

## 'Styles of Thinking' and the Expansion of Normative Space

On some readings, a core theme of Sellars' 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind' is an exploration of the complexities surrounding the idea of induction into, and negotiation of, normative space. A central problematic in this area involves well-known difficulties besetting any attempt to narrate a possible transformation from outside to inside this space, recounting the move from those beings who exhibit the capacity to be responsive to causal force to those beings who also exhibit the capacity to be gripped by, and to challenge, normative force.

In this paper, I wish to explore some of the related difficulties involved in narrating a slightly different transformation, one that occurs inside normative space as it were. The kind of transformation I have in mind is one that has been explored in very different terms by Ian Hacking throughout his writings over the past thirty years, in the context of developing his notion of a style of thinking.

A style of thinking involves a distinctive way of telling the truth about certain kinds of objects that has emerged and become established ('crystallised') in a given socio-historical context. Each style is in part constituted by specific methods of reasoning, new kinds of sentences (candidates for being true-or-false) and specific objects of study, all of which are necessary (but not sufficient) constituents of the very style itself. The way of telling the truth captured in each style may draw on latent human abilities but these are abilities that we have had to discover how to actualise and to evolve social organisations within which such actualised abilities can be fostered. For Hacking, not every way of thinking is a style of thinking, since there are some ways of thinking that are universal human practices of telling the truth which lack history, at least in the sense that we cannot narrate their emergence and crystallisation in historical form.

The emergence of a given style of thinking involves the induction of individuals into a new normative space. For an individual to recognise a new style of thinking involves, inter alia, the recognition that certain patterns of thinking and acting have now become obligatory or permitted or prohibited, and thus to treat a new set of ought-claims as relevant to the assessment of her subsequent performances. Yet this transformation is not best characterised as one from outside the normative space of reasons to within it, but as an expansion of the frontiers of the normative space within which she already operates.

The aim of this paper is to contrast the difficulties associated with narrating the induction into normative space from a position outside it and those associated with narrating the expansion of normative space from a position within it. More specifically, I argue first that there is an underexplored aspect of Hacking's writings on styles of thinking, viz. his use of legendary beginnings in exploring the emergence of a style, which reveals some sensitivity to the difficulties involved in narrating the expansion of normative space. Second, I contrast this use of legendary beginnings with the kinds of mythic narratives told by Sellars in exploring the induction into normative space. Finally, I show how attention to this aspect of Hacking's work can provide the resources for overcoming some recent challenges to it.

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