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Force, content and the varieties of unity

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Abstract. A strict dichotomy between the force / mode of speech acts and intentional states and their propositional content has been a central feature of analytical philosophy of language and mind since the time of Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell. Recently this dichotomy has been questioned by philosophers such as Peter Hanks (2015, 2016) and Francois Recanati (2016), who argue that we can't account for propositional unity independently of the forceful acts of speakers and propose new ways of responding to the notorious 'Frege point' by appealing to a notion of force cancellation. In my paper I will offer some supplementary criticisms of the traditional view, but also a way of reconceptualizing the force-content distinction which allows us to preserve certain of its features, and an alternative response to the Frege point that rejects the notion of force cancellation in favor of an appeal to intentional acts that create *additional forms of unity* at higher levels of intentional organization: acts such as *questioning* a statement or order, or merely *putting it forward* or *entertaining* it; *pretending* to state or order; or *conjoining* or *disjoining* statements or orders. This allows us to understand how we can present a forceful act without being committed to it. In contrast, the Frege point confuses a lack of *commitment to* with a lack of *commitment or force in* what is put forward.

1. Introduction

Philosophical arguments often go wrong at the first step. But when that first step seems compelling, even obvious and is at the same time essentially connected to deep-seated assumptions, theories, concepts and ways of dividing subject matter, it may take decades, sometimes centuries, before it is ever challenged head-on. One such step in the recent history of philosophy, particularly the history of analytic philosophy, is the step that leads to the

opposition between the force of a speech act and its content, thought to consist in a proposition, which Peter Geach (1965) called the "Frege point". The clauses of a conditional (or disjunction) are not asserted and thus not assertions – what could be more obvious? – and therefore the minor premise and the conclusion of a modus ponens argument cannot be assertions either on pain of equivocation. They must rather be forceless entities, viz. propositions.

This idea is a central part of a widely accepted cluster of ideas according to which assertions and other speech acts such as orders and questions as well as intentional states like believing and intending are fundamentally different in kind from propositions, where propositions are the primary truth value bearers and, since logic is generally thought to be truth-functional, the entities that logical operations are performed on. Speech acts and intentional states are then conceptualized as attitudes towards propositions. Moreover, this tends to be connected to a general picture of mind and language according to which propositions are primarily the object of semantics, which studies word-world relations, representation, reference, truth and conventional meaning, so that propositions are also often thought to be sentence meanings, while pragmatics is thought to be the study of speaker's forceful, illocutionary acts and of non-conventional varieties of meaning. This picture also tends to suggest that the study of logic and of reference and predication, of meaning and truth, has nothing essentially to do with the acts of speakers, and that conversely the force of speaker's acts is not a matter of conventional meaning.

Frege conceived propositions in an unabashedly platonist fashion – even though he called them "thoughts". He thought they existed prior to and independently of the acts and states of subjects. But recently some philosophers, notably Scott Soames and Peter Hanks, have started a project of naturalizing propositions by reconceptualizing them in act-theoretic terms. Soames's proposal preserves the dichotomy of force and proposition, as he suggests

we can predicate a property of an object by merely entertaining a proposition, for example, in imagination or hypothesis, without committing to its truth. This would be a further step we would take in asserting its truth or otherwise acknowledging or endorsing it. Hanks has strongly criticized this proposal, charging that the idea that we could ascribe a property to an object without thereby taking a position with regard to whether it actually has that property is "incoherent". Anything that bears a truth value must involve such a position and thus must have force. The traditional separation of propositions as truth value bearers from force is therefore untenable. A proposition can only be a unified truth value bearer through the forceful act of a subject.

This argument is powerful and, I believe, correct, but it forces Hanks to challenge the Frege point head-on. How can propositions have force and yet occur unasserted as e.g. in conditionals and disjunctions? Hanks proposes that in such cases force gets "cancelled". Cancellation is not another act of the subject, but a feature of the context. A "pure", that is, free-standing act of predication counts as an assertion, but if such an act is performed in special contexts such as those created by fiction or by certain connectives, its assertive force is cancelled. I believe Hanks is right that the Frege point must be resisted. However, various critics have forcefully questioned whether Hanks really succeeds in the balancing act he must undertake to resist it.[1] He argues that force is necessary to tie the elements of a proposition together into a unified whole that can be a truth value bearer. But if force then gets cancelled, how can it still perform this function – as it must, since we still have to be able to think of the clauses of conditionals etc. as truth value bearers?

It may seem that Hanks here is trying to have his cake and eat it too and that ultimately his account does not fare better than Soames's. Everybody apparently has to recognize that predication occurs in non-assertive as well as in assertive contexts. So why

[1] See Hom & Schwartz (2013), Reiland (2013), Recanati (2016) and Green (forthcoming).

should it matter whether we conceptualize the assertive occurrences as basic and the non-assertive ones as being derived from them by subtraction through cancellation, or the non-assertive occurrences as basic and the assertive ones as being derived from them by addition through endorsement? It looks as if the end result of our understanding of predication e.g. in the clause of a conditional will be the same regardless of whether we think of it as being part of something inherently forceless or as being arrived at by subtracting force. Neither view appears to be in a better position to explain how a non-assertive act of predication can still be truth-valuable, and one might even wonder whether they are actually substantially different (Recanati 2016).

In a recent response to criticisms of this kind Hanks appeals to developmental considerations, arguing that a child could not perform non-assertive or hypothetical acts of predication prior to assertive or non-hypothetical acts (Hanks 2016). I think it is both true and important that forceful acts are more basic *in this sense*. But it is not sufficient to answer the points just made. Soames might retort by saying that non-assertive acts are more basic in the sense that they are universal, that they are analytically contained in all acts of predication, as assertive acts are just those acts where an *additional* act of endorsement is performed. Once we distinguish these different senses of "basic", the appearance of conflict disappears. We just have two different terminologies, and still neither appears to be better placed to explain how non-assertive acts of predication can unify truth value bearers.

A more promising line of response is indicated by some other things Hanks says in his most recent reply to critics, things like that talk of cancellation may be infelicitous terminologically ("a misnomer"), that force is not really removed in cancellation contexts. He even says that "[c]ancelled predication is not less than full-fledged predication; if anything, it is *more* than predication." (ibid., his italics). In this paper I want to argue that if we pursue this line further we can break the stalemate with Soames and develop a better response to the

Frege point. However, to do that I think we need to move beyond Hanks's position. Hanks's attack on the Frege point is an important step forward, but I think that there is a sense in which he still concedes too much to it. I will argue that we don't need really need to distinguish between assertive and non-assertive occurrences of predication in the manner suggested by Hanks at all. This is because force is indeed not 'cancelled'. It is more apt to say that it is "suspended" and that the relevant clauses are embedded, as it has been put traditionally.

The deep problem with the Frege point is that it misinterprets the nature of this embedding and draws a confused conclusion from it. It misinterprets the fact that certain contexts allow us to present or display a forceful entity *without being committed to it* as an attitude towards something forceless. To overcome this confusion, we indeed have to look at what *more* is going on in these contexts, but, contrary to Hanks, I will argue that this more consists in intentional acts of the subject, acts such as, for example, *pretending* to state or order, *questioning* statements or orders, or *disjoining* or otherwise connecting them. These acts create units at higher levels of intentional organizations which embed acts such as acts of stating and ordering and let's us present them while suspending commitment to them.

This suggestion seems pretty straightforward in some ways, so why hasn't it been made before?[2] I believe that at least part of the reason lies in the strict division of labor briefly described above between logic and semantics on the one hand and pragmatics and the theory of speech acts on the other. From this perspective, one won't tend to think of logical operations such as disjunction or negation, which are at the heart of the Frege point, in act-theoretic terms, because they belong to the domain of logic, not that of speech act theory. Moreover, our whole thinking about logic, because it revolves around the notion of a proposition, is truth-centric and therefore suffers, like our entire thinking about intentionality

[2] At least not that I am aware of. See Schmitz (2016) for an earlier version of some of the ideas in this paper. Eleni Manolakaki expressed what seems to be a similar view in her abstract for this workshop.

and rationality, from a persistent "theory-bias" (Schmitz 2013b). This makes it even harder to integrate the whole variety of practical speech acts, such as promises and orders, and acts of connecting them and the deductive inferences based on them, into our thinking. As a consequence, they are often left to the side, and this in turn reinforces the theory bias. I will try to show that even just considering examples from the practical domain will go some way towards debunking the Frege point and the framework that surrounds it. Within the narrow confines of this paper, I can still of course only scratch the surface of these important and wide-ranging issues.

Hanks takes an important step beyond the theory-biased standard framework of propositions by recognizing two further kinds of propositions in addition to the truth-valuable kind: imperative and interrogative propositions. These kinds of propositions correspond to three fundamental kinds of acts by which subjects "combine properties with objects" (2015: 186): predicating, the truth-evaluable kind, and ordering and asking. These kinds can be distinguished in terms of their direction of fit, their satisfaction conditions and the way they are reported. Predicative propositions have truth conditions, mind-to-world direction of fit, and are typically reported using that-clauses; imperative propositions have fulfillment conditions, world-to-mind direction of fit and are typically reported using non-finite to-clauses; interrogative propositions have answerhood conditions and mind-to-mind direction of fit, as they require an answer by a mind, and they are typically reported using whether-clauses. Generally, on Hanks's view propositions are "devices we use to classify and individuate our mental states and utterances" (manuscript: 1).

I will later criticize the idea that questions are on the same level as assertions or orders, but I will follow Hanks in dealing with intentional states and speech acts in the same breath. I tend to think though that it might be a better terminological policy to retire the term "proposition", at least in a central role, since it is so closely tied to ways of thinking I think

we should leave behind, and have taken to using the term "posture" as a cover term for both intentional states and speech acts.[3] Accordingly, I will sometimes use the term "force" to refer both to intentional mode and to the force of speech acts and the term "intentional act" to refer to both mental and linguistic acts. As a final terminological remark, I will typically use "theoretical postures" and "practical postures" to mark the distinction between mind-to-world and world-to-mind direction of fit postures.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the next, second, section I will criticize the traditional understanding of propositional attitudes as theory-biased. I will argue that we need to clearly separate a representation of a state of affairs from such a representation as from a theoretical point of view or position. I go on to propose to reconceptualize the force-content dichotomy in terms of practical or theoretical positions subjects take towards the reality of states of affairs. After a brief discussion of the theory bias in the third section I go on to develop the alternative response to the Frege point in the next three section. I discuss acts of putting forward and questioning in the fourth section, fictional contexts and acts of pretense in the fifth section and connectives in the sixth. In the seventh and final section I compare my account to Hanks's and Recanati's accounts in terms of force cancellation and explain how it can avoid the dilemma sketched at the beginning.

2. Postures as positions towards state of affairs

The core of the traditional conception of postures as propositional attitudes can be summarized through the following claims:

1) Postures are attitudes towards propositions, which are their objects / contents.

[3] See Schmitz (Schmitz 2013a, 2017). Friederike Moltmann (e.g. 2017) makes similar use of the term "attitudinal object".

2) Propositions are the objects / contents of both theoretical and practical postures, that is, they are e.g. what is asserted and believed as well as what is ordered or intended.
3) Propositions are truth value bearers, indeed the primary and constant truth value bearers.
4) The representational / intentional content of a posture is identical to the proposition that is its object / content. Subject and mode / force make no contribution to content and are only represented in reports of postures.

Throughout the history of the traditional conception, philosophers have often struggled to distinguish object and content or even outright refused to do so. For example, Russell at one point used the terminology of propositions to refer to states of affairs and thus to objects. More recently, philosophers who have employed the word "content" often have still only used it to refer to objects such as state of affairs in the world (e.g. McDowell 1996). I assume here that a clear separation between content and object can and must be made. Content is a feature of the representing posture, of the subjective act, event or state. It is what determines its conditions of satisfaction (Searle 1983). Its objects are those features of the world the posture succeeds in representing. These can be things, properties, events and so on, but the category of objects that will be most important for our present purposes are states of affairs.[4] The distinction between object and content is not only necessary because postures that fail to succeed in representing a state of affairs, like false beliefs or unrealized intentions, still have content, but because we need to capture that in virtue of which a subject succeeds in the good cases of successful representation. To block a common misunderstanding, content is not 'between' subject or world. It is the way the subject's state / act is with regard to its

[4] I will here disregard postures just directed at individual objects such hating war or loving Sally.

intentional significance. To turn it into an object between subject and world is to commit what John Searle (2015) calls the “Bad Argument”.

2) embodies what Hanks calls the “taxonomic” version of the force-content distinction. In one way it seems innocent and even obvious. We can point to a certain state of affairs such as Samuel Martins smoking tobacco (Searle 1969), or Hillary Clinton being eloquent (Hanks 2015) and the various positions subjects can take up towards it such as asserting or believing it to be case, ordering or intending to bring it about, or questioning its reality. It seems clear that there is a sense in which these various positions are directed at the same state of affairs, and once we unambiguously separate the state of affairs as an object from content, it is further evident that there must also be content shared between these different postures that represents the same state of affairs.

What is or at least should be contentious is that this shared element can at the same time be a truth value bearer, a proposition in the sense of 3). This is because truth is representational success from a theoretical position towards the world, as is evident from the fact that we ascribe truth values to assertions and beliefs, but not to intentions and orders. In intending and ordering we do not take up theoretical positions towards the world, so why should these postures contain representations of the world connected to a theoretical position? This seems ad hoc and at least in tension with our practice of ascribing truth values. So the traditional model ascribes two mutually incompatible roles to the proposition. As a truth value bearer, it must be essentially connected to a theoretical position. As the content shared between theoretical and practical postures, it should be neutral between theoretical and practical positions and essentially incomplete: a complete, satisfaction value bearing posture must be tied to a practical or theoretical position towards the world.

Since a fact is what makes a statement true, the counterpart to the claim that the contents of postures are all truth-value bearers in the language of object-directedness is the

claim that all postures are directed at facts. This claim is also implausible, as when I e.g. intend to close the door or order somebody to close it, I am not directed at this action as a fact but as a goal. It's not a 'done deal', but something yet to be accomplished. That's why to-clauses and non-finite verb forms generally are a strong indicator of practical, world-to-mind direction of fit postures, while that-clauses and finite verb forms tend to indicate theoretical, mind-to-world direction of fit ones (Hanks 2015; Schmitz 2013b). From these different positions we can yet be directed at the same state of affairs, as when e.g. I realize my intention to close the door and you come to believe that I did. But this identical state of affairs is represented as a goal from my position of intending and as a fact from your position of believing.

How should we capture what may be shared between different postures if we reject the view that their content is that of a truth bearer, so that it is not apt to say that they all "raise the question of the truth of a proposition" (Searle 1969)? I propose to reconceptualize this in object-directed terms: in all postures a subject takes a position with regard to the reality of a state of affairs. It affirms this reality from a theoretical or a practical position. By asserting or believing something, I affirm its reality as a fact, as something that is the case, and take theoretical responsibility for its reality. By ordering or intending something, I affirm realizing it, I affirm it as a goal, as something to be done, and take practical responsibility for its reality. This formulation also intentionally avoids invoking the notion of a question. As Hanks (2015) rightly emphasizes, the idea that all postures must involve an act of questioning or mere entertainment, is another questionable feature of traditional thinking. I will soon address how questions should be understood on the present proposal, and this discussion will reinforce this point.

We can also formulate this in content terms: all postures have content representing a state of affairs. What is wrong with the traditional view is not this claim per se but the idea

that this content as such is truth-evaluable. I propose to call this content "state of affairs-content" or simply "what-content", as it corresponds to *what* a subject intends or believes, orders or asserts. And just like we can and should preserve a notion of content that is neutral with regard to different forces, I think we also can and should preserve a notion of predication that is neutral in this sense. This notion is to be understood in terms of the role predication plays in the representation of the state of affairs. We need to represent how entities hang together or combine in a state of affairs regardless of whether we affirm the reality of this state of affairs from a practical or theoretical position (or whether we question, deny, or merely imagine it). The linguistic expression of this is the invariant meaning of the stem of the copula verb or other verb, which is modulated through grammatical mood, intonation and other force indicators.[5]

Accordingly, there is also a sense in which we can speak of the unity of the representation of a state of affairs, even if this unity is not the unity of a truth or other satisfaction value bearer. And there is a corresponding aspect of the traditional problem of the unity of the proposition which I believe can be raised even independently of the question of the unity of a truth value bearer, namely: what is the unity of a representation of a state of affairs, why doesn't it reduce to a list of items? This question can be raised regardless of whether we take up a practical or theoretical position towards this state of affairs.

If this is right, the act of predication (in this sense) cannot be what unifies a truth value (or other satisfaction value) bearer. There must be an additional act that connects the representation of a state of affairs to a theoretical (or practical) position: an act of asserting or ordering etc.. Only such an act will complete the posture and turn it into a satisfaction value bearer. Neither Soames as a proponent of the traditional force-content distinction nor Hanks recognizes the difference between these acts. The traditional view supposes that predication

[5] For further argument, in particular syntactical arguments for this, see Collins (2017).

could be both variable or neutral between different forces and what unifies the truth value bearer, the proposition that serves as content. Hanks sees correctly that nothing that falls short of a subject taking a position with regard to whether entities combine in certain ways could be a truth value bearer, but this leads him to reject the force-content distinction altogether and thus any notion of predication as neutral between different theoretical and practical forces. (While he does distinguish between assertion and predication, this distinction is entirely motivated through the contrast between a free-standing act of predication that counts as an assertion, and the same act as occurring in a cancellation context, in which it does not, not through the contrast between representing how things hang together in a state of affairs and the various theoretical and practical positions one may take up towards this state of affairs.)

Against both these views I have argued for a reconceptualization rather than a complete rejection of the force-content distinction. We can and must recognize there is something shared and neutral between different forces / positions: a representation of a state of affairs and a corresponding act of predication which represents how things and properties are combined in it. The mistake of the traditional view is just to think that this representation could at the same time be a truth-value bearer. To get a truth or other satisfaction value bearer, the posture must be completed through an act of believing or asserting, intending or ordering etc., through which a subject takes a theoretical or practical position with regard to the reality of a state of affairs. Only something that is connected to the theoretical position of a subject can be a truth value bearer; only something that is connected to a practical position can be the bearer of other satisfaction values like being realized or executed.

3. Overcoming the theory bias of the traditional model

The argument of the last section raises at least the following questions. How could the traditional model of propositional attitudes remain so popular, could remain basically unchallenged for such a long time, despite the fact that the tension between the required neutrality of propositions and the fact that truth must be connected to a theoretical position seems pretty obvious on reflection? And how is the theoretical or practical position towards a state of affairs connected to the representation of this state of affairs? These are important diagnostic and theoretical questions that I have addressed elsewhere (Schmitz 2013, 2017). Here I can only sketch my answers to prepare my response to the Frege point.

To get a complete answer to the first question, we would have to review much of the recent history of analytic philosophy. For example, we would have to talk about the tendency to respond to the excesses of subjectivism by taking the equally extreme objectivist stance of trying to remove all references to a subject (and its positions) from our accounts of language and mind, or at least the most central parts of these accounts. Obviously, such an enterprise is way beyond the scope of this paper. But let me note two points. The first is that there may be a tendency to confound the sort of neutralization provided by the contexts highlighted by the Frege point with the kind of force neutrality required by the traditional model. To put what is essentially the same point differently, there is the difficulty of disentangling different notions of force, that is, for example, what distinguishes serious from non-serious contexts, from what distinguishes assertions from orders. However, I suspect that what has made this so intractable is how it interacts with the second point, namely a persistent tendency to privilege the theoretical position towards the world – what I call the "theory bias" in the spirit of earlier similar diagnoses like J.L. Austin's diagnosis of the "descriptive fallacy" and R.M. Hare's diagnosis of the "indicative-bound" nature of the thinking of logicians. One manifestation of the theory bias is the tendency to not even consider practical examples, to feed one's mind

with a one-sided diet of examples from the theoretical domain. As I will try to show, simply considering practical examples in certain contexts will already take us some steps towards defusing the 'Frege point'.

In addition, the theory bias also consists at least in a presumption in favor of reductionism, that is, in favor of such ideas like that imperatives can be reduced to declaratives (e.g. Davidson 1979; Lewis 1970), meaning in general to truth conditions (Davidson 1984), intention to belief (Velleman 1989) and practical to theoretical knowledge (Stanley and Willlamson 2001); a presumption that persists in spite of the fact that these attempts are implausible on their face and typically quickly subject to serious objections. Part of the reason why reductionism and the theory bias are so tenacious is likely the attraction of the idea to assimilate as much of our understanding of mind and language to the paradigm of a semantics built on standard logic and thus on the notion of a proposition. Thinking of propositions as the shared core of practical and theoretical postures holds out the prospect of achieving this is at what may appear to be little cost. But the challenge of accounting for practical postures won't go away and the problems of reductionism are obvious. So here is another strategy: instead of trying to reduce the practical domain to a theory-biased framework, let us unbias this framework and truly generalize it, so that it can account for the practical as naturally as for the theoretical domain.

We have already seen how this can work for understanding the structure of postures: clearly distinguish between a state of affairs as represented from a theoretical position – a fact – and as represented from a practical position – a goal. Accordingly, distinguish the mere representation of a state of affairs from the practical or theoretical position connected to it. (In contrast, the traditional understanding of a proposition takes the latter for granted and thus treats the unit of a representation of a state of affairs and the theoretical position from which it is represented as an unanalyzed whole.) And think of truth as one mode of satisfaction

among others. The next step is to generalize ordinary standard logic to what I call "mode logic". To do that, we have to add mode / force symbols to the standard symbols *as a new category of non-logical symbols*. Force symbols have to be non-logical because, as I have argued, they are needed to complete representations of states of affairs into satisfaction value bearers on which logical operations can be performed. Therefore also a separate force has to be assigned to each clause of a satisfaction-functional connection such as the material conditional. For example, if both clauses have assertive force, our conditional will look like this: "A (Fa) -> A (Gb)". (Of course this runs directly into the Frege point soon to be discussed.) So all elementary postures will contain force symbols. Accordingly, the logical operations performed on them will be satisfaction- rather than truth-functional, truth being a special case of satisfaction. Standard propositional and quantificational logic can be seen as a special case of this logic – the case where only a generic theoretical force / position is allowed – that of propositions, which therefore does not have to be explicitly represented.

This is not the place to develop this logic and to discuss all objections that can be raised against it. This is the task of a companion piece to this paper (Schmitz manuscript). I just sketched the idea to show how the general strategy of reconceptualizing propositional attitudes that I have proposed can be extended to a corresponding treatment of logic, and to prepare the ground for later discussions of practical deductive inference.

If force symbols are integrated into logic as non-logical symbols, this gives even more urgency to the issue how their meaning is to be understood and thus to our second question for this section, namely how the subject's position towards a state of affairs is connected to the representation of this state of affairs. I suppose that most contemporary philosophers, if they think about mode / force at all, will tend to think about it in functionalist terms, or perhaps in purely phenomenal, normativist or expressivist ways. But they won't likely think of force as representational. The theory-biased model of propositional attitudes implicitly

presumes that all representation is from a theoretical position which is itself not represented – the view from nowhere of the eye that sees, but is itself not seen.

However, there is a tradition of thinkers ranging from Immanuel Kant and Jean Piaget to more recent figures such as P. F. Strawson, Gareth Evans and Jose Luis Bermudez, who think of world- and self-awareness as inextricably linked, as two sides of the same coin. In a similar spirit, John Searle has argued that already at the level of action and perception we experience active or passive causal relations between ourselves and the world. Inspired by these thinkers, I have come to believe that in any posture we always experience our kind of relatedness to the world, our theoretical, cognitive and epistemic or practical, conative position vis-à-vis a state of affairs, or have a sense of it, or otherwise represent it. In believing, we have at least a sense of being receptive to the world and of our position being grounded in perception – our own, or, via testimony, that of others. By contrast, in intending we have a sense of an active position vis-à-vis a state of affairs, of having practical responsibility to bring it about and of being poised to act accordingly. And we also always have a sense of the strength of our position, so-called "metacognitive" feelings[6] of the degree of our epistemic confidence, for example, or the strength of our desire for an outcome, or our sense of control over it. Note that the claim here is not that we necessarily have a concept of our position: experiencing our position or having a sense of it are non-conceptual forms of representation. (Grammaticalized markers such as sentence moods are also a distinct form of representation, whose peculiarities are undertheorized in philosophy.)

The kind of awareness I have in mind is not awareness of a position as part of something that is the case, as represented by what I called "what-content", as it would have to be on the traditional model. It is not that we look into ourselves and find the fact that we have

[6] Metacognitive feelings are often discussed in terms of higher-level monitoring states. I believe this to be an artifact of the traditional view, on which the subject can only come become aware of its position through an additional, monitoring state. On the present proposal, feeling of epistemic or practical confidence are an integral part of the first-order posture.

a certain position. It is rather the awareness of our position that makes awareness of a state of affairs the awareness of a fact or of a goal, depending on the kind of position. It is the awareness we have in experiencing our theoretical or practical relation to the world and in *taking* theoretical or practical positions rather than in reporting them. This awareness has a distinct representational role within the posture.[7] That is why I suggested its linguistic expression should be thought of as belonging to a separate kind of non-logical expression and why I also want to propose that its content is a special kind of content, which I propose to call "mode content". The mode content of a subject's posture represents the position it takes up towards a state of affairs. It's linguistic expression are force markers, by which the subject indicates or presents this position.

I find the claim that we are never just aware of a state of affairs – from nowhere as it were – but also of our theoretical or practical position relative to it, simply plausible on reflection. One can also find many statements in the literature which are naturally interpreted as expressing it, e.g. when Miranda Fricker (forthcoming) writes that "one who asserts P presents herself as taking responsibility for the truth of P…". But accepting it also has a number of more theoretical advantages, some of which I want to briefly discuss now before I go on to demonstrate its greatest theoretical advantage in the present context, namely that it can help to debunk the Frege point. The first theoretical argument departs from Searle's already mentioned actional and perceptual states, but also a variety of other postures such as, memories, intentions and orders, have a causal component in their satisfaction conditions (Searle, 1983). For example, an intention or order needs to cause what is intended or ordered to count as executed and thus as satisfied, while a perceptual state or a memory needs to be caused by what is perceived or remembered to count as veridical or true and thus as satisfied. Under the influence of the received view, Searle sought to capture this by inserting into the

[7] Maria van der Schaar (forthcoming) draws a similar distinction in terms of a first-person / third person contrast.

propositional content of these postures a clause to the effect that they themselves cause the relevant state of affairs or be caused by it – he refers to this as "causal self-referentiality" or "self-reflexivity" (2015). But locating this causal content in what I called “what-content” has implausible consequences.

One is that because of the difference in the direction of causation between e.g. intentions and memories, an intention and a memory now could not have the same content / object (Schmitz 2013a, 2017), because the causal relations become part of what is intended, remembered, and so on. But this seems wrong because, as we noted earlier, if I intend to close the door and you later remember that I did, it is natural to say that we are directed at the same state of affairs. Searle’s proposal seems to misplace the causal content in what is intended or remembered (Recanati 2007, 126f). That my intention can only count as executed if it causes me to do what intend is not a matter of what I intend, but of my intending it. To locate this difference in the what-content is an artifact of the traditional view and its conception of content. What I intend when I intend to close the door is not that the intention cause this action. Rather I represent this action from a position of directedness at causing it, of being committed and poised to cause it. So the alternative to Searle's account I am proposing is to say that the subject of an intention represents her position and has at least a sense of that position as an active one that is only satisfied if it causes the intended action. The subject is aware of this action as its goal and that is why its posture is only satisfied if issues in this action.

Searle arrives at his account on the basis of three key assumptions: first, that some satisfaction conditions have the causal components we discussed; second, that satisfaction conditions must be determined by intentional content; third, that intentional content is propositional content in the sense of the traditional model. I accept the first observation and also the second principle. Given my criticism of Searle's account and thus of the third point, I

think the first two points provide a powerful argument in favor of the idea that mode is representational.

The second theoretical argument in favor of the thesis I want to mention is that it allows a straightforward solution to all forms of Moore's paradox. For example, I cannot assert that it rains and then go on to deny that I believe that it does because in asserting it I already present myself as having some form of cognitive access to this state of affairs. A third and related point is that the thesis harmonizes well with all norm accounts of assertion such as e.g. knowledge accounts (Williamson 2000). Why should a speaker who asserts something be subject to a norm of knowledge, or reasonable belief etc., is this just something imposed from the outside, or how is that norm connected to assertion? A straightforward answer is: because assertion presents its subject as knowing, or reasonably believing etc.. A fourth point is that a representational interpretation of mode is likely also advantageous in the context of constructing the mode logic sketched above.

4. The unity of higher level acts I: putting forward and questioning

Since Frege, philosophers have mostly appealed to the following contexts to justify the separation of propositions or thoughts as forceless from assertions or other postures: contexts in which something is merely entertained, or merely put forward for consideration; fictional or other non-serious contexts such as joking; and, most influentially, the context of conditionals and disjunctions. This section and the next two will be devoted to these contexts. I will argue that once we clearly separate the different dimensions involved and see that they are independent, the argument for propositions as forceless collapses. All these appeals commit versions of the same fallacy: they confuse the creation of a context in which a subject can present a forceful posture without being committed to it, with the presentation of something forceless; that is, they confuse a *lack of commitment to* a posture with a *lack of*

commitment in the posture, that is, with a lack of force. Moreover, I shall also argue as against Hanks that these contexts are created through additional intentional acts which create new forms of unity at higher levels of intentional organization, which embed or suspend forces, but do not cancel them. Considering practical postures in contexts in which they have been neglected in the theory-biased debates so far will prove to be crucial for the argument at various points.

Let us begin with the phenomenon of merely putting forward an idea, say in a discussion, or of merely entertaining it in the course of deliberation. Of course it is true that I can merely entertain or put something forward in this way without having made up my mind, without committing to it. And something that is put forward for consideration prior to a decision, a proposal, is really what the word "proposition" ordinarily means, which is why it was recruited by philosophers for their own special purposes. But from the fact that something is merely put forward for consideration it does not follow that *what* is so put forward lacks force. This suggestion is easily refuted once we consider that what is so put forward can be either theoretical or practical. What is proposed can be a statement of fact, as in a debate, but it can also be a proposal for a course of action, or even a law, as in the propositions put to votes in California and other places. Likewise, what we merely entertain in deliberation can be intentions and plans for action just as well as beliefs.

The point also applies to questions and to the corresponding states of mind such as doubting and wondering. Putting something forward for debate or entertaining something for purposes of deciding on it indeed seems to be equivalent, or at least nearly equivalent with asking the corresponding yes-no questions. So let me focus my analysis on questioning and wondering here and thus on what Hanks calls "interrogative propositions". Recall that Hanks argues that interrogatives are one of three fundamental types of speech acts, not merely a species of directives, and that they have mind-to-mind rather than mind-to-world or world-to-

mind direction of fit. To justify this claim, he appeals to the fact that interrogative sentences are one of the three most common sentence types in the world's languages and that they are reported in a distinct way, through "whether"- clauses rather than "that"- clauses or "to"-clauses. I believe that Hanks is right that interrogatives are a fundamental category, but that they are not on all fours with practical and theoretical postures.

This becomes evident when we take practical questions into account, which Hanks neglects as much as Frege and most discussions of questions – a manifestation of the theory bias. For example, we don't only wonder and ask whether the door is closed, but also whether *to close it*. (In English, every directive in imperative form can be questioned simply by using question intonation, respectively by adding a question mark: "Close the door?".) The example further illustrates that there are also two corresponding types of whether-reports: whether + finite clause for theoretical, and whether + non-finite to-clause for practical questions. Furthermore, though I will focus on yes-no questions here, there are also practical and theoretical forms of wh-questions. We may not only wonder who went to the zoo, but also who to take there.

So interrogative acts of questioning and wondering, just like the closely related acts of merely putting forward and entertaining, modify entities that display practical as well as theoretical forces. Indeed it is essential that they operate on practical or theoretical attitudes. I cannot ask a yes-no question without putting a statement, an order, or another theoretical or practical posture, *into question.* I cannot question the reality of a state of affairs from a position that is neither theoretical or practical. Nor can I meaningfully merely put forward or entertain something that is entirely forceless. If I just put forward a force-neutral representation of the state of affairs of the door being closed – and we don't really have any way of doing this in natural language – people would ask "What do you mean, do you want us to debate whether the door is closed, or whether to close it?". This also means that

interrogative acts, like the non-committal hypothetical judgments discussed by Hanks, are ontogenetically less basic than and dependent on the theoretical and practical postures that they question. A child could not understand a question if it could not also understand the posture that it questions and its negation, either of which may serve as an answer to the question.

There is something very nice and insightful in the suggestion that interrogatives have their own category of direction of fit, mind-to-mind. It brings out the dialogical character of even mere inner questioning and the heightened awareness of our subjectivity, of the possibility of the failure of our positions, that questioning them brings with it. These points are actually strengthened by emphasizing that just like questioning is not on all fours with asserting and ordering, mind-to-mind direction of fit is not on all fours with mind-to-world and world-to-mind direction of fit. As each interrogative questions a theoretical or practical position, they are answered and thus satisfied by taking such positions.

For these reasons, interrogative force should be represented as follows in a notation for intentional acts (with symbols that should be self-explanatory):

“Close the door?”:	?O (aRb)
“Did you close the door?”:	?A (aRb)

If one thinks the act of putting something forward for discussion is importantly different from questioning, it can be represented in essentially the same way, except for a corresponding symbol replacing the question mark.

The upshot is that an additional intentional act of questioning allows a subject to present e.g. an assertion or an order without being committed to it. Even though it would be wrong to say without qualification that the subject asserted or ordered, symbols for these acts

are still ineliminable in representing the acts the subject does perform. The subject indicates whether it puts a theoretical or a practical position into question, or, as we can say equivalently, whether it questions the reality of a certain state of affairs from a theoretical or a practical position, as a fact to be known, or a goal to be realized. If we don't know which position it is, we won't understand the act being performed. We need to know whether a practical or theoretical question is being asked.

If the reader is still reluctant to accept that theoretical or practical force is an ineliminable part of the representation of the act, consider the suggestion to label an assertion differently when it is being questioned – e.g. to then call it a "proposition"! Now *that* of course we can do, but if it is thought this means it doesn't carry assertive force anymore at all, I don't see how we could make sense of the fact that we can generate any question by taking an assertion (or order) and questioning it. If this made force disappear, how could the question really question the assertion or order, and how could answering "yes" or "no" amount to affirming or denying the assertion or order? If the proposition really were something fundamentally different from an assertion rather than just an assertion (or other posture) *in a specific role*, I don't see how we could make sense of this. I'm thus led to the somewhat ironic conclusion that putting something forward *as a proposition* (in the ordinary sense) is actually a special *use* we make of assertions and other postures rather than the constant core of all the different kinds of use, as the received philosophical interpretation has it.

The reason that it is still wrong to report a theoretical or practical question by saying that the subject asserted or ordered etc. is because such a report is *incomplete* in such a way as to render it false in pretty much the same way it would be wrong to say that something asserted something if this was just done ironically or otherwise in jest.[8] The failure to report

[8] Irony is also discussed as an importantly related case by Francois Recanati (2016).

that it was asserted ironically, or that the assertion was questioned, is a failure to report the act that was performed at what I will call the "highest level of intentional organization".

The question is at a higher level of organization because it requires theoretical or practical postures to operate on and because the subject only takes responsibility for, commits to, the act of questioning and not the positions that it questions. It still seems correct to call its force an "illocutionary force" in accordance with the tradition. So in this case we haven't distinguished force from something which is not force at all, but we have still made some progress towards our goal of debunking the Frege point by distinguishing different levels of force. Once we see that the question is not on all fours with practical and theoretical positions, it also becomes plain that when something is questioned or otherwise merely put forward for consideration, this is not an argument that it is forceless, but, on the contrary, this only makes sense because it already has a force. Interrogative force, the act of putting something into question, creates a unity at a higher level of intentional organization, in which the lower level theoretical or practical position is embedded or suspended, that is, can be presented or displayed without commitment to it.

5. The unity of higher level acts II: fictional contexts

I now want to briefly extend this account to non-serious forms of discourse. Let me focus on fiction and take Frege's stage actor as my main example. From the fact that actors do not only play asserting, but also ordering, promising, threatening, and so on, it should be clear that fiction also constitutes an additional level of intentional organization. Just like questioning, playacting essentially modifies and extends pre-existing forms of intentional acts. This is what Austin (1975) meant when he said that non-serious discourse is parasitic on serious discourse. This is not only true for playacting, but also for other forms of non-serious

discourse such as joking and irony. These are only intelligible in relation to and as plays on and subversions of serious forms of asserting, ordering, promising, and so on.

Therefore, again as in the case of questioning, reference to speech act types and other intentional act types is also ineliminable in any characterization of the intentionality of what actors are doing. They are performing intentional acts of playing or pretending *to assert, order, or promise*, and so we cannot understand what they are doing without specifying what it is they are pretending. Just like it was a mistake to think because a subject was not committed to what she was merely putting forward that this something was not an assertion or other forceful posture, it would also be a mistake to think that because the actor is not committed to the acts she is playing, reference to these acts can be omitted from a characterization of the intentionality of what she is actually doing. Still, in reporting these acts, it would be wrong just to say that the actor (as opposed to the character she is playing), was asserting something, leaving out the crucial information that she was playacting.

The ineliminability of reference to assertion can be compared to the ineliminability of reference to money or news in phrases such as “counterfeit money” or “fake news”. Even though counterfeit money is not genuine money and fake news are not genuine news, reference to money and to news is essential to characterize what they are, because this is what the forgers are trying to fake, just like asserting is what the actor is playing.

If we try to represent the intentional content of these acts of pretense, we must therefore include content corresponding to force / mode. As an example, consider an actor pretending to assert that something is rotten in the state of Denmark in the role of Marcellus in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. I propose to represent the intentionality of this act as follows:

Pretense (as Marcellus (assertion (something is rotten in the state of Denmark)))

Nothing further than characterizing the act as one of pretense is needed to ensure that the fact that the actor is not seriously asserting is adequately captured. By contrast, consider the suggestion that words have special meanings in fictional contexts as a way of fleshing out the idea that something more is needed to account for their role in fictional contexts. If the suggestion is that each word has an additional fictional meaning in the sense in which, say, "chair" has different meanings, it fails because it is certainly not true that actors or pretenders more generally have to learn separate new meanings for each word they use in pretense (Searle 1975). This argument also applies to force indicators. Indicators of assertive, directive, or interrogative force no more have special meanings for fictional contexts than nouns like "chair".

If on the other hand what is meant is only that acting creates a context that embeds or envelops their usual linguistic abilities, including their semantic abilities, then this is consistent with the notation used above and the picture I am trying to convey. We can even say that acquiring acting skills changes the meaning of the words we use. We just should not understand this meaning change on the model of "chair" acquiring the meaning of "person who chairs a meeting", and of it having subscripts such as "$chair_1$" and "$chair_2$", which we might want to use for purposes of disambiguation in a logically perspicuous notation. We should think of it as a meaning change only in the sense that playacting and other forms of non-serious discourse open up new, previously unavailable ways of using words. These uses, such as using "whiskey" to refer to the colored water on stage, are new, but they remain tied to their original, serious uses. Explaining what "whiskey" means – even as used by the actor on stage, as she pretends to drink it by actually drinking colored water – still involves, in the most fundamental case, pointing to actual instances of whiskey.

While the actor is not committed to the assertion as a private person, the character he is playing is committed to it in the fictional world of the play – unless we are dealing with

fiction in fiction or other commitment-embedding devices are in effect. That is, the audience will interpret his other actions in light of the position he has taken and if other characters become aware of it, they might hold him to it in various ways, and so on. This kind of embedding can therefore be thought of as a kind of transfer or displacement (cf. Recanati 2016) – the commitment is transferred to the fictional world created by the play.

The upshot is that fiction and other non-serious forms of discourse and behavior should also be understood in terms of intentional acts at a higher level of intentional organization relative to acts of asserting, ordering and questioning. The unity of the act here is the unity of an act of pretending or playacting. This act is essentially an act of pretending to assert, to order etc., that is, the specification of these forces is essential to the characterization of the intentionality of this act and can't be eliminated, but the subject is not committed to them, though the character she is playing may be. We have thus distinguished another level of intentional organization and meaning from illocutionary force.

6. The unity of higher level acts III: connecting postures

Let us now turn to so-called complex propositions, in particular to conditionals and disjunctions and thus to the Frege point. Don't these contexts show that, as Geach put it "a proposition may occur in discourse now asserted, now unasserted, and yet be recognizably the same proposition" (Geach 1965, 449). Isn't this even "so obviously true as to be hardly worth saying" (ibid.)? It is instructive to revisit the historical context of Geach's statement. Geach thought it was necessary to say this in response to "erroneous theories of assertion" (ibid.), in particular that of Gilbert Ryle (Ryle 1950), who thought the idea that the same statement should occur once asserted, once unasserted, was paradoxical and put into question the validity of modus ponens. Geach continues:

Thus far Ryle. His argument fully illustrates the dangers of "statement" as a

> logical term. If we speak rather of propositions, Ryle's difficulties vanish. What Ryle calls "making a hypothetical statement" is what I call "asserting a hypothetical proposition"; in making such an assertion the speaker is certainly putting forward the antecedent and consequent for consideration, so that they are undoubtedly propositions too, but he is of course not thus far stating or asserting them to be true. He may then go on to assert the antecedent, and from this go on further to assert the consequent. (op. cit., 451)

But how is replacing talk of statements or assertions – I will use these terms interchangeably in what follows – by talk of propositions actually supposed to resolve the supposed problem? While many philosophers have apparently accepted that this move does some work here, it's actually not at all obvious what that work is supposed to be. The reason is that the apparent problem is rooted in the difference in status between the items – whatever they are – as they occur as clauses of conditionals or disjunctions and as free-standing premises or conclusions. There is no intuitive support for the idea that the free-standing premise or the conclusion of the modus ponens argument is not a statement. Nor, for that matter, is there intuitive support for the idea that the clauses of a conjunction are not statements. Of course, there is intuitive support for the idea that the speaker does not state or assert the clauses of conditionals and disjunctions, as it would plainly be wrong, for example, to report an utterance of the conditional that the street gets wet if it rains, by saying the speaker stated that it rains or that the streets got wet. "I only said "if"!", she would rightly complain. But the problem consists in the apparent tension between this obvious fact and the equally obvious facts that antecedent and consequent do appear as statements in the minor premise and the conclusion of the modus pones argument, and that the items appearing there must be identical to the ones occurring in the conditional in order for this argument to be valid.

So how is labeling these identical items as propositions rather than as statements or assertions supposed to resolve this tension? The difference in status remains, as the subject is not

committed to the clauses of the conditional, but to the minor premise and the conclusion. One change that using the proposition terminology brings is that we lack a corresponding verb for "proposition", so that we can't even state the equivalent of the fact that the subject did not state or assert the clauses of the conditional! But this can hardly be the key to the solution, or can it? In a sense, the platonist imagery of the traditional view does tend to suggest that it can, that the key is to think of logic and logical relations as being entirely removed from the acts of subjects. But this is part of what is at issue here. Based on our accounts of questions and fictional contexts, I think it is pretty straightforward how to respond to the problem.

First, that something is merely put forward for consideration does not mean it is not a statement or other posture. As we saw, being put forward for consideration is rather a specific role a posture can have. Figuring as the clause of a disjunction or conditional is a version of that role. Disjoining alternatives often has a very similar function to putting something forward for discussion, or asking a yes-no question. And again it is useful to remind ourselves that we can also connect practical postures, for example, with one another in a practical disjunction as in (1), or with theoretical postures in a mixed conditional as in (2).

(1) Close the door or open the window!

(2) If he is a nice guy, marry him!

Second, we can present a statement or order without being committed to it by performing an act of disjoining it with another posture, by conditionalizing on it, or simply by negating it. Such acts create a new unity at a higher level of intentional organization, the unity of a disjunction, a conditional, or a negation. Whether we are committed to the connected clauses is a function of the meaning of the connectives, of the kind of connective act we have performed. In conjunctions we are, in conditionals and disjunctions we are not. This is sufficient to explain the difference in status noted above between the clauses of conditionals and disjunctions on the one hand and the clauses of conjunctions, and of free-

standing premises and conclusions on the other. The received view again makes the mistake of confusing a lack of commitment to a posture with a lack of commitment and thus of force in the posture.

Third, this is also sufficient to explain why it's false to e.g. report the conditional above by saying that the speaker stated that it rains, or that the street gets wet, in a way that is consistent with its clauses actually being statements or other postures. Again we need to report what was said at the highest level of intentional organization. Just as we need to report that a statement (or other posture) was just put forward by questioning it, or that the speaker was merely joking or playacting, we also need to specify that it was merely presented as the clause of a conditional. That's why the retort "I only said "if"!" is the correct one. A subject may have e.g. connected a statement and an order as in the mixed conditional (2) above, but doesn't count as having stated or ordered, because the connection is such that it does not entail the clauses.

Fourth, by the same lights it is unproblematic that the very same items can occur in these different roles, as is required for the validity of inferences involving them. There is no invalidating ambiguity here. Neither e.g. a noun like "rain" nor force markers have different meanings when e.g. used in the antecedent of a conditional. And that force markers do contribute to the validity of deductive inferences is evident from the fact that examples like following are invalid:

If he is a nice guy, marry him!
<u>Make him a nice guy!</u>
Marry him!

The directive cannot detach the antecedent even though it is true that if it were realized, the antecedent would be true. This is because the antecedent considers the state of affairs from a

theoretical position, and so we need a theoretical posture to detach it. Affirming the directive is not enough, we would need to know or at least have reason to believe that it has been executed. There is, however, a sense in which the introduction of conditional markers or other connectives into a language changes the meaning of force markers and even that of all expressions, because they can now be used in new ways that were not possible before. We can now use them to consider the eventuality of it raining tomorrow in order to determine what else might happen in this case, or what to do, even though we are not as yet in the theoretical position from which we would have sufficient reason to affirm its reality. Before, the use of the assertive marker in conjunction with the word "rain" may have been restricted to reports of observed occurrences of rain. But this is the same kind of holistic meaning change that the introduction of interrogative markers or markers of fiction brings about, and like those, it can't be understood in terms of ambiguity. It's not that a new meaning has been given to "rain" in the sense in which, say, its metaphorical extension to an unfortunate circumstance in certain uses of a sentence like "He left me standing in the rain" is a new meaning. The inference from such a metaphorical use to the street's being wet is invalidated by ambiguity, but the use of "rain" to first represent a merely anticipated case of rain and then to report its actual occurrence is not an instance of ambiguity. Nor is the use of the assertive marker first to represent the theoretical position one anticipates taking towards the state of affairs of it raining and then to represent the actual theoretical position one takes an instance of ambiguity. But again, the introduction of a conditional marker like "if…then" does make it possible to represent a merely anticipated position in a way in which it wasn't possible before, at least not by conventional means.

Let me try to deepen these points by a more thorough critique of the traditional view. On the traditional view, it is the entire conditional (or other complex clause) that is being asserted etc.. So the conditional would be represented as A (p -> q). In the same vein, it has

often been held that a conditional like our conditional (2) above should be thought of as an order to make a conditional true and accordingly be represented as O (p -> q). So the idea is that force attaches to the conditional or other complex clause as a whole, rather than to each clause individually as I already suggested earlier. And this in turn is connected to the general notion that the theory of force is entirely disjoint from logic: the validity of deductive inferences is completely determined by the propositions represented inside the bracket.

The idea that force attaches to the whole has some initial intuitive plausibility because it appears to make sense of the fact that our commitment is to the whole rather than to the connected clauses. But I have already argued for an alternative explanation for this: the whole is unified through an act of connecting postures. And as I will show now, the suggestion that force attaches to the whole rather than to the clauses at best serves no purpose and at worst leads to counterintuitive consequences. As an example of the latter, consider Hanks's view of conjunctions of assertions (2015, 103ff). Hanks takes for granted that the whole complex clause must be asserted, but this together with the fact that the forces of the clauses of a conjunction are not cancelled, leads him to the rather counterintuitive claim that a conjunction of two assertions would add up to three assertions altogether. As John Stuart Mill (1884) once put it, this seems like treating a team of horses just like another horse. But of course Hanks is right insofar as it would be ad hoc to treat conjunctions differently than other complex clauses with regard to the question of whether the whole is asserted, so that I think we can take this an indication that something must be wrong with the general view.

For reasons that will become obvious it is important that for purposes of this discussion we restrict ourselves to truth- or other satisfaction-functional connections, so I will just stipulate here that the conditional is the material conditional (as does Hanks 2016). As I have argued, to assert something is to affirm its reality from a theoretical position, as something that is the case. But we can't think of a truth-functional connection as something

that is the case or that represents something that is the case, like a relation in the world. If we did, the affirmation of the complex clause couldn't be a function of the truth (satisfaction) of the atomic postures alone anymore. For example, affirming *p* wouldn't entail *p v q* if there really were a disjunctive relation in the world, because then the truth of *p* would not be sufficient to guarantee that such a relation between *p* and *q* does obtain. Of course, if the connectives do transport additional, non-satisfaction-functional meanings, e.g. temporal or causal content, as conditional markers arguably do in natural language, we are dealing with relations between states of affairs that can be asserted.

The point against attaching mode / force to a satisfaction functional complex becomes even clearer when we consider purely practical or so-called mixed complexes that include theoretical and practical postures like (2) or (3):

(3) If the sun shines, let's climb the mountain!

Here there's even less sense to the idea that the connection between these clauses itself could be asserted. Nor would it be right to say instead that it is ordered. If the connection could be asserted it would have to be possible to say that it is true that it is the case, and if it could be ordered it would have to be possible to execute it. But neither possibility makes sense. Only the antecedent can be true, and only the consequent can be executed. The connectives just, well, connect these postures in a certain way. They can't be construed as being inside the scope of force markers because they create a new unity at a higher level of intentional organization.

This is also why the traditional representation of such a conditional as an order to make a complex proposition true, where the force indicator takes wide scope over what is conceived to be an ordinary truth-functional conditional, can't be right. Because if it were, it

would have to be possible to execute this order by making the antecedent false, as that would ensure the truth of the truth-functional conditional. But it would be ludicrous to claim that to prevent the sun from shining – even assuming this were possible – is a way of executing the directive to climb the mountain if the sun shines. That the sun shines is not in the scope of the order, this state of affairs is rather represented from a theoretical position, as a possible fact. The satisfaction conditions of the antecedent are truth conditions, not execution conditions. Only the action of climbing the mountain is in the scope of the order and has execution or fulfillment conditions.

This is further supported by the pattern of inferences from this conditional that are intuitively valid. The modus ponens inference leads from the additional premise that the sun shines – that is, from a statement – to the conclusion to climb the mountain, that is, to an order. The modus tollens inference shows the opposite pattern of leading from the order not to climb the mountain, the negation of the consequent, as a further premise, to a statement, the negation of the antecedent. I don't see how this pattern could be explained except by assigning forces to the antecedent and the consequent in the way I have suggested (or something functionally equivalent). In contrast, assigning a force to the conditional as a whole serves no purpose in accounting for the validity of inferences. Nor, as I have argued, is it even intelligible on reflection what it means.

It might be objected that since the antecedent of a conditional can of course be replaced by another conditional or any complex clause of arbitrary complexity, and complex clauses are assigned satisfaction values and can be negated, they should also be treated the same way in all essential respects, including the assignment of force. But the facts mentioned should not blind us to the essential difference between atomic and complex postures. To ascribe a truth or other satisfaction value to a complex is just to affirm or reaffirm the relevant satisfaction function or connection. Only the atomic postures really confront the

world. It is something fundamentally different to affirm them rather than any of their satisfaction functions. It may therefore be more appropriate to stop ascribing truth values to complex postures and rather just speak of accepting or affirming them, as has already sometimes been suggested, especially for the conditional. As we have seen, this becomes especially compelling if we include mixed and purely practical complexes in our consideration, but the point already applies to purely theoretical ones. In the same spirit, it might also be more appropriate to replace talk of complex postures or propositions by talk of posture or proposition complexes.

7. Hanks and Recanati on force cancellation

Let me now contrast the account I have developed with Hanks's and Recanati's force cancellation accounts. As we noted earlier, Hanks claims that contexts such as fictional contexts (but not questions) and conditionals and disjunctions (but not conjunctions) have the effect of cancelling the force of postures embedded in them, and introduces a notation where the tilde represents force cancellation (as opposed to negation). Recanati appeals to Hare's distinction between a tropic and a neustic sense of force which he describes as follows:

> Its first function is that of a 'tropic', i.e. a mood indicator; it tells the difference between e.g. a declarative utterance and an imperative utterance. The second function is that of a 'neustic'. The neustic indicates the speaker's 'subscription' to the proposition s/he expresses in a certain mood. When a sentence occurs within a conditional or a disjunction, the neustic has to be removed from the logical representation of the sentence because in such contexts it does not have the force of a serious assertion. (2016)

Recanati uses subscripts to symbolize the difference between tropic and neustic force: F_t and F_n. There are important differences between Hanks's and Recanati's account. They won't matter for the argument about to follow, but I will discuss some of them later. I will argue that they are both subject to the same dilemma: either their notations capture something that

makes a difference with regard to meaning (broadly construed) and therefore to deductive inference: then it does not make the right difference; or it does not, then it is redundant: it does not represent anything which either hasn't already been represented in a different way, or that needs to be represented at all.

Consider again a modus ponens inference. If we add the tilde to the conditional or remove the sign for neustic force from the antecedent and consequent, but leave the minor premise and conclusion alone, as we must, the inference becomes invalid if these symbols have any logical significance. The minor premise can't detach the antecedent anymore. It may seem we are back to the original predicament described by Ryle, but in fact it is worse: while Ryle's worry was illusory, this one is valid! Recanati appears to be committed to grasping this horn of the dilemma, as he considers the neustic to be part of the logical representation of the relevant sentence (see quote above). Hanks anticipates this objection:

> For the propositions in the antecedent and minor premise to match it has to be that the type of action someone performs by uttering the antecedent is identical to the type of action someone performs by uttering the minor premise. .... The only difference is that the first token takes place in a cancellation context whereas the second does not. Remember that cancellation is not another action that someone performs, alongside or in the course of the act of predication. The idea that predication is cancelled is just the idea that an act of predication takes place in a certain sort of context. That is what the tildes in the conditional are supposed to indicate — that the acts of predication performed in uttering the antecedent and consequent take place in a cancellation context. Since these acts of predication exactly match the ones performed in the minor premise and conclusion there is no problem about a mismatch between these propositions and there is no threat to the validity of modus ponens. (2016)

Hanks takes the opposite tack and explicitly denies that force cancellation makes a difference to the propositions (which for him include force) involved and thus with regard to the intentional acts the subject performs: it is just a matter of context. He thereby grasps the other horn of the dilemma. The relevant context is here provided by the conditional connective.

The connectives determine whether ‘force is cancelled’. In conditionals and disjunctions it is, in conjunctions it isn’t. But this means that the sign for force cancellation is redundant. It makes no difference to content and deduction. It only repeats something already indicated by the connectives (Schmitz 2016).

Hanks and Recanati may also want to ask themselves why there are no signs for force cancellation and for neustic force in natural language, while there are connective markers and also, we might add, interrogative markers and ways of indicating fictional contexts, among others. As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Hanks comes close to acknowledging that these contexts really do all the work when he says such things as that cancellation is a “misnomer” because really “more” rather than less is going on. He also says that the changes brought about by these contexts are purely “extrinsic” (2016). I have tried to show that if we take such thoughts to their logical conclusion, talk of cancellation becomes redundant and we can build our account entirely on what is “more”, namely such intentional acts as questioning or disjoining postures, or pretending to take them up.

There are (at least) two ways in which Hanks stops short of going down all the way on this route, so let me conclude my critique of his account by discussing these. First, he persists in drawing a distinction between assertion and predication in the sense of what is hard to read other than as the weakened form of assertion that occurs in antecedents and other ‘cancelling’ contexts. Second and more importantly, he insists that these contexts should not themselves be understood in terms of intentional acts.

As to the first point, the problem is to understand this distinction in such a way that it indeed marks a purely extrinsic difference and therefore also does not run into the dilemma described at the beginning of this paper, namely that the cancellation of force also dissolves the unity of the proposition. I think my account accomplishes this through the distinction between commitment in and commitment to the posture. On this account we can say that the

same act of assertion (etc.) is performed in all contexts, the difference is just that in some the subject is not committed to the position it indicated. Therefore, there is no problem in explaining how force can unify a posture even when it occurs in a 'cancelled' context. But this is not to say that a distinction of the sort Hanks draws cannot be drawn at all. In the same vein in which I proposed to think of a proposition as a posture in the role of being put forward for consideration, we could also think of predication (in Hanks's sense) as assertion in that role / context. Perhaps this is what Hanks has in mind. Our disagreement might be merely terminological then: he calls what is common between contexts "predication" – in what might perhaps be thought of as a merely terminological concession to the Frege point – while I call it "assertion". But, given how his notion of predication is tied to his notion of force cancellation, ultimately there are certainly substantial disagreements, so let me now turn to the locus of these disagreements, the notion of context, and thus to the second point.

Hanks insists that there is no *act* of force cancellation and that cancellation is rather brought about through context, which seems to strongly suggest that context should not be explained through intentional acts at all, that there "is nothing intentional in force cancellation", as Recanati (2016) puts it. In this vein, he appeals to broadly externalist intuitions about assertion, that is intuitions according to which what intentional acts a subject performs may crucially depend on factors external to her subjectivity. About the actor example he says that "[a]s long as the play is still on there is nothing the actor can do to turn her utterances into assertions." If this taken to mean that the actor indeed could not possibly break through the fourth wall and convince the audience of her seriousness in e.g. screaming "Fire!", I believe Recanati is right when he calls this an "indefensible position" (2016). However, Hanks might reasonably concede that there are cases where the actor succeeds, so that the play is no longer "on", and still insist that there also others cases, where she does not, so that in these cases the status of the subject's acts would be determined through factors

external to her intentionality, and context still could not be exhaustively explained through her intentional acts.

But such a response is still unsatisfactory on a deeper level. Of course, we have only limited control about the way other subjects understand our acts and assign statuses to them, and we can accordingly define notions of assertive or other acts which make reference to actual or at least potential uptake, or other kinds of responses, by other subjects – as has often been done. But I believe that ultimately all such notions must be internalistically reducible, that is, all acts and statuses must be explainable in terms of the intentionality of all the subjects involved (compare Searle 1983, 230). Surely the intentionality of an actor who tries to break through the fourth wall to seriously assert something and fails could be indistinguishable from that of one who succeeds. The difference will be in the intentionality of the audience. And surely both the intentionality that is shared between these cases and the intentionality that is different is a legitimate object of study, and it ought to be possible, at least in principle, to say what its content is. In this spirit, I have taken a stab at specifying the content of the actor's intentionality above. Likewise, the intentionality of a subject who takes a position flat out is certainly different from that of one who merely puts it forward as a disjunct, and so I think it ought also be possible to account for that difference in terms of an intentional act of disjoining. In this way we can entirely account for what is going on in in terms of additional acts such as acts of pretense, or of questioning or connecting postures, which create the higher level unity in which we can perform other acts without being committed to them.

Let me conclude this paper by also comparing my proposal to Francois Recanati's in a bit more depth. In addition to Hare's distinction between tropic and neustic force, Recanati also appeals to Austin's distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts and introduces a corresponding distinction between locutionary and illocutionary contexts. Contrary to

Searle (1968) in his critique of Austin's distinction, Recanati interprets the locutionary act not as forceless, but as the "act of conventionally *indicating* the performance of an illocutionary act…one may, or may not, actually perform" (ibid., his italics). In a normal, serious act, one does perform the illocutionary act and locutionary and illocutionary context coincide. If one does not, "the illocutionary act indicated is understood as taking place in a context distinct from the locutionary context." The speaker does not endorse what he says, neustic force is cancelled, and "[r]esponsibility for the illocutionary act is displaced to some other agent, actual or potential, or to some other temporal slice of the same agent… (ibid.)."

I agree wholeheartedly with the proposal that the contexts in question always involve some form of displacement. I think it can also be extended to cover complex clauses, even though Recanati himself is a bit tentative on this. For example, we might think of a disjunction of alternatives as anticipating the positions the speaker or his interlocutors may commit to after deliberation. A first objection to the account is that it is implausible that in a 'cancellation' context force always has to be indicated conventionally. Surely the force of the antecedent of a conditional, or of a speech act performed on stage, can be also be indicated in non-conventional ways. (For example, I might communicate to somebody pantomimically what to do under certain conditions.) Though the distinction between conventional and non-conventional meanings has historically been prominent in this context because of the way it is associated with the semantics-pragmatics distinction, it still seems to me that it is orthogonal to the issue at stake here. The issue at stake is which intentional act is performed, not whether it is indicated conventionally or not. The second problem I want to highlight is that if the locutionary act consists in conventionally indicating the performance of an illocutionary act, but that latter act is actually performed in a normal, 'uncancelled' context, then how do we get from the mere indication of the act to the actual act? Recanati wants to avoid Soames's suggestion that an additional act is performed, but if there is no additional

act, the normal case consists in the mere absence of a 'cancellation' context, and the 'cancellation' in the displacement of the act to a different context, it seems that either the illocutionary act must already be performed by being indicated, by being represented, and this seems wrong and is inconsistent with what Recanati says, or it's mysterious how the illocutionary act is actually performed.

Now I think Recanati is led to this view because he assumes we cannot make sense of the idea that the illocutionary act is actually performed in cancellation contexts, and so he replaces it with the proposal of it being conventionally indicated. So an actual illocutionary force / act component in meaning is replaced with the representation of an illocutionary act.[9] But if instead we think of the illocutionary act as being itself a representational act in the way I have suggested, all the problems I raised for Recanati can be avoided. The illocutionary act consists in indicating a position relative to a state of affairs and this act can be performed even if the subject is not committed to this position because it is suspended in the higher level unity created by additional intentional acts. Accordingly, we can also think of a locutionary act or a sentence meaning as conventionally indicating such a position.

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[9] This proposal is also reminiscent of Donald Davidson's (1979) account of the meaning of a "mood-setter" as conventionally representing force, except that Davidson in truly reductionist fashion thought of mood-setters as indicative sentences.

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