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FELIPE CASTELO BRANCO MEDEIROS

AN INVESTIGATION INTO ASSERTION

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Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul
Pró-Reitoria de Graduação
Av. Ipiranga, 6681 - Prédio 1 - 3º. andar
Porto Alegre - RS - Brasil
Fone: (51) 3320-3500 - Fax: (51) 3339-1564
E-mail: prograd@pucrs.br
Site: www.pucrs.br

Felipe Castelo Branco Medeiros

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BANCA EXAMINADORA:

Prof. Dr. Claudio Gonçalves de Almeida (Orientador) – PUCRS

Prof. Dra. Kátia Martins Etcheverry– PUCRS

Prof. Dr. Sanford Goldberg – Northwestern University

Prof. Dr. Rodrigo Borges – University of Florida

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Abstract

The speech act of assertion is a fundamental part of our linguistic practices and consequently of our social lives. At a pre-theoretical level the act is usually associated with the simple utterance of a sentence in the declarative mood. The point of this dissertation is to show that there is much more to it. The underlying question that drives this dissertation then, is simply 'What is an assertion?'. In order to try to provide a plausible explanation to this question, I enmesh myself in the literature and take an evaluative stance towards different theories of assertion. After assessing the theories, I conclude that the most plausible theory available is a theory that defines the speech act of assertion on terms of being the speech act that is governed by a certain rule (much like a move in a game). This conclusion leads to a second question, 'What is the rule that governs assertion?'. Again, after looking at the literature I attempt to argue in favor of the idea that it is a knowledge rule that governs the speech act of assertion. This leads to the final conclusion that the speech act of assertion is the speech act that is governed by the knowledge rule.

Keywords: Speech act theory; Assertion; Epistemic Norms.

Resumo: O ato de fala de asserir é uma parte fundamental da nossa prática linguística e, consequentemente, da nossa vida social. Em um nivel pré-teórico o ato é usualmente associado com o simples pronunciamento de uma sentença no modo declarativo. O propósito dessa dissertação é mostrar que a história é mais complicada. A questão que subjaz essa tese é simplesmente 'O que é asserção?'. Para fornecer uma explicação plausível para essa pergunta, eu mergulho na literatura e avalio as diferentes teorias oferecidas. Após avaliar tais teorias, eu concluo que a teoria mais plausível é aquela que define o ato de asserção como sendo o ato de fala que é governado por uma certa regra (de uma maneira muito semelhante aos movimentos de um jogo). Essa conclusão conduz a uma segunda pergunta, 'Que regra é essa que governa a asserção?'. Novamente, após examinar a literatura eu argumento a favor ta ideia de que tal regra é a regra

do conhecimento. A conclusão final é a de que o ato de fala de asserir é o ato de fala que é governado pela regra do conhecimento.
Palavras Chave: Atos de fala; Asserção; Normas Epistêmicas.

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Contents

Introduction

This dissertation consists in an investigation into the speech act of assertion. It is divided into two different (but still related) parts.

The first part addresses the question of what is to be the speech act type assertion. This part consists mostly in an investigation in the philosophy of language where we take a look at the candidate theories that try to define the act of assertion and the arguments for each of them. We examine the commitment account, expression of attitude accounts, effects accounts, the causal account and the constitutive rules account. We argue that, after examining in each theory, the candidate that emerges as the best theory of assertion is some sort of constitutive rule account.

The second part is more connected to the epistemology and starts right where the first part ended. Once we argued for a constitutive rule account of assertion, a natural question emerges, what is/are the constitutive rules that define the speech act of assertion? Again we examine the most prominent candidate theories, the knowledge account of assertion, the truth account of assertion, and a reasonability based account of assertion. We argue that the knowledge account of assertion is the most plausible theory and that such we should take the speech act of assertion as the act that is evaluable in terms of fulfilling a knowledge condition.

Chapter 1

What is assertion?

Consider a sentence such as 'It's raining outside'. When uttered by a speaker S in a non-deviant way (i.e the speaker actually grasps the meanings of the words pronounced, he is not in a conversational context where conveying truths is no longer a goal), the event in question will usually constitute an instance of the paradigmatic speech act, the one where speakers *claim that something is the case*, that is to say, they will be cases of assertion.

The subject of this dissertation is the *investigation of this class of utterances*, or to put it another way, the subject of this dissertation is the investigation of the *speech act type* that, at the surface level, is commonly expressed by the use of the indicative mood.

It is important to notice that an investigation of this sort is an investigation of *illocutionary force*, not of *content*. One straightforward way to construe an utterance as an speech act is to describe it as a "Ving with content *p*" (MACFARLANE, 2010, 79). To see why this matters, consider the set of sentences { 'It's raining outside.', 'It's raining outside?', 'Your sister is in the backyard.', 'Your sister is in the backyard?'}. While the utterances 'It's raining outside' and 'It's raining outside?' arguably have the same *content* [1], they will usually be tokens of different speech acts, namely, asserting and questioning. On the other hand, the utterances 'It's raining outside' and 'Your sister is in the backyard', while having different *contents*, will usually be instances of the same speech act of asserting.

Once one grasps the relevant distinction, a very natural question may arise, namely, 'What is this other feature that unifies utterances of different propositional contents and makes it the

[1] The example may actually not be that good, even though it is a helpful and intuitive way to illuminate illocutionary force. For while we can understand questions as mapping onto the set of their answers (and on certain views even to their true answers) we can also note that, strictly speaking questions don't have truth values and are therefore not propositions. For more on the nature of questions see (KARTTUNEN, 1977)

case that they end up being different instances of the same general kind?'. The purpose of this investigation is, precisely, to provide a preliminary response to this question. In particular, we aim to illuminate what is the more common occurrence of this phenomenon. In order to do this we will take a comparative approach. The idea is to try and explore a host of different theories that try to explain what it is to have our subject matter (i.e *assertoric force*) and, by doing so, to arrive at a satisfactory definition.

To properly compare something, however, the first obvious thing that is required is a set of parameters by which to gauge whether X does better then Y. This means that we require a set of *evaluative standards*. We begin then, with the task of identifying such standards and, in order to do so, we commence by exploring a set of very general features which we would like to ascribe to the speech act of assertion.

1.1 The features of assertion

The speech act type of assertion plays an important role in human communication and our overall conveying of information. While serving under that capacity, tokens of the type can be responsible for the generation of "*entitlements* and *responsibilities*"(GOLDBERG, 2015, 6) (for both speakers and hearers), can serve as "vehicles for the expression of beliefs" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 6) and can play a foundational role in the interpretation of languages that a hearer does not previously understand.

Since these features of the *assertoric speech act type* are such a basic fact about the proper ordering of our social lives, any theory of assertion must at the very least be compatible with, but also ideally help to explain, this *data*. This means, then, that a clear and precise grasp of the properties of these features becomes paramount, as the proper understanding of these features can play an adjudicating role on disputes about what is the correct theory of assertion.

The task that we face at this point is to get a firmer grip on the features of assertion that, on its capacity as a crucial part of communication, provide *explananda* for a theory of assertion. How can we go about doing that?

A promising way to do this would be by giving a more specific characterization of the theoretical roles played by the speech act type. For instance, we might begin such a task by drawing attention to "assertion's *epistemic significance*, so to speak" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 6). As Goldberg (2015) points out, it seems uncontroversial to say that "it is by way of assertions that one

can (and typically does) communicate one's knowledge to others." Furthermore, we might say that assertions are "*apt* for such a knowledge-communicating use" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 6). Call the twin facts that, when engaging in communication, speakers are prepared to employ assertions when aiming to communicate knowledge and that hearers are prepared to comprehend the act of assertion in terms of a default assumption that the speaker is aiming to communicate knowledge its *CK-aptness* (GOLDBERG, 2015, 6). It seems fairly uncontroversial to say that any reasonable theory of assertion should treat *CK-aptness* as a feature to be explained.

A second promising feature relates to the fact that it is "common for a speaker who makes an assertion to do so with the aim that her audience accepts the proposition she presents as true in this way" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 7). More strongly than that, we can say that "a speaker who does assert with this aim has a reasonable chance of realizing the aim" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 7). To put it another way, the fact that the speech act of asserting brings about the salience of questions [and also answers] regarding its content *"belief-worthiness"* (GOLDBERG, 2015, 7) when other types of speech acts, such as questions or commands, do not is something that an appropriate theory of assertion ought to help explain.

A third feature to take into account is the fact that a token of assertion can be challenged by a query related to the "speaker's epistemic standing on the proposition she has asserted" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 7). Assertions are commonly challenged by expressions such as 'How do you know this?' or 'Why do you think that?'. If we take into account the fact that challenges such as these ones seem perfectly acceptable even when the contents asserted contain no epistemic vocabulary, then we're left with an interesting fact to be explained. Call assertion's susceptibility to epistemic challenges "*EC-susceptibility* for short" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 7). An appropriate account of assertion ought to help explain this feature.

A fourth interesting feature relates to the fact that, when asserting, "a speaker represents herself as knowing, or at least as having evidence for [p]" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 7). An interesting consequence of this fact is that it may play some explanatory role in an account of why queries such as the knowledge (and the entailed) ones in *EC-susceptibility* are appropriate. Call the fact that when one asserts one represents oneself as knowing, even though that person does not explicitly says that she know the asserted content, the *conveyed self-representation* (GOLDBERG, 2015, 7) feature. An account of assertion that can explain this feature gains a comparative advantage versus its rivals.

A fifth interesting feature relates to the fact that, when used to communicate, assertions can

generate certain entitlements and responsibilities for speakers and hearers. This feature relates to the fact that when some speaker S asserts some content *p* to a hearer H, one (defeasible) reason that the hearer can claim for his belief on *p* (and/or his defense in further conversations regarding *p*) is the fact that S asserted that *p*. In this way, one available strategy for H to deal with challenges with regards to whether *p* can be simply to defer the challenge to S. Stronger than that even, one might want to say that S's assertion that *p authorized* H to do so and that, in this way, H is entitled to "pass the buck" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 8) [with regard to the defense of the claim that *p*] to S. An appropriate account of assertion then, ought to help explain this phenomena of *[epistemic] buckpassing* (GOLDBERG, 2015, 8).

A sixth interesting feature relates to the fact that assertions seem to hold a special connection with belief. Simply put, "when they are performed sincerely, assertions express or manifest one's beliefs" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 8). Furthermore, this feature of assertion seems to be common knowledge among competent speakers. Call this the "*sincerity* aspect of assertion" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 8). An appropriate account of assertion ought to help to explain this feature.

Finally, a seventh interesting feature relates to the fact that assertions "play a particularly prominent role in the method through which a hearer would go about interpreting a language she did not understand" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 8). This generic task, which Davidson (1973) labeled "Radical Interpretation", appears to heavily rely on the speech act of assertion for its feasibility. To see this, imagine how one would go about trying to interpret a language which one knew nothing about. The natural way to do it seems to be one where, in your aim to crack the code, you start by observing a subject's assertions and their correlation with the conditions that prompted then. Call this feature of assertion where it constitutes the foundational evidence for the task of Radical Interpretation the "*RI-evidential feature* of assertion" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 9). An account of assertion that can, independently, illuminate this feature could count itself as having some advantage over its rivals.

These seven features provide a nice cornerstone upon which to begin to gauge whether a candidate theory for assertion can provide an adequate analysis of the relevant speech act. There are, however, two more features that we deem to be equally general and that we would like to introduce by way of cases.

1.1.1 Two other important features

Consider the following cases:

> DIARY: Susan keeps a private diary on which she writes, every night, her account of the day. This is a private diary and no one else has ever read it. One day a short circuit in a lamp prompts a fire in her room which completely burns everything on her nightstand, including her diary.
>
> RAIN OUTSIDE: Juliana wakes up for her morning run. Before she commits fully to getting out of bed she glances to the window and notices a slight downpour of water. She says 'Oh, it's raining' and promptly gets back to sleep for another hour.

Both of these cases seem to strongly favour the intuitive verdict that the tokens of the speech acts performed are tokens of assertion. If this is correct then the cases appear to suggest that the speech act of asserting can be performed without having any particular *addressee*. Faced with this data then, an appropriate account of assertion would have to, either be compatible with this feature, or provide a compelling explanation of why the basic intuition in the cases is wrong.

Now consider the following case:

> MISTAKE: I'm a firm believer in the correctness of the *ABC conjecture*. One day I find out about Mouchizuki's proof. I then tell a friend, 'The ABC conjecture is true'. Later on, however, I find out about the vigorous debate between experts on number theory regarding the proof. In particular, I find out that there is no consensus on the community with regards to whether Corollary 3.12 is a legitimate step. I go back to my friend and say 'What I told you before is wrong'.

A case such as this one is supposed to present a clear example of *retraction*, that is to say, it's supposed to exemplify the fact that a speaker might "retract an assertion when she regards herself as no longer entitled to believe what she previously asserted, or else when she no longer regards herself as in a position to vindicate her assertion" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 8). An appropriate account of assertion must be able to make sense of why, by the accounts lights, a move such as that one is necessary.

The previous mentioned features, together with the two motivated by the presented cases provide us with the beginnings of a method for the evaluation of theories of assertion. In what

follows, we want to use these tools, together with considerations more specific to certain theories, to try to come up with a judgment with regards to what seems the most plausible candidate for a theory of assertion.

1.2 Expression of Attitude accounts of assertion

We begin our investigation by looking at Expression of Attitude accounts of assertion. Expression of Attitude accounts of assertion are accounts largely inspired by Grice (1957). In his seminal work we get an account of "meaning$_{NN}$" the notion on which the intended primary response is for the addressee to come to believe some particular content in virtue of that intention. Even though this account was not intended as an analysis of any particular speech act, we can, fairly easily, get a notion of assertion by framing the view in terms of it. So in a Gricean spirit we can get:

> Speaker S asserts that p by the utterance X in situation s iff there is an audience A such that:
> (i) S intends in s by means of X to produce in A the belief that p
> (ii) S intends A to believe that (i)
> (iii) S intends A to believe that p for the reason that (i) (PAGIN, 2004, 842)

There are two other prominent views largely inspired by Gricean considerations that we would like to highlight.They are:

(1) The Bach e Harnish (1979) view:

> In uttering e, S asserts that P if S expresses:
> i. the belief that P, and
> ii. the intention that H believe that P (BACH; HARNISH, 1979, 42)

To make full sense of this view we have to understand what it is for S to express an attitude. To express an attitude on the view is to R-intend the hearer to "take S's utterance as a reason to think S has that attitude" (BACH; HARNISH, 1979, 15), that is to say, to express an attitude is to have the intention for a certain utterance to come across as manifesting a certain attitude *in virtue of* the fact that the utterance can be interpreted as manifesting that action.

(2) The Recanati (1987) view which we could, following Pagin (2004), describe as:

> To assert that p is to make an utterance *u* which manifests that the speaker has the open (default-reflexive) intention that:

> i. *u* gives the audience reason to believe that the speaker knows that p and wishes to share that knowledge with the audience,and
> ii. the audience recognizes (i), and recognizes the speaker's intention as open (PAGIN, 2004, 844)

This construction is based on the concept of communicative intention:

> Communicative intention= open (default-reflexive) intention that:
> (a) u gives A reason to believe PC, and
> (b) A recognizes (a),and recognizes it as open. (RECANATI, 1987, 207)

On this view PC stands for *prototipicality conditions* which can be seen as the standard pretheoretical conditions associated with a given illocutionary type. In the case of assertion, the view has it that "it is part of our prototype of assertion that if someone asserts that p he knows that p and wishes the hearer to share his knowledge" (RECANATI, 1987, 183), giving us thus the elements to build the definition.

These three definitions are fairly representative of the expression views. Now that we know them, we would do well to try to gauge how well they do when faced with the conditions that we submitted as the markings of an appropriate theory of assertion.

1.2.1 Expression of attitude accounts and the features of assertion

The question that we are faced with is, how well the expression of attitude accounts explains the features that we deemed that would count, on a general level, as relevant for the evaluation of theories of assertion. So... How well do they do?

Here the answer would have to be that the accounts seem to do reasonably well. As we will see, even if the accounts do appear to have to do it in a roundabout manner, it seems as if expression of attitude accounts can make sense of most (though not all) of the relevant *phenomena*. To see this, let's take a look at the arguments for the accounts.

The accounts and the features that they can explain

It seems fairly clear that, if any theory of assertion wants to provide an account that will make sense of the paramount role that assertion plays in our epistemic lives, the first thing that such a theory must do is to provide an account of the connection between the speech act of *asserting* and some epistemologically relevant mental state. So the question is, how do expression of attitude accounts forge that connection?

The answer here is that the accounts can do it by providing an explanation for the *sincerity* aspect of assertion. The idea is this; the standard use of assertion embedded in our social practices is the performance of sincere assertions. On the standard cases it turn's out that one's assertion count as manifesting one's beliefs. On most descriptions of assertion this is simply counted as the *phenomenon*.

With this fact in mind we can, for each expression of attitude account, build an explanation of the phenomenon by reference to the theory:

(1) On the (BACH; HARNISH, 1979) view, the explanation relates to the fact that asserting involves expressing a belief and that "to express a belief (in the Bach-Harnish model) is to R-intend that the hearer take one's utterance as a reason to think that one has the belief in question"(GOLDBERG, 2015, 12). Since on standard cases the speaker is being sincere this means that, if we assume that sincerity involves actually having the attitudes one presents oneself as having, standard cases of assertion are cases where speakers actually possess the belief they aim to convey to their audience. Thus the connection is drawn.

(2) On the strictly Gricean view, the explanation relates to the fact that, when asserting, a speaker S wants his audience to believe that *p in virtue of* the fact that S uttered X with the intention of the audience coming to believe that *p*. On the standard (sincere) cases that means that, if we assume that sincerity involves whatever propositional content is being expressed by the utterance *actually* being a reason to believe that *p*, the speaker possesses reasons for the belief that the speaker is aiming to convey to their audience. This fact, when put together with assumptions about the relation between reasons and beliefs, seems enough to drawn the desired connection.

(3) On the Recanati (1987) view, the explanation relates to the fact that to assert involves making an utterance that manifests the speakers open intention of giving the audience a reason to believe that the speaker knows that p. On the standard (sincere) cases it follows from the sincere manifestation of this sort of reason and some minimal assumptions [2] about the relation between reasons and beliefs about knowledge that the speaker believes that he knows that *p*. Thus the connection is drawn.

[2]The assumptions here really are minimal assumptions on the ontology of reasons for it suffices for the explanation to go through that reasons be propositions.

The upshot of these constructions is the following, for each of the expression of attitude accounts an explanation of the *sincerity aspect* of assertion can do the work of drawing out the connection between the speech act of assertion and the doxastic states of both the speakers engaged in that act. This fact gives us two things. First, it allows for each theory to explain assertion's *conveyed self-representation* since the explanations in terms of intentions will, due to the sincerity conditions, explain the Speaker's self-representation of being in the relevant epistemic state[3]. Secondly it allows the explanation to go on and, on this basis, explain the others epistemic features of assertion.

To see how the explanation of the *sincerity aspect* helps with the other features, consider the following:
Suppose we moved on to examine the closely tied features of assertion's *CK-aptness* and it's *belief-worthiness.* How can Gricean inspired theories explain the fact that assertions typically are good vehicles for the communication of knowledge, and that assertions are typically evaluated with respect to whether their contents are worthy of belief?

We can develop an argument that will show the reasoning for one of this features and that will have as a conclusion the other one. We start by noticing that, if under the expression of attitude accounts there is a connection drawn between standard performances of the speech act of asserting and the doxastic states of the agent then this fact, when put together with another assumption, can be used to help explain how it is that attempts to convey beliefs via assertion ordinarily fulfill their epistemic purposes. Here is how the argument goes:

> (1)Standard performance of assertions connects the speaker's speech act with the speaker's respective belief. (Sincerity aspect)
> (2)The fact that the speaker believes that p, is a reason for the audience to believe that p. (Assumption)
> (3)Therefore, the audience has a reason to believe that p. (Conclusion).

The argument is valid. Since (1) is just a version of what is established by the sincerity feature, the interesting part that we haven't yet explored relates to (2). So, what can we say about this

[3]Notice that the different versions of the expression of attitude accounts may turn out to have different degrees of difficulty at providing explanations for the distinct epistemic features. For instance the Recanati (1987) account would, due to its explanation in terms of giving reasons to believe that the speaker knows, give a somewhat straightforward account in terms of knowledge. The Bach e Harnish (1979) account, on the other hand, would, due to its explanation in term of belief, give an account in terms of having evidence for [p] (but as we will point out latter the gap to knowledge could possibly be supplemented by an account of a knowledge norm on belief)

assumption?

Premise (2) is motivated by the plausible assumption that there are *epistemic standards for belief* (GOLDBERG, 2015, 12). The reasoning is as follows; if beliefs have epistemic standards, then when a speaker asserts Q meaning that P, on the standard performances of the speech act the speaker believes that *p*. This belief, by its turn, will be subject to the question of whether the epistemic standards for belief have been met. Because of this connection, then, the speaker's assertion can be a bearer of evaluation by epistemic standards. Thus, assertion's *belief-worthiness* would be explained on Gricean inspired terms.

The aforementioned reasoning does not have to stop at this point though. If we keep it going we can see that, if it turns out that there are reasons to believe that the standards have been met (and that there are no relevant defeaters at play), then this will count as a reason for the audience to rationally believe that *p*. This gives us premise (2) and therefore the argument goes through. At this point we would do well to notice that a lot of consequences will be drawn out of what theoretical choices are made with regard as to what are the epistemic standards for belief. To see this let's look at two ways on which the epistemic standards for belief can be cashed out.

On the first way, we can say that the epistemic standards for belief turn out to be just that, in order for you to believe that *p*, it must be **justifiable** for you to believe that p. On the other hand, on the second way, we can say that for you to believe that *p* you must **know** that p.

As a corollary of these options, one might be also tempted to say that different expression of attitude accounts might turn out to fit best with different views with regard to these epistemic standards. For instance, one might be inclined to associate the (BACH; HARNISH, 1979) view and the strictly Gricean view with a weaker version of epistemic standards since those definitions seem to make very light requirements upon the doxastic states that are associated with assertion. By the same token, one might be inclined to associate the Recanati (1987) view with a stronger version of epistemic standards, since that definition does appear to appeal to a somewhat heavier requirement upon the doxastic state associated with the relevant speech act. This would, however, be to quick, for there is nothing that prevents us from meshing this conceptions together. As a matter of fact, latter work by Bach (2008) appeals to knowledge as the appropriate standard for belief, and there are certainly interpretations of Grice, such as Benton (2016b), that suggest that the best way to make justice to the Gricean spirit is by inserting more talk about knowledge on the Gricean picture. The upshot, then, is that there is no particular reason for, under a given expression of attitude account, to choose a particular view on the epistemic standards of belief.

This, by its turn, leaves the question about the appropriateness of the standards to be resolved by further considerations.

One consideration for which epistemic standards of beliefs are relevant might be the explanatory role that such standards would play in the overall picture of the theories of speech acts. This leads us right back to our previous thread, where we came to wonder how different standards can have a bearing on the questions regarding the features of assertion.

On the two mentioned views, we can already see how some differences might turn up. So for instance, on the justification as the epistemic standard view, a reason for believing that the epistemic standard has been met (and an absence of any relevant defeaters) will yield *only* the result that the audience of the given speech act of assertion will have a rationale for her coming to form a justified belief based on the speaker's assertion. This fact, will be a first step to explain assertion's *CK-aptness*, with the remaining step required being some sort of condition that will help to ensure that her justified belief turns out to be knowledge. On the knowledge as the epistemic standard view, on the other hand, a reason for believing that the epistemic standard has been met (and the absence of relevant defeaters) will yield the result that the audience is in a position to, if everything goes right, potentially acquire knowledge from a speaker's assertion *in virtue of* the fact that the speaker possesses the relevant knowledge. This turns out to just be a straightforward explanation of assertion's *Ck-aptness*.

We can see further differences when we attempt to explain assertion's *EC-susceptibility*. On the justification as the epistemic standard view, an explanation of a reply to assertions with a form such as 'What are the reasons for you to say that?' can be quite straightforwardly given as a query/challenge related to the question of whether the relevant epistemic standard of assertion has been met. For stronger replies such as 'Do you know that?', however, an explanation under the justification view is not so readily available. The reason for this is that a query such as 'Do you know that?' would, at a first pass at least, simply be inappropriate under the justification as the epistemic standard view. After all, the straightforward explanation of the appropriateness of queries/challenges to assertions is one where the reason that the query/challenge is deemed appropriate is because it is a query as to whether the relevant epistemic standard has been met. Since knowledge is a stronger notion then justification, however, a query with respect to knowledge seems to require more of the assertion than what, under the justification as the epistemic standard view, is the proper burden for it to bear.

On the other hand, on the knowledge as the epistemic standard view, a reply to an assertion with

a form such as 'Do you know that?' would straightforwardly be explained as a query/challenge related to the question of whether the relevant epistemic standard of assertion has been met. Furthermore, under the reasonable assumption that knowledge has as a necessary condition justification, a reply of the form 'What are the reasons for you to say that?' can also be seen as a query/challenge that requires an appropriate (albeit weaker) condition on the evaluation of whether the relevant epistemic standard has been met, thus providing a neat explanation of assertion's *EC-susceptibility*.

Finally, we turn to the *RI-evidential feature of assertion*. The goal in radical interpretation is to retrieve a speaker's beliefs and the meaning of his utterances in contexts where none of these two things are previously known. So, how do the expression of attitude accounts explain the processes on which a hearer goes about doing that?

One plausible answer is that, "insofar as assertion expresses the speaker's beliefs and these in turn are governed by epistemic standards" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 13) the radical interpreter can take the utterances as most commonly conforming to epistemic standards that will make then count as a function of a speaker's beliefs. This means that, under an assumption of sincerity, the way to go about conducting a project of Radical Interpretation is one where the way that the interpreter goes about his project is by postulating speech patterns that maximize the speaker's justified belief and knowledge, or that at least, "minimize cases involving the unexplained lack of these"(GOLDBERG, 2015, 13). In order to do this, the most plausible way seems to be by "correlating (where possible) the assertions made with the environmental conditions prompting then" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 13). If such a methodology is sound then, the expression of attitude accounts of assertion can neatly explain both the process of radical interpretation and assertion's evidential role in it.

The six mentioned features are the ones which expression of attitude accounts of assertion do well to provide compelling explanations for. The remaining three, however, are the ones where expression of attitude accounts of assertion do not seem to do so well.

The accounts and the features that they can't explain

We begin with a feature that is still a part of assertion's epistemic significance, the *phenomenona* associated with what is described on the literature as "buck-passing". The idea behind this phenomenon is that the speech act of assertion generates certain entitlements and

responsibilities.

The problem here seems to stem from the fact that on expression of attitude accounts it is unclear why "one whose own belief was formed through accepting another's assertion would be entitled to defer the challenge to the source speaker" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 13). The reason for this is that what expression of attitude accounts gives us are merely utterances that express attitudes (usually intentions) for the audiences to form the respective beliefs. And while intentions may be be strong enough to, with some tweaking, provide explanations for the previous features, they do not appear strong enough to handle the normativity required to warrant talk of entitlements and responsibilities.

To see why this is so, consider what an explanation with the resources given by the expression of attitude accounts would have to look like. Clearly, the mere fact that S manifests some sort of intention to bring about beliefs is not enough for any H to become authorized or entitled to defer challenges to their beliefs to S. Any explanation that had a chance to tackle this question would require, at the very least, a strong version of the connection between speech acts and the speaker's doxastic states and their evaluation by some epistemic standards. Could these extra features, that we've already argued for, do the job required here ?

The contention here, is that they could not. The reason for this lies on the fact that even the normativity attached to belief would not, on its own, be enough to get what is required. To see why this is so, let's consider how far an explanation based on the normativity of belief can take us:

Under the expression of attitude accounts if S asserts that *p*, then S gives H a reason to regard S as (i) believing that *p* and (ii) intending that H believe that *p in virtue* of that intention. Furthermore, on the assumption that belief has to meet some epistemic standards, H can have reasons to believe that S intends H to come to believe a proposition that meets some epistemic standards. But is that enough for H to be entitled to "pass the buck" to S?

The problem with this construction seems to be that, under the description of the account, there is nothing that prevents S from, when queried, to shrug their shoulders and say "Oh well, so the belief I intended you to form fails to satisfy epistemic standards. So sorry" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 14). To be fair H could at this point accuse S of leading him to form a defective belief , but the problem here is that *there is nothing in the accounts* that would either, prevent this consequence, or deem it as a result of some form of improper occurrence of the speech act. In this sense, on the expression of attitude accounts, there would be nothing wrong with a reply

by S where she claimed that "the decision to believe what she (S) believes was his (H's) and his alone" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 14). Here is how Goldberg drives the point with an analogy:

> I may know that these cookies are for Ralph, and even so I may place them in a spot where I know you will encounter them, intending that you eat them (by way of your recognizing my intention). Still, if you do, it is no excuse to say that I authorized you to eat them- I did no such thing! (GOLDBERG, 2015, 14)

The analogy here is supposed to convey the idea that "even if the asserter intends the hearer to form the belief in question, intending is one thing, and *authorizing* is another" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 14). The upshot is that, because expression of attitude accounts have no basis to move from the former to the latter, they simply cannot explain the desired feature. These sort of accounts seem to be lacking a crucial feature, namely, they do not provide us with a way of saying that "S *ought not* to have asserted as she did-and that the reason she ought not to have done so is that in so asserting she *authorized* h to believe as he did"(GOLDBERG, 2015, 14).

A second problem appears when we think about cases such as MISTAKE. Cases such as this one are cases where the latter utterance by a speaker "takes back" the force ascribed to the first sentence. In this sense, we can think of a speech act of retraction as rendering the first assertion "null and void" (MACFARLANE, 2010, 83) in the same way as a retracted offer becomes null and void. The problem, however, is that one of the expression of attitude accounts of assertion does not seem to provide an adequate theory of retraction. To see why this is so, we should examine how the problem is posited for each type of account:

(1) On the Bach e Harnish (1979) account, to assert is to express a belief and the reflexive intention to instill that belief in an audience. The natural way to think of the retraction phenomenon then is one where it is taking back an expression of belief. Based on this, the following definition of retraction can be built:

> In uttering e, S retracts the claim that P if S expresses:
> i. that he no longer believes that P, contrary to what he previously indicated he believed, and
> ii. the intention that H not believe that P. (BACH; HARNISH, 1979, 43)

MISTAKE, however, highlights a general problem with this sort of definition. In MISTAKE, the speaker sincerely retracts his claim even though he still believes it [4]. If that

[4]Here one may try to object to the argument on the grounds that the content asserted on the retraction on

is correct, then the explanation of retraction that follows from the Bach e Harnish (1979) account of assertion seems to come with a problem.

(2) On the strictly Gricean account, assertion is defined in terms of the intention to bring about the belief *in virtue* of that intention. The natural way to think of the retraction phenomenon then is one where it is taking back that intention. Based on that we could build a definition of retraction:

> Speaker S retracts the claim that p by the utterance X in situation s iff there is an audience A such that:
> (i) S intends in s by means of X to produce in A the belief that not p
> (ii) S intends A to believe that (i)
> (iii) S intends A to believe that not p for the reason that (i)

Such a definition does not seem to suffer from strictly the same problem as the Bach e Harnish (1979) one. This seems to be the case for, since the definition does not explicitly appeal to the doxastic states of the agent, then the account turns out to be perfectly compatible with the idea that there are reasons for a change in what is permissible to assert without these being reasons for change in your underlying doxastic state. This does not mean, however, that the proposed definition would solve the problem all on it's own. For consider again a retraction such as the one that happens on MISTAKE. In a case such as that one, even though the speaker recognizes that he is not in a position to assert that *p*, it seems as if the aim of his retraction still cannot be characterized on the the basis of intentions for the audience to come to believe not *p*. At this point one might be inclined to try to reform the definition in a way that would try to circumvent the problem. Here is such an attempt:

> Speaker S retracts the claim that p by the utterance X in situation s iff there is an audience A such that:
> (i*) S intends in s by means of X to either produce in A the belief that not *p*, or, to make A suspend judgment with regard to whether *p*

MISTAKE is not a flat-out negation of the prior assertion. This sort of objection, though, seems to miss the point. To see this, notice that the problem generalizes, for what is at stake is the fact that it is intuitive that one can retract an assertion of what one still believes. As Macfarlane (2010) points out, one can do this, for example, "because one realizes one cannot adequately defend the claim, or because one does not want others relying in it" (MACFARLANE, 2010, 83) .

(ii*) S intends A to believe that (i*)

(iii*) S intends either for A to believe that not p for the reason that (i*) , or, for A to suspend judgment with regard to whether *p* for the reason that (i*).

Does a reformulation such as this one solve the problem? Alas it does not.

For even though a definition such as the one given by conditions (i*),(ii*) and (iii*) can appear to deal with one plausible account of the intentions on MISTAKE, it does not deal with a equally plausible interpretation of the case. On that interpretation, what happens in the case is that the speaker has no intentions whatsoever with regards to the mental states of his audience. Rather, on this interpretation, what happens in the case is simply that the speaker wants to "take back" his assertion, in the sense that the previous assertion should not be considered (and consequently should be disregarded with relation to any potential perlocutionary effects). This shows that the problem both persists and generalizes, for not only it looks fairly simple to build a score of cases on which the only plausible description is the problematic one, what the case seems to show is that definitions that try to characterize the phenomenon of retraction on the basis of the conveyance of certain intentions regarding mental states of audiences would seem to miss the mark, in the sense that they seem unable to capture the fact that the crucial aspect of retraction is tied to the nullifying of the previous speech act, not to any sort of intentions with regard to the mental state of an audience. If this is correct, then this second issue would not only apply to the strictly Gricean view, but would also apply to the Bach e Harnish (1979) account, since that view also characterizes the phenomenon in terms of intentions to bring about certain mental states in a audience.

(3) On the Recanati (1987) account, assertion is defined in terms of the manifestation of an open intention. The natural way to think of the retraction phenomenon then is one where it is taking back that intention. Based on that, we could build a first pass definition of retraction:

> To retract the claim that p is to make an utterance *u* which manifests that the speaker has the open (default-reflexive) intention that:
>
> i. *u* gives the audience reason to believe that the speaker knows that not p and wishes to share that knowledge with the audience,and

ii. the audience recognizes (i), and recognizes the speaker's intention as open.

In the same way as the strictly Gricean account, such a definition does not seem to suffer from the problem that afflicts the Bach e Harnish (1979) one. This seems to be the case for, since the definition appeals to the notion of a reason to think that the agent has the corresponding knowledge, then the account turns out to be compatible with the phenomenon, since reasons for believing that you possess knowledge can be overridden without necessarily overriding the reasons for the belief.

This, by its turn, makes possible that a change in what is permissible to assert won't necessarily constitute a reason to change the underlying doxastic state.

Still on a similar fashion, however, the account does seem to suffer of the problems prompted by cases such as MISTAKE. On a parallel manner to the attempted response on the strictly Gricean account, one might be tempted to try to circumvent the problem by introducing a disjunction in the definition:

> To retract the claim that p is to make an utterance *u* which manifests that the speaker has the open (default-reflexive) intention that:
> i. *u* gives the audience reason to believe that either the speaker knows that not p, or that he knows that he doesn't know p and wishes to share that knowledge with the audience,and
> ii. the audience recognizes (i), and recognizes the speaker's intention as open.

Contrary to the strictly Gricean account, however, it is not so clear that the inserted disjunction won't, on this account, do the trick. For even on the troublesome interpretation of what is happening in a case such as MISTAKE, the definition seems compatible with the idea that what is going on in an act of retraction is simply the act of "taking back" a previous speech act. For notice that, on this view, a plausible way to describe the troublesome interpretation of the phenomenon would be just to say that the speaker intends to give the audience a reason to believe that he knows that he doesn't know p which is just the second possibility on the disjunctive definition.

Since the second disjunct of the (RECANATI, 1987) account seems to be compatible with an explanation of the retraction phenonemon in terms of merely "taking back" the prior speech act, we might expect that the view could turn out to provide a plausible definition

of the phenomenon. Unfortunately, this cannot be the whole story. For notice that, while the second disjunct is compatible with one way on which speakers might merely take back a previous speech act, the definition still cannot make sense of other ways on which the phenomenon may occur. To see this consider the following case:

> FLAT-EARTH: You mistakenly get into a discussion with a flat-earther when you offhandedly remark that everyone knows that the Earth more closely resembles a sphere. After his initial objection you concede that not everyone knows that (after all flat-earthers don't believe the earth resembles a sphere so they can't know it), but you firmly maintain that the earth more closely resembles a sphere . Still, the flat earther presses on with objections, talking about how there are alternative explanations for the behavior of shadows, how Nasa and other space agencies are actually just propaganda machines, and how nautical and aeronautical routes are controlled by the cabal that is in the conspiracy. After a long conversation you come to realize that, since there is simply no agreement with regards to what count as evidence, you simply say 'I take it back'.

On FLAT-EARTH the retraction performed while saying 'I take it back' is not given with the intention of counting as a reason for the belief that either the speaker knows that not p or that the speaker knows that he doesn't know p, rather the retraction is performed due to the recognition that, in virtue of the conversational context, it is not prudentially rational for the speaker to stick to his previous assertion. Because of this, what the speaker does is make a move to which *the only* purpose is to make the previous move void. If that's the correct description of the case, then the (RECANATI, 1987) account can't make sense of it, and consequently the account can't make sense of the phenomenon.

The previous considerations gives us reason to doubt that expression of attitude accounts can give an account of the overall phenomenon of retraction. More precisely, the upshot of the considerations can be seen as threefold:

(1) Firstly, we can gather that the retraction feature poses a specific problem to the more popular expression of attitude account of assertion in the literature, the Bach e Harnish (1979) account.

(2) Secondly, we can see that retraction also poses a more general problem to expression accounts that attempt to define the phenomenon on terms of intentions towards audiences.

(3) Thirdly, we can see that the the phenomenon of retractions poses a even more general problem to any attempt of defining the speech act of retraction in terms of the expression of attitudes, for cases such as FLAT-EARTHER suggest that the crucial feature of retraction is merely the ”taking back” of the phenomenon, as opposed to any particular definition that can be construed by reference to the mental life of cooperative agents.

A third problem for the expression of attitude accounts comes from the consideration of cases such as DIARY and RAIN OUTSIDE. Expression of attitude accounts appeal to audiences on their definitions of speech acts. As such, it seems as if they cannot count such cases as cases of assertions, a fact which, on our view, is deeply counter intuitive. Even if we were able to shrug off the appeal of these cases (which we cannot!), however, it seems as if the move would still leave us with a problem. For consider this, if cases such as DIARY and RAIN OUTSIDE are not cases of assertion, what sort of action are the agents performing when they are uttering the contents in these cases?

The best, if not the only, available answer to the question seems to be that, in virtue of the fact that these utterances are not directed at an audience, they are not speech acts in the sense that they don't have *illocutionary force*. But now, consider cases such as these:

> DIARY*: Susan keeps a private diary on which she writes, every night, all and only her speculations about what is happening on her neighbor's . This is a private diary which she uses for the purpose of writing the impressions that she knows that she is not in a position to assert. Because of the diary speculative nature no one else has ever read it. One day a short circuit in a lamp prompts a fire in her room which completely burns everything on her nightstand, including her diary.
>
> RAIN OUTSIDE*: Juliana wakes up for her morning run. Before she even opens up her eyes she hears some noises that resemble the sound of rain. She says 'Oh, it's raining?', and feeling very comfortable decides that the question is moot and dozes off unto sleep for another hour .

DIARY* and RAIN OUTSIDE* seem to be cases of utterances of different types than those on DIARY and RAIN OUTSIDE. The usual explanation of these differences is giving in terms of

speech act theory, in particular, the natural explanation appears to be that these different utterances posses different **illocutionary force**. Expression of attitude accounts, however, cannot make use of this notion since they cannot attribute the relevant property to the utterance tokens. So, take for instance the utterance of 'Oh, it's raining' on RAIN OUTSIDE and the utterance of 'Oh, it's raining?' on RAIN OUTSIDE*. Even though this utterances share the same propositional content, it seems clear that there is a relevant difference between the two. Nonetheless, it looks as if expression of attitude accounts would, due to the explanation that follows from their handling of cases such as DIARY and RAIN OUTSIDE, have a hard time explaining just what that difference is. This conclusion seems to pose a major problem for the accounts.

1.2.2 Two other problems for expression of attitude accounts

In the previous sections we have examined the expression of attitude accounts and how well they explain the features that we deemed relevant for a general evaluation of theories of assertion. There are, however, some particular problems that afflict some of the accounts. On what follows we examine two other problems for expression of attitude accounts.

The problem of a sufficiency condition

Pagin (2004) raises the issue of whether definitions that embed social effects on their account of assertion can be extensionally adequate. On this view, there seems to be an issue with regards to the question of whether such accounts can capture jointly *sufficient* conditions for the speech act type. The idea is that, for such theories, there are going to be counterexamples which the accounts would be required to judge as assertions even though intuitively they are not.

Since expression of attitude accounts build audience conditions on their definition, one should expect, if Pagin's argument is correct, for them to fall prey to counterexamples of this sort. As it turns out, this seems to be precisely what happens in the following:

(1) On the Bach e Harnish (1979) account, S asserts that p if S expresses the belief that p and the intention that H believe that p. On the basis of this definition we could build the following utterance:

   (a) By means of this utterance I express my belief that p and my intention that you come to believe that p.

(2) On the strictly Gricean account, S asserts that *p* when S intends to produce the belief that *p* in A, S intends A to believe that S intends that, and S intends A to believe that *p* for the reason that he intends her to believe it. On the basis of this definition, the following utterance can be built:

(b) I intend by means of this very utterance to make you believe that p, and
I intend by means of this very utterance to make you believe that I intend by means of this very utterance to make you believe that *p*, and
I intend your reason to believe that *p* to be that I intend by means of this very utterance to produce in you the belief that *p*. (PAGIN, 2004, 842)

(3) On the Recanati (1987) account, S asserts that *p* when S makes an utterance *u* that makes manifest his intention of giving u as a reason for A to believe that S knows that *p* and the audience recognizes the manifestation of that intention and recognizes it as open. On the basis of this definition, the following utterance can be built:

(c) By means of this very utterance I intend to give you reason to believe that I know that p and wish to share my knowledge with you and I intend you to recognize that intention and also to recognize it as open. (PAGIN, 2004, 844)

Constructions such as (1a), (2b) and (3c) fulfill the requirements for their respective theories, but nonetheless are clearly not cases of assertion of the contents predicted by the respective theories. As such they are supposed to show that theories such as the expression of attitude accounts build *too much* into their accounts and end up counting up utterances that we are not ordinarily inclined to as cases of assertion.

Now, one might want to object that the constructions used to build this sort of cases are highly artificial and that it seems implausible that in ordinary language use such sort of constructions would be plausible employed. In particular, one might want to say that since (1a), (2b) and (3c) make their underlying intentions explicit that would turn out to be "self-defeating, giving the audience the feeling of being manipulated" (PAGIN, 2004, 842).

The problem with such a reply is that this sort of objection is besides the point. Making sincere utterances of (1a), (2b) and (3c) is surely possible, and their mere possibility is enough to highlight issues for the accounts.

The problem of blatantly false lies

A different problem is raised by a case such as this one:

> BALD-FACED LIE: Suppose that a student is caught flagrantly cheating on an exam for the fourth time this term, all of the conclusive evidence for which is passed on to the Dean of Academic Affairs. Both the student and the Dean both know that he cheated on the exam, and they each know that the other knows this, but the student is also aware of the fact that the Dean punishes students for academic dishonesty only when there is as confession. Given this, when the student is called to the Dean's office, he [asserts], 'I did not cheat on the exam'. (LACKEY, 2013, 238)

A case such as BALD-FACED LIE is marked by the fact that the speaker is lying even though she knows that the audience both knows that (1) her assertion is not true and, (2) that the audience know that she does not believe the content of her assertion (i.e the facts about the asserted content are common knowledge).

The problem here is that expression of attitude accounts of assertion do not seem to have the resources to classify this case as a case of assertion. To see this, notice that (3) expression of attitude accounts rely for their definitions on notions that relate to intentions to provide reasons for an audience to believe due to the performance of the utterances captured by the analysis. This fact poses a tension between the expression of attitude account definitions and cases such as BALD-FACED LIE for, in cases such as this one, the speaker knows beforehand that the audience knows that what he is going to say is going to be a lie. Given this fact, how can the speaker reasonably [5] have the required intention, that is to say, how can (1), (2) and (3) turn out compatible?

The most plausible way to try to make these compatible is given by the Bach e Harnish (1979) account. The mentioned account provides us with two somewhat different, but related, ways to try to make sense of a case such as BALD-FACED LIE.

The first way is to try to point out that the sort of reason that expression of attitude accounts try to capture on the accounts can be a *pro tanto* reason, and therefore not be conclusive. Here is how Bach e Harnish (1979) make the point:

[5] At this point one might want to object that requirement for the aim to be reasonable has been unwarrantedly introduced into the question, after all there was no previous talk of any requirement of reasonability. By way of response, we might say that any neo-Gricean theory of assertion is going to have to include a reasonability constrain on their account of assertion on pains of, otherwise, falling prey to charges of humpty-dumptism.

> S's utterance is, and can be R-intended to be taken to be, a reason, despite the fact that it can be overridden by mutual contextual beliefs to the contrary. Even when defeated, a reason is a reason. (BACH; HARNISH, 1979, 58)

By way of the response to this, we might want to say that while the general observation that reasons can be defeasible is certainly true, the problem raised by cases such as BALD-FACED LIE relates not to that fact, which is expressed by the idea that a reason *can* be overriden by mutually contextual beliefs, but rather, is the problem of whether we can make sense of the reasonability of the description of an intention to provide a reason when the speaker already *knows* that the mutually contextual beliefs override the purported reason. To see why this is a problem, consider the following examples of simple games of giving reasons:

> GOOD INDUCTION: It's 1500 and two Europeans are discussing whether swans are white. One of them asserts 'I've observed hundreds of swans across the continent and they are all white'. The other responds, 'It must be true then, that all swans are white'.

> BAD INDUCTION: It's 2019 and two Europeans are discussing whether swans are white. One of them asserts 'There are black swans in Australia'. The other one responds to that with, 'I've observed hundreds of swans across the continent and they are all white'.

GOOD INDUCTION seems to be a perfectly good case of inductive reasoning where the assertion that 'I've observed hundreds of swans across the continent and they are all white' can be interpreted as a move in the game of giving reasons that favors the proposition that 'All swans are white'. On BAD INDUCTION, however, it is hard to make sense of the assertion 'I've observed hundreds of swans across the continent and they are all white' as counting as a move in the game of giving reasons at all.

As a matter of fact, the only plausible way to count the assertion as an attempt to provide a reason seems to be to attribute to the second speaker either (1) a lack of understanding of the logical entailment's of 'There are black swans in Australia', or, (2) the outright rejection of the proposition expressed by the assertion that 'There are black swans in Australia'. But to say that either (1) or (2) just is equivalent to the idea that the mutually contextual beliefs have not been

updated in such a way as to prevent them from overriding the proposition expressed by the assertion of 'I've observed hundreds of swans across the continent and they are all white' to count as a reason. If that is correct, what it shows is that there is no sense where one can reasonably intend to provide a *pro tanto* reason via a speech act when one knows that the mutual contextual beliefs of a given context are such that the purported reason is, prior to the performance of the act, overridden.

The second way is to try to give an account of the reason given by the expression of an attitude without assuming the concept of a defeated reason:

> Instead of saying that expressing an attitude is R-intending H to take one's utterance as reason to believe that one has that attitude, we can say that it is R-intending H to take one's utterance as sufficient reason, unless there is mutually believed reason to the contrary, to believe that one has that attitude. (BACH; HARNISH, 1979, 291)

But this, as Macfarlane (2010) points out, borders on unintelligibility. Here is how the problem can be made explicit:

> We can make sense of intending that Jane take out the trash today, unless it is a holiday, in a case where it might be a holiday. But when Jane knows that today is a holiday, and the speaker knows that she knows this, what is it for the speaker to intend that Jane take out the trash today, unless it is a holiday? Similarly, if it is mutually known that the speaker lacks an attitude, what is it for the speaker to intend for the hearer to take her utterance as a sufficient reason to attribute this attitude to her, unless there is mutually believed reason to the contrary? (MACFARLANE, 2010, 82-83)

What both attempts to solve the problem show is that attempts to provide an account of the expression of the relevant attitude in contexts where the mutually shared believes entail the unreasonability of the purported attitude is problematic. Further, since this sort of attempt is what ties together the family of expression of attitude accounts the problem seems to generalize. The upshot then is that cases such as BALD-FACED LIE appear to pose some serious problems for this sort of account.

1.2.3 The final balance of expression of attitude accounts

Expression of attitude accounts are a live possibility for the account of speech acts and a somewhat popular theory in the current literature of assertion. Their appeal seems to come

from the fact that they do well to extend the Gricean project. Since the Gricean project presents distinct advantages in the construction of an organic theory of communication and psychology such accounts should then always be taken seriously.

Nonetheless, the accounts seem to be faced with some problems. As we have seen, while the accounts do provide interesting explanations to some epistemic and communicative relevant features of the speech act, the accounts appear to be unable to make sense of certain complex lies, of the performance of the speech act in soliloquies, seems unable to present the sweeping taxonomy of speech acts that it originally proposed (as evidence by the account of retraction) seems to have issues providing sufficient conditions for an account of the speech act.

When we take this into account the conclusion is that, should there be other theories that are able to preserve the explanatory power of the account and escape this presented problems, those accounts would be, all things considered, favored over the expression of attitude accounts.

1.3 Effects accounts of assertion

We can divide the effects accounts onto two very distinct families, the accounts that define assertion on terms of commitments and the accounts that define assertion on terms of the common ground.

1.3.1 The commitment account

Commitment accounts of assertion trace their origins back to Peirce and his idea that "to assert a proposition is to make oneself responsible for its truth" (PEIRCE, 1934, 384). Other defenders include Brandom (1983), and Wright (1992). The most current and, perhaps, more prominent formulation in the literature is, however, the one due to Macfarlane (2010). In what follows we will focus our attention mostly on that formulation.

The commitment account is an account, like various others, that purports to characterize assertion in terms of a normative factor. In particular, since it is a species of effect account of assertion, we can characterize it as an account that aims to provide an account of assertion in terms of its "downstream norms" (MACFARLANE, 2010, 91) specifically in terms of an *essential effect*. Taking this into account we might, on the view, characterize the speech act of assertion as the utterance U that manifests one's commitment to the truth of p.

1.3.2 The commitment account and the features of assertion

Here again we are interested in evaluating the account by gauging how well it does in explaining the features of assertion that we've deemed needing explanation. We begin with the features that the account can explain.

The commitment account and the features it can explain

We start with the features of assertion tied with its epistemic significance.
First, we notice that, since the commitment view is tied with the undertaking of a responsibility manifested by the downstream effect of being committed to the truth of the content asserted, the account is particularly successful in explaining "the susceptibility of assertions to epistemic challenge, as well as the feature whereby the speaker authorizes the hearer to defer challenges to her" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 17). The reason for this is clear, that is to say, since in the view assertion is defined by a speakers commitment to the class of responsibilities that emerge from the guarantying of the utterance token's truth, and since a defense of the utterance against epistemic challenges and an authorization of deference with regards to challenges are among those responsibilities, then it follows, on the account, that the very fact that S asserts that *p* explains both *buckpassing* and *EC-susceptibility*.

Further, the account seems well positioned to explain both assertion's *belief-worthiness* and its *Ck-aptness*. We can see this by noticing that, on the commitment account, one of the natural responsibilities included in the class ascertained when one asserts is simply the one where a speaker is thereby ready to vindicate her entitlement to assert the given propositional content. This fact, together with the plausible presumption that the entitlement is epistemic in nature, suffices to make an assertion, when "the hearer is entitled to regard her [the speaker] as able to vindicate that entitlement"[6] (GOLDBERG, 2015, 18) , *belief-worthy*. In addition, if the speaker

[6] A natural qualm that the reader might have at this point could be presented as the following question. Why would, on the commitment view, a hearer be entitled to regard the speaker as able to vindicate that entitlement? While the problem here is not simple, we can at least fairly easily gesture at two somewhat different, but also somewhat related, ways to answer the question :

On the first way, the commitment view explains the hearer's entitlement via the fact that to understand what an assertion is entails grasping [among other things] the fact that a speaker, when asserting, purports to incur in the responsibility for the vindication of the relevant entitlement. This fact, together with ordinary conditions for the assessment of sincerity, is enough to guarantee the required entitlement.

On the second way, we begin with the general observation that being a competent speaker of a language involves being competent in the use of the speech act type of assertion (which is after all the most common speech act type in language use). This fact entails that, on the commitment view, being a competent language user involves grasping the fact that the speech act of asserting entails the undertaking of certain responsibilities (such as the one

asserts a content of which she is knowledgeable about, she will also have "thereby passed this on to anyone on her audience who, on the basis of their entitlement to regard her as able to vindicate her entitlement" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 18) accepts what she says. This fact, together with its *mutuality* will suffice to explain assertion's *CK-aptness* for, if it is *common knowledge* that when a speaker asserts he is knowledgeable about whether *p* **and** he asserts that *p*, then the assertion suffices for the transmission of the relevant knowledge to an audience about whether *p*, a fact which guarantees assertion's *CK-aptness*.

Once we've seen this we can move on to examine assertion's feature of *conveyed self-representation*. Here again it seems as if the commitment account has the resources to provide a seemingly satisfactory explanation. Here is how an argument for the *conveyed self-representation* on the view could go:

Thanks to a *mutuality* assumption the commitment account can successfully explain assertion's *CK-aptness*. This means that it is common knowledge that a speaker's assertion conveys "her readiness to vindicate her entitlement" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 18) to assert the content in question. Now, since this fact is common knowledge, this means that the speaker knows that the hearer is aware of this feature of assertion. Because of this, a speaker can infer that when she asserts that *p* she will be taken as representing herself as knowing that *p* via an inference drawn out from (1) her item of common knowledge and, (2), the following conditional:

<For any audience A, if A is entitled to take my assertion that *p* as conveying my readiness to vindicate my entitlement to assert *p*, then A can take my assertion that *p* as conveying my representation of myself as knowing that *p*>

Or to put it another way, a speaker can reason from the fact that she knows that any hearer will know that her assertion that *p* conveys her readiness to vindicate her entitlement to assert that *p*, plus the reasonable assumption that that entitlement will be of an epistemic sort, to the conclusion that any hearer will know that her assertion that *p* conveys her representing herself as having epistemic authority with regards to whether *p*, and therefore explaining the feature of *conveyed self-representation*.

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of vindicating one's own entitlement to assert).

Now, both this strategies seem to yield the ultimate result that some form of tacit understanding of the relevant properties of assertion turn out to be *mutual* or *common knowledge* among the competent speakers of a language. Call this feature *mutuality*. On the present investigation, we will notice that some form of *mutuality* plays a crucial underlying explanatory role in a vast sway of the issues related to assertion. While we will not, during the course of this investigation, provide a knock-down argument in favor of *mutuality*, we should note that the assumption seems an extremely plausible feature of linguistic competence as evidenced by its extant role on the literature.

Finally we take a look at the features exemplified by cases such as DIARY and MISTAKE.

A case such as MISTAKE exemplifies the fact that a theory of assertion must be compatible with a well founded theory of the speech act of retraction. Fortunately on this score, the commitment view seems to do very well providing us with a "very simple and highly plausible, account of retraction" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 18). To see this we need only notice that, under this view, we can simply take the speech act of retraction as the 'undoing' of the previous undertaken commitment, that is to say, one who retracts an earlier assertion that *p* is "no longer 'on the hook' to vindicate her entitlement to [p]" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 18). This sort of explanation is particularly attractive since, not only it does well in explaining the quite straightforward cases where one's retraction is performed due to the fact that the speaker believes the negation of the previously asserted content, but also it neatly explains what goes on in cases such as MISTAKE where one can presumably still believe the proposition in question [7]. Finally the account also provides a neat explanation of the correlation between assertion and retraction, one is the *dual* of the other as pointed out by the fact that, on the view, assertion is the undertaking of a certain commitment and retraction simply is "the cancellation of that commitment" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 18)

On the other hand, a case such as DIARY purports to exemplify the fact that utterances of the assertion type can be made in solliloquie. Now, with regard to this feature the commitment view also appears to face no serious problem. For while some of the characteristic commitments undertaken while uttering an assertion do certainly appear to be realized in a conversational context, it seems fairly easy to see how a relevant class of commitments can be construed as being undertaken in solliloquie contexts (i.e for an equivalent of the commitment of being ready to vindicate my entitlement to assert *p* a given audience, we could characterize the commitment of being ready to vindicate my entitlement to having asserted *p* should an audience come to know that I've asserted *p*). If something like this is correct, then the commitment account seems perfectly compatible with the fact that assertions can be performed in cases of solliloquie and therefore cases such as DIARY and RAIN OUTSIDE favor the commitment view over accounts that cannot provide adequate explanations of them.

The seven mentioned features are the ones pertaining our *data* that commitment views of

[7] To see why this later feature is relevant we need only think again about the points made with regard to retraction in connection with expression of attitude accounts. On that view, the weakness of the explanation provided was identified precisely with the fact that that family of views could not easily disentangle the act of retraction from an alleged correspondence with the relevant propositional attitudes.

assertion do well at providing compelling explanations for. There are, however, two other features with regards to which the view appears to suffer some difficulties to explain.

The commitment account and the features it can't explain

We begin with what may very well be the biggest problem for the commitment account the fact that it is unclear, on the view, how one will explain the *sincerity* aspect of assertion. To see this remember first that what is at stake here is an account of how assertion manifests belief. The problem here seems to be that under the view, there is no immediate connection forthcoming. Now, the way that the proponent of the commitment account might try to solve this would be simply by identifying belief with the sort of commitments picked out by his account of assertion. On that case then, belief would just be a

> commitment to the truth of a proposition, such that, when one is legitimately called upon to do so, one stands ready to vindicate one's entitlement to the proposition to which one is so committed (GOLDBERG, 2015, 18)

The problem with such a view, however, is that "it is not clear that this singles out the attitude of belief" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 18). Further, it seems eminently plausible that one might (as the latter example of NED STARK will show) commit oneself to the truth of a proposition in the way described by the view for a host of reasons, even in cases where one does not necessarily believe it [8]. Because of this it seems as if the commitment view would be at a loss to explain the *sincerity* feature of assertion and that fact should count as a problem for the view.

A second problem relates to assertion's *RI-evidential feature*. Here the question is why the interpreter would focus on the speech act of assertion if the speech act illuminated merely a speaker's commitments? Similarly to the problem regarding the sincerity condition, it seems as if we *would* be able to make sense of this if it were the case that "we could identify these commitments with the speaker beliefs" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 19). However, as we've stated previously it is unclear how such a connection could be drawn. Because of this it seems as if the commitment view does poorly when trying to explain assertion's *RI-evidential feature* and that should count as evidence against the view.

These two features are the ones pertaining our *data* that the commitment view seems to have trouble dealing with. There is, however, another closely related problem that poses a significant

[8] One consequence of this fact, as a later suggestion will show, is that the account might seem to describe a property that would cut across other different speech acts, such as *assuming*, or *championing*.

challenge for the view.

The problem of a sufficiency condition

In the same way as expression of attitude accounts, commitment accounts embed social effects into their account of the speech act of assertion. This means, if Pagin (2004) is correct, that the account should not be extensionally adequate, for it would yield the result that, by the lights of the account, we would have to count as assertions certain utterance tokens that we would otherwise not classify as falling under the assertion type.

To see how this would happen, we should begin by considering the following utterance of an explicit performative formula:

(1) I hereby commit myself to the truth of *p*. (PAGIN, 2004, 838)

Utterances like (1) seem to be, intuitively, cases where one manifests one's commitment to the truth of *p* but that are, nonetheless, cases where one does not assert that *p*. To see this, let's consider briefly the relations between utterances such as (1) and standard cases of assertion and the doxastic states of the speakers who utter such sentences.

On cases where the speaker believes that *p*, utterances such as (1), and the standard cases of assertion seem to relate in much the same way, that is to say, the speaker believes that p and acts in a way that manifests both his belief that p and his commitment to the truth of p.

On cases where the speaker does not believe that *p*, however, it seems as if we can, for (1), envisage two different scenarios:

> (a) The standard insincere case where the speaker merely aims to deceive via his utterance of (1).
>
> (b) A case where the speaker, even though he does not believe that *p*, still sincerely utters (1).

A case such as (b) surely is possible. If you cannot imagine this possibility, here is a case that seems to fit the bill:

> NED STARK: Ned Stark promises on the deathbed of his sister Lyanna Stark that he will protect her newborn son from any harm. Knowing that if it were ever the case that his nephew's true parentage came to light the child would be in great danger,

> Ned decides to pass his nephew as his bastard son. Before leaving the Tower of Joy, Ned, on his sturdy honorable way, states his commitment to this course by saying 'I hereby commit myself, for as long as I hold breath, to the truth that this child is my bastard son'.

A case such as NED STARK seems to vindicate the judgment that utterances such as (1) are not equivalent to the assertion of *p*. This is due to the fact that NED STARK seems to be precisely a case of the type (b). We can make this point salient by noting that, while the utterance token by Ned of 'I hereby commit myself, for as long as I hold breath, to the truth that this child is my bastard son' has the value true, if Ned were, on the other hand, to utter the token 'This child is my bastard son' this token would have the value false.

Another way to make this point salient would be to imagine the kind of criticism that would befall Ned in a scenario where he utters 'I hereby commit myself to the truth that this child is my bastard son' to his wife, Catelyn Stark. Let us imagine a scenario where Catelyn does not find the use of the explicit performartive particularly odd (we can imagine that Ned has started to use this explicit performative in all sort of everyday occurrences in an effort to diminish the saliency of the oddity of this construction), and therefore does not take Ned to be flouting a Gricean Maxim, consequently inferring from Ned's utterance that the child is indeed his bastard son. Now, let us imagine that after years of Ned acting precisely in the manner that manifests his commitment to the truth of the proposition that *p*, Catelyn somehow discovers the truth. The relevant criticism that Catelyn may ascribe to Ned in this situation seems to be that he *deceived* her, not that he *lied* to her. To see this notice that, should Catelyn complain that Ned lied, it seems as if Ned might legitimately protest and say that he technically never lied, he was careful about that. On the standard assumption that lying requires asserting, the legitimacy of Ned's protest would be explained by the fact that he never asserted that *p*.

This second point should come as no surprise when we consider some alternative ways on which one can incur in the sort of deontic status that manifests one's commitments. To see this let us consider the sort of obligations that one incurs when one signs a contract that hinges on whether *p*. On this sort of case I may sign a contract "making me responsible for all the costs incurred if *p* should turn not to hold, but that again is not yet claiming that it is true" (PAGIN, 2004, 839).

A different argument against the idea that the commitment account provides sufficient conditions for the analysis of the speech act of assertion comes from what we can call the Inferential

Integration Test (PAGIN, 2004, 851) . The idea here is that an assertion must integrate inferentially with any other assertions made in the context of the present assertion. This test is relevant because one way on which defenders of the commitment view might try to reply to the problem of the sufficiency condition is by claiming that cases such as (1) are actually cases of indirect assertion [9].

On this view, what happens when a speaker utters a explicit performative formula such as in (1) is that he is indirectly asserting that *p*. But one problem with this view comes precisely from the idea that "any assertion should provide a premise for an inference *jointly* with the other assertions" (PAGIN, 2004, 851) that belong to that conversational context. We can see exemplifications of this principle when we think of inferential processes based on the paradigmatic cases of indirect speech acts. So, the following seem like acceptable inferences:

(2) (ASSERTORIC PREMISE): If 73 is a prime number, we cannot share the stones equally.
(IRONIC PREMISE): 73 is nicely divisible
(ASSERTORIC CONCLUSION): So, we cannot share the stones equally.

(3) (ASSERTORIC PREMISE): If 73 is a prime number,we cannot share the stones equally.
(RHETORICAL PREMISE): Is 73, perhaps,divisible?
(ASSERTORIC CONCLUSION): So, we cannot share the stones equally. (PAGIN, 2004, 851)

We can think of (2) and (3) as *correct* inferences in the sense that the "truth of propositions that are asserted by utterances of the premises guarantees the truth of the proposition that is asserted by an utterance of the conclusion" (PAGIN, 2004, 851-852). These inferences contrast with the inferential process which would occur on the exemplification of an inference based a on particular token of the general schema (1) such as:

(4) (ASSERTORIC PREMISE): If 73 is a prime number, we cannot share the stones equally.
(COMMISSIVE PREMISE): I commit myself to the truth of the statement that 73 is a prime number.
(ASSERTORIC CONCLUSION): So, we cannot share the stones equally. (PAGIN, 2004, 851)

An inference such as (4) can be said incorrect in the sense that the truth of the premises does not guarantee the truth of the proposition expressed by the conclusion. To see this, notice that there

[9]We are putting aside here two other issues that would come up for this view. First, this idea seems to be incompatible with the problems raised by a case such as NED STARK. Second, it seems that, if a defender of the view would like to claim that cases such as (1) are cases of indirect assertions, they would do well to present us with a different model of indirect speech acts for none of the views in the current literature seems to be able to explain how the indirect speech act emerges on these sort of cases.

seems to be an extra premise missing in (4), namely a premise such as 'If I commit myself to the truth of the statement that 73 is a prime number, then 73 is a prime number' (PAGIN, 2004, 852). What this shows is that an inference such as (4) is missing something to be correct.

The upshot is that, should instances of (1) be, in some way, cases of indirect assertion, then they should yield correct inferences in the same manner as (2) and (3) do. Since we've seen through the example of (4) that they do not, then we have an additional reason to think that the problem of the sufficiency condition affects the commitment accounts of assertion.

1.3.3 The final balance of the commitment account

Commitment account's of assertion seem to do actually fairly well in accordance with our criteria. Among the nine mentioned features of assertion the view seems to provide satisfactory explanations for seven of them. Nonetheless, it still seems clear that this sort of view struggles with regard to what seems a crucial aspect of assertion, that is to say, the special connection between sincere utterances of the token act and belief. This fact, together with the problem of the sufficiency condition will make it so that a view that can deal with these problems should be favored over the commitment view [10].

1.3.4 The common ground account

The common ground account draws its inspiration from Stalnaker (1999) and his remark that an assertion is made in a context. Even though Stalnaker (1999) does not intend to provide an account of assertion [11] an account on which assertion is taken to be characterized by a proposal to add information to conversational common ground has become an option that is seriously considered in the literature. A description of this approach can be given in the following way:

> ...[A]n assertion should be understood as a proposal to change the context by adding the content to the information pressuposed. This is an account of the *force* of an assertion, and it respects the traditional distinction between the content and the

[10] Despite the fact that the problem of the connection between sincere utterances and beliefs seems like a decisive one against the view, we should notice that we agree with Goldberg when he says that he regards the view as perhaps "the best of the views that I do not endorse" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 19). The commitment view is certainly an attractive one and we attribute this to the fact, that by our lights, the correct view will turn out to *entail* the sort of commitments postulated by the view

[11] Here is precisely what he says: "I will *not* propose an analysis of assertion, but I will make some modest claims about the way assertions act on the contexts in which they are made, and the way contexts constrain the interpretation of assertions" (STALNAKER, 1999, 78, our italics).

> force of a speech act. Propositional content is represented by a (possibly partial) function from possible worlds to truth values; assertive force is represented by the way in which any such function is used to change the context that the speaker shares with those to whom he is speaking (STALNAKER, 1999, 10-11)

That is to say, assertion, on this account, is defined as the speech act type that proposes to add the content asserted to the common ground [12].

1.3.5 The common ground and the features of assertion

We move on now to the evaluating of the common ground account and how well it does in explaining the features that we've deemed as worthy of explanation. We begin by considering how the common ground account would go about explaining the desired features of assertion.

An initial issue for the common ground account

We begin with a troubling (for the account) observation: There are lots of reasons why a conversational [13] (or other sort of context where utterances are in order) context may emerge. Because of this, it may be the case that in all non standard contexts the common ground does not purport to track an accurate representation of the world.

Once we notice this, it is easy to see how this fact can provide trouble for the project of providing an explanation of the features that we deemed worthy of explanation on the common ground account. For the account defines assertion in terms of its proposal to add content to the common ground. But on the non-standard contexts there may be no reason for the proposal to relate to any epistemically relevant properties (such as knowledge or justified belief). Because of this, since on the view, a speech act token is a token of the assertion type *in virtue* of it being a proposal to add to the common ground on the given context, then there may be no reason for the assertion to relate to any epistemically relevant properties. This fact makes it so that the project of providing explanations of the desired features becomes nigh unfeasible [14].

[12] The notion of common ground is an expansion of the Lewis (1979) notion of a conversational score. Roughly put, the conversational score is the set that registers all the moves (and therefore the conditions) of a conversation, while the common ground is the set that is mutually accepted by the participants as representing the score of that conversation

[13] To give but one example of an extreme case. We can imagine a conversation that is actually a game. The participants agree beforehand on a proposition that is false and that is the cornerstone of the game. The objective is to have a full conversation discussing that falsehood (and whatever it entails) as if it were true.

[14] To make the problem clearer let's take a look at two examples:
(1) Due to the *CK-aptness* feature of assertion, speakers are prepared to employ assertions to communicate knowl-

Now, to be fair to the common ground account we should note that it is far from clear how common these non-standard conversational contexts are. In addition, on the *paradigmatic* cases, where the goal of a conversation is the sharing of accurate information, it is plausible that the common ground might provide an explanation of the desired features. But that is not what the view, as stated, says. The common ground view purports to explain the speech act of assertion in terms of its proposed effect on the common ground of *any* conversation, no restrictions applied. Since this project seems unfeasible for the reasons stated above, however, perhaps the charitable thing to do here would be to state the account on terms where the speech act of assertion is defined on terms of its effect on the conversational context *conditional* on that context being the paradigmatic conversational context where the participants aim to convey accurate information. On this view we would formulate the common ground account as something like this:

RCGA(Revised Common Ground Account): To assert is to propose to add p to the common ground of a conversational context where the goal is to convey accurate information.

RCGA makes it so that the utterances in contexts where the goal is not to convey accurate information turn out to not be tokens of the type assertion. When we consider the set of utterances with surface level properties that are assertion-like but that intuitively should not count as assertions, this conclusion may turn out to be a welcome result [15].

Now, if we assume that **RCGA** is the best candidate for a common ground account of assertion we can see that the assumption seems to come with a nice package of advantages. In particular, since the problematic cases are ruled out, on the **RCGA** view it seems as if the common ground account can attempt to provide explanations for the desired features of assertion and can attempt to fulfill the theory *desiderata*.

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edge and hearers are prepared do comprehend the act of assertion in terms of the aim to communicate knowledge. But on the common ground account as stated, on non standard conversational contexts what the theory predicts as assertions may not have *any* relation to epistemically relevant properties. But if that is the case, then those contexts provide reasons for both speakers and hearers to not be prepared to employ/comprehend assertion in terms of epistemic aims. This leaves us at a loss as to how to explain assertion's *CK-aptness*;

(2) Due to the *belief-worthiness* feature of assertion, the speech act of assertion makes salient questions regarding whether the content of the utterance should be believed (and in certain views on the epistemology of testimony [i.e non reductionist views] provides a [defeasible] reason for an affirmative answer to the question). But on the common ground account as stated, on non standard conversational contexts what the theory predicts as assertions may not have *any* relation to epistemically relevant properties. But if that is the case, then in those contexts what the theory predicts as assertions may not make salient the question regarding the status beliefs in the content of the assertions. This leaves us at a loss as to how to explain assertion's *belief-worthiness*.

[15] It is welcome because there seems to be something right about the idea that they may be some relation between the context and the sort of illocutionary force that a speech act may have and this sort of explanation would provide the most straightforward way to carve out the space. However, as we will see with a problem raised bellow, **RCGA** cannot be the correct way to carve the space for it is to restrictive, that is to say, it will make it so that intuitive cases of assertion will should not count as it on the view.

RCGA and the features it can explain

We begin with the features more closely tied to assertion's epistemic significance.

Since **RCGA** rules out the non paradigmatic conversational contexts the account can attempt to explain assertion's *CK-aptness* by pointing out that the best way to convey accurate information is by uttering sentences that come from knowledge. On the conversational context where this is mutually known then, the hearer becomes entitled to presume that the reason that the speaker proposes to add p to the common ground is because he knows that p. Thus **RCGA** can provide an explanation for this first feature of assertion.

A second feature of **RCGA** is that assertion's *belief-worthiness* seems to follow from it almost automatically. Since on **RCGA** assertions are always issued in contexts where it is mutually known that the goal is to convey accurate information, then the saliency of the question of whether the content of the speech act should be believed is just identical to the question of whether the proposal to accept p into the common ground, for in the context delineated by **RCGA** it just follows from the fact that the speech act is a proposal to add p to the common ground that it is also a proposal for p to be taken as a proposition that is worthy of being believed.

It would be for a similar reason that **RCGA** might be able to explain assertion's *EC-susceptibility*. Since the best explanation for why a proposal to add p to the common ground on the contexts carved out by **RCGA** is that the speaker speaks from knowledge (or some other positive epistemic status) queries that check for the possession of the appropriate epistemic status then become relevant as challenges to the appropriateness of the proposal. This explains why *EC-susceptibility* should be a feature of assertion.

A similar situation also arises for the *conveyed self-representation* . Since the best explanation for why a proposal to add p to the common ground on the contexts carved out by **RCGA** is that the speaker knows that p, then when the speakers asserts that p he represents himself as knowing that p.

And yet again, the same situation can help the theory make sense of cases such as MISTAKE. Since the best explanation for why a proposal to add p to the common ground on the contexts carved out by **RCGA** is that the speaker knows (or has some other positive epistemic status with regard to)that p, and since, because of this, a speaker represents oneself as knowing that p when he proposes to add p to the common ground on **RCGA**, then when a speaker comes to believe that he did not, after all, know that p it becomes appropriate for the speaker to pro-

pose to remove *p* from the common ground, and that would just be the way that **RCGA** would explain what happens in a case such as MISTAKE.

Finally, this same feature seems to help explain both the *sincerity* aspect of assertion and the phenomenon of *buckpassing*. Since the conversational context carved by **RCGA** is one where the goal is to share accurate information and, since the best way for a proposal to add **p** to the common ground to fulfill that goal is for an agent to propose to add *p* to the common ground only when he knows that *p*, then a sincere utterance of *p* will manifest one's belief that one knows *p* (and therefore one's belief that *p*). In addition, since this fact is mutually known, then, when a speaker proposes to add *p* to the common ground, he provides a hearer with a (defeasible) reason for his belief that *p* and when challenged with respect to whether *p* the hearer will be entitled, due to his knowledge of what the speaker's assertion that *p* manifests, to appeal to that reason on the explanation of his own belief. In this way the phenomenon of *buckpassing* is licensed by **RCGA**.

RCGA, then, can explain seven of the features of assertion and by this metric alone would stand on a better position than, for instance, expression of attitude accounts of assertion or on par with the commitment account . As these previous accounts, however, there seem to be some features of our *explananda* that **RCGA** seem to have more trouble explaining.

RCGA and the features it can't explain

We begin with the feature of *radical interpretation*. While it is true that under **RCGA** assertion could play the sort of evidential role that it is required for it to be a crucial player on the project of Radical Interpretation, **RCGA** seems to pose an undue burden in the project for it adds another element that the interpreter must screen for in his assessment while conducting the project. On **RCGA** the interpreter has to monitor, not only for the pairings of assertions and the environment, but also for the (expanded) possibility of the utterances, by the lights of **RCGA** (in virtue of not being uttered in the proper conversational context), not counting as assertion tokens after all. This added strain in the process makes it so that the role of assertions in the project becomes naturally diminished and makes the overall project slightly more unfeasible. This makes it so that **RCGA** provides, at best, a dubious explanation of the project of Radical Interpretation.

A second problem comes from assertions in *solliloquium*. Cases such as DIARY and RAIN

OUTSIDE provide strong support for the intuition that such cases should count as cases of assertion. In addition, as we've have seen, theories that do not take accounts of *solliloquium* cases seriously seem to have trouble telling us what is the difference between utterances such as the ones made in DIARY and RAIN OUTSIDE and the ones made in DIARY* and RAIN OUTSIDE*. Since **RCGA** (as so does the initial common ground account) requires a conversational context, and a conversational context requires at least two agents, then **RCGA** seems ill-equipped to make justice to this feature of assertion.

This two problems show that while **RCGA** may seem appealing it would still not be able to completely explain every desirable feature of assertion. If this was everything to be said, the common ground account in the form of **RCGA** might look like a respectable, if not fully satisfactory account of assertion. However, there remains one problem, a problem that is already hinted at when we consider the *solliloquium* cases.

A further problem for RCGA

Consider the following case:

> THEATER: Pedro is an actor in a play. While performing one day he can't help but notice a couple in the last row of the audience who seem to be having a forceful but quiet discussion . At some point things tend to get worse for he notices the woman trying to get up to leave at which point the man grabs her arm forcefully. Unable to contain himself Pedro says 'You should not do that!'.

The problem here is that, while **RCGA** does well to recognize that it seems as if the context of a play is one where the lines that Pedro were saying while on character should not be classified as assertions, it seems as if **RCGA** will be unable to give the verdict that when Pedro says 'You should not do that!' he is actually asserting it. The reason for this is that, due to the quasi-conversational context remaining unaltered , **RCGA** does not count the context where Pedro utters 'You should not do that!' as a context where an assertion can be made. But this result should count as a serious strike against **RCGA** for it seems quite clear that Pedro asserts what he says when he goes out of his line.

Now, one might wonder what has gone wrong with **RCGA** in the case. For, after all, wasn't the suggestion before that having a way to discriminate between contexts where proposals to add **p** to the common ground should or should not be taken as assertions to be a positive feature

of **RCGA**? The problem, however, seems to be that using the notion of a conversational context to discriminate between cases that seem to share this feature seems, unfortunately, to be a case where one ends up using a tool that is to blunt for the job at hand.

While there is certainly some merit to the idea that a theory of assertion as a proposal to add to the common ground should have a way to discriminate between proposals to add to the conversational context that should or should not be ruled as assertions, THEATER shows that **RCGA** should not be the way to do it. This is because **RCGA** will lead to the wrong verdict on the whole range of cases where it will seem that an agent asserts that *p despite* the conditions of the present conversational context. The upshot is that cases such as THEATER pose a major problem for **RCGA** as candidate theory of assertion.

1.3.6 The final balance of the common ground account

While trying to evaluate the common ground account as a candidate for the most plausible theory of assertion we seem to come to the conclusion that proponents of the account end up facing a dilemma.

Either proponents of the common ground account recognize that proposals to add to the common ground can be done for a variety of reasons and that therefore explaining the desired features of assertion (especially the features that tie assertion to epistemic properties)on their view would be nigh unfeasible, or they endorse **RCGA,** which seems incapable of giving the correct verdict in a whole range of intuitive cases.

Now, there may be some other way that one might conceive of drawing the relevant distinctions that would be able to sidestep these issues. For myself, however, I confess that I struggle to see what sort of resources the account could have that would provide the desired sort explanation without impending in the cost of turning the account into a version of one of its rivals.

As long as this seems to be the state of affairs then, it seems plausible to say that the common ground account seems to sit at a definitive disadvantage when considering our criterion.

1.4 The causal account of assertion

The causal account of assertion is an account developed by Pagin (2010). It has as its base the following idea:

> (IA): An utterance *u* is an assertion iff u is *prima facie* informative. (PAGIN, 2010, 99)

It is important, of course, to cash out what it is for a notion to be informative:

> (IFN) An utterance *u* is informative iff *u* is made partly because it is true[16]. (PAGIN, 2010, 99)

Equally important, however, is to keep in mind that the notion must be only *prima facie* informative. To see why this is so, just consider the following cases:

> LIE: I get to my hotel room exhausted after a day of trying to understand what people are talking about with regards to quantum mechanics in a conference. I realize that a new episode of True Detective has just come out on HBO and, without much thought, I immediately decide to watch it before going to bed. When I call my fiance on the next morning she asks me, with a very characteristic inflection, if I managed to see the episode last night. Realizing that she did not watch it, and is hoping that I also did not, I say 'No, I did not see the episode'.

> WRONG: I'm discussing with my fiancee whether the first season of True Detective premiered on 2014 or 2015. I believe (wrongly) that it premiered in 2015 and say, 'True Detective premiered on 2015'.

When discussing the expression of attitude accounts we noted that one problem that the view had would be that it could not count cases such as BALD-FACED LIE as assertions. On the causal account without the *prima facie* qualification, however, not even cases such as LIE would be classified as assertions. Since it seems rather obvious that someone can make an assertion while lying [17] this seems like it would pose a major problem for this version of the view. In

[16] This may seem like to little. So here is a, still rough, characterization. An utterance is informative when it is a representation α of a state of affair β "just in case the existence or obtaining of α tracks the obtaining of β". (PAGIN, 2010, 102)

[17] As a matter of fact, most philosophers seem to think that asserting is a **necessary condition** for lying.

addition to that, it also seems as if the causal account without the *prima facie* qualification would not even classify cases such as WRONG as cases of assertion. But it seems quite obvious that someone can make an assertion while being mistaken about whether the content of what they assert is actually the case. Because of cases like these, it seems that a theory that said that an assertion is an utterance that is made partly because it is true would, therefore, be a non-starter. But this leads us to the question, what is it for an utterance to be *prima facie* informative?

One way to answer this question is to drawn from Pollock (1974). On this account we get the notion of a *prima facie* reason where a *prima facie* reason is a self-sufficient but *defeasible* reason (POLLOCK, 1974, 40). This is not, however, the way that Pagin (2010), characterizes the notion.

On Pagin (2010) the notion of *prima facie* informativeness is going to be characterized in terms of the utterance satisfying a condition that characterizes the manifestation of a belief[18][19]. To be more precise, what is required for the characterization of the notion are conditions ϕ_Y and $\phi*_Y$ such that:

> a) ϕ_Y is met by default and is characterized in terms of credence.
>
> b) $\phi*_Y$ is met when the default condition is not met but seems to be. (PAGIN, 2010, 117) [20]

Now, what is a default condition ϕ_Y that should it be met(or seem to be met) will provide a description of *prima facie* informativeness? The obvious answer seems to be that the condition must be that the speaker believes the content that he asserts. This means that an assertion, on the view, can be described as the fulfillment (or the seeming of fulfillment)of the following credence function:

> (IF)$A_Y(p) \rightarrow C_y(p) > \epsilon_Y$[21] (PAGIN, 2010, 122)

[18]This only characterizes assertion on the speaker side, the characterization on the hearer side is going to depend on the manisfetation of dispositions to believe the utterance, for more on the hearer notion see the footnotes bellow.

[19]The reason that Pagin does not want to characterize *prima facie* informativeness in terms of the Pollock (1974) notion is that the notion of reason seems to depend on normative concepts. The Pagin (2010) project, by contrast, can be seen as a project of characterizing assertion without normativity (i.e by appealing in the characterization only to descriptive concepts). Because of this, using the Pollock characterization would seem to be a non-starter.

[20]This is not precisely Pagin's characterization for, as mentioned before the conditions are going to be build in such a way that they are going to be a disjunction where they are either an assertion of the speaker or an assertion for the hearer. Due to the fact that I take *solliloquium* cases and other considerations to show that assertions should be characterized by appeal only to the speaker, and also due to the considerate amount of extra complexity that a theory of assertion for the hearer would add to this thesis, I'm choosing to deal only with speaker assertion in the corpus of the text. As Pagin himself recognizes, this is the standard treatment in the literature and he himself recommends that those who find issue with the hearer notion of assertion should read his theory as such.

[21]Again, this gives us only the characterization of speaker assertion. Should we wish to characterize hearer

Where ϵ_Y is the threshold for the speaker belief, $C_y(p)$ is Y's credence in *p* and $A_Y(p)$ means that Y asserts that *p*.

So an utterance is *prima facie* informative when condition (IF) is met, or seems to be met, by the speaker. This gives us an specification of what it is, on the view, to be an assertion. Having clarified the notion of *prima facie* informativeness we can now move on to evaluate the causal account of assertion.

1.4.1 The causal account and the features of assertion

The causal account characterizes assertion in terms of being the utterance that is *prima facie* informative and it characterizes this notion in terms of it either being the product of the speaker's belief that *p* or it seeming to be the product of that belief. But how well does this characterization deals with our *explananda*? It is this question that we address next.

The causal account and the features it can explain

We begin with the *sincerity* feature of assertion. On the causal account the explanation for this feature comes as a given. Since assertion is defined on terms of a subjective probability distribution where a credence above the threshold for belief on *p* is part of the cause for the speaker to utter a sentence with content *p*, then the fact that a sincere assertion manifests one's beliefs *just is* a description of the general attitude necessary for a speaker to utter a sincere assertion.

In addition, since the locution 'gives information that p' is factive (PAGIN, 2010, 104) and the description of being *prima facie* informative given by the credence function must either meet or seem to meet this condition, then presumably there are going to be evaluative standards on which the credence distributions that subsume the utterances can be evaluated, that is to say, there are going to be epistemic standards for credences (and hence for beliefs).

Once we get this assumption on board we can start to explain assertion's *conveyed self-representation* on terms of the fact that to assert is to either meet or seem to meet a condition that is evaluated by a certain standard. If the standard on which that evaluation is going to be made is knowledge then presumably the speaker, in order to be positively evaluated, is going to

assertion in terms of a hearer X we would need a function that obeyed the following constraints: (1)$C_X(p \mid A^X(p)) > 0.5$ and, (2) $C_X(p \mid A^X(p)) > C_X(p)$

aim to either meet or seem to meet the knowledge requirement when asserting. If the standard is some other epistemic (that connects belief with truth) property then the speaker, in order to be positively evaluated, is going to aim to either meet or seem to meet that other standard. In other words, for any evaluative standard that holds, when the speaker asserts that *p* he represents himself as fulfilling the standard required for him to be positively evaluated with regard to his epistemic relation to *p*.

An even more straightforward explanation is available for the feature of assertion's *belief-worthiness*. Since, on the view, to assert that *p* is to utter that *p* when the assertion is *prima facie* informative the mere recognition of this fact [22] should make salient questions regarding whether that information should be believed.

By the same token, explaining assertion's *EC-susceptibility* should be quite straightforward. Since an assertion is a speech act that is *prima facie* informative and since the notion of informativeness is going to be closely tied with the satisfaction of certain epistemic standards, then challenges as to whether the assertion is *de facto* informative are going to be quite natural, a fact which provides the explanation for assertion's *EC-susceptibility*.

Explaining cases such as MISTAKE also seems plausible on the view. For since the account requires that an assertion be *prima facie* informative and since prima facie informativeness is plausibly tied with certain epistemic standards, then when one discovers that one has failed to satisfy such standards it becomes permissible to *retract* such a speech act.

Finally, since what is required for a speaker to assert is only meeting, or seeming to meet, the conditions of a certain credence distribution, then the causal account of assertion also seems to be compatible with assertions in *solliloquium* as in cases such as DIARY and RAIN OUTSIDE.

These six features are the ones that the causal account seem to handle reasonably well. There is, however, an underlying issue that would seem to make that the account will do poorly when trying to explain the remaining features of assertion.

The causal account and the features it can't explain

To see what is the underlying issue, let us consider the feature of assertion's *CK-aptness*. What is required for a theory of assertion to be able to explain the fact that the speech act of

[22]Here we should be careful to not take this recognition as being in possession of a fully formed theory of assertion in one's mental life (for that of course would be to demanding and over intellectualized). Rather, what would suffice needs to be something more plausible at the pre-theoretical level such as having the disposition to utter and treat utterances of assertions as described conditions given by the respective credence functions.

assertion has the features of (1) being recognized by speakers as the primary act to be employed when one aims to communicate knowledge, and, (2) being recognized by hearers as the speech act that provides a default assumption on which that is the aim of the speakers, is that a theory of assertion tie together a significant high number of cases of assertion with instances of the asserter knowing what he asserts. Usually, the way that this is done is via some sort of evaluative standard where, due to some sort of normative or practical reason, assertions that correlate with instances of the speaker knowing what he asserts are deemed good in some relevant way where assertions that do not correlate with knowledge or fall significantly short of knowledge are deemed bad or defective. Since on the standard practice of communication it is going to be the case that the agents are going to aim and, in most cases succeed, at conforming with the standards for the communicative practice then this fact will guarantee the high correlation between instances of utterances of assertion tokens and instances of the speaker knowing what he asserts.

The problem for the causal account of assertion, however, is that since the account sheds normative notions in favor of a purely descriptive theory there are no such standards to be had. We can see this by noting that, on cases where the speaker fails to comply to any plausible epistemic standard (i.e lacks knowledge when asserts, does not posses evidence that favors the proposition he asserts, speaks a falsehood), by the account's lights there will still be no dimension on which the assertion the assertion is deemed criticizable. To put it another way, since on the account all that is required of an assertion is that it be *prima facie* informative, there is simply nothing wrong with asserting something that falls well short of being an instance of knowledge(or having any other sort of epistemically relevant property). The upshot is that, in a similar manner to the problem faced by expression of attitude accounts of assertion, the causal account would seem to *not have enough normativity in the picture* (GOLDBERG, 2015, 13) and, because of this, the view would seem unable to satisfactorily explain assertion's *CK-aptness*.

A similar problem will arise for the phenomenon of *buckpassing*. Since there is nothing wrong with an assertion being an instance of an utterance where the speaker falls well short of fulfilling epistemic standards, then it becomes quite obvious that a hearer cannot appeal to the fact that a speaker asserted that p as a reason for his belief that p. To be fair, since the account seems to presume evaluative standards for the belief that causes an instance of assertion, this means that when a speaker utters an assertion token without complying with certain epistemic standards he will, quite plausibly, be criticizable for believing the way he does. But still, even

if that is the case, by the account's lights there will be nothing wrong with his act of asserting that *p*. Given these conditions, there would seem to be no way that the account would be able to explain why a hearer would be *authorized* to take the mere fact that a speaker asserted that *p* as a reason for his belief that *p*, and therefore that seems to be no way on which the account could give an explanation of the phenomenon of *epistemic buckpassing*.

1.4.2 The final balance of the causal account

The causal account of assertion seems, at first, to do reasonably well at explaining the theoretically interesting features of assertion. However, since the account lacks, by design, a normative component it ends up facing serious problems when trying to explain the more robustly epistemic features of assertion, and that fact seems to count strongly against it.

To be fair with the account, there is nothing in it that says that such an account is *incompatible* with there being derivative norms of assertion. Because of this, one way to try to improve the account's standing might be to argue that there are indeed Norms of Assertion and that they provide the account with the desired normative features. However, once we add such a feature to the account, it seems to be hard to see what the motivation for retaing the causal account on the first place would be, specially if we had to consider why such an account would take some sort of priority of explanation over a straightforwardly rule based account.

1.5 Constitutive rules accounts of assertion

The constitutive account of assertion is the account where the speech act is defined by its rule. On the account "the speech act [of assertion], like a game and unlike the act of jumping, is constituted by rules" (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 238). The basic idea can be characterized, very simply, as the thought that, to be an assertion is to be the speech act that is governed by:

> (The C rule) One must: assert p only if p has C. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 141)

Now, there is a lot of debate as to which would be the condition C that should be used to specify the candidate rule. At this point though, this is not the question that I am interested on. For now I want to keep the discussion general and attempt to show how a very general account would be able to meet our *desiderata*.

1.5.1 The rule account and the features of assertion

The contention of this dissertation is that the rule account of assertion is the best way to formulate a theory of assertion. A great part of the reason for this claim lies in the fact that the rule account is capable of fully explaining the features of assertion.

The rule account explanation of the features of assertion

We can begin to see how the rule account provides a complete explanation of the desired features of assertion by focusing on the features of assertion more closely tied with its epistemic significance.

So, for instance, if we take a look at assertion's *CK-aptness*, we will see that, on the assumption that the rule of assertion would be a rule of language, and that as such it would be "something that is common knowledge among all competent language users" [23] (GOLDBERG, 2015, 19), we could get the fact that when a speaker asserts something for an audience then both the speaker and the audience are going to know that the assertion is appropriate only if it meets the standard set by that rule. Now, if the rule ties the standard in a relevant fashion to knowledge then the result will be that uttering assertions in the standard appropriate way will positively correlate with the speech act being a proper vehicle for knowledge and the audience will be aware of this fact, thus explaining assertion's *CK-aptness*.

In a similar fashion the theory can provide an explanation for the feature of assertion's *belief-worthiness*. For since the rule view carries with it a normative dimension of evaluation of the speech act of assertion, and since this fact should be mutual knowledge, then instances of assertion tokens will bring to light questions regarding whether the assertion tokens meet the appropriate standards. On the assumption that those standards are the sort of standards that render a belief epistemicaly valuable, then those standards will be the standards that are decisive for answering the question of whether it is a worthy endeavor to believe in the asserted content, that is to say, the very utterance of the token will make salient the question of whether the assertion tokens are *belief-worthy*, thus explaining this feature of assertion.

In addition, since it is mutually known that in order for the utterance of the token to be appropriate the utterance must meet the standard set by the rule, then if the standard is knowledge

[23] Here again we must take care to not assume a requirement that is to intelectualized. Fortunately we do not need to do so, for a weak assumption such as agents having the disposition to judge assertions in terms of meeting the standards will suffice for the purposes of the argument.

or something stronger [24], then the act of uttering the assertion itself can be seen as conveying that the speaker does have the relevant knowledge.

The same basic features will also help us explain assertion's *sincerity* feature. For if assertion is governed by a norm that has as its standard for appropriateness a belief component[25] then "insofar as one is sincere in one's assertion one aims to satisfy that norm" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 20) and therefore, because of this aim, a sincere assertion will involve belief in the asserted content.

Finally, the rule account also seems to be able to explain the phenomenon of *buckpassing*. For if the rule account of assertion is correct then if a hearer were to accept an assertion on "the strength of the speaker's say-so, she would then be in a position in which she regarded the speaker as satisfying the norm of assertion, under conditions in which the speaker conveyed precisely this" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 20). Due to this fact, if the hearer were challenged on her belief on the asserted content, she would be entitled to count as a reason for her belief the fact that the speaker asserted the content, and therefore, would be entitled to pass along a challenge to her belief to the speaker. This later fact just is an explanation of *buckpassing*.

Now, in addition to the more closely epistemic features, the rule account of assertion can also deal the other features that we deemed as *explananda*.

For instance, the account can easily make sense of why assertions in cases such as DIARY and RAIN OUTSIDE are possible. For if what is necessary for an utterance to be a token of the speech act of assertion is for that utterance to be subject to a rule that makes no reference to audiences, then it seems quite obvious that one can assert in *solliloquium*.

In addition, it is also quite clear how the account would explain what is happening in cases such as MISTAKE. For notice that since on the account to make a proper assertion is to conform to the rule that governs the speech act, then the right thing to do when one realizes that one has failed to conform to the rule becomes to retract the utterance that one has made.

Lastly, we can look at how the account deals with the role of assertion on *Radical Interpretation.* Here, the explanation seems to be simple as well. For since the speech act of assertion is governed by a rule, then "the Radical Interpreter who discerns the making of an assertion

[24] An important consequence here is that the *conveyed-self representation* feature on the view will only track whatever it is deemed the feature that the rules picks out. This fact is noteworthy and should be noted as it will be used in arguments bellow.

[25] Here again it is worth point that some candidate to norms might not require a belief component and because of this they may have trouble dealing with the sincerity requirement. We will come back to this point when discuss the Norms of Assertion more thoroughly bellow.

can then follow the method of trying to render the assertion in such a way as to satisfy the rule."(GOLDBERG, 2015, 20). This fact gives the Radical Interpreter the baseline on which he can correlate the speakers utterances with the environment in a way where the interpreter render the speaker as satisfying the relevant rule of assertion and therefore grounding a certain interpretation that will maximize the possibility of the project going about in the correct manner, all of which just in as explanation of how the speech act of assertion can be central in the project of *Radical Interpretation*.

1.5.2 Some objections to the idea of constitutivity

Despite the fact that assertion seems to smoothly explain all the the desired features of the speech act, there still remains a lot of controversy surrounding the idea of constitutive rules. In particular, even though most philosophers would be hard pressed to deny that there are either Alethic or Epistemic Norms[26] of Assertion [27], there is still a large part of the community who would try to resist the idea that these rules are **constitutive** of the act of asserting.

Most of the resistance of this sort will come out of the aforementioned *competing views of assertion* which, by their own lights, see the concept of a constitutive rule as superfluous (since the individuation of the speech act is already achieved by the view proposed by the theory). Some other forms of resistance though, seem to stem from conceptual grounds. It is to this sort of resistance, the one that comes from the idea that there is something wrong conceptually with the constitutive rule account, that this section is dedicated to.

To begin to understand the objections, it would serve us well to first get a tighter grip at the notion of a *constitutive rule*. Here is how Williamson offers the beginnings of a characterization of it:

> A rule will count as constitutive of an act only if it is *essential* to that act; necessarily, the rule governs every performance of the act. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 239)

On the Williamson (2000) account, for something to be a constitutive rule it has to be a rule that defines the performance of that act by the very fact of it being in place in every instance of

[26]For the sake of simplicity we will be here using norms and rules interchangeably even though we recognize that there might be some positions that take norms to be a more general type which contains rules as a proper subset.

[27]Though for a view where those norms turn out to be subsumed by more general principles of cooperative behavior see Sosa (2009)

its performance. In other words, a constitutive rule will tell us what it is required for a given token **to count** as an exemplification a certain type. One consequence of this definition is that one type of objection to the conception that the speech act of assertion can be so defined is simply one where a challenge to the idea that such a condition always obtains is posed. This is not, however, the only way that one can challenge the constitutive rule view. What would be some of the others?

Goldberg (2015), provides a nice inventory of the ways these kind of views appear and also some nice proposals towards how they could be resisted. In the remainder of this section, we will be following a large part of his discussion and arguments for the defense of the *constitutive rule* conception, while still adding some additional arguments and tweaks of our own.

Can the Norm of Assertion be a Constitutive Rule?

A great deal of the discomfort with the *constitutive rule* conception appears to come of the close analogy between speech acts and games. Of particular note is Maitra (2010)'s objections. On her (2010) she points out that, if a Norm of Assertion is a constitutive rule, then it is a very much different rule from the ones taken to be the paradigmatic cases of constitutive rules in other games.[28]

Maitra (2010) highlights three ways on which these differences can be brought to attention:

(1) The first of this ways consists in noting that there is a difference in *form* between the norms of assertion and the paradigmatic cases. To see this, consider the following rules:

> (Knowledge Norm) Assert p only if you know p.
> (Truth Norm) Assert p only if p.
> (Three Strikes Norm) A batter is out when he has earned three strikes. (MAITRA, 2010, 282)
> (Checkmate Norm) Checkmate is declared when there is no legal move available that will get the king out of check.

The difference in form between these rules seems quite obvious. While the 'Three Strikes Norm' and the 'Checkmate Norm' tells us what outs and checkmates are the 'Truth Norm' and the 'Knowledge Norm' tell us the conditions on assertions being warranted. According

[28]The point being, of course, that this asymmetry should be taken as evidence that a Norm of Assertion is **not** a constitutive rule of the speech act of asserting.

to Maitra, what this highlights is the fact that, while paradigmatic cases of constitutive rules appears to provide us with definitions, the candidates to constitutive rules of assertion merely "assume that there is something that counts as asserting, and tell us what an asserter ought to be aiming when performing the speech act" (MAITRA, 2010, 282).

The problem with this argument is that, while it seems undoubtedly true, it seems really difficult to see why this would, alone, constitute grounds to think that the candidate rules are not cases of constitutive rules. To say that there is a difference in form between different instances of possible constitutive rules is not sufficient to negate that a given rule can be a constitutive rule. Rather, what would be required to do something like that would be to show that the type of candidate rule is not *essential* to the act or that the candidate rule is not sufficient to *individuate* it. As Goldberg points out,"unless we have reason to think that constitutive rules come in only one form, this is an interesting point which nevertheless does not undermine the hypothesis of assertion's having a constitutive rule" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 22).

Furthermore, notice that the candidates to constitutive rules do appear to provide a way to individuate the appropriate speech act type (in the sense that it does provides conditions upon which the satisfaction makes it attain a certain status). We can see this by noting that under any given candidate rule a move in a language game will count as an assertion just in case "(i)the move is properly assessed along the dimension of warrantedness, and (ii) the condition on the move's being warranted is uniquely specified by the rule that one must not make a move of that sort unless..." (GOLDBERG, 2015, 22). So for instance, for the 'Knowledge Norm' we would have that:

> **(Knowledge Individuation of Assertion)**: A move in a language game will count as an assertion just in case: (i) the move is subject to a assessment along the dimension of warrantedness, and, (ii) the condition on the move's being warranted is that the subject who utters that p knows that p.

(2) The second way to see a difference between the norms of assertion and the constitutive rules of other games consists in observing that in the cases of assertion it would appear that there is a much higher rate of violations of the Norm then in the constitutive rules of paradigmatic cases. Here is how Maitra puts the point:

> ...though there are no doubt some breaches of the three-strikes norm in games of baseball, it seems likely that these are extremely rare. For example, by and large,

> batters are indeed ruled out when they earn three strikes. By contrast, if either the knowledge or the truth norm were a constitutive norm of assertion, then, (as Williamson notes) breaches of the constitutive norm of the speech act would be very common indeed. (MAITRA, 2010, 282-283)

Call this the **Argument from Breaches** (or **AfB** for short). **AfB** seems to take the fact that there are fairly common violations of the candidates for Norm of Assertion to count as evidence against the idea that the paradigmatic cases of constitutive rules for assertion are analogous to constitutive rules of games. A reason for thinking something like that would be that, while violations of paradigmatic cases of constitutive rules are fairly uncommon, if the candidates for constitutive rules were indeed rules of the sort for assertion, then instances of violations of constitutive rules would be staggeringly high in the language game(and this asymmetry would count as evidence against the constitutive rule hypothesis).

The problem with **AfB**, however, seems to be (as Goldberg points out) that there seems to be two different senses on which a rule can be "breached". On one sense, one might have in mind a case "in which a move in a game *fail's to satisfy a rule's standards*" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 22). This would consist in an infraction of the rule and would be something that would trigger a verdict in which the act would be deemed inappropriate, not good, worthy of sanction, etc. On the second sense, one might have in mind a case "in which a rule on the books is *incorrectly applied to the case at hand*"(GOLDBERG, 2015, 22). The result here would be that a verdict would be rendered, but it wouldn't "reflect the actual rules that govern the game" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 22). The problem with **AfB** seems to be that it trades on the fact that while the breach exemplified by the baseball example is one of the second sense, the common infractions with regards to candidate Norms of Assertion are of the first sense.

To see why this distinction seems to matter, let us consider a simplified version of a constitutive rule of another game, the game of Football:
(Complete Pass Norm): A pass is complete iff a receiver successfully catches a valid pass.

A complete pass is defined, then, by the achievement of a certain standard (the successful receival of the pass by a valid receiver of your team). Now, if you've seen any game of football you know that there are a lot of passes who fail to meet that standard. Does that mean that the "Complete Pass Norm" is not a constitutive rule of Football? Certainly not. This simply means that the passes that fail to meet the standard are incomplete passes or interceptions (which just are bad passes or really bad passes). The fact that bad passes are fairly common does not

undermine the claim that the "Complete Pass Norm" is a constitutive rule of football, to suppose otherwise would be simply to "confuse the failure to satisfy a rule's standard (something that happens with some frequency) with the failure to properly apply a rule (which is a less common, though still not non-existent phenomenon)" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 23). One plausible reply to **AfB**, then, is simply to point out that it seems to fall prey of precisely this sort of confusion. Consider what a rule such as the "Knowledge Norm" or the "Truth Norm" would do. Trivially, if these rules were in place there would seem to be a lot of violations of it. According to each of the candidate rules, those just are *unwarranted assertions*. The fact that there are lots of assertions that fail to meet the candidate rules standard does not mean that these are not constitutive rules, to suppose this would be to just mix the normative with the descriptive. We can see this by looking at the example of 'Complete Pass Norm'. The analogy here would suggest that if a rule such as 'The Knowledge Norm' or the 'Truth Norm' cannot be a constitutive rule of asserting according to **AfB**, then by the same token the 'Complete Pass Norm' would not be a constitutive rule of football.

Another, perhaps more charitable, way to understand **AfB** is to take it as already taking as clear the distinction between failing to satisfy a rule's standards and misapplying the rule. Under this reading, the point of **AfB** is that rules such as the 'Three Strikes Norm' are misapplied way less frequently then any candidate rule for the constitutivity of assertion. This point does ring true [29] for, while it's rarely the case that a batter is called out when she only has two strikes or is allowed a fourth strike, and it is somewhat rare that a pass is considered a complete pass when a valid reception actually did not occur (though notice that cases such as these do happen from time to time), it seems very plausible that for any candidate norm of assertion, there would be "many cases in which hearers regard an assertion as warranted when in fact (by the lights of the rule) it was not, or as unwarranted when in fact (by the lights of the rule) it was warranted"(GOLDBERG, 2015, 24). As it stands, then, this point does threaten to count as evidence against the constitutive rule hypothesis. Unless there is an explanation for the asymmetry between failed attributions in assertion cases and improper judgments in the paradigmatic cases, it would indeed look as if we should take this point as counting against the candidates for Norms

[29] As a matter of fact, there might be some resistance even to this concession. Consider, for instance, the offside rule in the game of soccer. If you're a soccer fan you know that this rule does tend to be misapplied somewhat often. Nonetheless, it seems fairly obvious that the offside rule is a constitutive rule of soccer. This consideration alone would already suggest that a difference in degree (in incorrect appliance of a rule) is not enough to disqualify it as a constitutive rule.

of Assertion.

Fortunately, as Goldberg notices, there seems to be a fairly plausible explanation at hand. To see that, consider what is necessary for applying the different rules of different games. To apply the 'Three strikes Norm' you need to able to count to three and you need to able to recognize balls from strikes, to apply the 'Checkmate Norm' you need to able to recognize when the king is on check and that there are no legal moves available to get him out of check, to apply the 'Complete Pass Norm' you need to able to recognize valid passes and valid receptions. Now consider what is necessary to apply a candidate rule in the case of assertion: "arguably, you need to be able to discern speaker intentions, and you also need to be able to discern whether the standard of the norm of assertion was met"(GOLDBERG, 2015, 24). The point here is that to discern whether this conditions are satisfied can be a lot harder than to discern the correct application of the paradigmatic rules of other games. This fact provides an explanation of the greater incidence of incorrect applications in the assertion case and staves off the challenge posed by this alternative interpretation of **AfB**.

(3) The third way to see a difference is made salient by an understanding of a more general point about constitutive rules. To begin to understand the point let's first, by means of an example, make clear the distinction between a *constitutive rule* and a *regulative rule*:

> (Three Strikes Norm) A batter is out when he has earned three strikes.
> (Hit Batter Norm) Pitchers should not hit batters on purpose. (MAITRA, 2010, p.280)

The familiar 'Three Strikes Norm' is a constitutive norm of baseball because it (partly) defines what a move in the game is- that is, it states what it is for a batter to be out. 'Hit batter Norm', on the other hand, is a regulative norm of baseball because "it (partly) specifies what counts as playing the game well, by telling us what qualifies as unsportsmanlike conduct within the game" (MAITRA, 2010, 280). Armed with such a distinction, what Maitra wants to go on to say is that *constitutive rules* are the sort of rules that when violated make it so that you're no longer performing a move in the game. So, in the baseball case for instance, this idea would be captured by the following gloss: "in order to play baseball, a player must *follow* the constitutive norms of the game". (MAITRA, 2010, 281)

This simple characterization, however, cannot be right. To see this notice that, under this gloss,

any instance of non compliance with a constitutive rule would be assessed as failure to perform the act/move in the game. So for instance, if an umpire failed to call 'out' after X earns his third strike and instead allows him a fourth strike, the gloss would give the verdict that X has stopped playing baseball. Nonetheless, it seems clear that in a case such as this one X is still playing baseball. Conclusion: This simple version of the gloss *must be wrong*.

Now, contrast this case with a case where X, when called 'out' by the umpire, refuses to get out and starts rambling that the game would be much more interesting if instead of three strikes, ten strikes were required for a player to get out. In a case such as this, if Mister X continually ignores the umpire's calls and persists in saying that the game would be much more fun if only it were played his way, we would be inclined to say that Mister X has stopped playing baseball altogether. The contrast between the cases suggests the following principle:

> (The Baseball Principle): In order to play baseball, a player must not *flagrantly* fail to conform to the constitutive norms [of baseball].(MAITRA, 2010, 282)

Which is just an instance off:

> (The Game Principle): In order to play (!), a player must not *flagrantly* fail to conform to the constitutive norms of (!).

It is 'The Game Principle' that brings to bear the third difference between the paradigmatic cases and the candidate rules for assertion. For it may seem quite clear that, "flagrant failures to conform to either the knowledge or the truth norm can nevertheless count as assertions"(MAITRA, 2010, 283).

Call the fact that the candidate rules for assertion would violate 'The game principle' the **Argument from Flagrant Violation** (or **AfFV** for short).

In reply to **AfFV** one might want to point out that there is reason to think that 'The Game Principle', when unqualified, also appears to be false. To see this, let us first assume that the alleged cases of "flagrant failure to conform" for assertion are cases where a speaker makes "(what any good theory should recognize as) an assertion, but the speaker knows full well that what she is saying is false or otherwise unsupported by [the] evidence [and that the speaker knows that the audience will recognize this]"[30](GOLDBERG, 2015, 25, *our addition under brackets*) (so for instance very obvious cases of lies).

[30]This assumption seems fairly straightforward for in Maitra (2010) a failure to conform to a norms is *flagrant* iff it's intentional and sufficiently marked.

Next, let's take notice that there appear to be, in fact, analogous cases in the paradigmatic cases of games. Here is one such example: In baseball there will be cases where the pitcher "throws (what any correct theory of baseball ought to recognize as) a pitch, but the pitcher does not even pretend to try to conform to the "strike zone" standard"[31] (GOLDBERG, 2015, 25) These cases of "intentional walk" are cases where a pitcher deliberately and flagrantly fails to conform to the 'strike zone' standard but is still undoubtedly playing the game of baseball. What the analogy highlights, is the fact that there are certain constitutive rules that while at the same time tell you what just what is a move will also tell you the *conditions of success* for that move.On this hypothesis, it's only flagrant failures of the first form that mark a move as outside of the game. This hypothesis appears to have a good amount of explanatory power, for notice that, not only does it explain neatly what goes on in cases such as 'intentional walks', it also provides a good account of this interesting feature of constitutive rules in the sense that some constitutive rules can both provide a criterion for what is a move in a game and for what is a successful instance of the move. If the hypothesis is correct then, it would appear that an unqualified version of 'The Game Principle' would be false.

Furthermore, we should notice that, if the 'The Game Principle' turned out to be false, there would still, nonetheless, be some cases where, even though flagrant violations would happen, it would still be the case that we would be inclined to judge the subject as no longer being engaged in the relevant game. But it is also important to notice that, in this sense, the analogy between speech acts and games would still seem to hold true. This is so because parallel of instances of non engagement cases could be constructed for the assertion account. So for instance, if before Y says anything of relevance he begins his sentence with 'Nothing that I'll say after this is going to be true' there will be no reasonable interpretation under which whatever Y says next should be taken as an instance of the speech act of asserting.

Under the assumption that an unqualified version of 'The Game Principle' is incorrect then, what would a correct version look like? We might spell it like this:

> (The Game Principle)*: In order to play (!), a player must not *flagrantly* fail to conform to the conditions for performance given by the constitutive norms of (!).

To see how this version of the principle would work, let's take a look at a case:

[31] In baseball a throw is a pitch if it's thrown by the pitcher towards the home plate on a certain trajectory which is governed by a 'strike zone' standard of goodness (where throws in the strike zones are *strikes*, and those not in the strike zone are *balls*).

> MOM AND DAUGHTER WEEKLY MATCH: Stefanie Graff meets her daughter Jaz for their weekly match of tennis. Steffi knows that her daughter is having a hard time in high school and is a gloomy mood because of it. Steffi also knows that her daughter absolutely hates when she let's her win and sheer indignation is usually the only thing that will make Jaz stop thinking about her problems. In the third set of a hard fought match where Jaz is leading 5 to 4 and is up 40-30 in the game, Stefanie Graff wildly, and quite clearly on purpose, overshoots both her first and second serve making it so that Jaz wins the match.

On MOM AND DAUGHTER WEEKLY MATCH Stefanie Graff is flagrantly violating a constitutive rule [32] but, nonetheless, is clearly still playing tennis[33]. A plausible explanation of why this is so is that *the constitutive rule for serves in tennis* plays a dual role where, not only, it tells us the conditions for the performance of a move in the game, but also what the conditions of success for that move are[34].

This explanation, then, leaves us with a nice theoretical package on which (The Game Principle)* sets conditions for moves that can make justice do the fact that constitutive rules may exercise a dual role on which they both, can tell us to engage in an activity, and how to do well on it. Once we see this, it is easy to see how it is the former condition, not the latter, that governs what it is to make a move in a game.

The engagement condition objection

Kelp e Simion (2018) presents two different, but somewhat related, objections to the constitutivity account . The first objection is actually a version of the third problem presented by Maitra (2010). On their view, however, the argument is not a good one for one can quickly discard **AfFV** due to the simple fact that they take it to be obvious that a version of (The Game Principle) is false. On their perspective, we can quite easily see that (The Game Principle) is false by considering any instance of a natural language, like English, for example. The idea

[32] In case the reader is still left wondering as to what rule is being violated here we could present in the following simplified manner. The serve rule: A serve in tennis is performed if and only if the server hits the ball over the net right into the first quadrant of the court opposite to the side that he serves on.

[33] We could in fact say something even stronger here, not only Steffi is clearly playing tennis, she is also clearly **serving**.

[34] One might wonder if we're not unduly stretching the concept of constitutive rules in *ad hoc* manner here. By way of response, we would like to point out that this interpretation actually upholds the spirit of the concept in a Searleian fashion since the idea there was that constitutive rules "constitute (and also regulate) an activity the existence of which is logically dependent on the rules" (SEARLE, 1970, 34)

here is that "one may flagrantly violate a constitutive rule of English, without thereby ceasing to speak English" (KELP; SIMION, 2018). An example of this would be if a speaker were to utter "Maitra's argument just don't work" (KELP; SIMION, 2018), which would be a case in which the rule that requires one to add 's/es' to present tense verbs in the third person singular is flagrantly violated, but that nonetheless would still be a case on which the speaker seems to count as speaking English.

Now, while the simple use of this example to dismiss something like (The Game Principle) seems to us, ultimately, turn out to be correct, here the step just seems to be taken to quickly. For notice that while the example, if compelling, can be taken as a counter example to the principle, it still leaves at a loss as to why an initially plausible principle such as (The Game Principle) turns out to be false. Further, the unvarnished disqualification of the principle fails to make justice to the fact that there are indeed multiple instances where a flagrant violation of a constitutive rule does appear to constitute in the non participation on a game. This is what (The Game Principle*) purports to help explain and we submit, therefore, that it is a reference to a principle such as this one that is missing on the Kelp e Simion (2018) explanation.

The second objection comes when we start to consider the following condition for engaging in activities:

> Engagement Condition: If some activity A is constituted by a set of constitutive rules, R, then one cannot violate too many members of R too systematically without ceasing to engage in A. [35] (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

Due to the semantics of 'too many' the condition is, of course, somewhat vague. Nonetheless, this does not seem to pose a problem for the condition since it seems correct to imagine that, for different activities, there may be different degrees of instance violations required for one to be counted as not performing the activity.

Now, if Engagement Condition is plausible, then so to is:

> Engagement Condition*: If activity, A, is constituted by only a single constitutive rule, r, and if one violates r with near maximum systematicity, then one does not engage in A. (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

[35] There is a worry here on which we agree with Kelp e Simion (2018). The worry is that for an agent to be able to 'violate' a rule of an activity the agent must already, by definition, be engaged in the respective activity. While this natural reading of 'violate' does threaten to trivialize the Engagement Condition, we tend to agree that there is a way to parse the condition such that" *it doesn't trivialize*" (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

Engagement Condition*, if correct, is going to be taken as the condition that usually governs the particular moves in a game (since the moves in a game are usually uniquely governed by one and only one constitutive rule). We can see this by thinking again about the MOM AND DAUGHTER WEEKLY MATCH example. On that case, Steffi Graff flagrantly violates the constitutive rule of serving in tennis, that is to say, she violates the rule that governs a move that is a part of the game of tennis. In this sense, we can quite clearly see the analogy between the rules of games and the rules of speech acts. In particular, if we think of speech acts as the particular moves in a given language game, then the moves in a game analogy would help us to explain a puzzling feature of the game analogy, namely, the fact that the analogy with games seems to break down at the number of rules level. To be more precise, the puzzle here seems to emerge due to the fact that the constitutive rule account of assertion postulates one, and only one constitutive rule for the act. But, if we are taking the analogy with games seriously, it seems to be extremely hard, if not unfeasible, to think of a concrete example of a game that is constituted by one and only one rule. Thinking about speech acts as moves in the language game helps us to clear that hurdle.

Now, once we grasp the moves in a game analogy, it is easy to see that the condition that would be relevant for assertion is Engagement Condition*. Still, even with this part of the analogy clear, one might still wonder about the relevance of trying to make sense of an engagement condition in an argument about the constitutive rule account of assertion. After all, Engagement Condition* simply purports to tell us about the conditions for engaging in a given activity and as such could, in principle, be silent about the actual account of that activity. So, why is it that Engagement Condition* is relevant for this argument?

The see why Engagement Condition* would be relevant let's take a look first at a similar condition and see how that one can be relevant for a constitutive account.

It seems eminently plausible that "some sensitivity to the difference —in both oneself and others— between conforming to the rule and breaking it presumably is a necessary condition of playing the game, speaking the language, or performing the speech act." (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 240).

From this plausible condition we could derive a condition similar to Engagement Condition*, such as:

Sensitivity Condition*: If activity, A, is constituted by only a single rule, r, and if

> one shows no sensitivity to r, then one does not engage in A.

From Sensitivity Condition* we get that "for any A such that it can be shown that one can engage in A even though one is not at all sensitive to the difference between conforming with r and breaking r, r is not constitutive of A after all." (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

On a similar vein from Engagement Condition* we can get that *for any A such that it can be shown that one can engage in A even though one nearly maximally sistematically violates r, then r is not constitutive of A after all* . Call this thesis the **Maximal Violation Condition**. Now, once we grasp the **Maximal Violation Condition**, the next step for the argument, asks us to consider the following cases:

> CASE 1:
>
> S1 has been in causal contact with physical objects long enough for his thoughts to have the same contents as the thoughts of inhabitants of Earth. S1 is a member of a very small set of unfortunate individuals who, shortly after the contents of their thoughts were fixed, came under the spell of an evil demon, who sees to it that nearly all their beliefs are false. (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

and,

> CASE 2: S2 is a compulsive liar: S2 is strongly disposed perhaps even hard-wired to assert *p* only when he believes *p* to be false. (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

In addition, we asked to also consider the following theses about the cases:

> POSSIBLE ASSERTION 1: It is possible for S1 to assert a wide range of propositions. (For instance, S1 may assert that it is raining outside, that there is coffee in his mug, etc. even though S1 is merely deceived into believing this and, as a matter of fact, it's not raining outside, there is no coffee in his mug, etc.)(KELP; SIMION, 2018)

and,

> POSSIBLE ASSERTION 2: It is possible for S2 to assert a wide range propositions. (For instance, S2 may assert that it is raining outside, that there is coffee in his mug, etc., even though he is lying about this: S2 really believes that it isn't raining outside, that there is no coffee in his mug, etc.) (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

The combination of CASE 1 with POSSIBLE ASSERTION 1 and CASE 2 with POSSIBLE ASSERTION 2 yields the following:

> SYSTEMATIC COUNTER-KNOWLEDGE: S1 makes assertions that, with near maximum systematicity, are false and run counter to what S1 knows. (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

and

> SYSTEMATIC FALSITY: S2 makes assertions that, with near maximum systematicity, are false. (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

Now, SYSTEMATIC FALSITY and SYSTEMATIC COUNTER-KNOWLEDGE are both instances of the left side of the conditional expressed in **Maximal Violation Condition**. This means that together with the **Maximal Violation Condition** they entail that the rules violated by those type of assertions are not constitutive rules after all, that is to say, if the argument is sound, CASE 1 and CASE 2 are counterexamples to the constitutive rule account of assertion [36].

But is the argument sound? At this point, it should come as no surprise that I think that it is not. To see why, imagine a variation of MOM AND DAUGHET WEEKLY MATCH where Steffi Graff overshoots her serves from the very beginning of the game. When Steffi Graff violates in a *maximally systematically* manner the rule of serving (by deliberately putting the ball outside the serve zone), it still seems as if we are not inclined to say that she has stopped serving or playing tennis. As stated before, the contention is that the reason for this lies in the fact that there are some constitutive rules that tell you not only what it is to make a move but also the conditions of success of that given move [37]. Because of this, there should, at the very least, be cases of deliberate maximal violation of constitutive rule that are nonetheless cases of engaging in the relevant practice.The upshot is that, when dealing with this sort of rule, it seems to be a mistake to always take evidence of violation of the rule as evidence of non-constitutivity simply because the violation of the rule can be a violation of the built in condition of success as opposed to the condition of existence.

To reinforce this point, notice that while on MOM AND DAUGHTER WEEKLY MATCH we are not inclined to say that Steffi Graff is not serving, we might well be inclined to say that she

[36] A qualification here is necessary. For all that been said so far the cases are strictly speaking only going to pose immediate problems to candidate rules that take an *alethic* component as a necessary part of the Norm. For the argument that shows that the problem generalizes and will pose problems to all the other live possibilities in the Norms of Assertion literature (i.e norms that do not build at least truth on their conditions such as, for instance, norms that hinge on non-factive justification) see (KELP; SIMION, 2018)

[37] And of course, once we notice this it seems fairly easy to see that the constituve rule of assertion is precisely a rule of this sort

is not serving properly (and this sort of classification also seems plausible for a systematic liar and/or someone who is suddenly on a BIV case) . Now, things would be quite different if as opposed to violating the rule in the manner that she does in the case, Steffi Graff started trying to serve while using basketball's as opposed to tennis balls. On that scenario we would be inclined to say that Steffi Graff is not serving anymore, even though in both cases Steffi Graff is violating the same rule. The difference between the two judgments in the cases illustrates the difference between the two roles that some constitutive rules can play and show why not attending to that fact leads to incorrect verdicts.

Further, if we want to make the previous observations more plausible, we could add some small evidential weight to our point by noticing that the analogy between the Engagement Condition* and the Sensitivity Condition* quickly breaks down[38]. For while on the variation of MOM AND DAUGHTER WEEKLY MATCH, on CASE 1 and on CASE 2 the agents are all maximally, or nearly maximally, violating purported rule r, it is not that clear that on any of these cases they do not show at least some sensitivity to the conditions spelled out by the purported constitutive rules. The fact that there is an asymmetry in verdicts between two conditions that are supposed to illuminate precisely the same phenomenon, I take it, should give us *some* (non conclusive) reason to be further suspicious of Engagement Condition*.

Now, if the considerations above are correct, and they suggest that the Engagement Condition* is false, then they also suggest that the **Maximal Violation Condition** should be false. As such, I submit that we have good reason to think that the second (KELP; SIMION, 2018) argument does not pose a pressing challenge to the constitutive rule account of assertion.

Cheating an Assertion

A different objection comes from the idea that "unlike other cases where there is a constitutive rule, with respect to assertion there is no notion of cheating" (GOLDBERG, 2015, 26). But what does this mean? To make sense of this objection we must first try to unpack the notion of cheating and how would that notion purport to pose a problem for the constitutive account of assertion.

[38]This shouldn't be particularly controversial. For notice that on MOM AND DAUGHTER WEEKLY MATCH it is precisely because of her sensitivity to the rule that Steffi Graff can so purposely violate it. Similarly, this seems to be what happens in CASE 2. It is because of his understanding of his beliefs that S2 can systematically be insincere and therefore violate the Norm of Assertion. In addition on CASE 1, there are a vast range of impersimible assertions that would seem to exhibit S1 sensitivity to the rule. For instance S1 would not say things that, from her perspective are false, she would not attempt to refer to things with improper names, etc.

Here is how one could define cheating:

> One cheats iff one violates knowingly and willingly the rules of a game.

But as we mentioned before, it seems that there are two different ways on which one can violate constitutive rules:

> (1) One could violate a constitutive rule but still play the game.
>
> (2) One could violate a constitutive rule and thereby not be playing the game anymore.

Could one of these two ways pose a problem for the account due to the fact that there is no analogue for these violations on a constitutive rule account of assertion?

Clearly (1) could not, for it seems clear that there is an analogue for (1) on the view which is lying.

So the problem must lie in the analogue for (2), that is to say the objection must be the contention that there is no analogue for, for instance, what one does when one attempts to castle while violating the rules for castling and doing so knowing and willingly. In a situation such as that one, the 'move" would not be a chess move and in effect when an agent cheated in that way that agent would no longer be playing chess [39].

So the objection alleges that there is no analogue on the account for cases that satisfy (2). Could that be correct?

I think that it could not. Further, I think that there is a whole range of cases more or less controversial that are just instances of this phenomenon [40], I want to emphasize two clear cut cases of the phenomenon. They are:

> FAKE WEBSITE: Intending to get another person to believe that the President is in Honolulu, Gonzales goes to the trouble of faking a website that looks exactly like the website of the New York Times online (albeit with a slightly different URL) and posts a story about Obama being in Honolulu. (GOLDBERG, 2015, 27)
>
> COMPUTER-GENERATED ILLUSIONS: Simpson is a computer whiz who has recently learned to program her computer so that it produces arbitrary but intelligible sentences and "utters" them through its voice synthesizer. Anyone hearing the

[39] This would be the case even if say, the opponent did not notice, and continued playing normally. While the agent would have cheated and might even win the game that way on that situation, still it would not seem to be the case that the agent won an actual *game of chess*.

[40] These cases will just be cases where one misleads by making utterances with surface properties similar to assertions without actually asserting. So imagine, for instance, someone who answers queries with his best guesses or with hypothesis.

> computer who did not know that the "utterances" were computer-generated would be duped into thinking someone had said something.(GOLDBERG, 2015, 27)

Now, both of these cases seem to be cases where we get a violation of the rule which makes it so that even though it looks like they are cases of assertion, they turn out to actually be not. This is because in both cases there is no speaker who performs the act and hence there is simply no way that the rule can apply. These cases them, seem to fit the bill as relevant analogues and therefore the objection does not apply.

The modal variability problem

Finally we get to the modal variability problem. Cappelen (2010) argues that a rule based account of assertion is too demanding for it requires any purported Norm of Assertion to be modally robust. The problem, on the view, is that we can imagine worlds nearby to the actual world where the assertion practice could be such that it would be ruled a different instance of the C rule. In order to see this, he asks us to imagine a paradigmatic case of assertion, such as for instance, "Mia saying that Mandy forgot to pay her cellphone bill last week" (CAPPELEN, 2010, 31). Now, let us call performing the speech act of asserting action E. Cappelen then asks us to consider the following questions:

- Could Mia have done that, i.e performed E, if the default assumption was that she assert that *p* only if she believes that *p*?
- Could Mia have done that, i.e performed E if the default assumption was that she assert p only if she is committed to defending p in response to objections?
- Could she have done that, i.e performed E, if the default assumption was that she assert p only if p is true?(CAPPELEN, 2010, 31)

Now, Cappelen thinks that the answer to all of this questions must be yes. And since a constitutive rule must be an essential rule, then, if the answer to the question is yes, this means that Norms of Assertion cannot be constitutive of the act after all.

It is hard to try to reply to this objection with more than the observation that I think that the answer to these questions should be no. In order to make this dispute at least a little more interesting then a mere clash of irreconcilable intuitions, let me at least try to run a diagnosis of why one might have the intuition that the answer to the questions should be yes.

Cappelen (2010) contrasts his first set of questions with the following second set of questions:

- Could she have played that game, i.e played chess, if the rules were that the rook could not move horizontally, the paws could only move two steps sideways, and the queen move one step forward...?

- Could she have played that game, i.e tennis, if serves were thrown with a hand without a racket, and no ball could be hit by a player unless she had a foot on one of the lines... (fill out for completeness)

Here Cappelen thinks that the answer is a clear no.

Now, while this second answer does sound right I think that understanding *why* is it clearly right can be instructive. For notice that while the intuitive response is quite clear when we imagine a game with a whole set of rules that are different enough, the answer would seem less clear if the question turned out to be:

- Could she have played that game, i.e tennis, if it turned out that when balls hit the white lines on the court they would be ruled out as opposed to in?

Now, while I think that the answer to this question also is a no, it seems fairly plausible to assume that intuitions with regard to this case are going to be less clear or perhaps even fluctuate. The reason for that seems to be that the game in question, while, on my view, would not be tennis, would still, however, be extremely similar to it. This reasoning suggests one further observation to press the point.

The observation builds on a point made earlier where I claimed that perhaps the best way to understand individual speech acts is not as games on their own right but perhaps as moves in a language game [41]. If we think about the analogy that way, then the analogue of the a speech act such as assertion is not the game of tennis but rather a move in it such as the move of serving. Now imagine the scenario where the rules of serving are slightly different in just the manner previously described. Would serving in that manner be considered the same move as in tennis? Here the answer seems to be, even though in most circumstances both acts would be performed in exactly the same manner, and even though from the point of view of an observer

[41] If you think this point is incorrect, just substitute talk of a move for the general talk of playing the game. While I think that in this scenario the responses should be the same and that we should have two games here tennis and tennis*, intuitions on this case may be a little bit more murky.

the actions would in most circumstances be indistinguishable, clearly not. But this case seems to be perfectly analogous with just an alteration on the standard of the act of asserting, so why should the answer be negative on one case and positive in the other?

I think that the answer is that it should not, and I take the asymmetry between the responses to favor this intuition. Austin (1975) famously distinguished between speech acts as constatives and perfomatives. Now on the constatives variety a whole range of speech acts share similar surface properties and overall similar profile. Speech acts such as guessing, hypothesizing, speculating, are all relevantly similar to assertion and would I believe, on Cappelen's view, fall under the description of 'sayings'. But none of these speech acts are assertions. On my view the correct diagnosis with regards to changes in the rules of a speech act is simply that the act performed would shift to a closely related but ultimately different speech act. The analogy with what would happen with shifts in rules in other games here is compelling and anyone who denies it should provide an explanation for why the cases of speech acts when analyzed in the game framework would fail to share this basic feature of rule change. These observations, I think, show that while there may be some temptation to answer on the affirmative to Cappelen's set of question regarding assertion, a positive answer to the question would turn out, however, to be misleading.

1.5.3 The final balance of the constitutive rule account

The constitutive rule account of assertion explains our of desired features of assertion. One of the main reasons why the account seems to be able to do this is because a rule based account provides a close tie between the speech act of assertion and the normative features characteristic of our epistemic lives. The theory then, has as one of its main advantages tying closely together epistemology and philosophy of language in such a way where it is shown why the speech act of assertion is of particular *epistemic significance*.

Now, we've seen that despite these advantages there are lot of competitors and different reasons why one might argue that the view is problematic. Nonetheless, I think that we've shown how the theory can respond to these issues and ultimately thrive. I submit, therefore, that a constitutive rule account of assertion is the best available theory of assertion and that as such we should , unless some other issue can be shown to prove the contention wrong, take it as the correct account of the speech act of assertion.

Chapter 2

Norms of Assertion

On **Chapter 1** we began an investigation into the speech act of assertion by asking ourselves questions about the nature of the speech act itself.

On that context I've argued for a *constitutive rule* view of assertion where the proposal is that the speech act of assertion can be understood as the speech act that is defined by the following being in place:

> (The C rule) One must: assert p only if p has C. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 141)

If the account is correct (as I think it is) then this means that the speech act of assertion is defined by the fact that the utterance is evaluated according to the C Rule. But this of course leads to the question, what is the correct specification of the C Rule? In **Chapter 1**, I've tried to remain as neutral as possible in that question for the simple reason that I had first to argue in favor of the more general fact that there is such a rule (and it's role on the specification of the speech act). But of course, once we agree that the correct definition of assertion is given by the the C rule, then an specification of it's content becomes a vital question for anyone who wants to understand assertion.

Providing an answer to this question is what prompts what is known in the literature as the debate about the Norms of Assertion, and is that debate that will be the subject of the second part of this dissertation.

2.1 The Norm of Assertion Debate

The debate about the Norm of Assertion is the debate about what sort of property C is the property that gives the correct account of the rule of assertion.

My objective is to argue in favor of the **knowledge account** of assertion. In order to do this my strategy will be, again, to take a comparative approach. I will begin with a presentation of the knowledge account of assertion and general reasons to think that the account is correct. After this initial presentation I will take a look at what I take to be the view main competitors and argue that the arguments in favor of those other views fall short of doing the job that they are designed to do. I will then conclude by returning to the knowledge account and argue for a further feature of the view.

2.2 The Knowledge Norm of Assertion

2.2.1 In what sense would knowledge be the Norm of Assertion

A knowledge account of assertion is simply an account that takes the specification of the assertion rule to be given in terms of knowledge. Still, even under that description, there are different possible ways on which one could formulate a knowledge account of assertion.

So, for instance, one could say something like:

> By asserting that P, you imply, though you do not assert, that you know that P. (MOORE, 1962, 277)

Or something like:

> Asserting that something is so entails not just representing the thing as being so, but representing oneself as knowing that it is. (UNGER, 1975, 256)

Each of these perspectives will yield a distinct knowledge account of assertion in the form of:

(IKN): To assert that p is to imply that one knows that p. [42]

(SPKN): To assert that p is to represent oneself as knowing that p. [43]

[42] While formulations such as IKN are inspired by Moore's remarks, it is important to emphasize that something like IKN is not explicitly endorsed by him. As a matter of fact, a good case could be made that something KNA would be more menial to the Moorean spirit.

[43] These formulations of the account could, of course, generalize to formulations of the other candidate accounts

In addition we have what we would get if we simply plugged a knowledge condition into the C rule, which just is Williamson's formulation of the account:

> (KNA) One must: assert that p only if one knows that p. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 243)

Now, it is clear that (IKN), (SPKN) and (KNA) are not equivalent. But are they equally good accounts of assertion, that is to say, do each of them carry the same theoretical advantages, explain the same phenomenon and give the same extension as instances of the relevant concept?

I submit that they do not. To see why this is so, we would do well to examine each of these variations separately.

Two problems for assertion as implying that you know that p

I think that there are two main reasons why one should not consider (IKN) as a strong contender for the title of correct account of assertion.

The first reason is that it turns out that (IKN) is too permissive (i.e it will count as assertions utterances that intuitively are not). To see this we have only to notice the fairly obvious fact that a speaker can imply that p without actually asserting that p (that is after all what implying means!). But if that is the case, on the reasonable assumption that when one implies that **p** one implies that one knows that p, then one can imply that one knows that p without asserting that p, something that should be impossible if (IKN) was the correct definition of assertion. A particularly stringent version of this problem could be given if we were to think about *conversational implicatures* such as:

> CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE
> S1: We're running out of gas.
> S2: There is a gas station a mile from here.

The lesson from Grice (1989) is that utterances such as the one made by S2 trigger an inference where S1 comes to believe that S2 is implicating that he can fill up the tank at the gas station. Nonetheless, S2 is clearly not assuming this. On the further assumption that conversational implicatures, aside for the flouting that triggers then, respect conversational maxims it also follows

of assertion. So, for instance, Michael Dummett claims that: "A man makes an assertion if he says something in such a manner as deliberately to convey the impression of saying it with the overriding intention of saying something true" (DUMMETT, 1973, 300), which would just be a version of a self-representation account for belief. Still, the concerns raised on this section for the sort of moves made by these variations of the account would appear to cut across the board and because of this I shall mention the variations only in this section.

that S2 is implying that he knows what he implicates. This means that (IKN) counts conversational implicatures as cases of assertion, and this is a perfect example of the first problem with the (IKN) view.

The second problem for (IKN) is that this version of the knowledge account seems to get a range of normative judgments about assertion wrong. In particular, since the theory requires only that a speaker implies that she knows that *p* then the account will issue judgments that disconnect the speech act of assertion from the condition of in fact knowing that *p*. So in situations where one implies that one knows that *p* but one does not in fact know that *p*, the account will issue the judgment that (i) that utterance is a case of assertion and (ii) that assertion is perfectly all proper. But at least some instances of that will be clearly wrong [44]. This counts as a second major problem for the view and I submit that these two problems make the view implausible.

Assertion as representing oneself as knowing that p

With regard to the self-representation account I think that there are going to be three sorts of reasons why one should not consider it as a strong contender for the title of correct account of assertion.

The first reason is that since the (SPKN) seems to build into the account a social aspect, it is going to fall prey to the problems posed by the arguments of Pagin (2004). To recall, the problem there was that sentence with explicit performatives that fulfill the conditions of social accounts should, by the lights of the account, count as instances of assertions even though they are clearly not. So, for (SPKN) we would have an utterance such as,

> I hereby represent myself as knowing that p. (PAGIN, 2004, 847)

[44]The reason that I say at least some as opposed to all of them is again because of the fact that similar accounts to (IKN) can be built for the main competitors of the knowledge account (i.e accounts based on justification, truth, etc). But by the lights of theories that require something weaker than knowledge for the propriety of assertion, there are going to be a certain subset of cases where the speaker implies that he knows that *p* while not knowing that *p* but while still fulfilling the weaker condition, which will mean that, by the lights of those theories, those instances would not count as arguments against (IKN) (though of course, those theories would already see other problems with (IKN)). Despite this fact I think that there are two things that are important to emphasize here. First, it seems reasonable to presume that, for every other candidate condition, there is going to be a subset of cases where a subject would imply that he knows that *p* while failing to fulfill the weaker condition preferred by the rival account. This fact is enough to give strength to the objection and is why hedging with the quantifier on the problem is appropriate. Secondly, here again we can assume that the problem with account in terms of *implying* will generalize. This is so because for every account of the sort (such as (IJN) or (ITN) there should be cases where the speaker implies that he is justified in his belief that *p* or he implies that *p* is true while that is false, making it so that the problem would appear for every account that embeds this sort of condition.

which can be sincerely uttered and should be counted as an assertion that *p* by (SPKN) light's even though it is clearly not an assertion that *p*.

A second problem for (SPKN) is that the account also seems to get a range of normative judgments about assertion wrong. Since (SPKN) only requires that a speaker represents oneself as knowing that *p*, the account will issue judgments that disconnect the speech act of assertion from the condition of in fact knowing that *p*. So in situations where one represents oneself as knowing that *p* but that one does not in fact know that *p*, the account will issue the judgment that the assertion is perfectly all right. But this cannot be right. We can see this by noting that every case where one asserts that *p* will be a case, by the account's lights, where one represents oneself as knowing that *p*. Because of this, every case of assertion, will, by the account's light, be a case of proper assertion. But there are obviously cases, such as lies for instances, where assertions are improper. But the account cannot give that result. The upshot is that (SPKN) is normatively innocuous.

The third problem for (SPKN), which is closely related to the second, is that the account seems to be unable to fulfill a theory of assertion's *desiderata*. In particular, the account would appear to have trouble explaining some of the features of assertion tied with its epistemic significance. Since the account only requires that a speaker represents oneself as knowing that *p*, and since representing oneself as knowing *p* is not factive, it seems hard to see how the account would explain, for example, the fact that when S asserts some content **p** to H, H acquires a (defeasible) reason for his belief in p. In a similar manner, since asserting that *p* would only require that one represents oneself as knowing that *p*, as opposed to actually knowing that *p*, it would be hard to see how one could explain assertion's *EC-susceptibility* or assertion's *CK-aptness*. Now, of course, (SPKN) can quite easily explain assertion's feature of *conveyed-self representation* for, after all, it is in terms of this feature that (SPKN) purports to define the speech act of assertion. But, when put in the context of the costs to the explanation of the other features of assertion, this fact should make us suspect even more that *conveyed-self representation* is a feature of assertion, but not the property responsible for its definition. For, since the cost of (SPKN) in explaining some of the interesting features of assertion consists in blocking the explanation of other features of the act, then it seems reasonable to conclude that the property of *conveyed-self representation* is not a fundamental property of the speech act of assertion, and that, should there be a competitor property that would be able to explain all the features of assertion without incurring those costs, we should take that to be a more plausible candidate theory of assertion.

Now, since I've argued in **Chapter 1** that simple versions of the C rule such as (KN) will be able to do the required explanatory job, the upshot is that (KN) seems to be the correct way to formulate the knowledge account of assertion.

2.2.2 The initial case for the Knowledge Norm of Assertion

The Knowledge Norm of Assertion, when formulated in the following manner,

> (KNA) One must: assert that p only if one knows that p. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 243)

can, as most of the other robustly epistemic constitutive rule accounts, fulfill all of our specified *desiderata*. Due to this fact it would seem reasonable to assume that explanatory power with regard to the features of assertion should not differentiate between KNA and its main competitors. While this assumption is mostly right, it should come with some important caveats. For we would do well to remember that, while discussing the constitutive rule at a general level, at certain points we remarked how different properties might be able to merely partially explain, or, to put it in a better way explain only the weaker versions of, certain features of assertions. Since a full explanation, or a mere explanation of a weaker requirement (assuming the requirement is an actual requirement), is better than a partial explanation , then such successful explanations can become points in favor of KNA and make it so that, because of this, it turns out to be worth emphasizing certain features of assertion and how KNA would provide explanations for these:

(1) The first feature that might be worth to emphasize in this way is KNA's explanation of assertion's *EC-susceptibility*. To recall, the feature here comes from the fact that a host of conversational patterns where queries/challenges to assertions initiated by expressions such as 'How do you know that?', 'Why do you believe this?', 'What are your reasons for saying this'? seem like perfectly appropriate responses to the relevant speech act. Now, while competitor accounts of the Norm of Assertion might be able to explain the legitimacy of some of those queries, like, for instance, a reasonable belief norm of assertion might be able to explain the legitimacy of a query such as 'What are your reasons for saying this?', it is important to notice that only KNA, or something stronger, will be able to explain all of them[45]. This is so because the appropriateness of a query such as 'How

[45]Here there is an important caveat that we should highlight. For one might wonder about a challenge such as 'Are you certain about that?', which if taken as appropriate would seem to indicate that certainty is a property that also might need be explained by a Norm of assertion account. Since most views do not require certainty for

do you know that?' seems to be only explainable on the assumption that assertion tracks knowledge for, after all, for a challenge to the assertion on the grounds of knowledge to be appropriate requires a connection between assertion's appropriateness and the content asserted being an item of knowledge, and that connection is something that the competitor accounts of assertion can't seem to be able to provide.

(2) The second feature is one that was already gestured at before, but that should, nonetheless, be worthy of fully spelling out at this point. This feature relates to KNA's interaction with assertion's *conveyed self-representation*. Since KNA requires knowledge of the speaker then it will be able to explain why when a speaker asserts that *p* he will represent himself as knowing that *p* (and also represent himself as possessing any weaker epistemic property with regard to whether *p* that is taken to be a necessary condition on knowledge). If it is indeed the case that when a speaker asserts that *p* he represents himself as knowing that *p* then the ability to provide such an explanation will turn out to be important for, on the proposals that posit weaker conditions on knowledge, said proposals should only be able to explain the *conveyed self-representation* of the features posited by the proposals or features weaker then the one's posited by the proposal, leaving KNA with an advantage in this regard.

A different reason to endorse KNA comes from the consideration of Moorean Paradoxes. In particular, KNA seems to draw support from considering the form of Moore's Paradox where a speaker asserts "A and I do not know that A" (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 253). The hypothesis that knowledge is the norm of assertion can easily explain what is wrong with such an assertion, since for it to be proper for a speaker to assert 'A and I do not know that A' it would have to be the case that a speaker both knows that A and that she knows that she does not know that A. But one cannot know this conjunction for,

knowledge, this would mean that something stronger than a Knowledge Norm is what is actually supported by the data provided due to assertion's *EC-susceptibility*. I think this argument would be to quick though. The reason for this is that, as Williamson (2000) points out, it is extremely plausible that *certainty* is a context sensitive term. And while it is extremely plausible that there are senses of certainty that do not track the concept of knowledge, it is not clear that the senses that make an assertion susceptible to challenges in terms of '*certainty* are of this sort.

We can see this by making the relevant senses of the term explicit as, for instance, we would do if one were to make a query such as 'Are you certain by Descartes standards?' (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 254) which would seem like a strange way to challenge ordinary common sense assertion and to which a negative response would not (assuming that the question does not also immediately raises the standard for knowledge) invalidate the propriety of the assertion, or if one would simply ask 'Are you certain'? in response to an ordinary query where, on instances of knowledge the appropriate response would be yes.

> One knows the conjunction only if one knows each conjunct, and therefore knows that A (the first conjunct); yet one knows the conjunction only if it is true, so only if each conjunct is true, so only if one does not know that A (the second conjunct); thus the assumption that one knows the conjunction that A and one does not know that A yields a contradiction. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 253)

since on KNA the condition for propriety for an assertion is that it be known, then this means that 'A and I do not know that A' will, on KNA, be an improper assertion. Concurrently, the other main competitors to KNA, since they don't require that for an assertion to be proper it must be known , will therefore be unable to explain what is improper about an the assertion of the 'A and I do not know that A' form of Moore's paradox. Now, granted, the competitors to KNA should be able to explain *other* forms of Moore's Paradox such as 'A and I don't believe that A'. But this should come as no help to the proponents of KNA's competitors. For since for every property entailed by knowledge KNA will also be able to explain the Moorean Paradox impropriety,[46]then the considerations about moorean paradoxes should be taken as, ultimately, favoring KNA.

Yet another different consideration in favor of KNA will come from considering cases such as the following:

> LOTTERY: An expert holds a lottery. There are a million tickets, of which you have one. However, she does not announce the number of the winning ticket; she merely hands each participant a slip of paper. If your ticket won, the true member of the pair p, ¬p is written on your slip; if your ticket lost, the false member of the pair is written there. There is no doubt that this is the arrangement. You are not in a position to confer with other participants. Suppose that ¬p turns out to be written on your slip. On your evidence, there is a probability of one in a million that your ticket won and ¬p is true, and a probability of 999,999 in a million that your ticket lost and ¬p is false. Thus, if you assert p, the probability on your evidence that your assertion is true is 999,999 in a million. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 250)

LOTTERY is a case where the intuitive response seems to be that you're not entitled to assert *p*. KNA can support that intuition. For it seems clear that one cannot know [47] in lottery cases (or in more general cases where statistical evidence that is not entailing is the only basis for your belief) and because of this fact to assert a lottery proposition becomes improper. This will

[46]Here again the same sort of considerations with regard to stronger epistemic properties as in footnote 43 will apply.

[47]As conversations with Nate Lauffer and Baron Reed have showed me, this assumption is not as uncontroversial as one would like. Now while I do not think the denial of this assumption is plausible, I do not, however, have the space here to argue in favor of this claim. Because of this, those who do think that we can have knowledge of lottery propositions should simply disregard the version of the argument presented here.

stand in contrast with the judgments issued by KNA's competitors for if a norm should be based on, for instance, reasonability it would be hard to see how the same verdict could be issued. This is so because a lottery case could be constructed in such a way that a belief in a lottery proposition will have any probability on one's evidence short of 1, making it so that ordinary standards for reasonability and/or justification are fulfilled [48]. This fact leaves views that appeal to such concepts as the ones determinants for the C rule on a bind for it seems that they can't easily explain what is wrong with assertions in cases such as LOTTERY.

Another argument for KNA comes from considering what we will call the phenomenon of *specification* (ADLER, 2009, 407). This phenomenon happens when a "speaker S asserts a disjunctive sentence and the hearer H asserts a sentence that can serve as an obvious premise for a disjunctive syllogism" (ADLER, 2009, 408). To illustrate, let us assume that a speaker believes *p* in virtue of his belief in the following disjunction:

$$(p\&s\&r) \vee (p\&\neg s\&r) \vee (p\&\neg s\&\neg r)$$

Now, let's imagine a case where, once a speaker asserts $(p\&s\&r) \vee (p\&\neg s\&r) \vee (p\&\neg s\&\neg r)$, a hearer replies with $\neg(p\&\neg s\&r)\&\neg(p\&\neg s\&\neg r)$. Now, what happens in a case such as this one? As Adler (2009) points out, a natural response to the question is that the hearer's assertion will be taken as a contribution rather then a challenge to the speaker's assertion in the sense that the speaker will, rather than withdrawn his belief on *p*, actually come to believe $(p\&s\&r)$. But this phenomenon is only explainable on terms of knowledge, or something stronger, for it requires that your evidential probabilty for $(p\&s\&r) \vee (p\&\neg s\&r) \vee (p\&\neg s\&\neg r)$ be 1, since, if otherwise, the following will hold:

$$\text{pr}((p\&s\&r)\vee(p\&\neg s\&r)\vee(p\&\neg s\&\neg r) \mid \neg(p\&\neg s\&r)\&\neg(p\&\neg s\&\neg r)) < \text{pr}((p\&s\&r)\vee (p\&\neg s\&r) \vee (p\&\neg s\&\neg r))$$ [49]

a result, that would deny the phenomenon. Now, since only knowledgeable assertions would explain the phenomenon, and since it is KNA that predicts that it will be mutually known

[48] The matter may become more tricky on certain views of justification that will put caveats on the relation between the concept and reasonability. Aside from this footnote I will not mention those views here. For what I take to be the most interesting of those views, however, see Smith (2010). For a response see Littlejohn e Dutante (2019).

[49] This should be intuitively quite straightforward, for it is quite obvious that the probability of a disjuction decreases when some of its disjuncts are negated. For a proof that yields this result but operates using pr(p) see Adler (2009).

that an assertion should be generally taken as conveying knowledge, then the phenomenon of specification seems to provide some support for KNA.

The final initial arguments for KNA come from parenthetical uses of epistemic modals.

The first argument from parenthetical uses starts with an observation by Slote (1979) about assertions of mere beliefs where the subject does not take himself to know. The natural way to assert such a content seems to be:

(1) I believe that it's raining.

But this form "could also be used merely for ascribing belief to oneself rather than expressing it" (BENTON, 2011, 684). To unambiguously express a belief, then, one could use parenthetical constructions such as:

(2)It is, I believe, raining.

(3)It is raining, I believe.

where the parenthetical use of 'I believe' will make the doxastic hedge clear. But an interesting fact seems to be that this does not seem to work on the same manner with regard to 'I know'. To see this, let's imagine the following assertions:

(4) I know it is raining.
(5)It is, I know, raining.
(6)It is raining, I know. (BENTON, 2011, 685)

(5) and (6) do not seem to be natural constructions. This would lead us to wonder, why does the prefaced assertion works in constructions (1) and (4) while the parenthetical use fits naturally only (2) and (3)? KNA seems to be in a good position to answer this question, for,

> If parenthetical uses serve to express a mental state, then the fact that we don't, or can't, use a parenthetic construction with 'know' as in (5) or (6) must be because, as KNA maintains, the flat-out assertion already serves to express one's knowledge. (BENTON, 2011, 685)

KNA, as opposed to it's competitors then, can explain why the parenthetical uses of 'I know' seem unnatural for, on the account, to flat-out assert that is raining is already equivalent to expressing the mental state that would be asserted via the use of the parenthetical. To put it another way, KNA, as opposed to other competitor norms of assertion, can explain why on (5)

and (6) the parenthetical use is redundant. This fact should be seen as additional evidence that favors KNA.

A second argument based on parenthetical use of epistemic modals comes from Blaauw (2012). This comes from a parenthetical use of 'I know' that is not redundant such as in a case like this:

> LAZY: John is having a fight with his wife Jill. Apparently, as Jill brings forward repeatedly during their heated conversation, John is very lazy; a point that Jill supports with ample evidence. At one point, exasperated, John asserts,
> (7) I am very lazy, I know! (BLAAUW, 2012, 106)

On LAZY John's assertion of (7) seems perfectly all right, since the parenthetical 'I know' is being used in a reinforcing sense. In addition it is worth pointing out that a different positioning of the parenthetical would seem to yield the same result as in:

> (8) I am, I know, very lazy! (BLAAUW, 2012, 106)

And also that the parenthetical can be used multiple times for reinforcement as in:

> (7*) I am very lazy, I know, I know!
> (8*) I am, I know, I know, very lazy! (BLAAUW, 2012, 106)

But this use, it seems, can be only explained by KNA [50] for it is only if the assertion without the parenthetical already conveys knowledge that the parenthetical use of 'I know' would be able to have a reinforcing effect. This argument can be strengthened by the fact that if we imagine that instead of (7) John asserted on LAZY the following,

> (9) I am very lazy, I believe! (BLAAUW, 2012, 107)

the effect be off the parenthetical 'I believe' would not be one of reinforcing but rather one of hedging. Again, KNA provides the explanation for this for if the flat-out assertion committed one to knowledge then the use of a parenthetical that conveys a weaker epistemic modal would call that commitment into question and thus would hedge the assertion, exactly as predicted by KNA, and thus bolstering the case for KNA in virtue of parenthetical usages of epistemic modals.

Now, this initial set of arguments seem to already provide a somewhat compelling case for KNA. In what follows I will examine KNA's competitors in the hope of making the case

[50] The caveats about stronger norms also seem to apply here.

that the contrast with the other views will further illuminate why KNA should be taken as the fundamental norm of assertion.

2.3 The Truth Norm of Assertion

The Truth Norm of Assertion can be seen as the theory where the C rule is simply given in the following way:

> TNA: One must: assert that *p* only if is true that *p*.

It's prominently defended by Weiner (2005) and Whiting (2013). In what follows, I will examine their arguments in favor of TNA and argue for why, ultimately, we should not take then as compelling, thus reinforcing the case for KNA.

2.3.1 Some preliminary remarks about Norms

Before we properly address the arguments for TNA there is one general matter with regard to the debate about the norms of assertion that I think requires clarification.

This matter refers to two sort of cases and the fact that a general observation about the nature of a theory of assertion should suffice to deal with the problems raised by then. The cases are the following:

> TRAIN: I shout 'That is your train', knowing that I do not know that it is, because it probably is and you have only moments to catch it. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 256)
>
> SNOW OUTSIDE: It is winter, and it looks exactly as it would if there were snow outside, but in fact that white stuff is not snow but foam put there by a film crew of whose existence I have no idea. [I assert 'There is snow outside']. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 257)

Now, objectors to KNA/TNA might take these cases to be counterexamples to the knowledge/truth account of assertion, for these cases would seem to be cases where the speaker asserts what he should have asserted even though he does not know the asserted content/ the asserted content is not true. This, however, would be to quick.

For while it is true that in a case such as TRAIN that seems to be something right about the speaker asserting what he does, it is far less clear that this fact is due to the fulfillment of assertion's constitutive rule. To see this, notice that on the case where that is in fact *not* your

train there will indeed still be something wrong with my assertion, even though there is a sense in which I should have, given the conditions of the time, asserted it. Once we notice this, the relevant question then become, what can explain this combination of facts, that is to say, what would provide an explanation for (i) that there is something wrong with my assertion and (ii) that I should have asserted it?

The most plausible answer for (i) seems to be that the assertion is improper in virtue of it failing to conform to the constitutive rule of assertion. The answer to (ii) is that the reason I should still assert that this is your train is because the constitutive rule norm, like many other norms, is not an *all things considered* norm. This last remark should come as no surprise. There are many actions that, while improper, can become the right thing to do in virtue of the fact that other considerations supersede the fact that they are improper actions. In particular, there is a ready made example of this situation with assertions:

> WHITE LIE: There are white supremacists on your doorstep looking for 'foreigners'. They ask you whether you've seen two young 'mexicans' that they were chasing. You've hidden then in your basement. You say that you haven't seen anyone else the whole day.

On a case such as WHITE LIE you've violated a sincerity condition on assertion and that makes your assertion improper. Nonetheless, you still did what you should in virtue of the fact that moral considerations supersede the violations of the rule of assertion. The upshot is that WHITE LIES is a clear example that show that (i) and (ii) are compatible. The argument posits that cases such as WHITE LIE are more common than just such an extreme version and that all sort of considerations can supersede the appropriateness of assertion on the overall balance of action. This seems indeed to be the point made by Williamson (2000), when he claims that:

> Such cases do not show that the knowledge rule is not the rule of assertion. They merely show that it can be overridden by other norms not specific to assertion. The other norms do not give me warrant[51] to assert p, for to have such warrant is to satisfy the rule of assertion. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 256)

The picture on the view then is that the appropriateness of the speech act is defined by compliance to the constitutive rule even though there may be situations where other considerations

[51] Williamson and others uses the term 'warrant' in the context of assertion to talk about the property that picks out whether the speech act satisfies the relevant rule of assertion. I prefer to use 'appropriate' in order to avoid any confusion with the specific technical use of 'warrant' in epistemology .

make it so that the right thing to do is to perform an inappropriate act. This is perfectly congenial to the analogy with games where a proper move in the game is the move as defined by the rules, and a violation of the rules will make it so that the move is an improper one, but there may be, nonetheless, situations where other considerations make it so that the thing that one should do is to violate the rules of the game. This explains what goes on in cases such as TRAIN and make it so that cases such as this one should not be taken as counterexamples to KNA/TNA.

With regards to a case such as SNOW OUTSIDE the matters are a little more complicated. I think there are two similar but yet distinct moves that one can make in order to deal with this objection, one that works and one that doesn't.

A bad response: Primary/secondary impropriety

One way to deal with the concern is by introducing a distinction between primary and secondary impropriety. Here is the notion as explained by DeRose (2002):

> As happens with other rules, a kind of secondary propriety/impropriety will arise with respect to [the KNA]. While those who assert appropriately (with respect to this rule) in a primary sense will be those who actually obey it, a speaker who broke this rule in a blameless fashion (one who asserted something she didn't know, but reasonably thought she did know) would in some secondary sense be asserting properly... (DEROSE, 2002, 180)

On this picture, what happens in cases such as SNOW OUTSIDE is that they are proper on one sense and improper in another sense. More precisely since SNOW OUTSIDE fails to satisfy KNA then the assertion in SNOW OUTSIDE is primarily improper (for when I assert that there is snow outside I do not say something that I know) but is secondarily proper (for when I assert that there is snow outside I assert something that I reasonably thought I knew). The explanation here is attractive, for it seems to quite neatly fit with the problematic phenomenon, while at the same time preserving the idea that, even though there is something improper with my assertion when I do so, there still seems to be a sense on which it is all right for me to assert what I reasonably believe. Despite this, however, I think that this distinction is quite clearly problematic.

To see why this is so let's consider an argument presented by Lackey (2007). Lackey (2007) argues that the notion of secondary propriety/impropriety is spurious. This seems to be due to the the combination of two facts, (i) an answer to the question of whether an act ϕ complies to

a given rule is binary, either the act does or doesn't, and, (ii) there seems to be no other relevant question in order to determine whether the *act itself* is proper.

The analogy with games seems, with regard to this point to be particularly illuminating. Let us consider Toby, a quarterback who is attempting to complete a forward pass. Now,

> if Toby crosses over the line of scrimmage when making a forward pass, he may rightly be criticized for failing to play professional football by the rules. In other words, this particular pass is improperly made because it does not follow the rules governing professional football." (LACKEY, 2007, 604-605)

But let us suppose that the reason why Toby crossed the line of scrimmage while making a pass is that on the previous play his contact lens fell out his eyes. Does this mean that Toby's pass is now secondarily proper in a sense despite being primarily improper? The answer to this question has to be no, for there seems to be no sense conceivable in a game where the action can be *secondarily proper*. What happens in such a case, instead, is that

> the impaired vision brought on by the loss of his contact lens provides Toby with an excellent excuse for making an improper pass. Otherwise put, while his particular circumstances render his violation of the rules of the game *blameless*, Toby's pass is nonetheless one that shouldn't have been made in order to successfully play professional footbal. This is evidenced by the fact that no referee, upon hearing the story about his contact lens, would allow Toby another chance at his pass. (LACKEY, 2007, 605)

The analogy seems to also break down if we try to consider cases of secondary impropriety on games. So, for instance, if we imagine a case where Toby, despite his impaired vision, still makes a lucky guess as to where the line of scrimmage is positioned and manages to complete a pass, there seems to be no sense on which Toby's action should be regarded as secondarily improper. This can be evidenced by the fact that there is no sense on which either Toby or his pass would be subject to criticism upon the discovery of the conditions on which he made his pass. For "even if the players on the opposing team later found out that Toby did not know whether he crossed over the line when making his pass, none of them would rightly regard him as somehow cheating." (LACKEY, 2007, 605) Now, one thing that might be fair to say with regards to such a case is that Toby's action on that particular instance may not turn out to be particularly " *praiseworthy* or *deserving of credit*". (LACKEY, 2007, 605) But none of these concepts seem to be relevant to answering the question of whether Toby's act was proper with regard to the rules of football.

The upshot of these considerations is that the notion of secondary propriety/impropriety seems to come from a misguided attempt to capture the notions of *blamelessness* and *praise-worthiness*. This should come as no surprise. We can see this by noticing, as Lackey (2007) points out, that in other domains where such concepts are theoretically relevant the notion of secondary propriety/impropriety is not evoked. So for instance, on cases where ethicists or epistemologists provide accounts of the following form:

> MR: Action A is morally right only if A possesses feature x.
> EJ: Belief B is an instance of knowledge only if B possesses feature x. (LACKEY, 2007, 606)

Both on moral cases and in epistemological cases where a subject acts or believes on A or B while A or B lacks feature x but the subjects reasonably believes that the action/belief possesses feature x the familiar response will not be to evoke secondary propriety/impropriety but it will rather be to distinguish between moral/epistemological rightness and excusable or blameless belief/action. This leads further credence to the previous claim and I submit that it is enough to show that, since the notion of secondary propriety/impropriety is plausibly spurious, then an appeal to it as a response to the worries posited by cases such as SNOW OUTSIDE is a bad move.

A good response: Imperfect operationalizability

A different way to deal with the concern is by simply pointing out that there is no reason to expect that the Norm of Assertion should be *perfectly operationalizable*. A Norm N is *perfectly operationalizable* iff,

> "whenever one knows N and is in G, one is in a position to engage in a piece of knowledgeable practical reasoning 20 of the form:
> (1) I am in circumstances G
> (2) I ought to F in G
> (3) I can F by A-ing (HAWTHORNE; SRINIVASAN, 2013, 15)"

In particular, since knowledge and truth are both *non-transparent* [52]it will simply follow from the purported Norms that they should, as a matter of fact, be imperfectly operationalizable.

[52]I take it that at this point, Williamson's arguments for why knowledge is not transparent are reasonably uncontroversial and do not, therefore, see the need to argue for that in here. For a defense of the non-transparency of knowledge and other states see Srinivasan (2015).

Now, it is a feature of imperfectly operationalizable rules that attempts to comply with the rule will not guarantee compliance with the rule. This seems precisely to be what is happening in a case such as SNOW OUTSIDE. A response such as this one seems to be precisely what Williamson (2000) has in mind when he says the following in defense of KNA:

> The rule makes knowledge the condition for permissible assertion, not for reasonable assertion. One may reasonably do something impermissible because one reasonably but falsely believes it to be permissible. In particular, one may reasonably assert p, even though one does not know p, because it is very probable on one's evidence that one knows p. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 256)

The upshot of these considerations is that we can draw a distinction between two dimensions of evaluation (i) whether a speaker's assertion conforms to the Norm of Assertion, and, (ii) whether the speaker is reasonable in believing that he conforms to the Norm[53]. While (i) and (ii) will in most normal cases coincide, there is no particular reason why we should think that there is a necessary connection between the two. Further still, once we consider the non-transparency of a property that is a component of a rule we should expect for this to lead to differences on the evaluations of (i) and (ii).

Once we grasp the distinction we should also be able to see that it provides an explanation of cases such as SNOW OUTSIDE for those are going to be precisely the sort of cases where (ii) will be positively evaluated without a positive evaluation with regard to (i). This would explain the sense on which one might think that one should assert that there is snow outside on a case such as SNOW OUTSIDE, that is to say, on a case such as that one it is reasonable for me to assert that there is snow outside even though my assertion that there is snow outside is improper.

Now, one final sort of qualm that one might have about this explanation is due to the fact that it stipulates that the rule of assertion is not *perfectly operationazable*. Wouldn't it be better to have a rule that is able to simply accommodate the idea that cases such as SNOW OUTSIDE are simply cases where one's assertion is perfectly in order and that would also be able to ascribe to the Norm of assertion the property of being *perfectly operationazable*? Might an objector here ask. So wouldn't, for instance, competitor Norms of Assertion such as,

RBNA: One should assert that p only if one reasonably believes that one knows that

[53] I take this to a more fruitful formulation of the consequences of the distinction between the correctness and regulation conditions as stated on Engel (2008).

p.

be preferable to norms that have as a part of their nature the fact that they are *imperfectly operationalizable*?

By way of response I would like to point two things:

First, it is not at all clear that only because a norm of assertion appeals to the notion of reasonableness as the standard for propriety it will be the case that the Norm will be *perfectly operationalizable* [54].

Second, it is not clear what, aside from making it possible to explain the divergence between judgments of reasonability and appropriateness, is the cost of recognizing *imperfectly operationazalibility*. In addition, since the function of assertion seems to be to make claims about the world, then a Norm that will issue the verdict that assertions that make incorrect claims about the world can be perfectly proper will seem to miss the point of assertion and will, as discussed before, be *normatively innocuous*.

Finally, we should point two final things. First it seems as if most, if not all, non-trivial rules on a vast range of philosophically interesting domains seem to be *imperfectly operationalizable*. For since, for actions with aims, "no plausible norm is such that trying to do what one ought to do will guarantee in fact doing what one ought to do" (HAWTHORNE; SRINIVASAN, 2013), it seems as if in general, subjects being in positions similar as SNOW OUTSIDE when trying to conform to rules should come as no surprise[55]. Secondly, the *imperfect operationalizability* seems a feature that is perfectly congenial to the analogy in games. For there are certainly constitutive rules of games that are *imperfectly operationalizable*. Take for instance the Offside rule in soccer:

> The Offside Rule: A player is offside iff there are less than two players between , or at the same line than , him and the goal when he is passed the ball, and the player is on the offensive half of the field, and the ball did not came from a throw in, and the pass did not come from a player that was ahead of him on the field, at the time of a pass.

Now, one of a player's goals in a soccer game is to not be offside when receiving a pass, that

[54]The reason for this is that it could be the case that it would be unreasonable for one to believe that one's belief is reasonable, for an argument see Williamson (2014).

[55]This observation should come as no surprise for, for instance, utilitarianists for similar problems with regards to maximizing utility are widely recognized.

is to say, to never be in a position described by the offside rule. We could describe this goal on the following way. When playing soccer,

NOT OFFSIDE: One must not be offside.

But not being offside is clearly *imperfectly operationalizable*. For, in particular, the timing demands of trying to not be offside while at the same getting an edge on moving make it so that that it is particularly tricky to be in a position to know whether one is at the same line then a last defender. This makes it so that mistakes in judgment about whether oneself is offside (not to mention about whether others are offside) are quite common. This shows that in games, similarly to in other domains, one is not always in position to know whether one is complying with a rule, and that therefore *imperfect operationalizability* just seems to be a common feature of a host of rules.

This collection of facts, I submit, make it so that not only assertion's *imperfectly operationalizability* should count as a feature, not a bug, but also that any account that does not contain such a feature and is therefore forced to issue judgments of propriety about cases such as SNOW OUTSIDE should have that fact count as evidence against the theory.

2.3.2 Weiner's arguments for TNA

Once we've dealt with the preliminary observations, we can finally move on to talk about TNA itself. Weiner (2005) argues for TNA on the basis of cases. His primary arguments are actually going to be arguments for the idea that TNA can explain both *lottery propositions* and *Moorean propositions* as well as, or even better then, KNA. Call the arguments relating to these cases *Weiner's negative arguments*. In addition to these arguments, Weiner will also present cases of *predictions* and *retrodictions*. On his view, those cases are cases of assertions where KNA will give the right verdict, making it so that TNA will ultimately have the advantage. Call the arguments relating to cases of *predictions* and *retrodictions Weiner's positive arguments*. In what follows we will consider all of Weiner's arguments, beginning with the negative ones.

Weiner's negative arguments

In order to argue that TNA can explain *lottery propositions* and *Moorean propositions* as well as KNA, Weiner (2005) asks us to consider the following utterances:

> Suppose that Alice has bought a lottery ticket, with her odds of winning as low as you like. The drawing takes place at 9 a.m. and is publicly announced at noon. At 10 a.m. Sarah says to Alice:
>
> (1) Your ticket didn't win.(WEINER, 2005, 230)
>
> And the following Moorean sentence:
>
> (2) Dogs bark, but I don't know that they do. (WEINER, 2005, 230)

Once we've gotten a grip on the cases, the next task is to consider how TNA would be able to explain then. On Weiner (2005)'s account, their explanation will be Gricean. The idea is supposed to be that that "there is a norm, akin to Grice (1989)'s Cooperative Principle , that one's utterances have some point" (WEINER, 2005, 230).

So on the case of lottery propositions, "it is because of such a norm that it would be pointless for Sarah [to tell Alice (1)], unless she had some insider information [with regard to (1)]" (WEINER, 2005, 232). Since this fact should be mutually known, then when Sara asserts (1) she implicates that she has inside information. But since Sarah does *not* have inside information, then," Alice has the right to feel resentful [towards her assertion of (1)]"(WEINER, 2005, 232). The claim, then, is that it is this right to resentfulness that explains why we take assertions of lottery propositions such as (1) to be improper. Further still, the claim is that this resentment "is grounded in the falsehood of Sarah's implicature rather than in the mere fact of Sarah's having asserted what she does not know" (WEINER, 2005, 232)

To further strengthen the case of the argument Weiner (2005) asks us to consider what would happen if (1) conveyed only its literal significance, that is to say, if (1) only conveyed the fact that Alice's ticker did not win. On the case where that is true TNA would predict that the assertion is proper. But still, "this assertion is also pointless" (WEINER, 2005, 232). On the TNA account, (1) would still violates Grice's maxim of Quantity, "Do not make your contribution more informative than is required" (GRICE, 1989, 26). Weiner (2005) points out that (1) is not required so long as the following three conditions holds:

> (5a) Alice is already aware of the overwhelming likelihood that her ticket didn't win,
> (5b) Sarah is not presenting herself as knowing anything that could strengthen Alice's belief (cited in (5a)) that her ticket did not win,
> (5c) Alice does not need reminding that (most likely) her ticket didn't win. (WEINER, 2005, 232-233)

By contraposition, "in order for there to be a point [to (1)] one of (5a-5c) must be false" (WEINER, 2005, 233). But if Alice knows that (5a) and (5c) are true and if a Cooperative principle is in place guaranteeing that Alice is entitled to assume that Sarah's assertion does have a point, then Sarah is entitled to assume that (5b) is false, and thus that Sarah is presenting herself as having inside information. This is supposed to guarantee the implicature on (1) and also validate the resentment when the implicature turns out to be false.

Now, is this a good explanation of cases of lottery propositions, that is to say, does a Gricean strategy have the same explanatory power as KNA with regards to propositions such as (1)?

To answer this question we must carefully consider the features of conversational implicatures:

(1) First, explanations via conversational implicatures require that we hold the inferential process that explains the flouting of a Gricean Maxim fixed in relation to sufficiently similar token cases to which the inferential process should similarly apply. This fact seems to point out that a Gricen explanation should also seem to lead to the conclusion that,

> (6) Your ticket is almost certain not to have won. (WEINER, 2005, 233)

should be as bad as (1) to assert. But, as Williamson (2000) points out, this prediction does not seem to born out. At worst, what can be said about (6) is that "it is banal and unkind" (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 247).

By way of reply to this, Weiner (2005) claims that the paralel between (1) and (6) breaks down, that is to say, the cases are not similar enough for the same inferential process to be triggered in virtue of the flouting of the same Gricean Maxim. To see this, Weiner (2005) points that the conditions under which asserting (6) is pointless seem to be the following:

> (7a)Alice is already aware that her ticket is almost certain not to have won,
> (7b) Sarah is not presenting herself as knowing anything that could strengthen Alice's belief (cited in (7a)) that her ticket is almost certain not to have won,
> (7c) Alice does not need reminding that her ticket is almost certain not to have won. (WEINER, 2005, 233)

And as with (5a) and (5c) Alice seems to know (7a) and (7c). However, opposed to with (5b) Alice also seems to know that (7b) is true. For, so the reasoning goes, since

because Alice knows (7a) Sarak already knows that her ticket is almost certain not to have won, then *a fortiori* "Sarah cannot present herself as knowing anything that would strengthen [the belief on (7a)] further" (WEINER, 2005, 234). Because of this, the most plausible interpretation of (6) is that "Sarah violating the Cooperative Principle by making a pointless assertion" (WEINER, 2005, 234) This leads to the result that, while on the Gricean explanation we shouldn't judge (6) to be as bad as (1), we should judge it to be, in virtue of failing to conform to the Cooperative Principle, banal and unkind, which is just the same result as given by KNA.

Now, I must confess that I'm not entirely sure how convincing this reply is. The reason for this is that this explanation seems to take for granted that (7b) must be true. To put it another way, why is it so that Alice must know that Sarah cannot present herself as knowing something that would strengthen her belief?

On any view where there are such things as credences, there seems like there should be hedged propositions that could act as evidence that would increase one's confidence when one's credence distribution assigns to p a value lower then 1. So why couldn't (6) be a case where a plausible interpretation is such a one?

Indeed, Weiner (2005) seems to recognize this concern when he says the following:

> What if Sarah had evidence that Alice's ticket was even less likely to have won than Alice thought? This would not strengthen Alice's belief that her ticket was almost certain not to have won. Rather it would give her grounds for a belief with a different content, 'My ticket is even less likely to have won than I thought before.' Hence this scenario would not falsify (7b) (WEINER, 2005, 249)

But this seems like a mistake. For getting the belief 'My ticket is even less likely to have won than I thought before.' is not a acquiring a belief with a different content than the previous belief it is merely giving a different description of the natural process of belief revision. To see this, notice that for any process of belief revision where the updated belief does not turn out to have maximally upper or minimally lower bound value, the description that 'My belief that X is even less/more likely than I thought before' will apply. If this is right, then this means that Weiner (2005) assumes a certain ranking of the plausibility of the inferential process without no apparent reason for preferring one ranking over another.

On his preferred ranking, the Gricean explanation seems to be able to explain as well as KNA the first issue that comes out of using a Gricean maneuver to explain the oddity of (1). On a different(but seemingly equally as plausible) ranking, the Gricean maneuver seems unable to explain why (6) should not be counted, by their lights, as equally bad as (1), a result that should favor KNA over the Gricean explanation.

Now, there seems to be no principled way to decide which ranking should apply to a case such as the one where Sarah would assert (1) or (6). This would leave us with the following conditional: If the correct ranking turned out to be Weiner (2005)'s preferred one, then the TNA would be on par with KNA with regard to such a feature. But if the correct ranking turned out be to the other one, then this feature of conversational implicatures would lead to an argument that favors KNA over TNA [56].

(2) A second feature of conversational implicatures is that they are cancelable. So, if the explanation for the inappropriateness of (1) is due to a conversational implicature, then it would seem to follow from this feature that on a case where the implicature is canceled the inappropriateness should accordingly disappear. So for instance, the following assertion,

> (8) Your ticket did not win, but I do not mean to imply that I have inside information. (WILLIAMSON, 2000, 248)

should, on the TNA + Gricean explanation picture, be perfectly acceptable. But (8) is still an improper assertion which is a problem for the view.

By way of response, Weiner (2005) claims that while it is true that (8) is improper, the explanation for that is that it is pointless, and that therefore it violates the general principle of cooperativeness rather then the Norm of Assertion. This fact should be evidenced by the fact that on (1) Sarah can reproach Alice by "saying 'You didn't know that' when she discovers that Alice didn't have insider information' (WEINER, 2005, 234). By contrast, the claim is that on (8) it would be wrong 'You didn't know that' since supposedly Alice has already admitted as much.

[56] Perhaps even more then this could be said still. For while there seems to be no principled way to decide on the case such as described, it seems conceivable that there would a case where contextual features could be made it so that the correct inferential ranking favors the inference on which a parallel to (7b) is false. If such a case is possible then it would be a case where TNA's explanation via a Gricean maneuver would be at a disadvantage with regard to this feature and then that would count as an argument in favor of KNA.

> Here again it seems hard to figure out exactly what to say except if to point out that it seems to me as if the above diagnosis is just wrong. For it seems perfectly alright to say 'You don't know that' in reply to (8) and that would precisely be a rebuke of the fact that asserting (8) is improper not only pointless. To motivate this thought, I think it helps to think of more trivial cases of pointless assertions. Let's us imagine that I pointlessly say everything that I see while walking on the street to my fiancee, I say things like 'There is a black car', 'There is a yellow car', 'There is a blue car', 'There is a yellow bike'. While asserting all this seems clearly annoying and pointless and therefore in clear violation of a Cooperative principle on Conversation, the reply 'You don't know that' would not be appropriate to any of these assertions. This contrast with if I, for instance, started saying things like 'That car is owned by a 80 year old man' , or, 'That bike is owned by a 6 feet woman', where the reply 'You don't know that' would be appropriate. These just serves to highlight the obvious fact that being pointless and being unknown are different dimensions of *criticizability* and that an explanation that tries to substitute one for the other should bear a considerable burden of evidence, one that I take the view to not have satisfactorily met.

The second issue on Weiner (2005)'s negative arguments is an attempt to deal with Moorean propositions. On his account an explanation of the oddity of a proposition such as,

> (2) Dogs bark, but I don't know that they do. (WEINER, 2005, 230)

should be dealt via an appeal to DeRose (2002)'s distinction between primary and secondary propriety/impropriety. The idea is that "the person who asserts (2) must have some warrant for believing that dogs bark, or she has committed secondary impropriety with respect to the truth norm" (WEINER, 2005, 237). On this picture, while an assertion such as (2) is proper on the primary sense, it will be improper in the secondary sense for the agent will have no reason to believe that (2) conforms to the Truth Norm. The reason for this is that reasonably believing to conform to TNA involves having reasons to believe that (2) is true. But having reasons to believe that the first conjunct of (2) is true would give the agent, on most normal circumstances, knowledge that dog's bark. In addition "if the speakers situation is so unusual that she has some other warrant for believing that dogs bark, she should say so"(WEINER, 2005, 238). This makes it so that asserting (2) is secondary improper.

Leaving aside the question whether this response is sound, there still remains a problem with the argument. The problem is that, as we've pointed before, the notion of secondary impropriety is spurious. As discussed before, there seems to be no theoretically relevant notion of impropriety that is captured by the notion of an action being secondarily improper. Rather, what seems to happen is that the notion is introduced on a misguided attempt to capture notions such as *praiseworthiness* and *blamelessness*. I've suggested that the theoretical work done by the notion of secondary propriety/impropriety can be done equally as well (and in a much more satisfactory manner) by simply recognizing that the Norm of Assertion is a Norm that is *imperfectly operationazable.* But on this account, there is no sense on which TNA can explain the inappropriateness of assertions like (2).

Once we've considered the argument, I think it becomes clear that to show that TNA may be on par with KNA on the explanation of the *phenomena* other arguments would be needed. In this sense seems as if KNA still has an advatange over TNA. This does not exhaust Weiner (2005)'s arguments however, for we still must examine his positive arguments in favor of TNA.

Weiner's positive arguments

Weiner (2005)'s positive arguments for TNA come from considering the following cases:

> JACK AUBREY: Captain Jack Aubrey has had long experience of naval combat against the French Navy. He and young Lieutenant Pullings have been watching French ships maneuver off Mauritius all day. At 2 p.m., Aubrey says to Pullings:
>
> (3) The French will wait until nightfall to attack. (WEINER, 2005, 230)
>
> SHERLOCK HOMES: Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson are brought to a crime scene. Holmes scans the scene and says (truthfully, as it turns out),
>
> (4) This is the work of Professor Moriarty! It has the mark of his fiendish genius. Holmes, at this point, has not found any evidence (in the criminal rather than epistemological sense) incriminating Professor Moriarty, but he is sticking his neck out based on his sense of what Moriarty's crimes are like. (WEINER, 2005, 231)

The utterance of (3) in JACK AUBREY is a case of prediction and the utterance of (4) in HOLMES is a case of retrodiction. Weiner (2005) also takes (3) and (4) to be clear cases of assertion. But both utterances (3) and (4) also to seem be cases of proper utterances where the speakers don't know what they say. In addition, we've stipulated that (3) and (4) are both true. This means that if Weiner (2005) is right, them both (3) and (4) counterexamples to KNA (but not to TNA), and therefore should be taken as evidence that favors TNA over KNA.

Now, I think that are two ways on which a defender of KNA might want to reply to this argument.

On the first way, one could, like Benton (2012) does, simply point out that the judgments towards utterances such as (3) and (4) just seem to be wrong. For if they were right, one would expect the normal tests that count as evidence for KNA to not apply to the utterances. So for instance if a prediction such as (3) did not require knowledge, then one would expect it to "be conjoinable with a conjunct disavowing knowledge" (BENTON, 2012, 103) such as in:

> (3*) The French will wait until nightfall to attack, but I don't know that they will. (BENTON, 2012, 103)

And the same should hold for a retrodiction, such as in:

> (4*) This is the work of Professor Moriarty, but I don't know that it is.

But both of these utterances are infelicitous, as are:

> (3**) I don't know that the French will wait, but I can say that they will. (BENTON, 2012, 103)
> (4**) I don't know that this was the work of Professor Moriarty, but I can say that it was.

Weiner (2005) seems to anticipate such a response for he claims that "predictions and retrodictions can be maintained while knowledge is explicitly disclaimed" (WEINER, 2005, 238). His example of such a case is:

> (3***) I don't know they'll attack at nightfall-we haven't intercepted their orders- but my prediction is that they will.

Here, two observations seem to be in order. First, it is not clear that such an example could be construed for the retrodiction case, for there seems to be definitely something odd with:

> (4***) I don't know that this is the work of Professor Moriarty- I can't point to any evidence that he did it- but I retrodict that it was him!

Second, the conjunction in (3***) is not equivalent to (3*), and indeed, the second conjunct of (3*) seems to back out from the flat-out assertion on (3) as showed by the fact that 'my prediction is that' seems to have the effect of hedging.

A further point in support of this response is that if KNA did not apply, then“ we should expect queries [on terms of knowledge] such as 'How do you know that?' and Do you really know that' to be inadmissible [on the face of (3) and (4)" (BENTON, 2012, 104), which would seem to suggest that predictions and retrodictions do indeed seem to, *contra* Weiner (2005), comply to KNA.

A second way to reply to this argument would be to point out, following Cariani (Forthcoming), that the speech act of predictions (and plausibly also retrodictions) is "multiply realized" (CARIANI, Forthcoming, 2). The relevant question here is, how are assertion and prediction related?

One possible response to this question seems to hold the following as true:

> **the subkind thesis**: every act of prediction [and retrodiction] is also an assertion. (CARIANI, Forthcoming, 5)

But **the subkind thesis** is false. This can be shown by looking at data that emerges from putting the speech acts on their explicit performative form:

> (9) I predict that she will win, but I don't know that she will.(CARIANI, Forthcoming, 6)
>
> (10) I retrodict that she did win, but I don't know that she did.

(9) and (10) seem to be felicitous utterances, which shows that predictions and retrodictions can be "felicitously followed by Moorean professions of ignorance in the predicted[/retrodicted] proposition" (CARIANI, Forthcoming, 6). But the same cannot be said of assertions such as:

> (11) She won, but I don't know that she did. (CARIANI, Forthcoming, 6).

This would suggest that, while some predictions and retrodictions certainly are species of assertion, some others would plausibly be not. This would also be congenial to Benton (2012)'s explanation, for the tests that seem to show the inappropriateness of utterances like (3) and (4) would also be tests that would force upon the utterances the interpretations where they are taken as assertions, and are therefore deemed as inappropriate if they don't fulfill the knowledge condition.

But, by the same token, this explanation would leave room to explain the intuition that some utterances like (3) and (4) do not require knowledge for their appropriateness. These cases

would just happen to be the cases where predictions and retrodictions are realized by other speech acts that are not assertions. This sort of explanation seems particularly fruitful for it would seem to be able to accommodate all the relevant data in an organic and conflict free way. So for instance, on such a view, we might want to assume for instance that the speech act of guessing is the speech governed by the following rule:

> The Guessing Norm: One must: guess that p only if it is reasonable for one to believe that p.

On this assumption guessing would be a member of the family of constatives, just as asserting. But it would also be importantly different on a way that would help explain the appropriateness of certain instances of (3) and (4). On this interpretation when you're predicting or retrodicting (3) or (4) it is perfectly all right for you to utter (3) or (4) while not knowing that (3) or (4). This interpretation would drawn further support from the fact that it seems felicitous do utter:

> (11) I guess that the French will wait until nightfall to attack, but I don't know that they will.
> (12) I guess this is the work of Professor Moriarty, but I don't know that it is.

On the assumption that the *multiple realizability* hypothesis is right then, we would get an organic explanation of the intuitions behind *Weiner positive arguments* that would still loan credence to KNA. Now, Weiner (2005) seems to anticipate this kind of response when he anticipates that one way to respond to this arguments is by claiming that utterances such as (3) and (4) would be cases of assertions.

While he does point out that assertion " is largely a philosopher's term, which we are free to define" (WEINER, 2005, 239), this does not mean that he thinks that the dispute here would be largely a terminological one. For, on his view, it would be hard to "exclude predictions and retrodictions without trivializing the knowledge account' (WEINER, 2005, 239). On the view, an account of assertion that excluded predictions and retrodictions would simply be uninteresting and 'it would be hard to see why we should care about the norms of assertion any more than we should care about the norms of prediction" (WEINER, 2005, 239). In addition, Weiner (2005) also argues that should a move would remove the support that KNA gets from lottery propositions. For since lottery propositions are generally cases of predictions or retrodictions then excluding such cases from being classified as assertions it would be hard to see" why

they[lottery propositions] should count as assertions if (3) and (4) do not." (WEINER, 2005, 239)

In order to respond to this argument, I think that there are two observations that we must make.

First, since the *multiple realizability* hypothesis does not predict that all cases of predictions and retrodictions are not in fact assertions, then it seems that the Norm of Assertion debate would hardly be as uninteresting (or even trivial) as in the way that the extreme case portrayed by Weiner (2005) would predict. In fact, if we consider that most declarative utterances in the present tense turn out to be assertions, it would seem that we should expect that the *multiple realizability* hypothesis would predict that most declarative utterances in the past or in the future tense would also turn out to be, even though also being cases of retrodictions or predictions, to be cases of assertion. This would fact would also be congenial with KNA getting support from lottery propositions for since the *multiple realizability* hypothesis would predict that most predictions or retrodictions should be cases of assertion, then the hypothesis will also predict that most utterances of lottery propositions will turn out to be tokens of the speech act of assertion [57].

Now, a relevant worry that one might have with this is that the determination of whether a prediction/retrodiction is also a token of assertion is that this determination looks suspiciously arbitrary. Isn't it convenient that when an utterance seems appropriate without it being the case that the content asserted is known, than it turns out that the utterance is not a case of assertion? - Might an objector ask.

This question leads me to my second observation. For while it is indeed convenient that the cases of assertion seem to track knowledge in such a way, my contention is that, as evidenced

[57]Further support for the hypothesis could be drawed from applying the exercise related to the speech act of guessing and the test of the subkind thesis to lottery propositions. For imagine that on the context of (1) we take Sarah to be guessing when she utters (1). If we apply the performative test to such a situation we would get an utterance such as:

(1*)I guess your ticket didn't win, but I don't know that it didn't.

Similarly if we did the performative test for the subkind thesis on a lottery proposition we would get an utterance such as:

(1**) I predict that your ticket won't win the lottery, but I don't know that it won't.

Both (1*) and (1**) seem like felicitous utterances. This would contrast with,

(1***) Your ticket won't win, but I don't know that it won't

which is just an infelicitous utterance of a Moorean absurdity.

by the arguments that seem to favor KNA on cases of prediction, this is not an objection to the *multiple realizability* hypothesis, but rather a description that suggests that the taxonomy of the speech acts on the hypothesis just gets things right. On my view, a correct taxonomy of speech acts is important because of the theoretical illuminating role that it plays. Stronger still, one might want to say that the theoretical illumination of speech practices should be taken as the deciding factor for theories (as long as the taxonomy picks out plausible extensions). With regard to this feature the *multiple realizability* hypothesis would seem to do particularly well, for it seems to fit perfectly with the theoretical picture where we judge a theory of assertion in terms of how well it fulfills our previously highlighted *desiderata*. Incidentally, this fact also assuage the concerns of arbitrariness, for if we gauge the hypothesis on terms of whether it is theoretically illuminating, then taxonomical choices that carve out the space in such a way that it maximizes explanatory power turn out to not be arbitrary but rather the ones that dominate the other ones. With regards to the constrain, one might still worry about the adequacy of the picked out extensions and while I take explanatory power to be a determinant factor of the adequacy of any such extension, it might be helpful to try to say a little bit more the factors that determine whether an utterance is a type of a particular speech act. On my view, constatives will be tokens of a given speech act type on virtue of the intention that a speaker has for that utterance token to be evaluable (i.e governed) in terms of certain standards [58]. This picture is congenial to the *multiple realizability* hypothesis and would be able to perfectly explain all the supporting arguments that seem to favor the view, and, on my view, make the hypothesis eminently plausible.

Now, once we consider both possible replies for *Weiner positive arguments*, I submit that the arguments for TNA seems to loose strength and that what in effect happens is that the considerations put forth seem to lend support to KNA.

[58] More precisely but still roughly put:

> An utterance *u* will be a token of a speech act type α iff a speaker S intends for it to appropriate in virtue of its compliance with a Norm N.

This definition should come with the usual caveats about intentions on speech act theory. For instance, a speaker cannot intend for an utterance to be of a type α when the context prevents it from being reasonable that the utterance be of type α on pain of humpty-dumptysm. Also, in virtue of misunderstandings about the context or about one's intention a speaker S can be erroneously interpreted as performing a different act α than the one he is actually performing.

2.3.3 Whiting's argument for TNA

Whiting (2013)'s argument for TNA rely on the following principle:

> (POSSESSION): The fact that p can be one's reason or warrant for ϕing if and only if one knows that p. (WHITING, 2013, 859)

While (POSSESSION) is not an uncontroversial principle, Whiting (2013) is right on pointing out that most proponents of KNA would seem to accept such a principle. In addition, since the principle seems plausible to me, I'm happy to grant it for the sake of the argument.

Now, the relevant claim is that POSSESSION distinguishes between there being warrant to assert that p and one having warrant to assert that p. On the view TNA states the condition for there being *warrant to assert that p*. The view purports to draw distinct lines between whether an assertion is appropriate and whether the speaker is acting appropriately while asserting. On this view, TNA tracks only the former and provides a condition where "one may do so, if and only if it is true that *p*"(WHITING, 2013, 860). This means that TNA, on its own, "says nothing about what it is for one to have warrant to assert that p, or for a subject to be in a position to assert that p in the light of this warrant" (WHITING, 2013, 860).

The advantage of this sort account seems to mainly that the account woud able to explain the same data as KNA. For TNA + POSSESSION would seem to be able to explain the same data as KNA by translating most queries into queries about whether the subject is in the position to assert what he does. So for instance, with regard to challenges of the form 'How do you know that?', TNA + (POSSESSION) would predict that the query is a question not about whether there is warrant for that assertion, but rather that the query is a question about whether you "have that warrant" (WHITING, 2013, 860).

A similar explanation would be available for Moorean assertions. On TNA + (POSSESSION) it is possible for there to be warrant for Moorean assertions. However, (POSSESSION) says that it is 'not warrant one can have or act in the light of" (WHITING, 2013, 860-861). For since if someone has warrant to assert that p then the agent knows the first conjunct, but if they know the first conjunct the second conjunct is false and they can't have warrant to assert it. Similar explanations would seem to generalize for the other features of assertion and would therefore put TNA +(POSSESSION) on par with KNA.

Now, while I think that the argument is interesting, it seems to me as if it is still not very compelling. To see this, we should notice that there seems to be two different ways on which

we can interpret the argument but ultimately none of them are going to be satisfactory.

On the first way what TNA+ (POSSESSION) does is that it redescribes most of the data on the Norms of Assertion on terms of whether an agent has a reason or is warranted to take himself as being in a position to assert that *p* (and having such a reason or being in such a position requires knowing that *p*). This interpretation would claim that while it is true that the interesting question about the Norm of Assertion is what rule defines the speech act and how such a rule determines what is a proper, an improper, and what is not an assertion, the rule that does this is in fact TNA. On this view, all the data that seems to favor KNA does so only *misleadingly*. Rather, what the data in fact favors is a principle that describes the conditions for an agent to recognize himself as asserting properly and such conditions are described by (POSSESSION).

This interpretation is a very interesting diagnosis about the literature on the Norms of Assertion, but one that I think that is mistaken. The reason for this is that while it seems plausible that such a confusion could have with regard to the data about conversational challenges and the usage of parentheticals it seems much harder to see this applying to Moorean assertions and to lottery propositions. For it seems not only that an agent cannot take himself to have reason or warrant to assert 'p and I don't know that p' but rather it is the case that it is not permissible to assert 'p and I don't know that p' (and the same would seem to be true for asserting 'your ticket did not win' on the face of mere statistical evidence) [59]. More worrying still, this interpretation of TNA + (POSSESSION) would yield the result that it is indeed a case of proper assertion when I assert something that is true on a lucky guess, for even though (POSSESSION) will say that I cannot recognize that fact, TNA will still issue the verdict that such an assertion would be in order.

On the second way what TNA+ (POSSESSION) does is to drive a wedge between two different evaluation measurements, one about whether the assertion is proper and another about whether it is proper for S to assert. But it is hard to see exactly how that would get the desired result. For an assertion is a speech act and that means that it is just a particular act, whereas the metaphysics of an act tells us (minimally) that an act is an event with the kind of structure where the required condition is that they be performed by agents. But what then does it mean for an

[59] Similar considerations would seem to apply to the parallel with belief. It is not the case that I merely cannot believe myself to not have a reason for a belief in a moorean proposition, rather it is just that a belief in a moorean proposition is irrational.

act to be proper while being improper for it to be performed by the agent, a feature which is constitutive of the act? This notion seems mysterious. On the absence of any other explanation, I think the most plausible one would be that the act is improper if the agent does not reasonably take himself to be going with the rule. But this is just the notion of secondary impropriety and as we discussed before that notion seems to be spurious.

Once we consider TNA + (POSSESSION), then, I submit that the arguments in favor of the picture do not turn out to be very compelling. If that is right, then they do not count as a reason for favoring TNA over KNA.

2.3.4 Arguments against TNA

Once we've considered the arguments against TNA and found them wanting, the only thing that remains is to consider whether there are further reasons that count against TNA as the correct norm of assertion.

One first thing that should be worth pointing out is that the previously mentioned problem with regard to true but lucky assertions would be a general problem for the view.

Another problem would come from considering whether TNA would be able to fulfill our *desiderata*. In particular, since TNA requires only truth for an assertion to be proper, it seems that it might have trouble explaining the epistemic features tied with the speech act of assertion. So for instance how would TNA explain the feature of assertion's *conveyed self- representation*? If assertion required merely truth, why would the act of asserting that p convey that one knows that p. Recall that on TNA, if we discount the notion of secondary impropriety, then an assertion where the speaker asserts something that is true independently of him even believing that it is so will be proper. So why then, on such conditions should we expect for one's assertion to convey that one represents himself as knowing that p when he asserts that p? Similar worries would seem to generalize to the other features of assertion tying it to epistemic factors that were already not previously mentioned. This fact should count as evidence against TNA.

A different problem would come from considering the following self-referential assertion:

(13) This assertion is improper. (PELLING, 2011)

If (13) is true it is an improper assertion, but that means that by TNA it is a proper assertion. If (13) is false then it is a proper assertion, but by TNA it is an improper assertion. This seems like a problem for TNA.

These collection of arguments, together with the fact that TNA does not seem to explain the data that seems to favor KNA, I submit, make it so that KNA is a better candidate than TNA to be the correct account of assertion.

2.4 The Reasonable to Believe Norm of Assertion

The Reasonable to Believe Norm of Assertion can be formulated in the following way:

> RTBNA: One should assert that p only if (i) it is reasonable for one to believe that *p*, and (ii) if one asserted that *p*, one would assert that *p* at least in part because it is reasonable for one to believe that *p*. (LACKEY, 2007, 608)

There are two important features of RTBNA to highlight. First, it is important to notice that the RTBNA "does *not* include for proper assertion the condition that one *reasonably believe that p*, but only the importantly weaker requirement that it *is reasonable for one to believe that p*" (LACKEY, 2007). This feature is what makes RTBNA relevantly different from other reasonability or justification norms. [60]

The second feature worth highlighting is that (ii) should be seen as an independent clause. The motivation for (ii) comes from the fact that, if not for it, cases such as the following would be cases of proper assertion:

> ALARMIST: Gertrude has an overwhelming amount of excellent evidence available to her for believing that Oliver is the person who forgot to turn the alarm on before leaving the bank that employs both of them. She doesn't believe that this is the case, however, because she has romantic feelings for Oliver that cloud her rational judgment about his behavior. Nonetheless, when Gertrude is questioned by her supervisor about the alarm, she asserts "Oliver forgot to turn it on" merely to avoid any suspicion that she was involved in this oversight. (LACKEY, 2007, 609)

ALARMIST is the sort of case where the speaker asserts that *p* not in virtue of any epistemic considerations, but merely in virtue of the fact that she has ulterior (non epistemic) motives in order to assert what she does. On the assumption that the fact that an assertion would be entirely disconnect from epistemic considerations should make the assertion impermissible, (ii)

[60] Other variations on reasonability norms include the Rational Credibility Norm (see Douven (2006) and the Justification Norm (see Kvanvig (2003). Still, I will only address RTBNA for it seems to me as if the considerations with regard to it plus what was already mentioned with regard to RBNA should give a good idea of the general arguments for and against this family of notions.

would be the clause that would provide that result. It is also important to notice that this sort of consideration, would seem to cut across the board. For it seems plausible to imagine that this sort of case could also happen when a speaker's assertion is true or when a speaker knows the content of what he asserted. This would mean that other norms such as KNA, TNA or others should also include a clause requiring that," if one asserted that *p*, one would assert that p at least in part because it is true/known [or the other relevant specified X] that *p*"(LACKEY, 2007). Call considerations regarding clauses such as (ii) *proper basing* considerations. Despite the plausibility of *proper basing* considerations, I will choose to leave those concerns aside for the remainder of this discussion. The reason for that is that, if the hypothesis that *proper basing* cuts across the board is right, then nothing about it will be relevantly distinguishing of any given theory of assertion, and as such the considerations will not help us on determining which theory should be taken as the correct theory of assertion.

Now, once we've recognized these features, we can move on to the arguments in favor of the view. That is precisely the task that we turn to next.

2.4.1 Selfless assertions

The 'selfless assertion' class of cases is the main motivation for RTBNA. In addition, they constitute what I take to be the most serious challenge to KNA. In what follows we will take a look at the cases, why they seem to pose such a strong challenge to rival views and afterwards will explore what sort of responses one might try to give to that challenge.

The cases

These are the paradigmatic cases that exemplify the class of 'selfless assertions cases':

> CREATIONIST TEACHER: Stella is a devoutly Christian fourth-grade teacher, and her religious beliefs are grounded in a deep faith that she has had since she was a very young child. Part of this faith includes a belief in the truth of creationism and, accordingly, a belief in the falsity of evolutionary theory. Despite this, Stella fully recognizes that there is an overwhelming amount of scientific evidence against both of these beliefs. Indeed, she readily admits that she is not basing her own commitment to creationism on evidence at all but, rather, on the personal faith that she has in an all-powerful Creator. Because of this, Stella does not think that religion is something that she should impose on those around her, and this is especially true with respect to her fourth-grade students. Instead, she regards her duty as a teacher to include presenting material that is best supported by the available

> evidence, which clearly includes the truth of evolutionary theory. As a result, while presenting her biology lesson today, Stella asserts to her students, "Modern day Homo sapiens evolved from Homo erectus," though she herself neither believes nor knows this proposition. (LACKEY, 2007, 599)
>
> DISTRAUGHT DOCTOR: Sebastian is an extremely well-respected pediatrician and researcher who has done extensive work studying childhood vaccines. He recognizes and appreciates that all of the scientific evidence shows that there is absolutely no connection between vaccines and autism." However, shortly after his apparently normal 18-month-old daughter received one of her vaccines, her behavior became increasingly withdrawn and she was soon diagnosed with autism. While Sebastian is aware that signs of autism typically emerge around this age, regardless of whether a child received any vaccines, the grief and exhaustion brought on by his daughter's recent diagnosis cause him to abandon his previously deeply-held beliefs regarding vaccines. Today, while performing a well-baby checkup on one of his patients, the child's parents ask him about the legitimacy of the rumors surrounding vaccines and autism. Recognizing both that the current doubt he has towards vaccines was probably brought about through the emotional trauma of dealing with his daughter's condition and that he has an obligation to his patients to present what is most likely to be true, Sebastian asserts, "There is no connection between vaccines and autism." In spite of this, at the time of this assertion, it would not be correct to say that Sebastian himself believes or knows this proposition. (LACKEY, 2007, 598-599)
>
> RACIST JUROR : Martin was raised by racist parents in a very small- minded community and, for most of his life, he shared the majority of beliefs held by his friends and family members. After graduating from high school, he started taking classes at a local community college and soon began recognizing some of the causes of, and consequences of, racism. During this time, Martin was called to serve on the jury of a case involving a black man on trial for raping a white woman. After hearing the relatively flimsy evidence presented by the prosecution and the strong exculpatory evidence offered by the defense, Martin is able to recognize that the evidence clearly does not support the conclusion that the defendant committed the crime of which he is accused. In spite of this, however, he can't shake the feeling that the man on trial is guilty of raping the woman in question. Upon further reflection, Martin begins to suspect that such a feeling is grounded in the racism that he still harbors, and so he concludes that even if he can't quite come to believe that the defendant is innocent himself, he nonetheless has an obligation to present the case to others this way. Shortly after leaving the courthouse, Martin bumps into a childhood friend who asks him whether the "guy did it." Despite the fact that he does not believe, and hence does not know, that the defendant in question is innocent, Martin asserts, 'No, the guy did not rape her' (LACKEY, 2007, 598)

Even though the examples contain particulars that may lead to different judgments, they are all united by being examples of the phenomenon of 'selfless assertions', which mean that they all share the following core characteristics:

(1) The testifier, for purely non-epistemic reasons, does not believe that p (and therefore does

not know that p).

(2) Despite this absence of belief, the testifier is aware that *p* is well supported by the available evidence.

(3) Because of this, the testifier asserts that *p*, even though he does not believe that *p* (and therefore does not know that *p*). (LACKEY, 2007, 599)

According to Lackey (2007) the combination of these three features show that 'selfless assertion' cases are cases where 'a subject offer an assertion in the absence of knowledge and is not subject to criticism in any relevant sense' (LACKEY, 2007, 599). Further still, the claim is that the subjects in the cases, *qua asserters*, are 'appropriately subject to praise' (LACKEY, 2013). This is supposed to be the case because in the cases of 'selfless assertions' the subjects "offer the assertion in question precisely *because* he/she recognizes that it is supported by an overwhelming amount of excellent evidence, evidence that the subject either cannot or will not allow to govern his/her own doxastic states" (LACKEY, 2007, 600).

The upshot of these considerations is supposed to be that "it is a mistake to require proper assertion to pass through the doxastic states of the asserter" (LACKEY, 2007, 600). This, in turn, provides the motivation for clause (i) in RTBNA and therefore poses a challenge to competing views about the norm of assertion.

Now, before we turn into possible responses to this problem, it seems important to notice that, on the picture where the Norm of assertion is an *imperfectly operationazable* rule, there will be already a dispute about the diagnosis of the cases. For remember that, on that picture, there are two different dimensions relevant to evaluations: (i) whether a speaker's assertion conforms to the Norm of Assertion, and, (ii) whether the speaker is reasonable in believing that he conforms to the Norm. The first dimension is what tells us whether the speech act is proper or not and is an evaluation of the act, while the second dimension tells us whether the agent is criticizable or blameworthy. This, in turn, would mean that while it may very well be the case that the subjects are not criticizable *qua asserters*, their assertions are still improper, which is what the Norm of Assertion debate is ultimately about.

Possible responses to 'selfless assertions'

One initial way that one might try to respond to the selfless assertion cases is by simple denying that the cases are cases where the subjects lack the relevant belief/knowledge. This would be tantamount to saying that the cases, as described, are not plausible and that stipulating such conditions is not compatible with the way our belief system works. One reason to try to go this way would be that it seems as if this claim is supported by the empirical data about what are the most natural judgments of the cases.

This is what Turri (2015) shows. Turri (2015) conducts a series of simple experiments that provide empirical data that supports this first way of responding to the challenge posed by cases of 'selfless assertion'.

On the first experiment ninety-nine US residents[61] participants are randomly assigned to two conditions Believes and Knows. The participants are then asked to read the following case:

> DISTRAUGHT DOCTOR*: Sebastian is an extremely well-respected pediatrician and researcher who has done extensive work studying childhood vaccines. He recognizes and appreciates that all the scientific evidence shows that there is absolutely no connection between vaccines and autism. But shortly after his apparently normal 18-month old daughter received one of her vaccines, she became increasingly withdrawn and was soon diagnosed with autism. Sebastian is aware that signs of autism typically emerge around this age, regardless of whether a child received any vaccines. But the grief and exhaustion brought on by his daughter's recent diagnosis caused him to abandon his previously deeply-held convictions regarding vaccines. Today, while performing a well-baby checkup on one of his patients, the child's parents ask him about the legitimacy of the rumors surrounding vaccines and autism. Recognizing that the current doubt that we has towards vaccines was probably brought about through the emotional trauma of dealig with his daughter's condition, and recognizing that he has an obligation to his patients to present what is most likely to be true, Sebastian replies 'There is no connection between vaccines and autism.' (TURRI, 2015, 1223-1224)

DISTRAUGHT DOCTOR* is, nearly verbatim to DISTRAUGHT DOCTOR. The only differences between the cases is that changes were made to avoid outright stipulating lack of belief. This means that, since including such stipulations goes *contra* the goal "of learning how people naturally judge the case" (TURRI, 2015, 1223), the changes made it so that

> participants were not presented with the final independent clause of the originally

[61] This experiment was conducted using Amazon Mechanical Turk and Qualtrics and the data regarding the participants is the following: aged 18-67 years, mean age = 33 years; 94 % reporting English as a native language; 44 female.

> published version: It would not be correct to say that Sebastian himself believes or knows this proposition. And instead of reading that Sebastian had given up his 'previously deeply-held beliefs,' participants read that he gave up his 'previously deeply-held convictions'.

After reading this story, the participants in the Believes condition were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement:

> At least on some level, Sebastian believes that there is no connection between vaccines and autism. (TURRI, 2015, 1224)

On a similar manner, the participants in the Knows condition responded to the probe where the term 'believes' was replaced by the term 'knows' on the sentence that should be rated. After this, both participants went to a new screen and rated their agreement with the following statement:

> Sebastian should tell the parents that there is no connection between vaccines and autism. (TURRI, 2015, 1224)

The responses, which were "collected on a standard 6-point Likert scale anchored with "Strongly Disagree" (=1), "Disagree," "Somewhat Disagree," "Somewhat Agree," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree" (=6)" (TURRI, 2015, 1224), were the following:

For belief attribution (M=4.74, SD= 1.25). For knowledge attribution (M=4.84, SD=1.16). For the assertability condition on the Belief group(M=4.56, SD=1.25). For the assertability condition on the Knowledge group (M=4.78, SD=1.25) [62].

A similar experiment, with similar results, was conducted for DISTRAUGHT DOCTOR** where the only difference in the case is that "the mental state attributions omitted the adverbial phrase 'at least on some level"'(TURRI, 2015, 1226). In addition, an experiment was conducted to see if the results generalize to other cases, using CREATIONIST TEACHER* (a case like CREATIONIST TEACHER, but without the explicit stipulation of lack of belief) where the results also seemed to hold. And finally an experiment was conducted with a version very similar to DISTRAUGHT DOCTOR (including stipulations of lack of belief) [63], where the results also seemed to hold.

[62]The full data and discussion of the whole series of experiments is available on Turri (2015)

[63]It is worth emphasizing again that a thorough presentation and discussion of the data is available on Turri (2015)

The upshot is that empirical data suggests that the natural interpretation of the cases suggests that it is difficult to make sense of the fact that speakers in contexts such as the ones presented by 'selfless assertions' don't actually believe or know what they are asserting. Should we take this data seriously, then, we would be able to deny that 'selfless assertion' are counterexamples to various views about the Norm of Assertion, for we would deny that they are, after all, cases of assertion without the relevant knowledge/belief item[64].

A different way of trying to make a similar point is by suggesting that the cases itself suggest asserters indeed do believe what they assert. The way to make this point seems to be highlighting the fact that on each 'selfless assertion case' the asserter aims to say "what is most likely to be true" (TURRI, 2013, 194). But if that is the case, then the speakers on the case believe that the content of what they assert is most likely true. This seems very close to just believing on what they assert making it seem that arguments that would start from this observation and trying to derive that the speaker indeed believes on what he asserts would be, at least, plausible [65].

A second different way on which one might try to respond to the issues raised by cases of 'selfless assertion' is by claiming that 'selfless assertion' cases should be seen as cases of *vicarious assertions* (TURRI, 2013, 195). Call an assertion a *vicarious assertion* when the assertion is made to express the view of another person, of someone speaking on a specific capacity, or of someone speaking for a group. Here is an example of a vicarious group assertion:

> SPOKESMAN: Stephen is a spokesperson for the United States Government. On a personal level he has doubts about whether human beings actively impact the climate. Still it is the policy of the government to recognize the consensus on the scientific community that there is overwhelming evidence that man made climate change is real. When asked a question about the allegation that the idea of man made climate change is actually a part of a disinformation campaign organized by the Chinese government Stephen asserts 'Man-made climate change is a real

[64] This picture would seem to be particularly congenial to the E=K view, for it seems as if on the cases of 'selfless assertions' the agent possesses evidence that the content of what they assert is true, meaning that on the view one would also be tempted to say that one knows the content asserted.

[65] One way that such an argument could go might be by appealing to credences to explain the notion of believing that p as most likely true. On this view, believing that *p* is most likely true would just be having a certain credence value on *p*. On the assumption that this value would be high enough for belief, this could be interpreted as believing p. Further, one could point out that the actions undertaken by the speakers on the case seem to be guided by an evaluation of the evidence as strongly supporting the truth of *p*. On the assumption of some sort of connection between action and belief (like for instance a knowledge-action principle, or a justified belief action principle) an argument for the subjects having the beliefs in question could plausibly be made.

phenomenon.'

SPOKEMAN seems to be a clear case of vicarious assertion. Because of this, one might be inclined to judge that Stephen's assertion that 'Man-made climate change is a real phenomenon' is perfectly proper. On the hypothesis that 'selfless assertion' cases are cases of vicarious assertions this would also be precisely what would happen in those cases. To see how this would go, notice that, on CREATIONIST TEACHER, Stella says what she says because she "regards her duty as a teacher to include presenting material that is best supported by the available evidence" (LACKEY, 2007, 599). Similar considerations would seem to apply to Sebastian in DISTRAUGHT DOCTOR, on which his medical obligations would compel him to say what seems to be the consensus on the medical community. Because of this, both Stella and Sebastian seem to be asserting vicariously when they assert what they do (i.e Stella is asserting what teachers know, Sebastian is asserting what medical doctors know).

This sort of explanation would have the advantage of "explaining the *clash of intuitions*" [196](TURRI, 2013) on cases of 'selfless assertion'. This would be due to the fact that the assertion seems to be in certain effects evaluated on two different perspectives. On the first perspective we notice that the speakers assert something that they think is false. This would explain the intuitions of those who think that the assertion is improper. On the second perspective we notice that the speaker asserts for a group and that group believes/knows the content asserted. This would explain the intuitions of those who think that the assertion is proper. In addition, further support for this hypothesis could be drawn by trying to think about parallels where the conditions for vicarious assertion would not apply to the cases of selfless assertion:

> CREATIONIST TEACHER**: Stella is a devoutly Christian fourth-grade teacher, and her religious beliefs are grounded in a deep faith that she has had since she was a very young child. Part of this faith includes a belief in the truth of creationism and, accordingly, a belief in the falsity of evolutionary theory. Despite this, Stella fully recognizes that there is an overwhelming amount of scientific evidence against both of these beliefs. Indeed, she readily admits that she is not basing her own commitment to creationism on evidence at all but, rather, on the personal faith that she has in an all-powerful Creator. One day, while walking on the street she hears one kid saying to another, 'I've heard that we've evolved from Gorillas!'. Stella then turns to the kids and asserts 'Modern day Homo sapiens, evolved from Homo

erectus'.

On CREATIONIST TEACHER** it seems much harder to claim that Stela's assertion is proper. On the vicarious assertion hypothesis, this asymmetry between the cases would be easily explained.

Despite the attractiveness of this hypothesis, however, there seems to be one problem with it. The problem comes from trying to explain a case such as RACIST JUROR. For notice that, on RACIST JUROR, Martin is not speaking for a group and since Martin is talking to a friend after the trial Martin also does not seem to be speaking on another capacity or for another person. Now, one way that one might try to respond to this concern is by insisting that even after the fact Martin is still speaking "as a member of the jury" (TURRI, 2013, 195). If that explanation is correct, then the vicarious assertion hypothesis would indeed seem to provide a response to the problem posed by the cases of 'selfless assertion'. A third, and final, way on which one might try to respond to the issues raised by cases of 'selfless assertion' is by simply denying that the case is a case of proper assertion. Stronger still, one might want to claim that since 'selfless assertion' cases are cases where the speaker "presents as true something that they do not believe in, it seems that they simply lied" (MEIBAUER, 2014, 138).

With regards to the stronger claim, it is important to notice that on the perspective of a defender of RTBNA a case could be built for dismissing this thought. For, despite some controversy on the issue, the standard position seems to be that lying requires an intention to deceive. But 'selfless assertion' cases are precisely cases where the speaker supposedly asserts something that he does not believe in virtue of the fact that the speaker is trying to convey what is supported by the evidence. Because of this, one could argue that in the cases there is no intention to deceive, and as such, the cases would not be cases of lying.

With regards to the weaker claim, it may turn out that all that we have to go on is a clash of intuitions. Despite this, I think that there are considerations that may be highlighted and may make the balance slightly tilt towards one side. To see this, we should begin by remembering that, if the stipulation of the case is right, then the speaker is purposely saying something that he thinks is false, and therefore violating a sincerity condition on assertion. For myself, I take a sincerity condition to be a basic structural feature of the normativity of speech acts and I think that any violation of it should be seen as evidence that the speech act in question is improper. Still, the defender of RTBNA may plausibly claim, that the previous remark is not an argument

in favor of any one intuition but merely a *description* of the clash of intuitions. In order to make any side more plausible then, we would have to go deeper.

One way to do this is by making explicit the precise commitments that the speakers have in the cases of 'selfless assertion'. In this scenario we would imagine that the speakers explain every relevant feature that would help to make an informed judgment about the propriety of their assertion (i.e the fact that they don't take themselves to believe what they assert, the reasons for that perceived lack of belief, and the considerations that make them assert what they take themselves to not believe). After this we ask ourselves what sort of judgments would seem appropriate on such a scenario. Here the defender of the RTBNA should try to claim that the hearers would "clearly not feel cheated but grateful that the asserters have fit their assertions to the evidence rather than to their confused doxastic states " (LACKEY, 2007, 603). But why would this be so?

One reason for thinking that the hearers would be grateful in such a situation seems to be that, as we've mentioned before, on the full description of the cases the hearers would recognize that the speakers assertion is made in accordance with the aim of conveying what they take most probably to be true. This could be made even clearer if we imagine a scenario where the speaker initially discloses only the fact that he takes himself not to believe p. On this case, it would be quite clear that the hearers would be right to respond with indignation, we could imagine them saying things like 'But why would you say something that you do not believe?'. Now we imagine that the speaker replies to the indignation with considerations such as 'Yes, I don't believe it, but I recognize that the evidence points to p' or 'Yes, but I wanted to tell you what is true, not what I believe, and therefore I told you that p'. It seems plausible to say that any sort of response that we could imagine [66] here would seem to suggest a close tie between the intuitions of propriety and different levels of recognition of the truth of the content asserted. This would plausibly allow an objector to argue, on the basis of a host of different epistemic standards, that the underlying features of the case seem to support a case for the idea that the speakers in fact

[66] We could imagine one response where this would not seem to hold. This would be a case where Stella would say 'Yes, but I also don't think that evidential considerations should bear on this belief'. But on this case, it would be hard to see why we should judge Stella's assertion as appropriate, for this would ultimately mean that she doesn't think that evidential considerations should bear on the truth of what she asserts and therefore she would be asserting something in virtue of evidential considerations, but by her lights, those evidential considerations bear no relation to whether something should be believed. But this fact would seem to come dangerously close to undermining the strength of the intuition that the assertion should be taken as praiseworthy in the manner described by Lackey (2007). Where would this leave the case then? It seems as if on this scenario we should take Stella as saying something which she believes is false in virtue of considerations that by her lights do not bear on whether that assertion is epistemically appropriate. Could such an assertion be appropriate? I think not.

believe what they assert.

Once we've considered this final response to 'selfless assertion' cases, I submit that, if we think that the vicarious assertion response is problematic, the upshot is the following:
There is a respectable intuition that judges that asserting what you believe false is simply inappropriate. This intuition can be challenged by appealing to features of 'selfless assertion' cases that make the cases seem less inappropriate by appealing to (i) the speakers goals of conveying truths and (ii)their ability to recognize their assertions as fulfilling that goal . But this leaves the proponent of 'selfless assertion cases' in a bind. For notice that, to the extent that these considerations make the cases seems less inappropriate they turn out to, on the same proportion, suggest that the speakers actually possess the belief in question. This leaves the proponents of the selfless assertion cases in a dilemma, (i) either the cases should be judged as cases where the assertion is inappropriate, or, (ii) to the extent that we should dismiss that judgment, then we should also take the cases to be cases where the speakers have the relevant beliefs.

2.4.2 Another argument for RTBNA

A different argument for RTBNA comes from considering *imprecise assertions*. The argument would start from observations such as the following:

> Suppose that you ask me how tall I am and I assert that I am 5 feet, 4 inches. Strictly speaking, however, suppose that I am 5 feet, 3 1/2 inches. My assertion about my height, then, violates the TNA [and KNA] since it is false that I am 5 feet, 4 inches tall. Similar cases abound: the weatherman asserts that there is a 40% chance of rain tomorrow, when in fact there is only a 39.96% chance; a friend asserts that she is 28, when in fact she is 27 years, 364 days old; a contractor asserts that the room is 10X11 feet, when in fact it is 9 feet, 11 inches by 10 feet, 11 inches; a scientist asserts that the temperature of the water is 33.65 degrees Celsius when in fact it is 33.65432 degrees Celsius; a friend asserts that it is 6:00 PM, when in fact it is 6:01 PM. (LACKEY, 2007, 607)

On such cases, the idea would be that while the assertions are false (and therefore also not known) they could still be reasonable for in those sort of cases the speaker could still reasonably [or potentially reasonably had he had the belief] believe the content of the assertion.

In order to respond to such a challenge, it is worth to begin by pointing out that, while this explanation would seem plausible for some of the cases, it would not, however, be as fit for the whole phenomenon of *imprecise assertions*. To see this, notice that there seem to be two

different circumstances where imprecise assertions seem to commonly occur.

On the first sort of circumstance the speaker is carefree with his belief and he is satisfied with a rough approximation that he then asserts. An example of a case such as this one is a case where someone asks how tall something is and by just looking at it the speaker asserts what he takes to be the height saying something like, 'That 3 feet tall'. On this sort of circumstances it seems perfectly all right to take the speaker as reasonably believing what he asserts, and therefore reasonability norms of assertion would be able to explain the intuitive pull of the judgment that *imprecise assertion* is proper.

On the second sort of circumstance the speaker knows the truth about the matter but he speaks loosely about the matter. A particularly common example of this sort is when someone asks you the time, and you look at your clock and answer with a relevantly close approximation, like when someones asks you the time at 5:59 and you promptly answer that it is six o'clock. Bu since on this sort of case you know that it is 5:59, it cannot be the case that you reasonably believe (or would reasonably believe had you the belief) that it is six o'clock. But since the same intuitive pull of propriety applies on this sort of *imprecise assertion* than the one that applies to the first set of circumstances, then this means that reasonability norms of assertions also cannot explain the problems that come with *imprecise assertions*. The upshot is that, when it comes to this data, TNA, KNA or reasonability norms of assertion seem to stand or fall together.

Now, the above argument shows that reasonability norms do not get a special argument by appealing to the data of *imprecise assertions*. Still, it would be nice to have an explanation of why the cases seem to suggest different intuitive judgments than the ones predicted by the theories. Fortunately, such an explanation is at hand. To see this, we should just notice that the common feature between the two sort of normal circumstances that lead to *imprecise assertions* is that the context makes it so that agents are somewhat loose on applying the correct standards on the cases, be that for belief or for assertion. This suggests that cases of *imprecise assertions* are not cases where the act is proper, but rather, as Williamson (2000, 259) points out, that they are cases where we are lax about judging whether the act are proper or not. This hypothesis seems like a perfectly good explanation of what happens in cases of *imprecise assertions*, but should one still have doubts about it, we could, perhaps, further support the explanation in two ways:

First, we could bolster the case for this explanation by checking the reactions to cases of *imprecise assertions* where we would control for the factor that we are positing as the explanation

of the judgments. So for instance, let us consider the following case:

> CHEESEBREAD: Juliana puts cheesebreads in the oven at precisely 15:40. Both her and Felipe like their cheesebread on a very specific cooking point that is optimally achieved by leaving the cheesebreads for precisely 18 minutes at 400 degrees Fahrenheit (one minute less and it won't be cooked enough, and one minute more it start to get more on the burn side). After setting the relevant temperature on the oven, Juliana decides to take a power nap and asks Felipe to call her at precisely 16:00. When it is 15:59 Felipe decides it is close enough an awakens Juliana saying 'It is 16:00'.

CHEESEBREAD is a case of *imprecise assertion* where the context makes it so that the conditions of enforcement of the rules do not seem to be so lax. As such, the present hypothesis predicts that, to the extent that the context makes the condition for application of the rule more rigid, judgments about the appropriateness of the assertion in CHEESEBREAD would equally vary. This seems to be precisely what happens in the case, therefore leading further support to this explanation.

Secondly, we could also bolster the case for this explanation by pointing out that the explanation would seem to be congenial to what happens to rules of games. Too see this, let us compare the application of the offside rule on a serious English Premier League game and on my (sadly, long extinct) weekly 11 on 11. Both games are governed by the same rules, the rules of soccer. But still, there are significant differences between what it takes for a player to be judged offside on each game. On the EPL game a player is deemed outside when he is so called by the referee and the referee attempts to call offside with extreme precision based on the utmost respect for the offside rule. On my 11 on 11 game the offside rule would be called only when it was quite obvious that a player was way ahead of the others at the time of the pass and the rule would only be enforced if the majority of the players agreed that the player was clearly offside. Both the referee's EPL and my 11-11 judgments, however, could quite clearly end up yielding different verdicts than the answer to the factual question of whether the subjects were, in fact, outside [67]. The upshot is that the lax application of the rules hypothesis predicts all of this facts, and would therefore gain further support from the analogy with games.

[67] This would be so, of course, due to the fact that the judgments would be a matter of the perception of the subjects coupled with their interpretation of the rules whereas the question of whether the rule was in fact fulfilled would merely be a question of whether the state of affairs described by the rule obtains

If the above considerations seems plausible, then, I submit that *imprecise assertions* do not lead any particular support to RTBNA nor do they provide a particular challenge to KNA or TNA.

2.4.3 The arguments against RTBNA

In the previous sections we've discussed the arguments that might make someone inclined to think that RTBNA is the correct Norm of Assertion and the reasons why we should not deem them persuasive. In what follows we will strengthen that case by pointing out additional reasons why one might be suspicious of RTBNA.

A first reason why one might have additional suspicions about RTBNA (or other reasonability norms) would be that it does not seem to fit the *conversational data*. In particular, reasonability norms of assertion seem to be unable to explain the appropriateness of queries that probe for stronger conditions on assertion such as 'How do you know that?'. In face of this problem, defenders of reasonability norms usually tend to claim that challenges in terms of knowledge should actually be interpreted in terms of reasonability conditions. So, for instance, Lackey (2007, 610) claims that " implicit in these [the knowledge] challenges is the expectation that the asserter will respond with some *reason for believing* that the proposition asserted is true". And similarly, Kvanvig (2009, 143) claims that "the answer we are looking for [queries of knowledge] is one that cites the reasons that person has for thinking that the claim in question is true, and, when we get such an answer, we are satisfied". But this seems to be a mistake. We can see this by noticing that in the face of the proposed answers one could still appropriately ask 'Yes, but do you know that?' a fact that would not be explainable by the reasonability norms of assertion. Further, if it were the case that reasonability norms of assertion were correct we should expect, as Turri (2010, 461) points out, that certain prompts such as 'Do you have a reasonable belief about p?' to sound as natural challenges to the asserted content. But they do not. This shows that RTBNA (and other reasonability norms) is unable to make sense of the *conversational data*, and this fact should count as evidence against the views.

A second, much more troublesome reason for not considering RTBNA as a good candidate for the correct norm of assertion would be the results of the view with regard to *moorean assertions*. As mentioned in our previous discussion, it seems as if purported norms of assertion who require something weaker then knowledge should be unable to explain what is wrong with

moorean assertions of the form 'p, but I don't know that p'. But the problem, for RTBNA, is not only that it cannot provide an explanation of why some forms of *moorean assertions* are inappropriate. The problem is also the fact that, on RTBNA, some instances of moorean assertions will be appropriate.

To see this, we can notice that RTBNA guarantees that asserting that *p* when you don't believe that p will be, in some instances, appropriate. But additionally, in some of these cases (more precisely in the cases of selfless assertions) the subject will also reasonably believe that he doesn't believe that *p*. But since the account predicts that if you reasonably believe that *p*, then it is proper for you to assert that *p*, then in those cases it will also be proper for the subject to assert 'I don't believe that *p*'. In addition, on the extremely plausible assumption that conjunction preserves assertability, this would mean that on cases of 'selfless assertions' RTBNA predicts that it is proper for the asserter to assert 'p but I don't believe that p'(and consequently also 'p but I don't know that p'). But this seems like a troublesome result.

Now, Lackey (2007) tries to assuage the concerns raised by moorean assertions by appealing to two cases:

> LOOSING DRINKER: Nadia and Hank know both that their friend Nina tends to go to the bar only when she loses a tennis match and that this is a fact that is generally known by all of her friends. However, Nadia knows further that Nina went to the bar today to have a drink with her opponent despite having won her tennis match. Nevertheless, while discussing Nina's recent tennis matches, Nadia asserts to Hank, 'Nina went to the bar earlier today after her tennis match'. (LACKEY, 2007, 614)
>
> CHURCH THIEF: Quinn, Manfred, Rosalind, and Dolores are all currently at Starbucks drinking coffee and Quinn knows both that Dolores stole the money that was discovered to be missing earlier today from a local church's collection basket and that Manfred strongly suspects that Rosalind is the one who committed this crime. Nevertheless, Quinn asserts to Manfred, 'Someone in this coffee shop stole the money from the church's collection basket earlier today.'(LACKEY, 2007, 614)

LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF are cases where the assertions by Nadia and Quinn are to be taken as misleading. As such LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF are supposed to be cases where we take Nadia and Quinn to be criticizable on virtue of asserting what they did. This is supposed to show that the assertions on the cases are improper. But since no purported norm of assertion can give this result, this fact is supposed to be evidence that there is an additional norm of assertion, something like a *Not Misleading Norm of Assertion*:

> NMNA: S should assert that p in context C only if it is not reasonable for S to believe that the assertion that p will be misleading in C. (LACKEY, 2007, 615)

A defender of RTBNA would say that NMNA rules moorean assertions as improper and that, because of this fact, RTBNA + NMNA would be able to say that moorean assertions are improper. This would mean that considerations from moorean assertions should not count as evidence against the view.

By way of response to this argument, I would like to point out that the postulation of NMNA seems to be an unnecessary move that arises of demanding too much of the norm of assertion. This is so because intuitions on whether something is criticizable do not perfectly track assertion's propriety. This fact is nothing new, for as was mentioned before, it is quite obvious that the norm of assertion is not an *all things considered* norm. The most obvious case that shows this are violation of the rules of etiquette, on such cases the assertion can be perfectly proper (from the point view of assertion) while still being criticizable (and improper) from the point of of the rules of etiquette. I submit that we can, quite easily see that the same sort of explanation applies to cases such as LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF.

To notice this we have only to remember that there is already an established explanation on the literature as to why we would think that on cases such as LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF Nina's and Quinn's assertions are reproachable, namely, the assertions conversationaly implicate something that is misleading. But, as we've argued before a conversational implicature is not an assertion. As a matter of fact, it is a critical feature of implicatures that what is communicated by an utterance (via implicature) is not *said*. As such, the intuited impropriety of cases such as LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF should not be explained of terms of the violations of norms of assertion, but rather in terms of other norms, such as the norms of rational cooperation. This would go to show that postulating NMNA is an unnecessary theoretical complication and would highlight the asymmetry between cases such as LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF and moorean assertions.

If one would still have doubts about the previous point, we could try to add further support to the diagnosis by making two further observations:

First, it seems as if in both LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF the speakers assert with the intention to deceive. But on such cases, the normal verdict is that the speakers are lying. But in LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF we are not inclined to judge that the speaker are lying. This would seem to lead some support to the hypothesis that the issues on

the cases are not issues of the assertion but rather of something else.

Second, we could observe that it is not so clear that NMNA would deal with the problems raised by moorean assertions. For notice that NMNA denies propriety for the assertion on the basis of it being misleading. But this means that NMNA would predict, on precisely the same manner as would happen with the cancelability of *conversational implicatures*, that if the reasons for the assertion being misleading should be cleared, then the assertion should be deemed as proper.

This prediction would seem to born out on LOOSING DRINKER and CHURCH THIEF (leading further credence to the hypothesis that the relevant explanatory notion here would be Gricean), for it seems clear that

> (1) Nina went to the bar earlier today after her tennis match, but she won her match.
> and
> (2) Someone in this coffee shop stole the money from the church's collection basket earlier today, but it wasn't Rosalind.

would be deemed as proper. However, it is not so clear that anything even remotely close to cancelability is possible in cases of moorean assertions. On the 'selfless assertion' cases of moorean assertions nothing short of a full-fledged explanation of the self-perceived psychological conditions involved on the cases would have, even in principle, a chance of clearing the possibility of misconceptions. But this sort of explanation would also highlight that it is unreasonable for the subject to not believe that p and therefore it is unreasonable for the subject to assert the second conjunct of the moorean assertion, a fact that would make RTBNA go against its owns predictions

If this considerations are right, then, they will show that moorean assertions are not only misleading, but rather improper *qua* assertions. In addition they would show that RTBNA is unable to countenance such a result, making it so that considerations regarding moorean assertions should give us strong reasons to be suspicious of RTBNA. This fact, together with the arguments before, and the fact that RTBNA would seem to have problems to explain lottery propositions, the data regarding the parenthetical use of epistemic modals and the stronger features of assertions epistemic significance should lead us, I submit, to prefer KNA over RTBNA, or other reasonability based norms of assertions, as the preferable theory of assertion.

2.5 The Knowledge Norm of Assertion again

On the previous sections I've tried to build a case for KNA by presenting (i) arguments that favor KNA, and, (ii) arguing against KNA's main competitors. If I was successful while doing both of these things, then the upshot should be a robust case for KNA. Still, there is one final line of argumentation that we still have to address. On the arguments presented up to this point we've indiscriminately talked about the appropriateness of assertions, while being carefree with regards to whether we are talking about necessary or sufficient conditions of appropriateness. If KNA is a constitutive rule that individuates assertion and provides both necessary and sufficient conditions for the act, this seemingly transition should be fine. However, if KNA should hold for only one of the directions, this would mean that we should have been much more careful in carving that distinction and how the arguments relate to the conditions.

So, is there cause for worry? I think that there is not. For one, I think that the previous discussion provides a robust case for the idea that KNA provides a necessary condition on the propriety of assertion. This leaves the question of whether KNA also provides sufficiency conditions, a question to which there may be some independent reasons to think that the answer would be negative. It is to addressing those issues that we turn our attention now.

2.5.1 The sufficiency direction of KNA

The question that we're interested on is whether the following is correct:

> (KNA-S): One's assertion that p is epistemically proper if one knows that p. (SIMION, 2016)

(KNA-S) seems eminently plausible. (KNA-S) helps explain the effectiveness of testimony, the conversational data from challenges and parentheticals and respects the intuition that is perfectly all right for you to say what you know. In addition, a different sort of conversational data seems to provide (non-conclusive) support for (KNA-S). For notice, as Brown (2010, 552) points out, that an agent can be criticized on terms of knowledge when she fails to say something that was relevant on a given context . So, for instance,

> (1) You knew this, why didn't you say so?

seems like a relevant criticism of the speaker in a context where the proposition referred anaphorically in (1) is relevant.

Despite all this, the recent literature has provided one with reasons that might make one doubt (KNA-S). These reasons come from the fact that purported counterexamples to the principle have recently been proposed. Should we be able to explain why the counterexamples are not problematic, then, it seems as if we would have good reasons to think (KNA-S) is right.

Brown's argument against (KNA-S)

Brown's argument against (KNA-S) starts with the following case:

> AFFAIR: A husband is berating his friend for not telling him that his wife has been having an affair even though the friend has known of the affair for weeks.
> Husband: Why didn't you say she was having an affair? You've known for weeks.
> Friend: Ok, I admit I knew, but it wouldn't have been right for me to say anything before I was absolutely sure. I knew the damage it would cause to your marriage.
> (BROWN, 2010, 555)

If we take the friend's assertion in AFFAIR seriously, then AFFAIR is a case where the friend knew that p but still it was improper for him to assert that p. This would mean that AFFAIR is a counterexample to (KNA-S). But would it really?

We've mentioned before that there are going to be cases where you can fulfill the conditions established by the norm of assertion with regard to whether p but on which it would still be *all things considered* inappropriate for you to assert that p. On a case such as this one, the rule would predict that asserting is appropriate, but still it would be the case that asserting would be inappropriate in virtue of other considerations. This would be the case, for instance, on a case where you know that your friend is bald but it is inappropriate to say so in virtue of the fact that this would be rude and it would therefore violate the norms of etiquette (not to mention the norms of friendship). Despite the abundance of these sort of cases, we do not seem inclined to take then as counterexamples to (KNA-S) precisely because we recognize that the considerations that make such cases improper are *extraneous* to the considerations that govern the act of asserting. This means that in these cases the assertion is improper not *qua assertion* but rather in some other form. Call the sort of propriety that speech acts of assertion have as assertions *epistemic propriety*. The debate about the Norms of assertion is a debate that is interested on picking precisely this sort of propriety and so, accordingly, (KNA-S) is formulate precisely in those terms. The relevant question then is this, is the friend's assertion in (KNA-S) a counterexample to the sort of propriety picked out by (KNA-S)?

I submit that it is not, and the reason is precisely because AFFAIR is the sort of case where other sort of considerations kick in. To see this, I think we should notice two different things:

First, as McGlynn (2014) points out, if the problem with such an assertion in a case such as AFFAIR was that it was epistemicaly improper, then we should expect a hedged assertion to be proper. But if imagine the friend saying,

(2) I believe your wife is cheating on you.

the judgment would still be that the assertion would be improper in the case. This lends strong support to the hypothesis that the impropriety in AFFAIR is of another sort.

Secondly, we should also ask ourselves why one would assume that the impropriety in the case is epistemic impropriety.

Now, the only reason that I think one could consider to entertain such a thought comes from the fact that, in AFFAIR, the friend remarks that he couldn't saying anything until he was absolutely sure. But since being absolutely sure is an epistemic property and having this property would seemingly make the assertion proper then the impropriety must be epistemic. This sort of reasoning would seem to be encapsulated by the following principle:

> The Epistemic Impropriety Principle (EIP): If it is improper to assert that p due to the evidential relation that the agent has to p not meeting a certain standard, then it is epistemically improper to assert that p.

On the present hypothesis, what happens in AFFAIR is that while it is epistemically proper for the friend to assert that p it is other sorts of improper for him to assert that. (EIP) expresses the sort of reasoning that says that the hypothesis must be false for a case such as AFFAIR.

But there is good reason to think that (EIP) is false. We can see this by noticing that if such a principle were true, we should expect it to apply to other of speech acts as well. But now let us consider again the speech act of guessing and the hypothesis that it is the speech act that is governed by a reasonability rule[68]. In addition let's consider the following case:

> DANGEROUS GUESS: An old acquaintance comes to town and you generously agree to let him crash at your place for one night. During the middle of the night he barges into your room, subdues both you and your partner and ties both of you

[68] If you feel like that is wrong, feel free to replace with what you take to be a close analog (like conjecturing for instance)and then redescribe DANGEROUS GUESS accordingly.

> to chairs. He then gives you two options.You can either, (i) say not a single word for ten minutes and then he will release both you and your partner and go away, or you can, (ii) guess what he does for a living now and he if you get it right he will give your partner one million dollars and then go away, but if you get it wrong he will break your partner's arm and then dump both of you in front of a hospital.

DANGEROUS GUESS is a case where, on the hypothesis that guessing is the speech act governed by the reasonability norm, it would still be improper for you to guess if you only reasonably believed that your old acquaintance became a criminal. But if you knew the acquaintance's job then it would be fine for you to guess it. Further, it might also be plausible that if you had a certain high degree of confidence (that is still not enough for knowledge) it might be proper for you to guess so [69].But this suggests that (EIP) is false.

This fact becomes even more plausible if we consider that it would seem as if, in other rule defined activities, judgments similar to the ones induced by (EIP) do not seem plausible. So for instance for the activity of driving we have rules such as:

> Speed Traffic Norm(STN): One must drive on a speed such that it is greater than half the maximum and smaller or equal to the maximum speed limit.

But now, consider a case such as this one, where he assume that the speed limit on a highway is 50 kms/hr:

> DRIVE: Say that your sister's kid needs to be at the hospital as soon as possible, his life is at stake. Surely, going a bit faster than 50 looks like the all things considered proper thing to do, even though in breach of the traffic norm. (SIMION, 2016, 3046)

DRIVE seems like a case with the same structure as AFFAIR, that is to say, it's a case where even though there is a norm, (STN), that establishes the parameters of propriety for a certain act, it ends up being the case that for the the act to be *all things considered* proper what is required is for you to exceed the threshold set on what is permissible with regards to a certain gradable property given the norm that governs the act. But, still, we are not inclined to say that because of that fact (STN) ceases, even in that context,to be the rule that determines what it is for one to be on the proper speed on the high way. This would seem to lend further support to

[69]If you find this extremely implausible in the event, consider whether there might be an adjustment of the payoff and the damage that would make it plausible

the thought that (EIP) is false and would therefore lend support to the interpretation whereas the reason while it is improper for the friend to say that the wife was cheating is because of other considerations that override the standards set by the Norm of Assertion.

Now, one worry that one might have at this point is that this sort of defense would be too strong, in the sense that it would make it nearly impossible for anything to count as an objection against (KNA-S) due to the fact that one would always seem to be in a position to reply that the problem seems to be that other considerations make the act inappropriate. Here is Lackey manifesting this worry:

> For now, whenever evidence is adduced that concerns the epistemic authority requisite for proper assertion, it may bear on the norm of assertion or it may bear on these other [...] norms. [...][I]t will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to tell which is being defended. (LACKEY, 2010, 277)

While I think the concerns are valid and one should be always weary of making any theory impossible to falsify, it is not entirely clear that the concerns apply here. For one, it seems extremely clear that acts in general and moves in games in particular *can* have their appropriateness overridden by other considerations. And secondly, it seems as if *contra* Lackey, we have, for most cases, a pretty good pre-theoretical grip on the sort of issues that make this sort of judgments divert. The reason for this is because the sort of considerations that end up determining propriety are going to be closely associated with certain goals. Thus " prudential norms will be associated with a prudential goal—maximizing practical utility— moral norms will be associated with the goal of maximizing moral goodness, etc. Epistemic norms will thus be concerned with guiding us in reaching epistemic goals." (SIMION, 2016, 3047) If we apply this sort of reasoning to AFFAIR, we will see that the reason that it is inappropriate for the friend to assert that the wife is cheating is not because of epistemic goals (such as that the friend would not be able to come to know if the friend said so), but rather because it would be inappropriate to cause grief to a friend without meeting an evidential standard that is higher then the one for knowledge. This seems like a moral goal, not an epistemic one, and as such makes the explanation that moral considerations are what are doing the work in the case a plausible and compelling one.

A second case that challenges (KNA-S) is the following:

> RESULT: Two lecturers have been in an exams meeting all morning which the

> students' exam results are determined. After the meeting lecturer B bumps into one of the students and, on the basis of her recollection of the meeting, informs her that she has passed. On discovering this, lecturer A criticizes her colleague for giving out information about the results without checking the exam pass list.
> A: You shouldn't have told her she'd passed without having the list in front of you.
> B: What's the problem? I knew she'd passed - I was in the examination meeting this morning.
> A: That's not the point. Think of the damage it would cause if you gave the wrong result. We can't afford to take that risk. (BROWN, 2010, 556)

In RESULT we're supposed to take A's affirmation that it was inappropriate for B to tell the student that she passed the exam. But how are we supposed to take this criticism? One way that one could would be simply to dismiss this criticism as unwarranted. For notice that if B is not subjected by doubts when A raises his concerns, the following response seems perfectly appropriate 'I *know* that she passed, it is perfectly all right for me to say so.'.

If one did not like this sort of response, would another way to deal with the counterexample be possible? Again, one might try to respond by thinking about how one should take A's criticism on the case. On RESULT the risk described is the risk of telling the student that she passed the exam when she in fact did not. But since knowing is factive, then if the lecturer did indeed know that the student passed the exam there would be no such risk. The risk described by A then is the risk of B believing that he knows when he in fact doesn't know [70]. But is this the sort of risk that is tracked by the Norm of Assertion?

On the picture suggested, it is not. For it is not the case that we should expect the rule of assertion to be *perfectly operationazable.*. But since one is not always in the position to know that one knows, then if the risk is high enough it will become reasonable to double-check. But this does not mean that asserting on the case is inappropriate but rather that it is unreasonable to do so, which is a different dimension of evaluation.

Alternatively, if the second response does not seem plausible, one could point out that the reason that judgments seem to fluctuate on the case is because they seem to track the fact that the subject is on a high-stakes scenario. High-stakes scenarios, are of course the motivating factor behind the intuitive pull of cases for *pragmatic encroachment*. One plausible way to understand what happens in the case then, is that what it does is trade off on those sort of intuitions. But on the *pragmatic encroachment* view, the lecturers would simply not know in the case. This means

[70]Notice that this picture is congenial with the previous response, and would just describe the case where the challenge by A is taken seriously. The picture seems to be further reinforced by the fact that the use of the epistemic modal in 'I *know* that she passed' is best seem as a reinforcing use of *know*.

that, on the view, RESULT would not be a counterexample to (KNA-S).

If any of these responses is plausible, then RESULT should also not pose an issue for (KNA-S). On the assumption that the argument against AFFAIR as a counterexeample stands, this would mean that (KNA-S) can withstand the arguments presented by Brown (2010) against the view.

Lackey's arguments against (KNA-S)

Lackey (2010)'s case against (KNA-S) starts by posing the following case:

> DOCTOR1: Matilda is an oncologist at a teaching hospital who has been diagnosing and treating various kinds of cancer for the past fifteen years. One of her patients, Derek, was recently referred to her office because he has been experiencing intense abdominal pain for a couple of weeks. Matilda requested an ultrasound and MRI, but the results of the tests arrived on her day off; consequently, all the relevant data were reviewed by Nancy, a very competent colleague in oncology. Being able to confer for only a very brief period of time prior to Derek's appointment today, Nancy communicated to Matilda simply that her diagnosis is pancreatic cancer, without offering any of the details of the test results or the reasons underlying her conclusion. Shortly thereafter, Matilda had her appointment with Derek, where she truly asserts to him purely on the basis of Nancy's reliable testimony, 'I am very sorry to tell you this, but you have pancreatic cancer'. [71] (LACKEY, 2016, 510)

DOCTOR1 presents us with a case of isolated second-hand knowledge. A case of isolated second-hand knowledge is a case with two central components: first, "the subject in question knows that p solely on the basis of another speaker's testimony that p—hence the knowledge is second hand; and, second, the subject knows nothing (or very little) relevant about the matter other than that p—hence the knowledge is isolated" (LACKEY, 2010, 254). Further, DOCTOR1 is also a case where the person who is asserting (the doctor) is an expert and it is this fact that makes her assertion inappropriate in the case. This is so because "expert assertion requires that the asserter be in a position to respond to questions or challenges regarding the expert judgment, and isolated second-hand knowledge does not enable this" (LACKEY, 2016, 510). Because of this DOCTOR1 is supposed to be a counterexample to (KNA-S).

Now, before we present possible responses to this worry, I think it is important to notice two things.

[71] The original case DOCTOR in Lackey (2010, 254) described a competent medical student as opposed to a colleague. However, the case would seem to prompt extra issues regarding whether one can come to know via non-expert testimony and the conditions of expertise. In order to sidestep these issues here I'm choosing to use the reformulation granted by Lackey (2016).

First, it is worth pointing out that the same intuitions of inappropriateness for the flat-out assertion in a case such as DOCTOR1 will hold for the hedged assertions in the case such as assertions like 'I am very sorry to tell you this, but I believe you have pancreatic cancer'. This would mean that cases such as DOCTOR1 would be purported counterexamples not only to (KNA-S), but also to any other candidate weaker epistemic theory of the suffiency direction for a rule of assertion.

Secondly, it is important to notice that it cannot be the case that is merely in virtue of being an expert assertion that the sort of purported inappropriateness arises. For this would fly in the face of a case such as the following:

> NEW VIRUS: Juliana is a plant pathologist who is asked to look at a tomato farm that is not producing as expected. When she gets to the farm she sees symptoms of what she believes to be ToMoLCV. She takes a sample just to be sure and upon returning to her lab immediately sends it for sequencing. The next day when she wakes up she sees that there is a text message from her friend on the sequencing lab telling her that what she found is a new virus and that the whole sequence should be officially sent to her by lunch. Unable to contain herself, however, she immediately calls her boss and says 'I've just found a new virus!'.

NEW VIRUS is a case of isolated second-hand knowledge made by an expert who seems, nonetheless, perfectly appropriate. But this means that it is not *expert assertion per se* that triggers the intuitions of inappropriateness on isolated second-hand knowledge cases but rather features of the context of the cases.

Once we notice this, we can see how one might respond to such a case, for if it is not the very fact that the type *expert assertion* falsifies (KNA-S) in isolated second-hand knowledge cases, but rather that considerations brought in by contextual features make some cases seem inappropriate, then we are free to consider whether other sort of considerations are responsible for the inappropriateness intuition on a case such as DOCTOR1. Once we see this, the question then becomes, could other considerations override the judgment issued by the Norm of Assertion and therefore issue the verdict that asserting in a case such as DOCTOR1 is not *all things considered* inappropriate?

I submit that they could. Stronger still, I think it is very plausible that what explains the intuitions of inappropriateness on DOCTOR1 is that the case is pragmatically misleading, or that

the assertion is " *professionally inappropriate*" (BENTON, 2016a, 504). The sort of reasoning for this seems to supported by the following case:

> DOCTOR2: Matilda is an oncologist at a teaching hospital who has been diagnosing and treating various kinds of cancer for the past fifteen years. One of her patients, Derek, was recently referred to her office because he has been experiencing intense abdominal pain for a couple of weeks. Matilda requested an ultrasound and MRI, but the results of the tests arrived on her day off; consequently, all the relevant data were reviewed by Nancy, a very competent colleague in oncology. Being able to confer for only a very brief period of time prior to Derek's appointment today, Nancy communicated to Matilda simply that her diagnosis is pancreatic cancer, without offering any of the details of the test results or the reasons underlying her conclusion. Matilda then asks whether Nancy could come in and explain the results to Derek, a request to which Nancy promptly agrees. Shortly thereafter, Matilda had her appointment with Derek, where she tells him that unfortunately she hadn't had the time to thoroughly review his exams and that therefore she will call her colleague Nancy to explain them to him. Derek agrees and Matilda calls Nancy to come in. While they wait for Nancy to arrive Derek asks Matilda 'You know the results don't you, can't you already tell me what they are?'. Matilda replies 'I think it is better if we wait for you to get all the answers that you might want to have'. But Derek insists 'Please, just tell me'. Matilda then says 'I am very sorry to tell you this, but you have pancreatic cancer'.

DOCTOR2 is a case where Matilda's assertion seems perfectly appropriate. But the only difference between DOCTOR1 and DOCTOR 2 is that the possibility of misleading Derek with regard to further expectations is prevented in DOCTOR2. This would seem to favor the idea that what is wrong with the case is not that the assertion *qua assertion* is inappropriate, but rather that other more general considerations about conversational or professional norms kick in and provide pull for the intuition that the assertion in DOCTOR1 is inappropriate.

Now, one way that Lackey (2016) might respond and try to make the case for her view is by pointing out that, even on alternative explanations, the impropriety will still occur *in virtue* of the fact that the asserter does not bear a certain epistemic relation to the proposition that he asserts. But this just looks like a version of the claim that if there is something epistemically

lacking on a assertion, then that assertion is epistemically improper. But as we've seen before there is good reason to think that principles such as (EIP) are false. This would mean that this sort of reasoning does not entail the implausibility of the explanation based on other considerations overriding the norm of assertion and as such would leave the proposed explanation of the case intact.

A second sort of case that Lackey (2010) takes as posing a problem for (KNA-S) is the following:

> FOOD: My neighbour Ken is a connoisseur of fine dining. As we were leaving Starbucks this afternoon, he told me that the food at a new local restaurant about which I was previously quite unfamiliar, Quince, is exquisite, though being in a hurry prevented him from offering any details or evidence on behalf of this claim. While talking to my friend Vivienne later in the day, she was fretting over where to take her boyfriend to dinner for Valentine's Day. I promptly relieved her stress by truly asserting, 'The food at Quince is exquisite'.(LACKEY, 2010, 257)

FOOD is supposed to show that in cases of assertions about predicates of personal-taste assertions of isolated second-hand knowledge also pose as counterexamples to (KNA-S).

Leaving possible complications about the truth conditions for predicates of personal taste aside, I think that, still, it would seem as if cases such as FOOD should not be taken as particularly problematic for (KNA-S). For notice that FOOD seems to be clearly amenable to a Gricean explanation. This is evidenced by the clear appropriateness of an assertion such as

> (1) The food at Quince is exquisite, but I don't know this from personal experience.

in the case (when we assume that the speaker indeed knows that the food at Quince is exquisite), meaning that the sort of inappropriateness in question would be the one defined by more general norms of conversation, not the norm of assertion.

Now, one worry that one might have with regards to this explanation is that it does not look as if the assertion in the case of food is a *conversational implicature*. For, as Lackey (2013, 270) points out, *conversational implicatures* arise not in virtue of what is said but rather of how it is said and in how what is said violates a Gricean Maxim, something that does not happen in the case of Food. But this objection fails to notice, as Simion (2016) points out, that aside from traditional *conversational implicatures* there are also *conventional conversational implicatures* that are "carried by the meaning with which the sentence is conventionally (usually) uttered" (SIMION, 2016, 3053), which seems precisely to be the *phenomenon* in a case such as FOOD.

If these considerations are right, then the case against (KNA-S) plausibly fails. Put together with the previous arguments this means that KNA plausibly provides both necessary and sufficient conditions for individuating the speech act of assertion and therefore provides a thorough account of this speech act.

Conclusion

On this dissertation I've argued for the idea that KNA is the constitutive rule of assertion.

I've done so by arguing first that a constitutive rule account is the best way to provide a theoretically informative and extensionaly adequate account of the speech act of assertion. In order to do this I've taken a comparative approach where we've examined the most prominent rival theories and how they explain what I've taken to be the theoretically interesting feature of the speech act of assertion. The upshot of that argument was that the constitutive rule account of assertion provides the best explanation for the interesting features and that it does so in a manner that is not only extensionally adequate, but that can also explain why other rival theories seem plausible since the account can, in principle derive the individuating features of other theories, which are taken of the view to be other interesting, non-constitutive, features of assertion.

After doing this, I've moved to the question of the nature of the constitutive rule of assertion. Here I've argued that the constitutive rule of assertion is a rule that governs the speech act of assertion in the sense of being in place for every instance of the speech act and determining whether the act is appropriate or inappropriate. I've argued that what the rule demands is that when the speaker asserts that p he must know that p. I've done this by comparing the proposed account with its main rivals and by suggesting that the knowledge account provides the best explanation of the *phenomena*. The upshot is that assertion turns out to be the speech act that is evaluable in terms of fulfilling a knowledge condition, a feature that provides a place for it in an overall taxonomy of speech acts and that also helps to explain assertion's epistemic significance and overall pervasiveness.

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