Jane Heal's constitutive view: some Wittgensteinian concerns

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I shall be concerned with Jane Heal's account of first-person authority as expounded in her article of 2001[1], which develops her own version of the so-called 'constitutive view' of first-person authority. Heal's stance over first-person authority, while partly based on that of Wright's[2], pledges to avoid the disadvantages of dualism, reliabilism and expressivism by paying due heed to performatives. Her central idea is that the analysis of performatives like 'I promise to φ', taken as a particular practice involving certain commitments, can help to show how knowledge of one's own state of mind is not a sufficient condition for eliciting an authoritative promise, but a necessary one. The extension of the analysis of promises to other psychological states allegedly proves how these can also be authoritative, without losing the main properties of the psychological.

After canvassing expressivism, Heal join forces with others in the view that this theory fails to explain satisfactorily the authoritativeness of assertions within any standard truth-conditional theory. In the stage-setting of the constitutive view, meant to replace expressivism, she introduces the concept of 'mental states' (16) in order to explain the public availability of third-person thoughts, together with a singular process by which

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* This article has been written with a postdoctoral scholarship co-funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education and the European Social Fund. This document is protected by a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.5 Spain License. For a summary of the terms of this license, including a link to the full license, visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/es/deed.en.

[1] Heal, J. (2001) 'On First-Person Authority', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* 102, 1-19. Hereafter I will quote it by giving its page number. With the exception of *The Big Typescript TS 213* (Oxford: Blackwell), which will be abbreviated as BT, Wittgenstein's works are quoted as customary.

[2] Wright, C. (1989) 'Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy of Mind: Sensation, Privacy and Intention', *Journal of Philosophy,* 86, 622-634; (1989) 'Wittgenstein's Rule-Following Considerations and the Central Project of Theoretical Linguistics', in A. George (ed.) (1989), *Reflections on Chomsky* (Oxford: Blackwell) 233-264.

utterances cause mental states to exist and which ultimately, is said to yield self-representing features. I will discuss whether these assumptions can do justice to the nature of the psychological verbs and see if, on a strict Wittgensteinian perspective, expressivism can be up to the demands of truth-conditional theory and a make a coherent case to explain its benefits to first-person authority. The analysis of Heal's constitutive view, however, will occupy us for most of this discussion.

(i) Outlining the constitutive story

In constitutive views it is generally accepted that if a proposition '*p*' is a first-level mental state, 'I believe that *p*' is a second-level mental state. To be sure, second-level mental states will exhibit distinctive and singular properties while being firmly bound up with first-level mental states. For Heal, 'the existence of a second-level belief about a first-level psychological state is what makes it true that the first-level state exists' (4).

In this way, 'if a constitutive story is right then this second-level belief brings with it the first-level state it is about' (4). In a correct application of the rule, 'personal promises' (6) need to be seen as practices, only that very peculiar ones. A personal promise needs not any prior performance (11); uttering 'I promise to φ' is itself the required truth-maker for the promise to be real. 'Making the statement that one fulfils the conditions for promising is itself what makes that statement true' (11). Indeed, the person who makes a promise does not look inward in search for an existing mental state which can work as a truth-maker for the utterance, but simply 'reflects on (…) whether she should promise, i.e. do something which shows in her a real tendency to φ and so entitles an observer to expect that she will φ' (11).

This account is posed to simplify things, since now we can look at performatives as *simultaneously* being assertions and doings. The problem is that 'many of the psychological items on which we want light are persisting states' (15), making it 'logically inappropriate to identify uttering, say, 'I believe that *p*' with believing that *p*' (15). Belief is a case of this sort; the prior existence of beliefs never expressed by the subject counts as a liability when mental states are to be concomitant with the utterances which express them. For Heal, promises are lucky to be free of this problem since the warrant we look for when someone issues a promise is already in place; 'the fact that

one has done something which shows a real tendency to perform a certain action' is that warrant. Similarly, in the case of beliefs Heals suggests that 'there is the fact that one is in a state which will (probably) lead to certain further inferences, actions and so forth' (16). The self-ascription of a belief seems the required element for such a persisting state of belief to be authoritative. That state, which gets expressed either in the sentences '*p*' or 'I believe that *p*' (17) turns out to be 'an apprehension of the self and (…) an apprehension of the world' (17) at the same time. With this, Heal's view pledges to combine both what is essential to constitutive views — the identification of the state of belief with the utterance if sincere (15) —, and the fact that a self-ascription can itself be a fact contributing to second-order beliefs.

(ii) The case for mental states

The constitutive view raises a number of points. One of them is how psychological verbs work. Heal sketches it out in three guiding principles of the psychological, the third of which states that 'persons and their psychological states are among the public and effect-producing occupants of the universe' (3), a claim which is posed to introduce a 'realist' clause into the concept of the psychological which, acknowledging the existence of real psychological acts, will justify their attribution to others.

According to this we can say that persons are 'public and effect-producing occupants of the universe' (3). Heals clarifies from the outset that psychological verbs are not introspectable phenomena recognisable by *inner features*. The opposite of this, however, the suggestion that psychological verbs are 'public' seems a different thing. Wittgenstein considered that 'psychological verbs are characterized by the fact that the third person of the present is to be verified by observation, the first person not' (Z §472). Drawing on the asymmetry of perspectives — on which Wittgenstein's view rests —, we can take the observation of someone's behaviour as the evidence to attribute beliefs and intentions to her, whereas that evidence is not needed for oneself.

Wittgenstein's remark, however, leaves an important question unresolved. Does the public availability of what subjects believe and intend entail that psychological states are public and thus, real 'occupants' of the universe? Would a comprehensive

description of what there is in the world require the inclusion of *psychological properties* in the whole set of objects and it so, would this description be feasible?

Of course, these questions converge in a central, non-trivial issue as is the metaphysical status of psychological verbs. Whether or not we call them 'mental states', there is a whole question as to whether these verbs possess or latch on to fully-fledged metaphysical properties. From a strict realism the answer to this question will be affirmative, although to be sure, there are many forms of realism. For brevity's sake, I will only sketch two of them. One kind of realism grants the existence of mental states and leaves the nature of those verbs indeterminate. Such a realism simply requires looking at the psychological as occupying some ontological space within the objects of the outside world, so that in descriptive metaphysics the world will appear as made up, among other identifiable objects, of the psychological states of all individuals or the otherwise called 'mental states' (16). In this way, to claim that your mental states are *occupants* of the world at a given time is a way of accepting the metaphysical or causal stricture of your psychological verbs without advancing any particular theory of the correspondence between the mental and the physical. No matter how that correspondence is, the fact remains that each time you entertain one of those verbs we can say that there is a subject S in the state M, so that for any S who believes that *p*, S is in M. I take these states to be a raw metaphysical description of S's mental properties and assume, as Heal does, that S's attitudes are public because M is a metaphysical state open to third-person enquiry.

A second and less compromising realism will seek a wholesale identity between psychological and physical states, fully accepting that although the psychological is highly complex it still admits reduction to a set of neural processes. I will not look further into this position, since for many, Wittgenstein's objections to it in PI §§143-184 and other standard critiques of eliminativism are sufficient to expose the apparent flaws of this view, which to start with needs to tell us in more detail what, if anything, turns neural processes into psychological verbs, and remains highly controversial[3].

[3] In this form of realism, all we know about someone's speech is what it is said, while only scientifically can we assume that some process is running in her brain connecting the speaker's mental states and speech. We do not know what is in the speaker's mind, but provided the relevant scientific evidence, that does not matter, for all that is required is to attribute to her neural activity. However, let alone the confusion involved in this practice, Wittgenstein notes that the attribution of neural patterns to subjects is

I imagine that the constitutive view is not akin to this kind of realism, but to the most general one. On such a view, it may appear that we cannot do metaphysics out of the attribution of beliefs to third-persons other than resorting to 'mental states', since these states provide a necessary but limited grasp of what lies in our use of psychological verbs, and this despite the fact that the realist commits herself to say something non-trivial and explanatory on the nature of psychological properties. Presumably, if M-states are public and available, what their properties are and how they combine to build meaningful concepts must certainly be a matter of study. For example, if we know a priori that mental states exhibit metaphysical properties, there will be good reasons to think that they must necessarily be temporal. S's beliefs and intentions will then show the same patterns of temporality as other physical objects; they will last so long as the subject is in M and cease to be once M undergoes the relevant metaphysical change. Subjects will acquire and lose these properties over time as their beliefs and intentions develop. If we grant that M is a clockable state, the situation would not be far distant in which S could report, regarding her mental states: 'since yesterday I have understood this word' in the same sense in which one can say this of someone else, as in: 'he was depressed the whole day' or 'he has been in continuous pain since yesterday' (PI §150a). Of course, in that case one would be entitled to ask: "continuously', though?' (PI §150a). That is, if S understood a word yesterday for the first time, she has steadily understood it since then. Thus we should be in a position to affirm that S has been in the state M since then. So far, so good. But the problem with this description is what a sudden interruption of M can be when M is a state of understanding, because whereas we can make sense of the sudden interruption of other unrelated states such as a depressive mood or a toothache, it is not obvious how long-standing process of 'understanding' can be interrupted.

The analysis of psychological verbs as 'states' raises, in sum, the following difficulty:

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a far cry from the ordinary ascription of a belief or any psychological verb (RPP I §501). For normally, we do not describe S's beliefs by saying that, S's brain is in a certain physical state at time *t*, nor is this information relevant to the speaker's self-knowledge or authoritativeness. Moreover, it needs not to be said that very little is known today about such states and in Wittgenstein's times, who notoriously described them as 'the yet uncomprehended process in the yet unexplored medium' (PI §308).

> If one conceives of understanding, knowing, etc., as a *state,* then one does so only hypothetically, in the sense of a psychological disposition that's on the same level as a physiological one (BT 176)[4].
>
> Hence the incorrect comparison to states which are amorphous in time (a tooth ache, hearing a sound, etc., even though these differ from each other in turn) (BT 289).

Wittgenstein made it sufficiently clear that psychological verbs can only be yielded as 'mental states' at a high explanatory cost, that of jeopardising the distinction between mental states and psychological verbs (PI §151a), where the former are descriptions of the subject's states at a certain time, such as 'to have a toothache' or 'to be depressed', and the latter are not. This distinction, laid out in RPP II§45 in similar terms, provides some evidence to argue that intentional verbs cannot be rendered as mental states without leaving out important tenets of their grammar, as I will stress in section iii).

Wittgenstein considered understanding and belief to be dispositions which, although possessed by a subject who persists in time, are neither clockable nor time-dependent. On such a view, the central claim of Heal's realism, the claim that psychological acts are public occupants of the world, insofar as it is based on the model of physical persistence is a defective way of capturing the nature of dispositions (PI §150). While most Wittgensteinians agree that belief can be described as a cognitive ability or a disposition, they see problems to categorise psychological states as real kinds or metaphysical states brought to bear upon the world. This suggests that psychological verbs are not basic facts which can occupy some part of the world or its totality, or as it were, landmarks which go beyond the biographical or historical interest. Wittgenstein stresses that we have access to what other people thought, believed and intended in the past, not because psychological verbs are *presently* part of the *history* of the world (RPP II §18) in the same way as Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* and Mao's *Long Walk* are part of the world's history. We *presently* understand what other people thought, believed and intended because we share with them the same *grammar* rather than the same mental states. The idea is then that turning ordinary psychological verbs into metaphysical states we make them part of a whole to which they do not belong.

[4] This idea raises the question, which I cannot address here, of whether or not it is possible to deal with mental states leaving their nature undecided as I have assumed. For Wittgenstein, according to this, the talk about mental states is avowedly committed to the reduction of the psychological to neural processes.

Of course, nothing is wrong with ascribing beliefs and intentions to agents; the crucial point is how to they are characterised. Wittgenstein considers that the use of the verb 'to think' in present continuous tacitly endorses the idea that thinking is a temporally-extended activity, such as the expressions 'I'm thinking, leave me alone' or 'he was thinking about it yesterday' seem to show. Certainly, uses like these imply the free-flow of time. Whether this is the same use as 'I think that *p*' in 'I think that you've got measles' is debatable. Formulas like 'man thinks' (RPP II §14) in the context of 'natural history', and 'thinking', in the expression 'human beings think, grasshoppers don't', do not involve any temporal succession; they refer to what Wittgenstein calls 'human life' (RPP II §23): that is, a property by which human beings are cut up by putting forward what is probably their most characteristic and singular property. Thus, by giving information of what defines human beings as a species, the expression 'man thinks' countervails the effect of opposite examples. But the crucial point is that, no matter how we use the verb in everyday language, thinking is not a mental process (PI §§330-332; RPP I §§278 ff.) which is, as it were, 'amorphous in time' (BT 289).

So far I have dealt with one of the possible properties of the psychological such as time, but others like spatial location could also be shown to have similar results if psychological verbs are considered some kind of metaphysical states[5].

(iii) The picture of the two cognitive levels

Now I turn to Heal's analysis of the structure of the self-ascriptions. As I outlined in section i), the constitutive view distinguishes between a mental state of belief, which is said to yield some self-knowledge, and ordinary utterances such as '*p*', which in contrast to those beliefs do not yield self-knowledge. So while there is not any logical necessity to identify '*p*' and 'I believe that *p*', the constitutive analysis recommends the identity between any sincere belief-utterance and the state of belief in question (15). Although the logical difference between '*p*' and 'I believe that *p*' seems well-established by features of our language, some psychological verbs express both things at once (17). These verbs bring about a mental state whose judgement 'represents the world as being a certain way in representing the self as being a certain way' (17). In the

[5] 'Thinking: a process in the brain and nervous system; in the mind, in the mouth and in the larynx; on paper. Remarkably, one of the most dangerous ideas is that we think with or in our heads' (BT 173).

same guise, other psychological verbs exhibit this feature too, i.e. inasmuch as any statement of intention 'expresses a decision but should also be taken as a self-description' (18).

Suppose that in some circumstances, utterances can be one with their mental states; and let us also grant for now that such mental states are sufficient to talk of two cognitive levels. Once we have done this, how will we account for the claim, central to the constitutive view, that some propositions succeed in 'representing the self'? (17) Implicit is here the view that to retrieve a valid representation of the self, an assertion such as 'I believe that p' must advance something of the subject's mental states in the order of an extra-feature which openly exposes how the subject knows or feels.

The success of such claim will probably depend on whether psychological verbs carry self-descriptive features at all. A traditional view close to Evans's Wittgensteinian account (16-17) denies this on the basis that such verbs merely report on facts, with nothing to be said about the subject's cognitive situation. On such account, what I do when I say 'it's 3 o'clock' is to report on the fact that it is actually 3 o'clock rather than on my being in a certain cognitive state, the state which prompts me to assert, invited to it by my interlocutor, that it's 3 o'clock. On that view, we should resist the tendency to describe 'I believe that it's 3 o'clock' as 'my mind feels inclined to believe that it's 3 o'clock' or 'my current mental state indicates that it's 3 o'clock', because I might then add: 'but I don't believe it' — prompting an unwelcome case of Moore's paradox —. *Pace* Wittgenstein, 'if I say 'It's raining', I don't in general want to be answered: 'So *that's* how it seems to you'. ''We're talking about the weather', I might say, 'not about me'' (RPP I §750). He therefore considers that there is no such a thing as a mental state of belief out of which we gather that 'it's going to rain' is a belief (RPP I §704), or out of which we come to know that, when expressing *p,* we believe *p* indeed (RPP I §§62-63). 'I am sad' or 'I am terribly depressed' does express such a state (RPP I §470), but not in sentences which involve the use of psychological verbs such as 'I believe that *p*' or 'I intend to φ'. In the light of this, the presumption that 'I am terribly depressed' works as 'I believe that *p*' precludes seeing that, while a belief is an ability to give

further reasons for *p* or to assent to it in the appropriate circumstances, to be depressed is a genuine mental state for which nothing of that sort seems to be required[6].

On such a view, the sentence 'it's going to rain' will have the same meaning and use as 'I believe it's going to rain', only that in the latter, the expression 'I believe' will not be at the bottom an expression of my own state of mind as well as an expression of the fact believed (PI IIx, 190e; RPP I §821). Both 'it's going to rain' and 'I believe it's going to rain' are predictions of rain and a recognition of the defeasibility of my forecast. If this analysis is correct, what is at issue when uttering these words is neither the nature of my belief nor the facts about me which the words 'I believe' pick out[7], but what my arguments to contend that *p* is the case are. 'I believe that it's going to rain' is a factual, non-self-descriptive statement. And a similar case to that of belief can be made for hope. If 'I am hoping' is called a 'description of my state of mind', then the proposition itself amounts to the description of how *I* hope it. However, for one thing this analysis is not satisfactory:

> [t]hat sounds as if I looked into my mind and described it (as one describes a landscape). If now I say: 'I keep on hoping that he will yet come to me'— is that a piece of hoping behaviour? Isn't it as little a piece of hoping behaviour as the words 'At that time I was hoping he would come'? So should I not say that there are two kinds of present of 'hope'? One, as it were the exclamation, the other the report? (RPP I §460).

There is a possible use of the psychological verbs to describe one's own state of mind, and authors like Moran[8] and Hacker[9] have stressed it. No one will dispute that 'believing', i.e. has a first-person present tense use for reporting one's mental states, but uses like these are more specialised and less common than we may initially think (LW §50). Certainly, the instances of belief and hope presented above are not self-descriptive, for they could only be such on pain of being amenable to questions about

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[6] Some more extensive discussion on the difference between states and dispositions can be found in: White, A. R. (1982) The Nature of Knowledge (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield) 107-111; Kenny, A. J. P. (1973) Wittgenstein (London: Allen Lane) 180-187; Hacker, P. M. S. (2004) 'On the Ontology of Belief' in M. Siebel and M. Textor (eds.) *Semantik und Ontologie* (Ontos: Frankfurt) 194-202; Hunter, J. F. M. (1991) 'Wittgenstein on believing in *Philosophical Investigations,* part II, chapter 10' in R. L. Arrignton and H.-J. Glock, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: Text and Context* (London: Routledge) 227-240. I am not aware of philosophers outside the Wittgensteinian tradition who endorse this distinction.

[7] Hunter, J. F. M. (1994) 'Wittgenstein on Grammar and Essence', in S. Teghrarian (ed.), *Wittgenstein and Contemporary Philosophy* (Bristol: Thoemmes) 84.

[8] Moran, R. (2001) Authority and Estrangement (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press) 73.

[9] Hacker, P. M. S. (1993) An Analytical Commentary on the *Philosophical Investigations*, vol. 3: Meaning and Mind, Part I: Esssays (Oxford: Blackwell) 95.

how informative of ourselves such expressions are and how they succeed in describing our mental states. With this in mind, any speaker who contends that her hope expresses a sort of hopeful mental state needs to tell us exactly what she means by that.

This is, on my view, the chief challenge which any constitutivist faces. Irrespective of how we take the suggestion that psychological verbs are openly self-descriptive, the endorsement of those premises brings out an unwelcome paradox which I will call, for the argument's sake, the *commanding mental state* paradox. Here's how Wittgenstein formulates it:

> It might be said: an assertion says something about the state of mind, given that I can make inferences from it about the state of mind (…) If *that's* how it is, then the expression of a wish 'give me that apple' says something about my state of mind. And is this proposition then a description of this state? *That* one won't want to say (RPP I §463).

Wittgenstein is telling us that an imperative such as 'give me an apple' cannot be the description of the speaker's desire for an apple. For a quick listener the utterance expresses an unambiguous request; it does not express a wish, or, more startlingly, a commanding mental state in the subject's head which makes plain the necessity of expressing it. If we were to accept the thesis that 'give me an apple' means this, it would follow that the words in question would have been mysteriously commanded (!), thus giving rise to a singular and hopeless situation which the subject could make publicly manifest by asserting: 'someone has voiced a command, and it happens to be *me*[10]'.

While the idea that such an imperative can describe my wish for an apple, or else, an internal command is extremely odd, it is manifest on the belief, assailed in RPP I §463 that 'an assertion says something about the state of mind'. Yet this assumption and Heal's claim that some propositions *represent the self* (17) are not too different, especially when the proposition '*p*' is presented as different from 'I believe that *p*' in that, while the former describes the world, the latter represents it together with the self. Conceivably, a supporter of the constitutional view might reply that these arguments do

[10] Conceivably, someone could undertake a defence of the criticised line in this way. Suppose that 'give me an apple' was simply the subject's natural reaction at the realisation of her mental state, and that being this a pre-reflective act, the reaction can bear no consequence for the authoritativeness of the avowal. The defence, however, will not do, since one can always wonder whether that command was sensitive to the right context, or if, by being pre-reflective and spontaneous it was genuinely authoritative.

not do justice to the way in which a proposition represents something about ourselves or something internal. For the constitutivist is not claiming that the words ‘give me an apple’ elicit a *commanding* mental state; such words are said simply to attribute an action and a statement to a subject at once. If we grant that, the challenge for the constitutivist would then be to specify how a psychological verb can secure a representation of the self which can be independently identified from the propositional content of the sentence uttered, or at least, a representation minimally independent for it to clear the way for the logical distinction between the utterance and its corresponding mental state (15). Such a distinction is necessary to resist the suggestion — which may in some cases be true — that every assertion consists in a description of a mental state. For imperatives are utterances buttressed only by reasons which constitute *motives* to give them, and which can only be side-stepped at the loss of first-person authority. For such reason, mental states and assertions need to be cautionary kept apart, or else, invite the thought that (i) the mental state under which ‘give me that apple’ is said constitutes *itself* the command, or that (ii) this utterance is the overt expression of an imperative given for no reason.

To elude this paradox, I suggest to look at a proposition like ‘give me an apple’ or ‘I command you to give me an apple’ not as describing any mental state at all. As the analysis of ‘it’s going to rain’ shows, the words ‘I believe’ are inseparably bound up with the content *p* so that ‘I believe *p*’ comprises a minimal unit of meaning with a single referent. And to this referent, the words ‘I believe’ contribute as much as ‘*p*’.

(iv) The ‘constitution’ of beliefs and promises

Heal’s discussion becomes innovative when it expands on the role of some verbs in everyday life, and in particular on the role of performatives, verbs which singularly suit the causation theory. Among performatives, personal promises stand out for exhibiting the alleged self-descriptive role most clearly. For that, we are invited to note that promising is a peculiar sort of action. By promising, the subject sets up, as it were, the truth-makers of the terms of her promise: ‘making the statement that one fulfils the condition for promising is itself what makes that statement true’ (11). We do this in a practice which particularly suits the constitutivist’s purposes, since promising is ‘a happening which is both an action and a representation of that action’ (13). In fact it is

an action and a claim; it 'is an action inasmuch as its aetiology and consequences are those of an action. But it is also a claim that the action occurs' (13). In this promising is not equal to other authoritative verbs like believing, since believing that *p* cannot be straightforwardly reduced to the assertion 'I believe that *p*'. But it turns out that there is a way of accommodating them into the picture, for which we only need to consider that to believe that *p* is to stand in a position which normally leads to further inferences and actions consistent with it (16), that is, to intellectually proceed in a certain way.

Heal fleshes out a promise as the state which prompts subjects to promise. 'I promise to φ' seems to be the natural effect of some tendency, namely, a particular tendency to promise (upon the knowledge of some commitments) which happens to be learnable. Of course, before promising each subject must reflect on whether she should 'do something which shows in her a real tendency to φ' (11), but the training is set up to instruct inexperienced subjects in turning the inclination to φ into an authoritative promise to φ so that promising can be seen both as the result of a tendency and a reflection (11).

This analysis is thoroughly sustained by what I will call the 'causation theory', a theory under which mental states are said to come about together with utterances. The idea, which is inspired in the singular nature of promises, involves that utterances — or in the case of beliefs, its practical commitments —, being causally linked up with mental states, are sufficient to effect metaphysically changes in a subject's mental states. Accordingly, in any promise, i.e. my promise that I will buy a new house, there will always be something of ontological relevance to say about the transition from mental states on the lines of what I streamlined in section ii), namely, a transition from the state S in which I have not promised anything to S' in which I do it and thus place myself in the situation of facing up to the responsibilities which my promise at S' involves.

I have referred to this as the 'causation theory' and implicitly implied with it that utterances *cause* mental states to exist. But is Heal subscribing to it? The answer to that question requires putting together different things. If we take mental states to be valid metaphysical descriptions of a subject's cognitive attitudes, the expression of such attitudes and their putative mental state — the state to which they can be traced back — in one respect need to be causally and metaphysically different, for subjects may have reasons for not expressing some particular belief, but such reasons are different from the

reasons by which that belief may be epistemologically justified. It is natural to suppose that one and the other are different if causes play any role in the acquisition of beliefs. The metaphysical distinction between a belief and its utterance may look unproblematic, but it is at odds with what the constitutive view seeks; for Heal genuinely identifies 'what is expressed by the utterance if sincere, viz. belief that one is in the state in question, and the state itself' (15). So the view might not straightforwardly accommodate the distinction which I am suggesting, but if acquiring a belief amounts to a state of affairs which can be described as a worldly 'occupant' (3), the interplay of utterances and mental states make this distinction inevitable. To the extent that all entities are subject to the laws of cause and effect, mental states are causally active too. While arguing that mental acts can come about together with certain practices, Heal leaves their causal origin unspecified, in virtue of which we drawn to conclude that utterances *cause* self-ascriptions, and that self-ascriptions are the most prominent effect of speech acts.

In the next section I will say more about the causation theory. In the remainder of this section, I will spell out the reasons why the identification between psychological verbs and their utterance which the constitutive view recommends is not a good one. The straightforward argument in my support is that an utterance is not always identifiable with some mental state. It happens that we occasionally voice deep-seated convictions which we may have never expressed before, and not necessarily of the kind of which I cannot be authoritative for having assumed them unreflectively. The longer but perhaps more solid argument needs to explain why personal promises are not akin to beliefs in what the constitutive view assumes that they are — in their being actions —. The supposed common ground between belief and promise dissipates when promises are taken to be, as is argued, the outcome of a natural tendency to promise. A promise is authoritative when the subject knows its terms and in normal circumstances can objectively be said to be in a position to carry them out; it is then her awareness of her commitment to φ plus her being able to fulfil it what gives the promise to φ any authoritative value. By contrast, no such thing is at play with believing. While knowledge of the commitments of the belief that *p* is necessary to believe that *p,* I cannot authoritatively believe that *p* if *p* just happens not to be true. For me to be authoritative in my belief that 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' it is not sufficient to be in a

position to survey its various implications for the rest of my beliefs; first and foremost I should be able to *know* that Hesperus and Phosphorus truly are the same planet[11].

The analysis of belief and promises diverges in more respects. I agree that performatives like personal promises can partly be seen as facts or actions. We normally promise in a context in which other people are witnesses to it, being they entitled to invoke any time my having promised to φ as a warrant of my commitment to act according to the terms of my promise. If I were to show signs of unwillingness to φ, someone could tell me: 'eh, but you promised!' The fact that I promised to φ is then a crucial point in the analysis of a promise. The bad news, however, are that belief and knowledge do not seem to be actions. When we say 'I believe' or 'I know' is not to believe or to know in the way that asserting 'I promise' or 'I warn' promises and warns respectively. We say 'I promise' and 'I warn' to express that we are *promising* to φ or *warning* someone not to ψ at the time in which the relevant words are uttered. Third persons understand that my asserting them now is a criterion which fixes the time at which the promising or warning action is made. On the other hand, as A. White[12] stressed, when I claim to know, i.e. that Andrew was away last week I am not saying that I become aware of this fact as I speak; my claim gives rather to understand that I have known it for some time, being the time at which I assert it not a criterion fixing the time of my realisation. Thus, while knowledge does not make up a knowing act, promise makes up a promising act.

More elements need to come into the picture. Consider, i.e. that promises are not given at anyone's choice. Rather, a promise is expected and issued on a host of considerations which may be publicly held and which others can potentially understand. Rational subjects can be broadly said to know and assume them as such (12). These reasons will be at the centre of any personal deliberation as to whether φ. No doubt then, that if any training to drill subjects into the practice of promising can succeed, the tendency to φ cannot thwart the agent's deliberative concern with such reasons. Rather, the deliberation must take into account the relevant circumstances. Thus, relying on constitutivist assumptions we can now describe the tendency to promise to φ in a

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[11] S. Shoemaker remarks to this extent that any rational agent will answer affirmatively to it if and only if she will answer affirmatively to the question 'is it true that p?' (Shoemaker, S. (1994) 'Self-Knowledge and the Inner Sense', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54, 282).
[12] White, A. R. (1982) 111. See also Austin, J. L. (1946) 'Other Minds', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* Suppl. 20, 169-175, whose remarks on this issue were the origin of the current discussion.

different manner; i.e. we can look at this the tendency as the result of some deliberation as to whether φ, so that once the subject accepts or declines to φ, her corresponding tendencies will spur her either to accept or decline to promise. To guarantee the safe transmission of authoritativeness to any inclination or tendency I cannot see a better way.

Remove that transmission from the process of deliberation, and the promise to φ will not yield the expected result. If the agent lacks rational awareness of the terms of her promise to φ, will she still be able to authoritatively promise? This is why I am suggesting that the tendency to promise to φ may well be the result of some other mental state, such as a deliberative one, rather than of the words 'I promise to φ'. The rational deliberation prior to promising will be the state which moves a subject to promise to φ, or to follow, if she has it, the relevant tendency to promise to φ[13].

To this extent, the constitutivist's strategy, by exclusively focusing on that tendency, replaces rationality — the source of authoritativeness — by something which is not nearly rational as is the natural inclination to promise when feeling the right stimulus. Heal points out that only 'creatures who are capable of posing to themselves the question 'Should I promise?' and of carrying out the intention formed in answer to the question' (12) can engage in the practice of promising. There are good reasons, howver, to dispute the thesis that the tendency to φ is the best candidate to decide what should move us to promise. Ask a group of rational agents why they would promise to φ in a given circumstance, i.e. in case someone really needs their help. If some of these agents find that the promise in question is a valuable one, they will not appeal to their own tendency to promise as the reason why they promise to φ, but to the appropriate reasons on the basis of which their decision seems to them a reasonable and good one.

It must be said that Heal is not unaware of this circumstance. She remarks that rational deliberation is a necessary condition of the authoritativeness of any promise. She writes:

[13] Note, though that the tendency *itself* cannot be any source of authoritativeness, because the reasons to promise to φ do not originate in such a tendency, but in the deliberative awareness of the commitments to φ. Not being so, the tendency to promise to φ is lacking something essential to any promise, namely, the reasons *why* someone chooses to promise at all.

> [T]he state of mind which results from the deliberation (if its outcome is positive), together with the manifestations in the utterance 'I promise to φ', is the right kind of thing to make it true that one satisfies the condition specified in (a), i.e. promises to φ (12).

This 'state of mind', though, is a requirement for the authoritativeness of any promise which surprisingly does not show up in the constitutive view. And it is difficult to know why, since the 'state of mind' which amounts to some deliberation may well be the near cause of the inclination to promise, such a state will be at odds with the suggestion that before promising, the subject reflects as to 'whether she should (…) do something which shows in her a real tendency to φ' (11), that is, whether the agent finds in herself any inclination to it, when in fact, it should be reflecting whether the promise in question affords a real benefit to its agent and there are good reasons for it.

Stipulating such a tendency have a straightforward appeal on us, but it is not clear that in fact, the alleged tendency can be said to exist. Indeed, it may even not be necessary, since in some scenarios the agent may not be moved to promise by it. Consider i.e. the case of someone whose real complicity in a crime has been publicly revealed. Keen to reach a quick settlement, the subject is asked to promise to φ — say, to pay a certain sum — to avoid legal action. As it happens, the subject does not have a real tendency to promise to φ, but she consciously promises it in order to forgo a legal nightmare. She may not like the terms of the compensation and look at the other party with mistrust, but think that other courses of action would be far worse. In that case, we do not say that the agent gave her promise unauthoritatively, for she has long considered it and thinks that her decision (and her promise) to pay compensation is still a good one. Thus, the present case shows that despite not feeling any attraction to φ, an agent's promise can still be fully authoritative. And so, to promise to φ, far from reflecting just a personal tendency to φ, can reflect an equal tendency to shun φ. Consequently, it would be odd to argue that a promise may be the result of a tendency not to promise, or a natural inclination to avoid the course of action which that promise will bring about. Hence, any sound theory of action must admit that our inclinations cannot determine the final result of rational deliberation, or else be prepared to reasonably explain difficulties such as these[14].

[14] Hence, for a satisfactory account of why we promise we would do well in keeping tendencies aside. There seems to be some ambiguity in Heal's account. She speaks of a deliberative mental state and of a promise as playing similar roles, but does not clarify which role is given to each one of them.

Ultimately, the constitutive story presents us with a dilemma. Either the utterance 'I promise to φ' is the description of the upshot of a deliberative mental state, in which case the promise cannot be brought about by the utterance — 'the claim that the action occurs' (13) —, but by the relevant mental state, or if it is not, to promise has no characteristic state in which someone can issue a promise. The commitment to the latter, however, is bound to leave aside the role of rational deliberation in the process of decision-making — something which we probably do not want —. As a result, the constitutive view can only become more palatable by undercutting the role of reasons in the process of deliberation in favour of more congenial tendencies, but as far as I can see, this move can only be done at the loss of first-person authority[15].

(v) The fate of the 'causation theory'

The difficulties on the constitutivist analysis bring the issue back to the starting point. We started-off by discussing the ontology of psychological verbs, a question which gauges whether such verbs can resemble worldly states of affairs and thus ushers the question of how much can their authoritative use tell us about their nature. Do psychological verbs reward us with knowledge of our own cognitive attitudes?

Heal has it that while Evans's Wittgensteinian account of self-ascriptions — which holds that while uttering such verbs our gaze is fixed on the world — is as its most convincing (16-17) as regards to beliefs, the account cannot adequately handle the full complexities of performatives such as promising. Presumably, the suggestion is that by merely looking at the world the desired representation of the self cannot arise. For Heal, performatives such as promises directly or indirectly contribute to the agent's cumulative self-knowledge. In performatives the agent gets a better picture of her dispositions to act in some way. Thus, if what is proposed is that psychological verbs bring to light self-descriptive features, promising will be a way of exhibiting my conscious attitudes in a conventional way — both to other people and to myself —.

[15] My presumption is that Heal emphasises the role played by the tendency to promise to remove obstacles for the idea that promises are the effect of something factual, rather than of an element unfit for the causation theory as is the deliberative input. I can only offer it as a hypothesis.

The primary appeal of this view consists in showing that, by bringing out relevant information on ourselves, self-ascriptions are not trivial. I contested this view in section iii) by arguing that most uses of the psychological verbs do not bring to the fore the subject's attitude to *p*, attitudes that the mere assertion of '*p*' could not make equally manifest. Wittgenstein repeatedly held that verbs like 'believing' and 'thinking' do not display features intrinsic to the subject, and everything indicates that this is also the case with performatives. In other words, a promise is not primarily a way of making my dispositions manifest to other people; rather, promising describes the state of affairs which the speaker commits herself to *bring about* with her responsible effort, whether this is 'something which shows in her a real tendency to φ' (11) or not.

We are now in a better position to examine the validity of the causation theory. In section iv) I stressed that no matter how we *logically* describe the relation between first- and second-level mental states, inasmuch as it is conceded that promising prompts a new state of affairs in the subject's mind, we seem to need a metaphysical analysis of the background interplay between one's utterances and one's mental states. But can this or any other causal story of mental states as world 'occupants' (3) adequately explain the relation between what Heal calls 'mental states' and our self-ascriptions?

Ever since Frege it has standardly been argued that propositions are the expression of thoughts or that they straightforwardly express thoughts, and so did Wittgenstein, who variously illustrated Frege's original idea in his account of first-person authority. For him the claim that a proposition 'expresses' some thought does not imply that such propositions *bring about* — as if it were, mechanically — thinking, for this assumption would entail that thinking and its assertion might conceivably be hostage to odd worldly events. These would include physical or metaphysical influences which can cause sudden or non-authoritative changes to our beliefs. This is why, in outlining his understanding of the idea that propositions express thinking, he remarked:

> A thought is essentially what is expressed by a proposition, in which context 'expressed' does not mean 'brought about'. A cold is brought about, not expressed, by a cold bath (BT, 175).

The causal interaction of events needs to be kept apart from any form of authoritative assertion. Hence, if the constitutive view holds that utterances exhibit a causal effect on our beliefs, the theory seems vulnerable to the criticism that all our assertions are

hopelessly unauthoritative, or in Wittgenstein's words, that thoughts can be brought about as a cold bath brings about a bad cold. The constitutive view faces this objection and those levelled in sections ii) and iv), where I defended that the view exhibits a strong commitment to the idea that thinking can be metaphysically caused to the detriment of first-person authority. But such a commitment is absent from Wittgenstein's expressivism and this makes his account substantially different.

(vi) Why expressivism is here to stay

Admittedly, Wittgenstein's expressivism is not a fully developed theory of first-person authority. It is indeed of no surprise that specialists have not always found in it much explanatory value, while some of its deficiencies have shown that its problems cannot be easily circumvented. I will attempt now to outline the reasons why some of those claims, which Heals finds cogent enough to accept, may rest on a false assumption.

Heal presents 'a crude version of expressivism' as denying 'all the appearances including the appearance that an avowal such as 'I believe that *p*' has the truth conditions that I believe that *p*' (8). This version of expressivism is indeed strong, because it denies that, in a non-deceptive scenario, any authoritative assertion derives from a genuine psychological verb. In effect, when the normally reliable link between a belief and its corresponding assertion is called into question, there stands no particular reason to think that such an assertion can be authoritative. And it looks as if Wittgenstein would have been too complacent when he claimed that 'a proposition, and hence in another sense a thought, can be the 'expression' of belief, hope, expectation, etc.' (PI §574), from which it has commonly been assumed that he is an expressivist *tout court.* On such a view, it has been said that 'self-ascriptions variously describe states of belief, desire, pain or joy'[16], according to the proposition in question.

This brand of expressivism has been accused of irresponsible thinking, for it misses out the threat lying on the idea, working behind sections of PI such as §244, that pain can be expressed in various ways, such as in a cry or in any other form of pain-behaviour, including among those a proposition. As Wittgenstein put it: 'the scream as an

[16] Jacobsen, R. (1996) 'Wittgenstein on Self-Knowledge and Self-Expression', *Philosophical Quarterly* 46, 19.

expression of pain, the proposition as an expression of thought' (BT, 175). He honestly invites us to consider an assertion as the natural expression of a thought or the way in which a thought gets expressed. However, if that expression does not differ from any other expression of pain, the transmission of authoritativeness to the assertion may well be unreflective, as in the case of someone who exclaims: 'ouch' when she accidentally knocks her head. The suggestion that an involuntary expression of pain works as far more circumspect assertions such as a promise or an oath — practices in a high degree of authoritativeness — makes it particularly hard to separate the two cases. Some authors have thought accordingly that if states of belief, desire and the like are to be on the same footing as a cry, expressivism cannot simply be accommodated in truth-conditional semantics. The expressivist should get a better grasp of the apparent disjunction between her mental acts and their propositional expression for us to do any philosophy of language with it. Heal notes how 'an expressivist option is particularly attractive here and why it fails' (5).

Whilst the weakness of the theory looks very evident, the common interpretation of Wittgenstein's expressivism is startlingly flawed at another level. In section ii) I have argued against the idea that thoughts are events or occurrences of the kind of mental states. In essence, metaphysicians deem mental states to be basic or elementary states stand in some form of relation with our psychological verbs. In Heal, they are thought to be brought about by self-ascriptions, but we may equally look at their mental occurrence, which — one could think — might be accompanied by words or not, depending on the speaker. Ultimately, while expressivism is accused of failing to secure a safe link between mental states and assertions in a way in which asserting *p* resembles an involuntary cry, this objection is often raised without considering that the situation is very different when mental states are out of the stage. If Wittgenstein's criticisms are successful, once we reject the existence of brute or elementary thoughts such as mental states, it comes as natural to rule out with them meaningful thinking out of the realm of propositions. It is a core Wittgensteinian idea that language and thought share the same boundaries, and that no satisfactory view can successfully postulate, as the realism of the psychological does, that thinking can constitute an episode freely detachable from the rules of grammar (RPP II §213). Of knowledge, for instance, Wittgenstein said that it is not a phenomenon 'quite apart from the sense of the sentence 'I know'' (RPP II §303), be it conceived as a non-grammatical brute metaphysical state or as a brain-

pattern. For him, psychological states are not articulated in higher and metaphysically-explanable mental levels. He writes:

> If thought were not already articulated, how could expressing it by means of language articulate it? Rather, an articulated thought is essentially a proposition (BT, 175).
>
> Everything is carried out in language (BT, 283).

In other words, for him any form of authoritative expression must be propositional. It can certainly be questioned whether thought and language mutually relate as Wittgenstein thought, but if these observations are correct, epistemology cannot any longer be a theory of phenomena which occur contemporarily to thinking, as if originally cast in the far side of our mental spectrum to be propositionally processed somewhere else. For one thing he insisted that language, inasmuch as it effectively convey ideas, can be called an 'instrument' at the service of thinking or 'the instrument of thought', provided that no one come to understand the role of language as merely instrumental to thinking (BT 176)[17].

Authors like Wright[18] and Jacobsen notoriously read Wittgenstein as endorsing an expressivism built into some theory of mental or psychological states, and Heals assesses expressivism rather similarly. She notes that 'the strong version of expressivism, applied to promises, denies that they have truth conditions at all' (8). Yet readings such as these rely on the assumption that thinking is a phenomenon describable as a mental state which exhibits ontological properties. But if we relinquish mental states and check our theory again we will see that there is nothing strictly speaking *metaphysical* to which an assertion may *give expression;* assertions, as Wittgenstein would say, do not 'express' thinking throughout any medium, but straightaway. Accordingly, while Wright's and Jacobsen's position can only be true in the context of a theory of mental states which find linguistic expression, I have defended that no such a theory is germane to Wittgenstein's intentions, so that out of the mental states scenario it is reasonable to think that there is no threat for the authoritativeness of first-person expressions in truth-conditional theory. In the mental states scenario, in turn, this threat

[17] The mistake in question is to see it as 'the carrier of thought, as, for example, the notes of a song might be called the carriers of the words' (RPP II §8; see PI §673).
[18] Wright, C. (2001) 'The Problem of Self-Knowledge', *Rails to Infinity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) 344-373.

is not imaginary but real, and it brings a host of problems of authoritativeness as those inherent to the naïve expressivism, lucidly raised by Wright and Heal[19].

Now the central question is another one, namely, what sort of proposition Wittgenstein had in mind when he calls it the 'expression' of thought and distinguishes it from a cry (PI §317). This question undeniably needs careful consideration. But if my analysis is correct, that question will be made simpler by understanding expressivism rightly.

[8,516 words]

It looks, however, as if the constitutivist is under pressure to deliver self-descriptive features, that is to say, features which expose the subject's state of mind (17). For we may need to bring to light what is only in the agent as an intention, but this has to be harmonised with the fact that 'uttering 'I promise' cannot be the upshot of inspection to see whether the truth conditions of the utterance hold' (11). In other words, the self-representing features need to come out naturally, without resort to any inward look. To meet the demands of this constraint is the job of the causation theory, which seeks the origin of mental states in the utterances which cause them to be.

Once the concept of mental states is cleared, the premise under which expressivism rests can be overturned. Now there will be no states of which any proposition is an expression. Not because PI 574 is not right, but because the assumption that 'self-ascriptions variously describe states of belief, desire, pain or joy', based on which Heals debunks expressivism, is not a Wittgensteinian thesis. As Wittgenstein emphatically stresses, there is no need of placing a state between words and beliefs: 'one can believe with words' (BT 290). If the distinction can be allowed, psychological verbs are thoughts and thought-expressions at the same time. A different one is the question of whether that thought is given any expression and that expression is made available to third-persons. Thinking is not a mental sate and in most circumstances, it lacks any metaphysical structure, by contrast i.e. with a cry of pain (PI §319), where the expression of pain and the phenomena are the same too, but mediated by a state which is fully-physical. This is why, in the cv, the distinction of 'cognitive levels', where 'p'

[19] But it also affects the causation theory, since inasmuch as it is founded in a two-level theory of mental states, it sets up a dualism of states and utterances which is inherently problematic.

and ‘I believe that p’ are said to be at cognitive levels, builds its scope on the model of physical states like pain.

I am aware of the difficulties of my position with respect non-conceptual content.

[They convey *objective* features of the world or the subject which back my disposition, or which, in another sense, make it a reasonable disposition to be held. So it appears that assertions of belief, of hope and commands resist their characterisation as self-descriptive in the way in which the constitutive view characterises them.]

[The fact that I promise cannot cast lights on how the subject feels about the terms of the promise. And so happens with other authoritative verbs. Compare promising with intending. Except for the fact that a promise cannot be privately given, the fulfilment of a promise is analogous to the satisfaction of an intention. In contrast with promises, which need to be given to someone else, they can often be privately intimated by the subject. But they are like them in that they are always conceived on the basis of some reasons. ‘I intend to φ’ is an authoritative intention if resting on a belief which gives my intention some credit].

[We need first to consider that a thought is not expressed by a proposition in a derivative way, as it were, once the thinking has done its job. For Wittgenstein, thoughts are not fully-formed without propositions (RPP II 303); language is precisely the vehicle of thought (BT 283). Only when thoughts are considered events or occurrences which can be accompanied by words or not, Wittgenstein’s point about the necessity of psychological verbs to form a particular belief is missed. ‘One can believe with words’ (BT, 290). Essentially, the belief is the proposition ‘I believe that *p*’, whether or not the speaker utters that proposition. Therefore, it is surprising to construe expressivism as stating that a proposition is expression of thought already happened with which it will be now contingently connected. Only under the idea that psychological verbs are mental states which can be expressed as propositions can this assumption make sense. ‘I believe that *p*’ could lose its authoritativeness for a sleepwalker or someone who does not believe that *p.* In most cases, that assertion does not express a mental state, or as it were, something occurred in my mind before I assert it. On the contrary, *p* itself is part of the belief that *p.]*

without the truth-conditions think that a proposition can express an internal proposition. One wonders In section ii) I have extensively argued that psychological verbs are not mental states. Understanding thoughts as mental events can the objection to expressivism succeed.

In the second section I argued that the notion of mental states precludes the understanding of psychological verbs grammatically rather than metaphysically. In the third section, I stressed the difficulties of conceiving utterances as self-descriptions. In the last one, I claim that the analysis of promises as tendencies hinges on mental states as cause of such tendencies, thereby undermining the causation theory. It follows that assertions of belief,. These assertions, I argue, are statements about states of affairs without having to be deprived from the occurrence of mental events; they are not internally constituted in the way in which physical phenomena are constituted, and for this reason Wittgenstein argues that they cannot break down into metaphysical concepts such as that of 'mental states', on pain of giving up the authoritativeness which the constitutivist is seeking to explain.

Thus it has turned out that mental states are the first obstacle to first-person authority, because this notion is hostage to the designation of a metaphysical entity rather than of a grammatical expression, and that consequences from that assumption follow. For one thing Wittgenstein claimed that the notion of 'mental states' invites to take the psychological for what it is not. Inevitably, when this conception is bound with the causation theory the analysis of the psychological is compromised. Surely Heal's attempts to forgo common mistakes about first-person authority deserve some credit, but if we need a better notion of that authority mental states seem not the way.

however, makes M a different state of subjects; in order to explain this contingency it could argue that M1 and M2 are the same mental state in S1 and S2, but it can only do

so at the cost of overriding the first-person perspective. It requires then some presupposition of the uniformity of thought, the idea that states need not be perspectival, to maintain that the possession of beliefs requires subjects to be in the same mental state M, because the objective approach to psychological verbs wipes out the asymmetry of perspectives.

[that state We we should acknowledge in them patterns of temporality such as in grammar, the look at first-person present-tense psychological verbs as metaphysical states M seems insufficient to perceive what is at issue in epistemological contexts. There seem to be a question as to whether verbs can be analysed in term of states (PI §151a); especially, it is unclear what links the state M with the subject's own perspectival view when, to express her beliefs, she articulates it with 'I', 'she' or 'he'. In the absence of a theory of mental states that can explain it, it can be questioned whether or not a proposition provide enough evidence to justify the claim that subjects are in metaphysically distinctive states M when they have some belief, states which may be radically different from each other when subjects hold opposite views, and be absent when no known subject seem to be in the state M.]

In Heal, the reduction of dispositions to mental states posits unnecessary risks in the domain of the psychological, especially when the resulting picture — the mental states M to which any belief that *p* conforms considerations of perspectives aside — is one in which, in order to understand those states, we tend to focus our interest 'on the inner, as if on the chemical structure from which behaviour issues' (RPP II §643).

iii) The law of the uniformity of the psychological

In this section I will advance a brief argument to show that Heal's recommended realism can only accommodate mental states as uniform states. It is a fact that grammatical rules are sufficiently fine-grained to distinguish between first and third-person perspective by the use of operators like 'I', 'he' or 'she'. However, the concept of 'states' does not seem to reflect such asymmetry in the same way. Consider that

(1) 'she believes that *p*', and
(2) 'I believe that *p*'

Are under some aspect the same belief, namely, the belief that *p,* cast only on different perspectives; to that expect it is plain that both she and me abide to the same proposition. Grammar acknowledges the identity of the content *p* in (1) and (2), but it also accommodates their perspectival difference by showing what is self-evident, that is, that, in spite of conveying the same thought, (1) and (2) are not the same proposition and are not interchangeable. The realism of the mental, which assigns (1) and (2) two different mental states, faces a dilemma in order to accommodate this difference. Ultimately, if (1) and (2) are propositions of S, they are not reason to suppose that the metaphysical description of both sentences is up to reflect their asymmetry, since the analysis of both mental states is carried out from a first-person perspective. It follows that in the best scenario, (1) and (2) will be rendered in the first-person perspective by turning them in high-order ascriptions of the propositions in question:

(3) I believe that 'she believes that *p*'
(4) I believe that 'I believe that *p*'

which could be abbreviated:

(3a) I believe that *q*
(4a) I believe that *r*

Consequently, the perspectival asymmetry of (1) and (2) is wiped out on the realist assumption that (1) and (2) constitute two different mental states. By (5) and (6) the unity of the content *p* splits up in the contents *q* and *r,* with no possibility of suggestion that $q = r$, and hence that they both are equal to *p.* The realism of mental states gives us a too sweeping description when it categorises the difference between (1) and (2) as the difference between two mental states M and M* attributable to the subject S.