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Speech acts and divine names: Comparing linguistic ideologies of performativity

1 Introduction

Discourse is said to create kinship systems, gender, and (according to some) even the world of nature, replicating the power attributed to the deity's utterance "Let there be light" in Genesis. Speech act theory in turn explains the creative power of language, providing the "performative" engine for social construction.[1] J. L. Austin (1962) famously argued that certain first person statements were not so much truth claims as speech acts that "do things" (such as, "I now pronounce you man and wife" and "I give and bequeath my watch to my brother"). Austin's theory continues to dominate debates about effective language. This dominance excludes other ideas about how words relate to their contexts of use.

As one example, in *Excitable Speech*, Judith Butler favors Austin's model over what Louis Althusser called the "Christian Religious Ideology" of naming (Butler 1997: 31–37). Althusser was interested in "social interpellation," how a person becomes a subject (in this case of the state) (Althusser 1994). In Christian divine naming, as briefly presented by Althusser, the deity calls out a name, such as "Peter," and thereby turns Peter into a subject. Althusser's primary example of Christian naming ideology is taken from Exodus 3, where Moses replies to God's summons, "It is I." Moses' reply is followed by the deity's revelation of his name (Exodus 3:4, 14). For Althusser, the deity presents himself as the "subject par excellence" just as Moses recognizes that he is a subject of the deity (Althusser 1994: 134).[2]

From Butler's point of view, divine naming is a model of limited value since it depends on the possession of sovereign power by the speaker. This power occurs very rarely in general society. Equivalent linguistic power operates only in those situations where speech is backed by state forces. She explains, "Human speech rarely mimes that divine effect except in the cases where the speech is backed by

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[1] For revolutionary social-constructivists, nothing exists beyond discourse (Hacking 1999: 9–12).
[2] The naming creates a subject who is subsequently subjected to a greater subject. These mutually recognize each other and also guarantee that "everything is really so" (Althusser 1994: 135).

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state power, that of a judge, the immigration authority, or the police, and even then there does sometimes exist recourse to refute that power" (Butler 1997: 32).

However, Butler dismissed Althusser's insights into effective language too quickly. Althusser has revealed another way in which language effects the context of use, one that is not based on the verbs that dominate Austin's theory. Instead divine naming presents a very different concept based on something about the power of names and naming in general. Both ideologies, speech act theory and divine naming, offer partial windows into the multi-functionality of language. They differ in the way that language uses are plumbed in search of context-relating social efficacy. After examining the linguistic function of names, we will look at several examples of divine names in detail. It will then be possible to see how the distinct ideologies capture different aspects of the social role of language.

2 How personal names name

Austin included christening a boat as one of his speech acts (Austin 1962: 5). He did not, however, discuss names in general at all, since his emphasis was on certain self-reflexive verbal forms. Althusser turned to Exodus because of the importance of naming ideologies in biblical and post-biblical texts. He introduced, but only briefly, some of the issues involved in not only divine names but also naming in general, putting his finger on something important about the social use of names. Althusser was interested in the deity's name "I am who I am," and its role in establishing him as the ultimate subject. But this enigmatic answer also shows hesitancy on the part of the deity to reveal his name. Uttering personal names is subject to widespread taboos. As Luke Fleming explains, "Verbal taboo is a domain of ethnolinguistic study uniquely amenable to cross-cultural study" (Fleming 2011: 143). Something about personal names elicits tremendous interest and concern on the part of speakers. Using a name seems to have implications beyond reference. Hence the widespread taboos against uttering personal names in diverse cultures, all with different nuances. These taboos carefully delineate the social permission needed to refer to people and the ways in which names can and cannot be used in both oral and written form.[3] The special functionality of personal names appears as widely in languages other than English, unlike Austin's first-person verbal phrases.

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3 Butler (1997: 33) is correct that a name can be refused. But the baptismal event plus rigid reference makes it harder to say, "who me?"

This special functionality is based on the distinct linguistic role of personal names. Names do not simply refer to individuals. Benjamin Lee explains, "[...] the semantics of proper names is based not on a description model – nor can it be reduced to such a model – but rather on an initial indexical specification backed up by a sociohistorically constructed and transmitted meta-indexical chain of reference" (Lee 1997: 90). In other words, as explained in the classic work by Kripke, personal names refer based on a "baptismal" event when a name is first "fixed" by ostension as referring to a specific person (Kripke 1972: 4). Every name is closely related to the social context in which it is conferred, encoding all sorts of information about the speakers who endow the name and the addressee who is named. Thus a personal name is also a unique symbol for that person, indexically connected with the person at the moment it is given. The relationship is even stronger when part of a one-time event, e.g., baptism. In sum, as an "inherently inferring noun-phrase type," a personal name (whether one word or several) refers uniquely and irrevocably to the person named even as it stands symbolically for that person (Fleming 2011: 146).

At the same time, this "pointing to" or indexical capacity of names is familiar from other context-dependent linguistic units such as the oft-discussed deictics ("this," "then," etc.).[4] Unlike the noun "car," for example, which can be easily redefined in different contexts, a personal name carries the same reference cross-context (Fleming 2011: 149). A personal name functions both referentially and indexically, as if stating, "This very specific car and only this unique car."[5] The "rigid" reference means that personal names cannot be casually employed without invoking social implications, leading to the social restrictions (Kripke 1972: 4). For all these reasons a personal name functions context-free, being "resistant to recontextualization" (Fleming 2011: 149). Citation, for example, cannot diffuse contextual implications. It is hard to talk "about" a name without seeming to "use" it.

The source of what we might call a name's "rigid performativity" is the formal and context-related (indexical) capacity of language.[6] The indexical (contextual) implications of names are contagious and carry over to other lexical units that resemble names. For example, "Homophone and near-homophone avoidance represents an essentialization of the performative effect of verbal taboos as adhering in the material sign-form itself" (Fleming 2011: 157).

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4 In other words, "Personal names function in a manner quite distinct from these other denotational indexicals" (Fleming 2011: 148).

5 Personal names combine "the constant denotation of the truly symbolic nouns with the indexical denotation of shifters, anaphoric pronouns and denotation" (Fleming 2011: 151).

6 Fleming (2011: 151), following Silverstein.

Divine names, not surprisingly, compound the problems of rigid reference and indexical implications of personal names, and offer particularly rich examples of deference and taboos. As a mode of "performativity," divine names are particularly instructive because unlike Austinian speech acts, they highlight the role of indexical icons as motivators of efficacy.[7] Their seemingly "natural" performativity contrasts with the conventional performativity of speech acts. At the same time, divine name ideologies implicate other types of signs (writing, art, etc.), opening up the issue of cross-modal efficacy, that is, how signs other than language also have contextual implications (efficacy). As we will see in the examples below, a natural form of performativity also has a contagious potential that conventional, verb-based performativity does not.

Example 1: Divine name and human form

The first example is two Iron Age drawings on storage jars found at Horvat Teman, an ancient crossroads on the Judah-Sinai border.[8] The fragmentary drawings with inscriptions, a striking archeological find, have elicited extensive discussion. Schmidt (2016) argues that the drawings are a practice study for a larger wall drawing. In the first drawing (A), an ornate humanoid male and female couple is placed between two musicians and a cow with calf.[9] A formula inscription overlaps the figures as follows (Inscription 3.1): "Speak to Yaheli, and to Yose and to [] I bless you before/to Yahweh of Shomron and his Asherah."

Scene A has elicited the greatest furor because the humanoid depiction of Yahweh contradicts Biblical injunctions against some types of divine images.[10] Similarly, strands of Israelite theology condemned Yahweh's consort Asherah even as she was the focus of Israelite ritual practices.[11] The male deity's crown is similar to the one worn by the deity Bes; divine attributes were shared between cults in both verbal and artistic presentations. Brian Schmidt judiciously identifies the male figure as Yahweh. He follows the label and opts for a reading that "requires far less convoluted arguments than any alternative interpretation

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7 On indexical icons see the discussion in Parmentier (1997: 37–42).

8 The evidence, along with speculative interpretation, is presented in Meshel (2012).

9 The drawing can be found in Meshel (2012: 87).

10 For a summary of these issues see Halbertal and Margalit (1992).

11 Among the many discussions of Asherah, see the classic works by Olyan (1988) and Ackerman (1992).

offered to date" (Schmidt 2002: 107).[12] The drawing correlates with the use of statues in urban cultic centers. In this setting the "statue" is a small drawing.

The second drawing (B) includes a small crowd of worshippers near a cow, also overlapped by an inscription as follows (Inscription 3.9): "before/to Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah [...] whatever he shall ask of anyone, may He grant it [...] and may Yahweh give him according to his heart."[13]

A vertical inscription from the same scene reads (Inscription 3.6): "Thus say Amaryaw, Say to my lord Are you at peace? I have blessed you before Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah. May he bless and keep you and may He be with my lord [...]."

In an astute interpretation, Schmidt argues that Scene B is an example of "empty space aniconism" (Schmidt 2002: 114), in which a crowd of worshippers being blessed can point towards the divine source of the blessing. The place the deity might be (the sky), as a statue "before them," is empty even as the worshippers direct their prayers to that "empty" space in the sky. This use of empty space aniconism "highlights for the ancient viewer, the transcendence of Yahweh and his Asherah who invisibly dwell in the heavens exercising their power to bless those who send homage to them" (Schmidt 2002: 122 and 114; following Mettinger).

Both cultic models are depicted; that is, the urban temples with statues (Scene A) and the open-air "empty space" sanctuaries (Scene B). Both drawings employ an aesthetic of "overlapping perspective" (Schmidt 2002). Understanding this mode of representation is necessary for the viewer to correctly interpret the scenes (a problem for modern viewers). Objects are portrayed from more than one direction at the same time in order to give them three-dimensionality. Viewers know this social convention and use it to interpret the pictures.

Another overlapping layer of the formulas with the drawings then extends this overlapping portrayal. Overlapping connects the two modalities, verbal (inscription) and non-verbal (drawing). The blessing literally happens "before" Yahweh, in the nexus of the words and drawings "before" the viewer.[14]

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12 Ahituv, Esehel and Meshel disassociate the drawings from the inscriptions in order to preserve an "image-free" ancient Israelite religion. See Meshel (2012: 129). They state, "There is no support for the idea that the people of Ajrud tried to represent the effigy of YHWH. The drawings on the pithoi do not challenge the accepted view of the non-iconographic character of Yahwistic cult and theology" (Meshel 2012: 129).

13 The drawing can be found in Meshel (2012: 92).

14 The modern insistence that Asherah is not a reference to the direct name of a divinity but only to a secondary object of divine representation (following the model of rabbis praising the Ark as a secondary representation of Yahweh) is another example of representational prohibition in action.

The inscriptions call upon the deity and his Asherah to bless specific individuals. The act of blessing joins representations of divinity (figures and names) in space and time with the worshippers who are formal (figures and names) models of the "blessed." Who exactly is speaking the blessing is not clear; there is no evidence that the blessing has to be delivered by some special authority, since the blessing comes from the deity. Humans declare other humans, and sometimes the deity, blessed as a way of marking the exalted status of the deities and drawing attention to the activity of the deities in the human world.

It is with these verbal forms that Austinian speech act theory comes into play. As for the formulas, "I bless you" comes the closest to a "performative" speech act.[15] As Seth Sanders has demonstrated, in West Semitic languages, the perfect form will be the closest equivalent to the performative, since it is the "morphologically and semantically minimal verbal category" (Sanders 2004: 170; see also Hasselbach-Andee 2015).

The phrase "I blessed you" is glossed in the archaeological report by Ahituv, Eshel, and Meshel as a parallel to Judges 17:2, where a mother declares, "Blessed of/to YHWH [be] my son" (Meshel 2012: 127).[16] She calls attention to the status of her son as being in a particular state in relation to the deity. This is a very common pattern found in biblical texts. Blessings as well as curses are automatically effective speech that is spoken by the deity but conveyed via human speakers (and even animals). We are far from Austin's speech acts here. The primary force of blessings is not based on any verbal form but located in a broader ideology of blessing that correlates with naming.

The deity is always referred to in the third person (by the personal name Yahweh and by "he"). Unlike the later standard blessing formula ("Blessed are you God"), second-person references are only made to the person seeking the blessing. The specific name "Yahweh" is necessary since the word "god" does not function as a proper name when there are many gods. Deities are connected to locations, so the full name of the deity is Yahweh of Shomron/Teman. Divine names clarify exactly which divinity will be personally responsible for the blessing. The figure alone is not sufficient since deities, like kings, share standard insignia.

Later biblical texts adapt some of these ancient modes of blessing, including the idea of inscribing a deity's name as a means of making a site holy. Deuteronomy 12:11 states: "Then to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling place for his name, there are you to bring everything I command you."[17] The deity's name

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15 Blessing formulas are discussed in Meshel (2012: 127–129).

16 While some English translations offer "by" the Hebrew is not agentive and is better glossed as blessed "in relation" to the deity.

17 For a general discussion of the Deuteronomic source in the context of the documentary hypothesis see Baden (2012: 129–148).

"dwells" in a specific location by means of a statue, by inscribing the name on a monument, and by a foundation sacrifice in which the divine name was deposited (baptismally!) in a temple foundation in written form (Richter 2002: 127–205). In all these cases the specific name of the deity is central since it explains exactly which deity is sacralizing the Temple, supporting the king or laying claim to territory. The "dwelling" formula is glossed in several places in Deuteronomy as "to place in," as a clarification of what it means for a name to "dwell" centuries after the ancient practices had lost their original setting.[18]

Some scholars argue that the Deuteronomic name ideology represents the withdrawal from the Temple by the deity, replacing an immanent theory of divine representation with a transcendent one.[19] The implication of the theology, however, is not that the deity has left *only* his name in the building.[20] Instead the issue is the specific form that divine representation takes in a specific cultic setting. The contrast between a notion of the name "dwelling" somewhere and "placing the name" somewhere pales against the general point that both tie the tightest possible knot between the two modalities, verbal and non-verbal: nothing can stand for the deity more directly than his name and thus his building. In both cases the name is an indexical icon that spatially connects divinity with a specific place. Like the Iron-Age drawings with their inscriptions, the "dwelling" name ideology is another example of cross-modal representation. The linguistic model is used to calibrate the sacredness of the Temple building.[21] The value of the Building-as-name ideology is the special functionality of names.[22] As discussed above, a name has a special relationship with what it names. Each reminder about the in-dwelling name "baptizes" the Temple in a re-naming event that is itself a repetition of the primordial naming of the deity. Baptism, and re-baptism, is always indexical, sanctifying the building directly as it makes the connection between divine name and place.

Treating the building, or a name, as a formal representation of divinity may seem like an idolatrous move. Idolatry is not a type of cultic practice as much as an interpretive claim made, often by outside opponents or internal reformers, about some contested representation (how something is understood, or misunderstood,

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18 New meanings for a name "dwelling" in a place will develop in the first centuries C.E. as discussed in the next example.

19 For a critique of this interpretation see Richter (2002). It incorporates later interpreters, starting with the translators of the scriptural texts into Aramaic in the first centuries C.E. into the Deuteronomic text. See Example #3 below.

20 And no longer, presumably, his body.

21 The ideology permits many ideas about names, as Hundley (2009) enumerates: name as legally-binding, as making de facto owner, as obligating someone.

22 Hundley (2009: 549) claims a special connection between name and what is named in the ancient, as opposed to the modern, setting.

to stand for something else). The building "is" the deity no more and no less than his name "is" him and the humanoid figure from Scene A "is" the deity.

In the ancient examples, as continued in the biblical texts, Yahweh's name can be directly employed. Deference does not demand avoiding the name when it is possible to name more than one deity. As pointed out by Morton Smith, etiquette demanded describing each deity as if he were the greatest and the only really important one (Smith 1952). The use of "my Lord" for example by Abraham when greeting the angelic messengers shows another deferential mode of discourse used with people who may be of higher status. The same deference was used with deities by combining the deferential phrase with their personal name.

All of this will change with the rise of monotheistic theology. When God becomes a personal name for the deity since there is only one, the rules of address will change drastically. Deference will make new demands.

Example 2: Divine name as form (X)

The mid-3rd-century Dura Europos synagogue, on the Roman-Parthian border, is famous for its floor-to-ceiling paintings of biblical scenes.[23] The building was miraculously preserved when, during a war between Persia and Rome, it was filled with dirt to buttress the city walls. The dramatic paintings depict numerous biblical scenes and characters, including a woman wearing only a necklace taking Moses out of the bulrushes.[24] Throughout the synagogue the deity is represented in four different modalities, including the divine name form.

First, several panels include a hand of God reaching down into a scene. The hand is a sign of the deity as the source of divine agency, as the hand formally activates the scene. The deity is responsible for the parting of the waters for the Israelites in Exodus and the resurrection of the dry bones in Ezekiel. The potentially ambiguous source of miracles is clarified with the dramatic hands literally reaching into the stories from outside the frames.

Second, other scenes point to the deity more indirectly, presenting stories in which he is a central, if indirect character. No hand appears in the scene where the Israelite king is being anointed; however, this is the deity's chosen representative on earth. An image can direct attention towards something

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23 For the earlier analysis see Goodenough and Neusner (1988) and Kraeling (1979) and for more recent discussion and bibliography see Fine (2005) and Fine (2014: 101–121).
24 The paintings are so complex that Weitzman and Kessler (1990) argue they must be based on lost illuminated manuscripts, though no such manuscripts have ever been found.

subject to restricted representation.[25] A throne can "point to" the absent being presumed to sit upon it. In Scene B, a name written in the sky and worshippers can point to the heavenly deity. In the Jerusalem Temple panel, Aaron stands as chosen representative of the deity, dressed in his holy robes with his name inscribed next to him in front of the Temple building.[26] Inside the "closed portal," as the Temple scene is called, is the divine presence. Just above the Torah niche the deity is invoked by an arrangement of the elements from the story of the near-sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 (back of man, knife, animal, etc.).[27]

The Torah scroll, stored in the Torah niche, is a third material representation of the divine presence, sanctifying the synagogue by their presence.[28] Prayer takes place "before" the niche, directed towards the sacred scrolls.

Fourth and finally, another formal divine representation and common mode of invoking divine presence is liturgy. A liturgical fragment was found among the ruins of the synagogue. The prayer includes a fascinating blessing formula with a previously unknown version of the divine name.[29] The fragment reads (following Fine's translation):

Fragment A:
Blessed is X, king of the world/eternity
apportioned food, provided sustenance
sons of flesh cattle to [...]
created man to eat of [...]
many bodies of [...]
to bless all cattle [...]

Fragment B:
pure (animals) to (eat?)
provide sustenance
small and large
all the animals of the field
[...] feed their young
and sing and bless.

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25 Biblical texts include numerous examples of thrones and throne-bearers pointing towards the one sitting on the throne, or being carried off in a chariot.

26 Many other scenes indirectly point to the deity, such as the anointing of the king.

27 A shift familiar from the many other examples in which sacrifice is replaced by discourse about sacrifice.

28 In other cases, the Torah was stored in another room and brought in to be read.

29 For a discussion and bibliography see Fine (2005).

The exact purpose for the prayer is not known; the imagery fits a blessing after meals but other settings are also possible (Fine 2005: 56–57). This phrasing is similar but not identical with the standard rabbinic blessing formula: Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the world.[30] The two striking differences are the use of an "X" shape and the lack of a direct 2nd person addressee "you."[31] The unusual formula is evidence that the liturgical formulas have not yet been standardized.

The Hebrew alphabet does not include a letter shaped like an "X." The character used appears to be a Greek Chi. In the context of the prayer it is a substitute for a divine name, but still an indexical icon. The striking usage is evidence of taboos against writing the name down too distinctly.[32] It is unclear what the setting for using the name might have been at the Dura synagogue, that is, whether it could be said out loud and when. In a later rabbinic formulation, the divine name can be said when ten men are present. It is hard to imagine that it was not possible to use the name liturgically, though again, how and when it could have been used is not clear.

The blessing is not addressed to the deity ("you"). The formulation parallels the earlier declarations of the blessed state of the deity, again pointing to a different kind of performativity from a speech act.[33] Once again prayer takes place in a site sanctified by multi-modal formal representations of the deity, including drawings and the divine name. All of these divine representations overlap in the synagogue, jostling with each other. Any name now refers to the only deity as taboos demand a substitution of the name at least in written form. This complex spectrum of representation discounts any abstract scale of idolatry.[34] Instead, what is acceptable seems to rely very much on what other practices are current at any given time. The Biblical scenes with the hand of the deity, for example, are a type of "iconic aniconism." The hand is permitted, but not the rest of the body. A throne is permitted to discreetly point to the being that sits on it long after the direct portrayal of the one sitting on the throne is forbidden. Not writing down the deity's name, surrounding it with careful restrictions, casts a shadow over

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30 Kimelman (2005) dates the emergence of the standard rabbinic formula to the mid-3rd century, close to the period of the destruction of the Dura synagogue.

31 This version is different from the rabbinic divine name ideology, as our next example demonstrates. In their ideology, the name could be written since it was not the true, unspeakable name.

32 As argued by Fine, who cites a similar usage in the 7th century Munich Palimpsest (Fine 2005: 52).

33 So too in the Dead Sea Scrolls standardization occurs internal to a single text rather than across texts (Nitzan 1994: 77).

34 Including the one found in Halbertal and Margalit (1992), which is a brilliant elevation of Israelite polemics to the level of theory.

any direct utterance of the name as heresy or magic. The deity is both hidden and available according to the divine name ideology.

Example 3: Divine name as circumlocution and text

In the rabbinic divine name ideology, in a baptismal naming event hard to top, the Genesis creation story is given a new interpretation: the deity created the world by speaking his name (Janowitz 1993). The divine name, as a synthesis of all creative ability, is itself given a name that refers in shorthand both to the fact that it is a name and to its complex content. The name used to create the world is given the name Shem Ha-Meforash, an obscure and hard to translate term that can be glossed as "the Exceptional Name."[35]

This ideology plays out in numerous variations in all sorts of secondary theological points.[36] As a name for the divine name, the term signals that this name itself is now an object of speculation and investigation, a mini-text in itself. The name can, indeed must, be interpreted in order for it to reveal its secrets. The power of the name means that its use must be highly restricted, limited by a fundamental taboo. Endless formal and functional substitutes are created that supply, within carefully delineated parameters, the transformational efficacy of all speech (including prayer). Somewhat ironically, the name that was avoided in earlier blessing can now be written out, since it is not really the true, hidden name anyway.

We will briefly trace two examples of how this ideology extends in all directions. The name ideology is read back into the biblical text in the Aramaic translations by means of circumlocutions for the divine name. The new name extracts the implicit idea of God's creative speech from Genesis and substitutes a timeless framework. The name swallows the Biblical text as the entire text becomes an extended divine name. Exodus 3:14–15 includes the famous revelations of the divine name: "Moses asked the Lord, Who should I say sent me? And the Lord said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, This you will say to the children of Israel: I am sent me."

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35 Bacher (1905) argues that the term basically sets this name apart from all other names.

36 Christian theologians also eagerly adopted these ideas. For example, Jerome lists the ten names of the deity, nine of which can be spoken while the tenth is "ineffable" (Jerome, Letter 25 to Marcella, *Patrologia Latina* 22, 429).

In Targum Neofiti, an Aramaic translation of the Torah, God, instead of giving the short version of his name, replies to Moses:

> This you will say to the children of Israel: The one who spoke and the world was there at the beginning, and who is to speak to it "Exist" and it will exist, sent me.[37]

The text in Exodus already contains a short meditation on the meaning of God's name, playing with the connection between the name "YHWH" and the root "to be" (HYH). The interpretation is then extended in the Aramaic translation. God not only exists, he is also the source of all existence as the creator of the world. Thus in order to refer to him and to explain who he is – to answer the question, what is your name? – the simplest way is to describe him in his unique role as the speaker who creates. The deity's creative act of speaking has become his proper name.

This new version of cross-modal representation of divinity mixes a very delicate, deferential avoidance of the divine name with a very dramatic materialization of it in the form of the physical text. The name is entextualized into a text that becomes one extended name (Silverstein and Urban 1996: 1–6 and passim). While the entire world is a materialization of the deity, the text (the written divine name) is a much more direct materialization. Divine speech, in the objectified state of the text itself, embodies the deity on earth. The Divine-name-form is not the "human" form of Pithoi drawings or the Dura painting, but it is just as "idolatrous" since the material representations appear magical to outsiders and the scroll can be misunderstood and misused.

The name is a report of a report of a reported speech (Moses reports what the deity told Moses to say, and that in turn is the report that the deity told Moses to say). But due to the rigid reference of naming, the text as name can become problematic. The second line of development dilutes the text-as-name, equating divine speech more generally with "word." This is a more indirect sanctification than divine name, with fewer implications.[38] The words by which the world was created are found in the document, along with many other examples of divine speech (words). Each "Thus says the Lord" is an utterance of divine speech and the text is a collection of all such "words."

This linguistic ideology is once again read back into the text via the Targumic translation. The Aramaic word for 'word' (*memra*) is added in the translation, as for example "I will be there, my *memra*, with you" (Neofiti to Exodus 3:12).

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37 Targum Neofiti is dated anywhere between the 2nd century to the 5th century CE.
38 The introduction of the Gospel of John, for example, has to explicitly equate the word (*logos*) with the name (*logos*) in order to achieve the rigid reference of name.

It only takes a slight equation of word with name to bring us back to the name ideology, but that slight difference of emphasis leaves open additional linguistic ideologies.

Example 4: Divine name as secret form

Our final two examples take us to the medieval elaborations of divine naming (12th to 13th century).[39] These articulations do not present new theories so much as spin out many of the implications of the ideologies we have already encountered. They both focus on the name as secret and powerful, an old idea but one that gains its own special emphasis in these examples.

First, *The Book of the Name*, written by Eleazer of Worms at the beginning of the 13th century, presents secret doctrines he hoped to preserve in the face of the death of his teacher and attacks on the Jewish community.[40] The text begins, "With the Name Was, Is, and Will be, I begin the Book of the Name" (1.1).[41] The name is both the subject of the text and also invoked at the outset. In a sense, the book could end here. As repeated explicitly throughout the treatise, "his name is his reality." If we could see immediately into the name, if we could uncover its structure, all the rest of the text would be commentary. But since we cannot do this, the author explicates the name for us. "Why is the Yod at the start of the name?" The answer Eleazer gives is that "Aleph is above, Beth is below, etc., Yod is afterwards." His name begins with "afterward" in order "to teach that the existence after the world is like that before the world" (2:10).

The book details a ritual for passing on the secret divine name from Rabbi to student. Based on Psalm 27:3, "The voice of God is over the waters," the teacher and his students are told to fast and then stand in water up to their ankles.

The Rabbi then recites the blessing:

> Blessed are you, our God, the king of the universe, the Lord God of Israel. You are one and your name is one. You have commanded us to keep your name hidden because it is so terrifying. Blessed are you and blessed is your glorious name forever, the numinous name of the Lord our God. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. Blessed are you our Lord who reveals His secret to those who worship him, the One who knows all secrets.

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39 Both of the examples are hard to date because the texts preserve earlier ideas. The nuances of debates about dating the ideas are beyond the scope of this paper.

40 For information about Eleazer of Worms see Dan (1995) and (Dan 2002).

41 This text is not available in English translation or even in a critical Hebrew edition. For a general introduction with some translations, see Dan (1995). Translations are my own, in some cases adapted from Dan's translations.

The ritual builds in numerous formal (iconic) representations of the deity. In the Genesis creation story, the deity hovered over the water in the act of creation. In this version Eleazer uses his secret name, which is hidden from everyone in the world except for those to whom it is passed on. In the ritual a close identification is made between the divine presence hovering over the waters to create the world and the Rabbi with his disciples standing in the water and uttering the same word. The disciple who participates in the ceremony also knows the name, hearing it just as it was spoken at the moment of creation. This is a wonderful example of building not only a cosmology but also a cosmogony into a ritual. Recreating the primordial moment of creation transforms the human speaker.

The fact that the deity has a secret name was widely disseminated. A secret has no social valence if it is not known to exist and to be available to certain people. A rich set of stories elaborate a "history" for the secret name passed on by priests and then worthy rabbis. Eleazer of Worms only revealed this secret due to the dire circumstances of his life.

The text also describes a mini-version of the ritual carried out after the water ritual at the synagogue, with the divine name recited over a glass of water.[42] This recitation of the name "over water" brings the creative divine power directly into the synagogue, sanctifying it in yet another modality.

Our second example of the secret name comes from Pedro Alfonso, an early 12th-century Jew who converted to Christianity.[43] He wrote many theological treatises in Latin, including a "Dialogue against the Jews."[44] In the dialogue, Petrus is trying to convince his Jewish interlocutor about the truth of the Trinitarian deity using various types of textual evidence. He discusses the Hebrew divine name as proof of the superiority of Christian theology. For example, he points to the use of a plural "gods" in several biblical citations. When the Jewish interlocutor Moses replies that these citations include singular verb forms, Petrus counters with his knowledge about a secret divine name. He explains that, "the very subtle name of God, which is found explained in the *Secrets of Secrets*, is a name I say, of three letters (although it is written with four characters [*figurae*], for one of them is

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42 For the combination of a divine name and water see the medieval versions of the *sotah* (suspected adultress rite) discussed in Janowitz (2014).

43 In the case of Eleazer of Worms, he wrote about the divine name because he hoped to preserve them. Peter converted to Christianity, and so revealed the form of the divine name as part of his argument in support of Christian theological doctrine.

44 Among other activities, he is said to have been a doctor to Henry I of England (Petrus and Resnick 2006).

written twice, doubled)."[45] He then makes three names out of the four letters as shown in a "geometric illustration [*figurae*]."
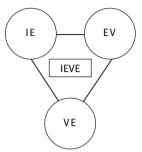

Figure 1: Alfonso's original model of the Divine Name.

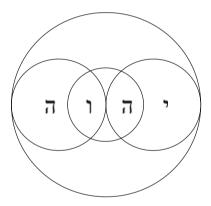Later versions of the text include a different figure:

Figure 2: Alternate version of Alfonso's model.

The four letters of the divine name include three different letters (*yod*, *hay* twice, and *vav*), thereby representing the Trinity and proving that it is the true theology. Both diagrams are formal representations of the deity of yet another new type. Something about the explanation of the name leads Petrus to shift to a diagram, offering as it were, a map of the name outlined for the reader. This move might seem to be breaking a taboo since it involves writing down the name. However, diagrams of names appear in later Jewish texts as well, including the names of

45 Pedro Alfonso, *Dialogus contra Judaeos* PL 157,611. The drawing also appears in Maurer (1979: 978). The drawing is included in the Latin text but not in the English translation by Resnick (Petrus and Resnick 2006).

the deity mapped out in the form of a human body. When such proof is needed, then the form can be unveiled.

This example employs a coordinated dual-modality for the name, as, following an example explored by Cale Johnson (2013), when the word "fish" is portrayed in the form of a fish. Dual-modalities may be used as "material representation of otherwise intractable ideas" (Johnson 2013: 8). For example, in order to convey the idea of silence, a modern poem encircles many instance of the word "silence" around a blank inner circle. While it is easy to understand how a hand can represent the hand of God, in our example the problem is representing a divine name. The use of the drawing is an attempt to both contain and exploit the full implications of the formal relationship between the name and what is named. This inner form is part of the "reality" of the name and must be put on display in order to make that reality clear. At the same time the name as a representation is increasingly thought to be only a partial representation of what is ultimately an unknowable secret.

3   Conclusion: Comparing ideologies

The two linguistic ideologies overlap and differ in striking ways. From one point of view, speech act performatives could be thought of as a kind of "naming" themselves: the verbs "transparently" name the type of action being enacted: "I baptize" is *eo ipso* a "baptism." It is this very self-naming which drew Austin's attention in the first place, and since they name an action done by language are the model for Silverstein's explicit metapragmatics (Silverstein 1976).[46]

Austin's dependence on the self-naming verbs means he has to incorporate enough of the context to demonstrate how a particular verb was understood to encode social action in a particular setting. He had to add felicity conditions in an attempt to locate the context in which a verb is effective and the "naming" of the action successful. Thus speech act theory "emerges from a sociohistorically specific formulation from within a culture caught at a particular happenstance moment of lexicalization of certain metapragmatic verbs (verbs used to denote discursive interactional event types) which, as lexical primes, come into and go out of general use" (Silverstein 2010: 344).

On the other hand, names, with their rigid reference, supply a different model of indexical summoning of the divine presence. No felicity conditions are needed

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46 This is why speech acts cannot model all the various functionalities of language but are limited to "nameable" action.

here. Automatic efficacy is taken for granted and extreme caution must therefore be observed. This ideology does not always play out in the same manner. Evolving constraints necessitate a constantly shifting calibration of the iconic presentation, ending up with the need to completely obscure the name. As a mediator between humans and their deity, the divine name is under constant pressure. As Leone and Parmentier note, "Cross-cultural investigations suggest [...] that the greater the assumed unbridgeability of the gap between earthly and transcendent realms[...] the more difficult becomes the task of traditional 'semiotic mediators' between realms, mediators that can now become increasingly open to intense ideological critique and political attack" (Leone and Parmentier 2014: 58).

Yet even as the ideological critique unfolds, the necessary indexical connection that is at the heart of the naming ideology continues to depend upon a material form in order to successfully invoke a divine presence. The material formal representation is always iconically connected to the divine referent. The formal "shape" is assumed to have a natural rather than conventional link to the divine. Thus all our examples of divine name rituals are built from not only words but other iconic signs as well.

One person's shape is another person's idol, even as all representations refer to the deity indexically as they cross-contextually manifest the divine presence in a particular location. The contagion of the "natural" connection of a name is harder to contain than the efficacy of a conventional speech act, easily dethroned by the mere shift in the verbal form. Both ideologies capture something speakers sense about the power of language, the capacity of names to invoke a presence and of self-reflexive verbs to describe the very action they enact.

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