

# 9 An I without a You? An Exercise in Normative Pragmatics

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Can there be an ‘I’ without a ‘You’? This question can be understood in radically different ways and will be considered here through the prism of the normative pragmatics of language use. By this I mean the attempt to understand the logical relations between philosophically significant concepts through consideration of the relations between the discursive practices that include the making of claims using those concepts. Thus construed, the question concerns the relationship between two discursive practices: the making of claims involving the use of the first-person-singular pronoun (‘I-talk’) and the making of claims involving the second-person-singular pronoun (‘You-talk’).<sup>1</sup> A positive response to the opening question affirms the pragmatic independence of I-talk from You-talk, such that it is possible to conceive of a discursive practice involving people using the first person-singular pronoun but not the second-person. A negative response rejects this possibility and thereby affirms the pragmatic interdependence of I-talk and You-talk.

The exercise in normative pragmatics that follows considers whether there can be an ‘I’ without a ‘You’ by engaging with the writings of Robert Brandom, especially his books *Making It Explicit* (Brandom 1994) and *Between Saying and Doing* (Brandom 2008), that—among other things—provide a clear sense of what normative pragmatics could be.<sup>2</sup> This engagement proceeds in two stages. In the first I make the case that the implicit response found in that body of work affirms the pragmatic independence of I-talk from You-talk. In the second I argue that this response is mistaken, as there are reasons internal to Brandom’s own project that require pragmatic interdependence. The upshot of this exercise in normative pragmatics is thus that there can be no ‘I’ without a ‘You.’

## 1 Brandom and the Pragmatic Independence of I-Talk from You-Talk

It may seem strange to claim that Brandom in the work under consideration is committed to the pragmatic independence of I-talk from You-talk, given that he famously characterizes the account of language-use

proffered there as involving an *I-Thou* sociality.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, no direct link between I-Thou sociality and the question at hand. As we shall see, I-Thou sociality is a claim about the notion of a social practice, and not directly a claim about the idea of a discursive practice, let alone a claim about a discursive practice deploying the first- and second-person pronouns. It is thus coherent to contend that people can fully participate in a social practice that instantiates I-Thou sociality without being able to make claims involving either ‘I’ or ‘You.’ If a claim about the character of I-thou sociality leads to a position on our master question (‘Can there be an ‘I’ without ‘You?’), the link is far less straightforward. In trying to tease out Brandom’s implicit response we will proceed indirectly, tracing first a connection between I-Thou sociality and the idea of an autonomous discursive practice (Section 1.1), and second a connection between an autonomous discursive practice and the use of first- and second-person pronouns (Sections 1.2 and 1.3).

### *1.1 I-Thou Sociality and an Autonomous Discursive Practice*

‘I-Thou sociality’ is the term used by Brandom to capture the essential form of a social practice, whose “basic building block is the relation between an audience ... keeping score, and a speaker ... on whom score is being kept” (Brandom 1994, 508). As talk of keeping score implies, we are encouraged to think of a social practice as a norm-governed game involving at least two players. At any stage in the game, a score is attached to each player that includes all the various commitments and entitlements that the player has toward certain moves in the game, with each subsequent move in the game altering the score associated with various players as per their understanding of the norms governing the game. Each player implicitly keeps track of the score associated with participants in the game, including themselves. Scorekeeping involves attributing commitments and entitlements (a normative status) to her fellow participants in the game, acknowledging her own normative status at each stage, and updating both of these in light of subsequent score-altering performances.

Our focus here is on one special kind of social practice that Brandom dubs an autonomous discursive practice (ADP). An ADP is the most basic discursive practice, basic in the dual sense that one is capable of participating in the practice even though one may not be capable of participating in any other discursive practices but not the other way round, and also in that the ability to participate in other discursive practice can be elaborated from the abilities required to participate in an ADP.<sup>4</sup>

A hallmark of an ADP for Brandom is that it is one in which the scorekeeper must be able to practically treat some of the gameplayer’s moves as assertions, as the making of claims and the giving of reasons for claims. What structure is needed within a social practice for a scorekeeper to

treat the practice as including assertions? One can summarize Brandom's book-length response by listing the following five features. First, a scorekeeper in the social practice attributes two kinds of normative statuses to the speaker: commitments and entitlements. Second, the manner in which the score is kept includes commitment-preserving relations (attributing a commitment involves attributing further commitments), entitlement-preserving relations (attributing an entitlement involves attributing further entitlements), and incompatibility-relations between commitments (attributing certain commitment precludes attributing certain entitlements). Third, the relations among commitments and entitlements are articulated both intrapersonally (attributing a change in normative status to one person involves attributing further changes in normative status to that person) and interpersonally (attributing a change in normative status to one person involves attributing further changes in normative status to other persons—including the scorekeeper themselves). Fourth, although attributing a commitment to a speaker does not entail attributing an entitlement to that commitment, there is a default status of attributing entitlement to that commitment together with the attribution of the commitment, so long as there is no reason (such as the concomitant attribution of an incompatible commitment) to refrain from so doing. Fifth, attribution of entitlement to a commitment will be withheld if the speaker is taken by the audience to fail to respond to appropriate challenges to that commitment (where a response could include the putting forward of another commitment from which the challenged commitment follows or by deferring to the commitments of others from whom entitlement to this commitment can be inherited.)

With this five-fold structure in place, Brandom contends that it is possible for a scorekeeper to practically treat some of the speaker's performances as assertions. Following the performance, the scorekeeping audience will update the score by treating it as an undertaking by the speaker of a commitment and related commitments; as default-entitling the speaker to that commitment and related commitments; as default-entitling all others to that commitment and related commitments by deferring to the speaker; and as the undertaking by the speaker of a responsibility to provide the entitlement to that commitment if appropriately challenged to do so. In treating the speaker's performance as licensing this scorekeeping response, the audience takes the speaker to have made an assertion. Assertions thus involve a combination of authority and responsibility. The speaker's performance authorizes certain further performances that were not appropriate prior to the performance. This authorization depends on the speaker discharging her responsibility to demonstrate her entitlement to the move if challenged. Though not every social practice is discursive, Brandom conjectures that is possible to describe a social practice using scorekeeping vocabulary that has the characteristics distinctive of a discursive one.<sup>3</sup>

As with every social practice, an ADP includes the differing perspectives of acknowledging and attributing normative statuses. According to Brandom:

Any situation that admits of a distinction of perspective of this sort is going to count as having a social structure, in my “I–thou” sense. (‘I’ is the perspective of acknowledgment, and ‘thou’ or ‘you’ the perspective of attribution.)

(Brandom 2010, 299)

‘I’ and ‘Thou,’ as these terms feature in the ‘I-Thou’ characterization of social practice, are labels for the differing perspectives of acknowledgment and attribution. While participation in any social practice requires the implicit ability to discriminate between these perspectives, it does not require the ability to use first- and second-personal pronouns to make this difference explicit. There thus can be an ADP without either an ‘I’ or a ‘You,’ and the focus of the current inquiry concerns the normative-pragmatic relations between the abilities to use these pronouns once they are introduced into such a practice.

### *1.2 Discursive Practice and ‘I’*

Brandom is explicit that I-talk is an expressive addition to an ADP, telling us that there is:

nothing incoherent in descriptions of communities of judging and perceiving agents, attributing and undertaking propositionally contentful commitments, giving and asking for reasons, who do not yet have available the expressive resources I provides.

(Brandom 1994, 559)

Though an ADP lacks the expressive resources afforded by the first person, one can use the vocabulary available within it to specify just what needs to be done in principle to engage in I-talk (a process Brandom dubs ‘elaboration’), and the expressive resources afforded by I-talk thus introduced allow practitioners to formulate claims about features of the self-same practice from which it is elaborated (‘explication’). ‘I,’ in other words, is a logical locution in the distinctive Brandomian sense of being a vocabulary that stands in a relation of elaboration and explication to an ADP.

One feature that orients much of Brandom’s thinking regarding the first-person could be called his ‘practical-motivational construal of acknowledgment.’ This construal can be introduced by considering the relation between the two italicized clauses in the following quotation:

The key feature of the use of 'I' that is not reproduced by other coreferential expressions ... is its use in *expressing the acknowledgment of a commitment*. What 'I' expresses is a potentially *motivating* acknowledgment of a commitment.

(Brandom 1994, 552, italics in original)

According to the construal, the distinctive pragmatic significance of the first-person is understood through its use in expressing the acknowledgment of commitments, which in turn is understood through the core case of a motivating acknowledgment of a practical commitment. Although not every instance of 'I' is an expression of acknowledgment of commitment and not every acknowledged commitment is a practical one, the construal treats motivating acknowledgments of practical commitments as "the home language-game" (Brandom 1994, 553) through which both the attitude of acknowledging and the use of I-talk is to be understood. The primary goal of this section is to highlight the distinct expressive role of the first-personal pronoun that emerges from this practical-motivational construal.

A practical commitment is a commitment to act, to make true a claim. Consider the pilot's claim, 'I shall pull back on the yoke.' This claim is an expression of a practical commitment and plays a dual conceptual-behavioral role. On the one hand, the claim operates within the practice of giving and asking for reasons. It can, for example, feature as the conclusion of a piece of practical reasoning ('I see the light is flashing, so I shall pull back on the yoke'), and the contents of the practical commitment itself incorporate assertoric claims regarding the conditions that need to be met to successfully fulfill it ('The yoke is pulled back'). On the other hand, the claim is potentially motivating in that it may act as an immediate stimulus for the production of non-linguistic states of affairs in exercises of intentional agency.<sup>6</sup> The pilot's pulling back on the yoke results directly (non-inferentially) from her acknowledgment of the practical commitment. We see all three parts of the practical-motivational construal at play in this example: acknowledgment is understood in terms of its motivational role, and the first-person is understood as making this explicit so that the acknowledgment can itself feature in discursive practice.

Any discursive practice must allow for the distinction of perspectives between the attitudes of attributing and acknowledging normative statuses. The ADP allows for this in practice by according those performances in which certain discursive claims lead straightaway to behaviors the significance of being immediate acknowledgments of practical commitments, even though participants in an ADP lack the ability to engage in I-Talk. Brandom is explicit that what participants in such a basic practice lack is not the ability to directly transform intention into action,

but that the practice in which they participate lacks an expression-type that publicly marks a tokening as having the pragmatic significance of an immediate acknowledgment of a commitment.<sup>7</sup> Just as there can be frisbee-catching dogs who are able to exercise abilities that we would describe as involving mapping indexical and non-indexical specifications of the frisbee without the dogs being able to deploy indexical vocabulary themselves, so too one can imagine our pilot in an ADP claim that ‘the pilot should pull back on the yoke’<sup>8</sup> and straightaway pull back on the yoke without being able to engage in I-talk herself.<sup>9</sup> Participants in a basic discursive practice are thus able to acknowledge commitments in their practical doings even though they are unable to make this explicit in the form of a publicly available claim prior to the introduction of the first-person. What distinguishes the attitude of undertaking by acknowledging in an ADP from other forms of undertaking normative statuses is thus seen by looking at its distinctive motivational role in the ‘behavioral economy of a subject,’ understood independently from the role played by expressions of undertakings in the game of giving and asking for reasons.<sup>10</sup>

Acknowledgment thus understood is potentially viewable from the third-person perspective of attribution. This is implied by the story that Brandom provides to illustrate how the practice of using ‘I’ can be elaborated from an ADP.<sup>11</sup> Prior to elaboration, a gameplayer in an ADP can undertake commitments through their performances, and scorekeepers keep track of these undertakings by attributing these to the gameplayer’s score. Among the gameplayer’s performances that are treated as undertakings by the scorekeeper are those non-linguistic performances that are direct responses to certain claims. In the first elaboration that Brandom describes, locutions are introduced into the practice to mark these performance-kinds. Observing a pilot pull back on the yoke, the scorekeeper can attribute the practical commitment ‘the pilot pulls back on the yoke’ to the pilot, thereby explicitly giving the performance its social standing as an intentional action. Furthermore, the gameplayer too can learn to keep score in this manner, allowing the pilot to self-attribute this practical commitment by observing their own performances. The upshot of the first elaboration is thus the introduction into the practice of self-attributions of intentional action. The remainder of the story proceeds through a nested sequence of elaborations, from self-attributions of intentional action to self-attributions of intentions-in-action to self-attributions of prior intentions, leading eventually to the introduction of I-talk marking the potentially motivating acknowledgment of a commitment. The first stage in this elaboration has been highlighted for two reasons: it begins with the practical-motivational construal of acknowledgment operating in an ADP, and it makes clear that the process of elaboration involves a gameplayer able to make increasingly complex self-attributions of these acknowledgments.

That the attitude of acknowledging commitments is to be understood in terms of self-attribution is stated explicitly early on in *Making It Explicit*. We are told that “[t]he fundamental concept of the metalanguage employed in specifying the model of assertional practice is that of the deontic attitude attributing a commitment” (Brandom 1994, 196). The initial specification of *both* undertaking and acknowledging are made in terms of attributing: “[u]ndertaking a commitment is doing something that licenses or entitles others to attribute it” while “[t]he attitude of acknowledging a commitment is in effect that of attributing it to oneself” (Brandom 1994, 196). According explanatory primacy to the attitude of attributing in this manner echoes the distinctive notion of responsibility as social-status that permeates Brandom’s thinking throughout that book, according to which to be responsible is to do something that (whether one knows it or not) has the social significance of entitling others to attribute the responsibility.<sup>12</sup> The attitude of acknowledging, understood through the practical-motivational construal, thus yields an account of the first-person pronoun in terms of self-attribution.

It is thus surprising that, in the course of discussing the distinctive pragmatic role of the first-person in *Making It Explicit*, Brandom states that “acknowledging commitments is the basic way of undertaking them, and undertaking commitments cannot be reduced to attributing them, even to oneself” (Brandom 1994, 554). While Brandom’s comment here echoes a theme that dominates much of the extant literature on the first-person, this statement does not—as we have seen—cohere with his own discussion of acknowledgment in *Making It Explicit*.<sup>13</sup> Brandom’s work as a whole evinces a marked interest in the notion of responsibility as social-status, ambitiously working out in detail its implications for understanding discursive practice. This can be seen in practice throughout *Making It Explicit*, in which every feature of a discursive practice is understood first and foremost from the perspective of a scorekeeper attributing normative statuses.<sup>14</sup> This includes the main thrust of his discussion regarding the first-person rehearsed above, including adherence to the pragmatic-motivational construal of acknowledgment and in the character of the story of elaboration told. As I interpret them, Brandom’s relatively isolated comments regarding the irreducibility of the attitude of acknowledging to self-attribution are best treated as outliers, reflecting—at best—recognition of a limitation in the ambitious attempt to account for the normative pragmatics of language-use using the notion of responsibility as social-status.<sup>15</sup>

The preceding comments aim to characterize the dominant understanding of the first-person in Brandom’s work under discussion. According to this understanding, ‘I’ is a logical locution that stands in a relation of elaboration and explication to an ADP, whose expressive function is to make explicit the notion of acknowledgment that features in the base practice. Acknowledgment in the base practice is understood in terms of

its distinctive motivational role in the behavioral economy of an individual, such that a claim involving an ‘I’ in the relevant sense is best thought of as the self-attribution of acknowledgment thus understood.

### 1.3 *Discursive Practice and ‘I-You’*

Compared to the extensive discussion of the expressive role of the first-person in Brandom’s work, there is nary a mention of the second-person. Brandom is a famously ambitious theorist whose areas of concern are “not less than everything.”<sup>16</sup> The omission strongly suggests he does not treat ‘You’ as a logical locution: the abilities required to engage in You-talk are not elaborated from and explicative of the abilities required to take part in an ADP.

It is not just the silence that speaks. The absence of any discussion of the second-person pronoun in the work under consideration reflects the absence of a second-person relation in the gameplaying model articulated in that work. As Jürgen Habermas puts this in an influential critique of *Making It Explicit*:

... the act of attributing, which is of fundamental importance for discursive practice, is not really carried out by a second person..... It is no accident that Brandom prefers to identify the interpreter with a public that assesses the utterance of a speaker – and not with an addressee who is expected to give the speaker an answer. Every round of a new discourse opens with an ascription that the interpreter undertakes from the observer’s perspective of a third person.<sup>17</sup>

Habermas’s characterization of the interpersonal relations at play in an ADP, endorsed by Brandom,<sup>18</sup> echoes our claim in the previous section that the relation between gameplayer and scorekeeper in an ADP centered around the attitude of attribution could be made explicit using first- and third-person pronouns. The primary conditions for canonical uses of the second-person pronoun are those communicative contexts which allow for the possibility of mutual address between participants, and yet the social relations between scorekeeper and gameplayer at the center of an ADP does not centrally involve such contexts. The absence of second-person addressive relations in Brandom’s model that Habermas identifies goes hand in hand with the lack of discussion of the possible role of the second-person pronoun in explicating an ADP. The best explanation of the omission of the second-person pronoun is thus neither oversight nor incompleteness but an implicit commitment to ‘You’ not being a logical locution in the manner in which ‘I’ is.

This disparity between the standing of ‘I’ and ‘You’ alone provides grounds for endorsing the claim heralded at the outset of this chapter, viz. that the implicit response to the opening question found in Brandom’s



work affirms the pragmatic independence of I-talk from You-talk. If the 'I' but not the 'You' is elaborated from and explicative of an ADP, then there can indeed be an 'I' without a 'You.' But the materials assembled thus far provide a further reason for endorsing this claim. This is because what pragmatic interdependence requires is not just complementarity in the standing of 'I' and 'You' as logical locutions, but additionally that both are elaborated from and explicative of the same aspect of an ADP. If both pronouns were logical locutions that explicated different features of an ADP, then though the abilities to express both 'I' and 'You' would be implicit in any discursive practice whatsoever, there is no reason to think that the process of elaboration whereby one set of these abilities is made explicit will yield a complementary elaborative process for the other set. To establish pragmatic interdependence, then, one would have to tell a story according to which both 'I' and 'You' are elaborated from and explicative of the same feature of an ADP. The further reason for claiming that Brandom's work affirms pragmatic independence is that material assembled in the previous section, especially the 'practical-motivational construal of acknowledgment,' rules out the possibility of such a story.

Under the practical-motivational construal, acknowledgment in an ADP is a feature of an individual's behavioral economy. I-talk allows a gameplayer to self-ascribe this feature, and thereby make explicit the claim's motivating role in directly eliciting behavior. Both the act of self-ascription and the acknowledgment thereby ascribed focus solely on the individual themselves and make no reference to anyone else to whom such an ascription may be addressed. Of course, once the abilities needed to participate in an ADP are elaborated to allow for I-talk, the expressed acknowledgment itself can feature in discursive practice and play an overtly social role, including making explicit to others a speaker's authoritative standing regarding a claim in a given context and used in response to challenges to that authority. But these expressive additions go beyond the logical role of I-talk in explicating what is implicit in an ADP. Understanding the distinctive pragmatic significance of the first-person through the core case of a motivating acknowledgment of a practical commitment yields an individualist conception of the role of I-talk that renders it unsuitable for the telling of a complementary story for the case of You-talk.

In sum: Brandom's silence regarding You-talk, echoing the absence of an addressive social relation in his gameplaying model, suggests that he does not treat 'You' as a logical locution in the manner he treats 'I.' Further, Brandom's understanding of the expressive role of I-talk through the paradigm case of a motivating acknowledgment of a practical commitment ensures that, even if 'You' is a logical locution, it would not be elaborated from and explicative of the same aspect of an ADP. Either way this yields the conclusion that Brandom is committed to the pragmatic

independence of I-Talk and You-Talk. Despite the use of I-Thou terminology to characterize a social practice, the implicit response to our master question found in the work under consideration is that there can be an ‘I’ without a ‘You.’

## 2 The Pragmatic Interdependence of I-Talk and You-Talk

One upshot of the preceding sections is that if there is a case to be made for the pragmatic interdependence of I-talk and You-talk, it will not begin with the notion of acknowledgment on the practical-motivational construal. In this section the focus is on a different feature of an ADP, the possibility of counterchallenge (Section 2.1), in order to make the case for pragmatic interdependence (Section 2.2).<sup>19</sup>

### 2.1 *Discursive Practice and Counterchallenge*

It is essential to the structure of authority and responsibility associated with the act of asserting that, for a performance to count as an assertion, the asserter must be treated as responsible for justifying an asserted commitment if appropriately challenged to do so. This means that an ADP must include the act of challenging, an act that—from the audience’s point of view—functions to detach the asserter’s conditional justificatory responsibility and to cancel the default attribution of entitlement to the act until the justificatory responsibility is suitably discharged. The act required by the default-and-challenge structure is not the broad sense of a challenge as a performance that calls into question the asserter’s original claim, as this broad sense allows for an assertion to be challenged (and thereby lose authority in the eyes of a scorekeeper) even if the asserter remains unaware of the challenging act. The default-and-challenge structure requires an ADP to include an act of challenging in a narrower sense, one in which the asserter’s responsibility to justify the claim is triggered only upon recognition of the act as a challenge, such that the asserter’s authority is lost for a scorekeeper when that scorekeeper judges that the asserter is aware of a challenge but has not responded satisfactorily.

When successful, a challenge calls an assertion into question. We can distinguish between (at least) two different acts that play this function. In a *query*, the challenger seeks explanation or clarification for the assertion without necessarily contesting its legitimacy.<sup>20</sup> In a *counterchallenge*, the challenger is contesting the asserter’s authority by providing a contradictory claim of their own.<sup>21</sup> The performance of both queries and counterchallenges are subject to conditions of propriety. For example, a query can be rejected if it is clear to all that the attempted challenger damn well knows the explanation for the assertion, and a counterchallenge can be rejected if it is clear to all that

the contradictory claim is damn well false. Furthermore, both queries and counterchallenges can result in a scorekeeper removing the default authority associated with the challenged assertion upon the perceived failure of the one challenged to respond appropriately, thereby making it unavailable for reassertion by others (according to the scorekeeper). The default-and-challenge structure of an ADP requires an act that can call an assertion into question upon the asserter's recognition of the act, and it seems that this can be achieved by the inclusion of *either* a query *or* a counterchallenge.

Can an ADP make do with only the possibility of a query but not a counterchallenge? My aim in this section is to return a negative response to this question. That is, I argue that any social practice containing the act of querying but lacking the act of counterchallenging is so impoverished that it fails to qualify as a discursive practice at all.

A asserts "p" and B responds by asserting "No, not-p." This crude fragmentary schema highlights two features central to the very idea of a counterchallenge. First, the 'not-p' asserted by B is not just a contrary, but a contradictory. For Brandom, a contrary of a sentence is a sentence incompatible with it, and the contradictory of a sentence is the minimal contrary, i.e., the one entailed by the set of all its contraries.<sup>22</sup> In the paradigm case, B is not just asserting a sentence he treats as incompatible with the sentence asserted by A, but contradicting it. A contradictory wears its oppositional character on its sleeve, removing much possible ambiguity regarding the possibility of conflict that may remain in the case of a contrary. Second, the 'no,' preceding the not-p highlights the dialogic character of a counterchallenge.<sup>23</sup> In saying 'no, not-p,' B is not just contradicting A but placing themselves in opposition to A such that if A recognizes the act as the act it is, she too recognizes herself as standing in opposition to B. These two features help make clear that in a successful counterchallenge both parties take themselves to be in an oppositional clash with each other.

An idea akin to such an oppositional clash can be found in Brandom's discussion of the intrapersonal case. When A notices that she has undertaken materially incompatible commitments, she has the "rational critical responsibility" to update her commitments so as to eliminate the incompatibility (Brandom 2008, 189). This is a two-fold activity: noting (critical registration of incompatibilities) and repair (alteration in some way to remove incompatibility). These two activities are intertwined and ongoing, and together constitute "the inhalation and exhalation of living discursive activity." In the case of an intrapersonal oppositional clash, A notes that she is committed to both a sentence and its contradictory. The recognition of a clash between contradictory commitments must matter to her as a rational subject,<sup>24</sup> and thus demands repair—an active response of 'relinquishing' one of the contradictory pair, 'extruding or expelling' it from the realm of her ongoing commitments.<sup>25</sup>

Including a counterchallenge into a practice extends this process of noting-and-repair to the interpersonal case. A's recognition of an oppositional clash with B demands a concomitant updating response in the form of a reaffirmation or a retraction of the extant commitment. Since disunity between A and B need not indicate to A that she has done something wrong, the response need not be thought of as repair.<sup>26</sup> But even when disunity remains, it is one that is maintained through active engagement towards another, and not merely through the continued maintenance of opposing assertoric claims by each party alone. The inclusion of the act of counterchallenging within a practice in this manner thus facilitates a partial extension of the inhalation and exhalation of living discursive activity from the intrapersonal to the interpersonal realm without blurring the difference between the subjects involved.

A social practice whose normative-pragmatic structure includes the possibility of querying but not the possibility of counterchallenging fails to qualify as a discursive practice. To see why, consider this impoverished practice in more detail, one in which participants are able to give reasons to each other through asserting and ask for reasons from each other through querying but lack the ability to confront one another through counterchallenging. Participants within this impoverished practice can respond to a claim by putting forward materially incompatible claims of their own and do so in a manner in which both parties are mutually aware of this. When this happens, each participant attributes a commitment to the other party that conflicts with an acknowledged undertaking of their own, though the conflict itself precludes any resultant alteration in the participants' acknowledged score. That is, without the possibility of a counterchallenge, one party cannot directly get another party to reconsider a prior commitment with which they disagree, for the apparent disagreement itself ensures that the other party will not reconsider the claim in light of the counter-claim.<sup>27</sup> As Glenda Satne has put it in a related context, there is a basic sense in which the responses of interlocutors do not 'matter to each other' in such a practice.<sup>28</sup> Criticism, in the colloquial sense of getting someone else to change their mind, can only take the indirect route of trying to saddle a person with incompatible commitments in the hope that this incompatibility will surface in the course of their intrapersonal cycle of noting and repair.

There is an unsatisfactory bifurcation in the impoverished practice we are imagining. Without the availability of a counterchallenge, the interpersonal transmission of reasons via acts such as asserting is separated from the process of noting and repair that occurs intrapersonally. The point is not that participants in such a practice uncritically accept whatever others tell them, but that the critical part takes place intrapersonally. Why is such a bifurcation unsatisfactory? After all, we are familiar with a similar division in our everyday epistemic activities

between acquiring knowledge via testimony in which the relevant justification appeals to the authority of another and via argumentation in which the relevant justification appeals to the cogency of an argument, and it is not much of a reach to treat the former as taking place interpersonally and the latter intrapersonally?<sup>29</sup> But of course this misdescribes our everyday practices in which argumentation takes place both intrapersonally and interpersonally.<sup>30</sup> This feature of everyday discursive practice reflects an insight into its rational-critical character. The very possibility of learning from testimony itself depends on the availability of an interpersonal practice of argumentation. It is because B can challenge A's claim in cases where she disagrees that she is able to defer to A in cases which she has no prior commitments on the matter at hand. Without this possibility of counterchallenge, the authority recognized in a case of testimony appears as an alien force and not that of the better reason.<sup>31</sup> The interiorization of criticism—of noting and repair—on the bifurcated model deforms the practice of giving and asking for reasons to the extent that it is hard to see the notion of reason get a grip in such a practice at all.

Can an ADP make do with only the possibility of a query but not a counterchallenge? Reflection on the impoverished practice has revealed the answer to be no, for the availability of counterchallenging in a discursive practice is central to its rational-critical character, and thus for reasons to feature in the practice at all. Counterchallenging is thus an indispensable feature of any ADP. Can an ADP make do with just the possibility of a counterchallenge but not a query? A query as we have described it is backward-looking, in that it asks a speaker for extant reasons for an acknowledged commitment without contesting its legitimacy or requiring a speaker to reconsider. The availability of a query in a practice suffices to trigger the speaker's responsibility to provide those reasons if recognized and to remove the default entitlement if this is not done, though this too can be achieved by a counterchallenge as well. Querying is thus best seen as an auxiliary act in an ADP, useful but dispensable.<sup>32</sup>

To summarize: The structure of authority and responsibility associated with asserting requires an ADP to include an act whose function is to call an assertion into question upon the asserter's recognition of the act, thereby cancelling the default attribution of entitlement to the asserted commitment until the justificatory responsibility is suitably discharged. Although both the acts of querying and counterchallenging can play such a function, the latter occupies a privileged place within an ADP. This is because a social practice lacking the possibility of querying is impoverished but still recognizable as an ADP, whereas the impoverishment of a social practice lacking the possibility of counterchallenging is such that it fails to qualify as a discursive practice at all.

## 2.2 *Counterchallenge and 'I-You'*

It will come as little surprise that, having argued in the previous section for the inclusion of the act of counterchallenging in an ADP, the central claim to be advanced in this section is that making such an act explicit involves the interlocking use of both I-talk and You-talk. We will take a slightly circuitous route toward this conclusion. First, we consider a purported difficulty with the conception of counterchallenging just sketched. Second, counterchallenges are understood as intentional transactions to help solve this difficulty. Finally, it is argued that making counterchallenges so understood explicit requires the use of both 'I' and 'You' pronouns.

The purported difficulty to be considered stems from the concern that the dual perspectives of attribution and acknowledgment that characterize the social structure of an ADP do not appear to permit the possibility of counterchallenging as characterized above.

A says 'p'; B says 'no, not-p.' The fragmentary schema of a counterchallenge invokes assertion and counter-assertion in a dialogic context, all of which are basic moves in an ADP. What, then, is the purported difficulty? Consider the schematized encounter from the perspective of an audience member C who has no prior commitments relevant to the matter at hand. Since C treats B's claim as incompatible with A's, B's response functions to cancel the default entitlement C accorded to A's commitment to p. As a result, C may no longer reassert p on A's say-so. Of course, incompatibility runs both ways, meaning that the incompatibility of A's claim with B's also functions to remove the default entitlement C would normally accord to B's commitment to not-p. As a result, C may not reassert not-p on B's say-so either. We have an *impasse*: neither A's statement nor B's statement changes the entitlement-score C associates with either of them, until one player provides a non-default entitlement to their claim. The same *impasse* extends to A if we treat her as a scorekeeper viewing the interaction from the perspective of attribution alone, according no special standing to her own position. Following B's response, A attributes opposing commitments to both A and B without entitlement, and no oppositional clash is in view. We arrive again at an *impasse*. Now consider the schema from A's perspective of acknowledgement and not just attribution.<sup>33</sup> Following B's challenge, A acknowledges a commitment herself and attributes to B an opposing commitment. Here we have A acknowledging a disagreement between herself and B, a disagreement in which—from A's perspective—B is viewed as wrong. In this case, what is arrived at is not *impasse* but *dismissal* (sent away without engagement). Again, no oppositional clash is in view and B's claim does not matter to A in the way in which a counterchallenge requires. The purported difficulty is that an I-Thou social structure affords us two options to capture A's perspective on

B's counterclaim, either conflicting attributions to A and B (resulting in impasse) or an acknowledgment by A and a conflicting attribution to B (resulting in dismissal), and yet neither capture the requisite notion of counterchallenge.

One thing missing in presenting both options is inclusion of the relevant dialogic context. After all, we are not just considering a case in which A becomes aware of B's contrary commitment, but that B has expressed this to A by saying 'no, not-p.' Perhaps it is by adding the dialogical context to these twin perspectives that one can capture the notion of a counterchallenge. To do this, the relevant dialogic context cannot simply add mutual awareness by A and B of their contradictory commitments. If A's awareness of B's contradictory commitment yields either impasse or dismissal, adding A's further awareness of B's awareness of A's awareness of B's contradictory commitment will not make a difference. That is, capturing the dialogic dimension to the interaction between A and B that is relevant to the idea of counterchallenge cannot—from A's perspective—merely involve further attributions to B, as the clash from A's perspective between an acknowledged undertaking by A and a series of attributions to B is insufficient to bring a challenge into view. How then should we understand the relevant notion of dialogic context?

Our discussion thus far provides the contours of a response. We have seen that neither conflicting attributions to A and B nor an acknowledgment by A and a conflicting attribution to B are capable of bringing an oppositional clash into view. What remains is to construe A's perspective on the interaction between A and B as involving conflicting acknowledgments on *both* sides, albeit without treating this as a joint undertaking between A and B.

To fill in the contours, let us turn to a familiar interpersonal structure that we shall call an intentional transaction.<sup>34</sup> Some ordinary activities are other-involving, in that their performance necessarily involves the participation of other persons. In some cases, the other person participates in the activity as a joint agent (the act is done with another), whereas in other cases the other participates in the activity as patient (the act is done to another). A further division among acts done to another is between those that require the parties to practically recognize their agent/patient status and those that do not. Those other-involving activities whose successful performance requires practical recognition by both parties of their agent/patient status are intentional transactions.

Giving is a paradigm case of an intentional transaction.<sup>35</sup> Giving yokes together two parties while holding them apart in the opposed but complementary roles of giver and recipient. Giving and receiving are not best construed as two separate actions linked together as cause and effect, but as a single transaction that can be described in two ways, from the perspective of the giver ('Eve gave the fruit to Adam') and that of the recipient ('Adam received the fruit from Eve'). Further, the practical

recognition by both parties of their complementary roles as giver and receiver is a constitutive feature of the transaction itself. These features distinguish giving as an intentional transaction from both intentional actions that are not transactions and interpersonal transactions that are not intentional. Hiding, for example, is an act normally done intentionally and it may well relate two parties that fall under that relation in a particular case ('Adam and Eve hid among the trees'), but there is nothing in the idea of hiding itself that invokes two parties, let alone holding them apart through complementary roles. Tickling, for example, is an activity that requires the participation of another as patient and can be described from either the perspective of agent or patient, but the patient's practical awareness of her patient status as the one tickled is not integral to successful performance in the way that practical awareness of receiving is in the case of giving.<sup>36</sup>

The suggestion here is that counterchallenging has the structure of an intentional transaction. The idea of a counterchallenge yokes together two parties while holding them apart as challenger and challengee, such that transaction can be described either as B challenging A or A being challenged by B. A successful counterchallenge requires practical recognition by both parties of their agent/patient status, a practical recognition achieved through acting according to the norms associated with their respective roles. For A this practical recognition involves responding to the counterchallenge in some way (including reaffirmation, retraction, defense or deferral or rejection), though the norms associated with the role do not determine the character of the response in question.

The purported difficulty noted above was that neither conflicting attributions to A and B nor an acknowledgment by A and a conflicting attribution are capable of sustaining the oppositional clash characteristic of counterchallenging within an ADP. The response has been to understand counterchallenging as having the interpersonal structure of an intentional transaction involving conflicting acknowledgments on both sides. The agent-patient structure internal to such a transaction distinguishes this from being a joint undertaking between A and B, and thereby maintains the opposition characteristic of a counterchallenge.

In an ADP, recognition of this transaction by either party is implicit in their doings. To make the transactional structure explicit requires the interlocking use of the first- and second-person-singular pronouns; A would make the counterchallenge explicit by saying 'I am being challenged by you' and B would make this explicit by saying 'I am challenging you.'<sup>37</sup> The discussion thus far provides the resources for a defense of this claim, at least for the case of counterchallenges. It is an argument by elimination: of the various personal pronouns combinations that are plausible candidates for making this practical recognition explicit, it is only the first- and second-person-singular combination that is capable of fully capturing counterchallenging as an intentional transaction.



We have already eliminated one plausible candidate pair for making counterchallenges explicit, a first-person singular and third-person combination. The suggestion has been ruled out, as the interaction made explicit using these terms fails to have the pragmatic significance of a counterchallenge, yielding either impasse or dismissal (depending on whether the first-person is understood as marking self-attribution or not). Either way, use of a first-person singular and third-person pair by each party to a transaction fails to make explicit the fact that the transaction requires practical recognition by both parties of their agent/patient status.

This may suggest some form of first-person plural structure instead, as the 'we' proffers some hope of capturing the sense in which a transaction involves the undertaking of paired acknowledgments. This suggestion too should be resisted, for there is no available interpretation of a claim including the first-person plural that can capture the character of an intentional transaction. Following Matthias Haase, we can distinguish between three relevant interpretations.<sup>38</sup> The first is a *distributive interpretation of the first-person plural*, as exemplified in the claim: 'We are voting Republican.' The distributive-we functions to constitute a set of persons united under a common predicate of which the speaker herself is self-consciously a member. This interpretation is not easily extended to the case of counterchallenging. The 'we' in 'We are voting republican' could be true of one person independent of the participation of any other, and thus fails to capture the other-involving character of an intentional transaction. The second is a *cooperative interpretation of the first-person plural*, as exemplified in the claim: 'We are dancing the foxtrot.' The cooperative-we functions to mark an intentional, joint undertaking of a common activity marked by the verb phrase that involves a division of roles between at least two parties. Though this interpretation does capture the other-involving character of a transaction, it too is not easily extended to the case of counterchallenging. The 'we' in 'We are dancing the foxtrot' need not accord agent-patient structure to the relevant roles in a cooperation, and thus fails to capture that the roles in a counterchallenge are undertaken in opposition to the other.

Haase's third, *dyadic interpretation of the first-person plural*, requires special attention. His example is the claim 'We are playing tennis against each other.' The dyadic 'we' functions, Haase tells us, to signify "the poles of the relation expressed by the verb phrase, in the present case the agents of a transaction."<sup>39</sup> This formulation is misleading, as it implies that the relation expressed by the verb phrase is a single transaction, whereas the relation in fact involves a series of transactions interlinked in a unique manner. For it to be the case that we are playing tennis against each other, both of us must be engaged in a variety of other-directed activities: perhaps one serves, the other returns, one lobs, the other smashes, and so on. Each of these activities is an intentional

transaction whose successful performance requires practical recognition by both parties of their agent/patient status. The verb phrase in ‘We are playing tennis against each other’ applies to a sequence of intentional transactions between the same pair of agents in which the agent/patient polarities are reversed from one transaction to the other. In other words, the dyadic-we makes explicit a unique interpersonal structure involving various intentional transactions, with each transactional performance calling for a subsequent transactional performance with reversed agent/patient polarity by way of response. Understood in this manner, the dyadic-we thus depends on the prior availability of the structure of an intentional transaction, and makes explicit a distinctive oppositional structure between persons that arises when intentional transactions (independently understood) are interlinked in this particular way.

These reflections on the dyadic-we yield both a negative and a positive insight into the character of intentional transactions. The negative insight is that since the dyadic-we is best understood as an ‘intentional-transaction-plus-something,’ it does not make explicit the implicit practical recognition involved in a case of intentional transaction. The positive insight stems from considering what a discursive practice looks like once the ‘plus-something’ has been added. Earlier we wondered how to include within our scorekeeping practices the dialogic context implicit in the fragmentary schema of a counterchallenge—A says ‘p’; B says ‘no, not-p.’ The main thrust of our response has been that this dialogic context is understood through the notion of an intentional transaction. The dialogic context does not merely add mutual awareness by A and B of their contradictory commitments but requires the practical recognition by both parties of their status as agent/patient through acting according to the norms associated with their respective roles. The discussion of the dyadic-we suggests a further way of understanding the notion of a dialogic context. Assuming a relevant verb phrase is available, A and B can be seen to be participating in a social structure in which various intentional transactions are linked to form an extended plural activity, such that the recognition by one party of their role as a patient in a transaction calls for a subsequent performance that requires the recognition by the other party of the role as patient. The agent-patient roles are not only understood in terms of each other, but also alternate between the parties to such a structure as the dialogue proceeds.

This further understanding of dialogic context through the dyadic-we is admittedly speculative, and we are not claiming (here) that the additional dialogic social structure made explicit by the dyadic-we must feature in practice in any ADP, though its familiarity from our own practice makes this positive insight worthy of further consideration. For current purposes, it is the negative insight that is central: we do not make an intentional transaction explicit using any of the three interpretations

of the first-person plural that Haase has identified. This concludes our argument by elimination. Having considered various possible personal pronouns combinations that are plausible candidates for making the practical recognition of a counterchallenge explicit, it is the first- and second-person singular pronouns that remain as the only viable option. The transactional structure of a counterchallenge means that what is required from a challenger is both distinct from and yet interdependent on what is required from a challengee. The intentional transactional structure means that each party practically recognizes their roles by acting in opposition to the other. The interlocking 'I' and 'You' makes this practical recognition explicit.

### *2.3 An I without a You?*

The second part of this chapter has provided all the materials needed to make a normative-pragmatic case for the interdependence of I-talk and You-talk. When put together, the case can be summarized as follows. An ADP must include the act of counterchallenging and not just querying. Inclusion of a counterchallenge within a discursive practice extends the critical process of noting and repair from the intrapersonal to the interpersonal realm, such that recognition of a counterchallenge normatively requires the one challenged to respond in some manner. For a discursive practice to include such an act, it must allow for its scorekeeping practices to include the social structure of an intentional transaction. Scorekeeping that includes such a social structure can be done implicitly in practice through both parties acting toward the other according to their norms associated with their opposing roles in the transaction. Making this explicit involves the interlocking use of the first- and second-person pronoun. The abilities required to engage in You-talk are thus elaborated from and explicative of the same subset of abilities from which the ability to engage in I-talk is elaborated and explicates. Even though both 'I' and 'You' may take on further expressive roles as the practice develops, one cannot be in the position of being able to use I-talk but not You-talk. In that sense, there can be no 'I' without a 'You.'

It is easy to mischaracterize the conclusion reached here. One mischaracterization treats the conclusion as mandating the addition of counterchallenging alongside asserting as core performances in an ADP, without thereby transforming an understanding of asserting itself. This characterization leaves open the possibility of an 'I' that makes explicit the acknowledgment of a commitment in asserting which is pragmatically independent of a 'You,' alongside an 'I' that makes explicit the acknowledgment by both parties of a counterchallenge that is pragmatically interdependent on a 'You.' This characterization is unsatisfactory as it distinguishes between the processes of asserting (made explicit by

a you-independent ‘I’) and counterchallenging (made explicit by a you-interdependent ‘I’) in a manner that precludes the interaction between the two that we have claimed is central to viewing either asserting or counterchallenging as moves in the game of giving and asking for reasons.<sup>40</sup> The first mischaracterization thus understates the significance of the conclusion by limiting the thesis of pragmatic interdependence to just one kind of ‘I’. A second mischaracterization goes to the other extreme, contending that the conclusion mandates the replacement of assertion within an ADP with the acts of a challenge and counterchallenge. The characterization collapses the difference between asserting and challenging by contending that both share the form of intentional transaction, thereby treating every tokening of ‘I’ as embedded in a dialogue with a ‘You.’ This characterization too is unsatisfactory as it thins down the notion of dialogue in a manner that fails to allow for the distinctive character of cases of counterchallenging between actual parties. The second mischaracterization thus overstates the significance of the conclusion by extending the model of intentional transaction to encompass all acts within an ADP.

A proper characterization of the conclusion reached here avoids both extremes. We have argued that counterchallenging has the normative structure of an intentional transaction. Including this structure within an ADP ensures that participants in a discursive practice are able to enter a substantive nexus with another person whose opinions are thereby taken to matter to each other. This nexus is made explicit through interlocking use of ‘I-You.’ Asserting does not involve the structure of an intentional transaction and making it explicit involves an ‘I’ and not an ‘I-You.’ To assert is to license its reassertion by anyone, and it is not part of the act as an assertion that there is a someone—a ‘You’—who will reassert it. This, however, does not mean that the ‘I’ in *I assert p* is unrelated to a ‘You.’<sup>41</sup> Licensing its reassertion by anyone means that if there is someone who reasserts it, that someone inherits the entitlement from the original assertor to whom they can defer and whom they can counterchallenge. In asserting an asserter must thus understand their own act as inviting a possible counterchallenge which would be addressed to the asserter as ‘you’ from an ‘I,’ and understood by the assertor as an ‘I’ from a ‘You.’<sup>42</sup> What the ‘I’ in ‘*I assert p*’ makes explicit is the assertor’s standing as a locus of authority to whom any reassertor can defer or challenge in this manner. To assert is not to enter into a substantive nexus but, as the ‘I’ makes explicit, it includes practical understanding of the possibility of entering into such a nexus which counterchallenging makes actual.

The conclusion to this exercise in normative pragmatics, that there can be no ‘I’ without a ‘You,’ is thus not best thought of as adding a counterchallenge to an ADP alongside an assertion, nor as replacing assertion within an ADP with the acts of a challenge and counterchallenge.

Instead, taking the pragmatic interdependence of ‘I’ and ‘You’ seriously offers an understanding of the normative pragmatics of discursive activities within which to understand why both asserting and counterchallenging each have their distinctive social structure within the practice itself.<sup>43</sup>

## Notes

- 1 As befits the normative pragmatic orientation, the focus on I-talk and You-talk is not to be understood as taken in opposition to an interest in I-thought and You-thought. A governing assumption throughout is that the two pairs of activities cannot be made sense of independently of each other.
- 2 Discussion of these themes in his most recent *A Spirit of Trust* (Brandom 2019) is set aside here.
- 3 E.g., Brandom (1994, 39). This is discussed more fully in 1.1. The contrast is with ‘I-We sociality’ in which the distinction needed to account for the normativity of a social practice is for performances by an individual within that practice (an ‘I’) to be treated as appropriate or inappropriate by the community as a whole (a ‘We’).
- 4 A fuller description of basicness in terms of elaboration-explication is found in 2.2 below.
- 5 I remain unconvinced that this conjecture can be fully vindicated, especially if pursued in the reductive vein that Brandom favors. See Wanderer (2014a, 78–94). For a recent defense, see Loeffler (2018, 233–237).
- 6 According to Brandom (1994, 256–259), in acting one responds to acknowledging a practical commitment by making something true. Sometimes the action results from the acknowledgment of a practical commitment (the action results from ‘a prior intention’) and sometimes the action just is the acknowledgment of a practical commitment (the action is an ‘intention in action’). Intentional actions either result from or just are the acknowledgements of practical commitments. This bifurcated structure has come in for criticism – see Stout (2010); Levine (2015). I focus on the former in the text, as well as follow Brandom in his idiosyncratic use of the terms ‘intention’ and ‘intentional action’.
- 7 An ADP is one that “lacks expression-types that mark their tokenings” as expressing “those immediate commitment-acknowledgements that mediate the cycle of perception and action” (Brandom 2008, 64–65). This suggestion can be made clearer, I think, by making explicit the role of anaphoric commitments in creating meaningful term-types. Discussion of I-talk makes reference to a type of term, an ‘I’ that can be used by different speakers in different contexts, and yet what the speaker produces is a token utterance, a unique unrepeatable event. What makes the latter fall under the former for Brandom is not lexical-cotypicality of (e.g.) morphological or phonetical features, but an anaphoric commitment to treat two tokens as a recurrence of the other. That is, two term tokens fall under the same type just in case a speaker (according to a scorekeeper) treats one as the recurrence of the other. A term-type such as ‘I’ is, for Brandom, an anaphorically related chain of term-tokenings across time and between persons. An ADP is one in which participants do not make the relevant anaphoric commitments regarding the first-person, meaning that scorekeeping within such a community does not recognize the relevant anaphoric commitments needed for ‘I’ to feature as a meaningful type in social discourse.

8 Or even, more sparsely, “there should be pulling back on the yoke.”

9 The frisbee analogy is in Brandom (2008, 64).

- 10 The quoted phrase is from Brandom (2008, 62). This claim is directly related to a central feature of Brandom’s discussion of action that is not explored in detail in the main text, viz. his approach to understanding the discursive exit transitions in action by analogy with the discursive entry transitions in perception. The analogy is that in perception we non-inferentially respond to environmental stimuli by taking up a position in the space of reasons, and in action we non-inferentially respond to an acknowledgment of a practical commitment within the space of reasons by bringing about a nonlinguistic state of affairs through bodily action. (This is the central theme of Brandom 1994, chapter 4.)
- 11 Brandom tells this story in Chapter 8 of (Brandom 1994) and in (Brandom 2008, 56–68). Elaboration here occurs through a process of response-substitutions (connecting an extant performance-kind as a response to an extant stimulus-kind) on performances that already feature in the base. Levine (2009, 99) insightfully points out the parallel between such story-telling and Sellars’ use of myth in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (Sellars 1997) to undermine the claim that ‘looks-talk’ could be had in the absence of ‘is-talk’.
- 12 Brandom provocatively illustrates this by reference to the 18th-century British practice wherein accepting the offer of a shilling from a navy recruiter counts as having enlisted in the navy, even though the unwitting marks of savvy recruiters often discover the commitments undertaken “only upon awakening from the resulting stupor.” (Brandom 1994, 162. Cf. Pippin (2005, 395–396).
- 13 The deontic attitude of attributing a commitment involves two parties, the person attributing the commitment (‘the scorekeeper’) and the person to whom the commitment is attributed (‘the gameplayer’). In the case of acknowledging understood as self-attributing, scorekeeper and gameplayer are one and the same, though the identity of scorekeeper and gameplayer is a contingent matter and not the result of the attitude of attributing itself. This suggests the possibility of a different understanding of acknowledgment, one in which the identity of scorekeeper and gameplayer is *de jure*, the result of the deontic attitude of undertaking by acknowledging itself. A suggestion along these lines is familiar from discussions of the character of the first-person pronoun, as part of an explanation of why the first-person pronoun in an expression of an acknowledgment cannot be substituted for another co-referring expression. (Brandom’s discussion of the seminal literature in this area is found in Brandom (1994, 552–561) and in Brandom (2008, 56–68)). In the idiom used here, the explanation is that the *de jure* identity of gameplayer and scorekeeper in acknowledging a commitment is what is marked by the use of the first-person pronoun, an identity not preserved by any other referring expression. This alternative understanding of acknowledgment encompasses a different sense of responsibility to the social-status sense just outlined: to be responsible is not just to do something that entitles someone to hold you responsible whether you know this or not, but is an exercise of your authority to make yourself responsible just by taking yourself to be responsible. (This is the notion of responsibility as autonomy that Brandom treats as Kantian in his Woodbridge lectures, printed in Brandom (2009).) The point in the text is simply to note that, however plausible, this notion of responsibility does not feature centrally in *Making it Explicit*.

- 14 This was a feature of the presentation of the five features of a discursive practice in Section 1.1.
- 15 Brandom appears to concede as much in a footnote to his *A Spirit of Trust* (2019, 782 fn. 7).
- 16 The quoted phrase is from TS Eliot (1971) in a poem that Brandom himself excerpts in *Making it Explicit*'s epigraph.
- 17 Habermas (2000, 345).
- 18 Brandom (2000, 362).
- 19 This is not the first time I have explored the significance of challenges in Brandom's work (see Wanderer, 2010). What follows is a somewhat different, and less conciliatory, understanding of the role it should play in an ADP. I am indebted to the work of Satne (2017 – discussed below) for challenging me to rethink these issues.
- 20 A query here is stronger than that invoked by Brandom, viz. "a way for A to find out whether B acknowledges commitment to p" (Brandom 1994, 193). Querying in that weak sense is not an act that itself could be subject of questions concerning its propriety in a gameplaying sense, and its performance alone does not alter the score. Querying here also differs from what could be called pointed-querying which is rooted in suspicion of A's authoritative standing with regards the claim. Cf. Austin (1946, 150).
- 21 Preliminary definition, refined below.
- 22 See Brandom (2008, 126). Negation is a logical locution for Brandom, and thus an ADP may not include 'negation-talk'. Nonetheless, it will include the idea of a minimal contrary, which can then be made explicit with a negation. In some cases, this minimal contrary will be an available sentence-type, and a more precise formulation of the oppositional clash as it features in an ADP will involve this sentence type. I have ignored this in the text itself for simplicity sake.
- 23 I do not mean that B intends to enter into a conversation with A (the counter-challenge may be followed by a mic drop or a departure) but that it expressly registers opposition to A. Different notions of dialogue are discussed below.
- 24 This is not to say that individuals do not persist in holding incompatible commitments even upon noting their incompatibility. The point is that this involves a kind of breakdown of the basic structures of rational agency, similar to more familiar akratic forms in cases of practical agency.
- 25 Brandom (2008, 192) for relinquish; Brandom (2019, 53) for extruding or expelling.
- 26 "Subjects ... are individuated by the way they normatively 'repel' incompatible commitments. It is not impermissible for two different subjects to have incompatible commitments ... What is impermissible is for one and the same subject to do so. ... A single subject just is what ought not to have incompatible commitments (at the same time)." (Brandom 2008, 192)
- 27 This is the response dubbed 'dismissal' in Section 2.2 below.
- 28 Satne's work has been influential in making me reconsider my earlier, more conciliatory understanding of Brandom's 'challenges' (Satne, 2017). Though the discussion in this section shares her broad approach, it differs in the fine-print. First, Satne thinks that the lack of challenge in the account leads to the loss of "sensitivity to any cognitive friction and with it the possibility of having meant anything at all", which overlooks the possibility of intra-personal friction noted here, Second, her proposed emendation elides the distinction between incompatible and contradictory commitments invoked here to avoid the blurring of difference between subjects as units of account.

- 29 Cf. McMyler (2011, 54–58) on the difference between testimony and argumentation.
- 30 It is standard to interpret Brandom’s game of giving and asking for reasons as involving such interpersonal argumentation – See, e.g., Dutilh Novaes (2011).
- 31 Cf. McDowell (2009, 104).
- 32 See Brandom (1994, 192) for a related use of auxiliary.
- 33 This challenge, of course, is more pronounced if one does not treat the attitude of acknowledging as that of self-attribution, as discussed in Section 1.
- 34 The term, and the inspiration, is taken from Rödl (2014).
- 35 See Descombes (2014, 238–239).
- 36 I have discussed this example in Wanderer (2014b, 76).
- 37 Versions of this claim has been defended in different ways, including by Haddock (2014), Haase (2014), Heal (2014), Longworth (2014), Rödl (2007, Chapter 6, 2014) and Wanderer (2014b).
- 38 Haase (2018, 238–240). Haase’s discussion of these three interpretations of the first-person plural functions to introduce his main quarry, which is a further, generic sense of ‘we’ that is operative in the context of describing the participant’s grasp of a social discursive practice. See also Haase (2012). If correct, this would make the generic-we a logical locution in the terms used here, and its relation to other logical locutions is an important subject for further exercises in normative pragmatics.
- 39 Haase (2018, 239).
- 40 This is similar to the unsatisfactory bifurcation between the intrapersonal criticism and interpersonal transmission of reasons rejected in 2.1.
- 41 My thinking here in these sentences, in particular, is indebted to Kukla and Lance (2009, chapter 7), though the position arrived at is not the same as their ‘transcendental vocative’.
- 42 This is a version of what Moran (2018, 156–158) calls, drawing on Benveniste (1971), ‘the reversibility of I and You’.
- 43 A version of this paper was presented at a workshop on ‘The Social Institution of Norms’ in Vienna in 2019, and I am indebted to much discussion with workshop participants on that occasion. I am also grateful to Steven Levine, Ronald Loeffler, Jaakko Reinikainen, Glenda Satne, Preston Stovall and Lynne Tirrell for comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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