

Preface

For the past two decades, Mitchell S. Green (2003; 2007; 2009; 2019a) has been developing an original model of self-expression, the central idea of which is that expressing, understood as a behavior whereby we make our mental states public, is a species of signaling. In other words, in expressing ourselves we both show and signal our introspectable states. According to Green (2009, 141-143), to show something is to make it knowable to an appropriate observer. A signal, in turn, is defined as a “feature of an entity that conveys information (including misinformation) and that was designed for its ability to convey that information.” (Green 2007, 26-27)

Next, to account for our tendency to take some natural objects and artefacts as if they expressed emotions, feelings and moods, Green distinguishes between *expressing* a mental state and *being expressive* of it. Unlike expression, expressiveness is not factive. For instance, my sneer expresses my contemptuous attitude towards what my interlocutor has said

in that it both signals and shows my actual mental state. However, a sneer can be expressive of contempt independently of the current feelings and emotions of the sneering agent. According to Green (*Ibid.*, 40) “[t]his evidently means that his face has a configuration that would typically be used by one who is expressing their contempt.” Next, Green (*Ibid.*, 178-180) refers to the phenomenon of cross-modal congruence and put forth a hypothesis according to which it plays a key role in the mechanism underlying our practice of attributing expressiveness to natural objects, artefacts, and art works.

The above-mentioned notions of signalling and showing play a key role in Green’s (2007) signalling model of communication, within which he develops a three-part account of speaker meaning. Green distinguishes between acts of *factual*, *objectual*, and *illocutionary* speaker meaning and claims that to speaker-mean an item—a fact, an object, or a commitment, respectively—is to signal and overtly show it. For instance, to



factually speaker mean that p is to perform an action with an intention that in performing it, first, one enables knowledge about the fact that p in an appropriately endowed receiver and, second, makes it manifest that one has *this* intention; by analogy, to speaker mean φ 'ly that p —where ' φ ' stands for a certain illocutionary force—is to perform an action intending that, first, one makes it knowable that one is committed to the proposition that p under force φ and, second, makes it manifest that one has *this* intention. Green's notion of speaker-meaning, which is an alternative to Grice's original definition of non-natural meaning, can be easily integrated within the framework of the signalling model of communication and successfully used in theorising about the evolutionary emergence of uniquely human communicative skills.

In "Speech Acts, the Handicap Principle and the Expression of Psychological States", Green (2009) uses the framework of the evolutionary biology of communication to account for the expressive dimension of speech acts, i.e., their power to express the mental states that are their sincerity condition. He argues that expressive illocutions—i.e., speech acts that allow for insincerity—are handicaps: signals difficult to fake in virtue of being costly to produce.

More specifically, Green claims that assertions, requests, promises, etc. are subject to expressive norms. As the corollary of this, a speaker who performs an expressive speech act incurs the risk of a loss of credibility; for instance, a speaker who asserts that p incurs the cost of closing off the option of not having the belief that p without exposure to the risk of being accused of insincerity.

In his more recent paper entitled "Organic Meaning: An Approach to Communication with Minimal Appeal to Minds", Green (2019b) introduces the notion of organic meaning which significantly enhances the explanatory power of the signalling model of communication. He discusses a number of examples of organic meaning and argues that they can be regarded as intermediate forms between mere natural signs and acts of intentional and inferential communication. According to him, communicative transactions involving organic meaning do not require from their participants the ability to form and reason about intentions and other propositional attitudes. Green concludes that the notion of organic meaning enables us to solve the so-called *cognitive load* problem, i.e., it enables us to fill in the gap between the rich communicative skills of humans and those of our extant evolutionary relatives.

Green has also contributed to the development of the common-ground model of communication. In (Green 2017a) he argues that the common-ground framework, which has been originally devised and used by Robert Stalnaker (1998, 2014) to explain the functioning of assertions, can be extended to account for acts of asking a question. According to Stalnaker (1998, 5-6), the context of a conversation can be defined as a context set: the set of all possible worlds that are compatible with the body of information that the conversing agents mutually take for granted or, in other words, that are compatible with the propositions that constitute their common ground. An assertion, in turn, is understood as a proposal to reduce the context set by eliminating from it the worlds in which the asserted proposition is false. Stalnaker (2014, 141) also suggests that to ask a question is to put forth a proposal to divide the context set into partitions representing alternative answers to it. Like asserted propositions, than, asked questions can be accepted by conversing agents and absorbed into the common ground. Following this suggestion, Green develops a common-ground model of communication that accounts for acts of making an assertion as well as for acts of asking a question: to accept a question as a common ground

component—i.e., to take it to be “a question worthy of investigation” (Green 2017a, 1591)—is “a matter of (...) structuring those worlds in a certain way” (*Ibid.*).

Green (2017a; 2019a; 2021) also argues that the common-ground framework can be further elaborated to accommodate what he calls the teleological perspective on conversation. Adopting this perspective, he arrives at a taxonomy of conversation types that are defined by reference to their purposes and the distribution of roles or, in other words, ‘illocutionary entitlements’ among the conversing agents. Using the first criterion, he distinguishes between inquiries and deliberations, i.e., between conversations aimed at determining how things are and conversations whose purpose is to formulate a course of action. Next, taking into account the conversational roles of the participants in a dialogue—i.e., the relations between their conversational goals and the distribution of their ‘illocutionary entitlements’ to add propositions or questions to the common ground—he distinguishes between symmetrical, didactic asymmetrical, and socratic asymmetrical conversations. Participants in a symmetrical conversation are allowed to make the same types of conversational moves; “in didactic conversations, [in turn,] one interlocutor aims

to lead others to accept an answer to a practical or theoretical question about which the speaker may already have an opinion or plan, while in Socratic conversations, an interlocutor aims to lead others to answers by helping them to formulate their own views or plans of action.” (Green 2017a, 1595)

The above-mentioned ideas of self-expression, expressiveness, signalling communication, speech acts as handicaps, organic meaning, and conversation types are systematically discussed in the papers collected in the present volume.

Stina Bäckström in “Must expression be instrumental?” critically examines Green’s (2007) model of self-expression. She argues that Green adopts the ‘instrumental perspective’, the central idea of which is that expression is a means for transmitting information about mental states from one organism to the other. Bäckström contrasts the instrumental perspective with an alternative approach, which she calls the ‘descriptive perspective’ and articulates with the help of Merleau-Ponty and Wittgenstein. She argues that it is the descriptive view, not the instrumental one, that enables us to account for manifesting emotions, feelings, attitudes, and thoughts that are formed and take shape in novel forms of expression.

Viewed from the instrumental perspective, expression is an information-transferring process that enables knowledge of one’s mental states. For instance, Green (2007) takes smiles, frowns, yelps, gestures, and other expressive manifestations of what is within to be signals: behavioral or physiological traits that were designed for their ability to convey the information that they do. According to the descriptive perspective, by contrast, expression is best understood as an essential aspect of the *mode of being* of human agents and other sentient creatures.

Bäckström argues that Green’s instrumentalist model makes no room for cases in which sentient and thinking agents express thoughts that are formed in the course of being expressed. One example of such a situation comes from George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*: Rosamond Vincy twists her neck and thereby expresses her obstinacy and determination. Discussing this example, Green (2007, 142) finds it difficult to account for Rosamond’s twist of the neck as a case of signaling and, by the same token, as a case of expressing. According to Bäckström, however, the twist is a genuine expression even though it cannot be regarded as a signal, i.e., as a sign designed for its ability to convey Rosamond’s obstinacy. Bäckström claims that the case under

discussion constitutes a counterexample to Green's theory, according to which to design the twist as an expressive signal Rosamond would have to access her obstinacy independently of the piece of behavior she used to manifest it; the obstinacy, however, takes shape in the twist construed as a novel form of expression.

According to the descriptive perspective, by contrast, embodying or manifesting mental states that take shape in being expressed constitute the most fundamental cases of expression. This is not to say that descriptivist models make no room for instrumental expression. For instance, Merleau-Ponty's theory of expression allows for instrumental cases (e.g., the 'second-order-speech'). Nevertheless—Bäckström argues—Merleau-Ponty took genuinely novel expressions (e.g., the 'first-hand' speech) to be primitive and paradigmatic. In a similar vein, Wittgenstein argued that to have pain is to express it. In sum, being expressed is a characteristic mode of existence of mental states. Expressing is not a matter of manifesting an independently existing mental states; rather, it is a matter of constituting the expressed states.

Marina Bakalova in "The Epistemic Value of Music" argues that music enables us to acquire knowledge of the phenomenal character of real or

imaginary inner states that cannot be easily gained otherwise; in other words, due to its unique expressive dimension—which she calls *musical expressiveness*—music has epistemic value. It is instructive to stress that Bakalova adopts Green's (2007) distinction between expressing a state and being expressive of it and claims that what a piece of music is expressive of—that is, what it 'expresses' in the ordinary sense of this word—is not necessarily what its composer or performer intends to express.

Bakalova also argues that thanks to their expressive function, pieces of music can evoke concepts that cannot be expressed verbally, e.g., 'elegance', 'lyricism', 'drama', 'nostalgia', and 'melancholy'. According to Bakalova, a piece of music that expresses certain inner experiences can convey to its listener a concept whose content relates to how these experiences feel like. What is more, it can express the concept in question more fully than it can be done with the help of a verbal phrase that stands for it. As a result, the listener can gain new knowledge which enables her to harbour emotions or other phenomenal states which she has never experienced before.

To account for the above mentioned expressive powers of music, Bakalova adopts Green's (2007) multi-space model of artistic expressions and

argues that it allows us to explain how a sound sequence can display phenomenal characteristics. Viewed from the perspective of this model, a piece of music can be represented by a trajectory of expressive stimuli in a multidimensional space involving the time dimension. The piece so represented can be regarded as expressing a mental episode construed as a temporal sequence of phenomenal states that flow one into the other only if the trajectory and the episode occupy roughly the same region of the multidimensional space. In other words, the piece of music can enable qualitative knowledge about the episode—that is, it can show an appropriately endowed listener how this episode feels (see Green 2007: 48 and 2009: 142)—provided there is a sufficient overlap between the regions they occupy.

Maciej Witek in “Self-expression in speech acts” discusses Green’s (2007) notion of self-expression and examines the role it plays in his model of illocutionary communication (Green 2009; 2019a). He suggests that Green’s three-part model of speaker-meaning can be extended by introducing the notion of proto-illocutionary speaker-meaning, which is necessary to account for cases of overtly showing general commitments that are not ‘marked’ as being specific to one or another illocutionary force.

He also argues that the model of expressive norms presented in (Green 2009) involves a kind of circularity. Green claims, namely, that expressive norms enable us to indicate the force of a speech act—i.e., “how what is said is to be taken and what would count as an appropriate reply” (2009, 160)—by showing the psychological states that constitutes its sincerity condition. At the same time, however, Green asks the following question: “How can the use of an illocutionary force constitute strong enough evidence of a psychological state to enable knowledge in an appropriate observer—that is to express that state?” (*Ibid.*, 148). In other words, Witek concludes, Green seems to assume that the use of a force shows a certain psychological state and thereby indicates itself. Finally, Witek elaborates on the idea of discourse-constituted thoughts (Jaszczolt and Witek 2018)—or, in other words, thoughts that exist in virtue of being expressed—and argues that it can be regarded as a useful amendment to Green’s model of expressive illocutions. More specifically, he distinguishes between (*i*) expressing with the thinking-to-speaking direction of influence and (*ii*) expressing with the speaking-to-thinking direction of influence or, in other words, between (*i*) expressing discourse-independent thoughts and (*ii*) expressing discourse-

constituted thoughts. According to Witek, the notion of discourse-constituted thoughts—together with the corresponding idea of expressing with the speaking-to-thinking direction of influence—enables us to arrive at a more comprehensive account of self-expression in illocutionary communication.

Mateusz Włodarczyk in “Limitations of non-Gricean approaches to the evolution of human communicative abilities” discusses Green’s (2017b; 2019b) conception of organic meaning and Dorit Bar-On’s (2013) model of expressive communication. What these two proposals have in common is that they describe forms of non-Gricean communication. Gricean communication is both intentional and inferential. By contrast, organisms participating in communicative transactions involving cases of organic meaning as well as animals producing and reading expressive signals do not have to form audience-directed intentions and reason about mental states of others.

According to Green and Bar-On, the models they offer are not only adequate descriptions of non-Gricean forms of communication to be found among humans and non-human animals, but also provide an adequate basis for explaining the phylogenetic and ontogenetic emergence of uniquely human communicative

skills. More specifically, Green and Bar-On take cases of organic meaning and expressive signals, respectively, to be intermediate stages between cases of natural meaning and acts of speaker meaning. In other words, they use their models of non-Gricean communication to solve the *cognitive load* problem. According to Włodarczyk, the solutions they propose are non-Gricean in that they use their models of non-intentional and non-inferential communication to develop a plausible explanation of the evolutionary emergence of ostensive-intentional communication; by contrast, Gricean accounts of the evolution of human communicative abilities posit the class of ‘attenuated’ or ‘minimally Gricean’ (Moore 2016) acts and argue that they constitute an intermediate form between cases of natural meaning and acts of fully-fledged Gricean communication.

Włodarczyk claims that the non-Gricean evolutionary accounts based on the notions of organic meaning and expressive communication fail to provide a sufficient basis for explaining the evolutionary emergence of uniquely human communicative skills. To justify his view, he refers to Niko Tinbergen’s (1963) ‘four questions’ model of ethological explanation and argues that Green and Bar-On, who focus on the adaptive function of non-intentional forms of

communication, ignore questions about their underlying mechanisms, ontogeny and phylogeny. Next, Włodarczyk argues that examples of organic meaning examined by Green, rather than constituting intermediate forms between natural and non-natural meaning, are best understood as special cases of natural meaning. Finally, he discusses communicative gestures and verbal acts whereby one agent directs the attention of the other towards an external entity or event. According to Tomasello (2010), such triadic interactions are hallmarks of human communication. It turns out, however, that most examples of expressive signals and organic meaning discussed by Bar-On and Green, respectively, are dyadic rather than triadic. For this reason—Włodarczyk concludes—non-Gricean models developed by Green and Bar-On fails to offer a plausible reconstruction of the evolutionary transition from dyadic to triadic forms communication.

Felix Bräuer in “Common Ground, Conversational Roles and Epistemic Injustice” takes up the suggestion made by Green in “Conversation and Common Ground” to the effect that his extended common-ground framework can shed light on the phenomenon of conversational injustice. It is instructive to note, however, that Bräuer uses Miranda

Fricker’s (2007) term ‘epistemic injustice’, which stands for situations in which a speaker is unfairly discriminated against in his or her capacity as a knower based on prejudices about him or her; by analogy, we can speak of conversational injustice when a speaker is discriminated in that his or her capacity as a conversational agent is unjustly curtailed.

Bräuer distinguishes between three varieties of epistemic or conversational injustice: testimonial, inquiring and interpretative injustice. What they have in common is that their victims are, due to some negative identity stereotypes against them, unfairly curtailed in their ability to add to the common ground in the way intended by them. A speaker who suffers testimonial injustice is unjustly prevented from updating the common ground with the proposition she asserts; even though her utterance is taken to be an assertion, the proposition she expresses is not accepted due to a negative stereotype against her. By analogy, a speaker who suffers inquiring injustice is unfairly prevented from adding the question she asks to the common ground; as a result, her attempt to shape the course of the inquiry is unfairly thwarted: her question, though recognized and understood, is not accepted as something worthy of investigation. What Bräuer calls interpretative

injustice, in turn, consists in unjustly misunderstanding the force and meaning of the speaker's utterance or in misinterpreting the attitude expressed by her.

Bräuer discusses three examples of epistemic or conversational injustice. Using elements of Green's model of conversation types, he also argues that epistemic injustice plays a key role in the subordinating mechanisms that impairs the conversational agency of its victims: a speaker who suffers testimonial, inquiring, or interpretative injustice is curtailed in his or her ability to play a symmetrical role in the language game he or she participates in. Epistemic injustice, then, inflicts conversational harms on its victim and—Bräuer argues—has dehumanizing effects in that it compromises the speaker's conversational capacities which are crucial to his or her identity as a human being.

Marcin Lewiński in "Conclusions of Practical Argument: A Speech Act Analysis" uses a speech-act theoretic framework (Fogal et al. 2018; Green 2009; 2018; 2020) to account for a variety of illocutionary acts that conclude practical arguments. It is commonly agreed that conclusions of theoretical reasoning are expressed by speech acts belonging to what Green (2009, 160) calls the 'assertive family': assertions, conjectures, suggestions,

educated guesses, suppositions, and the like. What they have in common is that they have the words-to-world direction of fit and involve commitment to a propositional content; however, "[t]hey differ from one another in the norms by which they are governed, and thereby in the nature of that commitment." (Green 2009, 157) According to Lewiński, a distinctive feature of practical arguments is that their conclusions are expressed by what he calls *action-inducing speech acts*: illocutions with the world-to-words direction of fit that involve commitment to or at least putting forth a future action. Depending on the agent of the action induced, Lewiński distinguishes between three types of action-inducing illocutions: *commissives*, *directives*, and their *hybrids* such as proposals and offers. A commissive takes effect by committing the speaker or a group to which she belongs to a future action, whereas the performance of a directive counts as an attempt to get or even oblige the addressee or a third party to a certain future action; a hybrid speech act—i.e., the illocution that combines commissive and directive elements—takes effect as an attempt to get or even oblige both the speaker and her addressee to the joint performance of a future collective action. Moreover, Lewiński argues that action-inducing acts differ

also with respects to their illocutionary strength; in particular, the strength with which a given speech act presents its illocutionary point—i.e., the inducing of a future action—can vary from weak through neutral to strong. As a result, Lewiński arrives at a three-by-three matrix that enables him to distinguish between nine types of speech acts that can be used to express conclusions of practical argumentation. To demonstrate the explanatory power of his taxonomy of action-inducing speech acts, he uses it to account for arguments and illocutions to be found in the Guardian’s campaign to disinvest fossil fuels.

It is instructive to stress that in developing his model Lewiński adopts an argumentative perspective on reasoning (Mercier and Sperber 2011), the central idea of which is that the structure of a reasoning construed as a cognitive process is constituted in the course and for the sake of argumentative practice. In particular, Lewiński claims that “[p]ractical discourse (practical argumentation, deliberative practices) is (...) not only a

display mechanism for inner practical reasoning but also an important entry point into the elements and standards of practical reasoning” (Lewiński 2021, 434). For this reason, Lewiński’s externalist model of practical argumentation, together with his taxonomy of action-inducing illocutions, can be regarded as an substantial contribution to the discussion on the expressive dimension of communicative practice (Green 2007 and 2009).

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Maciej Witek

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