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HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS

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LECTURE VIII

IN embarking on a programme of finding a list of explicit performative verbs, it seemed that we were going to find it not always easy to distinguish performative utterances from constative, and it therefore seemed expedient to go farther back for a while to fundamentals—to consider from the ground up how many senses there are in which to say something *is* to do something, or *in* saying something we do something, and even *by* saying something we do something. And we began by distinguishing a whole group of senses of 'doing something' which are all included together when we say, what is obvious, that to say something is in the full normal sense to do something—which includes the utterance of certain noises, the utterance of certain words in a certain construction, and the utterance of them with a certain 'meaning' in the favourite philosophical sense of that word, i.e. with a certain sense and with a certain reference.

The act of 'saying something' in this full normal sense I call, i.e. dub, the performance of a locutionary act, and the study of utterances thus far and in these respects the study of locutions, or of the full units of speech. Our interest in the locutionary act is, of course, principally to make quite plain what it is, in order to distinguish it from other acts with which we are going to be primarily

concerned. Let me add merely that, of course, a great many further refinements would be possible and necessary if we were to discuss it for its own sake—refinements of very great importance not merely to philosophers but to, say, grammarians and phoneticians.

We had made three rough distinctions between the phonetic act, the phatic act, and the rhetic act. The phonetic act is merely the act of uttering certain noises. The phatic act is the uttering of certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types, belonging to and as belonging to, a certain vocabulary, conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar. The rhetic act is the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference. Thus 'He said "The cat is on the mat"', reports a phatic act, whereas 'He said that the cat was on the mat' reports a rhetic act. A similar contrast is illustrated by the pairs:

'He said "I shall be there"', 'He said he would be there';
'He said "Get out"', 'He told me to get out';
'He said "Is it in Oxford or Cambridge?"'; 'He asked whether it was in Oxford or Cambridge'.

To pursue this for its own sake beyond our immediate requirements, I shall mention some general points worth remembering:

(1) Obviously, to perform a phatic I must perform a phonetic act, or, if you like, in performing one I am performing the other (not, however, that phatic acts are

a sub-class of phonetic acts—as belonging to): but the converse is not true, for if a monkey makes a noise indistinguishable from 'go' it is still not a phatic act.

(2) Obviously in the definition of the phatic act two things were lumped together: vocabulary and grammar. So we have not assigned a special name to the person who utters, for example, 'cat thoroughly the if' or 'the slithy toves did gyre'. Yet a further point arising is the intonation as well as grammar and vocabulary.

(3) The phatic act, however, like the phonetic, is essentially mimicable, reproducible (including intonation, winks, gestures, &c.). One can mimic not merely the statement in quotation marks 'She has lovely hair', but also the more complex fact that he said it like this: 'She has lovely *hair*' (shrugs).

This is the 'inverted commas' use of 'said' as we get it in novels: every utterance can be just reproduced in inverted commas, or in inverted commas with 'said he' or, more often, 'said she', &c., after it.

But the rhetic act is the one we report, in the case of assertions, by saying 'He said that the cat was on the mat', 'He said he would go', 'He said I was to go' (his words were 'You are to go'). This is the so-called 'indirect speech'. If the sense or reference is *not* being taken as clear, then the whole or part is to be in quotation marks. Thus I might say: 'He said I was to go to the "minister", but he did not say which minister' or 'I said that he was behaving badly and he replied that "the higher you get the fewer" '. We cannot, however, always use 'said that'

easily: we would say 'told to', 'advise to', &c., if he used the imperative mood, or such equivalent phrases as 'said I was to', 'said I should', &c. Compare such phrases as 'bade me welcome' and 'extended his apologies'.

I add one further point about the rhetic act: of course sense and reference (naming and referring) themselves are here ancillary acts performed in performing the rhetic act. Thus we may say 'I meant by "bank" . . .' and we say 'by "he" I was referring to . . .'. Can we perform a rhetic act without referring or without naming? In general it would seem that the answer is that we cannot, but there are puzzling cases. What is the reference in 'all triangles have three sides'? Correspondingly, it is clear that we can perform a phatic act which is not a rhetic act, though not conversely. Thus we may repeat someone else's remark or mumble over some sentence, or we may read a Latin sentence without knowing the meaning of the words.

The question when one pheme or one rheme is the *same* as another, whether in the 'type' or 'token' sense, and the question what is one single pheme or rheme, do not so much matter here. But, of course, it is important to remember that the same pheme (token of the same type) may be used on different occasions of utterance with a different sense or reference, and so be a different rheme. When different phemes are used with the same sense and reference, we might speak of rhetically equivalent acts ('the same statement' in one sense) but not of the same rheme or rhetic acts (which are the same

statement in another sense which involves using the same words).

The pheme is a unit of *language*: its typical fault is to be nonsense—meaningless. But the rheme is a unit of *speech*; its typical fault is to be vague or void or obscure, &c.

But though these matters are of much interest, they do not so far throw any light at all on our problem of the constative as opposed to the performative utterance. For example, it might be perfectly possible, with regard to an utterance, say 'It is going to charge', to make entirely plain 'what we were saying' in issuing the utterance, in all the senses so far distinguished, and yet not at all to have cleared up whether or not in issuing the utterance I was performing the act of *warning* or not. It may be perfectly clear what I mean by 'It is going to charge' or 'Shut the door', but not clear whether it is meant as a statement or warning, &c.

To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and *eo ipso* to perform an *illocutionary* act, as I propose to call it. To determine what illocutionary act is so performed we must determine in what way we are using the locution:

asking or answering a question,
giving some information or an assurance or a warning,
announcing a verdict or an intention,
pronouncing sentence,
making an appointment or an appeal or a criticism,
making an identification or giving a description,

and the numerous like. (I am not suggesting that this is a clearly defined class by any means.) There is nothing mysterious about our *eo ipso* here. The trouble rather is the number of different senses of so vague an expression as 'in what way are we using it'—this may refer even to a locutionary act, and further to perlocutionary acts to which we shall come in a minute. When we perform a locutionary act, we use speech: but in what way precisely are we using it on this occasion? For there are very numerous functions of or ways in which we use speech, and it makes a great difference to our act in some sense—sense (B)[1]—in which way and which *sense* we were on this occasion 'using' it. It makes a great difference whether we were advising, or merely suggesting, or actually ordering, whether we were strictly promising or only announcing a vague intention, and so forth. These issues penetrate a little but not without confusion into grammar (see above), but we constantly do debate them, in such terms as whether certain words (a certain locution) *had the force of* a question, or *ought to have been taken as* an estimate and so on.

I explained the performance of an act in this new and second sense as the performance of an 'illocutionary' act, i.e. performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something; and I shall refer to the doctrine of the different types of function of language here in question as the doctrine of 'illocutionary forces'.

[1] See below, p. 101.

It may be said that for too long philosophers have neglected this study, treating all problems as problems of 'locutionary usage', and indeed that the 'descriptive fallacy' mentioned in Lecture I commonly arises through mistaking a problem of the former kind for a problem of the latter kind. True, we are now getting out of this; for some years we have been realizing more and more clearly that the occasion of an utterance matters seriously, and that the words used are to some extent to be 'explained' by the 'context' in which they are designed to be or have actually been spoken in a linguistic interchange. Yet still perhaps we are too prone to give these explanations in terms of 'the meanings of words'. Admittedly we can use 'meaning' also with reference to illocutionary force—'He meant it as an order', &c. But I want to distinguish *force* and meaning in the sense in which meaning is equivalent to sense and reference, just as it has become essential to distinguish sense and reference within meaning.

Moreover, we have here an illustration of the different uses of the expression, 'uses of language', or 'use of a sentence', &c.—'use' is a hopelessly ambiguous or wide word, just as is the word 'meaning', which it has become customary to deride. But 'use', its supplanter, is not in much better case. We may entirely clear up the 'use of a sentence' on a particular occasion, in the sense of the locutionary act, without yet touching upon its use in the sense of an *illocutionary* act.

Before refining any further on this notion of the

illocutionary act, let us contrast both the locutionary *and* the illocutionary act with yet a third kind of act.

There is yet a further sense (C) in which to perform a locutionary act, and therein an illocutionary act, may also be to perform an act of another kind. Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which reference is made either (C. *a*), only obliquely, or even (C. *b*), not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act. We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a *perlocutionary* act or *perlocution*. Let us not yet define this idea any more carefully—of course it needs it—but simply give examples:

(E. 1)

Act (A) or Locution

He said to me 'Shoot her!' meaning by 'shoot' shoot and referring by 'her' to *her*.

Act (B) or Illocution

He urged (or advised, ordered, &c.) me to shoot her.

Act (C. *a*) or Perlocution

He persuaded me to shoot her.

Act (C. *b*)

He got me to (or made me, &c.) shoot her.

(E. 2)

Act (A) or Locution

He said to me, 'You can't do that'.

Act (B) or Illocution

He protested against my doing it.

Act (C. *a*) or Perlocution

He pulled me up, checked me.

Act (C. *b*)

He stopped me, he brought me to my senses, &c.
He annoyed me.

We can similarly distinguish the locutionary act 'he said that . . .' from the illocutionary act 'he argued that . . .' and the perlocutionary act 'he convinced me that . . .'.

It will be seen that the consequential effects of perlocutions are really consequences, which do not include such conventional effects as, for example, the speaker's being committed by his promise (which comes into the illocutionary act). Perhaps distinctions need drawing, as there is clearly a difference between what we feel to be the real production of real effects and what we regard as mere conventional consequences; we shall in any case return later to this.

We have here then roughly distinguished three kinds

of acts—the locutionary, the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary.[1] Let us make some general comments on these three classes, leaving them still fairly rough. The first three points will be about 'the use of language' again.

(1) Our interest in these lectures is essentially to fasten on the second, illocutionary act and contrast it with the other two. There is a constant tendency in philosophy to elide this in favour of one or other of the other two. Yet it is distinct from both. We have already seen how the expressions 'meaning' and 'use of sentence' can blur the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts. We now notice that to speak of the 'use' of language can likewise blur the distinction between the illocutionary and perlocutionary act—so we will distinguish them more carefully in a minute. Speaking of the 'use of "language" for arguing or warning' looks just like speaking of 'the use of "language" for persuading, rousing, alarming'; yet the former may, for rough contrast, be said to be *conventional*, in the sense that at least it could be made explicit by the performative formula; but the latter could not. Thus we can say 'I argue that' or 'I warn you that' but we cannot say 'I convince you that' or 'I alarm you that'. Further, we may entirely clear up whether someone was arguing or not without touching on the question whether he was convincing anyone or not.

[1] [Here occurs in the manuscript a note made in 1958 which says: '(1) All this is not clear (2) and in all senses relevant ((A) and (B) as distinct from (C)) won't all utterances be performative?']

(2) To take this farther, let us be quite clear that the expression 'use of language' can cover other matters even more diverse than the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. For example, we may speak of the 'use of language' *for* something, e.g. for joking; and we may use 'in' in a way different from the illocutionary 'in', as when we say 'in saying "p" I was joking' or 'acting a part' or 'writing poetry'; or again we may speak of 'a poetical use of language' as distinct from 'the use of language in poetry'. These references to 'use of language' have nothing to do with the illocutionary act. For example, if I say 'Go and catch a falling star', it may be quite clear what both the meaning and the force of my utterance is, but still wholly unresolved which of these other kinds of things I may be doing. There are parasitic uses of language, which are 'not serious', not the 'full normal use'. The normal conditions of reference may be suspended, or no attempt made at a standard perlocutionary act, no attempt to make you do anything, as Walt Whitman does not seriously incite the eagle of liberty to soar.

(3) Furthermore, there may be some things we 'do' in some connexion with saying something which do not seem to fall, intuitively at least, exactly into any of these roughly defined classes, or else seem to fall vaguely into more than one; but any way we do not at the outset feel so clear that they are as remote from our three acts as would be joking or writing poetry. For example, *insinuating*, as when we insinuate something in or by issuing some utterance, seems to involve some convention, as in

the illocutionary act; but we cannot *say* 'I insinuate . . .', and it seems like implying to be a clever effect rather than a mere act. A further example is evincing emotion. We may evince emotion in or by issuing an utterance, as when we swear; but once again we have no use here for performative formulas and the other devices of illocutionary acts. We might say that we use swearing[1] *for* relieving our feelings. We must notice that the illocutionary act is a conventional act: an act done as conforming to a convention.

(4) Acts of all our three kinds necessitate, since they are the performing of actions, allowance being made for the ills that all action is heir to. We must systematically be prepared to distinguish between 'the act of doing *x*', i.e. achieving *x*, and 'the act of attempting to do *x*': for example, we must distinguish between warning and attempting to warn. We must expect infelicities here.

The next three points that arise do so importantly because our acts are *acts*.

(5) Since our acts are acts, we must always remember the distinction between producing effects or consequences which are intended or unintended; and (i) when the speaker intends to produce an effect it may nevertheless not occur, and (ii) when he does not intend to produce it or intends not to produce it it may nevertheless occur. To cope with complication (i) we invoke as before the distinction between attempt and achievement; to cope

[1] 'Swearing' is ambiguous: 'I swear by Our Lady' *is* to swear by Our Lady: but 'Bloody' is not to swear by Our Lady.

with complication (ii) we invoke the normal linguistic devices of disclaiming (adverbs like 'unintentionally' and 'so on') which we hold ready for personal use in all cases of doing actions.

(6) Furthermore, we must, of course, allow that as acts they may be things that we do not exactly *do*, in the sense that we did them, say, under duress or in any other such way. Other ways besides in which we may not fully do the action are given in (2) above.

(7) Finally we must meet the objection about our illocutionary and perlocutionary acts—namely that the notion of an act is unclear—by a general doctrine about action. We have the idea of an 'act' as a fixed physical thing that we do, as distinguished from conventions and as distinguished from consequences. But

(*a*) the illocutionary act and even the locutionary act too may involve conventions: consider the example of doing obeisance. It is obeisance only because it is conventional and it is done only because it is conventional. Compare the distinction between kicking a wall and kicking a goal;

(*b*) the perlocutionary act may include what in a way are consequences, as when we say 'By doing *x* I was doing *y*': we do bring in a greater or less stretch of 'consequences' always, some of which may be 'unintentional'. There is no restriction to the minimum physical act at all. That we can import an indefinitely long stretch of what might also be called the 'consequences' of our act into the act itself is, or should be, a fundamental commonplace of

the theory of our language about all 'action' in general. Thus if asked 'What did he do?', we may reply either 'He shot the donkey' or 'He fired a gun' or 'He pulled the trigger' or 'He moved his trigger finger', and all may be correct. So, to shorten the nursery story of the endeavours of the old woman to drive her pig home in time to get her old man's supper, we may in the last resort say that the cat drove or got the pig, or made the pig get, over the stile. If in such cases we *mention* both a B act (illocution) and a C act (perlocution) we shall say '*by* B-ing he C-ed' rather than '*in* B-ing . . .'. This is the reason for calling C a *per*locutionary act as distinct from an illocutionary act.

Next time we shall revert to the distinction between our three kinds of act, and to the expressions 'in' and 'by doing *x* I am doing *y*', with a view to getting the three classes and their members and non-members somewhat clearer. We shall see that just as the locutionary act embraces doing many things at once to be complete, so may the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts.

LECTURE IX

WHEN it was suggested that we embark on a programme of making a list of explicit performative verbs, we ran into some difficulties over the matter of determining whether some utterance was or was not performative, or anyway, *purely* performative. It seemed expedient, therefore, to go back to fundamentals and consider how many senses there may be in which to say something is to do something, or in saying something we do something, or even *by* saying something we do something.

We first distinguished a group of things we do in saying something, which together we summed up by saying we perform a *locutionary act*, which is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense. Second, we said that we also perform *illocutionary acts* such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, &c., i.e. utterances which have a certain (conventional) force. Thirdly, we may also perform *perlocutionary acts*: what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading. Here we have three, if not more, different senses or dimensions of the 'use of a sentence' or of 'the use of

language' (and, of course, there are others also). All these three kinds of 'actions' are, simply of course as actions, subject to the usual troubles and reservations about attempt as distinct from achievement, being intentional as distinct from being unintentional, and the like. We then said that we must consider these three kinds of act in greater detail.

We must distinguish the illocutionary from the perlocutionary act: for example we must distinguish 'in saying it I was warning him' from 'by saying it I convinced him, or surprised him, or got him to stop'.

B. THE NEED TO DISTINGUISH 'CONSEQUENCES'

It is the distinction between illocutions and perlocutions which seems likeliest to give trouble, and it is upon this that we shall now embark, taking in the distinction between illocutions and locutions by the way. It is certain that the perlocutionary sense of 'doing an action' must somehow be ruled out as irrelevant to the sense in which an utterance, if the issuing of it is the 'doing of an action', is a performative, at least if that is to be distinct from a constative. For clearly *any*, or almost any, perlocutionary act is liable to be brought off, in sufficiently special circumstances, by the issuing, with or without calculation, of any utterance whatsoever, and in particular by a straightforward constative utterance (if there is such an animal). You may, for example, deter me (C. *b*)[1] from doing something by informing me, perhaps

[1] See p. 102 for the significance of these references.

guilelessly yet opportunely, what the consequences of doing it would in fact be: and this applies even to (C. *a*)[1] for you may convince me (C. *a*)[1] that she is an adulteress by asking her whether it was not her handkerchief which was in *X's* bedroom,[2] or by stating that it was hers.

We have then to draw the line between an action we do (here an illocution) and its consequence. Now in general, and if the action is not one of saying something but a non-conventional 'physical' action, this is an intricate matter. As we have seen, we can, or may like to think we can, class, by stages, more and more of what is initially and ordinarily included or possibly might be included under the name given to 'our act' itself[3] as *really* only *consequences*, however little remote and however naturally

[1] See p. 102 for the significance of these references.

[2] That the giving of straightforward information produces, almost always, consequential effects upon action, is no more surprising than the converse, that the doing of any action (including the uttering of a performative) has regularly the consequence of making ourselves and others aware of facts. To do any act in a perceptible or detectable way is to afford ourselves and generally others also the opportunity of coming to know both (*a*) that we did it, and further (*b*) many other facts as to our motives, our character or what not which may be inferred from our having done it. If you hurl a tomato at a political meeting (or bawl 'I protest' when someone else does—if that is performing an action) the consequence will probably be to make others aware that you object, and to make them think that you hold certain political beliefs: but this will not make either the throw or the shout true or false (though they may be, even deliberately, misleading). And by the same token, the production of any number of consequential effects will not prevent a constative utterance from *being* true or false.

[3] I do not here go into the question how far consequences may extend. The usual errors on this topic may be found in, for example, Moore's *Principia Ethica.*

to be anticipated, of our actual action in the supposed minimum physical sense, which will then transpire to be the making of some movement or movements with parts of our body (e.g. crooking our finger, which produced a movement of the trigger, which produced . . . which produced the death of the donkey). There is, of course, much to be said about this which need not concern us here. But at least in the case of acts of saying something,

(1) *nomenclature* affords us an assistance which it generally withholds in the case of 'physical' actions. For with physical actions we nearly always naturally name the action *not* in terms of what we are here calling the minimum physical act, but in terms which embrace a greater or less but indefinitely extensive range of what might be called its natural consequences (or, looking at it another way, the intention with which it was done).

We not merely do not use the notion of a minimum physical act (which is in any case doubtful) but we do not seem to have any class of names which distinguish physical acts from consequences: whereas with acts of saying something, the vocabulary of names for acts (B) seems expressly designed to mark a break at a certain regular point between the act (our saying something) and its consequences (which are usually not the *saying* of anything), or at any rate a great many of them.[1]

[1] Note that if we suppose the minimum physical act to be movement of the body when we say 'I moved my finger', the fact that the object moved *is* part of my body does in fact introduce a new sense of 'moved'. Thus I may be able to waggle my ears as a schoolboy does, or by grasping them between my finger and thumb, or move my foot either in the

(2) Furthermore, we seem to derive some assistance from the special nature of acts of saying something by contrast with ordinary physical actions: for with these latter even the minimum physical action, which we are seeking to detach from its consequences, is, being a bodily movement, *in pari materia*[1] with at least many of its immediate and natural consequences, whereas, whatever the immediate and natural consequences of an act of saying something may be, they are at least not normally other further acts of saying something, whether more particularly on the speaker's own part or even on the part of others.[2] So that we have here a sort of regular natural break in the chain, which is wanting in the case of physical actions, and which is associated with the special class of names for illocutions.

But, it may be asked at this point, are not the consequences imported with the nomenclature of perlocutions

ordinary way or by manipulating with my hand when I have pins and needles. The ordinary use of 'move' in such examples as 'I moved my finger' is ultimate. We must not seek to go back behind it to 'pulling on my muscles' and the like.

[1] This *in pari materia* could be misleading to you. I do not mean, as was pointed out in the previous footnote, that my 'moving my finger' is, metaphysically, in the least like 'the trigger moving' which is its consequence, or like 'my finger's moving the trigger'. But 'a movement of a trigger finger' is *in pari materia* with 'a movement of a trigger'.

Or we could put the matter in a most important other way by saying that the sense in which saying something produces effects on other persons, or *causes* things, is a fundamentally different sense of cause from that used in physical causation by pressure, &c. It has to operate through the conventions of language and is a matter of influence exerted by one person on another: this is probably the original sense of 'cause'.

[2] See below.

really consequences of the acts (A), the locutions? Ought we not, in seeking to detach 'all' consequences, to go right back beyond the illocution to the locution—and indeed to the act (A. *a*), the uttering of noises, which is a physical movement?[1] It has, of course, been admitted that to perform an illocutionary act is necessarily to perform a locutionary act: that, for example, to congratulate is necessarily to say certain words; and to say certain words is necessarily, at least in part, to make certain more or less indescribable movements with the vocal organs.[2] So that the divorce between 'physical' actions and acts of saying something is not in all ways complete—there is some connexion. But (i) while this may be important in some connexions and contexts, it does not seem to prevent the drawing of *a* line for our present purposes where we want one, that is, between the completion of the illocutionary act and all consequences thereafter. And further (ii), much more important, we must avoid the idea, suggested above though not stated, that the illocutionary act is a *consequence* of the locutionary act, and even the idea that what is imported by the nomenclature of illocutions is an *additional* reference to *some* of the consequences of the locutions,[3] i.e. that to say 'he urged me to' is to say that he said certain words and in addition that his saying them had *or* perhaps was intended to have

[1] Or is it? We have already noted that 'production of noises' is itself really a consequence of the minimum physical act of moving one's vocal organs.

[2] Still confining ourselves, for simplicity, to *spoken* utterance.

[3] Though see below.

certain consequences (? an effect upon me). We should not, if we were to insist for some reason and in some sense on 'going back' from the illocution to the phonetic act (A. *a*), be going back to a minimum physical action via the chain of its consequences, in the way that we supposedly go back from the death of the rabbit to the movement of the trigger finger. The uttering of noises may be a consequence (physical) of the movement of the vocal organs, the breath, &c.: but the uttering of a word is *not* a consequence of the uttering of a noise, whether physical or otherwise. Nor is the uttering of words with a certain meaning a *consequence* of uttering the words, whether physical or otherwise. For that matter, even phatic (A. *b*) and rhetic (A. *c*) acts are not *consequences*, let alone physical consequences, of phonetic acts (A. *a*). What we do import by the use of the nomenclature of illocution is a reference, not to the consequences (at least in any ordinary sense) of the locution, but to the conventions of illocutionary force as bearing on the special circumstances of the occasion of the issuing of the utterance. We shall shortly return to the senses in which the successful or consummated performance of an illocutionary act *does* bring in 'consequences' or 'effects' in certain senses.[1]

[1] We may still feel tempted to ascribe some 'primacy' to the locution as against the illocution, seeing that, given some individual rhetic act (A. *c*), there may yet be room for doubt as to how it should be described in the nomenclature of illocutions. Why after all should we label one *A* the other *B*? We may agree on the actual words that were uttered, and even also on the senses in which they were being used and on the realities

I have so far argued, then, that we can have hopes of isolating the illocutionary act from the perlocutionary as producing consequences, and that it is not itself a 'consequence' of the locutionary act. Now, however, I must point out that the illocutionary act as distinct from the perlocutionary is connected with the production of effects in certain senses:

(1) Unless a certain effect is achieved, the illocutionary act will not have been happily, successfully performed. This is to be distinguished from saying that the illocutionary act is the achieving of a certain effect. I cannot be said to have warned an audience unless it hears what I say and takes what I say in a certain sense. An effect must be achieved on the audience if the illocutionary act

to which they were being used to refer, and yet still disagree as to whether, in the circumstances, they amounted to an order or a threat or merely to advice or a warning. Yet after all, there is ample room, equally, for disagreement in individual cases as to how the rhetic act (A. *c*) should be described in the nomenclature of locutions (What did he really mean? To what person, time, or what not was he actually referring?): and indeed, we may often agree that his act was definitely one say, of ordering (illocution), while yet uncertain what it was he was meaning to order (locution). It is plausible to suppose that the act is at least as much 'bound' to be describable as some more or less *definite* type of illocution as it is to be describable as some more or less definite locutionary act (A). Difficulties about conventions and intentions must arise in deciding upon the correct description whether of a locution or of an illocution: deliberate, or unintentional, ambiguity of meaning or reference is perhaps as common as deliberate or unintentional failure to make plain 'how our words are to be taken' (in the illocutionary sense). Moreover, the whole apparatus of 'explicit performatives' (see above) serves to obviate disagreements as to the description of illocutionary acts. It is much harder in fact to obviate disagreements as to the description of 'locutionary acts'. Each, however, is conventional and liable to need to have a 'construction' put on it by judges.

is to be carried out. How should we best put it here? And how can we limit it? Generally the effect amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution. So the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of *uptake*.

(2) The illocutionary act 'takes effect' in certain ways, as distinguished from producing consequences in the sense of bringing about states of affairs in the 'normal' way, i.e. changes in the natural course of events. Thus 'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*' has the effect of naming or christening the ship; then certain subsequent acts such as referring to it as the *Generalissimo Stalin* will be out of order.

(3) We have said that many illocutionary acts invite by convention a response or sequel, which may be 'one-way' or 'two-way': thus we may distinguish arguing, ordering, promising, suggesting, and asking to, from offering, asking whether you will and asking 'Yes or no?' If this response is accorded, or the sequel implemented, that requires a second act by the speaker or another person; and it is a commonplace of the consequence-language that this cannot be included under the initial stretch of action.

Generally we can, however, always say 'I got him to' with such a word. This does make the act one ascribed to me and it is, when words are or maybe employed, a perlocutionary act. Thus we must distinguish 'I ordered him and he obeyed' from 'I *got him* to obey'. The general implication of the latter is that other additional

means were employed to produce this consequence as ascribable to me, inducements, and even very often personal influence amounting to duress; there is even very often an illocutionary act distinct from merely ordering, as when I say 'I got him to do it by stating *x*'.

So here are three ways in which illocutionary acts are bound up with effects; and these are all distinct from the producing of effects which is characteristic of the perlocutionary act.

We must distinguish actions which have a perlocutionary object (convince, persuade) from those which merely produce a perlocutionary sequel. Thus we may say 'I tried to warn him but only succeeded in alarming him'. What is the perlocutionary object of one illocution may be a sequel of another: for example, the perlocutionary object of warning, to alert someone, may be a sequel of a perlocutionary act which alarms someone. Again, deterrence may be the sequel of an illocution instead of the object of saying 'Do not do it'. Some perlocutionary acts always have sequels rather than objects, namely those where there is no illocutionary formula: thus I may surprise you or upset you or humiliate you by a locution, though there is no illocutionary formula 'I surprise you by . . .', 'I upset you by . . .', 'I humiliate you by . . .'.

It is characteristic of perlocutionary acts that the response achieved, or the sequel, can be achieved additionally or entirely by non-locutionary means: thus intimidation may be achieved by waving a stick or pointing

a gun. Even in the cases of convincing, persuading, getting to obey and getting to believe, we may achieve the response non-verbally. However, this alone is not enough to distinguish illocutionary acts, since we can for example warn or order or appoint or give or protest or apologize by non-verbal means and these are illocutionary acts. Thus we may cock a snook or hurl a tomato by way of protest.

More important is the question whether perlocutionary acts may always achieve their response or sequel by non-conventional means. Certainly we can achieve some sequels of perlocutionary acts by entirely non-conventional means (or as we say 'unconventional' means), by acts which are not conventional at all, or not for that purpose; thus I may persuade some one by gently swinging a big stick or gently mentioning that his aged parents are still in the Third Reich. Strictly speaking, there cannot be an illocutionary act unless the means employed are conventional, and so the means for achieving its ends non-verbally must be conventional. But it is difficult to say where conventions begin and end; thus I may warn him by swinging a stick or I may give him something by merely handing it to him. But if I warn him by swinging a stick, then swinging my stick is a warning: he would know very well what I meant: it may seem an unmistakable threatening gesture. Similar difficulties arise over giving tacit consent to some arrangement, or promising tacitly, or voting by a show of hands. But the fact remains that many illocutionary acts cannot

be performed except by saying something. This is true of stating, informing (as distinct from showing), arguing, giving estimates, reckoning, and finding (in the legal sense); it is true of the great majority of verdictives and expositives as opposed to many exercitives and commissives.[1]

[1] [For the definition of verdictives, expositives, exercitives, and commissives see Lecture XII.—J.O.U.]

LECTURE XI

WHEN we originally contrasted the performative with the constative utterance we said that

(1) the performative should be doing something as opposed to just saying something; and
(2) the performative is happy or unhappy as opposed to true or false.

Were these distinctions really sound? Our subsequent discussion of doing and saying certainly seems to point to the conclusion that whenever I 'say' anything (except perhaps a mere exclamation like 'damn' or 'ouch') I shall be performing both locutionary and illocutionary acts, and these two kinds of acts seem to be the very things which we tried to use as a means of distinguishing, under the names of 'doing' and 'saying', performatives from constatives. If we are in general always doing both things, how can our distinction survive?

Let us first reconsider the contrast from the side of constative utterances: Of these, we were content to refer to 'statements' as the typical or paradigm case. Would it be correct to say that when we state something

(1) we are doing something as well as and distinct from just saying something, and

(2) our utterance is liable to be happy or unhappy (as well as, if you will, true or false)?

(1) Surely to state is every bit as much to perform an illocutionary act as, say, to warn or to pronounce. Of course it is not to perform an act in some specially physical way, other than in so far as it involves, when verbal, the making of movements of vocal organs; but then nor, as we have seen, is to warn, to protest, to promise or to name. 'Stating' seems to meet all the criteria we had for distinguishing the illocutionary act. Consider such an unexceptionable remark as the following:

> In saying that it was raining, I was not betting or arguing or warning: I was simply stating it as a fact.

Here 'stating' is put absolutely on a level with arguing, betting, and warning. Or again:

> In saying that it was leading to unemployment, I was not warning or protesting: I was simply stating the facts.

Or to take a different type of test also used earlier, surely

> I state that he did not do it

is exactly on a level with

> I argue that he did not do it,
> I suggest that he did not do it,
> I bet that he did not do it, &c.

If I simply use the primary or non-explicit form of utterance:

He did not do it

we may make explicit what we were doing in saying this, or specify the illocutionary force of the utterance, equally by saying any of the above three (or more) things.

Moreover, although the utterance 'He did not do it' is often issued as a statement, and is then undoubtedly true or false (*this* is if anything is), it does not seem possible to say that it differs from 'I state that he did not do it' in this respect. If someone says 'I state that he did not do it', we investigate the truth of his statement in just the same way as if he had said 'He did not do it' *simpliciter*, when we took that to be, as we naturally often should, a statement. That is, to say 'I state that he did not' is to make the very same statement as to say 'He did not': it is not to make a different statement about what 'I' state (except in exceptional cases: the historic and habitual present, &c.). As notoriously, when I say even 'I think he did it' someone is being rude if he says 'That's a statement about you': and this *might* conceivably be about myself, whereas the statement could not. So that there is no necessary conflict between

(*a*) our issuing the utterance being the doing of something,

(*b*) our utterance being true or false.

For that matter compare, for example, 'I warn you that it is going to charge', where likewise it is both a warning

and true or false that it is going to charge; and that comes in in appraising the warning just as much as, though not quite in the same way as, in appraising the statement.

On mere inspection, 'I state that' does not appear to differ in any essential way from 'I maintain that' (to say which is to maintain that), 'I inform you that', 'I testify that', &c. Possibly some 'essential' differences may yet be established between such verbs: but nothing has been done towards this yet.

(2) Moreover, if we think of the second alleged contrast, according to which performatives are happy or unhappy and statements true or false, again from the side of supposed constative utterances, notably statements, we find that statements *are* liable to every kind of infelicity to which performatives are liable. Let us look back again and consider whether statements are not liable to precisely the same disabilities as, say, warnings by way of what we called 'infelicities'—that is various disabilities which make an utterance unhappy without, however, making it true or false.

We have already noted that sense in which saying or stating 'The cat is on the mat' implies that I believe that the cat is on the mat. This is parallel to the sense—is the same sense—as that in which 'I promise to be there' implies that I intend to be there and that I believe I shall be able to be there. So the statement is liable to the *insincerity* form of infelicity; and even to the *breach* form of infelicity in this sense, that saying or stating that the

cat is on the mat commits me to saying or stating 'The mat is underneath the cat' just as much as the performative 'I define *X* as *Y*' (in the *fiat* sense say) commits me to using those terms in special ways in future discourse, and we can see how this is connected with such acts as promising. This means that statements can give rise to infelicities of our two *Γ* kinds.

Now what about infelicities of the A and B kinds, which rendered the act—warning, undertaking, &c.—null and void?: can a thing that looks like a statement be null and void just as much as a putative contract? The answer seems to be Yes, importantly. The first cases are A. 1 and A. 2, where there is no convention (or not an accepted convention) or where the circumstances are not appropriate for its invocation by the speaker. Many infelicities of just this type do infect statements.

We have already noticed the case of a putative statement *presupposing* (as it is called) the existence of that which it refers to; if no such thing exists, 'the statement' is not about anything. Now some say that in these circumstances, if, for example, someone asserts that the present King of France is bald, 'the question whether he is bald does not arise'; but it is better to say that the putative statement is null and void, exactly as when I say that I sell you something but it is not mine or (having been burnt) is not any longer in existence. Contracts often are void because the objects they are about do not exist, which involves a breakdown of reference (total ambiguity).

But it is important to notice also that 'statements' too are liable to infelicity of this kind in other ways also parallel to contracts, promises, warnings, &c. Just as we often say, for example, 'You cannot order me', in the sense 'You have not the right to order me', which is equivalent to saying that you are not in the appropriate position to do so: so often there are things you cannot state—have no right to state—are not in a position to state. You *cannot* now state how many people there are in the next room; if you say 'There are fifty people in the next room', I can only regard you as guessing or conjecturing (just as sometimes you are not ordering me, which would be inconceivable, but possibly asking me to rather impolitely, so here you are 'hazarding a guess' rather oddly). Here there is something you might, in other circumstances, be in a position to state; but what about statements about other persons' feelings or about the future? Is a forecast or even a prediction about, say, persons' behaviour really a statement? It is important to take the speech-situation as a whole.

Just as sometimes we cannot appoint but only confirm an appointment already made, so sometimes we cannot state but only confirm a statement already made.

Putative statements are also liable to infelicities of type B, flaws, and hitches. Somebody 'says something he did not really mean'—uses the wrong word—says 'the cat is on the mat' when he meant to say 'bat'. Other similar trivialities arise—or rather not entirely trivialities; because it is possible to discuss such utterances

entirely in terms of meaning or sense and reference and so get confused about them, though they are really easy to understand.

Once we realize that what we have to study is *not* the sentence but the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation, there can hardly be any longer a possibility of not seeing that stating is performing an act. Moreover, comparing stating to what we have said about the illocutionary act, it is an act to which, just as much as to other illocutionary acts, it is essential to 'secure uptake': the doubt about whether I stated something if it was not heard or understood is just the same as the doubt about whether I warned *sotto voce* or protested if someone did not take it as a protest, &c. And statements do 'take effect' just as much as 'namings', say: if I have stated something, then that commits me to other statements: other statements made by me will be in order or out of order. Also some statements or remarks made by you will be henceforward contradicting me or not contradicting me, rebutting me or not rebutting me, and so forth. If perhaps a statement does not invite a response, that is not essential to all illocutionary acts anyway. And certainly in stating we are or may be performing perlocutionary acts of all kinds.

The most that might be argued, and with some plausibility, is that there is no perlocutionary *object* specifically associated with stating, as there is with informing, arguing, &c.; and this comparative purity may be one reason why we give 'statements' a certain special

position. But this certainly would not justify giving, say, 'descriptions', if properly used, a similar priority, and it is in any case true of many illocutionary acts.

However, looking at the matter from the side of performatives, we may still feel that they lack something which statements have, even if, as we have shown, the converse is not so. Performatives are, of course, incidentally saying something as well as doing something, but we may feel that they are not essentially true or false as statements are. We may feel that there is here a dimension in which we judge, assess, or appraise the constative utterance (granting as a preliminary that it is felicitous) which does not arise with non-constative or performative utterances. Let us agree that all these circumstances of situation have to be in order for me to have succeeded in stating something, yet when I have, *the* question arises, was what I stated true or false? And this we feel, speaking in popular terms, is now the question of whether the statement 'corresponds with the facts'. With this I agree: attempts to say that the use of the expression 'is true' is equivalent to endorsing or the like are no good. So we have here a new dimension of criticism of the accomplished statement.

But now

(1) doesn't just such a similar objective assessment of the accomplished utterance arise, at least in many cases, with other utterances which seem typically performative; and

(2) is not this account of statements a little over-simplified?

First, there is an obvious slide towards truth or falsity in the case of, for example, verdictives, such as estimating, finding, and pronouncing. Thus we may:

estimate	rightly or wrongly	for example, that it is half past two,
find	correctly or incorrectly	for example, that he is guilty,
pronounce	correctly or incorrectly	for example, that the batsman is out.

We shall not say 'truly' in the case of verdictives, but we shall certainly address ourselves to the same question; and such adverbs as 'rightly', 'wrongly', 'correctly', and 'incorrectly' are used with statements too.

Or again there is a parallel between inferring and arguing soundly or validly and stating truly. It is not just a question of whether he did argue or infer but also of whether he had a right to, and did he succeed. Warning and advising may be done correctly or incorrectly, well or badly. Similar considerations arise about praise, blame, and congratulation. Blame is not in order, if, say, you have done the same thing yourself; and the question always arises whether the praise, blame, or congratulation was merited or unmerited: it is not enough to say that you have blamed him and there's an end on't—still one act is, with reason, preferred to another. The question whether praise and blame are merited is quite different

from the question whether they are opportune, and the same distinction can be made in the case of advice. It is a different thing to say that advice is good or bad from saying that it is opportune or inopportune, though the timing of advice is more important to its goodness than the timing of blame is to its being merited.

Can we be sure that stating truly is a different *class* of assessment from arguing soundly, advising well, judging fairly, and blaming justifiably? Do these not have something to do in complicated ways with facts? The same is true also of exercitives such as naming, appointing, bequeathing, and betting. Facts come in as well as our knowledge or opinion about facts.

Well, of course, attempts are constantly made to effect this distinction. The soundness of arguments (if they are not deductive arguments which are 'valid') and the meritedness of blame are not objective matters, it is alleged; or in warning, we are told, we should distinguish the 'statement' that the bull is about to charge from the warning itself. But consider also for a moment whether the question of truth or falsity is so very objective. We ask: 'Is it a *fair* statement?', and are the good reasons and good evidence for stating and saying so very different from the good reasons and evidence for performative acts like arguing, warning, and judging? Is the constative, then, always true or false? When a constative is confronted with the facts, we in fact appraise it in ways involving the employment of a vast array of terms which overlap with those that we use in the appraisal of

performatives. In real life, as opposed to the simple situations envisaged in logical theory, one cannot always answer in a simple manner whether it is true or false.

Suppose that we confront 'France is hexagonal' with the facts, in this case, I suppose, with France, is it true or false? Well, if you like, up to a point; of course I can see what you mean by saying that it is true for certain intents and purposes. It is good enough for a top-ranking general, perhaps, but not for a geographer. 'Naturally it is pretty rough', we should say, 'and pretty good as a pretty rough statement'. But then someone says: 'But is it true or is it false? I don't mind whether it is rough or not; of course it's rough, but it has to be true or false—it's a statement, isn't it?' How can one answer this question, whether it is true or false that France is hexagonal? It is just rough, and that is the right and final answer to the question of the relation of 'France is hexagonal' to France. It is a rough description; it is not a true or a false one.

Again, in the case of stating truly or falsely, just as much as in the case of advising well or badly, the intents and purposes of the utterance and its context are important; what is judged true in a school book may not be so judged in a work of historical research. Consider the constative, 'Lord Raglan won the battle of Alma', remembering that Alma was a soldier's battle if ever there was one and that Lord Raglan's orders were never transmitted to some of his subordinates. Did Lord Raglan then win the battle of Alma or did he not? Of

course in some contexts, perhaps in a school book, it is perfectly justifiable to say so—it is something of an exaggeration, maybe, and there would be no question of giving Raglan a medal for it. As 'France is hexagonal' is rough, so 'Lord Raglan won the battle of Alma' is exaggerated and suitable to some contexts and not to others; it would be pointless to insist on its truth or falsity.

Thirdly, let us consider the question whether it is true that all snow geese migrate to Labrador, given that perhaps one maimed one sometimes fails when migrating to get quite the whole way. Faced with such problems, many have claimed, with much justice, that utterances such as those beginning 'All . . .' are prescriptive definitions or advice to adopt a rule. But what rule? This idea arises partly through not understanding the reference of such statements, which is limited to the known; we cannot quite make the simple statement that the truth of statements depends on facts as distinct from knowledge of facts. Suppose that before Australia is discovered *X* says 'All swans are white'. If you later find a black swan in Australia, is *X* refuted? Is his statement false now? Not necessarily: he will take it back but he could say 'I wasn't talking about swans absolutely everywhere; for example, I was not making a statement about possible swans on Mars'. Reference depends on knowledge at the time of utterance.

The truth or falsity of statements is affected by what they leave out or put in and by their being misleading,

and so on. Thus, for example, descriptions, which are said to be true or false or, if you like, are 'statements', are surely liable to these criticisms, since they are selective and uttered for a purpose. It is essential to realize that 'true' and 'false', like 'free' and 'unfree', do not stand for anything simple at all; but only for a general dimension of being a right or proper thing to say as opposed to a wrong thing, in these circumstances, to this audience, for these purposes and with these intentions.

In general we may say this: with both statements (and, for example, descriptions) *and* warnings, &c., the question of whether, granting that you did warn and had the right to warn, did state, or did advise, you were *right* to state or warn or advise, can arise—not in the sense of whether it was opportune or expedient, but whether, on the facts and your knowledge of the facts and the purposes for which you were speaking, and so on, this was the proper thing to say.

This doctrine is quite different from much that the pragmatists have said, to the effect that the true is what works, &c. The truth or falsity of a statement depends not merely on the meanings of words but on what act you were performing in what circumstances.

What then finally is left of the distinction of the performative and constative utterance? Really we may say that what we had in mind here was this:

(*a*) With the constative utterance, we abstract from the illocutionary (let alone the perlocutionary) aspects of

the speech act, and we concentrate on the locutionary: moreover, we use an over-simplified notion of correspondence with the facts—over-simplified because essentially it brings in the illocutionary aspect. We aim at the ideal of what would be right to say in all circumstances, for any purpose, to any audience, &c. Perhaps this is sometimes realized.

(*b*) With the performative utterance, we attend as much as possible to the illocutionary force of the utterance, and abstract from the dimension of correspondence with facts.

Perhaps neither of these abstractions is so very expedient: perhaps we have here not really two poles, but rather an historical development. Now in certain cases, perhaps with mathematical formulas in physics books as examples of constatives, or with the issuing of simple executive orders or the giving of simple names, say, as examples of performatives, we approximate in real life to finding such things. It was examples of this kind, like 'I apologize', and 'The cat is on the mat', said for no conceivable reason, extreme marginal cases, that gave rise to the idea of two distinct utterances. But the real conclusion must surely be that we need (*a*) to distinguish between locutionary and illocutionary acts, and (*b*) specially and critically to establish with respect to each kind of illocutionary act—warnings, estimates, verdicts, statements, and descriptions—what if any is the specific way in which they are intended, first to be in order or not in order, and second, to be 'right' or 'wrong'; what terms

of appraisal and disappraisal are used for each and what they mean. This is a wide field and certainly will not lead to a simple distinction of 'true' and 'false'; nor will it lead to a distinction of statements from the rest, for stating is only one among very numerous speech acts of the illocutionary class.

Furthermore, in general the locutionary act as much as the illocutionary is an abstraction only: every genuine speech act is both. (This is similar to the way in which the phatic act, the rhetic act, &c., are mere abstractions.) But, of course, typically we distinguish different abstracted 'acts' by means of the possible slips between cup and lip, that is, in this case, the different types of nonsense which may be engendered in performing them. We may compare with this point what was said in the opening lecture about the classification of kinds of nonsense.

LECTURE XII

WE have left numerous loose ends, but after a brief résumé we must plough ahead. How did the 'constatives'-'performatives' distinction look in the light of our later theory? In general and for all utterances that we have considered (except perhaps for swearing), we have found:

(1) Happiness/unhappiness dimension,
(1*a*) An illocutionary force,
(2) Truth/falsehood dimension,
(2*a*) A locutionary meaning (sense and reference).

The doctrine of the performative/constative distinction stands to the doctrine of locutionary and illocutionary acts in the total speech act as the *special* theory to the *general* theory. And the need for the general theory arises simply because the traditional 'statement' is an abstraction, an ideal, and so is its traditional truth or falsity. But on this point I could do no more than explode a few hopeful fireworks. In particular, the following morals are among those I wanted to suggest:

(A) The total speech act in the total speech situation is the *only actual* phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating.

(B) Stating, describing, &c., are *just two* names among

a very great many others for illocutionary acts; they have no unique position.

(C) In particular, they have no unique position over the matter of being related to facts in a unique way called being true or false, because truth and falsity are (except by an artificial abstraction which is always possible and legitimate for certain purposes) not names for relations, qualities, or what not, but for a dimension of assessment—how the words stand in respect of satisfactoriness to the facts, events, situations, &c., to which they refer.

(D) By the same token, the familiar contrast of 'normative or evaluative' as opposed to the factual is in need, like so many dichotomies, of elimination.

(E) We may well suspect that the theory of 'meaning' as equivalent to 'sense and reference' will certainly require some weeding-out and reformulating in terms of the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts (*if this distinction is sound*: it is only adumbrated here). I admit that not enough has been done here: I have taken the old 'sense and reference' on the strength of current views; I would also stress that I have omitted any direct consideration of the illocutionary force of statements.

Now we said that there was one further thing obviously requiring to be done, which is a matter of prolonged fieldwork. We said long ago that we needed a list of 'explicit performative verbs'; but in the light of the more general theory we now see that what we need is a list of

illocutionary forces of an utterance. The old distinction, however, between *primary* and *explicit* performatives will survive the sea-change from the performative/constative distinction to the theory of speech-acts quite successfully. For we have since seen reason to suppose that the sorts of test suggested for the explicit performative verbs ('to say . . . is to . . .', &c.) will do, and in fact do better for sorting out those verbs which make explicit, as we shall now say, the illocutionary force of an utterance, or what illocutionary act it is that we are performing in issuing that utterance. What will *not* survive the transition, unless perhaps as a marginal limiting case, and hardly surprisingly because it gave trouble from the start, is the notion of the purity of performatives: this was essentially based upon a belief in the dichotomy of performatives and constatives, which we see has to be abandoned in favour of more general *families* of related and overlapping speech acts, which are just what we have now to attempt to classify.

Using then the simple test (with caution) of the first person singular present indicative active form, and going through the dictionary (a concise one should do) in a liberal spirit, we get a list of verbs of the order of the third power of 10.[1] I said I would attempt some general preliminary classification and make some remarks on these proposed classes. Well, here we go. I

[1] Why use this expression instead of 1,000? First, it looks impressive and scientific; second, because it goes from 1,000 to 9,999—a good margin—whereas the other might be taken to mean 'about 1,000'—too narrow a margin.

shall only give you a run around, or rather a flounder around.

I distinguish five more general classes: but I am far from equally happy about all of them. They are, however, quite enough to play Old Harry with two fetishes which I admit to an inclination to play Old Harry with, viz. (1) the true/false fetish, (2) the value/fact fetish. I call then these classes of utterance, classified according to their illocutionary force, by the following more-or-less rebarbative names:

(1) Verdictives.
(2) Exercitives.
(3) Commissives.
(4) Behabitives (a shocker this).
(5) Expositives.

We shall take them in order, but first I will give a rough idea of each.

The first, verdictives, are typified by the giving of a verdict, as the name implies, by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire. But they need not be final; they may be, for example, an estimate, reckoning, or appraisal. It is essentially giving a finding as to something—fact, or value—which is for different reasons hard to be certain about.

The second, exercitives, are the exercising of powers, rights, or influence. Examples are appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning, &c.

The third, commissives, are typified by promising or otherwise undertaking; they *commit* you to doing

something, but include also declarations or announcements of intention, which are not promises, and also rather vague things which we may call espousals, as for example, siding with. They have obvious connexions with verdictives and exercitives.

The fourth, behabitives, are a very miscellaneous group, and have to do with attitudes and *social behaviour*. Examples are apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing, and challenging.

The fifth, expositives, are difficult to define. They make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, how we are using words, or, in general, are expository. Examples are 'I reply', 'I argue', 'I concede', 'I illustrate', 'I assume', 'I postulate'. We should be clear from the start that there are still wide possibilities of marginal or awkward cases, or of overlaps.

The last two classes are those which I find most troublesome, and it could well be that they are not clear or are cross-classified, or even that some fresh classification altogether is needed. I am not putting any of this forward as in the very least definitive. Behabitives are troublesome because they seem too miscellaneous altogether: and expositives because they are enormously numerous and important, and seem both to be included in the other classes and at the same time to be unique in a way that I have not succeeded in making clear even to myself. It could well be said that all aspects are present in all my classes.

I. VERDICTIVES

Examples are:

acquit	convict	find (as a matter of fact)
hold (as a matter of law)	interpret as	understand
read it as	rule	calculate
reckon	estimate	locate
place	date	measure
put it at	make it	take it
grade	rank	rate
assess	value	describe
characterize	diagnose	analyse

Further examples are found in appraisals or assessments of character, such as 'I should call him industrious'.

Verdictives consist in the delivering of a finding, official or unofficial, upon evidence or reasons as to value or fact, so far as these are distinguishable. A verdictive is a judicial act as distinct from legislative or executive acts, which are both exercitives. But some judicial acts, in the wider sense that they are done by judges instead of for example, juries, really are exercitive. Verdictives have obvious connexions with truth and falsity as regards soundness and unsoundness or fairness and unfairness. That the content of a verdict is true or false is shown, for example, in a dispute over an umpire's calling 'Out', 'Three strikes', or 'Four balls'.

Comparison with exercitives

As official acts, a judge's ruling makes law; a jury's finding makes a convicted felon; an umpire's giving the batsman out, or calling a fault or a no-ball, makes the batsman out, the service a fault, or the ball a no-ball. It is done in virtue of an official position: but it still purports to be correct or incorrect, right or wrong, justifiable or unjustifiable on the evidence. It is not made as a decision in favour or against. The judicial act is, if you like, executive, but we must distinguish the executive utterance, 'You shall have it', from the verdict, 'It is yours', and must similarly distinguish the assessing from the awarding of damages.

Comparison with commissives

Verdictives have an effect, in the law, on ourselves and on others. The giving of a verdict or an estimate does, for example, commit us to certain future conduct, in the sense that any speech-act does and perhaps more so, at least to consistency, and maybe we know to what it will commit us. Thus to give a certain verdict will commit us or, as we say, commits us, to awarding damages. Also, by an interpretation of the facts we may commit ourselves to a certain verdict or estimate. To give a verdict may very well be to espouse also; it may commit us to standing up for someone, defending him, &c.

Comparison with behabitives

To congratulate may imply a verdict about value or

character. Again, in one sense of 'blame' which is equivalent to 'hold responsible', to blame is a verdictive, but in another sense it is to adopt an attitude towards a person and is thus a behabitive.

Comparison with expositives

When I say 'I interpret', 'I analyse', 'I describe', 'I characterize', this, in a way, is to give a verdict, but is essentially connected with verbal matters and clarifying our exposition. 'I call you out' must be distinguished from 'I call that "out"'; the first is a verdict *given* the use of words, like 'I should describe that as cowardly'; the second is a verdict *about* the use of words, as 'I should describe that as "cowardly"'.

2. EXERCITIVES

An exercitive is the giving of a decision in favour of or against a certain course of action, or advocacy of it. It is a decision that something is to be so, as distinct from a judgement that it is so: it is advocacy that it should be so, as opposed to an estimate that it is so; it is an award as opposed to an assessment; it is a sentence as opposed to a verdict. Arbitrators and judges make use of exercitives as well as issuing verdictives. Its consequences may be that others are 'compelled' or 'allowed' or 'not allowed' to do certain acts.

It is a very wide class; examples are:

appoint	degrade	demote
dismiss	excommunicate	name

order	command	direct
sentence	fine	grant
levy	vote for	nominate
choose	claim	give
bequeath	pardon	resign
warn	advise	plead
pray	entreat	beg
urge	press	recommend
proclaim	announce	quash
countermand	annul	repeal
enact	reprieve	veto
dedicate	declare closed	declare open

Comparison with verdictives

'I hold', 'I interpret', and the like, may, if official, be exercitive acts. Furthermore, 'I award' and 'I absolve' are exercitives, which will be based on verdicts.

Comparison with commissives

Many exercitives such as *permit*, *authorize*, *depute*, *offer*, *concede*, *give*, *sanction*, *stake*, and *consent* do in fact commit one to a course of action. If I say 'I declare war' or 'I disown', the whole purpose of my act is to commit me personally to a certain course of action. The connexion between an exercitive and committing oneself is as close as that between meaning and implication. It is obvious that appointing and naming do commit us, but we would rather say that they confer powers, rights, names, &c., or change or eliminate them.

Comparison with behabitives

Such exercitives as 'I challenge', 'I protest', 'I approve', are closely connected with behabitives. Challenging, protesting, approving, commending, and recommending, may be the taking up of an attitude or the performing of an act.

Comparison with expositives

Such exercitives as 'I withdraw', 'I demur', and 'I object', in the context of argument or conversation, have much the same force as expositives.

Typical contexts in which exercitives are used are in:

(1) filling offices and appointments, candidatures, elections, admissions, resignations, dismissals, and applications,
(2) advice, exhortation, and petition,
(3) enablements, orders, sentences, and annulments,
(4) the conduct of meetings and business,
(5) rights, claims, accusations, &c.

3. COMMISSIVES

The whole point of a commissive is to commit the speaker to a certain course of action. Examples are:

promise	covenant	contract
undertake	bind myself	give my word
am determined to	intend	declare my intention
mean to	plan	purpose

propose to	shall	contemplate
envisage	engage	swear
guarantee	pledge myself	bet
vow	agree	consent
dedicate myself to	declare for	side with
adopt	champion	embrace
espouse	oppose	favour

Declarations of intention differ from undertakings, and it might be questioned whether they should be classed together. As we have a distinction between urging and ordering, so we have a distinction between intending and promising. But both are covered by the primary performative 'shall'; thus we have the locutions 'shall probably', 'shall do my best to', 'shall very likely', and 'promise that I shall probably'.

There is also a slide towards 'descriptives'. At the one extreme I may *just* state that I have an intention, but I may also declare or express or announce my intention or determination. 'I declare my intention' undoubtedly does commit me; and to say 'I intend' is generally to declare or announce. The same thing happens with espousals, as, for example, in 'I dedicate my life to . . .'. In the case of commissives like 'favour', 'oppose', 'adopt the view', 'take the view', and 'embrace', you cannot state that you favour, oppose, &c., generally, without announcing that you do so. To say 'I favour *X*' may, according to context, be to *vote* for *X*, to *espouse X*, or to *applaud X*.

Comparison with verdictives

Verdictives commit us to actions in two ways:

(*a*) to those necessary for consistency with and support of our verdict,

(*b*) to those that may be, or may be involved in, the consequences of a verdict.

Comparison with exercitives

Exercitives commit us to the consequences of an act, for example of naming. In the special case of permissives we might ask whether they should be classified as exercitives or as commissives.

Comparison with behabitives

Reactions such as resenting, applauding, and commending do involve espousing and committing ourselves in the way that advice and choice do. But behabitives commit us to *like* conduct, by implication, and not to that actual conduct. Thus if I blame, I adopt an attitude to someone else's past conduct, but can commit myself only to avoiding like conduct.

Comparison with expositives

Swearing, promising, and guaranteeing that something is the case work like expositives. Calling, defining, analysing, and assuming form one group, and supporting, agreeing, disagreeing, maintaining, and defending form another group of illocutions which seem to be both expositive and commissive.

4. BEHABITIVES

Behabitives include the notion of reaction to other people's behaviour and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct. There are obvious connexions with both stating or describing what our feelings are and expressing, in the sense of venting our feelings, though behabitives are distinct from both of these.

Examples are:

1. For apologies we have 'apologize'.
2. For thanks we have 'thank'.
3. For sympathy we have 'deplore', 'commiserate', 'compliment', 'condole', 'congratulate', 'felicitate', 'sympathize'.
4. For attitudes we have 'resent', 'don't mind', 'pay tribute', 'criticize', 'grumble about', 'complain of', 'applaud', 'overlook', 'commend', 'deprecate', and the non-exercitive uses of 'blame', 'approve', and 'favour'.
5. For greetings we have 'welcome', 'bid you farewell'.
6. For wishes we have 'bless', 'curse', 'toast', 'drink to', and 'wish' (in its strict performative use).
7. For challenges we have 'dare', 'defy', 'protest', 'challenge'.

In the field of behabitives, besides the usual liability to infelicities, there is a special scope for insincerity.

There are obvious connexions with commissives, for to commend or to support is both to react to behaviour and to commit oneself to a line of conduct. There is also a close connexion with exercitives, for to approve may be an exercise of authority or a reaction to behaviour. Other border line examples are 'recommend', 'overlook', 'protest', 'entreat', and 'challenge'.

5. EXPOSITIVES

Expositives are used in acts of exposition involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references. We have said repeatedly that we may dispute as to whether these are not verdictive, exercitive, behabitive, or commissive acts as well; we may also dispute whether they are not straight descriptions of our feelings, practice, &c., especially sometimes over matters of suiting the action to the words, as when I say 'I turn next to', 'I quote', 'I cite', 'I recapitulate', 'I repeat that', 'I mention that'.

Examples which may well be taken as verdictive are: 'analyse', 'class', 'interpret', which involve exercise of judgment. Examples which may well be taken as exercitive are: 'concede', 'urge', 'argue', 'insist', which involve exertion of influence or exercise of powers. Examples which may well be taken as commissive are: 'define', 'agree', 'accept', 'maintain', 'support', 'testify', 'swear', which involve assuming an obligation. Examples which may well be taken as behabitive are: 'demur',

'boggle at', which involve adopting an attitude or expressing a feeling.

For good value, I shall give you some lists to indicate the extent of the field. Most central are such examples as 'state', 'affirm', 'deny', 'emphasize', 'illustrate', 'answer'. An enormous number, such as 'question', 'ask', 'deny', &c., seem naturally to refer to conversational interchange: but this is no longer necessarily so, and all, of course, have reference to the communicational situation.

Here then is a list of expositives:[1]

1. affirm
   deny
   state
   describe
   class
   identify

2. remark
   mention
   ? interpose

3. inform
   apprise
   tell
   answer
   rejoin

3*a*. ask

4. testify
   report
   swear
   conjecture
   ? doubt
   ? know
   ? believe

5. accept
   concede
   withdraw
   agree
   demur to
   object to
   adhere to
   recognize
   repudiate

5*a*. correct
   revise

[1] Austin's layout and numbering is retained here. The general significance of the grouping is obvious but there is no definite key to it in the extant papers. The queries are Austin's. J. O. U.

6. postulate
deduce
argue
neglect
? emphasize

7. begin by
turn to
conclude by

7*a*. interpret
distinguish
analyse
define

7*b*. illustrate
explain
formulate

7*c*. mean
refer
call
understand
regard as

To sum up, we may say that the verdictive is an exercise of judgment, the exercitive is an assertion of influence or exercising of power, the commissive is an assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention, the behabitive is the adopting of an attitude, and the expositive is the clarifying of reasons, arguments, and communications.

I have as usual failed to leave enough time in which to say why what I have said is interesting. Just one example then. Philosophers have long been interested in the word 'good' and, quite recently, have begun to take the line of considering how we use it, what we use it to do. It has been suggested, for example, that we use it for expressing approval, for commending, or for grading. But we shall not get really clear about this word 'good' and what we use it to do until, ideally, we have a complete list of those illocutionary acts of which commending, grading, &c., are isolated specimens—until we know how many such acts there are and what are their relationships and inter-connexions. Here, then, is an instance of one

possible application of the kind of general theory we have been considering; no doubt there are many others. I have purposely not embroiled the general theory with philosophical problems (some of which are complex enough almost to merit their celebrity); this should not be taken to mean that I am unaware of them. Of course, this is bound to be a little boring and dry to listen to and digest; not nearly so much so as to think and write. The real fun comes when we begin to apply it to philosophy.

In these lectures, then, I have been doing two things which I do not altogether like doing. These are:

(1) producing a programme, that is, saying what ought to be done rather than doing something;
(2) lecturing.

However, as against (1), I should very much like to think that I have been sorting out a bit the way things have already begun to go and are going with increasing momentum in some parts of philosophy, rather than proclaiming an individual manifesto. And as against (2), I should certainly like to say that nowhere could, to me, be a nicer place to lecture in than Harvard.