

QUOTATIONS

SPEAKING AND LANGUAGE¹

“ here is an interesting nuance that goes to the heart of language, the relation of speaker and hearer: We can say, “I am walking too fast,” “You are walking too fast,” “He is walking too fast.” We can say, “I admire the view,” “I wonder what they’re doing,” “I’m surprised at you,” and “He admires the view,” “He wonders what they’re doing,” “He’s surprised at her.” But there’s something wrong in saying, “You admire the view,” “You wonder what they’re doing,” “You’re surprised at me”—we would have to add or imply “You admire the view, don’t you?” “I see you wonder what they’re doing,” “(I guess) you’re surprised at me.” Otherwise the hearer might say, “Stop telling me what I’m feeling.” On the other hand, “inner” actions that are likely to involve obvious overt behavior *are* allowable in the second person: “You love her,” “You hate me,” “You’re afraid of him”—the hearer might protest that it’s not so, but he won’t object to our *saying* so. The nuance here is definite and quite remarkable. It may be that *mens naturaliter Platonica*, but speaking people seem to be naturally behaviorists when they confront each other. In cases like this, unbehavioristic sentences become idiomatic.”

¹Paul Goodman, *Speaking and Language: Defence of Poetry*. Copyright Random House, Inc., 1972.