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Assertion, Between Saying and Telling

What is it to assert that p ? In the past few decades, a huge cottage industry has emerged focused on answering this question. However, in my assessment, a lot of this work has been plagued by fundamental unclarity about which notion, described in functional terms, we're supposed to be analyzing in the first place. This is exacerbated by the fact that 'assert' is not a common ordinary-language verb, but almost a quasi-technical term, and most theorizing is instead sensitive to uses of 'say', 'claim/state', and 'tell-that'. In this talk I argue that the interesting and distinctive notion that it makes sense to analyze can be isolated by focusing on two constraints: first, that assertion is necessary for lying; and, second, that it can be retracted. As such, assertion occupies the space between the linguistic or locutionary act of saying that p and the addressed, testimonial act of telling someone that p . In contrast to saying, assertion is an illocutionary act that is lie-prone. However, in contrast to telling-that, assertion is not addressed to anyone in particular, but rather a matter of going on the public record and as such, something that can be retracted