Illocutionary Disagreement in Faultless Disagreement

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Abstract: The debates over the problem of faultless disagreement have played a major role in shaping the landscape of today's semantic theories. In my paper, I argue that even though the existent contextualism-friendly proposals explain a lot of disagreement data by specifying various ways in which speakers may use subjective predicates, neither provides a satisfactory account which would explain what all the subjective disagreements have in common. In particular, what is lacking is an explanation of the persistent autocentric cases (Lasersohn 2004), i.e., disagreements in which each speaker utters a subjective sentence while openly and knowingly occupying his or her own perspective. In my paper, I offer a solution which consists in supplementing the standard contextualist semantics with an explanation of this most problematic class of cases, which is possible due to redescribing the phenomena in speech act nomenclature.

Keywords: Contextualism; commitment; faultless disagreement; speech act theory; value terms.

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1. Introduction

Faultless disagreement (FD), as the name itself suggests, is such a conversation that gives rise to two intuitions: (1) that the speakers are disagreeing and (2) that neither of the speakers has made a mistake in uttering what they have uttered (Kölbel 2004, Lasersohn 2005). Such impressions arise, among other situations,[1] in relation to discussions about aesthetic, moral or gustatory value, e.g.:

> [Dialogue 1]
> Amy: Brussels sprouts are tasty.
> Betty: No, Brussels sprouts are not tasty at all.

These two intuitions are arguably in a kind of tension—generally, on some pre-theoretical construal of the terms 'fault' and 'disagreement', if two speakers really disagree (that is, they are not mistaken about what the other one is saying and the dispute is not merely verbal), one of them must be wrong. If nobody is wrong, then the dispute cannot be a real disagreement (Boghossian 2006, Glanzberg 2007, Stojanovic 2007). This tension is particularly noticeable in discussions concerning the objective realm, where disagreement is typically construed as a situation in which one speaker expresses some proposition *p*, while the other expresses either the negation of this very proposition or some proposition which entails its negation. Faultlessness, on the other hand, is understood as saying something true—that is, something that is in agreement with the facts. Clearly then, in discussions about *objective* facts, faultlessness entails lack of disagreement and *vice versa*, so in any given situation either the speakers are disagreeing or they are faultless, but not both. Many authors believe, however, that value disagreements are different in this respect. In their case no priority can be given to either of the competing intuitions and, consequently, an adequate account of evaluative language should be able to explain both of them. The problem is that in many cases, a theory which provides a plausible account of the semantic content of value sentences, which, in my opinion, requires

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[1]   Some authors believe that FD intuitions arise also in conversations involving vague descriptive predicates or epistemic modals (e.g., Dietz 2008, Richard 2008, Stephenson 2007).

also the ability to account for the faultlessness appearances, has trouble explaining the disagreement intuitions in equally robust semantic terms. Since (1) and (2) are difficult to reconcile within standard accounts of the semantics of such sentences, faultless disagreements have constituted a much-discussed challenge to contemporary theories of meaning.

It seems that nowadays there are three main contenders that, sometimes forming alliances, have something interesting to say about disagreements involving value: contextualism, relativism and expressivism.[2] Additionally, there are many pragmatic, metalinguistic and hybrid accounts which offer alternative explanations of the phenomenon. In my paper, I claim that even though the existent proposals explain a lot of disagreement data by speci-fying various ways in which speakers may use evaluative predicates, they do not focus on providing a satisfactory explanation of the persistent auto-centric cases (Lasersohn 2004), i.e., disagreements in which each speaker utters a subjective sentence while openly and knowingly occupying his or her own perspective. To remedy that, I offer a solution which consists in supplementing the standard contextualist semantics with an explanation of this most problematic class of cases, which becomes possible due to a rede-scription of the phenomena using the speech act nomenclature. In section 2, I briefly discuss the problem that FD poses for contextualism. Further, I briefly talk about some accounts which aim at explaining disagreement intuitions without giving up a contextualist semantics and I claim that they do not provide a satisfactory account of persistent autocentric cases. In section 3, I argue that value terms are systematically used to perform non-assertive speech acts—praise and disapproval, which form the class of eval-uations. Further, I describe a new notion of disagreement—illocutionary disagreement—and I show how it can account for FD intuitions. Addition-ally, I propose a characterization of evaluations as a separate kind of illocu-tions. In section 4, I show how my account differs from its close cousin—the conflicting attitudes view[3]—and argue that it provides an explanation

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[2]   Some absolutist views in a minimalist framework have recently been proposed too (see, e.g., Wyatt 2018).

[3]   What I have in mind here are conflicts of non-doxastic attitudes only. Such views are typically hybrids of some account of truth-conditional content expressed in value utterances and the postulate that these utterances are connected with the existence

of disagreement intuitions, which is both more plausible and unificatory than conflict of attitudes, as it can be generalized to disagreement in general, even though it does not preclude the possibility that some affective attitudes are in fact present.

2. Contextualism and supplementary solutions

Few people think that value sentences are completely independent of standards or perspectives. Perhaps some speakers are inclined to believe that some deeds are absolutely and objectively morally right or wrong, but when it comes to gustatory properties such as tastiness or to aesthetic properties such as beauty, most of us seem to allow for some subjectivity or standard-dependence. When making an utterance about taste, the speaker realizes that its truth value must in some way depend on context. This context-relativity can be cashed out in different ways. One way to do it is to say that value predicates, such as *is tasty* have a hidden argument place or an unarticulated constituent which gets filled in at the context of utterance. This is what some versions of contextualism are committed to. Another way consists in keeping the content constant across contexts of utterance and assigning a truth value that is relativized to the context of evaluation, which is what relativism holds. In this paper, I am going to focus on the picture drawn by contextualism.[4]

According to contextualism, what is expressed in Amy's utterance of 'Brussels sprouts are tasty' in [Dialogue 1] is the proposition *that Brussels*

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or expression of non-propositional, affective attitudes. Some of these views are called hybrid-expressivism, but since this label is not fitting for all, I will avoid using it and speak about conflicting attitudes views.

[4]   Contextualism and relativism come in many versions, which may lead to a significant terminological confusion. Here I take only one criterion to distinguish between these two families of theories: namely, whether the value standard (for whom something is tasty or beautiful) comes into the picture as part of the proposition expressed—which I take to be a significant feature of contextualism—or whether it plays a role as one of the indices at the context of evaluation—which I take definitional for relativism. I believe that nothing in my later analysis hinges on this simplification.

sprouts are tasty for Amy.[5, 6] What is expressed by Betty, on the other hand, is the proposition *that Brussels sprouts are not tasty for Betty*. Since each speaker refers to her own standard of taste, this account of semantic content factors in the subjective character of the predicate *is tasty* and thus makes sense of the intuition of faultlessness. However, it becomes immediately clear that the proposition expressed by Betty does not contradict the one expressed by Amy and, if so, that they are not disagreeing if disagreement is construed as a pair of incoherent propositions. If we take intuition (1) for granted, however, contextualism needs to explain it anyway. It does not need to—and in most versions it does not—claim that there *is* a logical inconsistency between literally expressed propositions. Instead, it acknowledges that the appearance thereof is present and can be explained by either identifying propositional disagreement somewhere in the speaker meaning (implicature, presupposition etc.) or postulate a different construal of disagreement altogether.

Some authors (e.g., Stojanovic 2007) argue that FD is not a real problem which would require adopting a novel semantic theory (and that it does not play any significant role in adjudicating between contextualism and relativism). In each case in which FD intuitions arise, it should be possible to decide which one—intuition (1) or (2)—is symptomatic of the presence of a real phenomenon. In other words, upon inspection, it will turn out that a given case either is a real disagreement and one of the speakers is saying something false, or it's an instance of real faultlessness and the speakers are not disagreeing, but perhaps, due to a misunderstanding, they are talking past each other. The former case is not particularly contentious. It is a situation in which the speakers have the same standard in mind, but they differ about the facts of the matter. They, for example, discuss whether

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[5]   Here and in what follows, I ignore the time parameter, as the question of whether time should be part of the proposition is irrelevant to the aspect of the problem of disagreement I am interested in.

[6]   Depending on the version, the standard parameter may be filled out with Amy, the group Amy belongs to, majority of people, etc. Here I focus on the 1st person perspective version of contextualism, which will take the parameter to be filled with the speaker—Amy, be it Amy simpliciter or Amy before or after brushing her teeth etc.

Pollock's *Convergence* is a beautiful painting according to most American critics, which, even thought might be a difficult question to answer in practice, *has* a definitive answer and so, one can be wrong about it. The latter case, i.e., the situation in which the speakers are truly faultless, requires a more multifaceted treatment on a case by case basis. Sometimes competent interlocutors realize they are invoking different standards, like in [Dialogue 1], and thus they are just stating something about their respective tastes, in which case the disagreement intuition should vanish (which Stojanovic refers to as the "OK/OK" situation).[7] In other cases, they realize that, but the intuition of disagreement does not disappear. If that happens, it makes sense to take a closer look at what else is happening in the conversation and in its context.

Some authors (Stojanovic 2007, Sundell and Plunkett 2013) notice that persistent disagreement intuitions can be symptomatic of real conflicts which have to do with coordination of practical decisions that the speakers need to make taking into account the value judgments of the other side. For instance, the crux of the argument which, on the face of it, seems like a disagreement about the gustatory value of Brussels sprouts, may actually be the question of whether they should use this vegetable in the dish they are preparing and will consume together. Another option (Barker 2013, Sundell and Plunkett 2013, Kennedy 2013) is that rather than disagreeing about whether Brussels sprouts have the property of being tasty, the speakers are negotiating a common standard of tastiness or meaning of the word 'tasty'—which makes it a metalinguistic disagreement. In other words, they are arguing about what should *count* as tasty in their common context. Yet another idea is that speakers who are disagreeing about the matters of value presuppose that they share the standard (López De Sa 2008). Once it turns out that this presupposition of commonality is false, the disagreement is revealed to be spurious. I believe that in many conversational situations these explanations of (2) are in point. However, it is conceivable that there are still going to be some cases in which the speakers would oppose all kinds of paraphrase suggested above, that is, they would not, even upon

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[7] "Tarek: OK. To my taste, this ice-cream is delicious; that's all I'm saying. Inma: OK, and to my taste, it isn't delicious at all; that's all I'm saying." (Stojanovic 2007, 693)

reflection, consider their disagreement to be practical or metalinguistic. At the same time, they would believe that they occupy their own autocentric perspectives. I tend to agree both with Marques (2015) and Marques and García-Carpintero (2014) who argue that, if metalinguistic or presuppositional accounts were right, the intuition of disagreement should vanish upon enlightening the speakers. I also agree with Zeman (2016), who notices that this is the one class of cases of disputes about value that has not received a satisfactory treatment in the contextualist framework. According to him, until contextualism devises a straightforward explanation of persistent autocentric disagreement, it cannot claim it has accounted for the FD intuitions.

Finally, there are views which aim to account for disagreement intuitions by postulating conflict of non-cognitive attitudes expressed or possessed by the speakers (e.g., Buekens 2011, Clapp 2015, Huvenes 2012, Marques and García-Carpintero 2014). Such accounts often accompany contextualist accounts of the content of subjective utterances and thus can be treated as strategies supplementing contextualism with an account of FD. In section 4, I will argue that these solutions, even though plausible as accounts of value language, as accounts of FD suffer from some shortcomings which are avoided by my proposal. Before that, in the next section I present a sketch of my account, which has the potential of accounting for persistent autocentric cases of FD.

3. Value terms in illocutions

In order to lay the ground for my proposed explanation of what happens in autocentric cases of persistent disagreement about value, let me very briefly remind the reader of some basic notions pertaining to speech act "theory".[8]

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[8] It is customary to use inverted commas when talking about speech act theory, since it is not considered to be a theory with its own hypotheses, claims and so on. Rather, it is treated as a field of inquiry which, using its characteristic notions, aims at describing and investigating a large chunk of linguistic communication.

In the developed version of his framework, J. L. Austin talks about speech acts—"things done with words"—also called *illocutionary acts* or *illocutions* (1962). Austin starts with the observation that not all utterances are meant to represent how things in the world are. Plenty of what we do in conversations are other things: promising, warning, inquiring, asking, apologizing and so on. Every illocution is made up from two components: propositional content and illocutionary force. The former is—simplifying a bit—the proposition expressed, while the latter is what determines what kind of speech act is performed. Illocutions can be made with the use of performative formulae, such as 'I promise' or 'I'm warning you', but it does not need to be the case. Often the content underdetermines the force. I can warn somebody by uttering 'There is a bull in the field' with certain intentions and in a certain context. The proposition *that there is a bull in the field* is the content and it is uttered with the force of a warning. However, I may express the same content with the force of assertion or conjecture—thereby trying to make my interlocutor believe that it is true (or letting them know that this is what I believe). Searle and Vanderveken (1985) consider illocutions to be minimal units of human communication. They also believe that speech acts are so ubiquitous that they are the basic building blocks of the use of language: "Whenever a speaker utters a sentence in an appropriate context with certain intentions, he performs one or more illocutionary acts." (1985, 109). It is interesting to observe what effects these acts have on our conversational and extra-linguistic reality. A successfully performed speech act puts on the speaker certain commitments concerning e.g. her or others' future behavior as well as performance of other illocutions. If I (successfully) order somebody to φ, I put on them an obligation to φ. Moreover, if I order somebody to φ, I commit myself to permitting them to φ. This does not mean that I need to perform the act of permission, but the actions and beliefs of the persons involved are such that it is as if the permission has been granted. Speech acts, therefore, modify not only the conversational score understood as the totality of what we mutually know or believe to be true, but also our practical, normative and conversational commitments. The rules governing the connections between speech acts Searle and Vanderveken call illocutionary logic.

With this picture of communication in mind, I would like to recast some of the ideas connected with the use of evaluative language. Let us note the trivial fact that, just like many other constructions, the utterance of 'x is tasty' can be used to perform a number of speech acts. For example, it can be used to make an assertion about some fact. Doing that involves conveying the proposition that x is tasty to people in general, to a particular group of experiencers, to dogs, to children, or to the speaker's 2nd floor neighbors etc. and putting it forward as true (or as something the speaker believes).[9] If their interlocutor knows whose standard the speaker has in mind but denies that utterance, then the disagreement is factual and propositional, not faultless. Consider, for example, the following conversation happening at the store where the speakers are discussing what kind of dog food to buy for their dog Fido:

> [Dialogue 2]
> Amy: Let's get Frolic—it's cheap and tasty.
> Betty: No, it's not tasty. Fido wouldn't have any of that.

In [Dialogue 2] it does not seem that the speakers are expressing their personal opinions about the taste of Frolic. Rather, they are invoking the standard of taste they think their dog has. It seems, therefore, that Amy has primarily made an assertion and Betty denied it. Moreover, as we have seen, 'x is tasty' can also be used autocentrically, to convey the proposition *that x is tasty to S* (i.e. according to the speaker's own standard). If Betty asks Amy whether she likes spinach, she might understandably assert: 'Spinach is tasty' just to inform Betty that spinach is tasty to her. In this context, the utterance may be meant primarily as an assertion too.

I believe, however, that in what seem like faultless disagreements, the speakers are not only making assertions. If that were the case, assuming contextualism is correct, then either denial on the part of the second speaker would be unlicensed (because they'd be denying that something is tasty for their interlocutor),[10] or at least one of the participants would have to be

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9   What an assertion involves is, of course, a complicated issue, which I do not need to tackle here.

10   In that case it is imaginable that the denial is actually felicitous but only if the second speaker wants to argue with their predecessor about what he or she finds

mistaken about the value of the standard parameter which the other is invoking. I would like to argue that evaluative terms are systematically (although not always) used to perform a special kind of speech acts: praise and disapproval, which together can be called *evaluative speech acts* (or *evaluations*). In [Dialogue 1], under certain circumstances, Amy praises the taste of Brussels sprouts and Betty, in turn, disapproves of it. It does not just mean that Amy and Betty are saying that they praise or disapprove of the taste of Brussels sprouts. They are not reporting any mental operations. It is not *saying* something, it is *doing* something. What I am putting forward here are thus three claims:

(1) Evaluative expressions are systematically used to perform non-assertive acts of praise and disapproval over and above expressing the proposition that something is good or bad according to one's standard.

(2) The intuition of disagreement can be plausibly explained by invoking the conflict between illocutions (illocutionary forces)—illocutionary disagreement.

(3) The intuition of faultlessness is accounted for thanks to the semantic content postulated by contextualism.

In a nutshell, the locution in the act of praise performed by Amy in [Dialogue 1] consists in expressing the proposition *that Brussels sprouts are tasty for Amy*. Since being tasty is a perspectival property, Amy—if sincere—has said something true and thus she has not made a mistake. The locution subsequently performed by Betty consists in expressing the proposition *that Brussels sprouts are not tasty for Betty*, which, again, is a faultless move. The conflict between the illocutions the speakers are performing—praising and disapproving—is what accounts for the disagreement intuitions. I will come back to what this conflict amounts to later in this section.

There are some straightforward reasons to consider what is happening in [Dialogue 1] as performing the special acts of praising and disapproving. One of them is that utterances like those made by Amy and Betty, as well as similar value utterances, are very naturally reported the way other

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tasty ('No, it's not tasty to you!'). I presume that such cases constitute a minority and are not among persistent cases which I'm interested in here.

illocutions are. When someone says 'I will do it tomorrow', we can report what happened as 'He said he would do it the next day' or as 'He promised to do it the next day'. Similarly, if somebody asks me what Amy thought about the food she had yesterday, I can either quote her words: 'She said it was tasty', or equally accurately report: 'She praised it'. This suggests that describing something as tasty or beautiful can be an action over and above stating one's own gustatory or aesthetic experience. Another quality that shows resemblance of evaluations to other kinds of speech acts is that they seem to be systematically correlated with one kind of expressions: evaluative adjectives.[11] At first sight there is nothing in the grammar of the sentence-type 'x is tasty' which would indicate that it has the illocutionary force other than assertion. However, I believe that evaluative expressions work like illocutionary force indicators[12], as they are typically used, unsurprisingly, to praise or disapprove of objects and their various aspects, people, events, and actions.

Now I'm going to elucidate the notion of disagreement, which, I claim, is exemplified in such exchanges as [Dialogue 1] and propose a characterization of the types of speech acts I am postulating.

3.1 Illocutionary disagreement

Many typical speech acts seem to have their opposites, i.e., acts of a similar kind but aimed at producing contrary extra-linguistic effects: assertion and denial, congratulating and condoling, forbidding and ordering (encouraging, inciting). Take for example

[Dialogue 3]
Amy (to Chris): Congratulations on your promotion! You'll get such a nice annual bonus!

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[11]   Here I limit my analysis to adjectives, but possibly this account could be extended to other parts of speech (e.g., to nouns such as slurs).

[12]   To forestall a possible misunderstanding, I do not mean to say that every use of an evaluative predicate forces us to classify a speech act as an act of praise of disapproval. Similarly, not every use of 'I promise' constitutes a promise (e.g., 'If I promise to φ, I always φ'). I'm grateful to an anonymous reviewer for indicating the need to clarify this point.

> Betty (to Chris): No, condolences on your promotion. You'll have no
> more free weekends.

Here the interlocutors are performing conventional acts (*expressives*) consisting in expressing certain attitudes towards the event of Chris's promotion. These attitudes are incompatible. But the illocutionary conflict does not have to stem from attitudinal incompatibility of any kind, as [Dialogue 4] shows:

> [Dialogue 4]
> Amy (to Chris): I order you to do it! [alternatively: 'Do it!']
> Betty (to Chris): No, I forbid you to do it! [alternatively: 'Don't do it!']

Even though what is happening between Amy and Betty does not look like a typical disagreement, there does seem to be some degree of conflict, which is indicated by the fact that both in [Dialogue 3] and [Dialogue 4] Betty's denial is felicitous.[13] As I have mentioned, only if we consider the acts performed in [Dialogue 1] to be something else than assertions is Betty's denial felicitous (again, assuming the contextualist picture is correct). If each speaker occupying their own perspective asserted something, denying it would have to target the assertion together with the perspective. In other words, Betty's denial would involve her asserting that Brussels sprouts are not tasty to Amy. Since this is not the case and we consider linguistic denial to be a permissible conversational move here, then perhaps it is a move in a different language game than we thought was being played.

Until now I have merely recast the notion of disagreement in terms pertaining to the speech act theoretic vocabulary. The crux of what makes praise and disapproval conflicting illocutions has to do with the way they modify the widely understood conversational score.

There is a number of accounts aimed at explaining the dynamic of a conversation. For example, Stalnaker (1978, 2002) uses the notion of the context set to model the conversational dynamics with particular focus on presupposition and assertion. The context set is defined as a set of possible

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[13]   Note that I am not using the term 'denial' here to refer to the act constituting opposition to assertion. By 'felicitous denial' I mean acceptable uses of expressions like 'no', 'that's not true' or even 'Nuh uh' as a reaction to somebody else's utterance.

worlds in which certain propositions are true, namely these propositions which have not yet been eliminated in the course of the conversation. Such dynamic models as Stalnaker's focus on the way assertoric speech acts restrict or otherwise modify this set. Accordingly, they concentrate on what is commonly accepted as true (or "true for the purposes of the conversation at hand"), justified or worth believing. It seems, however, that given the variety of other goals speakers want to attain in a conversation, it makes sense to postulate something like a normative dimension of the context set. Such a set would embrace values, commitments, admissible courses of action etc. and it could be used for modelling such conversations as [Dialogue 1]. Given that Amy and Betty share the context, their utterances are aimed at modifying both the "propositional" part of the context set and its "normative" part. The former is consensually updated with the propositions expressed by the speakers, while the latter is the ground on which the disagreement happens.[14]

Before explaining what illocutionary disagreement is in detail, I will say a few words about the way evaluations influence the common ground. In particular, I am going to sketch a picture of what commitments stemming from praise and disapproval might be and how they enter the common ground. I take the understanding of the notion of commitment from the work of Bart Geurts (2019), who proposes to analyze speech acts from a social rather than mentalist perspective.[15] A mentalist perspective involves understanding illocutions in terms of beliefs, intentions and other mental states that speakers want to express. That is, to make an assertion is to convey a certain belief and to make a promise is to convey a certain intention. From a social perspective, on the other hand, performing a speech act is essentially undertaking or putting on certain commitments. Geurts, along with other authors (notably Lewis 1969, Brandom 1994, Marques 2015)

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[14]   I choose to be non-committal with respect to the question of how the proposition enters the "normal" context set. I am, however, open to the possibility that the speakers performing evaluations simultaneously perform assertions. That would involve a version of speech-act pluralism (or rather dualism).

[15]   Neither Geurts nor I are saying that these two perspectives are incompatible with each other. I focus on the social perspective, as it is what provides the framework which is relevant for my account of disagreement.

stresses that coordination should be the central notion guiding any viable account of communication. He says:

> [T]he chief purpose of speech acts is to enable speakers to share commitments that enable them to coordinate their actions: communication is coordinated action for action coordination. (Geurts 2019, 3)

Commitments are understood in relational terms (Geurts 2019, 3):

> (…) commitment is *a three-place relation between two individuals, a and b, and a propositional content, p. ("a is committed to b to act on p.")*

Take, for instance, the following utterance: 'I will clean tomorrow'. Let us say that Amy uses this sentence to make a promise to Betty and that the promise is accepted (there is appropriate uptake thereof). The commitment which thereby arises is a relation between Amy, Betty and the proposition that Amy will clean on some particular day, such that Amy will act in such a way as to make this proposition true and Betty will be entitled to expect that. There are also other related propositions for which commitments are established, e.g., that Amy will not do other things which could prevent her from cleaning etc. (Geurts 2019, 4). If the propositions turn out to be false, Amy may be held responsible for that. Commitment is thus a normative concept, in Geurts' view. Moreover, commitments are *caused* by speech acts.

I propose to sketch the picture of what happens in the common ground when speakers perform evaluations to be somewhat along the lines of what Geurts proposes for promises. In performing the act of praise by uttering the sentence 'Brussels sprouts are tasty', Amy attempts to cause the relation between herself, Betty and a set of propositions, such that they both should act in accordance with their truth. These propositions are what guides coordinated action in relation to Brussels sprouts. If Amy praises Brussels sprouts and Betty does not oppose, they both will, for instance, i.a. accept the plan of having this healthy vegetable for dinner etc. *That Amy and Betty will have Brussels sprouts for dinner on some occasion* is then the proposition to which they are both committed—it enters the common ground. What enters the normative "compartment" is the relation

between Amy, Betty and this proposition (and a number of others), such that they will try to make these propositions true. On the other hand, Betty may acknowledge that her interlocutor likes the sprouts (that they are tasty to her), but she may refuse to accommodate the praise and thus to oppose taking up further commitments. In other words, she stops the relevant commitments—those tertiary relations—from being established. This is, I submit, what gives rise to disagreement intuitions in persistent autocentric cases of value disagreements and what licenses linguistic denial.

Perhaps praising the gustatory value of something does not seem to be a noteworthy update of the conversational score. Nor does it seem to deserve fighting over. The importance of common commitments becomes more striking when we think about moral evaluations. When someone uses the sentence 'Euthanasia is evil' to perform the act of disapproval, the context set gets significantly modified. Some acts will from then on be prohibited, some behaviors will be condemned, some plans not made and so on. Denying that euthanasia is evil—as a reaction to disapproval—constitutes a refusal to update the set of common commitments and thus gives rise to intuitions of disagreement. Disagreements about taste, even if they are less persistent or ubiquitous, can be explained by the same mechanism.

Let us now consider another example of value disagreement to see what, according to the picture I am proposing, happens when Amy performs an act of praise in a conversation with Betty:

Amy: The way Chris behaved was good.

Now, if Betty accepts the praise, we can imagine that the following can be said about their common ground from then on (the list is not exhaustive):

what Chris did is good according to Amy's standard;
we will praise similar behaviors of Chris and others;
we will reward Chris for his behavior;
it will be understandable if Amy makes similar illocutions in the future;
it will be admissible (ceteris paribus) to act like Chris did.

If Betty refuses to accept the act of praise by performing an act of disapproval, only the first of the above will be introduced to the common ground.

This brings me to a more general characterization of what illocutionary disagreement is: it is a conversational situation in which one speaker attempts to introduce the commitments (understood as relations) shared with another speaker towards certain propositions and the other blocks this attempt. The disagreement is illocutionary, since, again, both the attempt and the refusal to introduce commitments are executed by means of illocutionary acts whose constitutive role is to modify the common ground via commitments.[16]

3.2. Praise and disapproval as illocutions

In this section I would like to discuss some reasons for distinguishing such illocutions proper as praise and disapproval, which together form the class of evaluations. Searle (1975) distinguishes the following classes: representatives (e.g., assertion), directives (e.g., ordering), commissives (e.g., promising), declarations (e.g., appointing), expressives (e.g., congratulating). Expressives seem to be the most similar to evaluations, but I believe there are reasons to keep them apart for the reasons I mention later.

According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985), the force of a type of illocution is constituted by the following seven characteristics: illocutionary point, degree of strength of the illocutionary point, mode of achievement, content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, degree of strength of the sincerity conditions. I will here attempt to characterize evaluations, the acts of praise and disapproval, in terms of these features.

Illocutionary point is the characteristic aim of the speech act (Green, 2020): "In general we can say that the illocutionary point of a type of illocutionary act is that purpose which is essential to its being an act of that type" (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 112). For example, the illocutionary point of a promise is to commit oneself to doing something; that of a statement is to let others know what is the case; etc. If these main aims are not

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[16]   It is worth noting that illocutionary disagreement is a notion which can be applied also to assertoric speech acts. If A asserts p, which B believes to be false or unwarranted, B can block establishing the shared commitment to the truth of p. Illocutionary disagreement would then explain the "active" sense of 'to disagree', while propositional disagreement would explain the "state" sense (Capplen and Hawthorne, 2009).

achieved, the act cannot be considered successfully performed. The illocu-
tionary point of evaluations is to modify the set of normative or practical
commitments which are typically associated with the kind of value encoded
by the evaluative expression (gustatory, moral, aesthetic etc.). This aim of
evaluations is thus clearly distinct from the aim that expressives have. The
illocutionary point of the latter is to simply express the psychological state
of the subject with the use of some conventional devices—that is, let others
know the subject has this state in performing the act.

The degree of strength of the illocutionary point allows to distinguish,
for instance, conjecturing from asserting or suggesting from requesting.
What they have in common is the illocutionary point, but they differ with
respect to the degree of strength. Both conjecturing and asserting consist
in putting something forward as true, but asserting requires a higher degree
of certainty, perhaps even knowledge. The commitments they entail, even
though they are of the same type, are different: one is less likely to be
blamed if she conjectures something that turns out to be false than if she
asserts it. Praise and disapproval also come in degrees, which are deter-
mined by the lexical meanings of the evaluative expressions used to make
them. The utterances 'This is tasty' and 'This is delicious' aim at praising
something, but the latter expresses the point stronger. The same goes for
'untasty'—'disgusting', 'pretty'—'beautiful', 'fun'—'amazing' and so on.

Some illocutions need to be performed in some particular mode to be
successful. For example, one can command somebody to do something only
from the position of authority over that person. A promise can be made
only if the promiser has some power over what is being promised (I cannot
promise to you that the sun will not rise tomorrow), and the person to
whom we promise something should actually want the thing promised.
When it comes to praise or disapproval, it seems that no particular mode
of performance can be pinned down.[17] There certainly are some subjects
who are better-suited to making value judgments in certain situations, for
example judges in competitions or experts, and presumably, these speakers

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[17]   It could be conjectured that to praise the taste of something successfully, one
must have tasted it. However, arguably one could praise a dish by saying that it
looks delicious. Such a requirement also seems to be limited to predicates of personal
taste and not all evaluative expressions, so I do not want to commit myself to it.

have a higher potential of modifying the normative context set. Neverthe-less, each speaker has some of that potential. Additionally, there are rules of etiquette and other social norms, which regulate the issue of whether an evaluative judgment can be made at all in a given context.

According to Searle and Vanderveken, the illocutionary force sometimes imposes conditions regulating the kind of propositional content that can be expressed in a given act. For instance, in promising or ordering, the speaker cannot express a proposition about some past event.[18] When it comes to evaluations as speech acts, there are some evident regularities as well as exceptions. Praising and disapproving are typically performed with the use of evaluative expressions while the standard is set to the speaker or to a group including him or her—so, in autocentric uses. For instance, praising consists in uttering, e.g., 'x is tasty' in which the proposition expressed contains the referent of 'x' and the property of being tasty to the speaker.[19] Nevertheless, just like other adjectives, 'tasty' and other evaluatives can be used referentially ('Take the tasty one', 'The good guy always wins'), in which case praising may not be among the aims of the speaker. (Whether it happens anyway is a matter of further investigation.) Evaluative expres-sions are thus similar in function to performative expressions in that they are correlated with certain types of speech acts they are characteristically performed in. These performative expressions, according to Austin, are us-ually verbs in the first person present ('I promise …', 'I forgive …', 'I apolo-gize …', etc.); however, there are also such constructions that escape this characterization, e.g., 'sorry about …', 'welcome to …', 'thank you for …' or 'Hello!'. It seems, however, that it is also possible to praise someone without any reference to value. For instance, if someone asks me what I think about an online store, I may praise the owner by saying: 'They have fresh and cheap products and they always send my order promptly'. Meaning this as praise is intelligible provided that it is common knowledge what counts as being a praiseworthy online store. The same goes for typical speech acts—

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[18]   Saying 'I promise I have done what you asked me to do' does not count as a promise in the sense relevant here. It is a non-standard use of 'to promise' aimed at reassuring someone that the speaker is telling the truth.

[19]   For the sake of simplicity, I am treating propositions as structured entities, but all my claims can be recast in terms of the possible worlds theory of propositions.

even though I can apologize to someone by saying 'I apologize', I can attain this goal alternatively by sending them flowers.

Preparatory conditions are the conditions which have to be met for an illocution to take place—or in Austin's terms—not to misfire. For a declarative such as 'I hereby name you HMS Elisabeth II' not to misfire, the speaker has to be in the position allowing him or her to christen ships. Evaluations do not seem to be constricted by many such specific conditions. Perhaps one of the few is that an evaluative expression needs to be ascribed to the right kind of things. For instance, I cannot praise the taste of someone's behavior or the aesthetic beauty of their moral character (although I can praise the behavior and moral character themselves).

Sincerity conditions capture the requirement that in performing a given type of illocution, the speaker shall express a certain psychological state in order for it to be felicitous. In promising sincerely, the speaker expresses an intention to fulfill the promise. In apologizing, the speaker expresses remorse. This does not mean that an insincere promise is not a promise or that an insincere apology isn't an apology. The speaker who does not have the appropriate intention has still undertaken a commitment—if other relevant conditions have been met—but the promise is not perfect. Similarly, I can perform the speech act of praising sincerely or insincerely. The former takes place when I actually express the psychological state which my words suggest I have. For example, when I sincerely praise the gustatory value of some dish, I express my non-doxastic attitude of enjoyment or liking. Note, however, that I may also just pretend that I have this attitude and insincerely praise the dish anyway to be polite, because I want to make the cook feel good or for some other reason. Nevertheless, unless I confess my insincerity, I need to face the consequences of my praise. Polite people are too often repeatedly expected to enjoy the taste of dishes they had hastily praised.

The degree of strength of the sincerity conditions is, next to the degree of strength of the illocutionary point, another parameter which allows to distinguish between similar illocutions. For instance, asking and begging are the same in all dimensions except the intensity of the psychological state expressed.

4. Illocutionary account of disagreement
vs. the conflicting-attitudes-views

As I mentioned above, the illocutionary account of disagreement does not fundamentally preclude some forms of the conflicting-attitudes-view (CAV).[20] To be precise, I do not oppose the idea that speakers typically have or communicate non-propositional attitudes in making value utterances, but I don't believe that their conflict is what is responsible for the disagreement intuitions. I will argue instead that the notion of illocutionary disagreement provides a viable alternative as a method of accounting for them.

As mentioned in section 2, one way of keeping the contextualist semantic content of value utterances while supplying means to explain the disagreement intuitions is adopting a CAV (e.g. Buekens 2011, Clapp 2015, Huvenes 2012, Marques and García-Carpintero 2014). On the face of it, this solution proposes a way of dealing with the problem of autocentric cases. A CAV, on the understanding I am invoking here, supplements the contextualist semantic content of value utterances with an account of non-propositional attitudes that are expressed, revealed or communicated alongside it. These attitudes can be desires (e.g., that the other speaker changes their taste standard or that the participants in the conversation come to share taste standards), second-order desires (e.g., that they desire to desire to change their standard), or attitudes of liking and disliking, etc. The disagreement intuition is thus cashed out in terms of conflicting attitudes.[21] The intuition

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[20]   There are a few substantially different views which have been labeled 'hybrid-expressivism', 'expressivism', or otherwise by their proponents. For the sake of simplicity and to avoid terminological inaccuracy I've chosen a different label ('conflicting-attitudes-view'). The defining feature of a CAV is the claim that value judgments are used to express, convey or otherwise communicate cognitive as well as non-cognitive attitudes (pro-attitudes). Such views are hybrid because the affective part is accompanied by some standard semantic view of truth-apt content. Since hybrid views are often proposed as a way of accounting for disagreement where it is impossible for contextualism to do so, I take their standard semantics to be contextualist.

[21]   The FD problem is not, of course, the first time the conflict of attitudes has been proposed. For notable contributions see, e.g., Stevenson (1963).

of faultlessness is explained at the level of propositions expressed[22], just as in other forms of contextualism. There are two main construals of a conflict of attitudes, described i.a. by MacFarlane (2014): nondoxastic noncotenability and preclusion of joint satisfaction. Two attitudes are noncotenable if one agent could not entertain them both at the same time. I cannot, for example, at the same time like the taste of Brussels sprouts and dislike it. Preclusion of joint satisfaction, on the other hand, envisages that two attitudes are in conflict when they cannot be jointly satisfied. This notion of disagreement can be applied to, e.g., desires. If I want to eat the last piece of cake and you want it too, both of our desires cannot be satisfied.

I do not intend to give an extensive critique of the CAV here, especially because it has already been done in other places (e.g., MacFarlane 2014). Let me just say that I agree with some authors (i.a. Marques and García-Carpintero 2014, Marques 2015, Marques 2016, Zouhar 2019, Bex-Priestley and Shemmer 2021), who argue that the notion of conflicting attitudes on its own is unable to give us a plausible explanation of disagreement intuitions in discussions about value. If we grant that the contextualist picture which envisages that in [Dialogue 1] the speakers express the enriched propositions *that Brussels sprouts are tasty to Amy* and *that Brussels sprouts are not tasty to Betty* does not explain the intuition of disagreement, it is hard to see how possessing or expressing attitudes of liking and disliking towards Brussels sprouts would do the job. Such situations would be akin to the OK/OK dialogues, as the ones mentioned by Stojanovic. It seems, therefore, that in order to do the job, the CAV needs to include an additional requirement—that the speakers strive for coordination of their attitudes, plans or norms. Such an improvement of the CAV is proposed by i.a. Marques and García-Carpintero (2014) and Marques (2015) who suggest that the attitudes in question (e.g., desires or dispositions) should be

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[22]   The faultlessness intuition can alternatively be construed as stemming from the fact that each speaker sincerely expresses the nondoxastic attitude they actually entertain. If I do not enjoy the taste of Brussels sprouts, then my expression of dislike can be considered faultless. Nevertheless, there are other reasons to postulate truth-conditional dimension of evaluative words next to the expressive dimension, which have to do with the problematic non-cognitive character of pure expressivism (such as the Frege-Geach problem etc.).

construed as *de nobis* higher-order attitudes. In other words, in uttering that Brussels sprouts are tasty, Amy reveals or communicates her desire that *she and her interlocutor both* desire to eat (or enjoy) Brussels sprouts. Betty's desire is for *them both* to desire not to eat (or enjoy) them.[23] Marques adds to that picture an explanation of why people have this kind of dispositions, according to which we generally strive for coordination for evolutionary reasons. It makes more sense in a society to share certain values:

> Being disposed to eat the same sort of things enables further co-operation and altruistic behavior, and is more likely to lead to future benefits. Humans have evolved to approve of others with similar dispositions, and have evolved to disapprove of others with dissonant dispositions. Not being similarly disposed in some relevant aspects may hinder further cooperation. (Marques 2015, 9)

I sympathize with Marques' insight to a large extent. I, too, believe that often disagreements about value are driven by the need to coordinate standards and action. My two worries are, however, that (1) Marques' account does not provide a complete explanation of how the attitudes which she postulates get communicated—she is explicitly noncommittal about what kind of pragmatic mechanism is involved, which I consider to be a shortcoming of the account, and (2) that using non-propositional attitudes in explaining disagreement faces some additional difficulties (I will mention just one.) If these worries are substantiated, abandoning the concept of conflict of attitudes as crucial for explaining disagreements about value seems to be a less problematic option.

When it comes to the first point, again, I am not going to repeat arguments presented elsewhere (Hirvonen, Karczewska and Sikorski 2019), but I will just point out that the typical pragmatic mechanisms, such as presupposition or implicature do not seem to be a viable option for conveying non-cognitive attitudes or reports of speakers' having them. It should be

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[23]   The exact formulation of what these higher-order desires are might be different depending on the predicate, but it is irrelevant here. For details see Marques (2015) and also Marques (2016).

noted that the standard-enriched semantic content of the utterance of an evaluative sentence does not *entail* many (or even any) propositions to which the speakers become committed. It would be a long stretch to say that each of them (and perhaps more) are implicated. The fact that they enter the common ground is explainable by the constitutive role of causing commitments that speech acts have.

Regarding the second point, I believe that the illocutionary construal of disagreement fares better in accounting for disagreement *intuitions* than the one envisaged by the CAV when the attitudes in question are actually missing. After all, it may be the case that one of the speakers is insincere. For instance, Amy utters 'Brussels sprouts are tasty' to please a nice farmer, even though she hates the taste. Betty, on the other hand, is more straightforward. Now, the intuition of disagreement is triggered and Betty's denial is licensed despite the fact that no conflict of attitudes arises. The illocutionary account does not require the presence of these attitudes, even though it relies on them for the evaluations to be sincere (and generally successful). The illocutionary account avoids the need to take the mentalist perspective, which, in the absence of the explanation of communicative mechanism, risks collapsing into mind-reading.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have sketched a concept of disagreement consisting in performing two illocutions characterized by conflicting illocutionary forces. I have claimed that autocentric uses of evaluative predicates are often employed to perform *evaluations*—a newly-distinguished type of illocutions. I have proposed a preliminary idea of the mechanism with which illocutionary disagreement arises by employing the notion of commitment as a relation introduced to the normative part of the common ground. I suggested that when an attempt to establish a new commitment is rejected by the other party, this rejection is what accounts for the disagreement intuition. More needs to be said about this normative aspect of the common ground and the way in which commitments are related to propositions. These and related issues I leave for future research.

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