rabbit is present before me*, and expressing one's recognition of a person. Only the latter involves the establishment of a normative relationship and thus requires a second-personal speech act.

A vocative like "Yo!" exhibits a minimal form of second-personal speech, a pure address that demands acknowledgment. Such pure vocatives may be responded to with pure acknowledgments such "Yes?" But Lance and Kukla insist that various types of speech acts can perform vocative functions. Thus, a command has a vocative function in so far as it calls upon the person to whom it is addressed to acknowledge the order either explicitly—perhaps by saying "Okay"—or implicitly by performing the ordered action (and doing so because it was ordered). So closely linked are vocatives and second-personal speech, that Lance and Kukla claim that "it is [the] vocative function that makes [a given speech act] second-personal" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 163).

One of their most provocative claims is that this vocative function forms a transcendental condition on the possibility of speech itself. The reasoning behind this claim runs roughly as follows. In a concrete, inhabited normative space, speech acts strive for recognition of their pragmatic force—i.e. of their normative consequences—and it must be possible for agents to provide this recognition. Likewise, a speech act actually succeeds in having its normative consequences realized only if someone successfully recognizes it. Since recognizing the pragmatic force of a speech act is itself a normative act, such recognition must be something for which agents can be held accountable. To hold someone accountable is to establish and engage that person in a concrete normative relationship. Thus, *holding accountable* is itself a second-personal normative act. Since it is the vocative function that constitutes second-personal speech acts, the vocative function forms a transcendental condition on the possibility of pragmatically significant

speech. "Whatever else speech does...it does it by seeking to forge...a relationship of mutual recognition between speaker and target audience through a vocative call" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 165).

The identification of the vocative call with holding accountable also gives vocatives a crucial role to play in the initiation of *inhabitants* into the space of reasons. In hailing you, I am *holding you accountable* to recognize the force of my normative claim upon you. The manner in which vocatives hold their targets accountable may proceed along two normative dimensions. On one hand, vocatives are *alethic* in the sense that they call upon targeted agents to uphold norms that are already binding upon them prior to their being hailed. On the other hand, they are *constative* in the sense that they place targeted agents under a new normative obligation to respond appropriately, one that was not binding prior to the vocative call. Consider again the pure vocative "Yo." It plays an alethic role insofar as it calls on you to recognize yourself as a potential hailee bound by the norms delineating appropriate responses and to recognize me as an appropriate hailer on this occasion. It also plays a constative role by creating a new obligation on you to respond to me. The two dimensions produce a complex normative output: you are now bound by a new norm to recognize your normative status prior to the addition of this new norm. In virtue of this unique combination of alethic and constative functions, Lance and Kukla argue that vocatives play an essential role in the process of forming and solidifying social identities—the process of *interpellation*.

> When I recognize you as as a student, or as a man, or as a friend, my recognition takes you as already having these identies. but at the same time, I call forth an appropriate response from you that contributes to this identity. (Kukla and Lance 2009, 183).

At its root, hailing one another is how we constitute ourselves as *persons* inhabiting the space of reasons.

4.2.4 The Pragmatics of Defiance and the Typology of Second-Personal Addresses

As we have just seen, Lance and Kukla associate the vocative dimension of speech exhibited by second-personal addresses with the institution and reconfiguration of normative relationships and statuses, though they stop short of claiming that such addresses are the only way to institute norms. A second-person address calls upon its target to respond by giving first-personal uptake of the address itself. In this way, they are speech acts that hold their targets *accountable.*

The idea of holding someone accountable to a norm is not the same as informing or reminding them of the norm. It involves making the norm that is already binding 'inescapable' (Kukla and Lance 2009, 186). This 'inescapability' is not incompatible with the person refusing to act in accordance with the norm; if it were, then there would be no possible gap between what we do and we ought to do. When someone hails me by saying "Yo," the call has not achieved its purpose simply by getting me to recognize that a call has been made. The hailer calls upon me to express my first-personal uptake of that recognition. But one way in which I can express my uptake is to reject or challenge the call. So, rejecting the call, or even actively ignoring it, is an expression of uptake of that recognition. Once you have recognized the call as the call it is, it becomes inescapable in the sense that it can only be actively rejected and not passively ignored.

The claim that the norms imputed by second-person addresses are 'inescapable' is easily confused with the idea that such speech acts are immune to failure or impervious to legitimate challenge. Indeed, at points in *'Yo!' and 'Lo!'* it's hard not to see this inescapability as just a clever trick on the part of the hailer—Jeremy Wanderer likens it to a poster emblazoned with the words 'don't read this' (Wanderer 2010b, 375). Moreover, it's not clear that the 'inescapability' of the normative demand characteristic of the hail is generalizable to all second-person addresses that involve a vocative function. The command "Let go of me!"—what

Lance and Kukla would classify as an *alethic* imperative because it draws the target's attention to a norm to which she is already bound—calls upon its target not only to acknowledge the call but to acknowledge the propriety of the demand it makes by responding appropriately, i.e. by letting me go. Even though the imperative has a vocative function, its demand does not seem 'inescapable' in the way the hail's does.

Perhaps in recognition of these very difficulties, Lance and Kukla have recently provided a theoretical framework for analyzing the structure of second-person addresses in a way that makes it clear just where the inescapability of their normative demand lies. The framework reveals not only that such addresses fail and fail in multifarious ways, some of which are the result of legitimate challenges; but that the kind of failure, resistance, and defiance to which second-person speech acts are susceptible serves to distinguish various act-types *within* this category.

Obvious cases in which the speaker fails to perform the type of speech act she intends apply to second-person speech acts. Such acts are infelicitous when they have no target or when their target doesn't hear or understand them or when the acts themselves or the statuses they assign to their targets are incoherent given the context. Second-person speech acts can also fail because their speakers lack entitlement—for instance, when a subordinate gives a command to his superior— or because their targets lack the opportunity or ability to fulfill the demand placed upon them—for instance, when I agree to attend my wife's thesis defense but, at the last minute, get sick and am unable to go.

Beyond these familiar forms of speech act failure, there are those that addresses suffer in virtue of being challenged or resisted by their target. Here, the theoretical framework that Lance and Kukla introduce proves quite helpful. They ask us to consider the space of possible responses (SPR) opened up by second-person speech acts. Any type of second-person address, in so far as it is performed felicitously, opens up a new range of normatively significant performances that were not previously available to the targeted agent. After being asked to marry

me, your acceptance of my proposal is now something that you can do. Addresses create new action possibilities by altering the normative significance of both performance and non-performance. For instance, if a judge orders me to attend a drug rehabilitation program and I do not do so, my act has become one of violating or ignoring a court order, rather than simply one of non-attendance. The boundary of an address' SPR represents the possible courses of action that are now foreclosed—after my co-worker declares his undying love for me, it is impossible for us to return to a distant yet polite professional relationship.

Among the possible responses to an address, there are those that qualify as appropriate and thus belong to the smaller space of *normatively appropriate uptake* (SAU) created by the address. Once my friend invites me over to her house for a dinner party, I can either accept or decline with regret—both of these responses are appropriate ways of acknowledging her invitation and thus belong to the SAU. But to ignore her invitation or to insist that she change the date of her party to better accommodate my schedule or to refuse without expressing regret are not appropriate responses, though they do belong to the SPR opened up by invitation itself.

Finally, within the SAU there is a yet smaller space of responses that fulfill the *constitutive goal* of the address—what has to happen in order for the speech act to be completely successful. The constitutive goal of my friend's invitation, for instance, is to get me to go to her party. Thus, accepting her invitation counts as fulfilling this goal, while declining with regret does not, even though it *does* belong to the SAU and hence to the SPR. Figure 4.1 on the following page models these spaces of responses induced by act of addressing someone.

Lance and Kukla's model of addresses helps to clarify their claim made in *'Yo!' and 'Lo!'* that by holding agents accountable, second-person addresses make normative demands 'inescapable.'

> As long as a call is felicitous, the SPR it creates is, in effect, inescapable; any action that happens next is one within the slightly
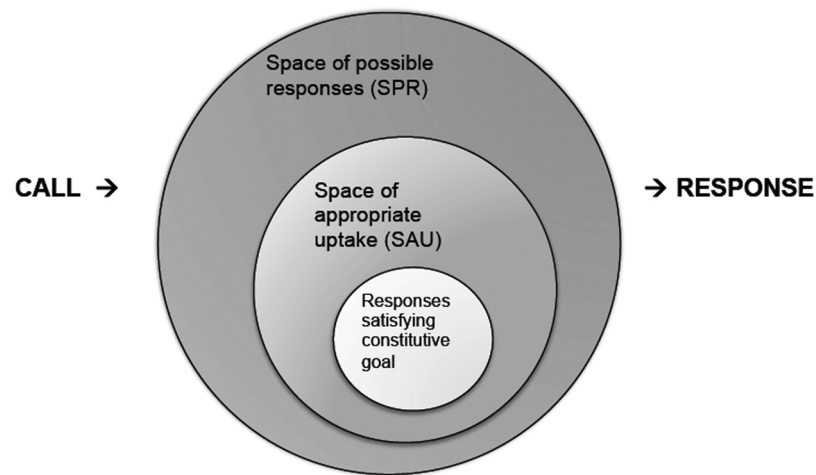
Figure 4.1: Lance and Kukla's Model of Second-Person Addresses (Lance and Kukla 2013, 469)

> reconstituted normative space created by the action. The SAU, on the
> other hand, is always escapable; no matter how forceful the claim that
> a norm makes on us is, it is always at least conceptually possible to
> violate it—this is indeed a distinctive mark of normative force. For
> instance, for any call, ignoring it altogether is always in the SPR, but
> it is not typically in the SAU (Lance and Kukla 2013, 468).

So the 'inescapability' of second-person addresses refers to the fact that once I
have been felicitously addressed, nearly anything I do subsequently will count as
responding to it and hence will belong to the address' SPR. Even 'ignoring' the
address will belong to the SPR, since prior to being addressed, the targeted agent
could not have performed an act with the normative significance of ignoring the
speaker's address. In fact, if 'ignoring' an address is also a way of being drawn
into the normative relationship forged by the address itself, there is no way to
actually *ignore* addresses.

Resisting or defying the normative demand of an address dramatically illus-
trates the latter's 'inescapability.' One way to defy an address is to challenge the
speaker's entitlement to make it. My co-worker orders me to help her on a project
that is outside my job requirements and I reply by reminding her that she is not
my superior. In this case, although I deny the speaker's authority to make the

normative demand that she does, I still acknowledge her act of addressing me as something that is worthy of response.

The target can also challenge an address *without* putting the speaker's entitlement into question. For instance, I turn up my stereo after my politically conservative neighbor asks me to turn it down, not because I think it out of line for him to make such a request, but because I want him to hear the leftist lyrics of the band I'm listening to. In this case, I acknowledge the force of the norm imputed to me by my neighbor's address but nonetheless violate it. Lance and Kukla call these instances of defiance acts of *transgression* (Lance and Kukla 2013, 471-2). Transgressing a discursive norm quite clearly involves acknowledging the speaker's second-person speech act—indeed, they are distinguished from other forms of defiance because they even acknowledge her entitlement to perform such an act. In all cases of defiance, the target pursues a course of action that is purposefully outside the address' SAU but within it's SPR. In defying the normative demand of an address, I thereby recognize the address as targeting *me*, rightly or wrongly, and thus I already give it an acknowledgement that grants it some legitimacy.

The distinction between SPR and SAU and the analysis of pragmatic defiance that it facilitates also permits Lance and Kukla to effectively distinguish different types of second-person speech acts. Take for instance the difference between commands and requests. As we saw in Chapter Three, Searle treats both speech act types as belonging to the category of 'directives,' which attempt to get the hearer to make the world match the speaker's words. Commands and requests only differ in their 'degree of strength.' Requests are supposedly 'weaker' than commands in so far as they permit the hearer to refuse to perform the requested action. Lance and Kukla reject Searle's handling of this distinction and his assumption that the two types of acts can be treated as "points along a single continuum" (Lance and Kukla 2013, 460).

For Lance and Kukla, commands (what they call 'imperatives') and requests

have fundamentally different pragmatic structures—a claim supported by their respective analyses in the framework represented by Figure 4.1. The constitutive goal of both commands and requests to φ may be the same—namely, the target's φ-ing (in the *right* way)—but their SAU's differ dramatically. On Lance and Kukla's more fine-grained analysis, the appropriate responses to commands and requests are acts with their own distinct normative significance—commands are *obeyed* while requests are *granted* (or not) . The SAU for requests includes both acts that grant the request (by φ-ing) and those that refuse it (by not φ-ing), while the SAU for commands consists exclusively of acts of obedience (in φ-ing). This divergence articulates the difference in outputs of the pragmatic functions associated with each act-type. Commands saddle their targets with an obligation to φ while requests provide the target with what Lance and Kukla call a "petitionary reason to φ" (Lance and Kukla 2013, 462).

Not every act of φ-ing in response to a command or request to φ falls within the respective SAUs. The target of a command to φ may perform the task while simultaneously undermining the authority of the one issuing it by intentionally doing it in a way that frustrates one of the latter's goals. For example, my boss orders me to work over the weekend to prepare his presentation; I do so but make sure to fill the presentation with embarrassing typos. Nor does every non-performance of φ fall within the SAU of a request to φ. Often refusing a request without offering an apology or explanation counts as an inappropriate response. In the case of invitations, for instance, if I decline an invitation to your party I am thereby obliged to express regret to you; not doing so turns my response into an act of defiance.

Finally, looking beyond the normative space opened up by second-person addresses to the sorts of normative changes imposed by the responses themselves, we find that the gulf between requests and commands widens further. When my friend grants my request to babysit my daughter for the evening, I am obliged to thank her. Indeed, it is nearly always the case that the granting of a request

imputes a commitment to express gratitude on the part of the one making the request. In contrast, gratitude is a positively inappropriate way to respond to compliance with a command. As Lance and Kukla point out, "If I express gratitude when you obey my order, I am in fact retroactively subverting that order and the entitlement with which I issued it" (Lance and Kukla 2013, 461).

Lance and Kukla's pragmatic theory represents a significant advance over Brandom's in terms of its breadth, depth, and overall analytic power. The functionalist construal of normative performances, when combined with distinctions between agent-neutral and agent-relative statuses and among first-, second-, and third-person pragmatic voice offers the theorist a wealth of conceptual tools with which to carve the nature of a speech act at its joints. In the next section, I will put these tools to work on the normative significance and typology of queries.

4.3 The Normative Function of Queries and their Typology

4.3.1 The *Telos* of Queries

Despite a few scattered references to "interrogatives," Lance and Kukla offer no analysis of queries; nor do they include queries in their typology[1]. In this section I shall attempt to provide the missing analysis of queries and to locate them within the typology of normative functions. I will follow their lead in keeping surface grammar at arms length from pragmatic function. While it would be absurd to think that we could understand the pragmatic significance of queries without being familiar with the syntactic category of interrogative sentences or the semantic category of questions, it is equally absurd to think that one performs

---

[1]The word "interrogative" appears on the following pages but in nearly every instance it is included among a list of speech acts: see Kukla and Lance (2009, 7; 10-11; 13; 134; 155). The one exception is a brief discussion on p.144 of the sentence "Is there a doctor on the plane?" which Lance and Kukla claim "hails by seeking an as-yet-indeterminate target."

a query if and only if one utters an interrogative. One can just as easily make an assertion by uttering an interrogative as ask a question by uttering a declarative. The utterance of an interrogative sentence (only) *typically* and *defeasibly* realizes a query, the semantic content of which just is a question. *This* is the core fact that links our conception of these three phenomena—mirroring the connection between assertions, declarative sentences, and propositions.[2]

Thinking about speech acts as discursive functions, as performance-types that *strive* to achieve a particular normative effect, is peculiarly apt for understanding the pragmatic structure of queries. It is no coincidence that the English nouns "question" and "quest" (not to mention "query" itself) have a common etymological ancestor in the past particle of the Latin verb *quaerere*, meaning "to seek" (Harper 2014). To query is to seek; a query is a search. To ask a question is to seek out its answer. Queries *strive* for answers. The answer is the *telos* of the question. This is a nice-sounding claim, but the insight it yields is little more than the hermeneutic circle in which most reflection on questions is entangled: we can't understand a question without understanding its answers; we can't understand an answer, *qua* answer, without understanding the question(s) it answers. Nearly every account of questions—be it semantic, pragmatic, or philosophical—aims to work its way out from this circle. In this section, I'll try to break out of this circle using the resources of Lance and Kukla's normative pragmatics.

So, queries search for, seek out their answers. What is the normative-pragmatic sense of 'answer'? We certainly address questions to others and do so with the expectation that they will provide an answer. Perhaps, then, queries

---

[2]This is not to say that morphosyntactic differences are not highly revelatory of pragmatic ones. For instance, in English and in many other natural languages, the class of sentences which share characteristic verb-subject inversion, in particular, polar (or yes/no) interrogatives and *wh*-interrogatives, i.e. sentences formed with the English words *which, what, who, where, when, why*, and *how*, are highly associated with the performance of two distinct speech acts: polar queries and wh-queries, respectively. See Biber (1999); Quirk and Greenbaum (1973). I relied implicitly on this distinction in the last chapter. However, since the distinction is not of great normative significance, it falls outside the typology of queries formulated in this chapter. This fact should serve to remind the reader, as if there were any doubt, that the typology sketched here is no where near exhaustive.

are a class of second-person speech acts and an 'answer' is a response given by the addressee that belongs to the constitutive goal of queries. I think this line of analysis captures many of our intuitions regarding queries and that it demonstrates the explanatory power of Lance and Kukla's theory. But I do not believe it represents all of the essential characteristics of queries that can be depicted within the normative-functionalist framework. So, before fleshing out that analysis, I'd like to think a bit more about the discursive function of queries.

In the previous chapter, I contrasted Searle's early classification of queries as 'requests for information' with his later classification of them as 'requests for the hearer to perform a certain speech act.' I suggested that the former conception better represents the satisfaction conditions of queries. After all, in asking a question like (4.1), the speaker is typically not looking *simply* for the addressee to assert that the road is closed or that it is open, but to assert whichever proposition is *true*. In other words, she's after *information* not just a certain speech act.

(4.1) Is the road closed?

Moreover, the speaker can obtain the information she seeks if, for example, the hearer points to a fallen tree sprawled across the road. In this case, the hearer has performed what Lance and Kukla call an "ostension" not an assertion, and yet the speaker, if she sees the fallen tree, has the information she was seeking. Thus, we can't read (4.1) as a request that the hearer perform a specific type of speech act.

Despite these problems, the latter conception is able to make sense of queries whose answers do not provide information in the sense of conveying the content of an assertion. Take for example, the following question-answer pair.

(4.2) (a) Should Jim call his mother to tell her he'll be late?

(b) Yes, he should. She'll worry if he doesn't.

We might say that queries like (4.2 a) seek advice rather than information, albeit advice regarding a third party, i.e. Jim. In the language of Lance and Kukla,

the speaker is seeking out a normative change that is achieved by a third-person perscriptive. Since the third-person perscriptive has an agent-neutral function, it does resemble the pragmatic function by which information is typically exchange-able, namely, the assertion. But, queries can also seek second-person perscriptives such as (4.3 b).

(4.3) (a) Should I call my mother to tell her I'll be late?

(b) Yes, you should. She'll worry if you don't.

In saying "Yes" the addressee is responding to the query in (4.3 a) *by* perform-ing a second-person prescriptive that calls upon the querier to acknowledge his commitments. Like that in (4.2 a) the query in (4.3 a) is advice-seeking, though of a more familiar structure, since the advice sought concerns the speaker him-self. While the prescriptive offered in (4.3 b) does have agent-neutral outputs, it is the agent-relative output, the change in Jim's normative status, that is being sought—something quite different from the information sought by (4.1)

On one hand, it seems that a query can achieve its pragmatic function with-out the addressee performing any *particular* type of speech act. This suggests that queries are requests for information whose function is relatively indifferent to *how* that information is provided. On the other hand, there are queries—e.g. the advice-seeking query in (4.3 a)—that are not after the sorts of things that could be expressed in the content of an assertion, i.e. they are not requests for *information.* How are we to square these two insights?

The solution, I believe, is to construe queries as striving to update the speaker's deontic score. Information-seeking queries (ISQs) are those that aim to bring about a change in the speaker's set of assertive commitments. Advice-seeking queries (ASQs) aim to change the speaker's practical commitments or ought-claims. However, in asking a question the speaker is not just aiming to ac-quire a new commitment but to achieve entitlement to it. Inquiry seeks *truth.* So, information-seeking queries are successful when the speaker gains entitlement to

a particular assertion; advice-seeking ones succeed when the speaker is warranted in making a particular ought-claim or acquires a justificatory reason to perform some action.

Like every speech act, queries strive for appropriate uptake. In the case of queries, such uptake is achieved when the hearer entitles the speaker to update her normative status, e.g. to make an assertion or perform some action. The queried agent is permitted a great deal of latitude in just how she provides this entitlement. Most queries can achieve their function without the hearer performing any *particular* speech act. So long as the hearer entitles the speaker to alter her deontic score in the manner specified by the query, she will count as having provided appropriate uptake.

The pragmatic function of queries thus shares with other speech acts a 'forward-looking' characteristic in the sense that queries strive for uptake from their targeted agents. But queries are peculiar in that they also look 'backward' to the querying agent in so far as they strive to entitle the speaker to adopt new normative stances. This 'backward-looking' characteristic is not obviously present among the other speech acts that Lance and Kukla address in their typology—except in the trivial sense that every speech act seeks acknowledgment of the speaker's propriety to make it. In the next chapter I will try to explain what unites these two orientations in queries and explore the entitlement-seeking structure of queries in greater detail. For the remainder of the present chapter, however, I want to analyze the fine-grained pragmatic structure of queries that emerges under the lens of Lance and Kukla's typology.

4.3.2 The Space of Possible Responses to Queries

As I've hinted at above, there appears to be an affinity between our intuitions regarding the act of asking a question and the communicative structure of second-person addresses. An address is a speech act directed from me to you; my address

calls upon you to acknowledge its propriety by responding to it in the right way. We've seen how such addresses alter the normative context of communication by reconfiguring the range of performances available to the target. A subset of this space of possible responses (SPR) includes just those acts that provide appropriate uptake for the address (SAU), and within *that* space, there is a further delimitation of those acts which achieve the address' constitutive goal. How does this structure of second-person addresses apply to the class of acts that count as asking a question?

My hypothesis is that the *telos* of queries is the speaker's entitlement to update her normative status and that queries are successful when the speaker acquires that entitlement *from* the targeted agent, who offers it *because* she has been queried. In querying you about something, I seek not just an answer but the *right, correct,* or *true* answer. My query is completely satisfied when you provide me with it, typically but not exclusively, by performing some speech act. To acquire the correct answer to a question just is to gain the authority to make some new move in the space of reasons, i.e. to make a claim, issue a command, prescribe an action, and so on. Thus, the constitutive goal of queries is accomplished when the target licenses the speaker to update her deontic score. The constitutive goal of an ISQ, for instance, is an entitlement to make a certain claim; the goal of an ASQ is to license the speaker to make some normative judgment or to perform some action.

But just *how* the speaker updates her score, i.e. *which* new assertion or command or prescriptive she is subsequently entitled to make, is underspecified by her query. Queries call upon their addressees to license the speaker's adoption of some normative status(es) from among *a range of alternatives*—i.e. the set of possible answers. Giving an answer, even if it turns out to be the wrong answer, is always an appropriate response to a query. By providing an answer to your query, I recognize your performance as appropriate, as one to which you are entitled. Ideally, my answer is the *right* answer and what I tell you the truth. If it is, then

your query has achieved its constitutive goal: you are now entitled to re-assert my answer-assertion or to perform the action I prescribe. But even if my answer is incorrect, in answering you, I have recognized your performance as a legitimate one. Thus, the set of possible answers constitutes the space of appropriate uptake (SAU) for queries.

Finally, there are those responses to queries that do not provide appropriate uptake but instead exploit the normative space opened up by the query itself. These will include speech acts that challenge the speaker's entitlement to ask the question and those that, while not challenging its entitlement, nonetheless transgress the normative demand instituted by the query. Besides the blatantly defiant and transgressive responses, there will be many acts whose status is not clear: are they indirect answers or non-answers? Non-answers or challenges? etc. As Lance and Kukla note, "There will never be a crisp boundary around the SAU; we cannot give general criteria for when a way of giving uptake becomes nonstandard enough to count as outside this boundary" (Lance and Kukla 2013, 470).

Here's an example to help illustrate the configuration of a query's SPR. Let's suppose that I ask my friend (4.4 a) and consider (4.4 b)–(4.4 i) as her possible responses.

(4.4) (a) How much does a a pound of ground sirloin cost at the farmers market?

    (b) It costs $5.50.

    (c) It costs $7.50.

    (d) It's written on a sign above the meat stand.

    (e) It's less than $10.

    (f) They don't sell meat at the farmers market.

    (g) I'm not sure. Its been some time since I was last at the farmers market.

    (h) How the hell should I know? I'm vegan. Remember?

(i) Whatever it is it can't begin to capture the moral cost of exploiting, torturing, and killing sentient creatures.

Responses like (4.4 b) and (4.4 c) provide direct answers to (4.4 a). If a pound of ground sirloin does in fact cost \$7.50, and my friend is entitled to this claim, then in asserting (4.4 c) she has licensed me to assert that the a pound of ground sirloin costs \$7.50 and has thereby fulfilled the constitutive goal of my query. Under the same assumption, my friend's false assertion that it costs \$5.50 prevents my query from achieving its constitutive goal, but it is still a direct answer and therefore provides my query with appropriate uptake.

By asserting (4.4 d) and (4.4 e) my friend also gives uptake to my query. However, she only answers my query *indirectly* or *partially*. Both responses recognize and promote the goal of my query either by directing me to another source of information, i.e. (4.4 d), or by narrowing the range of assertions to which I can be entitled, i.e. (4.4 e).[3]

In contrast, a response like (4.4 f) gives neither a direct/complete nor an indirect/partial answer to my question. Instead, it corrects a presupposition of my question. Erotetic logicians usually identify the presuppositions of questions as those propositions that are entailed by every direct answer.[4] In the normative pragmatic framework, we can think of presuppositions to a query, roughly, as all those commitments that are the committive-consequences of every direct answer-response. In asking a question, I undertake (or attribute to my interlocutor) an assertive commitment to the content of each of its presuppositions. Thus, a portion of my entitlement to query my friend is inferentially inherited from my entitlement to its presuppositions. By asserting (4.4 f), my friend challenges my entitlement to one of those presuppositions and thereby my authority to ask (4.4 a). According

---

[3]Arguments over what constitutes a complete answer to a question have dominated the semantic literature. See Belnap and Steel (1976); Groenendijk (1997); Hintikka (1976); Karttunen (1977). Luckily, my purposes do not require me to delve into this issue.

[4]Like that of 'complete answer' the concept of a question's 'presupposition' has been hotly debated among semanticists. See Åqvist (1965); Belnap and Steel (1976); Groenendijk (1997); Hintikka (1976); Karttunen (1977)

to Lance and Kukla's account of the SPR opened up by second-person addresses, challenging the entitlement of the addresser to make his address is a way of defying its normative demand and withholding uptake. Therefore, (4.4 f) falls outside my query's SAU.

(4.4 i) doesn't constitute appropriate uptake either. In giving it, my friend is clearly defying my request for information. However, she does not appear to be challenging my entitlement to make it. Instead, her response targets the normative expectation underlining my query, the expectation that she will assist me in my purchase and inevitable consumption of meat. My friend refuses me uptake in order to challenge my participation and my elicitation of others to participate in the exploitation of animals. In this sense, (4.4 i) is an example of a *transgressive* response to a query.

Thus far we have examples of responses to (4.4 a) that do not provide appropriate uptake, i.e. (4.4 f) and (4.4 i); those that do so without fulfilling its constitutive goal, i.e. (4.4 b), (4.4 d), (4.4 e); and those that *do* fulfill that goal, i.e (4.4 c). The two remaining responses—i.e. (4.4 g) and (4.4 h)—require a more fine-grained analysis to classify. Neither fulfills my query's constitutive goal; nor does either supply anything that we would call an answer. Both are admissions of ignorance regarding the answer to my query, but its not clear whether they nevertheless provide it with appropriate uptake.

Consider (4.4 h). One way to interpret this response is to treat my friend as challenging my authority to query her regarding the price of meat.[5] Being a vegan, she does not consume—nor, ostensibly, purchase—meat or meat by-products, and therefore won't be able to provide me with the information I seek. But it is not her lack of knowledge that undermines my entitlement to query her, it is the fact that I am responsible for knowing that she is a vegan—after all, she is my friend. Her commitment to veganism is, ostensibly, an important part of who she is. Disclosing

---

[5]Her utterance of "How the hell should I know?" is an example of a 'rhetorical question,' in the sense that she uses an interrogative sentence to make an assertion, or in this case, a denial. Specifically, a denial of my assumption that she is likely to know the price of meet.

and discussing commitments, values, interests, and goals is a crucial feature of the normative relationship that binds us together as friends. Our friendship doesn't just obligate *her* to disclose her commitments to me, it also makes *me* responsible for remembering, understanding, and at times appreciating them. Knowing about her commitments, at least many of them, is something I am responsible for *because* I am her friend. Even if my behavior is a wholly exculpable—I was distracted or anxious—by asking (4.4 h) I have failed to live up to an agent-specific epistemic responsibility. Her non-answer does not make her normatively deficient. It is *I* who am violating a norm when I ask her a question to which I am not entitled.

Now consider the non-answer in (4.4 g). Like (4.4 h), this response involves an admission of ignorance on the part of my friend, but her explanation of that ignorance is importantly different. While it is my responsibility to know and remember that she is vegan, our friendship probably doesn't obligate me to know when she last visited the local farmers market. Knowing that she has gone to the market to buy meat—supposing in this scenario that she isn't vegan—is enough to warrant my query. Moreover, the fact that my friend feels compelled to explain her ignorance suggests that she sees herself as acknowledging the legitimacy of my query. It would seem, then, that (4.4 g) falls within the SAU for my query, despite the fact that its does not answer my question.

Conceived as second-person addresses, queries reconfigure the range of normative acts available to the addressee. Lance and Kukla's theory of address-uptake successfully models the different ways one can respond to a query. The set of responses that provide a query with appropriate uptake (its SAU) corresponds with the set of its possible (direct/indirect, complete/partial) answers, though sometimes it includes admissions of ignorance like (4.4 g). The subset of those that achieve a query's constitutive goal aligns with our ordinary notion of a question's true or correct answer. Finally, outside a query's SAU lies a set of responses that defy its normative demand. Such responses include attempts to ignore the query, challenges of the speaker's entitlement, and efforts to transgress the broader web

of norms engaged by the query.

4.3.3 When a Request is not a Request

If we're to understand the pragmatic structure of queries as a type of second-person address in which one agent calls upon another to acknowledge her uptake of a normative demand, we'll need to distinguish it from other similar addresses, such as requests and commands. Above, I reiterated some of the arguments I made in the previous chapter against both the request-for-information and the request-for-a-speech-act interpretations of the illocutionary force of queries. I also reiterated the case for construing queries as a request to update the speaker's normative status, or more specifically, to *entitle* the speaker to make such an update. The issue I'd like to address first is whether so construing queries commits us to classifying them as a sub-species of requests if we also adopt Lance and Kukla's rather than Searle's analysis of requests.

According to Lance and Kukla, requests are characterized by a certain "combination of freedom and nonneutrality" (Lance and Kukla 2013, 461). In contrast with commands, requests empower the recipient to make a choice. I'd be mortified to learn that you accepted my request to babysit my daughter out of a sense of obligation. I want you to do so voluntarily; you are always free to decline. But a request doesn't open up a *neutral* space of choice. Rather, it seeks to impute a 'petitionary reason' for the addressee to grant the request. My request succeeds if you grant it because you want to do me a favor. Likewise, granting a request is itself a normative act whose output is an obligation to express gratitude. If you babysit my daughter, I'm obliged to thank you.

The most straightforward way to understand queries as a sub-species of the normative-functional category of requests is to think of them as requests for actions belonging to a particular class. According to Searle's classification, this class of actions is just that of speech acts, and thus individual queries come out analyzed as

requests to perform some speech act. But even if we adopt the account of queries I offered above, queries can still be classified in this manner. Queries would just be those requests to φ for which φ is restricted to a peculiar class of actions, not that of particular speech acts, but that of speech acts identified in terms of their normative effects on the speaker. An ISQ, for instance, would, roughly, instantiate a request to entitle the speaker to update her set of assertive commitments.

To test this classification, we need to see whether the normative structure of requests coheres with that of queries. First, do queries permit their targets the freedom to choose whether or not to update the speaker's normative status in the sense that refusing to answer the question still counts as providing appropriate uptake? In (4.4 g) we found a reply, which, while not answering the query, nonetheless proffers appropriate uptake. But admitting and explaining ignorance in response to a query is significantly different from refusing to answer. Asking how much someone weighs, even a close friend, is often met with a refusal to answer. Likewise, if I suddenly call up my friend's employer and ask for his social security number, I am likely to be denied the information. In fact, the employer is obliged *not* to satisfy my request. But in these and similar cases the refusal is justified on the grounds that the question is inappropriate or that the speaker lacks the authority to ask it. Thus, the refusal withholds appropriate uptake and serves instead to challenge of the speaker's entitlement.

Second, do queries aim to impute a reason for the queried agent to answer? It's perfectly coherent for me to explain why I made some assertion by citing the fact that it answered a question that you asked me. In doing so, I would be taking your querying me as a reason for acting, namely, for performing a certain speech act. It makes sense to take your querying me as an *explanatory* reason for my *act* of asserting. But it usually doesn't make sense to say that your query also gave me a *justificatory* reason for *what* I asserted. (A possible exception might be a response to the query, "Can you hear me?"). In other words, your act of asking me a question does not entitle me to make any particular assertion. Because queries

'present' a range of possible answers, they generally cannot grant entitlement to any of them. In contrast, the 'petitionary reason' imparted by a successful and entitled request usually serves as *both* an explanatory and a justificatory reason for the recipient to do what she does.

Third, assuming that answering a question instantiates a normative function, do its outputs include an obligation on the part of the querier to express gratitude for an answer? Pragmatic intuitions on this issue seem mixed. In most cases, receiving an answer in no way obliges me to thank the one who provides it. In the paradigmatic dialogical contexts arising from the normative relationships between parent and child, teacher and student, and doctor and patient such an obligation is almost entirely absent—as it is in question-answer exchanges among friends, colleagues, and co-workers.

One place where there does seem to be an obligation to express gratitude for an answer is in the querying of strangers—e.g. if I ask someone on the street for the time, then I should thank him when he tells me it. But the the obligation involved in such cases is already accounted for by the *meta-call* that seeks to establish the normative relationship that makes addresses like queries possible—what Lance and Kukla call 'entreaties' (Lance and Kukla 2013, 473-5). When the person on the street tells me what time it is, he is simultaneously granting my entreaty and answering my query. My obligation to express gratitude is a consequence of his granting my entreaty, not of his answering my question.

There are many situations in which it is normatively acceptable and perhaps even statistically normal to respond to the provision of an answer with an expression of gratitude. If I ask my co-worker to recommend a restaurant to take my wife to for our anniversary, and he does, I will likely thank him. But it's not clear that failing to do so would undermine the normative status of her response or entitle her to accuse me of ingratitude. Moreover, as this example illustrates, those queries that are usually accompanied by expressions of gratitude for answers are rarely those that would qualify as requests for information. They tend to be

requests for some other type of normative status, one imputed by a recommendation, a suggestion, a permission, etc. In these cases, it is the normative output of the solicited speech acts that imposes the tendency if not the obligation to thank the answerer rather than its function as a response to a query.

Queries depart from the normative-pragmatic structure of requests in nearly all respects. Unlike requests, refusing (to answer) a query almost never counts as an appropriate response (in the sense of providing uptake). While queries can impute an explanatory reason for queried agents to provide an answer, they rarely impute a justificatory reason for giving a particular answer. In contrast, the pragmatic structure of requests is such that the target of an entitled request to φ receives a 'petitionary reason' that both explains and *prima facie* justifies her φ-ing. Finally, answers to queries do not usually oblige the querier to express gratitude. When they do, it is the pragmatic function of the speech act performed in answering that imparts the obligation, not the answering itself. There is thus ample evidence to suggest that queries are not a sub-species of requests; they are not a class of substitution instances of the general form 'request to φ.'

4.3.4 Queries, Commands, and Epistemic Responsibility

If queries are not a special sort of request, then perhaps they are a type of command. There is precedent for such an analysis in the semantic literature on questions. Åqvist (1965) and Hintikka (1976) both offer semantic accounts that represent the meaning of interrogative sentences as sentences of a formal language that includes epistemic and imperative operators. The logical form of wh-questions, for instance, consists of an imperative operator plus a description of the cognitive situation the questioner wants to be brought about—the latter is the *desideratum* of the question. Accordingly, the meaning of the interrogative "Where is the car?" is represented as *Bring it about that I know where the car is.* The difficulty that such an account has for representing the meaning of, *inter alia*, embedded

interrogative clauses has been repeatedly criticized.[6] But despite its shortcomings as a semantic theory of interrogatives, the motivation behind this approach is an appealing interpretation of the pragmatic structure of queries. For Åqvist and Hintikka, queries are acts in which the speaker expresses a gap in her information state—the *desideratum* of her question—and orders the hearer to 'fill it in.' In other words, queries are a special type of command in which what the speaker orders the hearer to bring about is an *epistemic* state of affairs. The queries that inspire Åqvist and Hintikka's pragmatic interpretation are exclusively those that I have been calling information-seeking. But with an expanded notion of 'epistemic states of affairs'—one that includes a speaker's moral and practical as well as theoretical knowledge—the model could be extended to other query types, such as ASQs.

The prospects for a normative-pragmatic interpretation of queries as a special type of command rest, in part, on the extent to which the output of successful queries conforms to that of successful commands, namely, the imputing of an obligation to the target. If I am entitled to order my daughter to do her homework, then she is obligated to do so. According to the parallel, if I am entitled to query my daughter regarding the amount of homework she has, she is obligated to answer me correctly, that is, to tell me the truth. By telling me the truth will she update my epistemic state in the way I have ordered her to.

Construing my query in this way—i.e. as a command that obligates my daughter to tell me the truth—seems to exaggerate some normative effects while leaving others unaccounted for. If someone is capable of doing that which she is legitimately ordered to do, but nonetheless fails to do it, then the person who issued the order (and perhaps others, too) is entitled to punish her. (Of course, in order to be legitimate, such punishment must be commensurate with the offense.) It is plausible that if my daughter lies to me about the amount of homework she has, I am thereby entitled to punish her—no TV tonight! However, even if my

---

[6]See Bell (1975); Groenendijk (1997); Karttunen (1977).

daughter does not lie, but instead is mistaken about or ignorant of the amount of homework she has, she will still fail to bring about the necessary epistemic state of affairs. Is she still due punishment? Perhaps we should treat her knowledge of the answer to my question as part of her *capacity* to answer me correctly, in which case, her failure to increase my knowledge does not qualify as insubordination. But, if she *ought* to know how much homework she has—and ostensibly she *does*—then her ignorance is itself a failure to live up to certain norms, epistemic norms, and should not excuse her failure to answer my query correctly in the way that physical frailty might excuse the failure to comply with an order. (I return to this last point below).

At its core, what thwarts the classification of queries as a type of command is the fact that the normative space of responses configured by a command simply does not match up with that created by queries. As Lance and Kukla note,

> [Commands] are special among calls in that, unless we get quite fine-grained about varieties of uptake, the contents of their SAU match their constitutive goal. The only appropriate response to [a command] to φ is φing, and only if the respondent φs can the [command] meet its goal.

As we saw in § 4.3.2, however, the SAU of queries extends far beyond that of its constitutive goal. Incomplete, indirect, and incorrect answers, even non-answers or admissions of ignorance can and normally *do* qualify as appropriate uptake of queries, particularly ISQs. The constitutive goal of queries, on the other hand, is only met when the respondent entitles the speaker to update her deontic score, which, in the case of ISQs and ASQs, means changing her epistemic state.

Despite this fundamental difference, queries have a normative function that is quite similar to that of commands. Like commands, queries impute obligations to their targets. In general, the obligation is, as I hypothesized, an obligation to entitle the speaker to update her deontic score, i.e. to bring about a certain change in the speaker's epistemic state, in the broad sense of 'epistemic.' But queries are not neutral with regard to how a respondent fulfills this obligation.

(Neither, of course are commands, but the specification of the constraints imposed by commands requires a much finer-grained analysis). An entitled query obligates its target to alter the speaker's normative status by fulfilling *her* obligation to alter *her own* normative status.

The paradigm of this normatively complex output is the ISQ. When I ask my daughter how much homework she has, I am saddling her with a commitment to entitle me to make certain claims, such as "It's going to take my daughter three hours to do her homework." This is just the normative-pragmatic rendering of an obligation to bring it about that I *know* how much homework she has. But it is *her* (in this case, *agent-relative*) epistemic responsibility to know how much homework she has. So, in querying my daughter, I am calling upon her to fulfill one of *her* epistemic obligations in order to fulfill another obligation, namely, the one to update *my* epistemic state.

It is precisely because part of the normative output of ISQs is an epistemic responsibility that certain admissions of ignorance still manage to provide appropriate uptake. If the addressee of a query acknowledges the epistemic responsibility imputed by a query, then she is acknowledging the appropriateness of its normative output. As we saw in (4.4 g), this acknowledgment is often marked by a need to offer an exculpatory explanation of the addressee's lack of knowledge. In contrast, a response like (4.4 h), which also involves an admission of ignorance, does not provide uptake because the addressee is challenging the attribution of epistemic responsibility.

We should not confuse the idea that ISQs impute epistemic responsibilities with the idea that such queries *create* those responsibilities. As Lance and Kukla argue, it is often *assertions* that create them. In order to dispel the confusion, consider the distinction, briefly mentioned above, that Lance and Kukla make between *alethic* and *constative* commands. Alethic commands hold their targets responsible for living up to commitments that they have independently of the fact that they are given the command. As a rule, for every entitled alethic command

there is a corresponding true prescriptive with the same deontic content (Kukla and Lance 2009, 111-2). This does not mean that such commands have agent-neutral inputs. Being entitled to hold someone accountable to a norm, even one that already binds her, depends upon one's particular normative position vis-á-vis the target. Constative commands, on the other hand, hold their targets accountable to commitments that are created by the very act of commanding (Kukla and Lance 2009, 112-3). If I am already obligated to pick my daughter up from school, then when my wife tells me to do so, she is issuing an alethic command. If I tell my students to re-write their final papers, and they were not already committed to doing so, I am issuing a constative command. Of course, the alethic/constative distinction applies to types of holdings other than commands, such as entreaties, suggestions, permittings, etc (Kukla and Lance 2009, 111-2).

Querying someone for information involves holding them responsible in an alethic sense. When my student asks me for the date of the final exam, she is holding me accountable for knowing something that I ought to know. In fact, whenever someone is held accountable for living up to her epistemic responsibility, whether that responsibility falls upon her because of her particular normative position (agent-relative) or not (agent-neutral), the act that does so is an alethic holding. Thus, all ISQs have as a part of their normative significance an alethic holding function.

If we take epistemic responsibility to include practical knowledge, and if we follow Lance and Kukla in treating precriptives as truth-claims, then ASQs will also perform alethic holdings. When I ask you whether I should euthanize my elderly cat, I am calling upon you to fulfill your duty to know what to do. Beyond those queries that call for entitlement to speech acts with agent-neutral inputs and outputs, the alethic character of the holding function is harder to detect. When I ask my co-worker for a recommendation on where to eat lunch, whatever obligation he has to know a good restaurant, and moreover, one that I would enjoy, seems to be created by my query.

But, even though ISQs and ASQs strive to hold their targets accountable for living up to their own, pre-existing epistemic obligations, they often also serve a constative function by creating obligations to impart their knowledge to the speaker. When I ask you what the capital of Vermont is, you have a (defeasible) duty to know the answer, but your commitment to see to it that *I* know the answer is an effect of my querying you. Some queries, of course, hold agents accountable for providing information that they are already responsible for providing to the querier. If my daughter ought to tell me that she broke the vase, then when I query her about the broken vase, I am holding her accountable in an alethic sense for updating my epistemic state.

The pragmatic function of queries is closer to that of commands than that of requests. When ISQs or ASQs are legitimately made, their addressee is saddled with a commitment to update the speaker's epistemic state by fulfilling her own (i.e. the addressee's) epistemic responsibility. While they may hold their targets accountable to the first sort of commitment—i.e. the commitment to inform the speaker—in either an alethic or constative manner, these queries always perform an alethic holding function with respect to the second sort of commitment—i.e. the addressee's obligation to know certain facts. This complex, dual output of queries serves to distinguish them from commands, which simply produce an obligation to perform some action.

4.3.5 The Normative Scope of Queries

In this section, I have proposed an analysis of the pragmatic function of queries with the following core characteristics.

- Queries are second-person addresses.

- Their constitutive goal is to entitle the speaker to update her normative status (i.e. provide her with a correct direct answer).

- Their appropriate uptake can include incorrect answers, indirect answers,

partial answers, some admissions of ignorance, and various combinations of each (e.g. an incorrect, partial answer).

- The normative output of ISQs and ASQs is an obligation to update the speaker's epistemic state by fulfilling the addressee's own epistemic obligations.

According to Lance and Kukla's table, all second-person addresses instantiate Box-4 normative functions, i.e. those with agent-relative inputs and outputs. Since queries are addresses, they too will instantiate Box-4 functions. But are queries limited to such functions? In other words, are queries to be found exclusively in Box 4 of Lance and Kukla's classification scheme for speech acts. In this final sub-section and in the next chapter, I will attempt to justify a negative response to this question.

One difficulty that arises for a relegation of queries to normative functions with agent-relative inputs and outputs is that some ISQs and ASQs hold their targets accountable for living up to agent-neutral epistemic norms. If somebody asks me for the answer to a simple arithmetic problem, I am responsible for knowing the answer. Knowing basic facts such as this is everyone's epistemic responsibility. But only *I* am responsible for providing the one who asks me with this information. Thus, this type of ISQ imputes both an *agent-relative* obligation to update the speaker's epistemic state by providing the correct answer and an *agent-neutral* epistemic obligation to know the answer. Having the latter as an output is a reason to think that some queries might instantiated Box-1 or Box-2 functions, i.e. those that house functions with agent-neutral outputs

We can certainly find examples of queries that have agent-relative inputs but which output agent-neutral epistemic commitments. Knowing one's personal identification information is something that all agents are responsible for, though only persons with a particular normative status—e.g. my employer, a government representative, etc.—can query me about my social security number. These types of queries have agent-relative inputs but saddle their targets with an agent-neutral

epistemic responsibility; they thus instantiate Box-2 functions.

But there are also instances of queries with agent-neutral inputs. Take the example given in the previous paragraph. No special normative status is required to query someone regarding the answer to a simple arithmetic problem. Nor must one stand in a particular normative relationship to the person she queries regarding, e.g. the weather conditions in the latter's immediate surroundings. The level of epistemic access that targets have to such information will no doubt vary across agents. But the responsibility to know this information, though thoroughly defeasible and exculpable, applies to all members of the discursive community. These types of queries thus instantiate, *inter alia*, Box-1 functions.

Finally, we may also identify queries whose entitlement conditions are agent-neutral but whose normative effects include agent-relative epistemic obligations. In principle, the authority to query the President of the United States regarding his (at present, the position is occupied by a male) administration's foreign policy commitments is not restricted to any particular class of agents, not even to those who are citizens of the United States. But knowing the details of his foreign policy is something for which he is uniquely responsible. The fact that only certain individuals are able to exercise this authority is a consequence of circumstances that in no way alter the ideal functions that such queries strive to realize, namely those with agent-neutral inputs and agent-relative outputs. These queries thus instantiate Box-3 functions.

So far we have managed to identify queries that aim, in part, to realize functions belonging to every box in Lance and Kukla's table. But each of these functions has an epistemic responsibility as its normative output. Since my analysis has sought to show that queries perform a command-like function when they saddle the addressee with an obligation to license the speaker to update her deontic score, the epistemic-normative functions discussed thus far only represent a portion of their full pragmatic significance.

At first blush, this obligation to change the speaker's epistemic state appears to be intrinsically agent-relative. It is, after all, because of the normative relationship forged by the act of querying that the target is made responsible for providing an answer. In this relationship, the queried agent is responsible *to* the querier; the former is only responsible for updating the *latter's* normative statuses. No one else is obliged to provide the querier with the information she seeks.

However, it may be the case that queries constitute second-person addresses and therefore hold their targets accountable for providing answers while *also* instantiating normative functions, which strive, in principle, to get answers from anyone. In fact, the co-instantiation of second-person addresses and agent-neutral pragmatic functions is how Lance and Kukla understand the normal appearance of assertions in ordinary discourse. Many assertional speech acts take the form of second-person tellings which forge a normative relationship between speaker and hearer. Even in journalistic, academic, and legal contexts where assertions take on their most impersonal form, the speaker is still speaking *as* someone who has entitlement that *would* be available to anyone under the right epistemic conditions (Kukla and Lance 2009, 170).

In order for queries to approximate normative functions with agent-neutral inputs and outputs, where the latter include the obligation to provide an answer, they must not only have entitlement conditions that anyone could fulfill, they must also generate commitments that, ideally, fall upon everyone in the discursive community. We've already seen that entitlement to query basic information, like the solution to a simple arithmetic problem, can be had by anyone, and that the epistemic responsibility to know the answer to such queries can likewise be imputed to anyone. Now, while the actual obligation to provide an answer may be imputed to the agent who is in fact the target of this query, the fact that everyone is susceptible to calls to fulfill the correlated epistemic responsibly means that *anyone* could be the target of such a query. Moreover, anyone could entitle me to update my epistemic state with the solution to a simple math problem. There is

thus an implicit universality to basic ISQs; this suggests that they instantiate, at least in part, a function with agent-neutral inputs and outputs. But it does *not* make sense to say, even ideally, that everyone is obligated to give me the answer. Only the addressee bears this obligation, and she does so precisely because of the particular normative relationship forged by the query. There thus remains an agent-relativity to the output of these queries.

The agent-relativity of the normative effects wrought by queries is less visible in those that appear in the paradigmatically impersonal contexts of discourse—i.e. journalism, academics, law, science, etc. In the conclusion of an academic article, a biologist asks whether genetic or epigenetic factors are more significant determinants of the long-term memory exhibited by lab rats. She has not provided the answer in her article, but she is raising the question for others in her field, i.e. her audience, to answer. But the obligation to entitle *her* to answer is born by all of 'us' who inhabit her discursive community. Those, like me, who are not biologists will no doubt outsource their obligation to provide an answer to those who are. Still, the biologist is performing a speech act that seeks, ideally, to impose an agent-neutral obligation to entitle her to update her epistemic state with the correct answer. Anyone who acquires entitlement to the answer, by *discovering* the information she seeks, and who announces that answer, by making an assertion, has thereby entitled her to update her epistemic state. The levels of actual epistemic access that one needs to intelligibly ask this question, let alone provide an answer, are irrelevant to the sort of normative function that these queries strive to realize. In these admittedly rarefied instances, the querier is asking a question that anyone could be entitled to ask and that everyone, in an attenuated sense, has a responsibility to answer.

There is one special sort of query that generates agent-neutral obligations and that is a familiar feature of ordinary discourse. This is the query typically performed by uttering the phrase "How do you know that p?" or "Why do you think that p?" to someone who has asserted that p. These are reason-seeking

queries (RSQs), and they form a sub-species of ISQs. In making a RSQ, the speaker obliges the addressee to provide reasons, to demonstrate her entitlement to her assertion. While such queries are usually cast in the second-person, the normative effects they produce are not strictly agent-relative. Ideally, they change the normative status of everyone committed to p by imputing to them a responsibility to evince their entitlement to p. Of course, we might think of all those so committed as forming a class of agents sharing a certain normative status. But even those who are not committed p will have their scorecards altered by someone's querying p; for they will no longer be able to undertake a commitment to p without providing reasons for doing so. In other words, adopting a commitment to p now brings with it an *unconditional* responsibility to demonstrate entitlement. Anyone can ask someone committed to p for entitlement and in doing so, the nature of a commitment to p is changed for the entire discursive community. Now anyone who commits herself to p is obligated to provide entitlement. This obligation is lifted, however, when someone succeeds in vindicating commitment to p. These RSQs thus instantiate normative functions with agent-neutral inputs and outputs. They are solidly Box-1 queries. In the next chapter, I shall examine these queries and argue that they supply the resources needed to overcome the problem of justificatory stalemate in Brandom's account of MDPs.

5 Asking for Reasons

5.1 Introduction

In order for a normative practice to qualify as linguistic, it is not enough that it confer the practical significance of assertion upon certain performances. Indeed, it is not even possible for a normative social practice to count as discursive if the *only* performances that compose its practical repertoire are assertions. What else is needed? A goal of this work is to show that minimally discursive practices (MDPs) are inquisitive practices, practices in which participants ask questions and give answers. In this chapter I intend to accomplish this goal by offering a scorekeeping account of practices that exhibit both the asking of questions and the making of assertions; what I call MINIMALLY INQUISITIVE PRACTICES. More precisely, I argue that that inquisitive and assertional practices are pragmatically dependent on one another—i.e. that agents must know how to ask questions in order to make assertions and *vice versa.*

We have already learned much about the distinctive constellation of semantic content and pragmatic force that characterizes the speech act of asking a question or *queries.* In Chapter Three we found that the analysis of queries requires an appeal to a type of semantic content that is not that of assertions and that, consequently, a practice that only confers the content of assertions on performances can not implement queries. In Chapter Four, we discovered that the force of queries is (paradigmatically) that of a second-person address, that the normative functions they realize (paradigmatically) impute epistemic responsibilities and epistemic-

update commitments, and that these outputs can come in both agent-relative and agent-neutral varieties. The stage is thus set for an account of MDPs that include queries.

Before we can turn to this task, however, there are some loose ends which must be tied up. The most significant of these concerns the substantive differences between Brandom's scorekeeping account of assertional practices on one hand, and Lance and Kukla's normative-functionalist account of speech acts in ordinary discourse, including their own account of assertion, on the other. Since I define minimally inquisitive practices as co-extensive with assertional practices, and since the account of queries developed in the previous chapter took Lance and Kukla's picture of assertion for granted, bringing the insights gleaned from the latter account to bear on the elaboration of inquisitive practices in scorekeeping terms requires me to reconcile the differences between the normative-functionalist picture of assertion and the one native to the scorekeeping approach. In §5.2 I home in on the competing conceptions of epistemic responsibility to which each approach appeals in its pragmatic theory of assertion. I argue that that while Brandom's model already captures several features of the duty to know what is known, and can, with simple augmentation include the rest, Lance and Kukla do not have the resources to accommodate the duty to defend one's claims if challenged to do so. The greater explanatory power of Brandom's theory of assertion and its ability to represent the sense of *commitment* that discursive agents undertake in speaking are good reasons to adopt his theory, rather than that of Lance and Kukla, for the purposes of elaborating minimally inquisitive practices.

In §5.3, I show how scorekeepers capable of making and of taking others as making assertions can implement queries in their practice. My account introduces two new varieties of commitment and entitlement to the scorekeeping model: erotetic and apokritic.[1] Both varieties, I argue, are required for scorekeepers to

---

[1]Both adjectives are derived from nominalizations of Ancient Greek verbs. *Erotetic* derives from *erṓtésis*, a nominalization of *erōtaō* meaning 'to ask a question'. *Apokritic* derives from *apokrisis*, a nominalization of *apokrino*, meaning 'to give an answer' or 'to reply to a question'.

confer the significance of queries on one another's performances and both can be elaborated on the basis of the norms governing assertions in deontic scorekeeping. More radically, I argue that a new *kind* of normative attitude, distinct from both acknowledging and attributing, is required to model inquisitive practices; I call this attitude *addressing.* The attitude of addressing a normative status compares with that of attributing one insofar as it affects changes in the scorecards of *others.* But it contrasts with attributing by demanding the addressee recognize her new status and thereby foreclosing the possibility of passively ignoring it. The addition of addressing attitudes enables the scorekeeping model to incorporate some of the more important insights of Lance and Kukla's theory of second-person speech. Moreover, it does so without fundamentally altering the scorekeeping conception of assertions, since, as I argue, when scorekeepers assert a claim, they address its entitlement to others. The rest of the section works through the various combinations of statuses and attitudes that form the normative web of inquisitive practices.

In §5.4 I reverse the explanatory direction pursued in §5.3, demonstrating that the normative structure of assertional practices can be implemented on the basis of erotetic and apokritic statuses. Central to this account is the role that reason-seeking queries (RSQs) play in representing the justificatory responsibility associated with assertions. Roughly put, I show that taking or treating a player as responsible for justifying her claim if challenged is just what one does when one treats a player as responsible for correctly answering a particular RSQ if it is addressed to her. Representing the conditionality of justificatory responsibility entails that there are performances (part of) whose structural role in the practice is to detach the above conditions. In other words, there must be a way for inquisitive agents to perform the challenges that provide the condition requiring asserters to demonstrate entitlement to their claims. I argue at length that RSQs fill the structural role played by challenges in Brandom's scorekeeping model.

Once I have demonstrated that a non-assertional speech act can serve as

challenges in deontic scorekeeping, I will at last be in a position to redeem a promissory note issued at the beginning of Chapter Three. There, I suggested that the introduction of queries into an assertional practice might resolve the problem of justificatory stalemate. In § 5.5 I re-state the source and structure of this problem and argue that minimally inquisitive practices—those in which RSQs serve as challenges—do not exhibit justificatory stalemate.

5.2 Assertion, Commitment, and Epistemic Responsibility

5.2.1 Duty to Justify and Duty to Know

By introducing a host of new distinctions within the normative pragmatic framework—distinctions between inputs and outputs of normative functions, between agent-relative and agent-neutral statuses, and among first-, second-, and third- person pragmatic voices—Lance and Kukla are able to capture a wide range of linguistic phenomena that have gone unnoticed by earlier architects of normative pragmatics, such as Sellars and Brandom. The impetus for their expansion of the theoretical arsenal originates in a desire to free normative pragmatics from its preoccupation with assertional speech acts. Of course, in pursuing this goal, they proffer their own account of assertion, one they acknowledge to be heavily indebted to Brandom's. Indeed, it is precisely Lance and Kukla's analysis of assertions as speech acts oriented towards universal uptake that provides the contrast that illuminates the structure of second-person addresses and agent-relative normative functions.

But the influence of Brandom's theory on Lance and Kukla's account of assertion does not preclude the divergence between the two in certain key areas. In this section I will bring out some of the contrasts between their respective analyses of assertion. It is important to notice that while the notion of epistemic

responsibility figures prominently in both accounts, their conceptions of this notion differ. This difference is significant since the speech act of challenging is designed to secure epistemic responsibility of asserters in Brandom's account of MDPs. Likewise, a key consequence of justificatory stalemate is that stalemated practices fail to instantiate this responsibility. If queries are to play the role of challenges, as I have suggested, then they will serve to implement the discursive practices by which epistemic responsibility is instituted and discharged. Moreover, the normative-functional account of ISQs that I developed in the previous chapter interprets part of their output as an epistemic responsibility (on the part of the recipient) to know the answer. The differences (and similarities) between this sort of responsibility and the responsibility to respond to challenges is therefore critical to the task of injecting queries into Brandomian MDPs.

Any comparison between the normative pragmatics of Brandom and that of Lance and Kukla, must appreciate the very different theoretical agendas to which they are wedded. Unlike Brandom, Lance and Kukla are not interested in identifying the structure of MDPs, and are explicitly agnostic when it comes to the potential to extract a viable semantic account from a pragmatic theory. Nor are they particularly concerned, as Brandom is, with producing a theory of mind—i.e. of the content and character of mental states and psychological attitudes—to accompany their theory of language-use. Their aim is to chart the breadth and depth of the pragmatic field of concrete linguistic practice in normative-functional terms. So, while their taxonomy of speech acts isolates the ideal, teleological structure of discursive performances, they are keen to remind us that speech act tokens will realize multiple normative functions and promote various practical ends.

This is not to say, however, that Lance and Kukla are uninterested in questions regarding those features of a practice that are requisites for its discursivity. Indeed, as we have seen, they make the rather bold claim that second-person pragmatic voice is a transcendental condition for the possibility of speech itself. (In

the next subsection, we shall observe their attempt to square this claim with their account of assertions.) Rather, in keeping with their goal of liberating normative pragmatics from the 'declarative fallacy,' Lance and Kukla focus their attention on precisely those essential pragmatic structures, which, like the vocative function, have been historically ignored. Whether assertions, or more specifically, agent-neutral discursive functions belong to this structure is never made clear, though their importance to the analysis of ordinary discourse is also never challenged.

The normative function that assertions ideally perform, according to Lance and Kukla's analysis, is one that licenses all members of the discursive community to re-assert its content. This feature of their account is explicitly inherited from Brandom's pragmatic theory. Both accounts also see this universal entitlement to re-assertion as altering agents' epistemic responsibilities. However, the two differ in how they conceive of these responsibilities. For Brandom, the inheritance of entitlement to a warranted assertion is underwritten by the legitimate deferral of challenges to the original, or at least previous, asserter. Epistemic responsibility consists in the *duty to justify what one claims*—in the broad sense of 'justify' that includes deferral and appeal to non-inferential capacities. Crucially, an asserter need not volunteer a demonstration of her entitlement in order to license others to re-assert it. Rather, what permits others to re-assert her claims is the fact that in making them she acknowledges a conditional responsibility to provide justification. This acknowledgment in turn authorizes others to defer to her, that is, to pass along potential challenges to their own re-assertions. It is this person-based authority that is shared across the discursive community when someone makes an assertion.

In contrast, for Lance and Kukla, the entitled performance of an assertion adds to the community's body of knowledge and saddles all discursive agents with the new, defeasible responsibility to know it. Epistemic responsibility for them consists in a *duty to know what is known*, though not *all* that is known. While they do not subscribe to an explicit, philosophical account of knowledge, we

can assume that a necessary condition for knowing that *p* is an agent's believing that *p*. So, in order to fulfill one's epistemic duty, it is necessary, though not sufficient, that an agent believe that which is known. As I've said, Lance and Kukla aren't particularly interested in correlating their pragmatic theory with a theory of mental states. But they are willing to suppose that "some reason-giving mental events can be understood as having a pragmatic structure that mirrors the structure that their expressions would have" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 67). They invite us to think of an assertional mental event as "an occurrent doxastic commitment to a declarative truth-claim" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 67). Thus, the ideal distribution of epistemic duties affected by an entitled assertion is, in part, a matter of making other agents responsible for undertaking *doxastic* commitments to its content.

This way of formulating the duty to know—i.e. as a responsibility to undertake doxastic commitments to which one is entitled—brings it more in line with Brandom's own conception of assertional or doxastic commitment. After all, part of the responsibility one incurs in making an assertion is to undertake commitments to other assertions that follow inferentially from it. For Brandom, these 'downstream' commitments can be of either an attributed or an acknowledged variety. That is to say, they may be either beliefs to which an agent is committed in light of those commitments others take her to have (attributed) or beliefs to which she is committed by her own lights and hence is prepared to express in assertions or use as premises in inferences (acknowledged). Attributed commitments represent the ideal sense of *belief*, the sense in which one can be said to believe everything that follows from what one claims. Acknowledged commitments represent the mundane or empirical sense of *belief* which refers to those claims that one is actually disposed to assert (Brandom 1994, 193-8). Since Lance and Kukla only consider the ideal normative functions of assertions, the sorts of epistemic responsibilities they see as disseminating from assertions are of the attributed variety. Agents are responsible for being committed to assert more than what they

are actually disposed to assert.

Understanding Lance and Kukla's conception of epistemic responsibility in terms of Brandomian consequential commitments reveals a major divide in the type of sociality that characterizes their respective models of assertional practice. Brandom's scorekeeping model represents every scorekeeper as maintaining two sets of books: one that reflects the consequences of her interlocutors' attributed statuses and another that reflects the consequences of their acknowledged statuses. Having one's words understood is a matter of negotiating among the different perspectives represented by these two books. Every perspective is subject to other perspectives; none is privileged. This is what is meant by Brandom's claim that discursive practices are structured by an *I-Thou* sociality.

In contrast, the perspectival structure of speech acts hardily figures in Lance and Kukla's account. In a sense, the normative function of assertions represents the changes in attributional status that all agents undergo when one of them makes a warranted claim. But whose perspective do these attributed statuses represent? If warranted assertions add to the community's body of knowledge, to what 'we' know, and impute a responsibility on all to know that which 'we' know, then these new responsibilities are attributed by the community as a whole— the collective 'we'. The sociality operative in Lance and Kukla's conception of assertional exchanges thus has an *I-We* rather than an *I-Tho*u structure.

Brandom criticizes the *I-We* conception of discursive sociality on two counts. First, he argues, the very notion of communal assessments of propriety is a fiction: "Assessing, endorsing, and so on are all things we *individuals* do and attribute to each other, thereby constituting a community, a 'we" (Brandom 1994, 39, emphasis added). Second, by treating the community as a supra-agent and privileging its attributions of normative status over those of its members, the *I-We* picture treats the attitudes of the collective 'we' as incorrigible. Communal assessments of normative status are immune to further assessment. Whatever the community takes to be correct is correct. Brandom claims that this picture obscures the

objectivity of distinctly conceptual norms, the sense in which the application of concepts answers to facts independently of what we, even all of us and forever, take those facts to be.

Leaving aside the question of whether these objections to the *I-We* conception of discursive sociality are insuperable, it is important to determine whether the *I-Thou* model is able to accommodate the notion of epistemic responsibility that figures in Lance and Kukla's *I-We* conception of assertion, and *vice versa.* If one model of assertion is able to capture both conceptions of epistemic responsibility, then we will have a *prima facie* reason to pursue it over the other. In the rest of this section, I will show how and why, with minimal modification, Brandom's model is able to account for both the duty to know and the duty to justify.

5.2.2 Commitment to Assert

I have already hinted at one way on which the epistemic duty to know that which is known—the conception of epistemic responsibility that underwrites Lance and Kukla's account of assertion—might be partially represented by Brandom's model of assertional practices. Above I suggested that we understand the duty to know what is known as, in part, a responsibility to believe those claims to which everyone is entitled, or at least more of those claims than one already believes. Fulfilling such a responsibility may not be sufficient to meet one's duty to know, but additional conditions will depend on the particular conception of knowledge one adopts. Regardless, on Brandom's model of assertion, endorsing a claim commits one to endorsing those claims that are its consequences. Of course, one is only *obliged* to endorse those claims that are committive (i.e. deductive) consequences of what one has asserted. An agent is not obliged to endorse the permissive (i.e. inductive) consequences of her warranted assertions. But committive consequences are still claims to which one is entitled, even if only in a trivial sense. Thus, Brandom's account of assertion does represent a responsibility to believe or to be prepared to

assert claims to which one is entitled.

What Brandom's account does not explicitly acknowledge is a responsibility to endorse claims to which *everyone of 'us'* is entitled, irrespective of what one has actually endorsed. But this agent-neutral entitlement can be accommodated by his model with a little finesse. Since such responsibility may outstrip what an agent is prepared to endorse, it must belong to her set of attributional statuses. Moreover, since in Brandom's scorekeeping model there is no incorrigible communal perspective from which entitlements are attributed, any claim regarding what 'we' know must belong to an individual's scorekeeping perspective. In other words, when I take myself as entitled to some truth-claim, I thereby take *everyone* to be entitled to it. I do so, at least, according to the score I keep on others in light of those statuses *I attribute* to them, rather than in light of what they themselves acknowledge. It is in this sense that I think everyone ought to believe what they're entitled to believe, which is what I am entitled to believe.

It is still not quite correct to say that a scorekeeper takes the rest of the discursive community as *responsible* for claiming what they are entitled, by her lights, to claim. They may be obliged to *not* assert or to retract anything incompatible with those claims to which she has attributed entitlement. But this is distinct from the *positive* duty to assert those claims, even if this sort of duty falls short of the obligation to endorse *all* the claims to which one is entitled. We could always augment Brandom's model by stipulating the scorekeeping practice of taking interlocutors to have this positive duty, but it is not clear what advantage this would have in representing the normative structure of assertion. Indeed, in the next subsection, I suggest at least one reason why we should *not* introduce this stronger sort of epistemic responsibility into the pragmatic account of assertion.

Let's now consider the question of competing representations of epistemic responsibility from the opposite explanatory direction. Can Lance and Kukla's normative-functionalist model of assertion capture the justificatory responsibility that underwrites Brandom's model of assertional practice? In answering this ques-

tion, we'll need to determine whether such a commitment would be an input or an output of the assertional function and what sort of agent-specificity it would have. To the first question, it makes sense that an agent's responsibility to justify her claim when challenged would be a normative effect of her asserting that claim. It's only once I've claimed something that I can be held accountable for justifying it. So, justificatory responsibility would be an *output* of the normative function of assertion.

To the second question, there is also a *prima facie* answer. Since the justificatory responsibility is one that an agent incurs in virtue of having made a claim, this particular normative change only affects those agents who have made that claim. It makes no sense to say that everyone is responsible for justifying claims only asserted by some. Justificatory responsibility is thus an *agent-relative* output of the assertional function.

While it is *prima facie* intelligible to identify justificatory responsibility with an agent-relative output of assertions, the consequences that doing so has for the normative-functionalist account of assertional practice are significant. First, it runs contrary to Lance and Kukla's insistence that the distinguishing characteristic of asserting is that it instantiates a normative function with both agent-neutral inputs and agent-neutral outputs. They do suggest that the assertional function can be co-instantiated with other functions, as in the case of tellings, where in addition to the universal re-licensing of assertion, the hearer is also brought into an agent-relative normative relationship with the teller. But the agent-relative obligation to justify one's claim is not restricted to tellings. Indeed, even the most impersonal contexts of assertion appear to support a commitment on the part of the speaker to defend her claims when challenged.

Secondly, construing justificatory responsibility as an output of the ideal normative function of assertion complicates the understanding of that function's inputs. According to Lance and Kukla's theory, the inputs to all normative functions should be thought of as sets of statuses that entitle a speaker to perform the

speech act in question. Thus, if a speaker is, in fact, entitled to an assertion, then her act of asserting entitles everyone to re-assert its content. But a speaker incurs justificatory responsibility irrespectively of her actual entitlement to her claim. Even if a speaker is ignorant of some remote defeater of her claim, she is still discursively obligated to proffer or attempt to proffer justification—i.e. to present what she *takes* to be reasons for her claim. From the perspective of assertion's ideal normative function, the actual demonstration of entitlement is irrelevant. If a speaker lacks entitlement, then she fails to instantiate the assertional function, and thus none of the latter's normative consequences, including, *ex hypothesi*, her duty to justify her claim, are realized.

A third problem stems from Lance and Kukla's appeal to an *I-We* structure of assertional norms. Since satisfaction of the pre-conditions to a speech act is attributed from the singular perspective of the discursive community as a whole, there are two ways in which these attributions might diverge from those made by any subset of its members. Either a speaker is entitled to an assertion according to 'us' but not according to some of its members, or a speaker is not entitled according to 'us' but is according to some of its members. In the latter case, the speaker fails to realize her assertion and thus incurs no obligation to justify her claims. In the former case, those rogue agents who do not recognize a speaker's entitlement are defective by the lights of the community as a whole. Any challenge they pose to the speaker's assertion is premised on their *own* failure to know what they ought to know. The latter are therefore not entitled to challenge the original assertion. Thus, either a speaker fails to incur justificatory responsibility (when she is not entitled to the assertion in first place, by the lights of the community) or she is responsible for justifying her claims but cannot be legitimately challenged (when she is entitled according to the community but not entitled according to some defective agents). As we saw in Chapter Two, when it is *in principle* impossible to detach a conditional obligation, that obligation is void. Hence, there is *no* justificatory responsibility in the idealized assertional practice modeled by Lance

and Kukla's normative functions.

To recap: Brandom's scorekeeping model already captures many features of the stronger view of epistemic responsibility—i.e. the duty to know what is known. It falls short of attributing the positive duty to assert what is known, but is capable of representing this too by stipulating it in the mechanics of the model itself. On the other hand, we have seen that Lance and Kukla's normative-functionalist account of assertion not only does not, in fact, represent the weaker sense of epistemic responsibility—i.e. he duty to justify one's claims if challenged—but it also faces several challenges in even *attempting* to accommodate its features. These difficulties point up a surprising contrast between the two accounts of assertion. For all their criticism of Brandom's 'impersonal' view of assertion, Lance and Kukla's theory fails to capture the most 'personal' normative element of assertion: the speaker's own responsibility to justify her claims. In the rest of this section, I shall identify further consequences that this failure has for the normative-functionalist account of assertion.

5.2.3 Assertion, Repeated

By adopting the strong view of epistemic responsibility—i.e. as a duty to know what is known—Lance and Kukla's normative theory of assertion exhibits a rift between the account given of original assertions and that given for subsequent ones or *re*-assertions. In making a warranted claim, a speaker contributes to the store of facts 'known by us.' Her act alters the scorecard of everyone in the discursive community by saddling each of us with a new epistemic responsibility. How, then, do we explain the discursive function of re-assertions? Such performances are defined precisely by the fact that they offer up something 'we' already know and therefore cannot create new epistemic responsibilities. It would seem that re-assertions are normatively vacuous and discursively impotent acts—an idle cog in the linguistic machine.

Lance and Kukla recognize the need for an independent explanation of the discursive function of re-assertions and go to great lengths to make it cooperate with their theory of agent-neutral speech-acts. They tell us that

> When we offer up new knowledge in an ... [assertion], that knowledge is *for everyone* but will only be taken up by some people. Universal uptake is part of the *telos* of these speech acts, but not part of what they typically accomplish. But this means that there is still a *performative* point to uttering a declarative that states something that has already been stated, in a new context, at a new time, to new listeners, etc. ... [A re-assertion] calls upon those who did not already accept the claim to do so, not in virtue of specific agent-relative facts about them, but agent-neutrally ... There is an important sense in which the *first* utterance of a declarative can effect a normative transformation that is different from what the subsequent utterances will accomplish. But this does not take away the practical point to re-asserting declaratives, or the agent-neutrality of their output (Kukla and Lance 2009, 37-8).

They thus concede that re-assertions are impotent from the perspective of the ideal distribution of normative statuses across the discursive community. Their only function is to bring the real distribution in line with the ideal. There is a 'practical point' to re-asserting truths—namely, to get more people to recognize them. The account of re-assertion demands a shift in the terms of analysis away from normative functions toward something more closely resembling the communicative intention of the speaker—a methodological move that Lance and Kukla explicitly eschew. Moreover, they are peculiarly silent when it comes to explaining just how re-assertions achieve their 'practical point' and what effect it might have on agents' deontic scores.

When it comes to their account of re-assertion, Lance and Kukla would do well to borrow more out of Brandom's playbook. On his account, the right to re-assert is communicatively inheritable across deontic perspectives because the concomitant epistemic responsibility can be discharged by deferring to the authority of other agents. Original and repeated assertions are distinguishable in virtue of the fact that the latter but not the former can defer justificatory responsibility

to another speaker. Indeed, it is precisely because assertion is conceived in terms of a duty to justify what *one* claims, rather than as a duty to know what '*we*' know that Brandom can supply a pragmatic theory that seamlessly accounts for both assertion and re-assertion. This is certainly an advantage for his approach to normative pragmatics. Furthermore, the subsequent need for separate accounts of assertion and re-assertion provides a reason *not* to include the strong sense of epistemic responsibility in the our picture of normative structure of assertion.

5.2.4 Targeting and Addressing

There is no discussion of the permissibility of deferrals and only scant mention of uniquely *justificatory* responsibility in Lance and Kukla's book. In fact, there isn't even an explicit treatment of assertions as discursive *commitments*. Instead, they are simply seen as normative functions, which, when properly entitled, transform the *ideal* normative statuses of everyone in the discursive community. Assertions are thus the paradigmatic *impersonal* speech act. But as I've suggested, their account may in fact depict assertion as too impersonal, making it very difficult for them to accommodate the agent-relative responsibility that speakers incur to defend their claims. In this subsection, I examine their effort to represent some features of this responsibility in the normative structure of the a certain sub-type of assertions: tellings. I go on to argue that the specifically second-personal dimension of tellings is already a feature of Brandom's account of assertion more generally, thus providing another reason to adopt his scorekeeping account of that speech act and its weaker conception of epistemic responsibility.

As Lance and Kukla recognize, there is a *prima facie* difficulty squaring this construal of assertion with their claim that all speech acts strive to realize a vocative or addressing function. In fact, they see the identification of a vocative dimension in assertions as the primary challenge facing the claim that this dimension is linguistically transcendental. In attempting to meet this challenge, they

point to the difference between acts (approximating those) of *pure asserting* and acts of *telling.* Building on Richard Moran's and Edward Hinchman's respective analyses of telling, Lance and Kukla claim that tellings are complex speech acts that incorporate both the agent-neutral inputs and outputs of assertions and the agent-relative inputs and outputs characteristic of second-person addresses. In addition to instantiating agent-neutral truth-claims, tellings also aim to forge a normative relationship between speaker and hearer. In telling you something, I invite you to trust me, to believe *me* and not just what I say. Only *I* can offer *my* word as a telling, and only *you* can take it as a telling. It is in this sense that tellings have agent-relative inputs and outputs. But since what I tell you is information, something to which all agents are entitled, my speech act also has agent-neutral inputs and outputs (Kukla and Lance 2009, 166-7).

Lance and Kukla claim that most asserting that goes on among agents with specific normative relationships—e.g. doctors and patients, teachers and students, parents and children, etc.—are in fact *primarily* functioning as second-person tellings. Purer versions of assertion—paradigmatically found in journalistic, academic, and legal contexts—may not count as tellings, but they nonetheless have an addressing function (Kukla and Lance 2009, 169).

> Even in maximally impersonal [assertional] speech, its not quite right to say that I speak *as anyon*e, *to anyone.* Rather I speak *as* someone who has already taken up a normative entitlement that *would* be available to anyone under the right epistemic conditions (Kukla and Lance 2009, 170).

In those contexts when asserting approximates its purest, impersonal discursive function, there is still a second-personal dimension to speech. When the newscaster delivers the news, she speaks as a representative of the 'we' and addresses her audience not as individuals possessing some special normative position but as generic members of the same discursive community. No assertive function can thus be realized unless the speech act that instantiates it *also* instantiates a calling or address.

Given the place he reserves for person-based epistemic authority in his account of assertion, it is surprising that Lance and Kukla criticize Brandom for employing this ideal sense of commitments and entitlements while ignoring the *addressing* function of speech.

> For his purposes, a[n] [assertive] speech act shifts the (ideal) commitments and entitlements of everyone in the discursive community automatically. In this sense, it doesn't matter at all, for Brandom, whether the speech act was actually addressed to or heard by the people it targets—it achieves its function and shifts the normative status of everyone in the community in the relevant way simply by being uttered (Kukla and Lance 2009, 172).

It is more than a bit uncharitable to read Brandom this way. After all, an assertive speech act only has the normative effects that it does when it is *recognized* by others. These other discursive agents need not be the targets, i.e. hearers, of the assertion. Hearers and *over-hearers* alike have the right to re-assert the speaker's claim by deferring to her epistemic authority. Such authority is not a function of the speaker's reliability or expertise. (A scorekeeper can, of course, always use a *claim* about the speaker's reliability to gain entitlement to her assertion, but doing so remains within the scope of content-based authority relations). Rather, it is a function of the justificatory responsibility that distinguishes assertion from other types of speech acts—the fact that I am *responsible* for justifying what I claim. Thus, merely uttering a declarative sentence is *not* sufficient for a speaker to qualify as undertaking an assertive commitment; she must be heard or over-heard by others, she must lend out her justificatory responsibility, in order for what she says to be taken up and treated as an assertion.

Recently, Jeremy Wanderer (2010b) has argued that Brandom's account of assertion can accommodate its second-personal dimension. His argument begins with a distinction between those features that make a speech act second-personal and those that make it *targeted*. A speech act successfully targets an audience when it alters the normative status associated with the audience differently than

it alters the statuses of others. Classically, such speech acts generate a difference between hearers and over-hearers. To be a second-person address, on the other hand, a speech act must place a normative demand upon agents to provide acknowledgment and recognition. Recognizing an address serves to bind addresser and addressee in an normative *I-Thou* relationship such that "the addressee, once bound, cannot *ignore* the address; she can only *reject* it" (Weiss and Wanderer 2010, 102). According to Wanderer, a second-person address need not be targeted, so long as it makes a normative demand upon "anyone who comes into contact with the act, calling on them to respond in practice to the act in a suitable manner that precludes the possibility of passively ignoring it" (Weiss and Wanderer 2010, 106).

Wanderer's distinction between targeted and second-personal speech acts aligns with Lance and Kukla's distinction between speech acts with agent-relative outputs and those formulated in the second-person pragmatic voice. Both targeted speech acts and those with agent-relative outputs alter the normative status of only certain agents. Likewise, according to both accounts, second-person addresses are distinguished by the 'inescapable' normative demand they place on agents to provide appropriate uptake—a demand which precludes their passively ignoring the address.

Lance and Kukla's account easily accounts for agent-relative statuses to be imputed by third-personal speech acts, such as the prescriptive, "Jim shouldn't insult his friends," said to someone other than Jim. They even explain second-person prescriptives expressed by sentences like "You shouldn't insult your friends," which can legitimately be uttered by anyone. However, there does not appear to be any possibility of second-personal speech acts that fail to have agent-relative *outputs*. As we've just seen, even tellings, which instantiate discursive functions with agent-neutral inputs and outputs, must, *qua* tellings, also imply changes in the agent-relative statuses of the one being told. Indeed, Lance and Kukla define addresses in terms of the demand for recognition they make upon their *targets*.

From the perspective of Wanderer's distinction, Lance and Kukla are conflating the addressing function of second-person speech which places an inescapable *normative demand* on others with the *agent-specificity* of speech acts' normative effects, a specificity registered by the difference between hearers and over-hearers. As Wanderer sees it, assertions are the paradigmatic example of *untargeted*, second-person speech acts. Assertions have normative implications for both hearers and over-hearers alike. Someone who *does* encounter the claim is thereby drawn into a normative relationship with the asserter that prevents her from merely ignoring it. It is this normative relationship that permits anyone who comes across the assertion to defer to the asserter's epistemic authority.

To the extent that Wanderer's account is conducive with Brandom's pragmatic theory, it provides an alternative picture of the vocative dimension of assertions that does not depend upon the division between an ideally impersonal normative function and the actual addressing speech acts (e.g. tellings) that instantiate them. Since it is the permissibility of deferral that underwrites the second-personal dimension of assertions, the relationship of trust forged between speaker and *hearer* in the act *telling* loses its peculiar theoretical significance. This is a welcomed result. As Wander points out, extant epistemologies of testimony that see the offer of *assurance* on the part of the speaker as essential tend to take tellings as paradigmatic acts of testimony. These assurance theories rely on a problematic analogy between telling and promising that, among other things, has difficulties explaining how testimony can provide the audience with reasons for action (Weiss and Wanderer 2010, 107-8).[2]

What Wanderer's account of assertion as a second-person act demonstrates is that Brandom's pragmatic theory already has the resources to accommodate precisely those features of discourse that Lance and Kukla charge him with ig-

---

[2]More specifically, the problem is that unlike promises, where what a someone promises must be under her control, tellings offer the tellee reasons for acting consonant with what is claimed that do not depend on the teller's having *control* over the state-of-affairs that is represented by her speech. See (Weiss and Wanderer 2010, 108).

noring. Moreover, it shows that Brandom's theory can represent these features without appealing to a purely impersonal assertional function that is, by their own admission, never instantiated in ordinary discourse. Nor does the theory rely on the special normative relationship forged in acts of telling, with its problematic parallels to promising. Instead, it mobilizes the distinctly *justificatory* responsibility incurred by asserters and the acts of deferral that discharge it. It is the chains of deferrals made possible by actual hearings and over-hearings of assertions that link speakers together in a normative web of epistemic authority and responsibility. The difficulties I identified in Brandom's attempt to theorize a purely assertion practice that instantiates this web do not detract from the fact that the structure of the web itself is a more plausible representation of the relevant aspects of ordinary discourse than what Lance and Kukla have on offer. For this reason, I will return my focus to Brandom's version of normative-pragmatics in hopes of finding the resources with which to construct an account of queries that both captures the crucial insights gleaned from the normative-functionalist account developed in the last chapter and models MDPs that avoid the problem of justificatory stalemate.

In this section I have contrasted the notion of epistemic responsibility invoked by Brandom's deontic scorekeeping model of assertion with that invoked by Lance and Kukla's normative-functionalist theory. I have argued that while Brandom's model already captures several features of the duty to know what is known, and can, with simple augmentation include the rest, Lance and Kukla do not have the resources to accommodate the duty to defend one's claims if challenged to do so. I've indicated the latter's reliance on an *I-We* structure of discursive sociality and their overly impersonal conception of assertion as two possible reasons for this failure. Finally, using Wanderer's analysis, I have suggested that the second-personal addressing-function of tellings, which does represent aspects of the normative web of justificatory responsibility, is easily incorporated in Brandom's scorekeeping account. At base, Lance and Kukla's theory simply does not

provide the theorist with the tools necessary to represent the sense of commitment that discursive agents undertake in speaking. In the next section, I offer a view of deontic scorekeeping practices that include rudimentary queries, in which the conferring of discursive *commitments* upon queriers and recipients alike plays a crucial role.

5.3 Minimally Inquisitive Practices

5.3.1 Back to the (Small) Space of Reasons

In the previous chapter I provided an initial account of queries according to the normative-functionalist approach to speech acts developed by Lance and Kukla. According to that account, the primary normative output of an entitled query is a responsibility on the part of the recipient to entitle the speaker to update her normative status. Utilizing their framework for analyzing the space of possible responses (SPR) to second-person addresses, I identified the provision of a correct answer as fulfilling the constitutive goal of queries and the provision of incorrect, partial, or indirect answers with appropriate, though not goal-attaining, uptake. This analysis provided grounds for distinguishing two paradigmatic types of queries: information-seeking queries (ISQs), whose appropriate uptake consists in the licensing of assertions, and advice-seeking queries (ASQs), whose appropriate uptake consists in the licensing of prescriptives. I then examined the various possible combinations of agent-relative and agent-neutral statuses that could serve as inputs and outputs of the normative function instantiated by queries in ordinary discourse. This generated a partial typology of queries.

In this section, I intend to re-formulate the central insights of that account in the terms of Brandom's deontic scorekeeping model of minimally discursive practices (MDPs). In doing so, I shall take the scorekeeping account of assertion for granted, even though it is one of the central claims of this work that this account

is fundamentally flawed. My motivation for assuming the defective account of assertions is the hope of demonstrating that inquisitive and assertional practices are pragmatically dependent on one another—i.e. that agents must know how to ask questions in order to make assertions and *vice versa*. Thus, I am relying on Brandom's model of assertional practices in order to show that agents must know how to make (and take others as making) assertions in order to ask questions. In the section that follows, I reverse this explanatory trajectory and show that agents must know how to ask questions in order to make (and take others as making) assertions.

Above I argued that Lance and Kukla's account of assertion is unable to represent the element of justificatory responsibility, i.e. one sense of the status of *commitment*, that a speaker incurs in asserting something. I also claimed that as a consequence of this failure, and their actual neglect of the status of commitment in the analysis of assertion, they are forced to draw an unmanageable distinction between the pragmatic significance of assertions and that of re-assertions. In contrast, Brandom's picture of assertional practice offers a uniform treatment of assertion and re-assertion that reserves special roles for each within the default-challenge structure of entitlement. Taking this lesson to heart in the endeavor to theorize the deontic scorekeeping significance of queries will mean focusing as much on the *committive* dimension of asking questions as on the permissive dimension. Such a focus will entail certain modifications to the normative-functionalist treatment of queries offered in the last chapter.

One of the more substantial adjustments that must be made to the analysis of queries when transplanting it from the normative-functionalist to the deontic scorekeeping model is the accommodation of intuitions regarding the mental states associated with asking a question. As previously noted, the normative statuses that are conferred upon participants in Brandom's scorekeeping model of discursive practices are intended to represent, at least in part, the normative significance that attaches to attributions of assertions as well as those of *beliefs*. This is why he

uses the terms 'assertional commitment' and 'doxastic commitment' interchange-ably. In contrast, Lance and Kukla propose a normative pragmatics that assigns normative functions to *speech acts*, while merely leaving open the possibility that these functions are 'mirrored' by certain mental events. Thus, they avail them-selves of the term 'doxastic commitment' but reserve it solely for the normative significance of beliefs, construing them as commitments to make assertions. The status of commitment, as we have seen, plays no part in their account of assertions proper. Modeling the normative significance of queries in Brandom's scorekeeping terms will therefore require us to consider the kinds of mental states we attribute to a speaker when we take her to be asking a question.

Certainly the biggest adjustment that will need to be made to the analy-sis of queries involves accommodating the austerity of Brandom's scorekeeping model. Since Lance and Kukla are primarily interested in expanding the scope of normative-pragmatic analysis without any ambition to produce a philosophical semantic account of the contents of speech acts, they could appeal to intuitions regarding phenomena, which would, from the perspective of Brandom's project, beg the question. Moreover, they are intent on representing the normative struc-ture of speech acts as they appear in ordinary discourse rather than the structure they would retain in the stripped-down and idealized practices that Brandom hy-pothesizes. Remember that in the latter, agents are deprived of the ability to utter locutions with even the simplest logical vocabulary. Appreciating the strict austerity of Brandom's model relative to Lance and Kukla's will entail a massive reduction in the richness of the account of queries developed in the last chapter. One consequence this reduction has for the previous account is that the range of possible responses to queries will lose much of its population and diversity. For instance, since the distinction between partial and complete answers to a question will only be expressible in languages with quantificational locutions, the distinc-tion will not appear in the space of possible responses to queries in an MDP. Likewise, to the extent that admissions of ignorance require two-place predicates

like "S knows that p", and perhaps more specifically predicates that take interrogative compliments like "S knows wh-...," they too will be unavailable to minimally discursive agents. In section §5.3.6, I shall attempt to show how interrogative-sentential operators that play the role that "S knows wh-..." plays in English are amenable to the same sort of expressivist analysis that Brandom subjects sentential operators like "S believes that p" to. In order words, it may be possible for minimally inquisitive agents to do in practice what they are only able to say with locutions of the form "S knows wh-...".

5.3.2 Addressing: The Third Deontic Attitude

In order to capture the normative significance of queries in the scorekeeping model I am proposing two new types of commitments (and entitlements): *erotetic* and *apokritic*. These are intended to locate questions and answers within the nexus of authority and responsibility represented in the model of deontic scorekeeping. However, the introduction of these new commitments (and entitlements) does nothing to alter the fundamental structure of the model itself. It merely provides a new set of statuses to which agents can adopt deontic attitudes. The commitments and entitlements I introduce do not represent new *kinds* of status over and above those of commitment and entitlement in general. Thus, adding them to the stock of normative statuses provides new tools for conceptualizing the pragmatic significance of queries, but it does not augment the basic tool kit that deontic scorekeeping operates with.

My scorekeeping analysis of queries *does*, however, require augmentation to the *types* of normative *attitudes* that agents can adopt. According to Brandom's rendition of the scorekeeping model, agents can do two things with commitments: they can undertake them, either by acknowledging them or as a consequence of acknowledging others from which they follow, and they can attribute them. In Brandom's MDPs, the only attitude they can make explicit is the acknowledg-

ment of assertional commitment. To explicitly acknowledge a commitment is to be disposed to *avow* it with an overt assertion. Attribution of assertional commitments is something scorekeepers do *implicitly* by taking or treating others as responsible for defending their claims if challenged. It is not until propositional attitude ascribing locutions like "S believes that P" are introduced to a practice that scorekeepers can *say* that others are committed to a claim, that is, *explicitly* attribute commitment to them. In a rough sense, agents do not discover what commitments others have attributed to them unless and until they do something that contravenes those commitments and thereby authorizes the attributors to sanction them.

Although I will show that erotetic and apokritic commitments are subject to attitudes of acknowledgment and attribution, it is my contention that in order to understand the pragmatic force of queries in the terms of deontic scorekeeping, we must add a third type of deontic attitude to the model. I call it ADDRESSING. The attitude of addressing can be explained in the terms provided by our previous examination of both Lance and Kukla's and Wanderer's account of second-person addresses. A second-person address does not merely aim at have some effect on the normative status of another, nor to simply provoke some response. It demands that the addressee *recognize* the address. Recognizing an address in practice is itself an address—an address of the original address towards the original addressee. Successful addresses thus forge a relationship of *mutual* recognition.

Both commitments and entitlements can be addressed to other agents. If an agent has a commitment addressed to her, then she must undertake performances that fulfill that obligation, at least in part, *because* it has been addressed to her. To be addressed with an obligation is to be responsible *to* the addressee. If an agent has an entitlement addressed to her, then she is permitted to undertake performances on the *addresser's* authority. If an addressee does not recognize her address, then she actively *rejects* it. Following Lance and Kukla, we can distinguish addresses by the way they reconfigure the addressee's normative space

of responses. Once addressed, an agent's subsequent performances, *any* of her subsequent performances, fall into one of two categories: they either recognize the address by providing appropriate uptake of its demand or they serve to reject it. There is no way to passively ignore an address. Its demand is inescapable.

Because addresses are attitudes adopted towards others, their most important contrast is with attributions. Attributing a statuses, even an obligation, to someone does not demand that she recognize that attribution. The only demand incurred by someone to whom an obligation is attributed is that of the obligation itself, and this need not be an obligation to recognize any act or status. Failing to fulfill an attributed commitment does not necessarily count as failing any*one*, whereas failing to fulfill an addressed commitment always counts, in part, as failing the addressee. We can think of attributions as a kind of *third-personal* attitude, one that anyone could appropriately adopt toward another without forging a relationship of mutual recognition with her.

Finally, attributing a status does not alter the normative significance of *every* subsequent performance undertaken by the agent to whom it is attributed. Attributed responsibilities can be acknowledged, rejected, or simply ignored. Ignoring an attributed commitment and subsequently failing to fulfill it will of course have consequences for my subsequent normative status. But these consequences will surface at the level of other statuses *attributed* to me. There are always some acts that I can perform which qualify neither as acknowledgments, nor as rejections of an attributed status. Operating within this neutral space, I incur neither rewards nor penalties.

To grasp the contrast between attitudes of attribution and those of addressing, lets see how it applies to normative-perspectival structure of assertions developed in Brandom's scorekeeping model and developed by Wanderer's analysis of second-person speech acts. According to Brandom, undertaking an assertional commitment is doing something that makes it appropriate for others to attribute it. As I reiterated above, undertaking a commitment can be achieved without an

overt acknowledgment of the commitment, if, for instance, it is undertaken consequentially. Even when one acknowledges a commitment, and thereby performs in a way appropriate to one's attributed status, this acknowledgment need not involve a *recognition* of that attribution. I can successfully take my friend to be committed to some claim which she subsequently acknowledges by overtly asserting it, though she does not do so *because* I take her to be committed to it; she may be totally ignorant of my attribution to her. In MDPs, attributions are only ever made implicitly and so can not demand that agents recognize them. Agents become aware of an attributed commitment, if they do at all, either when they undertake a commitment incompatible with it or when they fail to demonstrate entitlement in the face of a challenge. In ordinary discourse, we are permitted to ignore implicit attributions; in MDPs, agents are largely *ignorant* of them. Indeed, one of Brandom's central claims in *Making It Explicit* is that the perspectival structure of interpretation can be understood in terms of the potential discrepancy between attributed and acknowledged statuses. This discrepancy is a *feature* of discursive practices, not a *defect* of their participants. Even when agents' behavior fails to accord with the statuses attributed to them, that failure is neither directed at anyone—there is no obligation to anyone—nor does it count as a *rejection* of the attribution. Thus, there is no temptation to think that assertional commitments are *addressed* to others. They are *attributed*.

What, then, are we to make of Wanderer's scorekeeping account of assertions as second-person addresses? The answer is that it is not assertional commitments which are addressed to others but rather *entitlement* to them. When a scorekeeper acknowledges an assertional commitment, she takes her interlocutors to be entitled to acknowledge it as well. From her perspective, anyone who comes into contact with her assertion is thereby authorized to re-assert its content. This communicative inheritance of entitlement depends upon the normative relationship forged between speaker and audience. In acknowledging an assertional commitment, the speaker *addresses* its entitlement to her interlocutors, calling upon them to recog-

nize this address.

Recognizing the address of an assertional entitlement does not require the addressee to overtly re-assert claims to which she is communicatively licensed—deferring or being disposed to defer justificatory responsibility to the speaker—although doing so is perhaps the paradigmatic way of appropriately responding to an assertional address. Rather, recognition is offered by implicitly acknowledging one's communicative entitlement to the addressed claim. Acknowledging assertional commitments in MDPs is an overt affair, but acknowledging *entitlements* to claims is something one *does* simply by not challenging them. So long as an interlocutor does not challenge the speaker, she counts as recognizing the speaker's default entitlement and hence her *own* communicative entitlement. Whatever the hearers and over-hearers of an assertion do subsequently, their acts will either count as (implicitly) acknowledging their own entitlement to re-asset its content or as a rejection of the speaker's (and their) right to make it. There is no way to passively ignore the address of assertional entitlement.

Furthermore, if I acknowledge an assertional commitment that is incompatible with one that you have acknowledged, I thereby do something that violates the normative relationship established in your address. My incompatible assertion is a violation addressed from me to you. Likewise, if you fail to adequately defend your claims to which you have addressed entitlement (to me), then you have failed *me*. The normative structure of assertional entitlement thus exhibits the telltale reciprocity of the addressing attitude.

The scorekeeping interpretation of assertings I am offering develops Brandom's original version and explicitly locates their second-personal dimension among the complex of deontic attitudes that institute them. On my account, a successful speech of act of asserting requires the speaker to acknowledge an assertional commitment and to address its entitlement to others. In order to take or treat another as asserting a claim, scorekeepers must *attribute* assertional commitment to the speaker and *recognize* the latter's address either by implicitly acknowledging

entitlement to re-assert her claim or by challenging it.

Now that the attitude of addressing has been added to the set of attitude-types available to participants in MDPs, I will proceed to make the case for the inclusion of two new commitments, which are together necessary for representing the pragmatic force typically associated with ISQs. Once this has been done, I will utilize the concept of addressing to explain the attitudes speaker's adopt toward these new commitments (and entitlements) so as to institute performances with the force of queries. As we shall see, addressing is central to the structure of minimally inquisitive practices.

5.3.3 Erotetic and Apokritic Commitments

Since I am assuming that the scorekeeping practices into which queries are to be introduced are just those that confer assertional significance on performances—even if, following my diagnosis of justificatory stalemate, those practices *by themselves* will fail to institute such significance—the only type of queries that will be available to their participants will be information-seeking queries (ISQs), i.e. queries that seek to update of a speaker's assertional score. Given this restriction, we can now ask the crucial question: what is the pragmatic force of queries, i.e. ISQs, according to the deontic scorekeeping model of MDPs? In this subsection, I propose an analysis of this structure that involves the acknowledgment and attribution of two new normative statuses, both of which can be understand as varieties of discursive commitment.

Recall from the previous analysis that queries impose upon their addressee's a commitment to license an update of the speaker's normative status. In the case of ISQs, discharging this commitment requires the addressee to entitle the querier to make some assertion from among a set of alternatives. Call this responsibility that an addressee incurs as a consequence of being queried APOKRITIC COMMITMENT. In being queried regarding some set of assertional commitments, Q, I become

apokritically committed to Q. This means that I am responsible for licensing others to undertake some assertional commitment from Q. Loosely speaking, I am responsible for answering the question. I discharge this commitment whenever I succeed in entitling others to one of the members of Q, that is, when I 'give' them an answer.

How does one speaker license another to make an assertion in the deontic scorekeeping model? We have already seen the answer: A scorekeeper authorizes others to undertake those assertional commitments whose entitlement she addresses to them in acknowledging those commitments herself, i.e. asserting the claims herself. This public authorization of re-assertion is secured by the speaker's having undertaken a commitment to justify her claims if challenged. Challenges to subsequent re-assertions can be 'passed along' to the original asserter by deferrals. This communicative inheritance of commitment depends upon the social recognition of *default entitlement.* It is only in virtue of the fact that a querier takes my claims to have entitlement by default that I can entitle her to my claims *merely* by making them. Thus, one way, perhaps the paradigmatic way of licensing a scorekeeper to undertake an assertional commitment is to acknowledge the assertional commitment oneself.

Of course, a speaker can pick up entitlement to an assertion through a combination of communicative and (strictly) inferential means. If I assert p and, according to your score book, p entitles one to q, then I have in effect entitled you to assert q. This combination of assertional licensing mechanisms suggests that the distinction between direct and indirect answers to a question is irrelevant to the discharge of apokritic commitments. If we think of the direct answers to a question the set of assertional commitments associated with an ISQ, then an indirect answer to an ISQ is just an assertion which, together with certain collateral commitments, entitles one to infer a direct answer, i.e. a member of that set. Thus, indirect answers are every bit as appropriate to the discharge of apokritic commitments as direct answers are. As promised above, the austerity of the score-

keeping account has depopulated the space of possible responses to queriers, in this case, by obviating the distinction between direct and indirect answers.

Another oblique way to discharge an apokritic commitment would be to draw the scorekeeper's attention to some feature of her environment to which she has a non-inferential disposition to respond by undertaking the assertional commitment in question. For example, I can satisfy your query regarding the whereabouts of the TV remote by lifting up the couch cushion. Such a performance fulfills my apokritic responsibility without my having to assert anything. In scorekeeping terms, 'giving an answer' to a query is just a matter of entitling others to undertake an assertional commitment from among the set of alternatives.

When I am queried *by* someone, I take on an apokritic commitment. I am responsible for providing an answer, though not in the sense that would require me to perform any particular speech act. However, apokritic commitment does not exhaust the normative significance of queries. There is, I contend, another sort of responsibility involved in asking a question, one that was not represented in the account of queries that I developed in terms of Lance and Kukla's normative-functionalist pragmatics. The missing responsibility is incurred by the querier herself. To query is to seek out an answer. In searching for something, we commit ourselves, even if only tentatively, to there being something to find. When we ask questions, we typically take them to have answers. It is an oddity for someone to pursue a question she admits to be unanswerable. Roughly, we can say that in performing a query an agent commits herself to its answerability.

What does it mean to commit oneself to the answerability of a question? If the scorekeeping analog to an answer is any member of the query's set of assertional commitments, then a commitment to the answerability of a question is a commitment to undertake an assertional commitment from among the set of alternatives. But commitment to the answerability of question is not simply a commitment to obtain *some* answer. Rather, it is a commitment to obtain *the* answer, that is, the *correct* answer. A correct answer is just an assertional commitment belonging

to the set of alternatives to which one is *entitled*. Thus, the responsibility that a querier undertakes has the scorekeeping significance of a commitment to acknowledge an assertional commitment (from among the query's set of alternatives) to which one is entitled. Call this a querier's EROTETIC COMMITMENT.

The responsibility to assert or believe something for which one has warrant may seem to capture a type of epistemic responsibility to which we are subject independently of any questions we ask. But strictly speaking this is not the case. Were we responsible for believing everything we are warranted in believing, even if only by our own lights, all of us would be found epistemically deficient. That alone is not a reason to think we are nonetheless responsible for having such beliefs, at least implicitly. There is a scorekeeping analog to the notion of implicit or ideal belief. Scorekeepers are held responsible for believing the consequences that follow from their overtly acknowledged commitments (i.e. their explicit beliefs) according to what others take those consequences to be. These are the commitments attributed to speakers by others. Being responsible for one's attributed commitments captures the ideal or implicit sense of 'belief' according to which we 'believe' all the logical consequences of our explicit beliefs. But note that even this sort of epistemic responsibility does not require speakers to overtly acknowledge consequential commitments. It only precludes us from acknowledging a commitment while denying one of its consequences. Retracting the original commitment is thus a perfectly acceptable way of fulfilling this responsibility. Finally, however we conceive it, epistemic warrant obviously extends far beyond logical consequence. It's absurd to think that we are responsible for believing, even implicitly or ideally, everything for which we have, say sufficient inductive grounds. It is no coincidence that Brandom offers the status of *entitlement* as an analog to epistemic warrant: we are *permitted* to believe that for which we have warrant, but we are not obliged to do so.

While it makes no sense to say we are responsible for believing *everything* we are entitled to belief, it does make sense to say that we are responsible for

believing *some* things we are entitled to believe. Lance and Kukla mark this distinction by claiming that we are responsible for knowing those truths that *matter* to 'us'. The scorekeeping model can accommodate this restricted sense of epistemic responsibility even while repudiating the I-We view of discursive sociality in which it is couched, namely, the 'us'. Erotetic commitment is precisely the mechanism by which it does so. When we ask questions we express, *inter alia*, an interest in their answers. The answers to my questions *matter* to *me.* I am in some sense deficient when I ask a question and, having been provided with its (correct) answer, fail to accept it. I might of course have beliefs that contradict the answer, but then there is another sort of epistemic responsibility that kicks in, namely, the responsibility to resolve incompatible commitments. In asking a question, I stake out a discursive territory and claim responsibility for believing whatever I am warranted to believe within it. Erotetic responsibility is thus a kind of *local* epistemic responsibility. Scorekeepers institute this propriety by taking a querier to acknowledge an erotetic commitment to Q, that is, a responsibility to acknowledge an assertional commitment from (among the alternatives in) Q to which she is entitled.

Erotetic and apokritic commitments represent the normative consequences that attach to quering and queried agents, respectively. While apokritic commitment was expressible in the terms laid out by Lance and Kukla's normative-functionalist framework, erotetic commitment was not. The latter more closely resembles the justificatory responsibility incurred by asserters in that it is added to the speaker's scorecard. As the account develops, the relationship between assertional and inquisitive responsibilities will be further articulated. Before we are in a position to do so, however, we need to examine the sorts of deontic attitudes whose adoption characterizes the pragmatic force of queries.

5.3.4 The Complex Act of Querying

In addition to the set of statuses and attitudes that agents can embody and adopt in Brandom's scorekeeping model of asserting, I have added two new types of commitment (erotetic and apokritic) and one new type of attitude (addressing). With this augmented conceptual tool kit, I now propose to represent the pragmatic force typically associated with queries, specifically ISQs. The following claim redeems the promise embodied in the title of this work: How to ask a question in the space of reasons.

Query: To perform a query regarding some set of alternatives, Q, a scorekeeper must (1) acknowledge an erotetic commitment to Q, or (2) address an apokritic commitment to Q (to others).

The sense of 'or' in *Query* is inclusive; scorekeepers may both undertake an erotetic commitment to Q and address the corresponding apokritic commitment to others. In fact, the pragmatic force *typically* associated with queries is precisely of this sort. Typically, when one agent queries another, she adopts two deontic attitudes and affects two changes in the deontic scores: on one hand, she acknowledges an erotetic commitment (herself), and on the other, she addresses an apokritic commitment to others.

Having the concept of addressing at our disposal is essential to understanding the normative effect that queries typically have on those to whom they are directed. In querying you, I call upon you to recognize my address of apokritic commitment. Paradigmatically, such recognition is given when the addressee discharges her apokritic commitment by licensing me to undertake a commitment to a member of the set of alternatives, that is, by 'giving' me the correct answer. In addressing a question to you, I treat you not only as bound by a norm but also as bound *to me*. You are responsible *to me* for giving a correct answer. You may, of course, not have the correct answer to give. In this case, merely acknowledging the apokritic commitment I have addressed to you, even if you do not discharge it,

will qualify as recognizing my address. This 'acknowledgment-without-discharge' is the scorekeeping effect wrought by those admissions of ignorance which, as we witnessed in the last chapter, can sometimes provide queries with appropriate uptake, though, strictly speaking, minimally inquisitive agents do not have the expressive resources to *say* that they don't know something. I develop this latter point in greater detail below.

Scorekeepers can reject or challenge addresses in several ways. The address of assertional entitlement can be rejected by disavowing the corresponding commitment or by acknowledge a commitment that is incompatible with it. In the case of apokritic commitments, it is also possible to resist address. In addition to certain non-complaint admissions of ignorance, one way to reject an address of apokritic responsibility is to disavow every member of the set of alternatives 'presented' by the query. In the previous chapter I offered a scorekeeping analog to the semanticist's notion of a question's presuppositions—namely, all those commitments that are the committive-consequences of every member of the set of alternatives. Since in disavowing some claim I also disavow any other claims of which the first is a committive-consequence, one way to reject the address of an apokritic commitment to Q is to disavow some committive-consequence of every member of Q. Note that the same rejection can be achieved by undertaking a commitment to any claim *incompatible* with every member of the set of alternatives. The practical significance of either move is to treat the query (to which one is subject) as unanswerable and to repudiate the attempt to hold one accountable for answering it.

What critically distinguishes this model of querying from the one developed in the last chapter is that the act of acknowledging a responsibility oneself (which was entirely ignored in the previous account) and that of imputing a responsibility to another are *separable*, both in principle and in practice. It is possible, on the present account, for a speaker to acknowledge an erotetic commitment without attributing an apokritic commitment and *vice versa*. Believe it or not,

these scenarios correspond to queries that we encounter all the time in ordinary discourse. Instances in which we ask so-called *self-addressed questions*, when we 'wonder aloud', when we announce a project of inquiry, or simply *pose* a question to our interlocutors can all be understood as acts in which we acknowledge an erotetic commitment without attributing a corresponding apokritic commitment. Conversely, when we ask so-called *exam-questions* to which we *already* have the answers or pursue *interrogation-questions* to which we think there is *no* correct answer, we can be seen as attributing apokritic commitments without acknowledging the corresponding erotetic commitment. The normative structure of these latter cases, i.e. interrogation-questions, will become particularly significant for the account of reason-seeking queries that follows.

The idea that the responsibilities associated with a speech act could detach from one another and associate with distinct performance-types is not incompatible with the scorekeeping model. Brandom's scorekeeping analysis of assertion, for instance, appeals to two distinct types of responsibility: ampliative and justificatory. While it is the intersection of these normative statuses that represents the pragmatic force of asserting, there is nothing, in principle, that precludes the possibility of performance-types that only institutes *one* of the responsibilities. Such performances may even correspond to speech acts we encounter in ordinary discourse. For instance, undertaking an ampliative responsibility to extract the consequences of one's commitment without thereby undertaking a responsibility to demonstrate entitlement if challenged seems a reasonable characterization of the normative significance of *conjecturing*. When I conjecture that p, I am not required to produce a justification for p if challenged, though I am required to undertake those commitments that follow from p, at least, to take up the *conjecturing* attitude toward them. Thus, the potential independence of responsibilities whose conjunction represents the normative significance of a particular speech act coheres with the deontic scorekeeping approach to discursive practices.

The picture of queries that is emerging is one of a complex normative acts whose constituents are at least an acknowledgment of an erotetic commitment or an address of apokritic commitment, and typically both. We have already seen how the identification of addresses in deontic scorekeeping reveals the complexity of assertions. Asserting a claim requires a scorekeeper to both acknowledge an assertional commitment and to address its entitlement to others. In contrast to assertions, queries address a commitment rather than an entitlement to others. And unlike queries, assertions *require* the speaker to acknowledge a commitment. The enriched version of deontic scorekeeping that I am presenting represents both queries and assertions as performances that include the adoption of two distinct attitudes regarding two distinct statuses and directed at (at least) two distinct participants.

5.3.5 Erotetic and Apokritic Entitlement

Scorekeeping practices that include queries must institute and administer two special types of responsibility: erotetic and apokritic. When an agent is erotetically responsible, she is obliged to recognize the entitlement of certain assertional commitments avowed by her interlocutors by undertaking those commitments herself, that is, by re-asserting their contents. An agent who is apokritically responsible, on the other hand, is obliged to entitle her interlocutors to undertake certain assertional commitments by undertaking (though not necessarily explicitly acknowledging) those commitments herself. The addressee is responsible for providing an assertional check, the querier is responsible for cashing it in.

Ideally, when a speaker acknowledges an erotetic commitment to Q and addresses a corresponding apokritic commitment to her interlocutor, the latter is in a normative position to discharge his (apokritic) responsibilities, and when he does so, the speaker is thereby put in a position to discharge her own (erotetic responsibility). The entire erotetic-apokritic transaction is made possible by the

communicative transferal of assertional entitlement. By making an assertion that answers her query, the addressee entitles the querier to re-assert his claim by permitting her to defer to his justificatory responsibility. This communicative inheritance of entitlement then detaches the querier's erotetic responsibility, thus *obliging* her to re-assert (or believe) his claim.

The entitlement one has to undertake an apokritic commitment to a set of alternative assertions and the entitlement one has to assert a member of that set are one and the same. We are authorized to take on the responsibility to answer an information-seeking question to the extent that we are authorized to make the assertion that answers that question. Thus, to treat an agent as entitled to an apokritic commitment to a set of alternatives, Q, is just to treat her as entitled to undertake some assertional commitment in Q. It is significant to note that this equivalency permits cases in which a scorekeeper takes a player to be entitled to an apokritic commitment but does not take her to be entitled to any *particular* assertional commitment. In other words, we can and often do treat someone as having the correct answer to a question without knowing what that correct answer is (ourselves).

Let's now turn to the type of circumstances that entitle one to an erotetic commitment. Minimally, one is entitled to take responsibility for a question's answerability if one is entitled to treat at least one member of the set of answers to that question as correct. But if a scorekeeper already has entitlement to an answer, then her question, so long as it is a genuinely information-seeking question, is trivial. Indeed, acknowledging an assertional commitment that answers an ISQ *precludes* an agent from entitlement to the corresponding erotetic commitment. In other words, commitment to an assertion that discharges an erotetic commitment is *incompatible* with that erotetic commitment. When an agent's scorecard indicates an assertional commitment to one of the members of Q and an erotetic commitment to Q, she is obliged to either retract her assertion or drop her question. The latter course of action is the typical result of an agent recognizing the

correct answer to a question to which she is erotetically committed.

Another sort of erotetic incompatibility occurs when an agent is committed to any assertion that is (assertionally) incompatible with all or some of the assertions that comprise the set of alternatives to which she is erotetically committed. In this case, a scorekeeper would no longer be treating a set of alternatives as *possible* answers, since some of her collateral commitments would preclude entitlement to (at least some of) its members. A scorekeeper whose scorecard indicates this sort of erotetic incompatibility is again obliged to retract either the incompatible assertion or the erotetic commitment. Since erotetic commitments are individuated in terms of the set of alternative assertions that constitute possible answers, a scorekeeper may respond to erotetic incompatibility that only bars her from endorsing *some* possible answers by retracting her previous erotetic commitment and undertaking another whose set of alternatives does not include those precluded assertions. That is, she can drop her original question and ask a different one.

Erotetic and apokritic responsibilities thus have conditions which authorize their undertaking just as justificatory and ampliative responsibilities have corresponding conditions of authorization. Likewise, agents can have entitlement to erotetic/apokritic commitments they do not undertake, without exhibiting normative deficiency. I can occupy a normative position that entitles me to ask a question or to make another responsible for answering it, without undertaking or addressing the erotetic and apokritic commitments, respectively. What is not permitted is that an agent ask questions or be asked questions and yet fail to acknowledge or provide answers to which she is entitled.

5.3.6 Erotetic and Apokritic Attitude-Ascriptions

Just as assertional commitments are intended to represent the normative significance of both assertional speech acts *and* doxastic attitudes or mental states, i.e.

beliefs, so too do erotetic and apokritic commitments purport to represent features of both queries and what we might call *erotetic* and *apokritic attitudes* or *mental states*. According to Brandom's expressivist understanding of attitude-ascribing locutions, an expression which plays the role that "S believes that-p" plays in English makes *explicit* the attribution of an assertional commitment. As I noted above, participants in a minimally discursive scorekeeping practice are capable of attributing assertional commitments *implicitly* by treating others as responsible for defending their claims and endorsing the consequences of their claims. But without propositional-attitude-ascribing locutions, they cannot yet *claim* or *assert that* someone has status, i.e. they cannot express their attribution explicitly. An expression like "S believes that-p" allows discursive agents to *say* what they could otherwise only *do* in practice.

Now consider the role played by English expressions of the form "S wonders wh-Q" where the *wh-Q* position is filled by an interrogative clause. I hypothesize that the significance of such expressions is to make explicit the attribution, to S, of an erotetic commitment to Q, where Q is the (semantic) question denoted by the embedded interrogative clause. In uttering a sentence like (5.1) a speaker ascribes to the subject a type of mental state, the state of wondering whether the road is closed. Call this an EROTETIC ATTITUDE.

(5.1) Jim wonders whether the road is closed.

Notice that in general one is entitled to assert a claim like the one expressed by (5.1) if Jim asks whether the road is closed. In asking this question, Jim authorizes others to hold him accountable for accepting its (correct) answer, that is, to take him to be erotetically committed to the question of whether the road is closed. Overtly asking a question does not always entitle one to ascribe an erotetic attitude to the querier. But the paradigmatic instances where the rule does not hold are precisely those in which one is not entitled to attribute an erotetic commitment in the first place, e.g. exam-questions and interrogation-questions. There is thus a *prima facie* correspondence between the normative structure of

erotetic commitments and the mental state of wondering, or what I am calling *erotetic attitudes*, which we ascribe to subjects with locutions like "S wonders wh-Q."

The mental state correlated with apokritic commitments is a bit trickier to characterize. One possibility is that English expressions of the form "S knows wh-Q," again, where the *wh-Q* position is occupied by an interrogative clause, ascribe the apokritic commitments to subjects. Unlike wonders-*wh* locutions, which have been largely ignored by linguists and philosophers, knows-*wh* locutions have been subject to rigorous analysis (Brogaard 2009; Kallestrup 2009; Masto 2010; Schaffer 2007). It is widely agreed that such locutions ascribe to their subjects knowledge of the answer to the question denoted by interrogative compliment. The real debate wages over whether this sort of knowledge-*wh* reduces to ordinary propositional knowledge ascribed by locutions of the form "S knows that-p", where p is the proposition that answers the question. Staking out and defending a position in this debate is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

The issue of the reducibility of knowledge-*wh* ascriptions to knowledge-*that* ascriptions can be tentatively avoided by focusing on the relationship between knowing the answer to a question, which is what nearly everyone agrees is at least part of what is meant by saying that someone knows-*wh*, and being responsible for providing that answer in response to a query, which is, roughly, what apokritic commitment amounts to. On one hand, it seems that in taking a subject as knowing the answer to a question, I am taking her to be responsible for giving the correct answer. But, on the other hand, it seems that I can take an agent to be *responsible* for giving an answer without taking her to *know* the answer. Doesn't, after all, my account of queries reserve a place for admissions of ignorance expressed by forms like "I don't know wh- ..." among the appropriate responses to queries even though they fail to provide an answer? How could the state of knowing an answer represent apokritic commitment when disavowing that very state qualifies one as discharging that commitment?

The solution to this puzzle lies in two distinctions. The first is between attitudes of attributing and those of addressing. According to the analysis proposed here, part of the typical normative significance of asking a question lies in the address of an apokritic commitment to the addressee. But this does not rule out agents independently *attributing* apokirtic commitment. In attributing, rather than addressing, an apokritic commitment to you, I take you to be responsible for correctly answering a particular question without demanding that you 'give' it to me. You may ignore or be completely ignorant of my attribution without being the least bit normatively deficient.

The second distinction is that between apokritic commitment and apokritic entitlement. It is perfectly intelligible that I be responsible for giving the answer to a question without 'having' the correct answer to give. In such a scenario, I am apokritically committed to a question but lack apokritic entitlement to it. We are not restricted to addressing or even attributing only those apokritic commitments to which the addressee is *entitled* to undertake. If the responsible agent is lacking the authority to fulfill her duty, it is *her* failing, not the one who takes her to be responsible.

Overlaying these distinction on one another reveals the possibility for agents to *attribute* both apokritic commitment and apokritic entitlement to others. In such scenarios, a scorekeeper will take or treat another as both responsible for answering a question and authorized to do so, though in a way that does not demand that the other actually provide the answer. Indeed, it is just this sort of attitude that we ascribe—i.e. *explicitly* attribute—to Jim when we utter a sentence like (5.2).

(5.2) Jim knows whether the road is closed.

In ascribing to Jim such a status, the speaker is saying that she takes him to be responsible for answering correctly the question of whether the road is closed and is authorized to do so, precisely because he is (epistemically) warranted in making the assertion that answers that question. Unlike the normative significance

of a query which addresses only apokritic commitment to the addressee, uttering (5.2) explicitly *attributes* both apokritic commitment and *entitlement.*

If the response "I don't know" to a query with content Q is elliptical for the longer expression "I don't know wh-Q", then there is a rather straightforward way to understand its significance within the normative structure of the erotetic-apokritic transactions. What one is doing in uttering these locutions is *acknowledging* an apokritic commitment while disavowing *entitlement* to it. Certainly there is a degree of normative deficiency on the part of the addressee who responds this way, but the normative goal of the original query is achieved to the extent that the status addressed to the recipient is acknowledged. Admissions of ignorance are a kind of minimally sufficient response to queries. They serve to acknowledge apokritic commitment without discharging it.

Of course, as expressively sophisticated performances, admissions of ignorance are not available to minimally discursive agents. We can now see why. Such agents are able to implicitly acknowledge entitlements, but they cannot *explicitly* acknowledge them. They cannot *say* that they are or are not entitled to something. They can only treat their own performances and those of others' as entitled. In the hypothesized toy practices that we're considering, there is at least one way for agents to respond to the address of apokritic commitments that has the practical significance of disavowing apokritic entitlement—they can undertake an erotetic commitment to the very question that they are being held responsible for answering. In other words, when an addressee doesn't take herself to be entitled to an apokritic commitment addressed to her, she can respond by asking the question herself, in the sense of undertaking an erotetic commitment to it. Since, as we have seen, erotetic commitment to Q precludes apokritic entitlement to Q, by re-querying Q, an addressee is doing implicitly (at least part of) what she does explicitly when she says "I don't know"—i.e. disavowing apokritic entitlement to Q.

These reflections support the view that the joint status of apokritic commit-

ment and entitlement is the scorekeeping analog to the mental state of knows-*wh*. Is there an ordinary mental state that corresponds *simply* to apokritic commitment? It would be a mental state in which the subject takes herself to have an answer to a particular question. If English permitted locutions like "S believes wh-Q", these might be the closest to expressing this mental state.[3]

Regardless, I have demonstrated how the account of apokritic and erotetic statuses and the attitudes adopted toward them can explain the meaning of ascriptions with forms like "S wonders wh-Q" and "S knows wh-Q", at least when the latter is given a rather uncontroversial interpretation. Both sentential operators perform an expressive function similar to that performed by "S believes that-p." All three serve to make explicit the normative signifcance of performances that compose the practical repertoire of minimally inquisitive agents. These agents can implicitly acknowledge, attribute, and address commitments and entitlements of the assertional, erotetic, and apokritic varieties.

5.4 The Assertional-Inquisitive Nexus

5.4.1 Making an Assertion in an Inquisitive Practice

In the previous section, I attempted to situate the normative significance of queries within Brandom's deontic scorekeeping model of minimally discursive practices (MDPs). In doing so, I presumed the normative-pragmatic structure of assertion

---

[3]The fact that the grammar of most natural languages does not permit such constructions complicates any comparison between the scorekeeping analysis of knows-*wh* ascriptions hinted at here and the one Brandom offers for tripartite accounts of knows-*that* ascriptions. Treating S as knowing that p is a matter of adopting a complex deontic attitude that involves 1.) attributing doxastic commitment to S, 2.) attributing doxastic entitlement to S, and 3.) undertaking a commitment to p oneself. Components 1 and 2 correspond, respectively to the *belief* and *justification* conditions of the tripartite account, while 3 corresponds to the *truth* condition. In contrast, since the attitude of believing-wh is unavailable, a tripartite account of knowledge-wh would need to take a stand on the question of its reducibility to knowledge-that. If such reduction were permitted, then the conditions on knows-that would simply transfer over to those of know-wh with the proviso that the true proposition believed is an answer to the question Q. If anti-reductionism is endorsed, then the account becomes more complicated.

to be as Brandom says it is, even though I have shown, in Chapter Two, that that this structure does not support an adequate account of MDPs. I nevertheless utilized this defective account in order to demonstrate that agents must know how to make (and take others as making) assertions in order to ask questions. In the following section, I reverse this explanatory trajectory and show that agents must know how to ask questions in order to make (and take others as making) assertions. Together, these mirroring claims express the view that inquisitive and assertional practices are pragmatically dependent on one another—i.e. that agents must know how to ask questions in order to make assertions and *vice versa*.

Let us begin the account of assertions in inquisitive terms by reflecting on what we have already established. First, assertions are answers. All assertions answer some question(s)—though not all questions are answered by assertions, e.g. advice-seeking questions are paradigmatically answered by prescriptives. To make an assertion is thus to answer or at least to aim at answering some *information-seeking* question.

Second, a license to make an assertion is a license to do what assertions do, namely, to answer a question (again, of the information-seeking variety). Thus, entitlement to an assertion is entitlement to answer a question. I have given the term APOKRITIC COMMITMENT to the kind of discursive responsibility agents have to answer questions. Being entitled to assert something is just being entitled to undertake this sort of responsibility, i.e. to undertake an apokritic commitment. When a scorekeeper takes another to be entitled to make an assertion, she takes him to occupy a normative position in the space of reasons that permits him to answer some question(s).

Third, making an assertion for which I have a license is how I resolve one of *my* questions. Scorekeepers can undertake a responsibility to accept answers to questions without incurring a responsibility to give them. I have called this sort of discursive responsibility EROTETIC COMMITMENT. A querier who takes her question to be answerable incurs an erotetic commitment to acknowledge those

answers to which she is entitled, though she is not obliged to *acquire* this entitlement. Undertaking a licensed assertional commitment is how scorekeepers fulfill their erotetic responsibilities. Assertions are erotetic-commitment discharging performances. If I assert something for which I have entitlement, I am responsible for dropping those questions answered by that assertion, i.e. for retracting certain erotetic commitments.

In summary, the following to features of assertion can be explicated in terms of erotetic and apokritic statuses, which are now assumed to be antecedently intelligible.

1. Making an assertion is (in part) undertaking a responsibility to retract those erotetic commitments discharged by that very assertion.

2. Being licensed to assert something is a matter of being entitled to undertake an apokritic commitment.

Taken together these two claims capture a portion of the normative significance of conferred upon assertions in Brandom's toy scorekeeping practice. To adequately represent the pragmatic force of assertions within the scorekeeping model of inquisitive practices, the two distinct responsibilities incurred by asserters—namely, *ampliative* and *justificatory* responsibility—will need to be explicated by constellations of erotetic and apokritic statuses.

The ampliative responsibility conferred on asserters can be explicated by unpacking the implications of (1). Among the erotetic commitments which a speaker is responsible for retracting when she has asserted a certain claim are those questions which are answered by its committive (i.e. deductive) consequences. For instance, if I ask both (5.3) and (5.4) and subsequently make the warranted assertion or form the warranted belief expressed by (5.5), then I have answered not only (5.3) but (5.4) as well.

(5.3) Is X a mammal?

(5.4) Is X an animal?

(5.5) X is a mammal.

(5.6) X is an animal.[4]

The responsibility I incur in asserting (5.5) is to retract my erotetic commitments to (5.3) and to (5.4) and to any other questions answered by the committive consequences of (5.5). Retracting an erotetic commitment to (5.4) in response to accepting (5.5) is a way of treating (5.4) as answered by (5.5), and thereby taking oneself to have the answer to (5.4). The relations of erotetic incompatibility capture, at least in part, the practical sense in which one is responsible for acknowledging a commitment to assert (5.6) as a consequence of asserting (5.5). Thus, the ampliative responsibility to extract the committive consequences of one's assertion falls out of one's responsibility to drop all those questions resolved by one's assertion.

Cashing out justificatory responsibility in the terms set by normative inquisitive practices will require an elaboration of what I have called reason-seeking queries. I turn to this task in the next subsection. Once the normative structure of these queries is in place, I will proceed to an understanding of justificatory responsibility in terms of a certain type of apokritic responsibility, namely, the responsibility to answer reason-seeking questions or RSQs.

5.4.2 The Normative Structure of Reason-Seeking Queries

Reason-seeking queries (RSQs) represent a species of information-seeking queries (ISQs). Like all ISQs, they involve the address of apokritic responsibilities that are discharged when the responsible agent licenses others to make certain *assertions* from among a set of alternatives. As we have seen, the primary mechanism by which a respondent proffers this license is avowing one of the alternative assertions herself. Since the address of entitlement by *default* to the claims of others is

---

[4]This example is an instance in which one question implies another, such that any answer to the latter will be answer to the former. Wiśniewski (1995) givens a model-theoretic account of this logical relationship under the title of "erotetic implication."

what permits a scorekeeper to re-assert those claims; it is default entitlement that enables respondents to discharge their apokritic commitments addressed by ISQs *simply* by asserting one of the alternatives without being obliged to *demonstrate* entitlement to that assertion. I suggest that it is the absence of default entitlement to a set of alternatives that defines a crucial dimension of RSQs.

RSQs aim to get addressees to demonstrate entitlement to certain claims. The aim of all ISQs is to get addressees to license others to re-assert certain claims. By rescinding the addressee's default entitlement to those claims, a querier prohibits him from passing along that entitlement merely communicatively, that is, by asserting one of the claims. This leaves the addressee with two options. Either he can acknowledge another assertion from which one of the alternatives follows inferentially, or he can defer to another speaker who has asserted one of the alternatives. Both qualify as 'giving reasons' in the broad sense of that term given to it by Brandom. Thus, the *differentia specifica* of RSQs is that they suspend addressee's default entitlement to the set of alternatives presented by a query.

Classifying RSQs as a sub-species of ISQs, permits our continued talk of a 'set of alternatives' to represent potential answers to questions, but our doing so requires some clarification. While it is perfectly intelligible for an RSQ to call upon agents to demonstrate entitlement either inferentially or by deferral to some assertions from among a set of alternatives, we are more familiar with questions that ask for those reasons that support some claim in particular. These RSQs can be distinguished by the fact their their set of alternatives is a singleton, i.e. a set whose sole member is an assertional commitment to *p*. Let's call these queries RSQs *regarding p*. For the remainder of the paper I will be concerned solely with this type of RSQ.

Like all queries, RSQs are a complex normative act; they involve either the acknowledgment of an erotetic commitment by the querier or an address of an apokritic commitment to the addressee, or both. The statuses associated with RSQs are distinguished by the fact that there is no default entitlement to set of

alternatives, which, in the cases we are considering, consist of single assertional commitments. Thus in asking an RSQ regarding p a querier either undertakes an erotetic commitment to $\{p\}$ or addresses an apokritic commitment to $\{p\}$, or both, and she also rescinds her interlocutor's default entitlement to p. For cases in which an querier *only* undertakes an erotetic commitment to $\{p\}$, it doesn't make sense to say that she withdraws her *own* default entitlement to p, since default entitlement is strictly *attributed to others* in deontic scorekeeping. Instead, the erotetic commitment to the singleton, $\{p\}$, is sufficient to qualify her as seeking out inferential entitlement to assert that p.

Finally, we saw in § 5.3.6 that apokritic commitments can not only be addressed (by a querier), but also *attributed*. Attribution is a *third-personal* attitude, one that is characteristically adopted by an agent *outside* the erotetic-apokritic transaction. I can take someone to be responsible for correctly answering a question without actually asking that question. When I attribute an apokritic commitment to someone I do not address her, I do not call upon her to recognize my act of attribution, nor is the success of my attribution dependent upon that recognition. She may ignore it without it ceasing to be an attribution of apokritic commitment.

We are now in a better position to explicate the justificatory responsibility associated with assertion in terms of the normative attitudes taken up in inquisitive practices. Since the answer to an RSQ regarding p is just the demonstration of entitlement—either inferentially or deferentially—to p, the responsibility to justify one's claim that p can be construed as the responsibility to correctly answer the RSQ regarding p. Furthermore, we know that a responsibility to answer a query is just the apokritic commitment associated with that query. But when we take someone to be responsible for answering an RSQ, in virtue of making a certain claim, we do not, or at least need not perform the RSQ ourselves. Instead, we *attribute* the corresponding apokritic commitment to her, leaving it to others to address it to her by performing the RSQ. Thus, the responsibility one

undertakes in asserting that *p*, the responsibility to demonstrate entitlement to *p* if challenged, is an apokritic responsibility to {p}, conditional upon being asked the corresponding RSQ, and in treating another as undertaking justificatory responsibility one *attributes* apokritic responsibility. Justificatory responsibility is just the apokritic responsibility one has to license others to undertake an assertion to which one has no default entitlement, a responsibility one can only fulfill by demonstrating entitlement.

This characterization of justificatory responsibility addresses the *task* asserters are responsible for performing in virtue of making an assertion. But it does not yet explain the *conditionality* of that task-responsibility. Our work here is thus incomplete. Asserters undertake a responsibility to justify their claims if challenged to do so. In order to account for the conditional character of justificatory responsibility, inquisitive practices must be able to confer the status of *challenge* on certain performances. In the next section, I shall show how this is possible.

5.4.3 Reason-Seeking Queries as Challenges

We have seen how the practices of asking and answering RSQs institute at least part of the justificatory obligation conferred upon asserters. While RSQs are a sub-species of ISQs and belong to any practice that includes the latter in its repertoire of speech acts, they are distinguished by the withdrawal of the addressee's default entitlement to the set of alternatives. We have also determined that justificatory responsibility incurred by an assertion can be explicated in terms of the responsibility to answer RSQs whose set of alternatives is a singleton consisting of that very assertion. These specifications already imply that RSQs achieve a significant portion of the normative effects previously identified with challenges. Let us review those effects, as outlined by Wanderer.

(C1) A successful act of challenging must provide the condition requiring the challenged asserter to undertake the task of demonstrating entitlement to

the asserted claim.

(C2) The effect of a successful challenge, according to a scorekeeper, is to remove the default entitlement associated with a claim, suspending entitlement to the claim pending successful defense.

(C3) A challenge itself must be an act that can be performed appropriately or inappropriately; it must be susceptible to being challenged itself, so that successfully challenging the challenge is one way of restoring the default entitlement to a claim (Weiss and Wanderer 2010, 100).

By definition, RSQs satisfy (C2). In order to demonstrate that RSQ's fulfill (C3), we will need to appeal to the circumstances that entitle a player to perform an RSQ. First, we should note that RSQs which challenge another player must *address* an apokritic commitment to that player. In other words, they must hold the challengee accountable for correctly answering the question; otherwise, the querier would not be delivering a challenge to *anyone*. It may be permissible for a challenger to also undertake the corresponding erotetic commitment, but this is not required.

Second, we observed above that in addressing an apokritic commitment to another player, the querier takes the latter to be responsible for licensing others to some member of the set of alternatives. The recipients can reject or challenge the address of apokritic commitment by treating the query as unanswerable. This can be accomplished by disavowing every alternative assertion or by undertaking a commitment to a claim that is incompatible with each alternative. These two points imply that RSQs satisfy (C3). Since RSQs address apokritic commitments, and since such addresses can be challenged, RSQs can be challenged.

Observing once again the difference between attributing and addressing apokritic commitments will show how RSQs satisfy (C1). According to a basic tenet of normative pragmatics, an agent counts as performing some normatively significant act just in case her performance entitles others to attribute that nor-

mative significance to her (act). An agent thus qualifies as asserting that *p* just in case her performance entitles others to attribute to her an assertional commitment to *p*. Since part of the significance of undertaking an assertional commitment to p is the undertaking of an apokritic responsibility to {p}, we found that asserting that *p* entitles others to attribute the apokritic commitment to {p}. But *attributing* a commitment to someone is crucially different from *addressing* it to someone. Addressing an apokritic commitment places an inescapable demand upon the addressee to recognize the address, either by acknowledging the commitment or by rejecting it. In the case of RSQs, the address of apokritic commitment includes a withdrawal of default entitlement. The attribution of apokritic commitment does not. If it were possible to *attribute* such a commitment to someone by performing an RSQ, then merely taking someone to assert that *p* would involve rescinding her default entitlement to *p*, and thus there would be *no* default entitlement attributed in the game of giving and asking for reasons. In other words, the attribution of entitlement in MDPs would no longer exhibit a default-challenge structure.

Attributing apokritic commitment is essentially an attribution of *conditional* responsibility. Treating you as responsible for correctly answering a question, in the sense of *attributing* the responsibility to you, is a matter of taking you to be obliged to provide that answer *if* you are asked that question by *anyone*. You are not normatively deficient if you do not assert the answer to a question that has not been asked addressed to you. By contrast, treating you as responsible for answering a question, in the sense of *addressing* apokritic commitment to you, is a matter of holding you accountable for recognizing my address by correctly answering the question. You fail *me* when you do not correctly answer my question or reject it. There is no room for neutral actions when confronted with a query. As the addressee of my RSQ regarding *p*, you are obliged to demonstrate entitlement to *p*. If you do anything which does not fulfill this task you are thereby deficient vis-á-vis your apokritic responsibility, which as we have seen, is just the justificatory responsibility you incur in asserting. Thus, in addressing an apokritic

commitment to agent and withdrawing her default entitlement, RSQs provide the condition requiring the challenged asserter to undertake the task of demonstrating entitlement to the asserted claim. We have now seen that RSQs satisfy all of the conditions needed to instantiate the pragmatic force of challenge.

5.4.4 Reason-Seeking Queries in Ordinary Discourse

It is important to remember that not all RSQs token challenges. This point becomes clear when we examine the sentences whose utterance is typically associated with performing an RSQ. In English, a speaker normally performs an RSQ regarding p when she utters a sentence of the type "Why p?".

Philosophers of science have long noticed that explanations can be treated as answers to *why-questions*, where the latter represent the logical form of, *inter alia*, interrogative sentences like "Why p?", i.e. *why-interrogatives*. Once the semantic analysis of questions got off the ground—with works like Belnap and Steel (1976), Bromberger (1992), and Hintikka (1976)—Van Fraassen (1980), Garfinkel (1981), and Lipton (1991) were able to argue that the logic of why-questions provides the basis for a model of explanation. The so-called "erotetic" model of explanation that has emerged relies on a certain analysis of why-questions, according to which, why-interrogatives like "Why p?" implicitly contrast the topic, p, with one or more foils, q, $q´$, $q″$, ... which denote events, properties, or states of affairs that do not obtain. In other words, on analysis, why-questions have the form "Why p rather than q (or $q´$, $q″$, ...)?" There is broad agreement that why-questions presuppose that the topic is true and that the foils are false. Since an explanation answers the why-question by discriminating between the topic and foils, the erotetic model tends to support a *contrastive* view of explanation.

The details of the erotetic model and even of the logical analysis of why-questions are largely orthogonal to our concerns. What is important is that if explanations are answers to why-questions, expressed by sentences of the form

"Why P?", and if RSQs are typically performed by uttering such sentences, then RSQs must, at times, call forth explanations. At first blush, it may seem that RSQs cannot make such a demand, since what they seek is reasons in the sense of *evidence* or *grounds* for what one asserts or believes, rather than for reasons that explain why what one believes is the case. A distinction between reasons in the former, *justificatory* sense, and reasons in the latter, *explanatory* sense is urged by many philosophers, particularly in the context of of debates about explanations of intentional action, where the two often overlap. How can RSQs demand both sorts of reasons?

In one sense, the distinction between justification and explanation is obviated by the extremely liberal notions of *entitlement* and *inference* that the scorekeeping model employs. The demand to demonstrate entitlement to a claim *inferentially*, only requires an agent to offer up some entitlement-preserving inference whose premises she is committed and entitled to and whose conclusion is the claim in question. Brandom identifies such inferences as the scorekeeping analogs to induction, but there is nothing barring our extension of this analogy to include abduction or inferences to the best explanation. Insofar as one or more of these types of inference are constitutive of explanations, then RSQs can clearly make demands for explanations. They can even make demands for *contrastive* explanations so long as the apokritic commitment they address is a singleton consisting of p and not-q where q is a foil. A contrastive querier thus addresses apokritic commitments to {p and not-q} while rescinding default entitlement to that (very) conjunction.

Given the availability of inductive, abductive, etc. inferences to scorekeepers, there ought to be no problem specifying RSQs whose addressed apokritic commitments require the querier agent to supply a license to one of these types of inference. But in order to make the latter performance the sole means for satisfying such RSQs, the addressee would need to be olbiged to provide strictly inferential entitlement. In other words, deferral must not be an appropriate re-

sponse to explanation-seeking queries; after all, we can't defer to another speaker as a way of explaining why something is the case. To achieve this kind of restriction on answers to RSQs regarding p, we simply represent the withdrawal of default entitlement to p as extending to all discursive agents. If no one is entitled by default to a certain claim, then an addressee cannot to defer to someone else's assertion of it to discharge her apokritic commitment. There would thus be a certain agent-neutrality to the outputs of explanation-seeking queries—deferral is not an acceptable response to them because no one has default entitlement to the claim.

Situating demands for explanation as a sub-species of RSQs supports the idea that semantic why-questions are typically realized by the performance RSQs, which in turn, are typically accomplished by uttering why-interrogatives. One case in which the link between why-questions and RSQs illustrates the explanatory power of the scorekeeping account is when agents commit themselves to a particular course of inquiry. Undertaking an inquiry can be thought of as adopting an attitude to a particular type of semantic object, namely, a why-question. This attitude might be one of wondering or investigating *why p?*. The scorekeeping *performance* that has the normative significance of undertaking an inquiry in this sense is an RSQ regarding p. If the speaker *only* takes herself to be responsible for carrying out this inquiry, and thus does not address the inquiry to others, she performs that peculiar type of RSQ in which she merely acknowledges an erotetic commitment to {p}. The scorekeeping account of RSQs thus has the added benefit of representing the attitudes that agents adopt to why-questions when we are inclined to describe them as engaging in inquiry.

Since agents who perform RSQs only to *acknowledge erotetic* commitments do not rescind anyone's default entitlement, and since the denial of default entitlement is a necessary feature of challenges, these agents perform RSQs that are *not* challenges. Although I have not discussed the possibility, erotetic commitments might also be attributed to others. The acknowledgment and attribution of such

commitments might be one way of understanding the kinds of normative relationships that bind together agents into a community of inquirers, i.e. a *scientific* community. Unfortunately, space does not permit me to explore the details of this proposal.

So, there are RSQs that are not challenges and which may be achieved by the utterance of why-interrogatives. How do RSQs which *are* challenges manifest in ordinary discourse? Again, utterance of why-interrogatives is the typical vehicle for performing these RSQs. One class of why-interrogatives that often play this role in English are of the form "Why do you think that (p)?" and, corresponding context of requests for practical reasons, "Why did you do A?" These kinds of expressions have received a good deal of attention from theorists from across a wide spectrum of disciplines who are interested in the social phenomenon of *account-giving*. These thinkers use the term "account" to refer to performances that an agent undertakes so as to change, mitigate, or modify others assessments of her and her actions (Buttny 1993; McLaughun et al. 1983; Schönbach 1990; Scott and Lyman 1968). Schönbach (1990), for instance, defines account episodes as four-stage processes in which actors violate some norm, opponents reproach actors, actors offer accounts in response, and opponents evaluate the accounts' validity. Reproaching an agent involves treating the agent as responsible for an inappropriate action, that is as being both committed and not entitled to a particular action. In responding to reproaches, agents can offer accounts by accepting both statuses (*concessions*), by denying both statuses (*refusals*), by acknowledging the lack of entitlement while denying commitment (*excuses*), or by acknowledging responsibility and demonstrating entitlement (*justifications*).

Given these general features of account behavior, it is easy to see that the responses available to challenged asserters in the game of giving and asking for reasons are ways of providing an *account* of one's assertion. When her assertion is challenged, a scorekeeper can retract her commitment (*excuse* or *concede*), demonstrate entitlement to it either inferentially or deferentially (*justification*),

or counter-challenge (*refuse*). Thus, challenging an assertion seems to fit quite comfortably into the category of social performances whose aim is to solicit an account of others' behavior.

Why-interrogatives have been identified as one of the most common linguistic devices for soliciting accounts. As Bolden and Robinson (2011) have argued, "even apparently 'neutral' why-interrogatives communicate a stance that an event is socially 'problematic' and thus are produced and understood as soliciting a [justification-or-excuse] type of 'account" (Bolden and Robinson 2011, 95). If challenges are a type of account-soliciting performance, one that takes aim at an agent's assertion, and if such performances are normally undertaken by uttering a why-interrogative, then there is good empirical evidence to suggest that most of those RSQs, which are normally realized by why-interrogatives, are fulfilling a discursive challenge-function. Khalifa (2011) has even argued that demands for explanation, and in particular, contrastive explanation, form a subset of account-soliciting performances, and that, consequently, the theory of accounts can underwrite a model of contrastive explanation. The viability of such a theory would lend further support for the idea that RSQs solicit accounts and at times, thereby, demand explanations.

In general, there is a good deal of evidence, both empirical and theoretical, that the utterance of why-interrogatives is a typical way to issue challenges and to demand explanations. Both of these discursive functions can be served by RSQs.

5.5 Justificatory Stalemate Averted

In Chapter Two, I presented an argument intended to show that a purely assertional MDP, modeled in deontic scorekeeping terms, was bound to fail. Such a practice would be unable to realize the normative significance of assertions. The reason for this failure lies in the fact that the model incurs a problem of JUSTIFI-CATORY STALEMATE. This problem arises from the conjunction of five claims.

1. Challenges can only be issued by incompatible assertions.

2. Assertional incompatibility is symmetrical.

3. Challenges can be challenged (C3).

4. Legitimate challenges rescind the default entitlement of challenged assertions (C2).

5. Legitimate challenges detach conditional justificatory responsibility by providing the condition requiring the challenged asserter to undertake the task of demonstrating entitlement to the asserted claim (C1).

Claim (1) follows from a commitment to assertional fundamentalism—the view non-assertional practices are pragmatically dependent upon assertional ones and not vice versa. This position restricts the range of speech acts available to participants in MDPs to those that have the pragmatic force of assertions. Thus, challenges must have assertional force. Since the only way for an assertion to satisfy (C2) is for it to be incompatible with the challenged assertion, speech acts that perform the structural function of challenges in MDPs must be incompatible assertions.

The conjunction of claims (1)-(4) is inconsistent with (C1)—the requirement that challenges detach conditional justificatory responsibility. It is only entitled challenges that have the effect of removing the challenged assertion's default status, thereby providing the condition requiring the asserter to vindicate her claim. But it follows from the conjunction of (2), (3), and (4) that the appropriateness of any incoming challenge is always itself put into question by the challenged assertion itself, and thus there are no legitimate challenges in the model. Therefore, claim (5) cannot be true if claims (1)-(4) are true.

Without the possibility of agents performing legitimate challenges, there are no circumstances in which to detach their conditional task-responsibility and thus no way to fulfill that responsibility. Since no agent can be held responsible for doing something that is in principle impossible to do, then so long as the score-

keeping model of MDPs exhibits commitment to (1)-(5), there is no justificatory responsibility in MDPs. Finally, insofar as justificatory responsibility is constitutive of the normative significance of assertions, a model of MDPs that adheres to claims (1)-(5) cannot be a model of purely assertional practices.

Equipped with the scorekeeping account of queries, and of RSQs in particular, I am at last able to redeem the promissory note I issued at the beginning of Chapter Three, namely, that the introduction of queries in an assertional practice resolves the problem of justificatory stalemate. As we have seen, RSQs can play the structural role of challenges, thus satisfying (C1)-(C3), i.e. (3)-(5) above. In Chapter Three I argued that since the content of queries is distinct from that of assertions, a practice which only confers the content of assertions on performances can not implement queries.[5]

From this, it follows that RSQs, which realize challenges, cannot be performed by strictly assertional agents. Thus, I reject (1). With the denial of (1), (2) becomes irrelevant. The result is a model of MDPs that no longer subscribes to all five claims above and which thus avoids the problem of justificatory stalemate.

What makes RSQs successful at delivering challenges in an MDP while evading the threat of justificatory stalemate is the fact that they do not stand in symmetrical relations of incompatibility with assertions. Entitlement to an RSQ regarding p is not undermined by its co-instantiation with an assertion that p in an MDP. Of course, RSQs can be challenged in their own right, by showing that the address of apokritic commitment they make to be unwarranted. Such a challenge is achieved when an agent disavows commitment to p or asserts something incompatible with p. Thus, RSQs can challenge assertions without simultaneously undermining their own *prima facie* entitlement.

---

[5]This claim is perfectly consistent with the one made above in § 5.3 that an inquisitive practice must also be an assertional practice. The latter claim only says that the making and taking of assertion is *necessary* for the making and taking of queries. The former claim denies something much stronger; it denies that assertional practices provide the resources in principle *sufficient* to permit its agents to ask question.

It is tempting to treat agents in an MDP as attributing *default* entitlement to RSQs, yet I suggest that we resist this temptation at the *global* level of discourse. In many contexts, ordinary discourse permits a speaker to ask "Why *p*?" or, more specifically, "Why do you think that *p*?" when presented with another's assertion that *p*, without the former being required to first demonstrate that she is entitled to ask that question. But there are also contexts in which such a question is *prima facie* inappropriate. Outside a philosophy classroom it is usually out of line for someone to query another regarding the latter's reasons for asserting a claim about some obvious feature of her environment. Rather, the burden of proof is on the querier to demonstrate that *she* is entitled to ask such a question— perhaps by introducing a skeptical hypothesis into the conversation—before her performance can have the force of an RSQ. Default entitlement to RSQs appears to be a function of *local* discursive contexts. It is perfectly consistent with the scorekeeping model of MDPs for participants to discriminate local discursive norms and thus to attribute default entitlement to some RSQs and not others.

A peculiar feature of treating some RSQs as entitled by default is that there are no constraints on the order in which assertions and their challenges must appear in conversation. By putting an RSQ regarding p to another agent, the speaker takes that agent to be assertionally committed to *p*. But this does not mean that the speaker must wait around for the agent to avow that commitment. So long as her query belongs to that class of RSQs with default entitlement, the agent is saddled with a responsibility to return the inquisitive address. If she is not committed to *p*, then she can fulfill this responsibility by disavowing *p*, without incurring subsequent sanctions. Assertional disavowals are, after all, like assertional avowals, attributed with default entitlement. Some RSQs can be issued without requiring the speaker to first demonstrate her entitlement, and her recipient, though obliged to acknowledge the query, is entitled by default to challenge it. There is no threat here of justificatory stalemate since the challenge of an RSQ regarding *p* cannot be accomplished by asserting *p*.

Finally, it may strike the reader that the relations of incompatibility between the apokritic commitment addressed by RSQs regarding *p* and the assertional commitment to *p* is too weak to prevent global skepticism from taking root in an MDP. Entitlement to an RSQ is a relatively inexpensive status to obtain. One can get it in many cases simply by taking a scorekeeper to be committed to some claim. Performing an RSQ does not require the querier to undertake a commitment of her own. Challenging an assertion doesn't require the challenger to have any 'skin in the game.' What, then, deters a scorekeeper from issuing challenges to every possible claim?

I have suggested two possible responses, neither of which is wholly adequate to prevent a radical skeptic from participating in an MDP. First, if the normative terrain of an MDP is 'bumpy' in the sense that there are some sets of claims, which, when realized in discourse, deny participants default entitlement to challenges, then there is at least a *prima facie* obstacle to radical skepticism. This is, of course, an *ad hoc* assumption and not one that is supported by the deep normative structure of inquisitive practices.

Second, the model of MDPs I have developed retains the attribution of default entitlement to assertions. Players in a game of deontic scorekeeping are permitted to take what others say 'at face value' and to use those claims in their own reasoning. Undermining this entitlement requires a player to *do* something, i.e. to perform an RSQ. Addressing someone with an RSQ, though cheap, is still something that can be done correctly or incorrectly; the challenger is still taking a risk with regard to her normative status if she undertakes to challenge an assertion.

Neither of these points prevents a participant in an MDP from challenging every possible claim, even those that will never be made. But they do demonstrate that the default-challenge structure of entitlement is preserved in minimally inquisitive practices, and they do make good on the *conditionality* of justificatory responsibility. In the final analysis, the possibility of radical skepticism taking

root in an MDP seems a small price to pay to have an MDP free of justificatory stalemate.

6 A Formal Theory of Queries and the Prospects for Interrogative Inferentialism

6.1 The Inquisitive Shape of MDPs

What is the minimal set of social-normative capacities whose exhibition qualifies creatures as discursive? We have seen that the answer is not, as Brandom would have it, the abilities exercised in administering the normative statuses associated with assertions. In order to be interpretable as thinking and speaking, it is not enough that creatures be able to make and to take others as making claims.

To make an assertion is, in part, to undertake a responsibility to justify that assertion if challenged. But assertions are incapable of serving as challenges. To ask for reasons is to ask a question, to perform a reason-seeking query (RSQ). Justificatory responsibility is the responsibility one incurs when addressed by an RSQ. Thus, purely assertional practices are not autonomous discursive practices at all, and hence are not minimally discursive ones. The performances of creatures engaged in a social practice of adopting normative attitudes and responding to normative statuses are not intelligible as *assertions* except insofar as the practice in question includes performances that count as *queries*. Assertional practices are only intelligible as part of inquisitive practices—those of asking and answering

questions.

Conversely, inquisitive practices, at least those which involve strictly information-seeking queries (ISQs), must include practices of asserting. Answering a question by providing information is a matter of licensing the inquisitor to make some assertion from among a set of alternatives. The attribution of default entitlement to another's assertion licenses the attributer to make that assertion herself. The administration of ISQs is thus possible for practices whose repertoire includes the provision of information in the form of assertions that enjoy default entitlement.

In order to represent the inquisitive structure of MDPs, the model of deontic scorekeeping has been modified to include a new type of deontic attitude that agent's can adopt to normative statuses in addition to those of *acknowledging* and *attributing*. This new attitude, called *addressing*, makes a demand upon its addressee to recognize her new status. Following the analysis of second-personal addresses proposed by Kukla and Lance (2009)—according to which such acts impose a demand for recognition that is 'inescapable'—no matter what subsequent performances an addressee undertakes, they will either have the significance of acknowledging the demand or rejecting it; there is no way to passively ignore a status that has been addressed to oneself. Addressing a commitment to another agent is thus quite different from attributing one, since in the latter case, there is no *prima facie* deficiency incurred by ignoring an attributed status. The pragmatic force of queries can be understood as the *address* of a commitment to another agent. Including the addressing attitude also illuminates latent features in the DSK account of assertion. The pragmatic force of assertions can be analyzed, in part, as the address of assertional entitlement to others—that is, as the imposition of a demand to recognize the speaker's entitlement by acknowledging the commitment themselves.

The modified model also includes two new flavors of commitment and entitlement. Apokritic commitment is the responsibility incurred by the addressee of a query to update the addresser's scorecard. In the case of ISQ's the addressee

is responsible for licensing the addresser to undertake an assertional commitment from among a set of alternatives. Apokritic entitlement is just the entitlement associated with the assertions that answer the query. Erotetic commitment, on the other hand, is obligation to acknowledge the entitlement of answers when they are offered, typically, by re-asserting them. Entitlement to such erotetic commitments is achieved when one is entitled to treat at least one member of the set of answers to that question as correct, though not any one answer in particular. These new varieties of deontic status, together with the new attitude of addressing, make it possible for DSK to represent the inquisitive shape of MDPs.

6.2 Inferentialism for Interrogatives?

In *Making It Explicit* the purpose of the DSK model is to represent the normative pragmatics of MDPs in a manner perspicuous enough to identify pragmatic consequence relations among utterances. These consequence relations then permit the theorist to induce material inferential relations among sentences, which, in turn, serve to explain sentential content. Using the capacity to discriminate among the proprieties of material inferences, Brandom goes on to show how traditional semantic, logical, and representational terms can be understood as making this capacity *explicit* in the form of overt assertions. In Chapter One, I briefly sketched how the notion of expressive role is applied in the explanation of the semantic contribution of logical vocabulary like the conditional and of representational vocabulary like *de re* propositional attitude-ascribing locutions.

Absent from *Making It Explicit* is a detailed account of the inferentialist semantics of the formulas and operators of propositional and modal logic. In that work, Brandom merely suggests that the basis of semantic talk is the ability to treat two claims as materially incompatible. As we have seen in Chapter Two, to treat p and q as incompatible is to treat anyone who is committed to p as precluded from being entitled to q. Once we can treat two claims as incompatible,

though, we can also respond to a kind of entailment relation among claims: we can take one claim, p, to be incompatibility-entailed by another, q, by treating every claim incompatible with p to be also incompatible with q. Demonstrating that a language exhibiting this entailment can be enriched through the addition of compound sentences formed by various logical operators then becomes a matter of showing how we may systematically compute the incompatibility sets of those compound sentences from the incompatibility sets of their components (through, for instance, familiar set-theoretic operations). For instance, the set of sentences that are incompatible with the negation of a sentence may be understood as the intersection of the incompatibility sets of all the items in the original sentence's incompatibility set. The negation a sentence can thus be thought of as the original sentence's *minimal incompatible*.

It is not until his Locke Lectures (2007), published as *Between Saying and Doing: Toward an Analytic Pragmatism*, that Brandom works out in detail how such a vocabulary can be used to formulate a semantic meta-language for any language consisting of sentences with no logical structure. *Incompatibility Semantics* is Brandom's attempt to use sets of sets of incompatible sentences as the semantic interpretants of individuals sentences and to derive the elements of classical propositional calculus and standard modal logics (**S4** and **S5**) on that basis.

With the exception of some speculative comments about the role of inquisitive attitude-ascribing locutions like 'wonders-*wh*' and knows-*wh*' I have not had much to say on the kind of alterations or extensions that might arise for an inferentialist semantics based upon the normative pragmatics of inquisitive practices. My silence on these issues has been deliberate; if, following Brandom's slogan, semantics is to answer to pragmatics, then it is crucial that we get the pragmatic account right before moving on to the semantic one.

With that said, I do not see any wholesale revision of Brandom's semantic theory entailed by the modifications I have offered to his pragmatic theory. Assertions are, after all, a necessary feature of inquisitive practices, and therefore all

the vocabulary that serves an expressive role vis-á-vis purely assertional practices ought to be retained. The major insights of the second part of *Making It Explicit* emerge unscathed. Instead of eroding these achievements, the changes I have proposed to DSK open up new directions for the inferentialist program to develop. One direction in particular would be an inferentialist semantics for interrogative sentences.

A semantic inferentialism for interrogatives based on the normative structure of inquisitive practices might differ from extant semantic accounts of interrogatives— e.g. Hamblin (1973) semantics, Groenendijk (1997)'s dynamic semantics, Ginzburg (1995a)'s type-theory, Krifka (2001)'s structured-proposition theory—in several dramatic respects. First, it would be thoroughly non-representationalist. Second, it could represent the content of interrogatives that do not strictly fit the mold of 'requests for information' such as advise-seeking questions. Finally, if the semantic content of interrogatives could be accounted for in a manner similar to the inferentialist semantics for declaratives—that is, by mobilizing proprieties of material inferences—then the resultant explanation would not need to appeal to the semantics of propositional (or higher-order) logic.

Providing a semantics for at least some basic classes of interrogative sentences antecedent to that of first-order logic would distinguish the inferentialist account from all other semantic theories of interrogatives. Since the days of Hamblin, virtually all treatments of interrogatives in the field of formal semantics have made use of the elements of higher-order logics, and in particular, the abstracta associated with Montague's intensional logic.[1] If a theory of interrogatives can be given in the style of Brandom's incompatibility semantics for declaratives, it would represent a significant contribution both to Brandom's project and to the field of formal semantics in general.

---

[1] There are two exceptions to this trend. One is the extensionalist semantics for interrogatives proposed by Nelken and Francez (2002), which uses the first-operators of a five-value logic. Another is the program of inquisitive semantics, which postulates a semantic (though not a syntactic!) distinction between interrogatives and declaratives at the level of first-order operators.

I am not offering such a theory in this chapter, though I hope to do so in future work. Instead, what I propose is a kind of first-floor to the edifice that such a theory would represent. The pragmatic base for Brandom's incompatibility semantics lies in the consequence relations among assertional commitments and entitlements, and in the incompatibility relation that holds between these statuses. It is only by fixing these relations that it becomes possible to associate sets of sets of incompatible sentences with a target sentence. Therefore, if an inferentialist semantics is to be given for interrogatives, it must originate with a precise set of pragmatic consequence relations among queries, or between queries and assertions.

As I noted in Chapter One, an obstacle blocks the path to a straightforward application of semantic inferentialism to interrogatives: there do not appear to be material inferences involving interrogatives. In order to maneuver around this obstacle, I have exploited the breadth of the notion of *inference* to articulate pragmatic relations among the normative statuses associated with queries and assertions. The 'inferences' or 'proto-inferences' that queries are caught up in have been shown to lie, primarily, in the relations between queries and answers, and not, as inferential erotetic logic would have it, between questions and questions.

The first step toward a semantic inferentialism for interrogatives will be a formalization of the normative constraints that characterize the query-answer relationship as it have been developed here—especially in Chapter Five. If we can represent these constraints as pragmatic consequence relations, we will then have the resources with which to stage the project of inferentialism for interrogatives. In the remainder of this chapter I will offer a formal theory of these consequence relations.

6.3 A Formal Pragmatics of Minimally Inquisitive Practices

In this work, I have argued that "the game of giving and asking for reasons" cannot be instantiated by purely assertional practices, and have suggested how a normative practice that includes performances of both querying and asserting will qualify as an MDP. But this practice only permits agents to perform a certain small class of queries, namely, RSQs. In Chapter Five, I suggested that RSQs are species of a genus of queries that seek *information* more broadly. Information seeking-queries (ISQs) saddle their addressees with apokritic responsibilities to update the querier's deontic score with a license to assert some claim from among a set of alternatives, i.e. to answer the question. RSQs are just those ISQs whose set of alternatives is a singleton and which deny addressees the possibility of fulfilling their apokritic responsibility simply by asserting that claim, that is, they deprive their addressees of default entitlement to the queried claim. Fulfilling the responsibility incurred by RSQs thus requires participants to *demonstrate* entitlement, either by asserting something from which the queried claim follows inferentially or by deferring to another's assertion of it. Since the force and content of RSQs is a specification of the force and content of ISQs, agents who can perform RSQs must possess the more general capacity to perform ISQs.

In this section, I will attempt to formalize the norms governing an MDP whose repertoire consists of ISQs and assertions. The formal-pragmatic treatment will represent these norms in terms of a consequence relation that observes the standard structural constraints of sequent calculus as well as a derived nonmonotonic consequence relation. The aim of the theory is to provide some of the raw materials with which to carry out an inferentialist program for the semantics of interrogatives. The theory will also help to substantiate the claim (argued for in Chapter Five) that the normative structures of ISQs and assertions are reciprocally dependent.

In order to represent this MDP, the formal pragmatic theory will need to build up the normative structure of assertions and ISQs from primitives that are not themselves speech acts. Nor should these primitives consist of semantic entities such as propositions, since, following Brandom, I treat such entities as explanatorily derivative of pragmatic ones.

The formal theory of MDPs can, however, appeal to normative statuses of commitment and entitlement, as well as to action-types and agents. Although they have no interest in representing MDPs, Rebecca Kukla, Mark Lance, and Greg Restall (KLR) have sketched a formal theory that aims to explain the pragmatic forces of speech acts by mobilizing just these sorts of primitives.[2] Their formalism is designed to perspicuously represent, *inter alia*, the agent-relativity and agent-neutrality of normative statuses that inform Lance and Kukla's typology of speech acts. However, since I have found certain aspects of Lance and Kukla's pragmatic theory undesirable for thinking about queries in MDPs, I will offer some important changes to the KLR framework. The alterations are intended both to facilitate the representation of the norms governing queries and to bring features of Brandom's DSK model of assertions to bear on the formal theory.

The formal vocabulary for KLR consist of the following:

- $\alpha, \beta, \gamma \in$ AGENT: a non-empty set of agents

- F, G, H $\in$ ACTION: a non-empty set of action types

- c, e, d $\in$ STATUS: a set non-empty set of normative statuses, e.g. COMMITMENT (c), ENTITLEMENT (e), and DOING (d).

These primitives are related such that statuses evaluate action types with respect to agents. A basic formula of the theory has the form of the triple $\mathsf{s}\langle \mathrm{F}, \alpha \rangle$ (abbreviated to $\mathsf{s}\mathrm{F}\alpha$) where s is a status, F is an action type, and α is an agent.

---

[2] The theory appears as appendix to Lance and Kukla's *Yo! and Lo!*. See (Kukla and Lance 2009, 217-234)

Basic formulas are normative assignments. A collection of assignments constitutes an agent's 'scorecard'. One of the great advantages of the KLR approach is that normative attributions can be represented as action types. Once we think of a creature as taking α to be committed to F, then we can think of this very taking as yet another act-type, to which it can be entitled or not. Thus, for every $\alpha \in$ AGENT, F $\in$ ACTION, and $\mathsf{s} \in$ STATUS, $\mathsf{s}F\alpha \in$ ACTION. This would be the action type of taking α's F-ing to be s.

Sequent calculus versions of formal proof theory can now be applied to explain the constraints on scorecards. If X and Y are sets of attributions, then X $\vdash$ Y is a structural constraint on scorecards such that a scorecard satisfies it if and only if it is not the case that the it contains every attribution in X and none in Y. General constraints on scorecards are analogous to the normal structural rules for the consequence relation, i.e., *reflexivity*, *weakening*, and *cut*.

A special case of the constraint is the form X $\vdash$. A scorecard is said to violate this constraint when it contains every assignment in X, and respects it when there is some assignment in X that it avoids. X $\vdash$ says that the assignments in X are jointly incompatible. Where X = {A, B}, X $\vdash$ can be written as A $\perp$ B. This is the primitive notion of incompatibility that the system uses to build up incompatibility relations among specific normative statuses.

The most important subsidiary incompatibility relation is that which holds among entitlement assignments. Two actions are said to be entitlement-incompatible or e-incompatible when they cannot be jointly performed with entitlement. For example, suppose that Jim and Susan are sharing a cake and that there is an underlying norm to their practice of cake-sharing such that whoever cuts the cake into pieces must wait until all the other diners have selected their pieces to select his own. Next, suppose that Jim cuts the cake into two pieces and chooses his piece *before* Susan chooses hers. Jim can no doubt perform both actions—i.e. cake-cutting and selecting the first slice—but he is not entitled to do both. He is only entitled to perform one of them. Thus, the actions of cake-cutting and

choosing the first slice, when performed by the same agent, are e-incompatible.

E-incompatibility is thus defined as the incompatibility between a set of attributions X when all of its statuses are replaced with DOING and that same set when all of its statuses are replaced with ENTITLEMENT.

$$\perp_e X \text{ iff } \perp X[\mathsf{c} := \mathsf{d}, \mathsf{e} := \mathsf{d}] \bigcup X[\mathsf{c} := \mathsf{e}, \mathsf{d} := \mathsf{e}]$$

The notion of e-incompatibility is of particular importance to the formulation of the norms of asserting. In order to represent an agent as contradicting herself, scorekeepers must be able to take each other as *making* assertions to which they are not jointly entitled. This is just what they do when they attribute e-incompatible assertions to each other.

Within this formal system, KLR identifies the following normative constraints on assertions.

A1: $\mathsf{d}\langle A(F, \beta), \alpha \rangle \vdash \mathsf{d}\langle \mathsf{d}F\beta, \alpha \rangle$

A2: $\mathsf{e}\langle A(F, \beta), \alpha \rangle \vdash \mathsf{e}\langle \mathsf{d}F\beta, \alpha \rangle$

A3: If $\perp_e \{\mathsf{d}\langle A(F, \beta), \alpha \rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle A(G, \gamma), \alpha \rangle\}$ then $\perp_e \{\mathsf{d}\langle A(F, \beta), \alpha \rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle A(G, \gamma), \delta \rangle\}$

A1 says that to assert that something is the case (e.g. β's F-ing) is, in part, to practically take something to be the case (e.g. to take β to have F-ed). Similarly, A2 states that entitlement to assert something implies entitlement to the corresponding practical attitude. The third constraint, A3, says that if an agent cannot make two assertions without contradicting herself, then when those assertions are made by two different agents, each contradicts the other. This constraint is intended to capture the sense of agent-neutrality that Lance and Kukla take to characterize entitlement to assertions—the sense that when one agent is entitled to assert something, then, ideally, such entitlement is available to all discursive agents.

While the conditions that KLR provide for assertion are necessary, they are by no means sufficient. Importantly, they fail to capture the justificatory responsibility a speaker incurs when making an assertion. As I argued in Chapter Five, I see this lacuna as partly a consequence of KLR's emphasis on the regulative ideals of normative discursive functions and their commitment to an I-We model of discursive sociality. Since the institution of justificatory responsibility is essential to the DSK model of assertion, and to my theory of RSQs, the formal pragmatics of minimally inquisitive practices will need to be able to represent it.

To formalize justificatory responsibility, we first need to be able to represent default entitlement, since detachment of the conditional responsibility to justify one's claims is, in part, dependent upon the loss of default entitlement. In order to capture the propriety of default entitlement, we will need to define a nonmonotonic structural constraint on scorecards using some modified notions of Ray Reiter (1980)'s default logic.

Let W be the set of all normative assignments belonging to members of $\{\text{AGENT}\}$ and let $Cn(X)$ represent the closure of a set of assignments X under $\vdash$. The system has a single default theory $\langle W, D \rangle$ where D is a set of defaults composed of instances of the following form with particular action-types substituted for F and particular agents for α, β.

$$\frac{\mathsf{dF}\alpha : \mathsf{eF}\alpha}{\mathsf{eF}\alpha}$$

Rules of this form say that if an agent has F-ed and there is no assignment incompatible with its entitlement, then the agent is entitled to F. Extensions of $\langle W, D \rangle$ are defined by fixed point construction. For any set of normative assignments, X, let $\Gamma(X)$ be the least closed set that includes W and satisfies the following condition:

If $\frac{\mathsf{dF}\alpha:\mathsf{eF}\alpha}{\mathsf{eF}\alpha}$, and $\mathsf{dF}\alpha \in \Gamma(X)$, and $X \not\perp \mathsf{eF}\alpha$, then $\mathsf{eF}\alpha \in \Gamma(X)$.

Conflicts between defaults will be resolved cautiously, so that when two actions are performed whose default entitlement (together with their performance) is incompatible, both are denied default entitlement. Since all defaults in $\langle W, D \rangle$ are of the normal form, I will use $\mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim}$ to represent cautious default consequence. Following Antonelli (2009) I take $\mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim}$ to satisfy conditions of *reflexivity, cut, supraclassicality*, and *cautious monotonicity*.[3]

We thus have the following default consequence relation:

DE1: $\mathsf{dF}\alpha \mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim} \mathsf{eF}\alpha$

Substituting an assertion for F then yields the default entitlement practice in Brandom's MDP:

A4: $\mathsf{d}\langle A(F, \beta), \alpha \rangle \mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim} \mathsf{e}\langle A(F, \beta), \alpha \rangle$

This condition states that if α asserts something, then she is entitled to that assertion, so long as no one occupies a normative position incompatible with its entitlement. It follows from A3 that an agent will not be awarded default entitlement to an assertion if someone else has performed an entitled assertion that is incompatible with it. For example, if Jim asserts that whales are cold-blooded but Susan has asserted that whales are mammals, then Jim does not receive default entitlement to his claim. However, since $\mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim}$ is interpreted cautiously, when two e-incompatible assertions have been made, neither is treated with default entitlement. Thus, if Susan's claim that whales are mammals is only attributed default entitlement, then following Jim's claim, her assertion would (also) lose its default entitlement. Such a scenario would exemplify the kind of justificatory stalemate that we have seen paralyze Brandom's pragmatic theory. In other words, were we to follow Brandom and treat assertions as challenges, the default theory above would lead to justificatory stalemate. We must, therefore, make good on the

---

[3]**Supraclassicality:** If $\Gamma \vdash \phi$, then $\Gamma \mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim} \phi$. **Cautious Monotonicity:** If $\Gamma \mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim} \phi$, and $\Gamma \mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim} \psi$, then $\Gamma, \phi \mathrel{\vdash\mkern-10mu\sim} \psi$

promise that queries can fill the role of challenges in an MDP. In order to do so, it will be helpful to refer to some of the following sets.

- $\text{Ent}(\mathsf{s}F\alpha) = \{A : A \vdash \mathsf{e}F\alpha\}$

- $\text{Ent}_{\mid\sim}(\mathsf{s}F\alpha) = \{A : A \mid\sim \mathsf{e}F\alpha\}$

- $\text{Inc}(\mathsf{s}F\alpha) = \{A : A \perp \mathsf{s}F\alpha\}$

- $\text{Inc}_e(\mathsf{s}F\alpha) = \{A : \perp_e\{X, \mathsf{s}F\alpha\}\}$

Notice that the most obvious formalization of justificatory responsibility is unacceptable:

A4*: $\mathsf{d}\langle \mathrm{A}(F,\beta), \alpha\rangle \not\vdash \mathsf{c}H\alpha$

where

- $\mathsf{d}H\alpha \in \text{Ent}\left(\mathsf{d}\langle \mathrm{A}(F,\beta), \alpha\rangle\right)$

This condition says that if an agent claims that β F's, then she is responsible for doing something which justifies that claim, typically by making another assertion from which it can be inferred. The problem with this formulation is that the responsibility to do something which entitles one to the assertion on the right-hand side is not a *conditional* responsibility, as it is intended by Brandom. Recall that in DSK for assertional practices, asserting that p entails the agent's responsibility to demonstrate entitlement *if* challenged. But A4* states that if an agent asserts something, then she is responsible for justifying that assertion, full stop. Thus, to accurately represent justificatory responsibility, we must define acts of challenging. Following the proposal in Chapter Five, we shall attempt to do so by formulating the structure of RSQs. However, since RSQs are a species of ISQs, we must first formalize ISQs.

Semantically speaking, polar questions, or yes-no questions, represent the most basic types of questions in the sense that they have smaller answer-sets than alternative or wh-questions. Indeed it has even been proposed by Wiśniewski (1994) that under certain constraints, the answerhood conditions for the latter

may be reduced to those of sets of atomic yes-no questions. This is a *prima facie* reason for thinking that institution of polar queries, that is, speech acts of asking polar questions, can proceed that of alternative or wh-questions.

Polar queries still require the expressibility of logical constants, namely, negation, so they cannot be included in a Brandomian MDP. Nonetheless, a pre-logical variant of polar queries is available to agents in an MDP using the basic incompatibility relation that holds between normative assignments. Since these 'proto-polar queries' can be directed at any action an agent performs and not just her assertions, they are not strictly speaking *information*-seeking queries. The following condition represents part of the normative structure of these 'basic proto-polar queries.'

Basic Proto-Polar Queries.

Q1: $\mathsf{e}\langle \mathrm{Q}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \alpha \rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle \mathrm{Q}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \alpha \rangle \vdash \mathsf{cH}\beta, \mathsf{cI}\beta$

where

- $\mathsf{dH}\beta \in \mathrm{Ent}_{\mathrel{\vdash\!\!\!\sim}}(\mathsf{d}\langle \mathsf{dF}\beta, \alpha \rangle)$ and

- $\mathsf{dI}\alpha \in \mathrm{Ent}_{\mathrel{\vdash\!\!\!\sim}}(\mathsf{d}\langle \mathsf{dG}\beta, \alpha \rangle)$ and

- $\mathsf{dG}\beta \in \mathrm{Inc}(\mathsf{dF}\beta)$

This condition says that if α is entitled to query β regarding the act of F-ing, and in fact issues such a query, then β is responsible for either doing something which defeasibly entitles α to take her as having F-ed or for doing something which defeasibly entitles α to take her as having done something incompatible with having F-ed. The left-side of Q1 thus represents β's apokritic responsibility. Following the disjunctive interpretation of the left-side of the consequence relation, this condition is satisfied when β performs actions which license α to take her as having performed incompatible actions. Such a response will no doubt place β in a normatively deficient position, but it will still count as having 'answered' α's query.

Specifying different types of queries—e.g. ISQs, advice-seeking queries, self-addressed queries, exam queries, etc.— can be achieved by some combination of a) modifying the sets of assignments which 'proto-negative' responses in Q1 license, b) substituting particular normative assignments for $\mathsf{dF}\beta$, and c) adding conditions. In formulating the conditions on proto-polar ISQs we employ all three techniques.

Proto-Polar ISQs.

ISQ1: $\mathsf{e}\langle Q_{is}\langle A(F,\beta),\delta\rangle,\alpha\rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle Q_{is}\langle A(F,\beta),\delta\rangle,\alpha\rangle \vdash \mathsf{cH}\delta, \mathsf{cI}\delta$

ISQ2: $\perp_e\{\mathsf{d}\langle Q_{is}\langle A(F,\beta),\delta\rangle,\alpha\rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle A(F,\beta),\alpha\rangle\}$

ISQ3: $\perp_e\{\mathsf{d}\langle Q_{is}\langle A(F,\beta),\delta\rangle,\alpha\rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle A(G,\beta),\alpha\rangle\}$

where

- $\mathsf{dH}\delta \in \mathrm{Ent}_{\mid\sim}(\mathsf{d}\langle A(F,\beta),\alpha\rangle)$ and

- $\mathsf{dI}\delta \in \mathrm{Ent}_{\mid\sim}(\mathsf{d}\langle A(G,\beta),\alpha\rangle)$ and

- $\mathsf{d}\langle A(G,\beta),\alpha\rangle \in \mathrm{Inc}_e(\mathsf{d}\langle A(F,\beta),\delta\rangle)$

Condition ISQ1 is interpreted as saying that if α poses an entitled query to β regarding some assertion, then β is responsible for defeasibly licensing α to make that assertion or some other assertion e-incompatible with it. In formulating this condition, we have substituted assertions for the queried assignment in Q1 and weakened the kind of incompatibility relation which must hold between the actions licensed by 'proto-positive' and 'proto-negative' responses. The motivation for both moves is the idea that the normative function of an ISQ is to obtain for the speaker a license to make an assertion. It is not sufficient for appropriate uptake of an ISQ that a querier merely be entitled to take the queried agent has having made an assertion. For other sorts of queries, e.g., exam queries, this result may be appropriate. But for ISQs, at least those present in the austere conditions of an MDP, the relevant normative function aims at a situation in which the querier

obtains information that can be used in her own reasoning, even if only defeasibly.[4]

The additional conditions of ISQ2 and ISQ3 are also motivated by intuitions regarding the normative structure of genuinely *information*-seeking queries. Together they state that one cannot be entitled to pose a query and be entitled to assert one of its answers. These conditions are intended to represent the state of ignorance that queriers must be in for answers to *provide* them with information. In Chapter Five, I suggested that the erotetic commitment associated with queries— i.e. the responsibility of a querier to acknowledge an assertional commitment (from among the query's set of alternatives) to which she is entitled—is incompatible with a commitment to one of the alternative answer-assertions. Conditions ISQ2 and ISQ3 represent this incompatibility relation. Again, such conditions would not be present in the normative structure of, e.g., exam queries, where the function is to discern what someone else takes himself to be entitled to.

Among the crucial structural features of proto-polar queries is that, following from A4, a queried agent can satisfy her apokritic responsibility simply by asserting the queried assertion or some assertion e-incompatible with it. Indeed, the formalism shows that it is precisely because a principle like A4 holds in an MDP, and agents' assertions are typically awarded entitlement, that merely *making* assertions serves to answer ISQs. For example, according to ISQ1–ISQ3, if Jim is entitled to ask Susan whether whales are mammals, and in fact asks her, then Susan is thereby committed either to informing Jim that whales are mammals or to informing him that something is the case whose assertion is e-incompatible with the assertion that whales are mammals, say, that whales are cold-blooded. If Susan asserts that whales are cold-blooded, then, so long as no one in the discursive community has asserted something incompatible with entitlement to this claim, she is entitled to her claim by default, and Jim now has a license to re-assert it. In such a situation, Susan fulfills her apokritic responsibility.

---

[4]Further support for this move can be found in the fact that KLR deliberating avoid a biconditional formulation of A2 for the reason that "there are prelinguistic takings that do not constitute issuances of universal re-taking license." (Kukla and Lance 2009, 230)

We are at last in a position to formulate conditions for RSQs.

Reason-Seeking Queries.

Let X_α denote all assignments on α's scorecard.

RSQ1: $\perp_e \{ \mathsf{d}\langle Q_{rs}\langle \mathrm{A}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \delta\rangle, \alpha\rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle \mathrm{A}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \alpha\rangle \}$

RSQ2: $\mathsf{d}\langle \mathrm{A}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \delta\rangle, \mathsf{e}\langle Q_{rs}\langle \mathrm{A}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \delta\rangle, \alpha\rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle Q_{rs}\langle \mathrm{A}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \delta\rangle, \alpha\rangle \vdash \mathsf{cH}\delta$

RSQ3: $\perp_e \{ \mathsf{d}\langle Q_{rs}\langle \mathrm{A}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \delta\rangle, \alpha\rangle, \mathsf{d}\langle \mathrm{A}(F, \beta), \delta\rangle \}$ iff $X_\delta \nvdash \mathsf{dH}\delta$

where

- $\mathsf{dH}\delta \in \mathrm{Ent}\,(\mathsf{d}\langle \mathrm{A}(\mathrm{F}, \beta), \alpha\rangle)$

RSQ1 is a carry-over of the erotetic-incompatibility condition on ISQs. Just as one cannot legitimately ask an information-seeking question to which one already knows the answer, one cannot legitimately demand reasons for a claim to which one is already committed and entitled. RSQ2 represents the detachment of conditional justificatory responsibility. It says that if an agent is issued a query regarding the grounds of some assertion she has made, then she is responsible for doing something which licenses her querier to make that very assertion. Since the set of permissible responses to an RSQ are drawn from the set of assignments that strictly (i.e. not defeasibly) entitle one to make the assertion in question, performances that only defeasibly license re-assertion will not provide appropriate uptake. Thus, an agent subject to an RSQ cannot satisfy her apokritic responsibility by simply re-asserting the challenged claim. Rather, she must *demonstrate* her entitlement to the claim. In this sense, the apokritic responsibility of an RSQ just is the justificatory responsibility associated with assertion.

RSQ3 says that an assertion and its corresponding RSQ are e-incompatible just in case the queried agent has not demonstrated entitlement to her assertion. This condition gives the sense in which RSQs have the force of suspending default entitlement to a queried assertion. In the absence of a demonstration of entitle-

ment, the posing of an entitled RSQ defeats the default license of the targeted assertion.

This formal pragmatic theory shows how the normative-pragmatic structures of queries and of assertions are interdependent. The administration of ISQs is only possible for practices whose repertoire includes the provision of information in the form of assertions that enjoy default entitlement. Conversely, assertions require distinctly non-assertional speech acts, namely, RSQs, to institute the structure of justificatory responsibility. The latter is but the apokritic responsibility associated with RSQs as a species of ISQs.

6.4 From the Formal Pragmatics of Queries to the Semantics of Interrogatives

Developing the formal pragmatics for assertion in terms of agent-neutral consequence relations, Lance, Kukla, and Restall claim to "arrive at the point at which [they] can cut and paste the semantic work of *Making It Explicit*." Their third condition (my A3) on assertions, or what they call 'declaratives', represents an incompatibility role that is independent of agent. If two assertions are e-incompatible, then that incompatibility is in force no matter who performs the assertions. This agent-neutral incompatibility, they believe, "amounts to the reproducible content of an act type."

> Since the incompatibility of declaratives is invariant under who is doing the declaring, we can talk simply of the declaratives themselves as being incompatible. This means that we can begin to look simply at the incompatibility role of these declaratives as itself a kind of inferential content (defining inference in the familiar ways in terms of normative incompatibility). And now, as promised, we can cut and paste! That is, at this point we simply can take on board the Brandomian semantic project with only minor revisions. Given incompatibility roles, we define inferential relations. Given inferential relations, we then develop substitution inferences, (de)compositionally combinable subsentential

content, conceptions of predicates, singular terms, logical vocabulary, and quantification (Kukla and Lance 2009, 230).

If it is the identification of agent-neutral incompatibility relations that brings the KLR formal pragmatics into contact with inferential semantics for declarative sentences, then where would the inferentialist account of interrogatives begin? The formal theory proffered above presents no agent-neutral incompatibility among queries and assertions.

However, the formal pragmatics does present an incompatibility relation constitutive of ISQs and RSQs that resembles the sort of assertional incompatibility that Brandom identifies, though not of the agent-neutral variety that KLR demand. Recall that for Brandom, two declaratives are incompatible just in case if an agent is committed to one, then she is not entitled to the other, and vice versa. ISQ2 and ISQ3 above say that if one is entitled to an assertion that answers some query, then one is not entitled to pose that query, and vice versa. Applying this constraint to RSQs yeilds the condition that entitlement to pose an RSQ regarding some assertion is (symmetrically) incompatible with entitlement to that very assertion. This 'erotetic incompatibility' between assertions and queries is not agent-neutral in Lance and Kukla's sense, since the statuses affected are only those of a single agent. But the the incompatibility affects the range of entitled performances available to *any* agent who asks a question or asserts one of its answers, just as, for Brandom, assertional incompatibility affects the status of *any* agent who makes one of any two incompatible claims. Erotetic incompatibility thus governs the statuses of *every* agent, regardless of her particular normative position. It differs from Lance and Kukla's constraint on assertions only in that it does not identify incompatibility across or between any agents.

Since Brandom's semantics for declaratives is based upon a pragmatic incompatibility role, which, like erotetic incompatibility, governs the scorecards of any agent, it may be possible to construct a semantics for interrogatives in the incompatibilist style. The interpretant for an interrogative sentence would just

251

be the set of sets of sentences erotetically incompatible with it. Such a semantics would no doubt need to avail itself of the relations of material inference among declaratives, but doing so would be consonant with the central claim of this work: that assertions and queries are pragmatically interdependent practices. I therefore end this work with an open invitation to others engaging with the inferentialist program in semantics to explore and exploit the prospects for an interrogative inferentialism.

References

Aloni, M. (2005). A formal treatment of the pragmatics of questions and attitudes. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 28(5):505 – 539.

Antonelli, G. (2009). *Grounded Consequence for Defeasible Logic.* Cambridge University Press.

Åqvist, L. (1965). *A New Approach to the Logical Theory of Interrogatives: Analysis.* University of Uppsala.

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words.* Clarendon Press.

Bell, M. (1975). Questioning. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 25(100):pp. 193–212.

Belnap, N. (1990). Declaratives are not enough. *Philosophical Studies*, 59(1):1 – 30.

Belnap, N. D. and Steel, T. B. (1976). *The logic of questions and answers.* Yale University Press, New Haven.

Benthem, J. F. A. K. v. and Meulen, A. G. B. t. (1997). *Handbook of logic and language.* MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Biber, D. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English.* Longman.

Bolden, G. and Robinson, J. (2011). Soliciting accounts with why-interrogatives in conversation. *Journal of Communication*, 61(1):94–119.

Brandom, R. (1994). *Making it explicit : reasoning, representing, and discursive commitment.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Brandom, R. (1997). Replies. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 57(1):pp. 189–204.

Brandom, R. (2000). *Articulating reasons : an introduction to inferentialism.*

References

Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Brandom, R. (2002). Pragmatics and pragmatisms. In Norris (2002), pages 40–58.

Brandom, R. (2008). *Between saying and doing : towards an analytic pragmatism.* Oxford University Press, Oxford ; New York.

Brandom, R. (2009). *Reason in philosophy : animating ideas.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Brandom, R. (2010). Reply to mark lance and rebecca kukla's "perception, language, and the first person". In Weiss and Wanderer (2010).

Brandom, R. (2011). *Perspectives on pragmatism : classical, recent, and contemporary.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Brogaard, B. (2009). What mary did yesterday: Reflections on knowledge-wh. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 78(2):439–467.

Bromberger, S. (1992). *On What We Know We Don't Know: Explanation, Theory, Linguistics, and How Questions Shape Them.* University of Chicago Press.

Buttny, R. (1993). *Social Accountability in Communication.* SAGE Publications.

Carnap, R. (1942). *Introduction to semantics.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.,.

Collingwood, R. G. (1939). *An autobiography.* Oxford University Press, London, New York, etc. 40005733 (Robin George), by R.G. Collingwood. 23 cm.

Davidson, D. (2001). *Inquiries Into Truth and Interpretation: Philosophical Essays.* Clarendon Press.

Davidson, D. (2005). *Truth, language and history.* Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, Oxford New York.

Dennett, D. (1987). *The intentional stance.* MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Dewey, J. (1925). *Experience and nature.* Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, London,.

Dretske, F. (2000). *Perception, Knowledge and Belief: Selected Essays.* Cambridge Studies in Philosophy. Cambridge University Press.

Dummett, M. (1978). *Truth and other enigmas.* Harvard University Press, Cam-

References

bridge.

Egginton, W. and Sandbothe, M. (2004). *The Pragmatic Turn in Philosophy: Contemporary Engagements between Analytic and Continental Thought.* State University of New York Press.

Fodor, J. (1990). *A theory of content and other essays.* MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Fotion, N. (2000). *John Searle.* Princeton University Press.

Frege, G. (1879). Begriffsschrift, eine der arithmetischen nachgebildete formelsprache des reinen denkens. In Van Heijenoort, J., editor, *From Frege to Gödel; a source book in mathematical logic, 1879-1931.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Frege, G. (1964). *The basic laws of arithmetic; exposition of the system.* University of California Press, Berkeley,.

Frege, G. (1966). *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik.* Olms paperbacks,. G.Olms, Hildesheim,.

Frege, G. (1977). *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege.* B. Blackwell.

Frege, G. (1979). *Posthumous writings.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Frege, G. (1980). *The foundations of arithmetic : a logico-mathematical enquiry into the concept of number.* Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., 2nd rev. edition.

Frege, G. (1991). *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy.* Wiley.

Fromkin, V. (2000). *Linguistics : an introduction to linguistic theory.* Blackwell, Malden, Mass. ; Oxford, U.K.

Garfinkel, A. (1981). *Forms of Explanation: Rethinking the Questions in Social Theory.* Yale University Press.

Geach, P. T. (1960). Ascriptivism. *Philosophical Review*, 69(2):221–225.

Ginzburg, J. (1995a). Resolving questions, i. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 18(5):459 – 527.

References

Ginzburg, J. (1995b). Resolving questions, ii. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 18(6):567 – 609.

Ginzburg, J. (2011). Questions: Logic and interactions. In van Benthem and Meulen (2010), page 1133.

Grice, H. (1991). *Studies in the Way of Words*. Harvard University Press.

Groenendijk, J. (1999). The logic of interrogation: Classical version. In *Proceedings of SALT*, volume 9, pages 109–126.

Groenendijk, J. and Stokhof, M. (1984). *Studies on the semantics of questions and the pragmatics of answers*. Dissertation, University of Amsterdam.

Groenendijk, J.and Stokhof, M. (1997). Questions. In Benthem, J. F. A. K. v. and Meulen, A. G. B. t., editors, *Handbook of logic and language*, pages 1105–1125. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Hale, B. and Wright, C. (2010). Assertibilist truth and objective content: Still inexplicit? In Weiss and Wanderer (2010), pages 276–293.

Hamblin, C. L. (1958). Questions. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 36(3):159–168.

Hamblin, C. L. (1973). Questions in montague english. *Foundations of Language*, 10(1):41–53.

Harper, D. (2001-2014). Online etymology dictionary.

Harrah, D. (1961). A logic of questions and answers. *Philosophy of Science*, 28(1):40–46.

Hausser, R. (1983). The syntax and semantics of english mood. In Kiefer, F., editor, *Questions and Answers*, pages 97–158. D. Reidel Pub. Co. ; Sold and distributed in the U.S.A. and Canada by Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht ; Boston Hingham, MA.

Higginbotham, J. (1996). The semantics of questions. In Lappin (1996).

Hintikka, J.and Halonen, I. (1995). Semantics and pragmatics for why-questions. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 92(12):pp. 636–657.

Hintikka, J. (1976). The semantics of questions and the questions of semantics.

References

Acta Philosophica Fennica, 28(4).

Jaworski, W. (2009). The logic of how-questions. *Synthese*, 166(1):133–155.

Kallestrup, J. (2009). Knowledge-wh and the problem of convergent knowledge. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 78(2):468–476.

Karttunen, L. (1977). Syntax and semantics of questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 1(1):3–44.

Khalifa, K. (2011). Contrastive explanations as social accounts. *Social Epistemology*, 24(4):263–284.

Krifka, M. (2001). Quantifying into question acts. *Natural Language Semantics*, 9(1):1–40.

Kubiński, T. (1965). Two kinds of quotation mark expressions in formalized languages. *Studia Logica*, 17(1):31 – 51.

Kubiński, T. (1966). A review of some problems of the logic of questions. *Studia Logica*, 18(1).

Kukla, R. and Lance, M. (2009). *'Yo!' and 'Lo!' : the Pragmatic Topography of the Space of Reasons*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Ladd, R. (1981). A first look at the semantics and pragmatics of negative questions and tag questions. *Proceedings of Chicago Linguistic Society*, pages 164–171.

Lance, M. and Kukla, R. (2010). Perception, language, and the first person. In Weiss and Wanderer (2010), pages 115–128.

Lance, M. and Kukla, R. (2013). Leave the gun; take the cannoli! the pragmatic topography of second-person calls. *Ethics*, 123(3):456–478.

Lappin, S. (1996). *The handbook of contemporary semantic theory*. [Blackwell handbooks in linguistics]. Blackwell Reference, Oxford, OX, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA.

Lewis, D. (1970). General semantics. *Synthese*, 22(1-2):18–67.

Lipton, P. (1991). Contrastive explanation and causal triangulation. *Philosophy of Science*, 58(4):687–697.

Manor, R. (1982). Pragmatics and the logic of questions and assertions. *Philo-*

sophica (Belgium), 29.

Masto, M. (2010). Questions, answers, and knowledge- wh. *Philosophical Studies*, 147(3):395–413.

McDowell, J. (2008). Motivating inferentialism: Comments on *Making It Explicit*. In Stekeler-Weithofer (2008), pages 109–126.

McKinnon, R. (2012). How do you know that 'how do you know?' challenges a speaker's knowledge? *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 93(1):65–83.

McLaughun, M., Cody, M., and O'hair, H. (1983). The management of failure events: Some contextual determinants of accounting behavior. *Human Communication Research*, 9(3):208–224.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self & society from the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. The University of Chicago press, Chicago, Ill.,.

Millikan, R. (1984). *Language, Thought, and Other Biological Categories: New Foundations for Realism*. Bradford Book.

Montague, R. (1970). Universal grammar. *Theoria*, 36(3):373–398.

Nelken, R. and Francez, N. (2002). Bilattices and the semantics of natural language questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 25(1):37–64.

Norris, C. (2002). *Hilary Putnam : realism, reason, and the uses of uncertainty*. Manchester University Press ; Distributed in the U.S. by Palgrave, Manchester ; New York New York.

Olsson, E. and Westlund, D. (2006). On the role of the research agenda in epistemic change. *Erkenntnis: An International Journal of Analytic Philosophy*, 65 (2)(2).

Price, H. (2013). *Expressivism, Pragmatism and Representationalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Quine, W. V. (1960). *Word and object*. Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge.

Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (1973). *A concise grammar of contemporary English*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

References

Reese, B. (2006). The meaning and use of negative polar interrogatives. *Empirical Issues in Syntax and Semantics*, 6:331–354.

Reiter, R. (1980). A logic for default reasoning. *Artificial Intelligence*, 13:81–137.

Rescorla, M. (2009). Assertion and its constitutive norms. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 79(1):98–130.

Risjord, M. (1999). No strings attached: Functional and intentional action explanations. *Philosophy of Science*, 66(3):313.

Risjord, M. (2000). *Woodcutters and Witchcraft: Rationality and Interpretive Change in the Social Sciences.* State University of New York Press.

Roberts, C. (1996). Information structure in discourse: Towards an integrated formal theory of pragmatics. *Working Papers in Linguistics-Ohio State University Department of Linguistics*, pages 91–136.

Romero, M. and Han, C. (2004). On negative yes/no questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 27(5):609–658.

Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity.* Cambridge University Press.

Rorty, R. (2005). A pragmatist view of contemporary analytic philosophy. In Egginton and Sandbothe (2004), pages 131–144.

Rorty, R. (2009). *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature.* Princeton University Press.

Russell, B. (1912). *The problems of philosophy.* H. Holt and company, New York,.

Schaffer, J. (2007). Knowing the answer. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 75(2):383–403.

Schaffer, J. (2009). Knowing the answer redux: Replies to brogaard and kallestrup. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 78(2):477–500.

Schönbach, P. (1990). *Account episodes : the management or escalation of conflict.* Cambridge University Press.

Scott, M. and Lyman, S. (1968). Accounts. *American Sociological Review*, 33(1):pp. 46–62.

Searle, J. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language.* Cambridge

References

University Press.

Searle, J. (1979). *Expression and meaning : studies in the theory of speech acts.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Eng. ; New York.

Searle, J. (1983). *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind.* Cambridge University Press.

Searle, J. (1999). *Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World.* Basic Books.

Searle, J. and Vanderveken, D. (1985). *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic.* Cambridge University Press.

Sellars, W. (1997). *Empiricism and the philosophy of mind.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Sellars, W., Scharp, K., and Brandom, R. (2007). *In the space of reasons : selected essays of Wilfrid Sellars.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Stahl, G. (1969). The effectivity of questions. *Nous*, 3(2):211–218.

Stalnaker, R. (1973). Presuppositions. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 2(4):447 – 457.

Stalnaker, R. (1998). On the representation of context. *Journal of Logic, Language and Information*, 7(1):3–19.

Stalnaker, R. (2002). Common ground. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 25(5-6):701–721.

Stekeler-Weithofer, P. (2008). *The pragmatics of making it explicit.* Benjamins current topics. John Benjamins, Amsterdam, The Netherlands ; Philadelphia, PA.

Tichy, P. (1978). Questions, answers, and logic. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 15(4):275–284.

Turri, J. (2010). Prompting challenges. *Analysis*, 70(3):456–462.

Valberg, E. (1977). On an ambiguity in 'why do you think that...?' questions. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 27(109):pp. 325–334.

van Benthem, J. and Meulen, A. (2010). *Handbook of Logic and Language.* Elsevier

Science.

Van Fraassen, B. (1980). *The Scientific Image.* Clarendon Press.

Von Stechow, A. and Zimmermann, T. E. (1984). Term answers and contextual change. *Linguistics*, 22(1):3–40.

Wanderer, J. (2010a). Brandom's challenges. In Weiss and Wanderer (2010), pages 96–114.

Wanderer, J. (2010b). Inhabiting the space of reasoning. *Analysis*, 70(2):367–378.

Weiss, B. and Wanderer, J. (2010). *Reading Brandom : on making it explicit.* Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York.

Williamson, T. (2002). *Knowledge and Its Limits.* Oxford University Press.

Wiśniewski, A. (1994). On the reducibility of questions. *Erkenntnis*, 40(2):265–284.

Wiśniewski, A. (1995). *The Posing of Questions: Logical Foundations of Erotetic Inferences.* Springer.

Wiśniewski, A. (2003). Erotetic search scenarios. *Synthese*, 134(3):389–427.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical investigations.* Macmillan, New York,.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations" Generally Known as The Blue and Brown Books.* B. Blackwell.

Wittgenstein, L. (1961). *Tractatus logico-philosophicus.* Humanities Press, New York,.

Wittgenstein, L. (1978). *Philosophical Grammar.* University of California Press.