

The Mind and Its Expression

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Jay and Gina Rosenberg were at the ZiF in Bielefeld for the academic year 1989-90, and our families spent many happy hours together. Jay and I also took many occasions to talk shop. One afternoon, when we argued at length about the reporting and expressing of one's own mental states, Jay said, "You should read my 'Speaking Lions'." I did, and we continued to pursue those issues energetically. This paper is an extended follow up on our conversations about these matters. I am sad that Jay cannot read and respond to it.

I. Introductory

Remarks such as 'I am in pain' and 'I think that it's raining' present opportunity for reflection and theory. Ostensibly such remarks report what one feels or thinks. But we do not in conversation treat these remarks as we do ordinary reports. If I ask you about the weather and you say, "I think it's raining," I can't complain that you told me just about your thoughts, and not about the weather. It is often held, moreover, that when we do take such remarks as revealing the speaker's mental states, those remarks are not subject to the kind of challenges that are in place with ordinary reports. Indeed, such remarks are often taken to exhibit some kind of epistemic privilege, and some have even maintained that one cannot be wrong when one says such things.

For these and related reasons, Wittgenstein held that in saying such things we do not actually report the mental states we seem to mention; rather, we simply express those states. Saying 'I am in pain' expresses, rather than reports my pain (Wittgenstein 1953, Part I, §§244, 310). It is in that way on a par with crying out or saying 'ouch'. Similarly, Wittgenstein maintained, saying 'I think it's raining' expresses my thought that it's raining, rather than reporting that thought. Thus he writes: "[T]he statement 'I believe it's going to rain' has a meaning like, that is to say a use like, 'It's going to rain'" (Wittgenstein 1953, Iix, p. 190). On this expressivist view, sentences that ostensibly report one's own beliefs, like those that ostensibly report one's own sensations, would then really just express those beliefs and sensations. It is this general idea that Douglas Gasking (1962) sought to capture by dubbing such remarks *avowals*.

An apparent advantage of this view is that it seems to explain the sense we have that these apparent self-ascriptions of mental states have some epistemic privilege. Saying 'ouch' plainly expresses one's pain; it does not report it. So if I cry out or say 'ouch', it makes no sense to tell me that I'm wrong. The same will hold for saying 'I am in pain' if in saying that I simply express the state in question, and don't actually report it. We can in this way explain the appearance of epistemic privilege without positing any special access to our inner states.

But as it stands, this picture won't do. As P. F. Strawson (1959) and Hilary

Putnam (1968) among others have stressed, whatever our conversational habits as regards such remarks, first-person remarks about one's own mental states interact with other speech acts in all the ordinary, logical ways. When you say of me 'You aren't in pain' and 'You don't think it's raining', your remarks contradict what I assert if I say 'I am in pain' and 'I think it's raining'. By contrast, when I say instead 'It's raining', I express my thought that it's raining, and in saying 'ouch' I express my pain. So those speech performances, if 'ouch' does indeed count as a kind of speech, do not literally contradict your saying that I'm not in pain or that I don't think it's raining.

All this makes it tempting to see whether we can in some way do justice both to the reporting role such remarks evidently have as well as to the ways these remarks appear to diverge from ordinary reports. Perhaps we can somehow see such remarks as combining features of ordinary reports with features of uncontroversial expressions of mental states, such as one's saying 'ouch' or saying simply 'It's raining'.

II. Truth and Truthfulness

It is in this spirit that Jay Rosenberg, in "Speaking Lions" (1977) characterizes remarks such as 'I'm in pain' and 'I think it's raining' as "report[s] judged as ... expression[s]." He argues that it is characteristic of such remarks that we have no criteria for their being true independent of whatever criteria we have for their being performed truthfully, i.e., sincerely. "The criteria of [their] truth are the criteria of [their] truthfulness" (1977, 159).

Consider a case in which extreme bodily damage is followed by intense writhing, crying out, and other behavioral indicators of pain. As Rosenberg notes, an individual in that condition might nonetheless be under anesthetic and simply simulating the behavior typical of pain. And he concludes that we judge whether the expressive behavior is actually due to pain by judging whether the behavior is sincere—or, perhaps better, whether it's insincere. We have reasonably reliable ways of judging simulated behavior, he argues, and nothing to go on in judging, independent of that, whether an individual is in pain.

I cannot... independently carry the question of truth to the world which the words may fit or fail to fit... [H]aving decided [whether you're sincere], no *hidden* truth remains for me to discover. All criteria of truth here collapse into criteria of truthfulness. The question of fact—the question of *pain*—is the question of the locus of authenticity (1977, 159; all quoted emphasis is in the original).

Rosenberg acknowledges that "there is, of course, a truth here" about whether the individual is in pain. But that truth is in a way removed from the remark, 'I am in pain', as well as any nonverbal behavior that is ordinarily expressive of pain. In issuing such a remark, "you do not report your suffering... . You *confess* it" (cf. Wittgenstein 1953, Part II, p. 222). So "[t]he question of truth [of the remark] is the question of trust" (1977, 159-160).

The upshot of Rosenberg's picture is that the remark, 'I am in pain', does indeed share some features with ordinary reports and other features with purely expressive speech. But it is not clear exactly how this is supposed to work. One possibility is that we can judge such a remark for truth, albeit only by judging whether the remark was made sincerely. But in that case there is still a truth, whether hidden or not, "which the words may fit or fail to fit." The remark would still literally purport to describe a pain.

But Rosenberg has in mind a more radical idea; as he writes, "you do not report your suffering... You *confess* it" (1977, 159). So there is nothing to evaluate in such remarks apart from their sincerity. But then it's unclear what these remarks could share with ordinary reports beyond their simply being sincere or not. And that's something that all speech performances, of whichever sort, have in common.

A report can be sincere but mistaken. Rosenberg joins those who dismiss this possibility in the case of remarks that are ostensibly about one's own mental states; how could one be mistaken about whether one is in pain? Or about whether one thinks that it's raining? And if error is precluded, sincerity is all that's left to evaluate.

But we can be and occasionally are wrong about these things. It's common to confabulate thought and desires, and even perceptions, especially when thinking a particular thing might be socially desirable or contribute to self-esteem (Nisbett and Wilson 1977). This can even happen, albeit for different reasons, even with bodily sensations such as pain. Dental fear is a phenomenon known to dentists, in which a patient seems to feel pain in connection with drilling a tooth that is fully anesthetized, or has no remaining nerve. The standard explanation is that the patient consciously experiences fear or anxiety along with vibration from the drill, and literally mistakes that experience for one of pain. The patient literally confabulates pain. Commonsense confirmation of this is found when the dentist, having explained the hypothesis, resumes drilling, and the patient no longer seems to feel any pain whatever.

Indeed, dental fear is a case in which we seem to have straightforward means to determine whether it's pain that an individual actually feels, and hence whether the remark, 'I am in pain', however sincerely issued, is true. There is reason in these cases to regard patients' remarks that they are in pain as literally erroneous, because pain would presumably be caused only by way of an unanesthetized nerve, and that is absent. One may not have absolute certainty, but we have as solid a reason for this judgment as we ordinarily have with empirical matters.

Confabulated pains are rare. But it's clear that we can evaluate a first-person claim to be in pain as regards its literal truth and independent of sincerity. We are often in a position to doubt such remarks by another, when circumstances and nonverbal behavior make it unlikely that that person is in pain. Similarly, circumstances and behavior may make it reasonable to conclude that, whatever another person says, that person does not after all think that it's raining. In these cases we resist taking the person's remark at face value.

The possibility of detectable factual error in such cases suggests that we should see remarks such as 'I am in pain' and 'I think it's raining' as straightfor-

ward reports of individuals' mental states. Though these reports seldom occur in circumstances that might lead us to doubt or dismiss them, that possibility is never wholly precluded. Sincerity is not the only evaluative tool we have with these remarks.

III. Misjudging and Misnaming

Dental fear shows that we can, independent of considerations of sincerity, occasionally detect erroneous reports about what sensations one has. But there is another way a person might go wrong in making such remarks; one might simply use the wrong word to refer to one's sensations. In dental fear, there is reason to think that this second type of error isn't operative, since patients' remarks, despite being erroneous about pain, end up fitting well with our commonsense understanding of the situation. Still, the possibility of misuse of words remains open.

Richard Rorty has argued, however, that these remarks differ in an important way from ordinary reports. With ordinary reports we can distinguish factual error from verbal error. But Rorty argues that in the case of our target remarks we cannot do this. Rorty's argument thus in effect constitutes a second attempt to combine an expressivist view of such remarks with the recognition that they are also reports.

Rosenberg brackets the possibility that the individual making such remarks is literally mistaken, and argues that the only criteria for the truth of these remarks are criteria for their being made sincerely. In a similar spirit, Rorty brackets the question of sincerity and argues that, when such remarks seem on independent grounds not to be correct, "the criteria for [one's] misjudging [one's own sensations] turn out to be the same as the criteria for [one's] misnaming" them (Rorty 1965, 46). Rosenberg and Rorty both see the judgment about the truth of our target remarks as indistinguishable from judgments about language, in one case about its sincere use and in the other case about its correct use.

Rorty acknowledges that we sometimes have reason to think that somebody's ostensible report of a mental state is not true. But in such a case, he urges, we cannot even in principle distinguish between that person's having made a factual error about what kind of state it is and having instead just misused words to describe that state. Any reason one might have for thinking that such a report, taken literally, is simply mistaken would equally be a reason to think that the person had misdescribed the state. This echoes W. V. Quine's well-known argument that any translation of a language which represents people as asserting bald contradictions is overwhelming evidence that the translation is wrong (Quine 1976, 109). Apparent factual error in first-person reports of pain may be equally well understood as reason not to take the report literally.

Even if we cannot distinguish between misjudging and misnaming in cases of remarks that ostensibly report one's own mental states, we can still evaluate such remarks as to whether they correctly represent the speaker's mental states. So they would still, like genuine reports, be literally about those states. But if we cannot sustain the distinction between misnaming and misjudging, that seems to capture something of what motivates the Wittgensteinian expressivist account.

For one thing, being unable to distinguish the misuse of words from getting something factually wrong would resemble the way we cannot evaluate an expression of pain, such as 'ouch', for literal truth. In addition, being unable to distinguish misjudging from misnaming would explain the appearance these remarks have of epistemic privilege. Suppose I sincerely say I am in pain, and that seems for some reason not to be so. If you can't distinguish my being factually wrong about the kind of state I'm in from my misusing words to describe that state, then I retain a measure of epistemic authority. It could always be that I'm right about my state and wrong just in the words I use. Rorty notes that such privilege would be empty; if we can't distinguish misnaming from misjudging, "then to say that we are infallible is to pay ourselves an empty compliment" (1965, 46). Still, the collapse of the distinction at least explains the appearance of privilege, just as the Wittgensteinian expressivist view does.

But we can, as we have seen, distinguish misjudging from misnaming in the case of first-person reports of sensations. We have convincing reason to think that dental-fear patients are using 'pain' in the ordinary way, even though they say they're in pain when there is independent reason to think that they aren't. That's largely because they adjust their application suitably on learning the hypothesis that they're actually experiencing not pain, but rather vibration and anxiety.

The lesson applies not just to exotic cases such as dental fear, but in general. If I say 'I'm in pain' and you have reason to think I'm not, you can determine whether this is a case of misnaming by seeing how I use 'pain' in other, uncontroversial cases, as well as what other things I say about the case I describe as pain. And if I'm not using 'pain' in some nonstandard way but there is nonetheless reason to conclude that I'm not in pain, then it's reasonable to conclude that I am after all misjudging my own bodily sensation.

Rorty thinks that remarks about one's own bodily sensations differ from ordinary reports because of the difficulty we have in determining whether another individual is in pain. We can override others' remarks about their own sensations only by a holistic appeal to many factors, and such a holistic appeal does not sustain the distinction between misnaming and misjudging. As he colorfully puts it:

Our neighbors will not hesitate to ride roughshod over our reports of our sensations unless they are assured that we know our way around among them, and we cannot satisfy them on this point unless, up to a certain point, we tell the same sort of story about them as they do. ... As in the case of other infallible pronouncements, the price of retaining one's epistemological authority is a decent respect for the opinions of mankind (1965, 46).

Rorty argues that, because we have no way to tell what sensations another person has that's independent of that person's ability to report those sensations correctly, we can't distinguish misjudging those sensations from misnaming. That resembles Rosenberg's argument that we have no way to tell what sensations another person has that's independent of that person's being sincere in reporting those sensations.

But just as we can evaluate the likely truth of sensation reports independent of sincerity, so we can evaluate it independent of a person's correct use of the relevant words. Rorty's argument again echoes Quine, in this case the thought that "it is nonsense ... to speak of a linguistic and a factual component in the truth of any individual statement" (Quine 1980, 42). But Rorty's observation is meant to apply only to remarks about one's own sensations, whereas Quine's dictum applies to all statements equally. More important, the inability to isolate factual and linguistic components that contribute to a statement's being true does not preclude distinguishing linguistic misuse from factual error in a particular case when one considers an individual's statements collectively.

IV. Bar-On's Neo-Expressivism

The Wittgensteinian view that speech acts such as 'I am in pain' and 'I think that p ' express the pain and the thought that p , respectively, and do not literally self-ascribe those states, seems to account for the sense we have that such speech acts have a special epistemic status. But that view runs up against the difficulty that those speech acts then fail to interact with other, third-person speech acts in characteristic conversational and logical ways. So it's tempting to see whether there is a way to see such speech acts as sharing features both of expressions of mental states and literal self-ascriptions of those states.

Rosenberg and Rorty both seek to do this by arguing that such speech acts are reports, but that they are special kinds of reports for which a distinction that applies in ordinary reporting fails. And the failure of that distinction gives these speech acts some of the characteristic nature of purely expressive, nonreporting remarks. On Rosenberg's argument, we cannot evaluate the truth of such speech acts except by evaluating their truthfulness or sincerity. On Rorty's view, we can independently evaluate their truth, but when we determine that they're not true, we cannot tell whether that is due to the speaker's factual error or to some misuse of words.

I have argued that both these distinctions apply in unproblematic ways to our target speech acts, and that because of that, Rosenberg's and Rorty's arguments fail to show that these speech acts share features of purely expressive, nonreporting remarks. But Dorit Bar-On (2004) has recently developed a more detailed, sustained argument that these speech acts do have features both of ordinary reports and of purely expressive remarks. In the remainder of this discussion I consider in detail Bar-On's challenging defense of that view.¹

Bar-On refers to the difficulty noted in §1 for Wittgenstein's purely expressive view as *semantic continuity*. Semantic continuity holds that spontaneous speech acts, such as 'I am in pain' and 'I think that p ', have the semantic properties that they seem on the surface to have. In particular, they are semantically related in the obvious ways to such speech acts as 'You are in pain', 'I was in pain', 'George

¹ What follows derives, somewhat expanded, from comments on Bar-On's (2004) at an Author-Meets-Critics session, American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, December 2007. I am grateful to David Pereplyotchik for thoughtful reactions.

thinks that p , and ‘I used to think that p ’. Bar-On refers to spontaneous, first-person speech acts such as ‘I am in pain’ and ‘I think that p ’ as *avowals*, and for convenience I’ll follow that usage in the remaining discussion.

Bar-On endorses semantic continuity, and sees it as decisive against the unmodified Wittgensteinian view, which she calls simple expressivism. But she also sees simple expressivism as having an important strength. Avowals, she insists, have a distinctive epistemic security in being “protected from ordinary epistemic assessments” (20; cf. 123, 222), though avowals are not, she acknowledges, absolutely infallible or incorrigible. This epistemic security has no exact parallel with other types of speech act, and cannot be detached from ordinary avowals. Seeing avowals such as ‘I am in pain’ and ‘I think that p ’ as expressing the pain and the thought that p themselves explains, Bar-On urges, how and why these avowals are protected from such epistemic assessments. It’s always appropriate to ask for reasons and raise challenges when somebody describes a mental state. Such responses are largely inappropriate, however, if one is instead “giving voice to the [mental] condition” (263) in question.

On the standard alternative to Wittgensteinian expressivism, speech acts such as ‘I am in pain’ and ‘I think that p ’ describe, rather than express, the mental states they are ostensibly about. So advocates of such views typically seek to capture a measure of epistemic security for avowals in purely epistemological terms, by invoking an epistemic advantage that occurs when we say what mental states we are in, but is absent with other types of speech act. But Bar-On argues that there is no epistemic advantage that does justice to the epistemic security that avowals have, or even that distinguishes avowals from all other speech acts. These alternative views, she concludes, fail to capture the epistemic asymmetry between avowals and other speech acts.

How, then, might we capture that epistemic asymmetry without sacrificing semantic continuity? Bar-On’s solution is a neo-expressivist view that draws both from the simple expressivism of Wittgenstein and from the descriptivist alternative. Like simple expressivism, Bar-On’s neo-expressivism holds that when I say that I am in pain or that I think that p , my speech act expresses my pain or my thought that p . But neo-expressivism, like the descriptivist alternative, also holds that these speech acts serve literally to ascribe those states to myself. Avowals on this view “are not protected by grammar” from being false (339). They are protected from epistemic challenge and “strongly presume[d]” to be true simply because they are a case of speaking one’s mind (311).

I am less confident than Bar-On that avowals have the kind of epistemic security she attributes to them. Bar-On gives little argument for the type of security she sees avowals as having, largely taking it to be an intuitive datum. And a descriptivist might well see the epistemic security she attributes to avowals as being somewhat too conveniently keyed to what the expressivist and neo-expressivist can deliver. So I am not as convinced as Bar-On that the descriptivist cannot capture the security avowals actually do have by appeal to a mixture of epistemic and pragmatic considerations.

I’ll say just a bit more about this in §VIII. But my main concern about Bar-

On's neo-expressivism has to do with its endorsement of the Wittgensteinian idea that avowals actually express, in a specific way I'll now turn to, "the avowed [mental] condition" (307).

V. Expressing a State

Following Wilfrid Sellars (1969; cf. 1964), Bar-On distinguishes the expressing of mental states from the expressing of propositions (216). It's central to her view that each avowal expresses, in the mental-state way, the mentioned state, but also expresses, in a different, semantic way, the proposition that one is in that state.

On the descriptivist view, the speech acts that Bar-On calls avowals do not express in the mental-state way the state it mentions; rather, they each express a thought that one is in the relevant state—a thought that I have in another context (e.g., 2005) called a higher-order thought (HOT). Bar-On concedes that each avowal, in addition to expressing the proposition that one is in the state it mentions, may also express a mental judgment to that effect (307-310). But whatever the case about that, she insists that avowals express, in the mental-state way, the states that they explicitly mention.

Because expressing a mental state can be an intentional action, Bar-On relies on intentions to determine which state is expressed by an avowal. For a piece of behavior "to express [a mental state] M in the [relevant] sense," she writes, "is to have M as one's reason for the relevant behavior" (309). And she takes this appeal to the reasons speakers have in issuing avowals to show that avowals such as 'I am in pain' and 'I think that *p*' express the states that they mention. But it's not obvious that this appeal to reasons does actually support that conclusion.

On the reasons test, my speech act 'I am in pain' expresses the pain itself only if the pain is my reason for performing that speech act. But the pain itself is not my reason. My reason is something along the lines of my desire to let you know that I am in pain, not the pain itself. Similarly, my reason for my saying 'I think that *p*' is not my thought that *p* itself, but my desire to let you know, or even just to express, that I think that *p*.

Reasons for doing things generally consist in some combination of beliefs and desires. My reason for knocking on the door is my desire to get you to open the door, together with my belief that knocking will achieve that result. My pain is not the kind of thing that would figure in my reasons for saying something.

Perhaps my awareness of being in pain would so figure. Presumably I wouldn't say 'I'm in pain' unless I thought I was in pain. And Bar-On does allow that the avowal, 'I am in pain', may well express not only the pain itself, but also my "judgment" (307) that I am in pain. So perhaps she would also accept that it is that judgment, or HOT, which figures in one's reason for saying 'I am in pain'. I'll say a bit more, in my closing §X, about such HOTs.

We sometimes speak of something as the reason for doing something when it's the occasion that motivates one's doing that thing. An explosion, for example, may be the reason for my running off. My pain can in that way be my reason for saying 'I'm in pain'; it's the event that provokes my behavior, in this case my

speech act. But a pain's being my reason in this way doesn't support the idea that my speech act expresses the pain. Compare the explosion; my running off doesn't express the explosion.

The appeal to reasons to determine which state a speech act expresses does not in any case square with the ordinary way we describe speech acts as expressing mental states. If I sincerely say 'It's raining', my speech act is ordinarily taken to express my thought or belief that it's raining (cf. 308). That is, we take it to express a mental state with the same intentional content as the speech act and a mental attitude that corresponds to the speech act's illocutionary force. So it's natural to see the avowal, 'I am in pain', which Bar-On concedes has the semantic meaning that one is in pain, as also expressing a judgment, or thought, that has that content. I myself believe that it's this commonsense notion of expressing that Sellars sees as basic, rather than a notion that hinges on intentions or reasons (1969: §§IX-X). But whatever the case about that, some different notion of expressing must in any case be operative if the avowal, 'I am in pain', is to express the pain itself.

Sellars does describe what he calls an action sense of expressing, on which an individual expresses an intentional state by saying something. And Bar-On urges that avowals express the states they mention in this action sense. But Sellars argues that this action sense is constructed from, and so relies on, a more basic kind of expressing, on which speech acts constitute a kind of thinking out loud, and thereby express intentional states that have the very same content as the speech acts that express those states. Sellars calls this the causal sense of expressing, and argues that, though expressing in this way is a type of doing something, it is not on that account a voluntary action (1969: §IX). I believe Sellars is correct in seeing the action type of expressing as built on the causal type (1969: §X). If so, action expressing will follow causal expressing, so that the state a speech-act action expresses will have the same intentional content as that speech act itself.

If I say 'It's raining', I semantically express the proposition that it's raining. But Sellars (1964) stresses that this amounts only to the speech act's belonging to a set of speech acts that have a particular functional role. Causal expressing, however, is more demanding; I cannot causally express a state I'm not in, since a state that doesn't occur cannot cause anything.

If I utter 'It's raining' but have no such thought, my utterance may still count as expressive behavior, as Bar-On urges. But that means only that it is a token of a type that typically does express a corresponding intentional state (Rosenthal 2005, ch. 3, §5). Insincere speech, as Frege (1977, 8) noted, is pretend speech. If I utter 'It's raining' without the corresponding thought, I merely pretend to assert that it's raining; I pretend, that is, to be a person just like me except that I actually have that thought. And as J. L. Austin (1979) observed, when I insincerely say 'I promise', strictly speaking I don't promise, but only say I do. Rosenberg urges that expressive behavior, such as writhing and the like, expresses pain even if one is not in pain, arguing that the relevant expressing is not a causal matter (1977, 157). But it's more accurate to say instead simply that the person or the behavior purports to express pain. The causal notion of expressing thereby remains intact.

Bar-On urges that the avowal, 'I think that *p*', semantically expresses the

proposition that one thinks that p and expresses in the action sense the thought that p . But I think it's again better to follow Sellars in seeing such semantic expressing as itself also a construction from causal expressing. Speech acts of asserting 'It's raining' have a particular functional role. The proposition that it's raining is, according to Sellars, an abstraction from particular speech acts, in whatever language, that have that role together with the intentional states that play the analogous role in one's mental economy (Sellars 1968, ch. 3; Rosenthal 2005, ch. 3). So to say that 'I think that p ' expresses a particular proposition is just to describe its semantic functional role in abstract terms.

Bar-On sees avowals (296), along with naturally expressive behavior such as wincing (272ff.), as actually showing the expressed state to others, and as allowing others to see it. This goes well beyond Wittgenstein's commonsense observation that somebody's saying "'I believe' throws light on [that person's] state" (1953: II, x, p. 191). According to Bar-On, an "observer perceives the state" another individual expresses, or in any case "perceives [that individual's] being in the relevant state" (278). Bar-On even maintains that when expressive behavior has become second-nature, it actually "becom[es] a characteristic...component of the relevant state" (299). But it's implausible that expressive behavior, however characteristic or second-nature, is literally a component of the state expressed, or that we literally see the state, as against simply seeing, that is, concluding, that somebody is in that state. After all, the pains and thoughts can each occur without the expressive behavior, and conversely. The tie between state and expressive behavior is just not that close.

VI. Moore's Paradox

Bar-On holds that avowals express the very states that they explicitly mention. But avowals also have the semantic content that one is in those states. And since avowals are not infallible, they may on occasion be false; even on Bar-On's view, the security involves only a strong presumption of truth (311). But when avowals such as 'I am in pain' and 'I think that p ' do fail to be true, there is no relevant pain or thought that p . So how in those cases can avowals express those very states?

Bar-On urges that even when a sincere remark that one's tooth hurts fails to be true, we can still see that remark as an avowal—as opposed to any other kind of speech act. Sincerely saying that one's tooth hurts is speaking one's mind; it is "speaking directly from a present condition." Even if there is no state for the avowal to express, it is "an expressive act" (328).

But if there is no state for the avowal to express, the speech act's being an expressive act can mean only that it is the kind of speech act that ordinarily expresses such a state. And a uniform account is available, which has no need to make special provision for untrue avowals. All sincere speech acts involve speaking, in an intuitively direct way, from one's present mental condition. If I sincerely say 'It's raining', I speak, seemingly directly, from my thought that it's raining, and that's so even when my statement that it's raining isn't true. So the descriptivist will agree that even when my sincere remark that I'm in pain or that I think that p is not

true, I still speak directly from the state I express. It's just that the state my avowal expresses is not the state I report; rather, it is a thought about that state, for example, a thought that I am in pain or a thought that I think that *p*. The descriptivist need not deal in any special way with cases in which one's sincere self-ascriptions fail to be true.

A related issue arises in connection with Bar-On's treatment of Moore's paradox. As Moore (1942: 543; 1944: 204) noted, one cannot coherently say things like 'It's not raining, but I think it is'. Bar-On acknowledges that the difficulty is not strictly semantic, since such sentences plainly are not contradictory; it may well not be raining even if I think it is. Still, one cannot coherently say such things. The problem is to explain why.

Bar-On explains it by arguing that, even though the two conjuncts do not express incompatible propositions, they do express "two conflicting beliefs" (218). Plainly, the conjunct 'It's not raining' expresses the thought that it's not raining. And on Bar-On's neo-expressivism, the second conjunct, 'I think it's raining', expresses the thought that it is raining. So, despite being semantically consistent, Moore's-paradox sentences express incompatible thoughts.

But if such sentences expressed incompatible thoughts, the sentences should carry some sense of literal and explicit contradiction. And, though there is plainly some pragmatic incoherence when we consider saying such things, there is no sense of literal contradiction. And an account is available that, unlike Bar-On's, does not invoke the expressing of incompatible beliefs.

Let's consider a slightly different form of Moore's paradox, though the following explanation applies equally well to other versions. We cannot coherently say 'It's raining but I don't think it is'. Here, the conjunct, 'It's raining', purports to express a thought the speaker has that it's raining, while the conjunct, 'I don't think it's raining', denies that the speaker has that thought. So, as I have argued elsewhere (1995, 2002, 2005: ch. 9), a Moore's-paradox sentence at once purports to express a thought and to deny that that very thought occurs. This explanation invokes the commonsense notion of expressing, on which the speech act and the expressed mental state have the same content, and so sustains the commonsense distinction between expressing a mental state and explicitly reporting that state. And the explanation also sustains the idea that what goes wrong is strictly pragmatic, involving no sense of literal contradiction. We can better explain Moore's paradox without assuming, as Bar-On's neo-expressivist view does, that the remark 'I think it's raining' actually expresses in some way the thought that it's raining.

Bar-On urges (personal communication) that Moore's paradox extends to cases in which one's nonverbal behavior conflicts with one's explicit remarks, for example, fanning oneself while saying that it's not hot. And she urges that the neo-expressivist account of sentences that run afoul of Moore's paradox explains such nonverbal cases as well. But as jarring as such nonverbal cases may be, they do not exemplify Moore's paradox. The absurdity in saying 'It's raining but I think it's not raining' is not present if I fan myself while asserting sensibly that it isn't hot. I might well have some compelling reason to fan myself despite my believing that it isn't hot. And saying 'I don't feel hot' while fanning myself is not in any case

much like Moore's paradox; I might well know it's hot despite it's not feeling that way to me.

VII. Avowals and Reports

Nor need we assume that avowals express the mental states they mention to understand the important, distinctive tie between those states and self-ascriptive avowals. Let's assume the commonsense view that the speech act, 'I think it's raining', reports, but does not also express, one's thought that it's raining, and that the remark, 'It's raining', does express that thought. As Bar-On acknowledges, these two remarks are semantically distinct; they have, as Moore's paradox underscores, different truth conditions. Nevertheless, the two remarks have, with a qualification that does not matter for our purposes, the same conditions of use, that is, the same conditions for the appropriate performance of speech acts that use those sentences. The speech acts are, we can say, performance conditionally equivalent.

The well-known qualification is that the sentence 'I think it's raining' can be used, in contrast to the sentence 'It's raining', to indicate the speaker's hesitation. Bar-On calls attention to this, in a context to which I'll return in §IX. But it's worth mentioning that the opposite also holds; 'I think it's raining', with the right intonation contour, can also indicate dispositive certainty. In any case, degrees of confidence won't be relevant here.

Not only are the speech acts, 'It's raining' and 'I think it's raining', equivalent as regards appropriate use; that performance-conditional equivalence is second nature for us. We use the two interchangeably, so much so that we may not recall even a moment later which of the two we said. And the automatic, second-nature character of the performance-conditional equivalence between the two explains the close tie that avowals have to the states they mention. The avowal, 'I think it's raining', expresses only the thought that one thinks it's raining, not also the thought that it's raining. But its automatic performance-conditional equivalence to the statement, 'It's raining', which does express the thought that it's raining, results in a distinctive, intimate tie between that thought and an avowal that self-ascribes that thought (Rosenthal 2005: chs. 10, 11).

Parallel remarks hold for avowals of purely qualitative states, such as 'I am in pain' and 'It hurts'. We can take those remarks to report, but not to express, one's pain. But, because those self-ascriptions are performance conditionally equivalent to an utterance of 'ouch' and that use equivalence is automatic and second-nature for us, those self-ascribing avowals have a distinctive, intimate tie to the pain itself.

Expressing a mental state is performance conditionally equivalent to self-ascribing that state, and this performance-conditional equivalence is second nature for us. So the intention one has in self-ascribing a state will often be indistinguishable from the intention one might have in simply expressing that state. That fits well with Bar-On's observations about the intentions we have in making avowals. But it does not on that account show that avowals literally express the states they mention.

It will be useful to return to the issue about senses of ‘express’. As noted in §V, we need no special notion of expressing to accommodate cases in which one engages in expressive behavior that would typically reveal the presence of a state, but the state isn’t there. We can simply say that the behavior, or the person engaging in that behavior, purports to express the state in question. So it’s tempting to see the action sense of expressing that Bar-On borrows from Sellars as being simply the notion of purporting to express in the causal sense. Indeed, that makes good on Sellars’ idea that the action sense of expressing is indeed a construction from the causal sense. But all this points away from Bar-On’s neo-expressivism. In saying something, I purport to express the state that such a speech act ordinarily expresses in the causal sense, and that is so whether or not I am in that state.

Bar-On would reject this characterization of what she has in mind. She sees the behavior a person engages in, whether verbal or not, as action expressing the mental state that behavior ordinarily reveals one to be in. Often I do or say something out of, as we might say, my being in a particular state. I say I think it’s raining out of my thought that it’s raining, not my thought that I think it’s raining; and I say I’m in pain out of my pain, not out of my thought that I’m in pain. Why would I say such things out of my pain and my thought that it’s raining if my performing those speech acts didn’t express the pain and the thought that it’s raining?

The automatic performance-conditional equivalence explains why. Saying ‘I think it’s raining’ is performance conditionally equivalent, in an automatic way, to saying ‘It’s raining’; so I may say ‘I think it’s raining’ when I might as easily have said just ‘it’s raining’. I can equally say either out of my thought that it’s raining. Similarly, saying ‘I am in pain’ is appropriate whenever I might say ‘ouch’, or engage in nonverbal behavior revelatory of pain, and that equivalence is automatic for us. Since I’m roughly equally disposed to say ‘I am in pain’ or ‘ouch’ or to engage in such nonverbal behavior whenever I’m in pain, any of those performances will be done out of my being in pain. We need not invoke an additional notion of action expressing to account for all this. The ordinary causal notion, together with the automatic performance-conditional equivalence, suffices.

Bar-On notes (2007, personal communication) that there are circumstances in which the performance-conditional equivalence is not automatic or second nature. I may describe myself as believing that p , for example, not on the strength of my subjectively direct access to that state, but on the basis of some conscious inference, perhaps relying on the word of somebody whom I take to know me very well. And I may in this case not be at all disposed to say that p . So the performance-conditional equivalence is not always automatic. But these cases are relatively unusual; typically when one describes oneself as believing something or is disposed to do so, it’s on the basis of one’s subjectively unmediated access to the state. So cases that rely on conscious inference do not undermine the foregoing argument, which relies only on its being automatic most of the time. Typically when I’m disposed to say that p , I’m equally disposed to say that I think that p , and conversely.

VIII. Epistemic Security

What of the unique epistemic security Bar-On takes avowals to have? I'll say just a bit about this, and then close with some remarks, first, about how we learn to make avowals, and then about some connections between avowals and consciousness. Bar-On holds that "avowals [are] protected from ordinary epistemic assessments (including requests for reasons, challenges to their truth, simple correction, etc.)" (20, 398) and that they are "strongly presumed to be true" (20, 399). A lot here rides on what being protected amounts to. Behavior seldom gives us enough to challenge or override a person's avowal, though occasionally it does. And that may be all the epistemic security there is. Since avowals are not infallible, challenges are always in place. And, if we had better tools to override avowals, as brain science will in time doubtless deliver, such challenges could be significantly more frequent (for striking results, see Soon, Brass, Heinze, and Haynes, 2008, and Mitchell, Shinkareva, Carlson, Chang, Malave, Mason, and Just, 2008).

Bar-On has urged (personal communication) that the epistemic security she describes is itself a commonsense datum, which we must explain in some way. Neo-expressivism may then seem the best bet for such an explanation. But the commonsense datum that obtains is far weaker than Bar-On takes it to be; it is simply that we seldom have reason to override others' avowals, and that when we do have independent evidence, their avowals are usually right. Epistemic security is a theoretical hypothesis about why these commonsense observations hold. In explaining such commonsense data, we should not posit more than we need to. So we should in this case prefer an explanation that appeals to broadly pragmatic considerations, and not invoke unnecessary theory-laden, epistemological claims.

Bar-On builds sincerity into avowing, thereby restricting challenges to cases of misjudgment about what mental state one is in. But that restriction is arguably unwarranted, since even when behavior shows that an avowal isn't true, it may not tell us whether error or dissimulation is responsible. More argument is needed to show that the apparent security Bar-On finds here is not due simply to these kinds of consideration.

Bar-On regards the epistemic security of avowals as "unparalleled" (20, 399). But that's also arguably doubtful. Past-tense self-ascriptions don't express the states they mention, as Bar-On notes, but my statement that I was in pain 2 hours ago or that I thought at that time that it was raining are at least as difficult to challenge as their present-tense counterparts.

As Bar-On notes, the privilege of avowals is "anchored to self-ascribers" (123). But that's just what one would expect from strictly pragmatic considerations. And she notes that this privilege is "inalienable," meaning by this that it is not "easily... 'detached' from subjects of mental states" (123), which rules out chronic unreliability in subjects' avowals. But a simpler explanation is again available that relies just on the second-nature performance-conditional equivalence I've described and explains why such chronic unreliability does not occur. The psychological pressure to avoid cognitive dissonance doubtless disposes us to think and to say that we think it's raining in pretty much the same circumstances in which we might think and say simply that it's raining. And that by itself will block chronic unreliability in saying 'I think it's raining' and the like.

IX. Learning to Avow

Bar-On urges that neo-expressivism can help us understand how we each initially learn to use self-ascribing avowals, such as ‘I am in pain’ and ‘I think that p ’. In part, she argues, we learn to use avowals by having them figure as a new form of expressive behavior, replacing, as Wittgenstein (1953: §244) suggests, such natural expressions as wincing or crying out.

But as Bar-On also notes, that model will not do in general, since there are no natural expressions for most mental states. So she urges that we learn, as young children, to use avowals from having others apply mental descriptions to us (288). In particular, we learn to say ‘I think that p ’ when it seems to us that p is so, but we aren’t quite sure (294). The hesitation often suggested when we say ‘I think’ figures in our initially learning, as children, to use such avowals.

As I noted earlier, in §VII, hesitation is by no means always suggested when we say that we think something. But that aside, there is a difficulty with this part of Bar-On’s suggestion. As work by Josef Perner and colleagues (1987; Wimmer, *et al.*, 1983) has shown, children up to around age 3 tend to ascribe to others beliefs that are true as the ascribing children see things; only between ages 4 and 6 do they come also to ascribe beliefs they take to be false. This suggests that children initially take thinking and believing always to correspond to what is actually the case, learning only between ages 4 and 6 that a person’s thoughts and beliefs sometimes depart from reality. Children do not initially learn to use ‘I think’ to convey hesitation.

Recent findings show that things are more complicated. 15-month-old infants respond differentially to expressions of belief they take to be true and those they take to be false (Onishi *et al.* 2005; Song *et al.* 2008; Buttleman *et al.* 2009). Still, the development from 3-year-olds’ ascribing to others only beliefs they take to be true to their ascribing to others beliefs they sometimes see as false undermines Bar-On’s hypothesis that young children learn to use ‘I think’ in connection with hesitation.

Still, Bar-On’s general idea is doubtless sound, that young children initially learn to use avowals from their elders’ applying mental terms to them. But that, by itself, is neutral as between her neo-expressivist theory and its descriptivist alternatives. When adults ascribe mental states to a child, the child may well preserve the purely descriptive nature of the adults’ ascriptions in adapting them to the first-person, just as children do with ascriptions of bodily and perceptual conditions.

The Perner findings do suggest that young children initially equate saying that p and saying that one thinks that p . What happens, then, when children do learn, between ages 4 and 6, how the truth conditions for the two diverge? One could speculate, as Bar-On does (personal communication), that their use of ‘I think that p ’ continues to express the thought that p , as against coming to express only the thought that one thinks that p . But without some empirical reason to think that, this speculation simply reflects, rather than supports, the neo-expressivist theory.

X. Avowing and Consciousness

Bar-On sees descriptivist theories as requiring an indefensible view about how we are able to say of ourselves that we are in one or another mental state. By contrast, she argues, neo-expressivism provides an acceptable answer to that question. Descriptivism, she urges, must assume some quasi-perceptual, recognitional ability to tell what mental state one is in. Self-ascriptive avowals would then simply express the descriptive content of that quasi-perceptual recognition that one is in the relevant state. Bar-On argues forcefully, and to my mind convincingly, that no such quasi-perceptual, recognitional capacity exists. And she stresses that neo-expressivism obviates the need to appeal to any such capacity, since one's ability to avow being in a particular state is on that view a matter simply of one's ability to express that state.

Some descriptivists do appeal to a recognitional capacity. Indeed, on a theory of consciousness that invokes higher-order perception, such as William G. Lycan's, it's natural to appeal to some quasi-perceptual recognition of conscious states, as Lycan (2004: 109) has recently done. But that's a signal difference between such inner-sense theories and my own HOT theory. Though both theories are purely descriptivist, I join Bar-On in rejecting any appeal to a recognitional capacity (e.g., Rosenthal 2004: §3).

Instead, the HOT theory relies here on the performance-conditional equivalences I mentioned earlier. We come to learn that it's appropriate to say 'I am in pain' in just those circumstances in which one might say 'ouch', and to say that one thinks that p in just those circumstances in which one might simply say that p (Rosenthal, 2005: ch. 10; 2008). But, as Moore's paradox shows, two speech acts can have the same conditions for appropriate use without expressing the same mental state. If the speech acts, 'It's raining' and 'I think it's raining', did express the same state, Moore's paradox would be contradictory, rather than just pragmatically incoherent. The automatic performance-conditional equivalences do the work of Bar-On's assumption that avowals actually express the states they mention, but without the disadvantages of that controversial claim.

It's worth noting that the performance-conditional equivalence between saying 'ouch' and 'I am in pain' and between saying that p and that one thinks that p is independent of the Perner findings. The Perner results concern when children come to recognize that saying that p and saying that somebody thinks that p have distinct truth conditions, not whether they recognize that two such speech acts are performance conditionally equivalent.

If each avowal did, as Bar-On insists, express in different ways both the state it mentions and a thought or judgment that one is in that state, that would explain this automatic performance-conditional equivalence. Saying that p would then be automatically equivalent in performance conditions to saying that one thinks that p . But there are, independent of that neo-expressivist claim, no circumstances in which it's appropriate to perform one of those two speech acts but not the other. Indeed, if that were not so, there would be nothing absurd about Moore's paradox. So explaining the performance-conditional equivalence does not require neo-

expressivist assumptions.

Nor are neo-expressivist assumptions needed to explain the automatic character of that performance-conditional equivalence. On the compelling picture developed by Sellars (1956), we come to describe ourselves and others as being in intentional states by initially positing such states as the causes of speech acts and rational nonverbal behavior. This account arguably applies not just to the way humans originally came to describe themselves as being in intentional states, but to individual development as well (Sellars 1975: §II). Seeing intentional states as causes both of speech acts and dispositions to speak underwrites ascribing such states whenever the corresponding speech acts occur or are disposed to occur. And that will induce a disposition to ascribe an intentional state to oneself whenever one is disposed to perform the corresponding speech act. This in turn will result in the performance-conditional equivalence's being relatively automatic, as well as generating accurate HOTs about one's intentional states (Rosenthal, 2005: ch. 10, §5; 2008: §5).

It's worth speculating about how this explanation may fit with the Perner findings. Suppose that young children learn to ascribe intentional states to others as this explanation suggests, by inferring from their speech and nonverbal behavior. How, then, might young children ascribe such states to others when there is no behavior to go on? Perhaps in that case the children simply slot in the intentional states they are in themselves. It's a later, more sophisticated achievement to base ascriptions of intentional states not just on behavior, but also on other states they have reason to believe the individual in question is in. And that is what is relevant to the Perner-style false-belief task; one infers what the other will believe from what the other can see.

Bar-On expresses doubts about my HOT theory, urging that it's unintuitive to hold that the states of creatures are conscious only if those creatures can make higher-order judgments about what states they are currently in (354, n. 12). Calling the HOTs judgments certainly helps make that seem unintuitive, since it makes HOTs seem cognitively elaborate and epistemically sophisticated. I've argued that only a rather minimal notion of thought is needed here, and that the HOTs themselves need not be, and seldom are, conscious.

But it's worth mentioning an argument (Rosenthal, 1993) for HOTs that relies on premises that seem hard to contest and that pertain to the expressing and reporting of mental states. For creatures, like adult humans, who can report being in mental states, it's standard to hold that a state is conscious if, but only if, it's sincerely reportable. Sincere reports, that is, avowals, occur only when the states are conscious. If somebody is in some mental state but sincerely denies being in it, that state does not count as conscious.

But a report of being in a state expresses one's thought that one is in that state. So the ability to report being in a state corresponds to the ability to express a thought that one is in that state—that is, a HOT. So it's arguable that mental states are conscious if, but only if, they're accompanied by HOTs that enable one to issue such sincere reports. And once we've used reportability to fix the reference of the term 'conscious state' for creatures, like us, who can say what mental states they

are in, we can then extend the HOT account to creatures who cannot.

Bar-On says little about mental states that aren't conscious or about what distinguishes them from states that are conscious. That's understandable given her focus on verbally expressed states. Verbally expressed intentional states are, with a minor exception, always conscious, unlike intentional states that are expressed only nonverbally (Rosenthal, 2005: ch. 10). Still, mental states do occur without being conscious. And if the HOT theory is wrong, we need some other way to explain the reportability test.

On Bar-On's neo-expressivism, remarks like 'I am in pain' and 'I think it's raining' both describe oneself as being in pain and as thinking that it's raining and literally express those very states. Her challenging, admirable book is doubtless the most thoroughgoing and well-developed defense of that view. That view, like the arguments by Rosenberg and Rorty, would if sustained show how such remarks share features of both reports and expressions of the very same mental states. But given the difficulties that face these three arguments, I conclude that we should regard such remarks as simply describing or reporting the states they are ostensibly about, and not also as expressing them. We can explain whatever temptation to think that such remarks actually express the states in question by appeal to the second-nature performance-conditional equivalence between speech acts that report such states and those that express them.

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