How to Guide with Words: Moral Advice as a Speech Act

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Abstract:

This thesis examines moral advice as a distinctive speech act, focusing on its aim in guiding deliberation. Despite its prevalence in moral discourse, moral advice has been overlooked in comparison to other speech acts, such as blame, praise, and promise. Drawing on speech act theory, I categorise moral advice as a directive speech act, and argue that it is best understood as a hearer-first directive: it aims to guide for the hearer's sake and for the morality's sake while respecting their autonomy. Adopting an intentionalist view, I claim that the type of speech act performed is determined by the speaker's illocutionary and relevant perlocutionary intentions, and that felicity depends on additional normative and contextual conditions.

I make four key contributions. First, I develop the priming view of explicit performatives, showing how explicit advisory utterances can guide action by shaping the hearer's interpretation of the utterance as intended. Second, I examine the family of directives by distinguishing between speaker-first and hearer-first directives, and clarify how advising differs from other directive speech acts. Third, I argue that the speaker's intentions and their normative standing both contribute to a unified account of speech acts: the former determines the type of speech act performed, while the latter determines felicity conditions. I clarify that standing can be conferred by the hearer, and that advising can be felicitous without uptake. On my account, moral advising is an invitation to deliberate on normative reasons rather than a demand for compliance. Fourth, I revise Sbisà's account of the norms of the speech act of advice. I propose felicity-enabling rules in light of the speaker's normative standing and the hearer conferring that standing, modify the maxims of advice, and suggest a unified evaluative requirement for moral advice.

Taken together, these contributions provide a comprehensive account of how moral advice functions as a speech act and how it should be evaluated. By examining both its performative structure and its normative requirements, the thesis provides tools for understanding when moral advice is performed, when it is felicitous, and how it can be evaluated. This not only advances debates in the philosophy of language and the norms of moral discourse but also informs practical contexts in which advice is given, including cases of discursive injustice and situations where it is unsolicited.

Key words:

Moral advice, speech act theory, directive speech acts, normative standing, uptake, perlocutionary intention, felicity conditions, moral deliberation

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To my dad

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Acknowledgements

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1.Introduction

> Practical discourse […] consists of answers to practical questions, of which the most important are "What shall I do?" and "What ought I to do?" If I put these questions to myself the answers are decisions, resolutions, expressions of intention, or moral principles. If I put them to someone else, his answer will be an order, injunction or piece of advice, a sentence in the form "Do such and such". The central activities for which moral language is used are choosing and advising others to choose (Nowell-Smith, 1954, p. 11).

1. Purpose and Motivation

Moral advice is prevalent in our daily interactions. Whether it is giving advice to a friend facing a moral dilemma or receiving guidance from a trusted mentor, offering and receiving moral advice is an important part of how we engage with one another.[1] Parents give their children moral advice on how to be a good person, someone who values honesty, kindness, justice, and wisdom. As we grow older, we turn to friends for advice on moral issues, such as whether to turn a blind eye to microaggressions, whether to initiate a divorce for one's own well-being over family values, or whether to forgive someone who has wronged us. At work, colleagues offer advice on navigating moral issues, such as whether to report a senior colleague's misogynistic behaviour, even though doing so could jeopardise one's career prospects. Even leaders – CEOs or presidents – rely on advisers to assist them in making better moral decisions on climate, labour, and fairness. We sometimes offer unsolicited moral advice

[1] As Wiland (1997, pp. 7–8) notes, "when a person is in a quandary about what to do, she often turns not inward but outward, consulting those close to her for advice. In deliberating she can recognize the limits of her own views, leading her to seek advice from others. Just as an inquirer might defer to another's judgment about how things are, so too might a deliberator defer to another's advice about what to do".

to others, hoping they will listen. We also receive unsolicited advice, sometimes gratefully, sometimes with surprise or resistance, challenging whether the speaker even has the standing to offer it. These cases show the various contexts in which moral advice is exchanged, highlighting its purpose of guiding us to make better decisions.

Despite its prevalence, the nature of moral advice has received little attention in contemporary moral philosophy, which has focused more on other forms of practical discourse, such as blame, praise, apology, and promise. Work on these areas has enriched our understanding of responsibility, standing, wrongdoing, and moral psychology, yet the practice of giving and receiving moral advice remains relatively underexplored – a surprising fact, given that advice is one of the primary ways we navigate uncertainty and make better moral decisions.[2]

One way to examine the role of moral advice is by analysing how moral language functions in practice. Over the last 20 to 30 years, contemporary metaethics has primarily approached moral language through a semantic lens, aiming to clarify the semantic meaning of terms like 'shall', 'ought', 'wrong', or 'good'.[3] While this work is valuable, I distance this thesis from purely semantic approaches. Instead, I focus on the pragmatic analysis of moral advice – how it functions as a speech act and guides action and moral deliberation.[4] Although speech act theory was once central to metaethics, its influence has waned in recent decades, with semantic analysis taking precedence. This thesis seeks to revive and develop insights from mid-20th-century metaethics that engaged with speech act theory, particularly the

[2] This observation is shared by Habgood-Coote (2024). Previous works on the nature of advice/advising include Nowell-Smith (1954), Stewart (1978), Kauffeld (1986, 1999), Hinchman (2005), Leibowitz (2009), Fleming (2016), Tubert (2016), Benziman (2019), Wiland (1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2004, 2021), and Sneddon (2023).

[3] For example, see Chrisman (2015), Finlay (2016), and Risberg (2023) for the discussion of 'shall' and 'ought'. For the discussion of the semantics of moral terms like 'right', 'wrong', and 'good', see Boyd (1988) and Horgan and Timmons (1991). For the open-question argument regarding 'good', see Moore (1903).

[4] I will use 'deliberation' as synonymous with 'reasoning'. Some philosophers have provided useful definitions of 'reasoning'. According to Kolodny (2005), reasoning is such that reasoner's assessment of their own reasons guides active or explicit thinking; according to Hieronymi (2013), reasoning is a reasoner's attempts to reach a well-supported answer to a well-defined question; Harman's (1986) view of reasoning is that it is a process where the reasoner engages in some reflections about various options that precedes the effort to make up one's mind. For present purposes, my use of 'reasoning' is intended in a broad sense encompassing the core features of these accounts, and nothing in my argument depends on adopting one over the others.

insights from Hare (1952, 1972) and Stevenson (1937, 1938). While my argument draws on their analyses of moral language, it does not depend on, nor is it committed to, their broader metaethical positions. It offers instead an account of moral advice that both complements and extends existing discussions in the field.

The cornerstone of my thesis is that giving moral advice is first and foremost an *act* of advising through speech. In other words, to give advice is to perform a speech act. While giving advice shares many features with other speech acts, such as those in the family of directive speech acts, it cannot be reduced to commanding or suggesting. Unlike commanding, advising typically lacks the coercive force that demands immediate compliance. Additionally, the speech act of giving moral advice carries a stronger normative weight than suggesting: it aims to guide the advisee's moral decisions by providing justifying reasons. Advising also respects the hearer's autonomy by allowing freedom of choice and inviting deliberation. As Fleming (2016, p. 190) puts it, "Respecting autonomy means to occasionally allow one the freedom to make mistakes. […] Respecting autonomy means allowing an agent to do what she chooses, even when we disagree". This view of autonomy leads me to analyse advising as a speech act that invites deliberation, rather than compels compliance. To explore these aspects, this thesis builds on existing work in speech act theory, particularly those on performatives and directives, to understand how advising fits within and extends this theory.

Understanding moral advice is crucial for seeing how moral language functions beyond holding people accountable or evaluating their actions. As Hills (2009, p. 123) says,

> Moral advice is extremely important, as moral questions are often difficult to decide, not just because they are inherently hard but also because your own desires, interests, and emotions can bias you and lead you astray. Advice from others, who can put forward another point of view, make salient the interests of others, and try to help you to see more clearly, is often essential to your gaining genuine moral understanding.

Moral advice directly engages with questions of *how* to act, *what* to believe or *what* evaluative judgements to endorse, offering guidance that assists in decision-making.[5] This makes advising a unique and complex type of speech

[5] Sneddon (2023, p. 18) says, "advice is a social practice for helping us figure out what to do (or believe)".

act, one that blends prescriptive and descriptive elements, depending on the context.[6]

If moral advice purports to guide action in the ways described, we must first determine what counts as an act of moral advice. This leads to the two central questions of the thesis: *(1) What determines that an utterance constitutes the speech act of moral advising? (2) Under what conditions is such an act felicitous?* I aim to investigate how, out of the many utterances we make, some constitute acts of advising. I also aim to examine the conditions under which an act of advising counts as felicitous, so that we can determine when the act better achieves its purpose. What is this purpose? As I will argue, it is to guide the hearers toward better moral decisions by inviting them to deliberate. Moral advice aims to help individuals in navigating complex moral choices by reducing uncertainty and offering guidance that respects their autonomy.

This thesis offers contributions in both the philosophy of language and the normative structure of moral discourse. First, in philosophy of language, I develop a new account of explicit performatives – what I call the *priming view* – which shows how advisory utterances can guide action by directly shaping how the hearer interprets the utterance.

Second, my thesis refines our understanding of directive speech acts. I argue that advising belongs to a broader category of directives, but that it is best understood as a *hearer-first* directive, given for the hearer's sake, unlike commands or demands, which are *speaker-first*. This allows us to explain why advising, unlike other directives, functions by inviting deliberation rather than inducing compliance.

Third, my account contributes to speech act theory by advancing a classical theory of speech acts – intentionalism: I argue that the type of speech act performed is determined primarily by the speaker's intention. However, I go beyond standard intentionalism by introducing a distinction between different types of success: this allows for a detailed analysis of *abuse* and shows how felicitous advising can occur even without uptake.

Finally, the thesis contributes to our understanding of the norms that govern moral discourse, especially by reworking the conditions under which moral advice is felicitous and evaluated. I argue that the felicity of moral advising

[6] For example, Searle (1976, p. 22) thinks that "warning and advising may be either telling you *that* something is the case (with relevance to what is or is not in your interest) or telling you *to* do something about it (because it is or is not in your interest). They can be, but need not be, both at once".

does not always depend on whether the speaker possesses traditional markers of authority, such as expertise. In some cases, the speaker's standing to advise may be conferred by the hearer.

While this thesis primarily makes theoretical contributions, the account of moral advising it presents also has practical implications. By clarifying the conditions under which advice can succeed performatively, particularly when offered without relevant knowledge, experience, or audience uptake, the thesis sheds light on the importance of the speaker's normative standing in contexts of discursive injustice and unsolicited advice. In this way, the thesis contributes to our broader understanding of how moral guidance can be offered legitimately in everyday life.

2. Brief Overview of Speech Act Theory

This section introduces speech act theory. §2.1 explains why speech act theory is used instead of semantic, conceptual, or empirical analysis. §2.2 outlines the core concepts related to locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, which are used throughout the thesis. §2.3 situates my view in relation to the three main theories of speech acts: intentionalism, conventionalism, and normativism. §2.4 discusses the standard classification of speech acts, categorising advice as a directive speech act.

2.1. Why Speech Act Theory?

One may wonder why I chose to analyse moral advice through speech act theory, instead of semantic or conceptual analysis or empirical research from the social sciences. The reason is that my central interest lies in what advising *does* in moral communication. I am concerned not primarily with the semantic meaning or truth-value of the propositions involved in moral advice, but with the intentional *act* of advising: the performative function realised through speech when we give advice. Nor is my primary aim to give a traditional conceptual analysis with a single set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the concept of advice, although I do treat certain conditions – such as the speaker's intention – as necessary for an utterance to constitute an act of advising, and others as requirements that must also be met for that act to be performed felicitously. The central question, then, is not "What *is* moral

advice?" but rather: "What makes this utterance an illocutionary act of advising, and what are the felicity conditions for such an act?"

Empirical research is valuable, especially in applied contexts such as medical, educational, or interpersonal advice-giving (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018). However, since my aim is to identify what is common across these various contexts, empirical analysis is not my method. Rather, I aim to explain how advising functions in linguistic and normative interaction, focusing on the speaker's intention and the felicity conditions of the act. For this reason, I turn to speech act theory. As Sbisà (2009, p. 231) explains:

> Speech act theory is tenable in so far as it is possible, and sensible, to view utterances as acts. An utterance is the production (oral or in writing) of a token of a linguistic structure which may or may not correspond to a complete sentence. An act, generally speaking, is something that we 'do': a piece of active (vs. passive) behavior by an agent. In speech act theory, by viewing utterances as acts, we consider the production of words or of sentences as the performance of speech acts, and we posit the speech act as the unit of linguistic communication. It is a task of speech act theory to explain in which senses and under which conditions uttering something can be doing something, thus providing a conceptual framework for describing and understanding the various kinds of linguistic action.

This thesis proceeds with that motivation: I treat advising as a distinctive illocutionary act, characterised by particular speaker intentions, conditions of uptake, and felicity conditions.

One might ask whether speech acts can be performed without words. Austin (1962, p. 118) argues that they can: "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". While this thesis primarily focuses on giving advice with language, I acknowledge that, following Austin, speech acts – including advising – could, in principle, take non-verbal forms. One may advise without words, for example, by nodding, shaking one's head, pointing, or remaining silent at the right time. In light of these considerations, speech act theory provides the resources needed to analyse advising as an intentional act, to specify its felicity conditions, and to explain its role in moral interaction. Compared with approaches that focus on the truth-conditions of moral language or on empirical patterns of advice-giving, speech act theory centres on the

performance of acts in context, making it well suited to my aim of understanding what advising does in moral communication.

2.2. Theories of Speech Acts

To situate the view developed in this thesis, it is helpful to clarify how it relates to existing theories of speech acts. Philosophers have typically offered five main accounts: conventionalist, intentionalist, functionalist, expressionist, and normativist (D. W. Harris et al., 2018). Each captures important features of speech acts, but only some are directly relevant to the account of moral advising defended here. [7] Accordingly, I focus on intentionalism, conventionalism, and normativism – theories that speak most directly to the nature of advising.

Intentionalist theories hold that communicative intentions determine speech acts, building on Grice (1957, 1968, 1969). To perform a communicative act is to utter something with the intention that the hearer form a specific response, and that the hearer recognise this intention. This theory accommodates direct and indirect speech, and literal and figurative meaning, and distinguishes three levels of success (Harris et al., 2018, p. 4): (a) Performing the act: expressing a communicative intention; (b) Communicating: the hearer recognises the speaker's intention to produce a certain kind of response; and (c) Producing response: the hearer forms the intended belief or performs the intended action.

[7] Functionalism, as defended by Millikan (1998), defines speech acts by their proper biological or communicative function, such as producing belief or causing action, rather than by intention or convention. It works well for explaining basic forms of communication, like animal signals. However, it may be difficult to use this to explain the flexibility and sensitivity to context of human communication. According to Harris et al. (2018, p. 8), "In the right context, it is possible to use a sentence to implicate something that it has never been used to implicate before, for example, and a gradable adjective (e.g., 'tall') can be used in context to literally and directly express a novel property (tall, by the standards of the marathon runners in this race). This suggests that human communication is thoroughly infused with greater flexibility than functionalist models can account for".
Expressionism treats speech acts as expressions of mental states (Bar-On, 2013; Green, 2007), e.g., assertions express belief; imperatives, desire. While this helps explain emotional or spontaneous communication, it overlooks the fact that many speech acts are meant to influence others, such as giving advice, which depends on the speaker's intention to guide someone. Moreover, as Harris et al. (2018) note, expressionism struggles with complicated speech acts like dog whistles, insinuations, or satire. These kinds of speech depend heavily on the speaker's intentions and the context, which are better explained by theories that focus on intention.

Adopting the intentionalist view, I argue that speakers' intentions are central to determining the type of illocutionary act being performed. In Chapter 3, I will argue that a speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide deliberation is essential for the proper performance of the illocutionary act of advising. Moreover, I am inclined towards what McDonald (2022a, p. 920) calls an 'impure' intentionalist view. While the pure intentionalists think that expressing the relevant communicative intention "both determines the potential force of an utterance and is sufficient for the act's successful performance", the impure intentionalists "might think that the intention determines the potential force, but other conditions must also be met in order for the act to be successful". In other words, while the speaker's communicative intention determines the potential force of an utterance for impure intentionalists, additional felicity conditions must also be met for the illocutionary act to be performed 'happily'.

Conventionalism, rooted in the work of Austin (1962), holds that illocutionary acts are conventional acts governed by socially or linguistically established felicity conditions (Sbisà, 2018; Searle, 1969).[8] Such acts succeed only if certain institutional or social norms are met, for instance, that the speaker occupies a particular role, uses appropriate form, or meets other procedural requirements.[9] This can be seen as the strength of conventionalism: it explains ritualised or institutionally bounded acts, such as declaring war, christening a ship, or swearing in witnesses.

However, as Harris et al. (2018) argue, conventionalism is poorly suited to ordinary communicative acts like asserting, asking, or requesting, which cut across institutional boundaries. Conventionalism also struggles with semantic underdetermination, the fact that utterance meaning is often underdetermined by linguistic form. When someone asks, "Can you lend me a hand tomorrow?", depending on context, this might be a request, a question, or a sarcastic aside. Linguistic conventions alone cannot disambiguate the force. As a result, many contemporary conventionalists (e.g., Lepore & Stone (2014)) appeal to linguistic conventions rather than social ones, though even these face challenges in accounting for indirect and non-literal speech acts.

Given these limitations, I take conventions to determine whether the illocutionary acts are felicitous. Felicity conditions can fail in two distinct ways:

[8] For an overview of these views and a hybrid theory of both intentionalism and conventionalism, see McDonald (2022a).

[9] Austin (1962, p. 118) adds, "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".

by producing abuses, such as insincere promises, or misfires, such as unauthorised marriages. While these are useful for explaining whether a speech act was performed felicitously, they do not determine the type of the speech act. This point will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Normativist theories treat speech acts as norm-governed activities. On this view, asserting, for instance, is subject to norms such as the knowledge norm (Williamson, 2002), or involves undertaking commitments (Brandom, 1998). These theories treat speech acts as ways of altering normative landscapes, creating obligations, entitlements, or permissions.[10]

This approach is particularly compelling in the case of moral advice, which often purports to generate or highlight practical reasons for action – reasons the adviser believes to be morally significant. In Chapter 4, drawing on Cuneo (2014), I treat the practice of giving moral advice to be governed by the speaker's normative standing. However, I depart from the claim that normative standing determines the illocutionary act-type. Instead, I hold that normative standing is part of the felicity condition of advising: a speaker must be entitled to advise, otherwise the speech act will misfire.

2.3. Definitions: Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary

Austin (1962) distinguishes three kinds of acts performed in speech: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. These distinctions are central to this thesis as they structure my analysis of moral advising in the following chapters.

A *locutionary* act is the act of saying something, producing sounds or symbols in conformity with grammatical rules. It involves what Austin calls phonetic, phatic, and rhetic acts, and 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" (1962, p. 108).[11] Locutionary acts are not

[10] A similar thought appears in McDonald (2022, p. 920): "Different illocutionary acts institute different normative statuses for speakers and hearers. Had I made a promise to you, you would have gained an entitlement to my doing what I promised, while I would have gained an obligation to do what I promised". Also see Kukla and Lance (2008), Cuneo (2014), and Kukla (2014).

[11] The phonetic act is simply producing sounds; the phatic act involves uttering recognisable words that conform to a language's vocabulary and grammar; and the rhetic act uses those words to express a specific sense or reference (Austin 1962, p. 95).

the primary focus of this thesis, as my concern lies not with meaning alone but with what is done in and by saying something, especially in the case of advising.

An *illocutionary* act is the act a speaker performs *in* saying something, typically involving a certain intention and illocutionary force. It is distinguished from merely uttering words (the locutionary act) and from the effects those words may produce in the hearer (the perlocutionary act).

Illocutionary acts are marked by *illocutionary force*. Traditionally understood, illocutionary force is determined by a combination of factors: the speaker's communicative intention, the linguistic form of the utterance (e.g., imperative, declarative), the context, and the hearer's recognition of the speaker's intention. While features such as grammatical mood or performative markers ("I advise," "I order") may signal force, they do not uniquely determine it (Searle, 1975). I will define illocutionary force as the aspect of a speech act that is partially but mainly determined by the speaker's intention in performing the act, whether they are advising, asserting, promising, commanding, etc.

Illocutionary *performance* intention (which I take synonymously with 'illocutionary intention') refers to the speaker's intention to perform a specific kind of speech act (e.g., advising, warning, or asserting) through their utterance. Illocutionary *communicative* intention is the intention to be recognised as performing that very illocutionary act. These two types of intention must be distinguished because they determine different types of success, which will be important in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 when I highlight the roles of uptake and felicity conditions. For example, illocutionary performance success requires merely producing an utterance with an illocutionary performance intention from the speaker; nothing on the part of the hearer is required. If the hearer recognises the speaker's illocutionary communicative intention, this then results in illocutionary communicative success.

Illocutionary point refers to the aim or purpose of a speech act type. The illocutionary point of a command is typically to impose an obligation, and that of an assertion is to present something as true. In this thesis, I will argue that the illocutionary point of advice is to guide, typically for the hearer's sake. In this thesis, I will treat the illocutionary point as synonymous with a relevant perlocutionary performance intention, an aspect I will clarify in Chapter 3.

A *perlocutionary* act is the act performed *by* saying something, such as persuading, alarming, encouraging, or motivating. Perlocutionary acts are aimed at bringing about a certain act or state of mind in the hearer, such as change of belief, eliciting fear, prompting reflection, or causing action.

Perlocutionary *performance* intention (which I take to be 'perlocutionary intention') refers to the speaker's intention (e.g., to persuade, reassure, or provoke) to bring about certain effects in the hearer. Perlocutionary intention concerns the reason why the speaker performs that particular act and the outcome they hope to bring about.[12] There is a relevant perlocutionary performance intention that is usually associated with a certain illocutionary act. For example, when issuing a command, the speaker typically intends to get the hearer to φ. I will assume that, when a locutionary act, illocutionary intention, and relevant perlocutionary intention are present, the illocutionary act is performed *properly*. Perlocutionary *communicative* intention refers to the intention to be recognised as performing that perlocutionary act specifically. These determine different types of success, which will be important in Chapter 3.

Perlocutionary effect is the outcome produced by an utterance in the hearer, which may or may not align with the speaker's perlocutionary performance intention.[13] For example, when insulting someone, the speaker might have intended that the hearer is offended. However, the actual perlocutionary effect achieved may be that the hearer is amused. Thus, the *intended perlocutionary effect* refers to the *specific* outcome that the speaker aims to bring about in the hearer. This could involve persuading them to φ rather than ψ, making them reconsider their beliefs, or prompting them to deliberate.

To emphasise, I am distinguishing between different types of intention in both illocutionary and perlocutionary acts for a specific reason. In my thesis, I will argue that the illocutionary type of a directive is determined by the speaker's illocutionary intention and relevant perlocutionary intention. I will also argue that an illocutionary act can be performed without meeting its felicity conditions. Felicity conditions determine whether the performed act was 'happy' or without defects. Austin coined the term 'felicity conditions' to

[12] A similar thought appears in Cohen (1973, p. 500): "When I say that there is a relation between the illocution and perlocution *in general*, I mean that the perlocution is something like the rationale for the illocution. It constitutes a general reason, a reason *überhaupt*, for performing the illocution. It gives the illocutionary act, considered as an act of a kind, a point".
[13] Note that perlocutionary effect is different from illocutionary effect. Illocutionary effect is, as Sbisà (1984, p. 96) puts it, "something that can be represented as an effect of the speech act (a change in the state of something within the context of the interaction, occurring under the responsibility of the speaker/agent), but which is not yet a perlocutionary effect". These effects are based on explicit or implicit agreement between speaker and hearer, and can be revised or "undone" through subsequent interaction (ibid., p. 97). For example, if I give you permission to enter my room, the illocutionary effect might be that you are no longer under an obligation not to enter.

describe the conditions under which a speech act can be 'happily' performed. There are two main types of infelicity: (i) a *misfire*, whereby the act fails due to, for example, a lack of speaker standing (e.g., the speaker lacks the authority to marry a couple), and (ii) an *abuse*, whereby the act is performed without adhering to its regulative rules (e.g., insincerity, such as making a promise without intending to keep it).

2.4. Classification of Speech Acts

According to a standard classification of illocutionary acts (Searle, 1975), there are five types: assertives, commissives, expressives, declaratives, and directives.[14] This classification is useful for understanding where advice fits within speech act theory. It is best understood as a distinct form of directive, namely, a hearer-first directive, defined by its role in guiding the hearer's deliberation. This argument is developed in Chapter 3.

Assertives commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition and aim to convey information. Examples include statements like "The cat is on the mat" or "Water boils at 100°C". These acts have a word-to-world direction of fit, according to Searle (1976): their success depends on whether the words accurately represent the world. Their sincerity condition is belief: the speaker must believe what they assert to be true. I will argue in detail why advice is not an assertive in Chapters 2 and 3.

Commissives commit the speaker to a future course of action, such as in promising or betting. They reverse the directionality of directives: rather than trying to affect the hearer's action, they bind the speaker. Their direction of fit is world-to-word, like directives, but with the speaker as the agent of action. When using a commissive, the speaker must intend to follow through. Since advice is not a self-binding act, it is not a commissive (although its regulative rule may require that the adviser does not hinder the advisee from performing the advised act).

Expressives are speech acts that reveal the speaker's psychological or emotional state. Examples include "I'm sorry", "Congratulations", and "Damn it!". They point inwards, expressing emotions such as regret, pleasure, or anger (Searle, 1979, p. 15). Their sincerity condition is that the speaker genuinely feels the state expressed. Although advice may carry expressive tones (e.g.,

[14] See Kissine (2013b, p. 174) for different classifications of speech acts. Also see Allan (2009, p. 450).

concern or urgency), its purpose is to provide guidance rather than to express emotion.

Declaratives are speech acts that bring about a change in institutional or normative status by the very act of being performed. Examples include "I pronounce you married", "You are fired", or "I resign". They require specific institutional or social conditions to succeed, which often include speaker authority and procedural formality. However, advice does not enact institutional change in this way, meaning it is not a declarative. In Chapter 2, I will argue in detail why advice, in its explicit form, is not a declarative.

Directives aim to get the hearer to φ. This category includes commands, requests, recommendations, and, as I argue, advice. Directives have a world-to-word direction of fit: the utterance is meant to bring the world in line with the speaker's words. Advice fits within this category because it attempts to guide the hearer's deliberation and/or future action. However, unlike orders or requests, which are typically given for the speaker's sake, advice typically is given for the hearer's sake. Moreover, the aim of advice depends not on compliance but on inviting the hearer's deliberation. I return to this point in detail in Chapter 3.

3. Key Definitions

In this section, I clarify four key concepts central to this thesis – advice, advising, moral advice, and moral advising.

3.1. Advice

Advice itself refers to the content of the speech act – the information being communicated through the speech act of advising. It is not, on its own, an action but rather the content that is communicated when one gives advice.[15] For example, if someone advises, "Save your money", the content of advice is *that* you save money. This content is offered regardless of whether the hearer follows it.

[15] Searle (1969) calls it 'propositional content', but I take it that it does not necessarily have to be propositional. For example, one can instead use Hare's (1952) 'phrastic' to refer to the content of advice – the aspect of a sentence that is common to different moods.

Crucially, content alone does not constitute advice, let alone *moral* advice.[16] Sentences that might typically be used in giving advice are such as "Don't φ", "You should φ", or "φ-ing is better", and the content of such could, in different contexts, be used in commands, orders, instructions, requests, suggestions, wishes, or warnings.[17] Similarly, an indicative sentence like "φ-ing is better" and the content of such might be used to assert, describe, mention, inform, postulate, swear, favour, affirm, or advise, depending on the context. Determining whether an imperative like "Don't φ" or an indicative like "φ-ing is better" is meant as advice rather than something else requires considering factors such as the context, supporting reasons, speaker intention, and the felicity conditions. In other words, whether such content amounts to advice depends on whether the speaker is advising – that is, performing the illocutionary act of advising. Identifying advice, therefore, presupposes that the speech act of advising has taken place. This in turn requires consideration of the speaker's intention, the context of utterance, and the conditions that govern felicitous advising.

Throughout this thesis, whenever I present an example of advice, I assume that the speaker intends to advise and that the hearer recognises the utterance as advice. However, this does not imply that these conditions alone are sufficient to understand advice. The criteria for felicitous advice will be explored in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.2. Advising

Advising is the speech act of giving advice. It is an action performed by a speaker who offers guidance to a hearer about what they should do or believe. In this thesis, I define advising as a speech act in which the speaker provides

[16] This is also known as the 'force/content distinction'. Stenius (1969) introduces this distinction between propositional content and illocutionary force with an analogy from chemistry: a *radical* consists of a group of atoms that cannot exist independently, while a *functional group* is the specific arrangement of those atoms responsible for a compound's properties. Similarly, a proposition on its own is communicatively inert. To engage in a language game, a speaker must present a proposition with an illocutionary force, such as an assertion, an order, or advice. This distinction will be useful for now, although I remain sceptical as to whether an imperative (used as a directive speech act) has propositional content.

[17] This point follows Austin's (1979, p. 251) insight that the *force* of an utterance is distinct from its meaning or content: the same sentence (e.g., "Shut the door") may function as an order, request, or entreaty depending on context.

guidance on a physical or mental action *for the hearer's sake*.[18] When the speech act of giving advice is performed, it may or may not serve the hearer's immediate interest, but its purpose is to help the hearer in decision-making by inviting deliberation and respecting their autonomy for the hearer's sake.[19]

There is some debate about what counts as advising. Bach and Harnish (1979, p. 49), for instance, propose a general group of *advisories* that includes 'admonishing', 'counselling', 'recommending', 'urging', and 'warning'. Similarly, Berger (2021, p. 268), considers *advisory acts* to include a range of directive speech acts, such as 'instruct', 'admonish', 'advise', 'counsel', and 'suggest'. However, this thesis adopts a narrower definition, focusing only on advising as a distinct illocutionary act rather than on the full range of advisory acts. This narrower focus is intentional, as achieving conceptual clarity requires a starting point.

Advising typically involves two distinct participants: a speaker and a hearer. However, can a person advise themselves? Self-advising – telling oneself what one should do and deliberating about that action in a way that mirrors interpersonal advice – shares some features with advising another person. While this thesis mainly focuses on giving and receiving advice interpersonally, I will explore the possibility of self-advising in Chapter 4.

3.3. Moral Advice

Moral advice is a particular kind of advice: guidance that concerns morally significant actions (or beliefs). For example, advice such as "You should stop cheating" or "It is wrong to betray a friend" involves moral matters rather than purely prudential concerns. Differentiating between moral and non-moral advice can be challenging, and it is unclear whether a definitive distinction can

[18] I will assume that, when I speak of the 'hearer's sake' from now on, this is what the adviser takes it to be.

[19] Some philosophers have proposed necessary conditions that the speech act of giving advice must satisfy. For example, see Searle (1969, p. 67) for the preparatory, sincerity, and essential conditions for 'advise', and Sbisà (2018) for the speech act norms of 'advise'. I will argue against these accounts in favour of intentionalism: what determines the illocutionary act-type is the speaker's intention, not these conditions (see Chapter 3). What I take to be the aim of advising is similar to that of Jonas (2017, p. 822), who defines the purpose of advice-giving as "to support an agent to act well by helping her to see what she should do". This definition of 'advising' will serve for present purposes until a more detailed discussion of these conditions in Chapter 5.

be provided.[20] That said, moral advice appears to have a different aim from non-moral advice.

Non-moral advice is often considered 'good' if it effectively helps the hearer to achieve their goals.[21] In contrast, moral advice does not always align with the hearer's goals. For example, if someone seeks advice on how to lie effectively, and the advice helps them do so, it would typically be regarded as 'good' advice in a prudential sense. Wiland (2021, p. 128) calls the kind of advice about *how* to do something 'hypothetical advice', as it "presupposes that the 'something' in question is an end the advisee has". Similarly, accountants might provide advice on how to evade tax or patent counsellors on how to circumvent copyright issues, or a person might seek advice on how to avoid getting caught cheating on a partner. In each case, the advice would be seen as 'good' as long as it helps to achieve the hearer their goals or serves the hearer's interest.

However, moral advice differs from non-moral advice in that its value does not depend solely on how well it serves the hearer's goal or interest. A moral adviser would outright reject the permissibility of cheating or lying, for example, regardless of the advisee's prudential goals. Their advice would be such that the advisee refrains from lying. According to Wiland (ibid.,), advice on *what* to do is categorical in nature. While advice on *how* to do something usually assumes that the hearer already values the outcome being advised on, categorical advice – advice on *what* to do – does not necessarily require such an assumption. Instead, it prescribes an action regardless of whether the hearer values the outcome. As we have seen in the example of the moral adviser above, they would call the action wrong outright rather than accommodate the hearer's goal.[22] Evaluating moral advice solely in terms of how well it helps the hearer achieve their goals would, therefore, be inappropriate.

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[20] Moreover, there may be some hints, such as evaluative words (such as thin and thick terms), valuing terms (e.g., 'better' or 'worse'), or prescriptions (imperatives, 'should', 'ought', etc.) in the content that highlight whether advice is *moral* or *non-moral*, but this is not always or necessarily the case.

[21] For example, this is how Sbisà (2018, pp. 36–37) characterises good advice: "The accomplished piece of advice is 'good' advice if it is *apt* to help the addressee to achieve or approximate his goals in a manner conforming to the other possible constraints and the requirements of the situation". This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

[22] It seems reasonable to say that moral advice is typically given under the assumption that the hearer at least somewhat cares about doing the right thing. If the advisee had no concern for morality at all, offering moral advice might seem pointless. Nevertheless, people often give moral advice in the hope that it will appeal to the hearer's latent moral concerns or prompt deliberation.

Understanding what makes advice moral, then seems to require some account of what morality itself involves. While I do not aim to resolve the question of what morality consists of – nor is that within the scope of this thesis – I propose two broad ideas that help to clarify the role of moral advice. First, Nagel's (1979) account offers a helpful starting point. According to Nagel, morality is not grounded in a single unifying principle but instead arises from multiple, often conflicting values, such as obligations, rights, utility, perfectionist aims, and personal commitments (ibid., pp. 129–130). Because of this plurality of values, moral decision-making cannot always rely on specific moral theories. Rather, it calls for judgement: an Aristotelian form of practical wisdom exercised in navigating competing considerations. In this sense, moral advice functions as a resource, drawing on a diverse range of considerations to guide actions and to support practical reasoning.

Second, if one thinks that this is too broad a conception of morality, a more structured account might involve understanding morality as relational. On this view, moral norms arise within interpersonal relationships and involve the mutual recognition of each person as a source of claims or reasons. For example, according to Scanlon (2011, p. 243), "moral standards are ones that we all have good reason to accept as a normally conclusive basis for deciding what to do and for assessing our claims against others". Here, moral advice could be understood as advice aimed at guiding action in accordance with moral standards that others have reason to accept or principles that no one can reasonably reject. Of course, one could adopt another moral theory (or even particularism) to define moral advice differently. My aim here is not to endorse one particular theory, but to clarify how differing conceptions of morality shape the practice of moral advising.

3.4. Moral Advising

Moral advising is the act of giving moral advice. It is a speech act in which the speaker provides guidance on an action based on moral considerations. Like advising in general, moral advising aims to help the hearer's deliberation, but in this case, the deliberation concerns normative reasons for action, reasons related to what the adviser thinks the hearer *ought* to (or *should*, *has* to, *must*, *shall*, etc.) do for morality's sake.[23] Reasons are standardly taken to be considerations that count in favour of the thing in question. Reasons are

[23] I will assume that, when I talk about 'morality's sake' from now own, this is what the adviser takes to be.

"correctly labelled 'normative' when and because they feature in the explanation of ought-facts, and nothing more" (Raz, 2009a, p. 191). Normative reasons "have the potential to (i.e. they may) justify and require that which they favour" (ibid., p. 187).[24] By performing the speech act of giving moral advice, the moral adviser invites the hearer to deliberate on the morally relevant considerations that count in favour of the action in question. Unlike issuing commands or orders, moral advising does not demand compliance but instead invites the hearer to deliberate on normative reasons in their decision-making. For example, advising someone to act kindly toward others differs from ordering them to do so because it leaves room for the hearer's deliberation and choice.[25]

4. Positioning Advising Among the Other Speech Acts

4.1. The Difference between Advising and Commanding

In exploring where advising lies in relation to other speech acts, it is essential to clarify the distinctions and similarities it shares with other forms of speech acts, particularly issuing commands and giving testimony. Most accounts treat advising and commanding as members of the directive family, yet the two speech acts differ in both their primary purpose and their underlying normative structure. First, many would agree that advising is different from commanding.[26] Wiland (2021), in his *Guided by Voices: Moral Testimony, Advice, and Forging a 'We'* – one of the first extended academic works to

[24] One might wonder if there are any non-normative reasons. I think so. According to Louise (2009, pp. 352–353), "We may say that a proposition *q* is a reason for the truth of the belief that *p*, because *q* is evidence that *p* is true. Clearly this reason is an *explanatory* reason, not a normative one. […] x's having some property P may provide a reason why some attitude A is correct in response to x. But this again will be non-normative: it will be a reason why A is correct".

[25] Scanlon's (1998, p. 20) interpretation of Williams captures this idea well: the fact that "such a person has a reason is something that could be offered to him or her as *advice.* The very idea of offering such advice presupposes that the agent in question is capable of thinking about what he or she has reason to do – that is, capable of understanding judgments about reasons in a normative sense".

[26] Hobbes (1994) makes a distinction between commands and 'counsel' in xxv, 'On Counsel'. According to Hobbes, a command is issued for the benefit of the one giving it, whereas advice is given for the benefit of the advisee.

focus specifically on advice – argues that the key difference between advising and commanding lies in the nature of the interaction and the power dynamics involved. Wiland (ibid., p. 112) suggests that advice typically engages with the advisee's existing cares and concerns.[27] According to him, advice should aim at something that the advisee could be reasonably motivated to do based on their cares and concerns. If advice fails to engage with these, it may not be as effective in guiding the advisee, but it would still count as advice. In contrast, commands do not need to align with the hearer's motivations; they impose an expectation or obligation to act, regardless of the hearer's own cares or concerns.

Another difference between commanding and advising is that, according to Wiland, those who command typically hold some form of authority or power over the hearers. This authority allows the commander to impose consequences or threats if the command is not followed, even if the threat remains implicit (ibid., p. 156). The power dynamic in commanding is such that the hearer is obliged to comply to avoid negative repercussions. Advising, on the other hand, lacks this element of obligation to comply.[28] An adviser does not impose sanctions if the advisee disregards the advice; the interaction is not based on authority or the ability to enforce negative consequences (ibid.).[29] Instead, advising appeals to the advisee's autonomy, offering guidance without the expectation of compliance through pressure or threat.[30]

A useful analogy that would bring out the difference between advising and commanding is to compare how lawyers give advice and police gives orders. Moral advice and legal advice share a similarity in that both are grounded in

[27] Another way to put this thought is: "advice typically engages with the advisee's existing subjective motivational set", as Williams (1995a) would say.
[28] However, the advisee may still feel obligated to comply. This point will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 3.
[29] Although Wiland emphasises that advice is generally free from explicit power dynamics, he notes that it is not entirely devoid of influence (2021, p. 156fn21). Even without formal authority, an adviser can still exert a subtle form of pressure. For example, if someone ignores advice, the adviser might react with disapproval or an "I-told-you-so" response, which could influence the advisee's future behaviour. Knowing that disregarding advice might change the adviser's view of them can create a form of implicit pressure for the hearer, showing that advice is not entirely free from power dynamics, even if it lacks the overt coercion found in commands. I will talk about what 'authority' could mean in Chapter 5.
[30] A similar thought is present in Manne's (2014, p. 97) ideal adviser: "The role of the ideal advisor is to persuade or to recommend, not to issue *de facto* commands to the deliberating agent".

normativity – morality and law, respectively.[31] Moral advice draws on moral norms, principles, or theories that the adviser believes are appropriate for guiding the hearer's actions.[32] This involves guiding the hearer to act in accordance with certain moral principles, for example, for their own sake as well as for morality's sake. Likewise, legal advice is based on the norms and regulations of the legal system, where the lawyer interprets these rules and applies them to the specific situation of the client.[33] Similarly, providing legal advice involves guiding clients to help them to understand why complying with international trade law, for example, is the best course of action for their own sake. In both cases, the advisers aim to guide the advisee by giving advice that is grounded in a system of norms, helping them to deliberate on the relevant considerations and make their own decisions. The advisers act as guides, using established norms to support the hearer's decision-making process.

On the other hand, the police expect immediate compliance when issuing commands, such as "Step out of the vehicle" or "Put your hands up!", as they are authorised to do so. Compliance is not optional, and there are clear consequences for non-compliance, enforced by the power of the state. Police enforcement represents the direct exercise of power, where compliance is expected immediately and is not open to negotiation. Unlike in moral or legal

[31] Moral advice can also be likened to health advice. For example, doctors advise patients to change their diet or exercise more based on healthy living norms, but they lack the ability to enforce compliance.

[32] One might question whether this account of moral advice, which refers to moral norms, principles, or theories, is compatible with a particularist view of morality. Moral particularism, as defended by Dancy (1993, 2004), holds that the moral relevance of any given feature depends entirely on the particular context. A particularist could argue that moral advice need not appeal to general norms or principles but could instead be based directly on the moral facts of a given case. However, the formulation here (referring to norms, principles, or theories in a disjunctive manner) does not presuppose commitment to non-particularist view of morality. It remains open to the possibility that moral advice may, in some cases, rely on particularist reasoning, where the adviser guides the hearer by pointing to morally salient features of the specific situation rather than appealing to overarching moral principles.

[33] I want to note that legal advice need not always be normative in the same way as moral advice. In some cases, it may be purely predictive: informing the client about the likely legal consequences of different courses of action without prescribing what they should do (Raz, 1975, p. 176). However, the similarity between legal and moral advice is that they are not about compliance. A lawyer might advise a client on how to exploit legal loopholes or assess risks associated with violating certain regulations, depending on the client's goals. In this sense, legal advice does not necessarily assume that following the law is always the best course of moral action. Rather, it can focus on what is legally permissible, strategically advantageous, or least risky given the circumstances.

advice, there is no room for the hearer to deliberate or for their autonomy to be respected.

One final important point to note is that both advising and commanding belong to the family of directive speech acts because they both direct action, despite the differences we discussed above. However, the question remains as to whether advising belongs exclusively to this family of speech acts. This brings us to the difference between 'giving advice' and 'giving testimony'.

4.2. Advice: Directive or Testimonial?

One central question in understanding advice is whether it should always be considered a directive speech act, or whether it can also be a testimony, belonging to the family of assertion.[34] Raz (2009b, pp. 13–14) argues for the latter view: "the primary intention in advising is to convey information about what is morally right or wrong, what is lawful or unlawful, in one's interests or not, and so forth or just about brute facts". The adviser, he claims, need not intend to influence the hearer's action at all, but only to make the hearer aware of a relevant situation. Raz says, "the adviser must intend his giving the advice to be taken as a reason to believe that what he says is true, correct, or justified. But he does not necessarily intend it to be taken as a reason for action, even though it may be the case that his giving the advice is a valid reason for action for the recipient" (ibid., p. 14). For this reason, Raz argues that advisory utterances are reducible to assertions: for example, saying "I advise you to apply to Balliol" is equivalent to saying, "Balliol is your best choice", or "On balance I think applying to Balliol is preferable to the alternatives" (ibid., p. 14fn14).[35]

Wiland (2021, p. 118) challenges this view and argues that advice is 'primarily directive', meaning that the adviser must intend to guide the hearer toward a particular course of action.[36] I agree with Wiland. He says, "Advice already

[34] I take that giving testimony, unlike presenting facts, implies the speaker's epistemic authority, which creates specific entitlements for the hearer to blame or pass the epistemic buck to the speaker. See Owens (2006) and Goldberg (2011).

[35] One of objection that Raz might face here – and the one that I agree with – is that sentences such as "Balliol is your best choice" or "applying to Balliol is preferable" already contain evaluative terms such as 'best' or 'preferable' which express one's attitudes or intentions to direct the hearer. Some philosophers might think that such utterances are not merely assertions conveying belief but rather evaluative judgements that are implicitly prescriptive or directive.

[36] It is generally thought that the purpose for giving advice is to influence the course of action, which is why we use directives. For example, Austin (1962) argues that 'advise' belongs to the

wears its practicality on its sleeve" (ibid., p. 127) because "truly advising someone requires that you intend to direct them" (ibid., p. 155).[37] On this view, advice is distinct from testimony, which merely conveys *how things are* (or were, or will be) without necessarily influencing action (ibid., p. 116).

In my view, advice and testimony differ in their illocutionary point: testimony aims to convey that some proposition is true, whereas advice aims to guide the hearer's deliberation about what to do, typically for the hearer's sake. The same utterance, however, can be both testimony and advice if it is intended both to inform and to guide. For example, "The exam will be difficult" functions as testimony if it is meant to convey a fact, but as advice if it is offered with the relevant perlocutionary intention of guiding the hearer to study. The difference, then, lies not in the linguistic form, but in the speaker's illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions.

Wiland (ibid., p. 118) acknowledges that this distinction between advice and testimony "is consistent with the fact that a speaker might *both* advise *and* offer testimony by means of the very same utterance".[38] However, he emphasises that not all cases of advice are cases of testimony, and he maintains that testimony alone cannot constitute advice. He says that while advice

> does achieve its aim by getting the advisee to believe something new, it need not, nor need it do so only by doxastic influence. A person who advises you to do something can be directing you to do it *both* by getting you to believe something new *and* through

class of exercitives, which means that verbs in this class are generally used to influence other people. I will highlight the difference between 'guiding' and 'influencing' in Chapter 3.

[37] Wiland's other important aspect of advising comes from Hinchman (2005) in that "Someone advises you only if she invites you to *rely* on her, much as someone offers you testimony only if she invites you to rely on her" (Wiland, 2021, p. 155). I will leave discussion of this aspect of 'relying' or 'trusting' until Chapters 4 and 5.

[38] As Wiland (2021, p. 121) notes, "Buckle your seat belt" can function as advice, a command, a request, or even permission, depending on context and speaker intention. This shows that we cannot infer the nature of advice purely from the words used; instead, we must understand what the speaker is doing with those words in a given context. Wiland also observes that advice may overlap with other speech acts, such as requests, without collapsing into them. Similarly, Anscombe (1957, p. 3) acknowledges that "Nurse will take you to the operating theatre" can function as an expression of the doctor's intention and as an order and conveyance of information. According to Halliday (2009, pp. 272–273), a clause "Don't tease your baby sister" both *construes* (i.e., making sense of what is perceived as reality) a form of action, 'tease', to be descriptively applied to the hearer and *enacts* a negative command where the speaker demands compliance from the hearer. See also Dahl (Forthcoming).

> non-doxastic means. We need not always choose (ibid, pp. 188–189).

Wiland's point is that while advice is not restricted to forming or changing beliefs, it is primarily about *directing action*. When the hearer already acknowledges the moral reasons for a given action, the adviser's role becomes one of reinforcement or encouragement.[39] Advice can function as a reminder or a nudge to prompt action, bridging the gap between belief and practice.[40] Rather than introducing new information or reasons, the adviser might appeal to emotional, motivational, or contextual factors that direct the hearer's readiness to act.

Wiland (ibid., pp. 116–117) argues that the key distinction between advice and testimony is that testimony conveys how things are, such as "The defendant shot the victim twice" whereas advice directs action, as in "Apologise to your mother". Advice, according to Wiland, "is a telling that canonically takes as its object a verbal phrase" (ibid., 116). On his view, advice is about what to do, not what to believe. He acknowledges that advice can appear to resemble testimony. For example, when a father says, "You ought to apologise to your mother", it looks like he believes that you ought to apologise, "and that he tells you this to get you to believe it as well" (ibid., p. 117). However, Wiland says that it remains advice because the father "isn't ultimately interested in whether you believe something that you didn't believe before. He is ultimately

[39] What do I take moral reasons to be? Reasons can be understood as facts that count in favour of an action or attitudes, a view that both cognitivists and non-cognitivists generally accept. However, cognitivists and non-cognitivists diverge on how these reasons function. If someone is a cognitivist, they would say that there is a normative fact – this is the reason why one should φ. On the other hand, if someone is a non-cognitivist, the fact will give them a reason in virtue of them favouring or desiring that fact as a reason. This fact is a reason for them to favour φ-ing. While this debate is a significant point of contention in metaethics, going into the specifics is beyond the scope of my thesis. There are numerous views on the nature of reasons – whether they are facts, beliefs coupled with desires, or fitting attitudes – but I am not advocating for any one particular view. Instead, I take the stance that reasons are facts with normative properties. This position is open to metaethical analysis and does not necessitate a commitment to objectivism about reasons. What is critical here is that, regardless of one's stance on reasons, it remains true that, as a maxim for moral advice, the speaker must provide moral (e.g., normative or justificatory) reasons to the advisee.

[40] As Wiland (2021, p. 171) puts it, "Sound advice, of course, can lead you to be motivated to do things that you *already* have reason to do. Indeed, this is the spirit in which advice is usually best given and received. But advice also can *change* what you have reason to do, this in multiple ways". In other words, advice can change what Williams (1995a) calls the agent's 'subjective motivational set'. This point will be briefly revisited in Chapter 6.

interested in getting you to do something you aren't doing: apologizing to your mother" (ibid.).

According to Wiland (ibid., p. 119), this practicality distinguishes advice from testimony: "Even instrumental advice is practical in a way that testimony is not". He shows this with an example of instrumental advice: a person advising a traveller to take the Megabus from Chicago to St. Louis. In this case, the speaker may not be trying to get the traveller to do anything, being indifferent to whether the traveller takes the advice or not. However, Wiland (ibid., p. 120) argues that even this kind of disinterested advice, where the speaker seems to be telling the traveller some facts, still involves the speaker participating in the traveller's decision. He explains that if the speaker were to advise the traveller how to travel from Chicago to St. Louis, "then it would be reasonable for you to presume that I think that it's at least okay for you to head to St. Louis – that I don't strongly oppose it. If I did strongly oppose your goal, I would refrain from even 'instrumentally' advising you about how to attain it" (ibid.).[41]

I agree with Wiland that advice is directive and practical. But here is a subtle disagreement. Consider an adviser who says, "If I were you, I would φ, but do what you want" or "φ-ing would be a great idea, but don't take my word for it". For Wiland (ibid., p. 155), these are not 'full-blooded' advice because they lack directive intent. In these examples, the speaker distances themselves from actively directing the advisee, thereby not fulfilling the role of an adviser in the full sense. Reporting one's own beliefs or predicting what one would do in the advisee's situation does not constitute advising. For Wiland, a true adviser is not merely offering opinions or sharing personal thoughts but is actively directing the advisee toward a particular course of action.[42] According to Wiland,

[41] Wiland (2021, p. 120) acknowledges that "It's true that I need not fully endorse your end in order to advise you how to attain it sincerely. I can sincerely advise you how to travel from Chicago to St. Louis, even if I think it would be better for you to be doing something other than traveling to St. Louis".

[42] We should also remember that advice might well involve directing the hearer to a wide range of actions, each aimed at helping them to make better decisions. For example, if someone seeks advice on whether to become vegan to reduce animal cruelty, an adviser – aware that radically changing one's diet in a short period of time – may advise them to first take other possible and more feasible steps, such as getting involved in animal rights work, supporting local farmers who prioritise the ethical treatment of animals, or incorporating more plant-based meals while still consuming animal products responsibly and ethically. In this case, the adviser guides action by presenting the advisee with several options that advisee may not have previously considered. Moral advising, then, is not limited to directing the advisee

> Reporting the contents of your beliefs by itself is not testimony, and predicting what you would do were you in the hearer's circumstances by itself is not advice. […] Thus, advising someone (as I'm understanding it) involves more than merely discussing the hearer's practical situation, rehearsing arguments for and against various options, and aiming to persuade the hearer to see for himself that a specific practical option is the one to opt for (ibid.).

He argues that without the intent to direct, such exchanges do not amount to full-blooded advice.[43]

I think Wiland's account makes advice too strong.[44] In fact, advising might involve aiming – or at least attempting – to persuade the hearer to see for themselves that a specific practical option is the one to opt for. However, advising need not involve persuasion at all; rather, it is to guide. Think of the guides in art galleries or on tours: you are free to join a tour; they do not persuade you to do so. Even when you are on a tour, you are free to leave at any time and do not need to follow the guide. Similarly, you can find dietary guidelines or hiking guide maps useful, but they do not compel or persuade you to follow them. If you find them useful, you are free to take on the guidance.

Advising, at its core, may include cases that Wiland would not treat as 'full-blooded' advice, such as "If I were you, I would φ, but do what you want" or "φ-ing would be a great idea, but don't take my word for it", where the adviser has an intention to perform the illocutionary act of advising and the relevant perlocutionary intention to guide the hearer, yet leaves space for the hearer to decide for themselves whether to φ.[45]

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towards a single course of action; it can also involve presenting the hearer a wide range of actions, all of which are equally preferred (or can be viewed indifferently) by the adviser.

[43] Wiland (2021) rejects views that downplay the directive nature of advice. Darwall (2006, p. 257), for example, claims that advice concerns beliefs about reasons for action rather than directing action, and that an adviser offers reasons without issuing demands or requests. Wiland (ibid., p. 118) disagrees, arguing that advice is "about getting you to do something that you aren't doing", and is therefore directly practical in a way that testimony is not.

[44] Wiland (2021, p. 117fn3) also sets aside 'passive' uses of advice (e.g., "Passengers are advised that the next train will be five minutes late."), treating them as distinct from standard use of advice. However, I include them in my broader view of advice, as they still function as guidance.

[45] Williams (1995a, p. 36) also has a positive view of offering advice using phrases such as "if I were you": "One example of this […] is given by advice in the 'if I were you ...' mode. Taking other people's perspective on a situation, we hope to be able to point out that they have

Consider another example where a teacher gives advice by presenting facts: "You should know that the exam is difficult". It is easy to infer that the students should study hard because the exam is difficult. When we give advice like this, it is natural to imagine that the advisees respond with something like, "Thank you for your advice. I will study hard!" or "That is good advice. I will let others know". Such advice is action-guiding and cannot be described as anything other than 'full-blooded', albeit implicit.

Whereas Wiland argues that advice must always involve a practical aim of directing a hearer towards a particular course of action, I hold that advice can also be given by offering reasons, perspectives, or information that guide decision-making without explicitly directing the hearer to φ, as long as the speaker has a relevant perlocutionary intention.[46] This broader view captures cases where advice functions not only through imperatives but also through indicative sentences, where the speaker provides reasons, experiences, or reflections that invite the hearer's deliberation.[47]

Ultimately, my disagreement with Wiland is not about whether advice is directive or practical – I agree that it is. The difference lies in how precisely we define its directive nature. Wiland maintains that advice must always actively direct the hearer towards an action. I, however, argue that some forms of advice guide decision-making more subtly, by offering reasons or perspectives that invite deliberation, while leaving it to the hearer to decide whether to φ. By broadening the category of advice, I aim to provide a more accurate reflection of how advice functions in everyday discourse.

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reason to do things they did not think they had reason to do, or, perhaps, less reason to do certain things than they thought they had".

[46] Similarly, Sliwa (2025, p. 3) describes hermeneutical advice as transmitting moral perspectives that reshape one's evaluative outlook, a form of moral testimony rather than directive speech.

[47] Another aspect of advising is that advice can also be given with a question, not only with a directive or an indicative sentence. As Hills (2009, p. 123) notes with her example, "it is not at all unusual for those offering advice to make explicit that they expect you to respond in this way rather than with deference, by prefacing their advice with remarks such as, for example, 'Look at it this way…' or 'Have you considered this point of view…?'". A paradigm case of an indicative sentence used for giving advice is an explicit performative utterance, such as "I advise you to φ". This case will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

5. Overview of the Thesis

Recall that the central questions of this thesis are:

(1) What determines that an utterance constitutes the speech act of moral advising?

(2) Under what conditions is such an act felicitous?

To answer these, I identify four sub-questions that structure the inquiry. The first two are more theoretical, examining how explicit performatives and speaker intentions determine whether an utterance counts as the speech act of advising. The latter two focus on the normative and pragmatic dimensions of moral advice: how the speaker's standing and the hearer's recognition affect the felicity of advising, and what norms govern the felicitous and good performance of moral advice. These four sub-questions, which will be answered in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively, are as follows:

(1a) Is moral advice necessarily expressed in the imperative mood? If not, how is it recognised as advice when expressed in other moods, in particular the indicative mood? This question examines how explicit performatives can signal the illocutionary force of advising when the sentence mood (e.g., indicative) does not match the force typically associated with that mood.

(1b) In what way does the speaker's intention determine whether an utterance constitutes the speech act of moral advising? The answer to this question develops an intentionalist view of advising, arguing that the potential illocutionary force of an utterance is determined by the speaker's illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions.

(2a) How does the speaker's normative standing, together with hearer recognition, determine whether an act of advising is felicitous? This question examines how the felicity of advising depends not only on the speaker's normative standing to advise, but also on the hearer's recognition of that standing, especially in cases of unsolicited or peer-to-peer advice, where conventional markers of standing may be absent.

(2b) Which norms govern the felicity and evaluation of moral advice specifically, and how should these be revised or refined in light of those that govern advice more generally? In response to this question, I identify the norms that determine the felicity and evaluation of moral advice, compare them with those that govern advice more generally, and argue for revisions where the two sets of norms diverge.

Chapter 2 examines how explicit performative utterances, such as "I advise you to φ", can be recognised as instances of the directive speech act of advising even when they appear in the indicative mood. In doing so, it tackles the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM, which concerns the fact that the indicative mood is typically associated with assertive speech acts, yet some explicit performatives, such as "I order you to leave" or "I advise that you reconsider", have a directive illocutionary force that breaks this association. Through examining and criticising several existing accounts, including indirect and declarational views, the chapter compares different explanations of how explicit performatives in the indicative can signal the illocutionary force. I then develop the *Priming View*, which proposes that a performative prefix, such as "I advise", acts directly as a cognitive prime, creating an expectation for the hearer to interpret the utterance as having a particular illocutionary force and to engage with the ensuing content accordingly. When an advisory explicit performative is used, the hearer is prepared to engage with the advice. This explains how advisory explicit performatives can guide action by directly priming the hearer to anticipate the content of the advice, even when the grammatical mood is indicative.

Chapter 3 develops an intentionalist view of advising as a directive speech act, arguing that the potential illocutionary force of an utterance is determined by the speaker's illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions. In what way does the speaker's intention determine whether an utterance constitutes the speech act of advising? I argue that directive speech acts must be primarily understood in terms of the speaker's perlocutionary intention: their attempt to influence or guide the hearer. For hearer-first directives like advice, the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide is explanatorily primary. This distinguishes advice from other kinds of directives. An illocutionary act of advising can be successfully performed as a directive even when it is not followed, and even when it fails to be a reason for action in a possible world, because what constitutes the speech act of advising is primarily the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide, which is to invite the hearer's deliberation.

Chapter 4 presents a complementary view of directive speech acts, arguing that perlocutionary intention and normative standing play distinct explanatory roles. While perlocutionary intention helps to determine the illocutionary act-type of the directive, normative standing determines whether the act misfires and contributes to whether an act is felicitous or not. Applying this view to H-directives, such as advice, I show that the hearer's recognition of the speaker's standing to give advice is important, as it reveals whether the speaker actually has the standing to give advice. In unsolicited contexts of giving advice, the

hearer can recognise or challenge the speaker's normative standing, which shows that this standing can be recognition-dependent. This sheds light on how the hearer can recognise or challenge the speaker's standing to advise in light of contextual judgements, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the felicity conditions of advice.

Chapter 5 addresses which norms govern the felicity and evaluation of moral advice, and how these should be revised or refined. Building on Sbisà's (2018) tripartite model of speech act norms, I revise her constitutive rules as felicity-enabling rules. I argue that they do not determine the illocutionary act-type of advice, but rather whether it misfires due to a lack of normative standing. I refine the specifics of these rules by replacing the terms 'authority' and 'competence' with 'knowledge' and 'experience', and by including standing conferred by the hearer. Furthermore, I revise and refine the maxims of moral advice as regulative norms that govern the optimal performance, emphasising the central role of providing normative reasons. Lastly, I replace Sbisà's objective requirements with evaluative requirements. I contend that moral advice is evaluated as 'good' when it becomes part of the hearer's moral deliberation and either deepens their moral understanding or helps to affirm, reinforce, or clarify a moral decision. These revised requirements allow for advice to be evaluated as good even when it challenges or overrides the hearer's existing goals, and even in contexts where there is only one morally permissible course of action.

Chapter 6 summarises the chapters, explores several implications that follow from the main chapters, discusses future research topics, and concludes.

2. Explicit Performatives in Giving Advice

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the use of explicit performatives – those with a performative prefix involving 'I' with a performative verb like 'order', 'promise', or 'advise' in the first-person singular present indicative active – and thereby reveal central aspects of the action-guiding nature of advice. Performative verbs are such that they are the name of the kind of illocutionary act one would ordinarily be performing in uttering that sentence (Bach, 1975, p. 229). Explicit performatives are, according to Austin (1962, p. 156), constructions in which "the specific act performed (commanding, betting, christening, warning) is referred to by the verb in the sentences, in contrast to ordinary declaratives, imperatives, and interrogatives, which perform their acts implicitly, without a word referring specifically to asserting, requesting, or inquiring". This chapter will set the first stage for explaining how the most explicit form of giving advice – using 'I advise' as a performative prefix – functions in speech acts.

There are two key reasons for examining explicit performative utterances in this chapter. First, understanding explicit performatives is essential for understanding how speakers make their intentions explicit in advisory contexts.[48] Since explicit advisory performatives (e.g., "I advise you to φ") are a subset of explicit performatives more broadly, analysing their structure is a

[48] One might wonder whether what is made explicit by the performative prefix is the successful act of advising or merely the speaker's attempt to advise. On an intentionalist view (D. W. Harris et al., 2018, p. 4), *performing* an illocutionary act succeeds when the speaker produces an utterance with the appropriate communicative intention; in this sense, adding a performative prefix like "I advise" could suffice. However, successful *communication* requires that the addressee recognise the kind of response the speaker is aiming to elicit. If the addressee fails to recognise that the speaker is trying to advise, then, on some accounts, the utterance would remain, at most, an attempt to perform the act of advising. I will argue in Chapter 3 that the illocutionary act is nevertheless performed.

necessary step in clarifying how advice functions in its most overt form. When we take an utterance 'p' – whether indicative or imperative – to express a piece of advice, we can often convert it into an explicit performative, such as "I advise that p" or "I advise you to p".[49] The addition of performative prefixes like "I advise" clarifies the illocutionary force of the utterance, making it explicit that the speaker is actively engaging in the act of advising. Here, the performative prefix functions as what Searle (1969) calls an 'illocutionary force indicating device'.

By employing explicit performatives, speakers draw attention to the advisory nature of their words. To fully appreciate the role of advice, then, we must first understand how the most explicit form of advising – i.e., sincerely advising with an explicit performative – functions and what it reveals about the speaker's communicative intention. Performative prefixes differentiate advice from other illocutionary acts. For example, when a speaker uses "I advise" instead of "I order", they communicate a fundamentally different intention. Clarifying the contrasts among such prefixes, e.g., "I advise", "I order", "I promise", thus will show how explicit performatives shape the hearer's interpretation of the speaker's intention.

Second, the embedding of 'p' in an explicit performative, such as "I advise that p", amplifies a notable tension: advisory explicit performatives seem to have a directive force even when they are in the indicative mood. At first glance, utterances like "I advise you φ" or "I advise that p" might resemble assertions or statements of fact, prompting the question of whether they function more like assertions or even as a kind of testimony.[50] However, these utterances act as directives, aiming to influence the hearer's action, despite their grammatical mood. This raises a central question posed in the introduction, to which I will give a negative answer: (1a) *is moral advice necessarily expressed in the imperative mood? If not, how is it recognised as advice when expressed in other moods, in particular the indicative mood?* Addressing this question will help to clarify how explicit performative utterances function, particularly in advisory contexts where guidance is given with an indicative sentence. This

[49] As Austin (1962, pp. 61–62) said, "any utterance which is in fact a performative should be reducible, or expandible, or analysable into a form with a verb in the first person singular present indicative active (grammatical)". However, I am not arguing for the strong claim such as the 'performative hypothesis' proposed by Ross (1970), where every declarative utterance contains an underlying performative verb. It is a weaker claim that if *p* is a piece of advice, then one can make it explicit by adding "I advise" in front of *p*.

[50] An example of "I advise you that p" could be "I advise you that the meeting has been rescheduled". This example can be likened to Searle's (1976, p. 22), as in "I warn you that the bull is about to charge".

chapter will address this question by proposing the Priming View, which suggests that the performative prefix 'I advise' acts as a cognitive prime that prepares the hearer to engage with the advice.

The sections are summarised as follows: §2 introduces the theoretical background to explicit performatives. §3 introduces the tension between the sentence mood and illocutionary force, highlighting why explicit performatives create what I call the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM. In §4 and §5, I evaluate and criticise the indirect speech act theories proposed by Bach and Harnish (1979) and the declarational theories proposed by Searle (1989) and Récanati (1987)[51]. In §6, I examine the direct theories, including Jary's (2007) 'showing' account and propose a new direct theory: the Priming View. In §7, I apply the Priming View to the performative prefix "I advise", suggesting that it primes the hearer to expect guidance.

2. Theoretical Background on Explicit Performatives

2.1 Defining Performatives

According to Austin, performative utterances are such that "in saying what I do, I actually perform that action". The term *performative utterance* (in short, *performative*) was first introduced by Austin (1962, p. 5), who states that

> they do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false'; and
>
> the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as saying something.

While this is a preliminary definition of performatives, we can learn from this definition what Austin thinks of as the main features of a performative; it is contrasted with constating (i.e., making a statement); it is not truth-evaluable; it is an action; and it is not normally described as merely saying something. As Austin (ibid., pp. 6–7) says, the term 'performative' "indicates that the issuing of the [performative] utterance is the performing of an action – it is not

[51] Although Récanati (1987) is a declarational theorist, he is an exception in that he does not endorse a strong association between the mood and force. I will talk more about his view in §5.

normally thought of as just saying something". For example, if a doctor advises a patient by saying "exercise more!", then the doctor is not making a statement, nor is what she says truth-evaluable. Here, the doctor is more than merely saying something – the doctor is performing the illocutionary act of *advising*.

As we can see from the definition above, Austin initially distinguished performatives from constatives. The distinction between constatives and performatives is, according to Austin, that the former make descriptive statements about the world, while the latter do not. For example, if "the cat is on the mat" were a constative, it is supposed to be a statement, hence truth-evaluable, as it would be describing, reporting, or constating, rather than performing an action, if we follow the definition above strictly.

Performatives, on the other hand, are evaluated by their *felicity*: whether they successfully accomplished the intended action. If a performative meets certain criteria, known as *felicity conditions*, it is considered successful or "happy". These criteria are, according to Austin, constituted by a convention that (A) "there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect" (ibid., p. 26), (B) the procedure must be executed by all participants correctly and completely (ibid., pp. 35–36), and (Γ) when "the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts, feelings, or intentions, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant", these persons "must in fact have those thoughts, feelings, or intentions, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves" and must conduct themselves thus subsequently (ibid., p. 39). If a performative fails to meet these conditions, it is deemed "infelicitous" or "unhappy". For instance, an utterance "I appoint you" is infelicitous (specifically, a flaw in (A)) when the hearer has already been appointed, or when someone else has been appointed, or when the speaker is not entitled to appoint, or when the hearer is a horse (ibid., p. 34).

However, it is doubtful whether the traditional dichotomy between *performatives* and *constatives* can be sustained. While Austin initially introduced this distinction – *performatives* being utterances that seem to "do" something (e.g., "I promise…"), and *constatives* being utterances that merely state facts (e.g., "The cat is on the mat") – he later came to reject the distinction. Specifically, he observed that constatives, like performatives, are subject to felicity conditions. As he writes, "what will not survive the transition […] 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" (ibid., p. 149).

A central reason for this shift lies in the realisation that constatives are not immune to the conditions that govern performative success. Like performatives, they are subject to what felicity conditions. These include essential, preparatory, and sincerity conditions. As Austin famously puts it, utterances are not simply true or false, but "happy" or "unhappy" depending on whether these conditions are met.

To show this, Austin compares two utterances: "The cat is on the mat" and "I promise to be there". The former seems at first glance to be a pure constative. Yet saying it implies that the speaker believes the cat is indeed on the mat, just as promising implies both an intention and a belief in one's ability to follow through (ibid., p. 135). In both cases, the act involves more than a representation of facts: it is subject to failure if the felicity conditions are not met.

This shift led Austin to a more general theory of speech acts, within which both performatives and constatives are understood as involving three distinct but simultaneous acts: the *locutionary act*, the *illocutionary act*, and the *perlocutionary act*. Importantly, 'stating' is also an illocutionary act. For instance, even the explicit performative "I *state* that the cat is on the mat" is an example of an illocutionary act of stating. As Austin remarks (ibid., p. 133), "Surely to state is every bit as much to perform an illocutionary act as, say, to warn or to pronounce". Indeed, 'stating' meets the same criteria Austin sets out for illocutionary acts more broadly: it must satisfy felicity conditions and it must 'secure uptake', which he defines as the hearer's "understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution" (ibid., p. 116).

The analysis so far suggests that, as Doerge (2013, p. 223) summarises, "the set of constatives is a subset of the set of performatives. Some performatives are constatives, and all constatives are performatives, because to utter a constative is to perform a statement, and to state something is to perform an illocutionary act".

2.2 On Explicit Performatives

Explicit performatives are unique in speech act theory as they are useful for understanding how speakers make their intentions explicit in communication. According to Austin (1979, p. 245), "By means of these explicit performative verbs and some other devices, then, we make explicit what precise act it is that we are performing when we issue our utterance". Explicit performatives typically have a common grammatical structure, which typically consists of a

performative prefix – i.e., 'I' followed by a performative verb in the first-person singular present indicative active at the beginning of an utterance.[52] Examples of explicit performatives include "I advise you to stop lying", "I promise to be there", and "I order you to leave".

However, it is important to note that not all sentences with a performative prefix are explicit performatives. Searle (1989, p. 537) provides us with some exceptions, such as "I promise too many things to too many people", where the form ('I' plus a verb phrase) does not indicate the performativity.[53] One way to test if an utterance is an explicit performative is, as Austin (1962, p. 57) proposed, to see if the word 'hereby' can be naturally inserted before the verb phrase. Since "I *hereby* promise too many things to too many people" does not sound natural, it can be arguably said that this is not an explicit performative.[54] So we can say that a verb is considered performative "where the [verb phrase] names the speech act S performs by her utterance of this very sentence" (Kissine, 2013b, p. 178), and the insertion of 'hereby' helps us identify performative verbs better.

As Austin (1979, p. 243) points out, explicit performatives need not always take the standard grammatical form of the first-person singular present indicative active (e.g., "I promise", "I advise"). While this form is paradigmatic, there are many common and felicitous alternatives. First-person plural utterances, such as "We promise to ϕ" or "We find the defendant guilty", also function as explicit performatives. So too do second-person and passive

[52] Following Doerge (2013, p. 213), I take a performative verb to be a verb that refers to an illocutionary act.

[53] Another exception is "I *will* advise you to stop lying". This utterance could be interpreted as a 'hedged performative', as suggested by Fraser (1975), where a performative is accompanied by a modal or semi-modal expression. Examples of hedged performatives include "I *can* advise", "I *must* advise", "I *should* advise", or "I *want* to advise", which may alter the illocutionary force of the utterance or the speaker's commitment to the speech act. For a detailed review of hedged performatives, see Fraser (1975) and Schneider (2010).

[54] Another example is the difference between "I *often* advise you to stop lying" and "I *hereby* advise you to stop lying". Even though the former utterance shares the typical grammatical structure of explicit performatives, 'often' indicates that 'advise' is being used to describe my habitual action, rather than functioning as a performative verb. This pointed is noted by Récanati (1987, p. 55) and Levinson (1983, p. 255). The latter is an explicit performative utterance, as the insertion of 'hereby' makes it explicit that 'advise' functions as a performative verb. This test explains why the following exchange, taken from Meibauer (2019, p. 75), does not contain an explicit performative from B, even though it follows the typical grammatical form: A says, "Imagine that I light up a cigarette. What is your reaction?" B replies, "I order you to leave the room". While B's utterance appears to be an explicit performative, it is not, because inserting 'hereby' before 'order' renders the conversation nonsensical. Jary (2007, p. 208) makes a similar observation.

constructions, such as "You are hereby warned" or "You are hereby sentenced". [55] These utterances are explicit performatives because their illocutionary force is made explicit, as indicated by how naturally the word 'hereby' fits into the sentence.

Whether one accepts the 'hereby' test or not, what is useful about explicit performatives is that the performative prefix reduces the cognitive load on the hearer by making it easier to identify the illocutionary act of the utterance. Imagine that only an implicit performative, "Stop lying", is uttered.[56] In some contexts, the hearer may find it difficult to discern whether the utterance is an order, request, permission, demand, recommendation, suggestion, or advice. When the performative prefix, "I advise" (with some qualifiers, such as "you to"), is added before "stop lying" (which will then be "I advise you to stop lying"), the hearer can more easily identify which illocutionary act is performed.

The distinction between explicit performatives and implicit performatives highlights the practical significance of using explicit performatives. Explicit performatives influence the normative relationships between participants in a speech act, especially concerning the *conversational record*, a concept introduced by Lewis (1979). Conversational record is "an objective record of prior conversational contributions, and whose state is (at least largely) determined by linguistic conventions" (D. W. Harris et al., 2018, p. 21).[57]

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[55] According to Austin (1979, p. 243), performative utterances can extend to written documents, which often require a signature in order to attribute the action to a particular individual, noting that the signature is "required in order to show who it is that is doing the act of warning, or authorizing, or whatever it may be". The signature thus serves to identify the person giving the advice or issuing the warning. For example, if a document reads "You are advised by the lawyer to stop lying", this is a performative utterance because it clearly indicates the source of the advice. Similarly, even if the statement "You are hereby advised by the lawyer to stop lying" is uttered by someone other than the lawyer, such as the lawyer's secretary, it still qualifies as a performative utterance because it passes the 'hereby' test and indicates the source of the advice. I agree with Austin.

[56] Austin calls such an utterance a 'primary' performative in opposition to an explicit one (1962, p. 69). It is important to note that not every utterance of an explicit performative makes it clear what its primary performative utterance is. For example, a corresponding primary performative utterance of "I forbid you to come" is not simply "don't come". The latter sentence contains the negation, but the former does not (Récanati, 1987, p. 60).

[57] I use 'conversational record' rather than 'conversational scoreboard' to highlight public conversational commitments, those explicitly marked in linguistic form and thus available for accountability. As Lepore and Stone (2014) argue, the record comprises only those determined by grammatical form and semantic content, excluding pragmatic enrichments, implicatures, or inferred speaker intentions. This narrow focus is especially important in contexts such as

Imagine that a police officer stops a driver and utters, "I'd like you to show me what's in your trunk". This is an utterance that might naturally be interpreted as an order, but the police can plausibly claim that it was only a request and so avoid culpability for making an illegal order. If they used an explicit performative, they would not have that defence. In other words, explicit performatives help eliminate such ambiguity; if the officer instead says, "I order you to show me what's in your trunk", this statement becomes part of the conversational record. This record is crucial for accountability, as it can be used to challenge the appropriateness or authority of the order, especially if it exceeds the officer's authority. As Camp (2018, p. 59) notes, 'conversational record' is the record of public speech acts made by interlocutors during conversations. This record helps track and explain the commitments made by speakers, which they must uphold or justify in subsequent interactions. This emphasises the practical importance of explicit performatives in maintaining clarity and accountability in communication, ensuring that the intentions and authority of the speaker are clearly understood and can be scrutinised if necessary.

3. The Relationship between Mood and Force

Having established the theoretical background on explicit performatives, including their grammatical structure and practical significance, we now turn to a key theoretical challenge they pose: the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM, a challenge to the conventional association between sentence mood and illocutionary force.[58] While the indicative mood is typically associated with assertive speech acts, explicit performatives like "I order you to leave" or "I advise that you reconsider" carry a directive illocutionary force that break this association. In this section, I will introduce the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM, situate it within the broader context of speech act theory, and discuss its relevance to understanding moral advice. By exploring how explicit performatives can have an illocutionary force that are not typically associated with their sentence mood, this section sets the stage for evaluating competing approaches and presenting my own Priming View.

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explicit performatives, where only explicit, grammar-triggered commitments should be publicly traceable.

[58] For a related concern, see Harnish (2007), who presents the *compositionality puzzle* by observing that "I promise to be there" functions as a promise, while "I promised to be there" or "He promises to be there" function as mere statements.

As discussed in §1, a central concept in understanding explicit performatives is *illocutionary force*, which is determined by the speaker's intention behind the utterance. The speaker, by having a certain intention, determines the illocutionary force *in* saying something, such as advising, ordering, promising, or asserting. For example, in "I promise to be there", the illocutionary force is a commitment to the speaker's future action. In "I advise you to stop lying", the illocutionary force is advising, aimed at guiding the hearer's decision-making. The performative prefix signals that the speaker is engaged in the act of advising.

Illocutionary force has been traditionally associated with *sentence mood.*[59] Many accept the idea that sentence moods "are illocutionary force indicators, i.e., that they encode illocutionary potential" (Meibauer, 2019, p. 65).[60] I will to focus on two primary sentence moods that are most commonly linked to specific illocutionary forces[61]:

Indicative Mood: Typically used for assertions or statements of fact in which the speaker commits to the truth of the proposition asserted.[62] When a speaker

[59] Many discussions, including Sadock and Zwicky (1985, p. 155), use the term 'sentence types' to refer to sentence moods. According to Sadock and Zwicky, in "some of these uses of sentences a language will have specific syntactic constructions, or even specific forms, reserved for just these uses – special particles, affixes, word order, intonations, missing elements, or even phonological alterations (or several of these in concert); when a sentence shows one of these it is to be understood as being used in a specific way. Such a coincidence of grammatical structure and conventional conversational use we call a sentence TYPE". In my thesis, I will use 'sentence mood' to refer to the linguistic forms (or grammatical structures) which are associated with their conventional conversational use.

[60] Similarly, Dummett (1996, p. 207) says, "at the very least, the use of the indicative mood is a prima-facie indication that the speaker is attaching to what he says a force distinct from any of those which the use of the interrogative, imperative, and optative moods are typically used to convey". According to Searle and Vanderveken (2005, p. 110), "Illocutionary forces are realized in the syntax of actual natural languages in a variety of ways, e.g. mood, punctuation, word-order, intonation contour, and stress, among others". However, since the space is limited, I will just focus on the mood, bracketing the word-order, intonation, contour, and stress, in my thesis.

[61] There are many more sentence moods, but I will only focus on these two for now. These are only part of the many different moods, and are among the most common. Other moods include interrogatives (i.e., questions), optatives (i.e., expressions of the speaker's wishes), imprecatives (i.e., curses), exclamatives (i.e., expressions of emotional reaction), and subjunctives (i.e., wishes, hypotheticals, demands, suggestions, or conditions that are contrary to fact).

[62] The indicative mood is also known as the declarative mood. It is important not to confuse Searle's usage of 'declaratives' with the sentence mood 'declarative'. For Searle (1975), 'declaratives' refers to a category of speech acts, those that bring about the correspondence

uses the indicative mood, such as in "The cat is on the mat", the illocutionary force is usually an assertion – a descriptive statement about the world.[63] Sentences in the indicative mood in English usually subject-verb word order followed by an object, complement, or adjunct.[64] While describing the world can take many different illocutionary acts (e.g., one can give testimony, explain a theory, make an assertion, depict a historical event, etc.), their utterances are subject to the judgements of truth or falsity.

Imperative Mood: Commonly associated with directives, such as commands or requests, telling the hearer to perform a particular action described (Wilson & Sperber, 2012a, p. 210).[65] Sentences in the imperative mood usually start with imperative verbs (i.e., the base forms of verbs) in English. These verbs can be followed by the objects. Examples include "Finish your dinner!" and "Leave". Since these sentences are usually used to tell others to do something, the illocutionary force of imperatives is associated with telling people what to do, or at least an attempt to influence the hearer's actions.

Explicit performatives present an interesting challenge to these traditional associations between mood and force. All explicit performatives are, in virtue of their grammatical form, in the indicative mood. Many philosophers have assumed a close association between sentence mood and illocutionary force; for instance, indicative mood with assertion, and imperative with directives (García-Carpintero, 2004; Hare, 1970; Palmer, 2001; Sadock & Zwicky, 1985; Searle, 1969). Given the traditional association between mood and force, all explicit performatives should carry an illocutionary force of being assertions – making factual statements.

However, there are explicit performatives that carry an illocutionary force that is not typically associated with the indicative mood. This is especially evident when an explicit performative embeds an imperative (i.e., when an imperative

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between the propositional content and the world. Hence, I will use 'indicative' to refer to the sentence mood.

[63] According to Hare (1970, p. 21), "When we say that 'The cat is on the mat' is a typical indicative (when we mention its mood, that is), we identify the type of speech act which it is standardly used to perform. Thus mood signs […] classify sentences according to the speech acts to which they are assigned by the conventions which give meanings to those signs".

[64] A simple indicative sentence does not have to be followed by any object, complement, or adjunct (e.g., "It is raining"). Complement refers to adjectives; adjunct refers to time and places.

[65] Condoravdi and Lauer (2012) also say that directives are one of the common functions of imperatives. Other functions of imperatives include wish-type uses, permissions and invitations, and disinterested advice.

sentence follows the performative prefix).[66] When a speaker says, "I advise that you leave" or "I order you to give me five push-ups", they are not simply asserting a fact; rather, they are directing the hearer to act.[67] Here, an indicative sentence functions as a directive, influencing the hearer to act. A similar observation arises even when an indicative sentence is embedded in an explicit performative, as in "I ask whether the store is closed".[68] Here, both the explicit performative and the embedded sentence share the indicative mood, yet the illocutionary force is inquisitive, not assertive. In "I bet the exam is difficult", the illocutionary force is not assertive but expressive.

These observations challenge the traditional association between sentence mood and illocutionary force. As Meibauer (2019, p. 63) notes, explicit performatives do appear grammatically in the indicative mood, disrupting these conventional associations with mood and force. I will name this challenge the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM: how can explicit performatives in the indicative mood carry a non-assertive illocutionary force? In other words, this problem focuses on how explicit performatives, such as "I order you to leave", despite being in the indicative mood, carry a different illocutionary force (in this case, a directive) that is not associated with the indicative mood.[69]

This problem is particularly pressing in the case of explicit moral advice. Utterances like "I advise that you φ" superficially resemble assertions, yet their force is directive; they aim to guide the hearer's action. If advising is best understood as inviting the hearer to deliberate, rather than asserting a fact, then we must clarify how such performatives function within advisory contexts. The

[66] One might question whether it is even possible to embed an imperative, given that what is embedded is in the infinitive form. I should note that it is also possible to embed an imperative with 'that', as in "I demand *that* you leave". Following Jacobs (1981), Huntley (1984), and Kaufmann (2012), I will assume that embedding imperatives is possible, whether in the infinitive form or with 'that'.

[67] This point is also noted by Johansson (2003, p. 683), as he says: "Both the assertive illocutionary content of the whole utterance and the directive illocutionary content of the nested imperative are displayed by grammar".

[68] Here I take "the store is closed" as the embedded sentence.

[69] This problem is, similarly, put forward by Portner (2017, p. 140) as "How does the grammatical form of a sentence contribute to its sentential force?", by Starr (2014, p. 4) as "what is the relationship between a sentence's type and the illocutionary force(s) of its utterances?", and by Searle (1989, p. 555) as "how can the literal utterance of 'I hereby order you to leave the room' constitute an order as much as the literal utterance of 'Leave the room' constitutes a directive in general, when the first is obviously an ordinary indicative sentence, apparently purporting to describe some behavior on the part of the speaker?". For the related discussion, see Davidson (1979), Portner (2017), and Starr (2014).

rest of the chapter explores existing approaches to this problem and develops my own view in response.

I now turn to two main approaches to the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM.[70] According to the first, explicit performatives pose a serious problem because they appear in the indicative mood and thus seem to carry an assertive force. The challenge, then, is to explain how such utterances can also perform non-assertive illocutionary acts, such as advising or ordering.[71] According to the second approach, however, the problem is dissolved: the performative prefix itself is thought to directly determine the illocutionary force, regardless of grammatical mood. I begin here with the first approach, focusing on the indirect theory as developed by Bach and Harnish (1979).

4. Indirect Theories on the Mood-Force Problem

This section will discuss the first approach to the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM, which is to claim that explicit performatives do state something as they are in the indicative mood, and at the same time another illocutionary force is expressed indirectly or directly. I will examine two different versions of the first approach. The first is provided by indirect theories, the second by

[70] I will follow how Harnish (2007, p. 13) divides up the theories of performatives on the market. There are other views, such as Davidson's (1979), which say that performatives are truth-apt. They constate one thing and directly do that thing. In my thesis, I focus on indirect theories and declarational theories.

[71] In other words, explicit performative utterances can "comprise two simultaneous illocutionary acts" (Bach, 1975, p. 229) or "perform more than one speech act" (Sinnott-Armstrong, 1994, p. 100), and Johansson's (2003) view is similar. Johansson's (ibid., p. 681) view is that explicit performatives have two kinds of illocutionarity which are equally direct: "Utterances of the form 'I assert that p' have two truth-values. One of the truth-values belongs to the proposition contained in 'p', and the other belongs to the proposition contained in 'I assert that p'. My analysis conforms to the so-called 'two-truth-value hypothesis' for utterances of this kind". I oppose these views.

declarational theories.[72] The first view – indirect theory – is mainly supported by Bach and Harnish (1979), and it will be evaluated in this section.[73]

4.1 Indirect Speech Act Theory on Explicit Performatives

According to indirect theories (Bach, 1975, 1995; Bach & Harnish, 1979, 1992; Harnish, 1988, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2007), explicit performative utterances are like ordinary indicative sentences, and are therefore constatives – they state facts, which make them truth-apt.[74] For example, the performative utterance "I order you to leave" is an ordinary indicative sentence used to state that something is the case. It serves directly as a statement, but its illocutionary force as an order is understood indirectly.[75] Bach and Harnish (1979, p. 208) give an example of how a hearer could reason (or be expected to) as follows:

> 1. He is saying "I order you to leave."
> 2. He is stating that he is ordering me to leave.
> 3. If his statement is true, then he must be ordering me to leave.
> 4. If he is ordering me to leave, it must be his utterance that constitutes the order. (What else could it be?)
> 5. Presumably, he is speaking the truth.
> 6. Therefore, in stating that he is ordering me to leave he is ordering me to leave.

This reasoning process exemplifies the inferential path a hearer may need to navigate to grasp the speaker's intended illocutionary act. However, one of the drawbacks of this inferential step is that there is a high cognitive load involved in interpreting indirect speech acts without contextual shortcuts.

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[72] Despite the differences between indirect theories and declarational theories, there is another reason why I merge them into one approach. Following Grewendorf (2002, p. 29), I think the similarities between these two theories is that both theories take the following to be true: "a. Performatives are statements in the sense that they constitute the implicit performance of the illocutionary act of stating. b. As statements, performatives can be true or false. c. The propositional content of a performative such as *I order you to leave* is *that I order you to leave*". Grewendorf thinks that c. is false, and so do I.

[73] As Ingvar Johansson pointed out in private, I do presuppose that explicit performatives can only have one direct kind of illocutionarity, while he regards this as a false presupposition. I defend my position in §4.3 and §6.

[74] The term – 'indirect' (and also 'declarational') theories – comes from Harnish's (2007) taxonomy.

[75] Note that this version of indirect theories is a narrow one that only concerns treating explicit performatives as statements.

Bach and Harnish argue that, to overcome the drawback of the hearer carrying a high cognitive load, in most cases this type of reasoning is 'short-circuited' by a process of standardisation, which simplifies the interpretation effort required by the hearer. They characterise standardisation as follows:

> Illocutionary Standardization (IS): expression T is standardly used to F in group G if and only if: (i) It is mutually believed in G that generally when a member of G utters T, his illocutionary intent is to F, and (ii) Generally when a member of G utters T in a context in which it would violate the conversational presumptions to utter T with (merely) its literally determined force, his illocutionary intent is to F. Typically a form becomes standardized for a use by being used that way commonly and being observed being used that way (ibid., p. 195).

Illocutionary standardisation explains how some expressions become commonly understood within a group to mean something specific, beyond their literal interpretation. For a phrase to be standardised for a particular illocutionary act (such as ordering), there must be a shared belief within the community that when the phrase is used, it is intended to carry that specific illocutionary force.

After an expression goes through illocutionary standardisation, the reasoning pattern above is short-circuited as the following (Harnish, 2007, p. 17):

1. S has uttered "I (hereby) order you to leave,"
2. "I (hereby) order you ..." is standardly used to order,
3. It would be contextually inappropriate for S just to be constating that S is ordering,
4. So, S is ordering me to leave.

Once a phrase such as "I (hereby) order you to leave" is standardised as an order within a community, the hearer need only recognise the standard use of the phrase, consider the appropriateness of its literal interpretation in the given context, and conclude that an order is indeed being given.

In summary, theorists like Bach and Harnish who focus on indirect speech acts suggest that explicit performative utterances are indicative sentences that state facts and are therefore truth-apt. For example, the utterance "I order you to leave" is not only a statement, but also indirectly carries an illocutionary force, in this case giving an order. When such an utterance is made, the hearer is expected to use their cognitive process to infer what illocutionary act the utterance is supposed to constitute. This cognitive process often involves illocutionary standardisation, whereby specific expressions within a linguistic

community are conventionally associated with particular illocutionary acts, thereby requiring the effort to understand the implied illocutionary force of an utterance.[76]

On this account, performative verbs are not semantically unique because illocutionary standardisation accounts for the conventional use of certain performative prefixes in these contexts (Harnish, 2007). What does the heavy-lifting here is the inference from "He is saying 'I order you to leave'" to "He is stating that he is ordering me to leave", where saying something is interpreted as stating something. Focusing on the arguments from Jary (2007), I will now argue that explicit performatives should not be seen as statements or assertions (as endorsed by indirect speech act theorists).

4.2 Challenging Indirect Speech Act Theory on Explicit Performatives

In the following two subsections, drawing on Jary (2007), I will argue that not all explicit performatives should be seen as statements or assertions. While all statements are in the indicative mood, not all sentences in this mood are statements. To understand Jary's view, it is important to note that while both assertions and explicit performatives use the indicative mood to convey propositions, a key difference, highlighted by Austin, is that explicit performative utterances are not truth-apt, unlike assertions.[77] This distinction suggests that indicative mood does not necessarily signal assertive force, challenging the traditional view that sentence mood directly correlates with certain illocutionary forces (Dominicy & Franken, 2001; Fiengo, 2007;

[76] Meibauer (2019, pp. 63–64) explains this point: "If interpreted in an indirect way, the context (or contextual inferences) seem to have the power to overwrite or suspend a default relation between sentence type and associated illocutionary force. Conventionalization of indirect speech acts is thus an effect of preferred interpretations in standard contexts, as can be seen with standardized indirect requests".

[77] Some philosophers have argued that, *pace* Austin, explicit performatives are truth-apt, although they are special in that they are self-verifying (Hedenius, 1963; Johansson, 2003; Lemmon, 1962). For example, Austin (1962, p. 90) says, "when we come to pure explicit performatives such as 'state' or 'maintain', surely the whole thing is true or false even though the uttering of it is the performing of the action of stating or maintaining". However, he also says, "'I promise that' […] is not a description, because (1) it could not be true or false; (2) saying 'I promise that' (if happy, of course) makes it a promise, and unambiguously a promise. […] we cannot say that such utterances are true or false, nor that they are descriptions or reports" (ibid., p. 70). I should flag that there are different interpretations of Austin, and I side with those who do not take explicit performatives to be truth-apt.

Kissine, 2013a; König & Siemund, 2007; Sesonske, 1965; Wilson & Sperber, 2012b).

One reason to doubt that indicative sentences always signal assertive force is that indicative sentences occur unasserted in metaphor, irony, fiction, fantasy, jokes, pretence, play, example sentences, loose talk, rough approximations, and as constituents of complex sentences, such as conditionals and disjunctions (Davidson, 1979, p. 10; Wilson & Sperber, 2012b, p. 210).[78] Huntley (1980, p. 299) also notes that "although assertive illocutionary force is typically accompanied by the indicative mood, the converse does not hold. The indicative is found in 'if'-clauses, in the disjuncts of disjunctions, in embedded sentences, and elsewhere where the clause in question does not carry assertive force".

Another way to support the claim that explicit performatives are not statements is by considering cases where they embed imperatives or subjunctives (or optatives).[79] Huntley notes a structural difference between the propositions embedded in non-indicative and indicative performatives (which he refers to as non-declarative and declarative performatives):

> the sentences embedded in these [non-declarative] performatives are different in form from those embedded in declarative performatives and that this difference between them is such that the former cannot be used to say something which is true or false though the latter can (ibid., p. 293).

For example, in the explicit performative "I order you to leave", the embedded sentence is the imperative, "leave." Similarly, in "I demand that you be nice to your sister", the embedded sentence is the subjunctive, "you be nice to your

[78] MacIntyre (1965, p. 514) also notes that an indicative can be given to issue an order, as in "when in giving an order an officer says, 'The following will report at the Guard Room at 18.00 hours: Smith, Jones, Robinson,' an indicative is being used to tell someone to do something". For more examples of indicative sentences without the assertive force, see van der Schaar (2007, p. 65).

[79] The optative mood is a grammatical mood used to express wishes, hopes, or desires, such as "May the force be with you" or "I wish she were here". The subjunctive mood in English is a grammatical mood used for hypotheticals, counterfactuals, and certain formal constructions, such as mandative clauses after verbs of suggestion or demand (e.g., "I suggest that he go"), fixed or formulaic expressions (e.g., "God save the Queen"), and clauses after adjectives expressing necessity (e.g., "I insist that she be present"). In English, the subjunctive and the optative moods have the same form, while in some languages, such as Ancient Greek, optative is often marked by specific verb endings not found in the subjunctive (Sewall, 1874). Both moods can occur as the embedded clause in an explicit performative, though in English their forms are indistinguishable.

sister". The issue here is that imperatives and subjunctives are not truth-apt. Huntley (ibid., p. 287) stresses that it is inappropriate to ask whether such sentences are true or false: "The question 'Is this sentence true or false?' cannot be raised of imperatives and optatives, as it is misplaced to claim one is stating anything when using such sentences". This highlights the idea that imperatives (and subjunctives or optatives) are not truth-apt; they do not make factual claims about the world.

Huntley explains this by focusing on the limitations of the complements (i.e., the clauses following the performative prefix): "the complement in these non-declarative performatives cannot stand alone and thus cannot be used by itself to say something true or false, the performative sentences likewise cannot be used to say something true or false" (ibid., p. 293). This does not yet show that explicit performatives are not truth-apt, but it highlights a structural feature that casts doubts on treating such utterances as statements. I return to this point in the next subsection, where I argue that explicit performatives are not truth-evaluable assertions.

This challenges the idea that the mood of the sentence directly correlates to its illocutionary force.[80] While explicit performatives are in the indicative mood, leading some philosophers to categorise them as statements, this does not mean they function as assertions (or declarations as we will see in the next section). As Jary points out, "the fact that assertions and explicit performatives share a common sentence-type is not a very compelling argument for the latter being parasitical on the former" (2007, p. 212). Recognising that the indicative mood can accommodate a variety of speech acts – including those that are not

[80] This observation implies that the correlation between imperative or interrogative moods and their traditionally associated illocutionary forces should also be reconsidered, as these moods are frequently used in contexts such as metaphor, irony, fiction, jokes, pretence, and loose talk (Kissine, 2009). I am happy to accept this implication. One might object that this weakens the intuitive link between imperatives (e.g., "Get out") and directive speech acts, but it is important to recognise that such utterances can occur without directive intent, particularly in playful or humorous contexts. For example, "Get out" may express surprise or disbelief, rather than issuing a directive. This variability reinforces the idea that grammatical mood alone does not determine illocutionary force. Such uses are often described as being in an *etiolated* mode (Austin, 1962; Friggieri, 2014; Sbisà, 2013a), where the speakers exploit "mechanisms of serious linguistic practice – the central part of which is occupied by illocutionary and perlocutionary acts – to achieve goals that go beyond what the mechanisms have been designed for" (Witek, 2022, p. 76). Whether these cases should be analysed as etiolated instances of directive speech, or instead as realisations of a distinct illocutionary force (e.g., joking), remains a matter of ongoing debate. I remain neutral on this issue here, since my point is only that grammatical mood alone does not determine illocutionary force.

assertions – allows us to engage with Jary's next argument, which considers explicit performatives embedding imperatives.

Jary (2007, p. 213) addresses the question of whether explicit performatives can be evaluated in terms of truth and falsity, arguing that they should not be treated as standard assertions. He discusses cases where a performative utterance is judged to be 'false' due to the failure of felicity conditions, and clarifies that such judgements do not make the explicit performative an assertion, but rather reflect whether the intended illocutionary act has succeeded. An example that Jary provides is when a lower-ranking individual, such as a private, attempts to give an order to a higher-ranking individual, such as a general:

(1) I hereby order you to clean the latrines.

Jary argues that (1) is not an assertion by raising two points. The first point is that the general cannot simply respond to the private with "That's not true", but rather with "You can't order me: you don't have the authority".[81] In other words, the general's response would not address the truth of the statement, but rather the private's lack of authority to give the order. Jary (ibid., p. 214) says, "the fact that the general cannot respond to the private's utterance by denying its truth is thus further evidence that it is wrong to characterise that utterance as an assertion". This insight underlines that explicit performatives are not standard assertions; they are not evaluated in terms of truth and falsity, but in terms of other metrics that shift, depending on the speech act: sincerity for promises, authority for orders, etc.

The second point that Jary raises is that even if he agrees that it is false that the private ordered the general by uttering (1), this does not entail that (1) is an assertion, just as the falsity of the claim, "'What are you cleaning?' is an order", does not entail that this question is an assertion. Therefore, this agreement does not classify (1) as an assertion; rather, it acknowledges that the intended performative act (i.e., ordering) did not succeed.

Jary highlights that there is a clear distinction between the speech act itself and assertions *about* the speech act. For example, saying that the private's attempt to order was unsuccessful (or 'false') does not mean we should regard (1) as an assertion about the world. Instead, we are asserting that the illocutionary act

[81] This point is also similarly made by Black (1963, p. 218): "we cannot retort to 'I promise' [such-and-such] with the objection 'It isn't so!'".

of ordering did not succeed, due to the private's lack of authority, thus failing to meet one of the felicity conditions.

Another point to add is that agreeing that it is even *true* that the private ordered the general does not commit one to the view that (1) is an assertion, either. Consider the following scenario: after the private says (1), the general asks, "Did you just give me an order, private?", and the private confirms that he did. The private would face consequences for this act because an illocutionary act of ordering was performed (or at least an attempt to order was made). If we interpret this situation as involving the performance of an illocutionary act (i.e., the private ordering the general), then it is possible to say that it is *true* that the private ordered the general. But this is a truth-evaluable assertion *about* the act, not an indication that (1) itself is an assertion.

This leads naturally to a development of Jary's point when he writes, "Agreeing that it is false that the private ordered the general does not commit one to the view that [it] is an assertion: what one agrees with is an assertion about the private's act" (ibid., p. 214). It is consistent to say that while assertions *about* speech acts (e.g., "The private ordered the general") can be true or false, explicit performative utterances themselves are not truth-apt in the way assertions are.

4.3 Limits of Indirect Speech Act Theory on Explicit Performatives

Although Jary's argument is compelling, it is worth considering one potential objection, and then refining his view in a way that strengthens the broader case against treating explicit performatives as assertions.

The first objection is that those who regard imperatives (or directives) as truth-evaluable could argue that when the general replies, "You can't give me an order", she is essentially denying the truth of the utterance. This response could be seen as aligning with Grice's Maxim of Quantity, which encourages speakers to be as informative as required (Grice, 1989). Saying "That's not true" would be minimally informative and potentially ambiguous. By contrast, saying "You can't order me – you don't have the authority" explains why the act fails, offering a more contextually relevant response. The objection, then, is that the general's not responding with "That's not true" does not show that (1) is not an assertion, but instead reflects conversational norms that favour informativeness.

However, even if this reply aligns with the Maxim of Quality, it does not follow that the original utterance is truth-evaluable.[82] Rather, it assumes that the speaker performed an illocutionary act, and the hearer responds by pointing out that one of its felicity conditions (in this case, authority) was not met. The speech act fails not because it is false, but because it does not satisfy the felicity conditions necessary for success.

Consider, for example, the utterance "I bequeath my estate to you", said by someone who owns no estate. A reply such as "You can't bequeath!" indicates that the speaker lacks the standing to bequeath, but it does not imply that the utterance is true or false. Similarly, "You can't give me an order" indicates that the private does not have the authority, not that (1) is true or false. The general's response targets felicity conditions, not truth conditions. Recognising this distinction avoids conflating the conversational norm of informativeness with truth-evaluation, and supports the claim that explicit performatives are not assertions.

In addition to addressing this objection, we can also strengthen Jary's criticism by diagnosing a further problem with indirect theories of explicit performatives, such as the one proposed by Bach and Harnish (1979). As discussed earlier in §4.1, the hearer understands an explicit performative such as "I order you to leave" as an order by progressing through a chain of reasoning: first, recognising that the speaker is saying this sentence (first premise); second, recognising that the speaker is stating that they are ordering the hearer (second premise); and third, finally inferring the intended illocutionary act (that the speaker is, in fact, ordering them to leave). Jary questions why a hearer should go beyond the second premise if there is no contextual reason to do so (2007, p. 221). If the utterance is already understood as a statement, why infer that the speaker is actually performing the act of ordering?

My argument goes further: the reasoning process should be blocked at the first premise.[83] That is, there is no need to understand the utterance as a statement at all. Rather, the hearer can directly recognise the illocutionary force from the performative prefix ("I order"), without relying on an inference from one

[82] Of course, it is not possible to completely settle the debate here whether performative utterances are statements or truth-apt. For the related debate, see Edmondson (1979, 1983), Harris (1978), Rajagopalan (1984), Spielmann (1980), and Taylor and Wolf (1981).

[83] Coulson and Lovett's (2010, p. 120) experimental results also show that their "data argue most clearly against the two-stage (or standard pragmatic) model, in which the literal meaning of the entire utterance is computed first, followed by the application of pragmatic considerations".

illocutionary force to another. In what follows, I will distinguish two senses of 'statement' and argue that neither supports the need to move beyond the first step in the reasoning process.

The term 'statement' has at least two relevant senses: (a) the propositional content of a sentence or utterance, which can be evaluated for truth or falsity independently of the speaker's commitment;[84] and (b) an illocutionary act of assertion (i.e., making a statement), where the speaker explicitly commits to the truth of the propositional content.[85]

If we adopt the second sense of 'statement', the gap between 'saying' and 'stating' becomes explicit. 'Stating', in this context, is an illocutionary act that involves more than merely producing coherent words or sentences; it is an act of performing an assertion. By contrast, 'saying' is a locutionary act, which Austin (1962) describes as the act of producing sounds, words, or grammatical structures. Because the locutionary act of 'saying' can serve as a basis for various illocutionary acts (e.g., stating, asserting, describing, commanding, etc.), there is no necessary reason for a hearer to infer that 'saying' implies 'stating' in the illocutionary sense.

This distinction is particularly important for explicit performative utterances, such as "I order you to leave". These performatives signal that a specific illocutionary act – e.g., ordering – is being performed, which is distinct from asserting or stating. This interpretation is consistent with Austin's intuitive explanation that the performative verb 'order' is used *directly* to give an order to the hearer. Because the utterance functions to perform the act of ordering, rather than to describe or report that the act is being performed, it should not be treated as an assertion. Thus, the mere locutionary act of saying "I order you to leave" does not provide sufficient grounds for classifying it as a statement in the illocutionary sense.[86]

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[84] I said 'at least' two senses because the first sense of 'statement' can be also divided into two subcategories, first a sentence, and second an utterance. As Davidson (1979, p. 9) says, moods classify sentences, while uses classify utterances.

[85] Similarly, Holdcroft (1974, p. 9) emphasises the distinction between a performative utterance as a sentence and as a speech act. Likewise, as Austin (1962) says, there is a difference between *utteratum* and *utteratio*, where the former refers to the product of the utterance whereas the latter refers to the issuing of an utterance.

[86] A similar point is made by Reimer (1995, p. 662) who says that "intuitively, at least, I am not *stating* that I am ordering you to leave the room; I am simply *ordering* you to do so". Hartnack (1963, p. 138) also argues a similar point: If I say "I promise I shall come", I am not stating what I am doing, as "it is not an answer to the question: 'What are you doing?'".

If "I order you to leave" is understood as a statement in the first sense, referring merely to the propositional content of the sentence and not to the illocutionary act of making an assertion, then Bach and Harnish's inference from the first premise ("He is saying p") to the second premise ("He is stating p") becomes problematic. Their account assumes that the hearer infers that the speaker is *stating p* from the fact that the speaker is *saying p*, but this does not follow if we consider the propositional content of the utterance. In fact, their approach reverses the natural interpretive order by presuming an illocutionary act (stating) before fully accounting for the propositional content of the utterance. In other words, when analysing explicit performatives like (1), context is necessary for identifying the norms of the speech act and understanding the felicity conditions of the utterance.[87] This necessity raises three serious challenges for indirect speech act theorists.

The first challenge concerns referential underdetermination, which threatens to undermine the claim that explicit performatives are truth-evaluable statements. If indirect theorists treat explicit performatives like (1) as statements in the first sense, they must explain how such utterances can express complete propositions. If we analyse (1) purely in terms of its propositional content, abstracting away from its context, it becomes what Bach (1994, p. 127) calls a *propositional radical*: a syntactically well-formed sentence that is semantically incomplete, which requires something in order to become a complete proposition. This is because (1) contains at least two indexicals, 'I' and 'you' (and possibly 'hereby'), whose referents are not fixed by linguistic meaning alone.[88] Moreover, the embedded imperative "clean the latrines" is arguably not truth-apt. As Bach (2006, p. 436) notes, such radicals are "incomplete for determining truth value because they lack constituents or are indeterminate in logical form". Therefore, if indirect theorists want to treat explicit performatives as statements, they must accept that (1) is a propositional radical which cannot be true or false, or find a way to complete the propositional radical.[89]

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[87] This point is also raised by Walsh and Chametzky (1983).

[88] This point is also made by Doerge (2013, p. 241): "Being indexicals, these do not determine a referent, and hence a sentence containing them does not express a determinate set of truth conditions. Thus, the thought expressed by "I promise to go" is semantically incomplete in such a way as to prevent the sentence from being either true or false, because *I* does not manage to determine a referent, and thus fails to determine whom the predicate promises to go is ascribed to".

[89] One might object that many ordinary assertions also contain indexicals, such as "I am tired" and "This is my seat", and yet are truth-apt. This is correct but does not contradict the point made here. The challenge arises when explicit performatives are treated as propositions

This leads directly to the second challenge, which concerns the abstraction from context in determining illocutionary force. Suppose that the indirect theorists try to resolve the first challenge by filling in the indexicals, making the explicit performatives into a complete proposition, such as "By this act of uttering, the speaker orders the hearer to clean the latrines". Here, 'I' is filled in by 'the speaker' and 'you' is filled in by 'the hearer'.[90] Although this move avoids referential underdetermination, it does so by excluding the conversational context and the performative nature of the utterance. Once (1) is treated as detached propositional content, its function as a speech act – as an (attempted) act of ordering – is no longer explained. This undermines the purpose of analysing explicit performatives. When the context is stripped away and the indexicals are filled in, the result no longer differentiates between describing an act (e.g., "The speaker orders the hearer") and performing it (e.g., "I order you").

One might object that this is a narrow reading, as all utterances necessarily occur within a context that contributes to their meaning. Doerge (2013, p. 241) notes that in many contemporary views, the truth conditions of a sentence are not fixed by its linguistic meaning alone, but are shaped by context-sensitive features that determine its semantic content. However, Doerge also cautions against equating semantic content with truth conditions, noting that it is "not too obvious that we should take 'semantic content' to determine the truth conditions of the sentence (as opposed to what the speaker uttering the sentence meant with it, or the like), and it is not very obvious that the satisfaction of these conditions would make the sentence true" (ibid.).

I agree with Doerge. If we accept that context has a strong influence on the semantic content of sentences and thus their truth conditions, then the shift from 'saying' to 'stating', as argued by Bach and Harnish (1979), cannot be taken for granted. Instead, an analysis of the speaker's intentions and the conversational context in which these utterances are made is required. This means examining the pragmatics of language use: how speakers use sentences to perform actions and how hearers interpret these actions in specific contexts.

The third challenge concerns the role of context in explicit performatives functioning as speech acts. For an utterance such as (1) to function as an

independently of their context. In such cases, even in simple assertions, indexicals can leave the propositional content underdetermined.

[90] Moreover, it is unclear how to translate 'hereby'. One can use Searle's (1989, p. 552) translation, stating that 'hereby' means 'by-this-here-very-utterance', or Harnish's (2002, p. 58) which says that 'hereby' means 'by-this-here-very act', but this translation includes 'here' and 'this' which are indexicals, again.

explicit performative, it must occur in a context in which the speaker performs the speech act by uttering the sentence in that very form. However, once this is acknowledged, (1) is no longer being treated as a context-independent proposition or a description of an act; rather, it is analysed as a speech act, such as an attempt to give an order. This undermines the indirect theorist's aim of reducing explicit performatives to propositions. They either ignore context and fail to explain the performative nature of such utterances, or else they acknowledge context and thereby concede that these utterances are not statements.

I now turn to two potential objections.[91] First, it may be contended that while imperatives are not traditionally considered statements, they could still be truth-apt. [92] This view, articulated by Schiffer (1972), suggests that performatives, although truth-apt, do not constate facts.[93] For example, the imperative "Close the door!" might be seen as true if the door is closed following the command. However, this objection confuses the result of the command with the semantic properties of the imperative itself. Imperatives call for action rather than stating facts. Imperatives have no truth value in the conventional sense used for propositions. This is important because it also undermines Bach and Harnish's stronger claim that performatives are not only

[91] There may be a third objection which I will address briefly. This objection concerns the problem that Bertolet (2017) raises: the indirect functionality of an utterance can be fully explained by conversational implicature, which is also discussed by Morgan (1978) and Groefsema (1992). According to Bortolet, an utterance functions indirectly in that it generates an implicature arising from conversational context. Applied to explicit performatives, this means that we understand the statement "I order you to leave" indirectly as an order is through conversational implicature, inferred by the hearer on the basis of the shared contextual cues and the norms of the conversation. Meibauer (2019) counters this objection by highlighting a crucial limitation of implicature theory with respect to 'speech act assignment', a term Gazdar (1981) uses to describe the process by which a particular illocutionary force is assigned to an utterance. Meibauer (2019, p. 71) says, "Usually, conversational implicatures are seen as additional propositions, not as additional illocutionary forces. The paraphrases given for conversational implicatures have the form of declarative sentences, but researchers refrain from associating illocutions to these conversational implicatures". While I am not sure if I fully agree with Meibauer, I do question whether Bertolet is correct. If "leave" were merely a conversational implicature of "I order you to leave", then it should be cancellable. However, it seems unnatural to say, "I order you to leave, but don't leave". This suggests that the directive force of the utterance is not a conversational implicature but is instead present in the performative itself.

[92] For example, Hausser (1980) proposes that declaratives, imperatives, and interrogatives have distinct semantic types: declaratives denote propositions, imperatives properties of the hearer, and interrogatives properties of possible answers. Therefore, all of them are truth-apt.

[93] Kissine (2012) also similarly argued that performative utterances have a truth-conditional content at the locutionary level, but are neither direct nor indirect constatives.

truth-apt but are themselves statements. If imperatives are not truth-apt in the first place, then performatives that embed them, such as "I order you to leave", cannot function as statements either.

The second objection concerns whether the performative prefix, such as "I order you", can be assigned a truth value, even if the embedded imperative ("Clean the latrines!") is not truth-apt. While the imperative "Clean the latrines!" is not truth-apt, the prefix "I order you" may be assessed as true or false when evaluated contextually. For instance, in a sentence like "It's not the case that I order you", the performative prefix is treated as propositional content and thereby becomes truth-apt (e.g., "It's not the case that the speaker orders the hearer").

However, this objection does not capture what the speaker expresses when issuing the performative. It risks misunderstanding the nature of performative utterances by focusing narrowly on the performative prefix, as though the prefix operates independently of the speech act as a whole. To isolate the performative prefix as a standalone proposition misses the point: performative utterances are not primarily statements of fact, but actions performed through speech. While the truth-apt proposition derived from the performative prefix (e.g., "The speaker orders the hearer") may have theoretical merits, reducing the utterance to its propositional elements detracts from recognising the illocutionary force that is characteristic of explicit performatives.[94]

While indirect speech act theories address the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM through inferential reasoning and illocutionary standardisation, they leave significant problems in explaining explicit performatives. Having identified these problems, the next section turns to declarational theories of explicit performatives, which focuses on the role of explicit performatives as declarations that create the state of affairs they describe.

5. Declarational Theories on the Mood-Force Problem

This section examines declarational theories and their response to the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM. Both indirect and declarational theories treat explicit

[94] This interpretation is consistent with Huntley's (1984, p. 107) point: "The performative clause does not contribute to the propositional content (i.e. the truth conditions) but simply provides illocutionary force in format".

performatives as statements, but they diverge in how they explain the relation between sentence mood and illocutionary force.[95] As we have seen, indirect theorists appeal to inferential processes to account for how the force of an explicit performative is recognised. Declarational theorists, by contrast, argue that such utterances function as declarations – that is, they perform the very actions they describe. On this view, explicit performatives not only describe reality, but also actively create it through a declarative speech act. After introducing declarational theories, I will assess and develop the challenges posed by Kissine (2013b).

5.1 Declarational Theories on Explicit Performatives

According to declarational theorists, such as Eckardt (2012), Récanati (1987), Searle (1989), and Searle and Vanderveken (1985), explicit performative utterances are declarations that, when made in the appropriate context, bring about the action they name.[96] These utterances are 'self-guaranteeing', i.e., by expressing the intention to perform an action through the use of performative verbs, the action is performed.[97] In other words, as Searle (1989, p. 542) says, "it is redundant to suppose that we need an extra presumption that the speaker is telling the truth […] because as far as the illocutionary force is concerned, there is no way he could fail to speak the truth". He elaborates that performative utterances are self-guaranteeing because the speaker cannot be mistaken about the nature of the action being performed, even though the speaker can lie, errors about the propositional content of the speech act may occur, or the action may fail under certain conditions (ibid., p. 539).

To fully understand Searle's view, it is necessary to distinguish between performative utterances themselves and their propositional content. Searle (1969, p. 31) argues that illocutionary acts generally consist of two elements: illocutionary force (F) and propositional content (p), which combine to form an illocutionary act, F(p). For example, when someone says, "It is raining", the propositional content is that it is raining, and the illocutionary force could be that of an assertion.[98] The fact that this utterance is an assertion can be

[95] Searle (1989, p. 540) says, "performative utterances in virtue of their literal meaning are statements with truth values".
[96] A weaker version of the declarational theory is provided by Condoravdi and Lauer (2011).
[97] Kissine (2013b, p. 178) calls such a property 'self-verifying'.
[98] It should be pointed out that Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 1) think that "the two utterances 'You will leave the room' and 'Leave the room!' have the same propositional content, namely that you will leave the room; but characteristically the first of these has the illocutionary force of a prediction and the second has the illocutionary force of an order". In

indicated by many features, such as word order, intonation, or grammatical mood. Since an assertion has what Searle calls a *word-to-world* direction of fit – that is, the truth of the statement depends on the state of the world – the assertion is true iff it is actually raining. In other words, the utterance is true iff the words conform to how things are.

In the context of explicit performatives, the performative prefix acts as an illocutionary force indicator. Searle (ibid., p. 30) explains that the role of the illocutionary force indicator is to specify "how the proposition is to be taken, or to put it another way, what illocutionary force the utterance is to have; that is, what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance of the sentence". Searle and Vanderveken (1985) note that performative verbs in all explicit performative utterances categorically mark them as declarations. Declarations are a type of speech act, characterised by examples such as "The meeting is adjourned" or "War is hereby declared". The illocutionary point of a declaration, as Searle (1989, p. 549) notes, is "to create a new fact corresponding to the propositional content". This highlights a unique feature of declarations: they have *both* word-to-world and world-to-word directions of fit. Declarations both bring about a change in the world with their words and describe the world that has been changed by the declaration itself. In essence, a declaration is successfully performed when it accurately describes the new fact in the world that has just been brought into existence by the very same speech act.

To show how the declarational theory works, consider the following examples. When I say, "I request you to leave", the propositional content is that I request you to leave. According to Searle, this content is made true by the very act of uttering the sentence, which constitutes a declaration. In contrast, if I request you to leave by uttering only "Leave" (an implicit performative), I am not making a declaration. While both "I request you to leave" and "Leave" function as requests, the former is made true by the act of declaring it, whereas the latter is not realised through a declaration. This difference arises from their form. The explicit performative "I request you to leave" can be analysed as a declaration that I make a request, combined with the propositional content (i.e., "that I request you to leave"). In contrast, the propositional content of the implicit request "Leave" is simply that you leave. Searle (ibid., p. 553)

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other words, directives "have the general propositional content condition that their propositional content represents a future course of action of the hearer" (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 56). I will briefly mention that I do not think that directives or imperatives have propositional content, siding with Hare (1952), Huntley (1980, 1984), Charlow (2014), and Mastop (2011), as covering this debate is beyond the scope of my thesis.

summarises this point: “Declarations, by definition, make their propositional content true. That is what a successful declaration is. It is an utterance that changes the world in such a way as to bring about the truth of its propositional content”.

Even though both declarational theories and indirect theories categorise explicit performative utterances as statements, and hence as truth-apt, declarational theories argue that explicit performatives are literal and direct, avoiding the need for the inferential steps required by indirect theories. As Searle (ibid., p. 551) says, “the performative utterance is literal. The speaker utters the sentence and means it literally. If the boss says to me, ‘I hereby order you to leave the room’, I don’t have to *infer* that he has made an order, nor do I think that he hasn’t quite said what he means”. Another way to present this point is that, on this view, uttering an explicit performative is not performing an indirect speech act. According to Searle (1989, p. 540), “Performative utterances are not indirect speech acts, in the sense in which an utterance of ‘Can you pass the salt?’ can be an indirect speech act of requesting the hearer to pass the salt”.

In addressing the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM, the declarational theorists can account for the illocutionary force of explicit performatives by treating them as declarations which have a double direction of fit: by declaring an order, command, promise, warning, or piece of advice, a new fact is thereby created – namely, that the speaker orders, commands, promises, warns, or advises, which makes the utterance true.

5.2 Kissine’s Criticisms of the Declarational Theories on Explicit Performatives

This subsection considers why explicit performatives might not be best classified as declarations, building upon Kissine’s (2013b) analysis. Searle (1989) and Searle and Vanderveken (1985) describe declarations as institution-dependent speech acts that require a particular social or institutional context to function. For example, official declarations such as marriages, court decisions, or ship christenings are made possible by the authority and procedures of legal, religious, or maritime institutions. Declarational theorists argue that, like these institutional declarations, performative utterances also create new states of affairs. As Récanati (1987, p. 142) explains,

> In the case of explicit performatives, the social act and the state of affairs brought about by that act are one and the same. The

> state of affairs represented is the performance of the act, and this is why the state of affairs can be brought about simply by performing the act.

According to declarational theories, the very utterance of a performative, such as "I now pronounce you married" or "I resign", simultaneously describes and creates a new fact, which supports the idea that explicit performatives are classified as declarative speech acts.

Kissine (2013b, pp. 178–179) criticises the classification of explicit performatives as declarations. He finds it counterintuitive to group utterances such as "I order you to leave" alongside institutional declarations such as "I declare you married". He is concerned that this broadens the category of declarations to include speech acts that function quite differently from one another. Institutional declarations, such as those made in courtrooms or religious ceremonies, derive their illocutionary force from institutionally recognised conventions. Directives such as demands or requests, by contrast, are usually given in ordinary contexts that do not require institutions, functioning to bring about action on the part of the hearer. As Kissine notes, while "Leave!" is a directive, it is puzzling why "I order you to leave" should be treated as a declaration merely because of its performative prefix. Treating "I order you to leave" as a declaration risks misclassifying its illocutionary force by treating directives as though they were institution-dependent declarations.

While I agree with Kissine's concern, it may only apply to Searle's declarational theory and not to Récanati's (1987). According to Récanati (ibid., p. 171), "In saying 'I order that p', the speaker is not content with merely declaring that he orders that p; he is in fact ordering that p". On this view, the speaker performs *two* illocutionary acts simultaneously: they declare that they are performing a speech act, and they perform that act. For example, when a speaker says, "I order that you leave", they are actively issuing an order by declaring it. The fact that two illocutionary acts can be performed at the same time mitigates Kissine's concern, as it preserves the directive force of the utterance while allowing that it also functions as a declaration. This avoids the risk of collapsing the distinction between declarations and directives, as it shows how both can be performed simultaneously in a single explicit performative.[99]

[99] Searle might describe an explicit performative as instances of a single speech act – a declaration – with both word-to-world and world-to-word directions of fit. Récanati, by contrast, treats it as two distinct but simultaneous illocutionary acts: the declarative "I order"

Nevertheless, Récanati's view invites scrutiny. For Searle, to make a declaration is to make a true statement. Récanati, on the other hand, proposes that making a declaration is not necessarily about making a true statement, because indicative sentences are compatible with a range of illocutionary forces, such as asserting, ordering, or declaring (ibid., p. 169).[100] As Récanati explains, "the illocutionary force potential in question, being neutral, is compatible with the force of any act the sentence could be used to perform. […] the illocutionary force of these two acts [i.e., stating and ordering] is compatible with the illocutionary potential of declarative sentences, which is neutral" (ibid., p. 171). Récanati rejects the traditional association between the indicative mood and its correlated illocutionary force. This allows him to argue that explicit performatives, though grammatically in the indicative mood, are not necessarily statements. However, this raises an important question: If the illocutionary force potential of an indicative sentence is neutral, as Récanati claims, then why must an explicit performative be treated as a declaration at all? Why could it not instead carry a directive force, especially in cases where the embedded clause is imperative, such as "I order you to leave"?

Récanati holds that explicit performatives are inevitably declarations – a view Searle endorses but Kissine rejects. Let us first understand why Récanati would say so:

> The speaker who says "I order you to come" intends not to report a fact that is independent of his utterance but to create a fact by his utterance – namely, the fact that he is ordering the hearer to come. Consequently, the utterance has performative force, and specifically it has the force of a declaration: the speaker "declares" that he is performing the illocutionary act denoted by the performative verb. Because the declarative mood is illocutionary neutral (hence compatible with a performative force), there is no reason to deny that this act is performed directly (ibid., p. 171).

Récanati emphasises two important points here. First, the speaker's intention in uttering "I order you to come" is precisely to perform this act through the

and the directive of ordering. This distinction matters for addressing Kissine's concern, since on Récanati's view the directive force is not exhausted by the declarative but remains an independently performed act within the utterance.

[100] For Récanati (1987, p. 171), the definition of declaration he uses is the following: "the utterance has performative force, and specifically it has the force of a declaration: The speaker "declares" that he is performing the illocutionary act denoted by the performative verb. Because the declarative mood is illocutionarily neutral (hence compatible with a performative force), there is no reason to deny that this act is performed directly".

utterance that expresses the intention, or in his words, "to perform this act *by means of the very utterance that expresses that intention*" (ibid., p. 172). In other words, it is "the intention that *in virtue of [the utterance] it be the case that [the speaker] orders such and such*" (ibid., p. 173). When a speaker utters an explicit performative, according to Récanati, the intention that the speaker forms "must be self-referential, that is, it must be the intention to perform the act *by means of the utterance that expresses that intention*" (ibid., p. 174). Had the speaker just ordered the hearer by uttering "Come!", the speaker would have a different intention that the speaker "*order such and such by means of [the utterance]*" (ibid.).

Secondly, Récanati argues that the speaker's intention to create the fact that he is ordering the hearer to come gives the utterance the illocutionary force of a declaration. As noted earlier, declarations are characterised by the fact that the very act of uttering the sentence brings about the action described.

Récanati's view offers one way of addressing the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM by claiming that explicit performatives express a distinct illocutionary force – namely, the speaker's intention to declare that p. However, this explanation depends on the idea that the speaker has a distinct self-referential intention when using an explicit performative. However, this idea seems unconvincing. The purported difference between "I order you to leave" and "Leave" appears overstated. In everyday usage, these two – explicit and implicit – utterances often share the same core speaker illocutionary intention: to issue a directive. For example, when a general utters "Leave" in a military context, this is immediately understood as expressing her intention to give an order. Adding the performative prefix in the same context does not seem to change that intention. Rather, it serves to make the illocutionary force explicit, leaving no room for ambiguity.

Contra Récanati, I think that the function of the performative prefix is not to add another illocutionary force of a declaration, but to make explicit the illocutionary force of the directive utterance. This is because an implicit utterance "Leave" could be interpreted as a request or suggestion with which the hearer does not have to comply. The performative prefix serves to make this explicit performative a part of the conversational record, making the speaker's intention explicit in order to reduce the risk of misinterpretation and ensure the future accountability of the speaker. Using explicit performatives does not necessarily reflect a self-referential intention to issue a declaration.

A separate concern arises from Récanati's interpretation of explicit performatives as declarations, particularly when tested against examples that

make the declarative nature of the utterance explicit. Consider the following modifications of "I hereby order you to leave":

(2) I hereby declare that I hereby order you to leave.

(3) I hereby order you to leave. That is a declaration.

If Récanati is correct in saying that two illocutionary acts are performed simultaneously with explicit performatives, then restating or highlighting the declarative and directive intention, as shown in (2) and (3), should be unproblematic. Yet these examples sound unnatural. (2) sounds redundant; we declare that we are declaring an order, which opens the door to an infinite regress (e.g., I hereby declare that I hereby declare that I hereby order…), a problem noted by Grewendorf (2002, p. 34) and Searle (1989, p. 541).

(3) creates ambiguity as to whether the utterance is an order or a declaration of an order. One might respond that this redundancy supports Récanati's claim that the declarative force is already built into the original performative. However, the unnaturalness of (2) and (3) suggests instead that the declarative component feels redundant because the added declaration does not convey any additional illocutionary force beyond that of the original explicit performative – an order. If explicit performatives are declarations, we would expect modifications like (2) and (3) to help us to clarify the speaker's intention, but they do not. While this is not a strong argument against Récanati's view, it does present a challenge to the idea that explicit performatives are declarations.

One could think that I might be arguing that if Récanati is correct, then (2) and (3) should be equivalent to "I hereby order you to leave". I do not believe this interpretation fully captures my point, but it raises an important clarification. Récanati's view does not necessarily imply equating (2), (3), and "I hereby order you to leave" because his view allows for multiple illocutionary acts to be performed under a single explicit performative. That said, the issue with (2) and (3) is that they introduce unnecessary complexity and undermine the communicative function of the performative. If an explicit performative like "I hereby order you to leave" already makes its illocutionary force clear, the addition of "I hereby declare that…" or "That is a declaration" becomes redundant and potentially misleading. This suggests that explicit performatives are not best understood as declarations in the sense Récanati proposes.

To summarise, I am not arguing that explicit performatives can never be declarations under any circumstances. For example, the explicit performative "I declare that the meeting is adjourned" is a declaration because the performative verb names the illocutionary act that is being performed. Rather,

categorising every token of an explicit performative as a declaration introduces some problems.

5.3 Developing Kissine's Criticisms of the Declarational Theories

Kissine (2013b) raises another concern about classifying self-verifying utterances as declarations, noting the potential for overgeneralising this category. He argues that equating utterances like "I am speaking now" with formal institutional declarations such as "War is declared" risks inflating the category of declarations to an implausible extent (ibid., p. 179). This could potentially lead to an overgeneralisation where any self-verifying sentence is categorised as declarative, thereby placing it on the same footing as formal institutional speech acts.

At first glance, it might seem that Kissine is simply mistaken in suggesting that all self-verifying utterances are declarations. After all, many such utterances (e.g., "I am speaking now") appear to state facts rather than to declare. However, this may not be what Kissine is claiming. Rather, his point is that *if* we adopt Searle's definition of declarations strictly – as speech acts that create the very fact which makes the utterances true – then we are led to classify "I am speaking now" as a declaration, since the act of declaring brings about the truth of the proposition. Kissine acknowledges that "I am speaking now" and explicit performatives differ with respect to negation (ibid., p. 179fn10) – "I don't promise to come" does not result in contradiction whereas "I am not speaking now" does. This tells us that their self-verifying nature arises in different ways: "in "I am speaking now" self-verification is due to the propositional content, whereas in a performative utterance (or an institutional declaration), it stems from the illocutionary force" (ibid.). Nevertheless, this distinction must be clarified in order to explain why only explicit performatives are considered declarations, while other self-verifying utterances such as "I am speaking now" are not.

One might think this clarification resolves Kissine's concern. However, I believe the concern remains pressing, since it raises the question of how to determine which self-verifying utterances function as declarations. In response, declarational theorists might argue that Kissine's objection relies on an overly generalised reading of self-verification, one that overlooks the distinctive function of declarations in bringing about the new facts. One way to mitigate the risk of overgeneralisation could be to distinguish between *performative* and *descriptive* self-verification. Declarational theorists might

argue that only the former involves creating the fact that makes the utterance true. For example, in the phrase "I order you to leave", the performative prefix creates the very fact that the speaker is ordering. In contrast, descriptive self-verifying utterances, such as "This sentence is in English", merely state facts that are already true.[101] They do not create new facts by virtue of being uttered. Therefore, the test is whether the utterance creates the truth of its propositional content by being performed. If so, it is a declaration; if not, it is a self-verifying assertion.

Kissine would argue that the risk of overgeneralisation remains, even if some self-verifying sentences can be distinguished from declarations. He might argue that many self-verifying utterances remain, such as "I am speaking now", which still fall under the category of declarations due to their double direction of fit. Like institutional declarations, explicit performatives create facts through their utterance alone. For instance, just as "I now pronounce you married" brings about a marital status, "I am speaking now" brings into existence the fact that the speaker is currently speaking.

To this point, Searle (1989, p. 549) would argue that there is an important distinction between institutional declarations and other self-verifying utterances. Unlike other self-verifying utterances, institutional declarations, like "I now pronounce you married" or "The war is hereby declared", create facts that extend beyond language, such as legal, social, or institutional changes. In contrast, utterances such as "I am now speaking" or "I order you to leave" only create *linguistic* facts, i.e., facts about the performance of the speech act itself.[102] While these utterances can have social consequences, such as generating expectations that the hearer will pay attention or creating an obligation for the hearer to leave if the speaker has the authority to do so, they do not, according to Searle, enact institutional changes. This distinction enables him to argue that not all self-verifying utterances are institutional declarations.

However, this distinction is not as clear-cut as it might seem. If "I promise you" or "I order you to leave" are declarations, they should also create extra-linguistic facts. For example, promising engages with the social convention of making commitments, and ordering presupposes authority within certain social structures. Searle (ibid., p. 555) acknowledges this, noting that language itself

[101] This example is from Searle (1989, p. 544).

[102] One can also say that Kissine's objection misses the point because, by Searle's (1989, p. 538) definition of performative utterances, "I am speaking now" is not a performative. However, it can be used as a performative in certain contexts where a speaker signals their intention to take the floor, establishing a social norm that others should listen and not interrupt.

functions within human conventions and institutions, enabling utterances to establish social facts, which he terms 'linguistic institutional facts'. This categorisation suggests that even linguistic declarations can change the world by creating new social facts, challenging the clear distinction between linguistic and extra-linguistic declarations. Then, there is substantial reason to view explicit performatives as akin to institutional declarations. As linguistic and extra-linguistic declarations are shaped by and shape the social conventions and realities they operate within, Kissine's overgeneralisation worry still stands.

In this section, I have evaluated declarational theories which argue that explicit performatives should be classified as declarations, defining them as declarative acts that describe and create new facts. This seemed to be a promising solution to the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM, as the indicative mood of explicit performatives would not have to treated as primarily assertive. The declarational theorists' solution was that explicit performatives have a double direction of fit, simultaneously describing and declaring the fact corresponding to the propositional content of the utterance. However, Kissine's analysis indicates a potential overgeneralisation of this classification, whereby the distinction between linguistic and extra-linguistic facts becomes blurred. This, in turn, calls into question the categorisation of explicit performatives as declarations. The following section evaluates direct theories that adhere more closely to Austin's account of explicit performatives and provides reasons for preferring these theories.

6. Direct Theories on the Mood-Force Problem

In this section, I will argue that explicit performatives are best interpreted through direct theories, as they provide a more intuitive approach to the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM. This approach is advocated, in particular, by philosophers such as Austin (1962, 1979), Fingarette (1967), Reimer (1995), Grewendorf (2002), Martinich (2002), and Jary (2007). I will outline what direct theorists propose, assess Jary's (2007) account, and suggest a solution – the Priming View – to better explain the illocutionary force of explicit performatives. The Priming View holds that the performative prefix itself, rather than appealing to standardisation or classifying them as declaratives, primes the hearer for the speech act's content. This priming effect functions as a cognitive cue, preparing the hearer to treat the subsequent utterance as the performance of a particular illocutionary act.

6.1. Direct Theories on Explicit Performatives

Direct theories argue that explicit performatives, despite their indicative mood, do not assert or declare facts. Instead, when the speakers utter explicit performatives, they directly perform illocutionary acts – such as asserting, promising, or advising – through specific conventions associated with performative verbs.[103] As Austin (1979, p. 235) puts it: "if a person makes an utterance of this sort we should say that he is *doing* something rather than merely *saying* something". Uttering "I order you to φ" is not an order inferred from a statement (as in indirect theories), nor a declaration that creates linguistic facts (as in declarational theories), but a direct act of ordering. Fingarette (1967, p. 39) similarly notes: "I am not 'saying so' in the sense that I am saying *that* something *is* so; I am not making a true or false assertion". The key claim is that direct theories treat explicit performatives as actions, not statements. Actions are not truth-apt: speakers do not purport to describe the world, but rather to perform an action.[104]

Direct theorists offer a solution to the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM by rejecting the assumption that the indicative mood carries an assertive or declarative illocutionary force. On their view, "I hereby order you to leave" is straightforwardly an order, with its directive force stems from the speaker's intention to use the specific performative prefix, rather than from mood. Likewise, "I promise you that I will be there tomorrow" is not a descriptive statement but a direct performance of the act of promising.

The challenge for direct theorists, then, is to substantiate this claim, which may prove more complex than the explanations offered by indirect and declarational theories. This requires a robust account of why the performative prefix indicates the illocutionary force of an utterance, irrespective of the sentence mood. Jary (2007, p. 208) summarises this difficulty accurately:

> Accounts which treat explicit performatives as indirect speech acts have the advantage of not having to explain the special role of the so-called 'performative prefix' […] in indicating illocutionary force. According to such explanations, the prefix makes the same contribution to interpretation as it would in a straightforward assertion. It is a challenge for any account which

[103] Similarly, according to the 'literal force hypothesis', as explained by Levinson (1983, pp. 263–264) and drawing on Gazdar (1981), explicit performatives directly enact the force named by the performative verb within the performative prefix.

[104] Cf. Schiffer (1972) and Davison (1979) think that performatives are true or false. Sinnott-Armstrong (1994) thinks that all performatives are true.

> denies that explicit performatives are derived indirectly from assertions to explain how, and under what conditions, the performative prefix indicates performative force, and to do so without making the implausible move of positing that it has a different semantics in these cases.

Building on Austin's foundational ideas, Jary proposes that explicit performatives are best understood as acts of 'showing' what one is doing, rather than declaring or asserting.[105] He emphasises that explicit performative utterances like "I promise" or "I apologise" involve actively performing and thereby showing that action denoted by the verb. Drawing from Green (2008), Jary identifies three kinds of showing, each corresponding to a different kind of knowledge: *showing-that*, which results in propositional knowledge (knowing that something is the case, as when one proves the existence of a black hole through calculation); *showing-a*, which results in perceptual knowledge (making something perceptible, as when one points out a bruise); and *showing-how*, which results in qualitative knowledge (knowing what something is like, such as how a texture feels or how a chord sounds).

According to Jary (2007, p. 218), the kind of showing characteristic of explicit performatives is *showing-a*: the utterance makes perceptible the illocutionary act being performed. For instance, saying "I advise" makes the act of advising perceptible to the hearer, thereby providing perceptual knowledge of the speaker's illocutionary act. Explicit performatives provide this kind of knowledge by deliberately drawing the hearer's attention to the state of affairs to which the utterance refers.[106] While no literal sensory perception is involved, the speaker's illocutionary act becomes perceptually accessible; it is available for uptake. In this sense, the knowledge conveyed is *perceptual*: it allows the hearer to have a kind of knowledge of the performed illocutionary act itself.

Jary goes on to explain that 'showing' involves two key components: (a) the state of affairs being communicated and (b) the intentional act of drawing attention to that state so that it becomes perceptible (ibid.). He provides an

[105] This is similar to what Doerge (2013, p. 240) says, inspired by Austin: "I am *making clear* what act I am performing, but not describing the act […]; I am *showing* what act I am performing, but not stating that I am performing it".

[106] One could question whether a similar problem occurs for Jary's view that if Searle should account for the propositional content of imperatives, should Jary not also account for what states of affairs such imperatives show? Since Jary is only interested in explicit performatives, the state of affairs that "I order you to leave" shows is precisely the state of affairs where the speaker orders the hearer to leave, not the imperative, "Leave".

example where the act of raising a trouser leg and pointing at an ankle not only reveals the bandaged ankle (i.e., the state of affairs) but also strategically draws attention to it (i.e., the intentional act). This act of 'pointing', whether through physical gestures or linguistic cues, is central to 'showing'. 'Showing' in this context combines the described state of affairs with the intentional act of making it observable to an audience. Jary argues that explicit performatives function in a similar way; they are acts of showing that encompass both the state of affairs and the act of pointing to it. Explicit performatives

> are acts of showing consisting in a state of affairs and an act of pointing. What is special about them is that the utterance constitutes both the state of affairs and the act that points to it: it is both the act of showing and the event being shown (ibid., p. 220).

For example, when I say, "I hereby order you to go", I am not just giving an order; I am showing that I am giving an order by using an explicit performative to show my utterance as an order to the hearer. The advantage of Jary's account lies in the idea that by uttering an explicit performative, "a speaker shows that she intends to perform a particular illocutionary act and thereby performs it" (ibid., p. 233).

6.2. Assessing Jary's Direct Theory

However, Jary's view that explicit performatives are acts of 'showing' faces serious difficulties. I will identify four. The first is that 'showing' typically contrasts with 'saying': explicit performatives such as "I order you to leave" are paradigmatic examples of 'saying', not 'showing'. This distinction is important because 'saying', unlike other forms of 'showing', directly alters the conversational record by changing the normative relationship between speaker and hearer.

Suppose a police officer, attempting to make the hearer believe that they are giving an order, puffs up their chest to display a badge. This instance of 'showing' lacks the normative effect that 'saying' achieves. 'Showing' is cancellable: even if the officer intends give an order by displaying their badge, they can deny it when pressed for an order they do not have the authority to give (e.g., "I wasn't giving an order; I just stood up straight"). By contrast, an explicit performative is not cancellable in the same way. The performative prefix becomes part of the conversational record. The officer cannot say "I order you to leave, but I'm not ordering you" without contradiction. Second,

consider a general saying, “I order you to leave”. This creates an obligation for the private in a way that non-linguistic cues, such as pointing to the door, do not. Merely pointing to the door is open to misinterpretation: does she want me to check the door, guard it, or simply notice it?

Jary might respond that explicit performatives are a kind of ‘linguistic showing’: the utterance itself makes the illocutionary act perceptible, much like showing someone a bruise reveals a physical injury. On this view, saying “I promise” or “I order” shows that the speaker is performing the illocutionary act that the verb indicates. However, interpreting explicit performatives as ‘showing’ risks underplaying their normative effect. These utterances do not merely make an action perceptible; they actively change the normative landscape by saying. ‘Showing’, in the sense Jary uses, seems passive; it may succeed at the illocutionary level by expressing the speaker’s intention, but it does not account for the uptake or commitments that follow from the utterance. Explicit performatives aim to do more than merely show; they function as public acts that place both speaker and hearer under specific normative expectations. “I promise you that I will φ”, when accepted, obliges the speaker to φ. “I order you to leave”, when uttered by a general, obliges the hearer to comply. While Jary’s account captures how the illocutionary intention can be expressed and thereby shown, it stops there. It fails to account for the uptake and normative changes that such utterances bring about in the conversational context.

The second difficulty concerns the relationship between the state of affairs shown by explicit performatives and the act of showing. According to Jary (2007, p. 218), “Showing […] consists in a state of affairs and a means of pointing at that state of affairs”. An explicit performative like “I order you to leave” thus has two elements: (a) the state of affairs in which the speaker orders the hearer to leave, and (b) an intention-directing element whereby the speaker shows this state of affairs by pointing to it. On Jary’s view, if the utterance “I order you to leave” is an act of showing, this utterance must simultaneously create a state of affairs in which the speaker shows that they order the hearer to leave.

One problem with Jary’s view is that it risks presupposing a state of affairs that is to be shown, rather than created. Jary’s analogy to showing a bandaged ankle highlights this problem: the bandaged ankle is a pre-existing state of affairs that the speaker points to, whereas explicit performatives like “I hereby order you to leave” create the state of affairs that the speaker is ordering. If an act of showing implies pointing to a pre-existing state of affairs, it conflicts with the nature of explicit performatives, where no such state exists prior to the

utterance. For instance, how can I show you that I order you to leave if I have not yet ordered it? While this might make sense in cases with a performative gloss, such as "Leave. *That is an order*", it does not align with the structure of typical explicit performatives, where the performative prefix leads the utterance. Unlike showing a bandaged ankle, which presents an existing fact to perception, uttering "I hereby order you to leave" does not point to a pre-existing state of affairs but actively performs the act of ordering.[107]

Jary might respond by saying that showing and performing can happen simultaneously. Just as I can show you that I am washing my hands by washing them, I can show you that I am ordering, and order you, at the same time. Jary explicitly says, "What is special about them is that the utterance constitutes both the state of affairs and the act that points to it: it is both the act of showing and the event being shown" (ibid., p. 220).

A further problem is that the state of affairs being shown or made perceptible, according to Jary (ibid., p. 218), "is that which is picked out by a description of the illocutionary act. In the case of a promise, this would be 'The speaker promises to P'; in the case of an order, 'The speaker orders the hearer to P'". The state of affairs that is made perceptible is not "*I* promise to P or "*I* order you to leave". This risks stripping away the nature of explicit performatives, which involve the speaker – referred to as 'I' – directly performing the act named by the performative verb. For Jary's account to hold, explicit performatives must point to the state of affairs in which *I* order *you* to leave, not a state of affairs in which the speaker orders the hearer. His account introduces an unnecessary intermediary step, requiring the hearer to infer that this speaker is 'I' and that the hearer is 'you'. I am not suggesting that every inferential step of this kind is problematic, but this one is problematic because it treats the utterance as if it were describing a separate event involving a speaker and a hearer, rather than performing the very act through the utterance itself. This risks undermining the directness and immediacy characteristic of explicit performatives.

Jary does say, "I show that I am promising by pointing to my utterance and referring to it as a promise. In showing that I am promising, I necessarily promise. Performing the illocutionary act that one refers to when showing that one performs that act is an unavoidable consequence of that act of showing"

[107] One might object that the speaker's intention to order could exist prior to the utterance, and that the performative shows this pre-existing intention. However, while intentions may precede speech, the act of ordering is not complete until the utterance is made. Saying "I hereby order you to leave" does not just show that I intended to order; it makes the order effective in virtue of having said so under certain conditions.

(ibid., p. 220). This seems to provide a reply to my worry. However, according to this picture, the utterance is both the act and the means by which the act is made perceptible. Therefore, the final problem here is that it is unclear what explanatory work is gained by describing the performative as an act of showing that one promises. It seems simpler to say that the speaker promises by uttering "I promise to P", rather than creating a state of affairs and pointing to it. On a more parsimonious view, the utterance is the act itself, and no further appeal to a self-reflexive act of 'showing' is needed.

The third difficulty is that Jary's use of the term 'state of affairs' risks turning explicit performatives into truth-evaluative sentences, something that his account intends to avoid. Declarational theories hold that uttering an explicit performative creates the state of affairs it describes and thereby makes the utterance true. Jary aims to distance himself from such theories; he states that explicit performatives are not assertions or declarations that can be evaluated as true or false. Rather, they both perform and show the illocutionary act at the same time, and as such, are not truth-apt. However, by describing explicit performatives as making a state of affairs perceptible, Jary's account risks suggesting that the utterance represents or corresponds to something that can be evaluated for truth. For example, Armstrong (1993) treats states of affairs as truthmakers – ontological grounds that make propositions true. On this view, the state of affairs brought about by the utterance "I promise to P" would serve as a truthmaker for that very sentence, rendering it true. But this is precisely the result that Jary would want to avoid.

The last difficulty with Jary's account is the ambiguity introduced by explicit performatives with strength-indicating adverbs, such as "I *regretfully* inform you that p" or "I *strongly* advise you to φ". This exacerbates Jary's second issue by further complicating the relationship between the act of showing and the state of affairs being shown. In the examples above, the explicit performatives combine three elements: showing, the states of affairs that the speaker informs (or advises), and the states of affairs that the speaker expresses regret (or strong preference). Jary's account leaves unclear whether the state of affairs being shown is the act of informing (or advising), the expression of regret (or preference), or both simultaneously. If both, how do these states of affairs cohere into a single act of showing? Unlike simple cases, such as "I order you to leave", where the act of showing might plausibly align with a

single state of affairs being pointed to, explicit performatives with adverbs reveal the difficulty of pinpointing what, exactly, is being shown.[108]

While Jary might respond by proposing that the adverb is attached to the act of showing rather than a separate state of affairs being pointed to, this move risks conflating illocutionary force with the act of showing, undermining the precision required for understanding explicit performatives. For instance, does "I strongly advise you to φ" express a strong preference as part of the speech act of giving advice, or does it merely describe the manner in which the act of showing occurs? Without a clear indication of which element the adverb modifies, it is difficult to determine the precise target of the showing, and the analysis loses its explanatory power regarding how the explicit performative functions as a unified illocutionary act.

6.3. Developing a New Direct Theory on Explicit Performatives: The Priming View

Arguing that explicit performative utterances are acts of showing, as in Jary's account, introduces theoretical complications. The Priming View, as I will call it, provides a more parsimonious and explanatorily robust alternative. It also offers a better account of explicit performatives than other competing theories, such as the indirect theory of Bach and Harnish (1979), and the declarational theories of Searle (1989) and Récanati (1987). Moreover, it addresses a key issue left unresolved by Austin (1962): the distinction between explicit and implicit performatives. Finally, the Priming View offers new insights into how the explicit performatives function in the speech act of giving advice.

Although Jary (2007, p. 222) says that his "aim is not to identify a feature of the performative prefix that determines performative force", his account nonetheless attempts to explain how performative utterances function, and is therefore relevant to the broader MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM discussed in this chapter. Unlike Jary's account, which leaves the contribution of the performative prefix under-described, I argue that, on the Priming View, we can explain how the prefix itself plays an important role in priming the hearer to understand the illocutionary force of the utterance.

[108] One might ask why the act of showing must align with only one state of affairs, rather than multiple I do not think it must, but then in that case Jary's view loses the advantage of being a direct theory where simplicity is key. If there are multiple states of affairs being shown, then Jary's account would have to explain how these states of affairs fit together into a unified illocutionary act without resorting to the inferential processes invoked by indirect theories.

To support my account, I draw on the concept of 'priming' from communication and cognitive psychology, where it plays role in shaping and influencing how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to information. Priming refers to the phenomenon where exposure to a particular stimulus influences the response to a subsequent stimulus, often without conscious awareness. This effect occurs because the initial stimulus activates associated memories or concepts, making related responses quicker and more likely. For example, Altmann and Kamide (1999) showed that hearers anticipate forthcoming linguistic information during real-time language comprehension. In their study, participants viewed a visual scene with elements such as a boy, a cake, and some toys. While listening to sentences like "the boy will move the cake" or "the boy will eat the cake", it was observed that participants fixated on the cake significantly earlier after hearing the verb 'eat' compared with 'move'.

Drawing on this idea, I argue that explicit performatives function as primes by setting clear expectations and activating specific cognitive schemas in the hearer. When we use explicit performatives, we are *priming* the hearer to expect that what I will be telling them is an order, a promise, etc., depending on the performative prefix that has been uttered. This, in turn, frames the communication in a way that directs the hearer's interpretation and response. This is a version of the direct theory of explicit performatives because the utterance is understood *directly* as a particular type of speech act (i.e., explicit performative) without interpreting it as a statement or a declaration.[109]

For instance, when a speaker begins an utterance with a performative prefix, such as "I order you" or "I promise", the very beginning of the utterance immediately primes the hearer to anticipate the speech act named by the performative verb, whether it is an order or a promise.[110] This priming effect activates cognitive schemas and behaviours aligned with the specific

[109] In a way, my view differs from Millikan's (2005, p. 159) account of explicit performatives, where she says, "In the case of the explicit performatives […] they become 'self-verifying'. […] For example, 'I warn you that p' has both the function of informing you that it is a warning and also the function of warning you, whether or not you follow through with the conventional responses to this form, hence whether or not its conventional purpose is fulfilled". I agree that explicit performatives have the function of performing the act that the performative verb names, but it is *not* informing the hearer that it is the kind of act that the performative verb names.

[110] Certain background conditions must obtain, such as the participants of the conversation understanding the language in use. For instance, if a Swedish speaker utters, "Jag lovar att ge dig 5 kr" to a Korean who does not speak Swedish, then, of course, priming does not take place.

illocutionary force of the performative. For instance, when a speaker says, "I promise", the prime activates cognitive schema related to trust, commitment, and accountability, prompting the hearer to interpret the utterance as a binding commitment to a future action and preparing them to hold the speaker accountable if the promise is not fulfilled.[111] Similarly, when a military general begins ordering by uttering "I order", the utterance primes the private to recognise the directive as an order, activating schemas tied to authority, obligation, and compliance, and preparing the hearer to act accordingly.[112]

This highlights that explicit performatives involve distinct cognitive primes tailored to the nature of the illocutionary act. The cognitive prime associated with "I promise" differs fundamentally from that of "I order", reflecting the unique expectations and obligations each performative generates. This explanation is consistent with the research by Bargh and Chartrand (2000) who show how priming can influence automatic behaviours and expectations.[113] The significance of explicit performatives is that they work as primes, which not only set the context for the upcoming utterance but also shape the cognitive and behavioural responses of the hearer by activating relevant cognitive schemas and expectations.

There are three advantages of interpreting explicit performatives with the Priming View. The first regards its advantage over indirect and declarational theories. The second regards its advantage over the competing views in the direct theories. The third regards its advantage of being included in the conversational record.

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[111] Of course, priming is compatible with the hearer rejecting the promise after hearing the whole sentence. Imagine that the speaker says, "I promise that I will call you every day to check up on you", and the hearer responds, "Please leave me alone. I don't want you to call me every day". Here, the hearer recognises the utterance as a promise and rejects it. This highlights that the priming effect activates the relevant cognitive schema for identifying the illocutionary act and its conventional commitments, without requiring that the hearer accept the promise. The Priming View, therefore, captures the cognitive process that prepares the hearer to interpret and engage with the speech act, while remaining flexible enough to account for cases where the hearer challenges or rejects the illocutionary act.

[112] A similar case arises when a child says to their parent, "I order you to clean my room". The parent recognises this utterance as an order, as the performative prefix triggers the relevant cognitive schema. However, the parent may reject its felicity on the grounds that the child lacks the authority to order. The parent might correct the child or play along, but in either case, the force is recognised.

[113] I am aware of the controversy surrounding the replicability of priming effects (Doyen et al., 2012), but it is beyond the scope of my thesis to delve into the discussion. Future research may be needed to see whether priming can be better explained with 'expectation' as proposed by Gärdenfors (2014).

The first advantage of seeing explicit performatives as triggering the priming effect on the hearer is that it reverses the direction of understanding. The indirect theories and declarational theories assume that a complete sentence (e.g., "I order you to leave") must be uttered first, because then a full proposition would be understood, and then the hearer understands it as an order, whether by standardisation or by declaration. However, the Priming View makes it possible for the hearer to understand the utterance even before the full sentence is uttered. Uttering "I order you" is not a full proposition, but the hearer is already expecting to hear an order, waiting for the content of the order to be filled in. This interpretation helps to intuitively explain the force of explicit performatives through the performative prefix which is not a full proposition. This sequential explanation overcomes the traditional limitation by demonstrating how the initial part of an utterance can shape the hearer's expectations and cognitive processing, making the communication more direct, circumventing the issues raised from Bach and Harnish's standardisation. And unlike indirect or declarational theories, which depend on retrospective interpretation of the full proposition, the Priming View locates the recognition of illocutionary force in the incremental processing of the utterance, something these theories cannot easily account for without abandoning their assumption that force is determined only once a complete proposition is available. By treating the performative prefix as a cognitive cue that sets expectations and activates relevant schemas, the Priming View preserves the distinct illocutionary force of each of explicit performative without reducing them to statements or declarations.

Additionally, the Priming View highlights the efficiency and economy of language use. Instead of waiting for a complete utterance to be spoken, the hearer can immediately begin processing and preparing a response based on the initial performative cue. This is particularly relevant in high-stakes or fast-paced environments such as military commands, legal proceedings, or emergency situations, where rapid and accurate understanding is crucial. The priming effect ensures that the hearer is ready to act upon the order or request as soon as the performative prefix is uttered, thereby enhancing the responsiveness and coordination in communication.

Furthermore, this approach aligns with cognitive theories of language processing that emphasise the role of anticipatory mechanisms in understanding speech. Studies by Altmann and Kamide (1999) show that hearers use contextual cues to anticipate forthcoming linguistic information, suggesting that the brain is adept at predicting and preparing for the continuation of a speech act. By recognising the priming effect of explicit

performatives, we can acknowledge that communication is not merely a linear transmission of information but an interactive process in which the hearer's expectations are shaped in advance. The hearer is actively engaged from the beginning, with the performative prefix triggering predictive processing that influences how the rest of the utterance is understood.

The second advantage of seeing explicit performatives as triggering the priming effect upon the hearer is that the associated cognitive schema and behaviours can be readily explained within the neo-Austinian normative theories of speech acts. These theories, developed mainly by Sbisà (2023a), Witek (2015), and Kukla and Lance (2008), hold that successful speech acts bring about normative changes in the speaker and the hearer, especially regarding their entitlements and commitments. On this view, when a speaker uses an explicit performative such as "I order you to leave", they are not merely showing (or declaring/stating) that they are giving an order; they are also changing their normative relationship with the hearer, who is already primed to expect that an obligation is being placed upon them.

The Priming View can highlight this normative dimension by focusing on how explicit performatives create expectations in the hearer. For instance, when a general begins an utterance with "I order you…", the private already recognises it as an order, even before the full sentence is spoken. The performative prefix primes the hearer to interpret the utterance as an order and initiates the cognitive process of framing it as something they are obligated to follow. Whether the remainer of the utterance concerns cleaning a bathroom, performing push-ups, or another task, the priming effect aligns the hearer's cognitive and behavioural expectations with the illocutionary force of the explicit performative.

By contrast, Jary's account of explicit performatives as acts of 'showing' struggles to capture this normative aspect. For example, Jary might argue that the general is showing the private the state of affairs in which the general is giving an order, just like the act of raising a trouser leg and pointing at an ankle. 'Showing', as Jary's account describes it, seems one-sided: the hearer observes the state of affairs but is not prompted to respond cognitively or behaviourally. While Jary may not be aiming to explain the normative aspect of such utterances, this is precisely what explicit performatives require to function as speech acts. If the utterance is to count as a successful order, it must not only reveal the speaker's intention but also place the hearer under a corresponding obligation. Priming, on the other hand, directly activates the hearer's expectations and obligations, integrating these into their cognitive schema.

Moreover, the Priming View also emphasises the practical significance of explicit performatives as contributors to the conversational record, which is its third advantage. As Camp (2018, p. 63) observes, "the conversational record is essentially public, and essentially linguistic. It is public insofar as it involves a cross-contextual liability for the commitments it records. And it is linguistic insofar as the kind of commitment one undertakes by an utterance depends in part on the language game in which it is generated". Explicit performatives shape this conversational record by creating publicly acknowledged commitments, thus reinforcing the social fabric and structuring future interactions in the audience through cognitive priming. For instance, when a manager says, "I promise you that I will increase your salary next year", the utterance does not merely show that the manager is promising, but establishes a binding public commitment with normative consequences for subsequent actions and decisions, precisely because the hearer is already primed to interpret the utterance as a promise.

This priming not only prepares the hearer to understand the illocutionary force of the explicit performative but also situates the utterance within the larger context of shared linguistic and social norms. By activating certain expectations and norms that are associated with the performative verbs, the performative prefix explains how explicit performatives integrate into the conversational record, ensuring that their normative effect persists beyond the moment of utterance.

What makes explicit performatives particularly unique among performative acts is their directional nature. Explicit performatives come from the first-person standpoint and are addressed to the second person, creating a specific relational dynamic. This directionality aligns with Darwall's (2006, p. 10) second-person standpoint, "the perspective you and I take up when we make and acknowledge claims on one another's conduct and will". Kukla and Lance (2008) further argue that addressing someone in speech involves making a demand, calling upon the hearer not only to recognise the normative claims made by the speaker but also to acknowledge their uptake of these claims. While competing accounts may acknowledge such features, they tend to understand explicit performatives as one-sided deliveries from speaker to hearer. The Priming View, by contrast, helps to highlight how explicit performatives actively shape the hearer's expectations and reinforce the normative relationship between speaker and hearer. The performative prefix does not merely show or indicate the illocutionary force of an utterance; it primes the hearer to treat the speaker's utterance as carrying a normative significance. This ensures that explicit performatives are not merely acts of

stating, declaring, or showing but interpersonal engagements with normative implications for both speaker and hearer – something the Priming View is well positioned to explain.

It is important to note that the Priming View is an account that only aims to explain the illocutionary force of explicit performatives while assuming the felicity conditions of different speech acts are already met. Recall Jary's example of a private ordering a general to clean the latrines. The Priming View would say that the general is expecting an order to be given, since the private starts saying, "I order you to…". However, it does not mean that it creates an obligation for the general to clean the latrines. Since the private does not have the authority to order the general, and the general already knows this, the priming effect fails to trigger any commitments. The utterance still primes the hearer to anticipate an order, which perplexes the general, and the order is misfired due to the lack of authority. The Priming View explains this by highlighting how the cognitive process of priming interacts with the broader social and institutional norms that determine whether an explicit performative is felicitous. Thus, while priming prepares the hearer to interpret explicit performatives in line with their illocutionary force, the resulting obligations or commitments depend on whether the felicity conditions are satisfied.

Additionally, the Priming View addresses a key issue left unresolved by Austin (1962) regarding the distinction between explicit performatives and implicit performatives. While Austin emphasises the performative nature of explicit performatives, such as "I order you to leave", his account does not fully explain why this explicit formulation is necessary or how it differs from simply issuing an imperative, such as "Leave". The Priming View offers two explanations: first, explicit performatives prime the hearer, shaping their expectations; and second, performative prefixes play a crucial role in being included in the conversational record. These two explanations are integrated in the Priming View, aligning more coherently with the broader structure of conversational norms and commitments, something Jary's (2007) 'showing' account does not fully address. This synthesis of performative priming and conversational record not only bridges the gap between Austin's and Jary's theories but also resolves the limitations of both, aiming to offer a more comprehensive understanding of explicit performatives.

There are four objections I can anticipate. The first concerns suffix performative glosses, such as "Leave. That's a warning".[114] If priming relies

[114] There are cases where the performative gloss cannot occur at the end of the utterance. An example is given by Récanati (1987, p. 58) where the explicit performative utterance of "I bet

on the performative prefix to activate expectations in the hearer, how does the Priming View account for the cases where the performative gloss occurs as a suffix? "Leave" is a directive, and "That's a warning" is an assertion. "Leave. That's a warning" cannot be likened to "I warn you to leave" because "Leave. That's a warning" is an utterance of two sentences with different illocutionary forces, while "I warn you to leave" is a single sentence used for issuing a warning. So, the objection is precisely that the Priming View can only explain explicit performatives, not the former where the performative gloss occurs at the end of the utterance.

I believe that the Priming View can address this objection by emphasising the flexibility of priming as a cognitive mechanism. Priming can operate not only prospectively but also retrospectively, allowing it to account for suffix performatives. In cases like "Leave. That's a warning", the suffix serves to recontextualise the initial imperative. While the hearer may initially interpret "Leave" as a general directive, the suffix "That's a warning" activates a more specific cognitive schema, retroactively clarifying the illocutionary force of the utterance. This sequential priming ensures that the hearer arrives at the correct interpretation, even though the activation of the specific schema occurs later in the speech act.[115] Unlike prefix performatives, which pre-emptively set expectations, suffix performatives refine or confirm the hearer's pre-understanding of the initial utterance.

This flexibility can also predict differences in cognitive load between prefix and suffix structures. When the performative gloss is a suffix, the hearer must hold the initial utterance in working memory while awaiting clarification of its illocutionary force. For example, in "Leave. That's a warning", the imperative "Leave" may initially activate a general directive schema, but the specific illocutionary force as a warning is only established upon hearing the suffix.

$100 that Belle d'Azur will win the race" cannot be shifted to "Belle d'Azure will win the race, I bet $100".

[115] One might worry that talking of 'retroactive' or 'suffix' priming is contradictory because the so-called *prime* ("That's a warning") arrives after the initial utterance ("Leave"). It is true that in standard psycholinguistic contexts, 'priming' typically refers to a process in which a prime precedes a target (e.g., seeing the word "doctor" primes recognition of the word "nurse"). However, it can also be the case that hearers continually update and sometimes re-analyse their interpretation of ongoing discourse. If a sentence starts one way but subsequent words reveal the speaker's real intention, the hearer dynamically revises (or backtracks on) the earlier interpretation. Once the speaker adds "That's a warning" after "Leave", the hearer can recontextualise the prior utterance. Even though this cue comes later, it can 're-prime' the interpretation of what was just said. There is nothing unnatural about this cognitive process if we allow that real-time language comprehension involves a loop of prediction, uptake, and revision as each new chunk of speech is processed.

This additional processing suggests that suffix performatives might impose greater cognitive demands, particularly in contexts where the speaker's intent is ambiguous. The Priming View therefore generates a testable empirical prediction (which cannot unfortunately be tested in this thesis): suffix glosses will likely require more context and impose a higher cognitive load compared with prefix glosses.[116]

The second objection concerns multiple explicit performatives in a single utterance. Consider an example, "I promise I will order you to leave once I become King". Does the first performative in the sentence (e.g., "I promise") dominate the interpretation, or are the primes associated with each performative processed equally? Consider another example, "I order and condemn you to exile". Does the order of the performatives influence their cognitive priming effect, or are they understood as activating distinct schemas simultaneously?

I suggest that the Priming View can accommodate these questions by appealing to the flexibility of how primes are processed, either hierarchically or in parallel, depending on the structure of the utterance and its context. For instance, in a case like "I promise I will order you to leave once I become King", it is plausible that the first performative ("I promise") dominates because it appears earlier in the utterance. The initial performative sets the primary cognitive schema, framing the subsequent clause ("I'll order…") within the context of a promise. Here, "I promise", would prime the hearer to interpret the utterance as a commitment, while "I'll order…" introduces the specific content of that commitment.[117] This hierarchical priming would be consistent with the incremental nature of linguistic processing, where information is interpreted on the fly, with early elements (e.g., "I promise") shaping the understanding of later elements (e.g., "I'll order").[118] Importantly, this sequencing does not rigidly depend on word order but instead reflects the hearer's natural tendency to prioritise the first prime encountered.

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[116] Coulson and Lovett's (2010) experiment suggests that people put more cognitive load and effort into understanding indirect speech rather than direct speech. If so, it can be hypothesised that a similar outcome is expected when the performative gloss in located in the suffix.

[117] One might wonder if a conditional promise is still a promise. I think it is, because the speaker is held accountable if the promise is not kept in the future, when the speaker becomes King. For example, "I will pick you up tomorrow if it rains" is a promise where the speaker commits to pick up the hearer if the condition is met. The speaker will be held responsible if she does not pick up the hearer the next day if it rains.

[118] See Altmann and Kamide (1999) and Pickering and Garrod (2004).

For conjoined performatives, such as "I order and condemn you to exile", the Priming View can accommodate the simultaneous activation of distinct cognitive primes. Each of the two performative verbs, 'order' and 'condemn', can trigger its own schema: the first related to authority and obligation, and the second to judgement or blame. These primes can be processed in parallel, allowing the hearer to integrate both illocutionary forces into a unified interpretation. While these observations are speculative, they show how the Priming View could be extended to account for nested or conjoined performatives.

The third objection is that the Priming View seems to accept the 'literal force hypothesis', according to which the illocutionary force of the speech act seems to correlate with sentence forms (Levinson, 1983). This means that the performative prefix reflects the underlying illocutionary force of the utterance. The problem, however, is that, as Huang (2007, p. 138) notes, "we cannot always identify speech acts even with sentences that contain a performative prefix". Consider the following example: "I promise to sack you if you don't finish the job by this weekend" (ibid.). The illocutionary force of this utterance seems to be a threat or a warning, even though its performative prefix indicates that this utterance is a promise. It seems that, if the Priming View is true, it would falsely prime the hearer to expect a promise.

My answer is that the Priming View does not accept the literal force hypothesis because it only emphasises the role of anticipatory mechanisms in understanding speech. Hearers use contextual cues to anticipate forthcoming linguistic information, which means the brain is likely to predict and prepare for the speech act as a promise. However, it seems plausible that *pragmatic modulation* is at work here, helping the hearer newly interpret the utterance as a threat or warning.[119] In this case, the addition of the conditional clause "if you don't finish the job by this weekend" alters the typical priming of the performative prefix "I promise".

[119] As Récanati (2003) explains, there can be many ways that pragmatic modulations can occur, including *loosening* or *semantic transfer*. This could be an instance of loosening, where the application conditions for 'promise' extend to include a warning-like commitment, much like how 'swallow' functions in "The ATM swallowed my credit card". Here, the application conditions of the verb 'swallow' extend to include the cash machine, even though no real swallowing takes place. Alternatively, it might be semantic transfer, where 'promise' no longer refers to promising at all but instead functions as a threat, akin to how "The ham sandwich left without paying" refers to a person rather than a dish (Nunberg, 1979). Both interpretations show how pragmatic modulation allows for shifts in illocutionary force.

The last objection is that the Priming View appears to treat performative prefixes such as 'I promise' or 'I advise' as redundant – helpful but non-essential cues. According to this interpretation, the prefix merely primes the hearer to interpret the utterance as a promise or piece of advice, aiding recognition and uptake. However, this seems to imply that the performative prefix is not necessary for the act to count as a promise or a piece of advice. After all, we can and often promise without saying "I promise". If the prefix merely assists recognition and uptake, then what distinguishes explicit performatives from implicit ones?

I am not claiming that the performative prefix is always necessary for an act such as promising or advising to be performed successfully. Clearly, promises can be made implicitly. Rather, the Priming View aims to account for the distinctive function of *explicit* performatives, a specific subclass of performative utterances that make use of a performative prefix. Within this subclass, the prefix plays a role in overtly signalling the speaker's intention. By front-loading the intended illocutionary force, the prefix primes the hearer to anticipate a certain speech act, reducing their cognitive load in guessing the intended speech act. This priming serves as more than just a cognitive aid; it is an important feature of the communicative interaction between speaker and hearer. It ensures that the utterance functions as both a signal of intention and as part of the conversational record. The Priming View explains how the prefix makes the speaker's intention explicit, shapes the hearer's expectations, and provides grounds for holding the speaker accountable for the speech act performed.

In conclusion, the Priming View offers a new approach for understanding explicit performatives, providing another solution to the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM. By positing that performative prefixes function as cognitive primes, it explains how explicit performatives activate specific cognitive schemas that shape the hearer's expectations, behaviours, or obligations, without assuming the traditional association between mood and force. This view not only accounts for the directness of illocutionary force but also provides a flexible mechanism for addressing challenges such as suffix performatives and multiple performatives within a single utterance.

7. The Priming View on Giving Advice

Having established the Priming View as a new account for understanding explicit performatives, particularly through its ability to prime the hearer's expectations, behaviours, or obligations with the illocutionary force of the utterance, this section focuses on applying the view to giving explicit advice. By examining how the performative prefix "I advise" functions within advisory contexts, this section aims to highlight the practical and normative dimensions of the Priming View. Moreover, it explores the unique features of giving explicit moral advice, sketching out how the Priming View emphasises the action-guiding and deliberative roles of such utterances.

The Priming View explains the performative prefix "I advise" as the following: giving advice using a performative prefix primes the hearer to anticipate guidance deemed relevant by the speaker. The utterance "I advise" activates a cognitive schema in the hearer, setting an expectation that the advice will contain information or a course of action considered beneficial or important by the adviser.[120] By using "I advise", the speaker draws attention to the content they deem important and primes the advice to be heard as an invitation for the hearer to both engage with and deliberate upon the underlying reasons behind it. This priming effect signals that the adviser provides guidance that invites the hearer to take the advice seriously. For instance, when a speaker says, "I advise you to stop drinking" or "I advise that you stay in bed", the performative prefix primes the hearer to recognise the speaker's reasoning as a meaningful contribution to the hearer's decision-making process. Priming highlights the content of the advice as salient, guiding the hearer to consider the speaker's perspective and evaluate the proposed content. Through this process, explicit advice invites the hearer to deliberate on its relevance to their own context.[121]

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[120] One possible objection is that the Priming View would characterise this information as an assertion (e.g., "Your φ-ing is important to me"), but such an assertion does not capture everything conveyed by "I advise you to φ". I think that this assertion can instead be presupposed in the context of advising. The act of giving advice conventionally carries certain *presuppositions*, such as the adviser believing that φ-ing is in the advisee's best interest or that φ-ing is supported by reasons, which can explain why the speaker decided to give advice, rather than, for example, to issue a command. While these presupposed assertions can explain why the speaker decided to give advice, they do not determine the illocutionary force of the advisory speech act. Advising remains a directive speech act, and the speaker's perlocutionary intention plays a crucial role in issuing this directive. The significance of perlocutionary intention in advice-giving will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

[121] One possible objection to the Priming View is that it fails to account for ironic uses of advice; for example, saying "I advise you to φ" when the speaker, in fact, intends to advise

It is important to clarify that the Priming View does not claim that an explicit performative such as "I advise you to eat your greens" encourages the hearer to take the advice more seriously than a bare imperative, such as "Eat your greens", which can itself function as advice.[122] Rather, the claim is that the performative prefix makes the speaker's guiding intention explicit, thereby priming the hearer to interpret the utterance as a piece of advice rather than, for example, a demand or a request. While both explicit and implicit utterances aim to guide the hearer's action, they differ in how the intention is conveyed: the performative prefix explicitly frames the utterance as guidance, whereas the bare imperative leaves the intention implicit. Without a clear advisory context, the bare imperative risks the speaker's intention being misinterpreted. When a speaker uses a bare imperative, the hearer may challenge the speaker's intention, for instance, "Don't tell me what to do; you're not my mum!" In such cases, the speaker might respond by clarifying: "It was just advice; take it or leave it. But I thought it would be good for you to eat your greens because…" The advantage of using a performative prefix is that it reduces the cognitive effort required to infer the speaker's intention. In this sense, priming through the performative prefix shapes the hearer's expectations, helping them to recognise the utterance as advice. This is the advantage the Priming View emphasises; not that the explicit advice will be taken more seriously, but that the advisory intention will be more readily recognisable.

The Priming View is, then, consistent with Sneddon's (2023, p. 18) observation that "advice is a social practice for helping us figure out what to do (or believe). This means that it is particularly germane at moments of choice, especially difficult ones". Using a performative prefix, "I advise", can trigger specific cognitive schemas at critical moments of decision-making.

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against φ-ing. In such cases, the literal content of the advice is the opposite of the intended meaning. However, this does not mean that the speaker is no longer giving advice. In other words, the speaker still performs the speech act of advising, and the performative prefix still continues to prime the hearer to anticipate guidance. What is at issue, then, is not the illocutionary force of the utterance, but rather the content of the advice in its ironic use. Therefore, the Priming View can still explain how the speaker gives advice, even when irony is involved. How, then, does the literal content come to mean its opposite? Several theories of irony can account for this. For example, Sperber and Wilson (1981, p. 310) say that irony involves mentioning a proposition, "echoing a remark or opinion that the speaker wants to characterise as ludicrously inappropriate or irrelevant". For Giora (1995), irony does not erase the literal meaning but highlights the gap between what is said and what is meant, treating that gap as the most relevant part of the message. Kotthoff (2003) adds that irony often involves uttering a statement that appears to endorse a particular attitude, while signalling the hearer to detect the contradiction.

[122] I thank Lucy McDonald for helping me to clarify this point.

Moreover, Sneddon describes advising as a practice that works by "bringing considerations to an advisee's attention" (ibid.). This aligns closely with the Priming View's claim that explicit performatives like "I advise you to φ" or "I advise that p" function to prime the hearer to focus on the content of the advice. The Priming View takes giving explicit advice as preparing the hearer to deliberate on the content of the advice, which fits well with Sneddon's claim that advice brings relevant considerations to an advisee's attention.

The Priming View also accounts for variations in the strength of advising, such as when performative prefixes are modified by adverbs like 'strongly' in "I *strongly* advise you to apologise to your sister" or 'highly' in "I *highly* advise that you reconsider your priorities". Such variations reflect differing levels of commitment on the part of the adviser and can prime the hearer to expect a stronger invitation to deliberate on the advised content. For instance, "I strongly advise you to apologise" not only primes the hearer to expect to be appraised of the adviser's strong endorsement of the action but also signals the heightened importance of the context, inviting the hearer to give the advice greater weight in their deliberation. This layering of strength in giving explicit advice shows how performative prefixes with strength-indicating adverbs can shape the hearer's cognitive schema, priming how seriously the advice is to be considered.

Then what can the Priming View say about giving explicit moral advice? Such utterances prime the hearer not only to expect guidance but also to consider the speaker's moral commitment seriously. By directly priming the hearer in this way, explicit performative utterances guide action by aligning the hearer's attention and response with the normative context the speaker highlights as morally salient. Explicit performatives used in giving moral advice guide the hearer's decision-making by drawing attention to the considerations the speaker deems morally important.[123] This primes the hearer to take the speaker's moral advice seriously, even if the final decision remains within the hearer's discretion.[124] This priming effect prepares the hearer to engage with

[123] One might wonder if an amoralist could give advice at this point as long as they use the performative prefix and give moral advice. However, the discussions about the normative standing of the adviser and the success conditions of moral advice must wait until Chapters 4 and 5.

[124] One possible objection is that the Priming View is vulnerable to the Frege-Geach problem. For instance, consider embedding an explicit performative such as "I advise you not to lie" in a conditional: "If lying is wrong, then I advise you not to lie". The worry is that the illocutionary force of the performative does not carry over into the conditional. Similarly, the priming effect might seem absent under negation, as in "It is not the case that I advise you to be honest". I would argue that what is embedded in these cases is not an explicit performative. As Austin

what the speaker finds important in a specific advisory context, inviting the hearer to deliberate on the advice. Being included in the conversational record, the explicit performatives used in giving advice can be used to hold the speaker accountable for the advice if it turns out to be bad, or of the speaker did not have the standing to give such advice.

8. Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the MOOD-FORCE PROBLEM by examining the nature of explicit performatives and evaluating competing theories, including indirect, declarative, and direct accounts. Through this analysis, I have proposed the Priming View as a new account for understanding explicit performatives and how they are used in advisory contexts. Having spent Chapter 2 establishing the theoretical foundations of explicit performatives and the role of explicit advice in guiding action, particularly through the Priming View, the discussion now turns to a more focused analysis of directive speech acts, as I will argue that advice belongs in this family.

(1962, p. 57) proposed, one way to test whether an utterance is an explicit performative is to see if the word 'hereby' can naturally be inserted before the verb phrase. It sounds unnatural to say, "If lying is wrong, then I hereby advise you not to lie", or "It is not the case that I hereby advise you to be honest". This suggests that what is embedded is not a performative. Since the Priming View is intended only to explain explicit performatives, the embedded cases in question fall outside the scope of the account and thus do not affect it.

3.Rethinking Directives and Advising

1. Introduction

Directives are speech acts that tell the hearer what to do – for instance, "Take these pills for a week" or "You should give to charity". This chapter defends the view that all directives involve a relevant perlocutionary intention, such as guiding, influencing, or prompting the hearer to φ, even if the intended effect is not realised. In particular, I argue that the speech act of advising is best understood in terms of the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide the hearer's deliberation or action, rather than in terms of whether the hearer actually complies. This distinguishes advice from other kinds of directives, such as orders, which aim at compliance but do not require it to count as a directive. Perlocutionary intention, rather than the realisation of intended perlocutionary effect, is therefore central to understanding directive speech acts.

I situate this claim within an intentionalist account of speech acts. One strength of intentionalism, as Harris et al. (2018, p. 4) note, is that it offers a three-part distinction among speech act success conditions:

> To succeed in *performing* an illocutionary act requires merely producing an utterance with a communicative intention; nothing on the part of the addressee is required. To succeed in *communicating* via one's act requires that the addressee recognize what kind of response one is trying to produce. Actually *producing* this response, on the other hand, constitutes a further kind of perlocutionary success.

This distinction is helpful. However, I depart from it in two respects. First, I argue that illocutionary performance success depends on producing an utterance with a performance intention, not a communicative one. Second, I claim that analysing directives also requires attention to perlocutionary

intention, since we do not perform illocutionary acts for their own sake. We perform them in order to bring about certain effects.

To clarify these claims, I propose a taxonomy of success conditions for directives:

- *Illocutionary performance success*: the speaker produces an utterance with the intention to perform an illocutionary act (e.g., advise, warn, order); nothing is required on the part of the addressee.
- *Perlocutionary performance success*: the speaker produces the utterance with the intention that the hearer φ (where φ may be a mental or physical action); nothing is required on the part of the addressee.
- *Illocutionary communicative success* (i.e., uptake): the hearer recognises the speaker's illocutionary intention (e.g., the hearer understands that the speaker is advising).
- *Perlocutionary communicative success*: the hearer recognises the speaker's perlocutionary intention (e.g., to guide, to deter).[125]
- *Perlocutionary production success*: the intended effect (e.g., φ-ing) is actually realised in the hearer.

On my view, *proper* performance of a directive requires both illocutionary and perlocutionary performance intentions: for example, the speaker intends to advise and intends to guide.[126] Whether or not the hearer complies is not necessary for the speech act to count as a directive, nor for it to be *performed* successfully in the relevant sense.[127]

To illustrate this, consider three examples: instructions, warnings, and advice. Imagine that you receive an IKEA instruction manual. If you ignore the instructions, the directive fails in terms of perlocutionary production.

[125] I will use 'perlocutionary intention' to mean 'relevant perlocutionary performance intention' in this chapter.

[126] It might be objected that perlocutionary intention has nothing to do with meaning. That is true if we are speaking about semantic meaning. But if our concern is pragmatics in this thesis. More specifically, if we are trying to explain speech acts as *actions*, then intention must be part of the picture. The kind of intention I focus on here is the perlocutionary performance intention: for instance, the speaker's aim to guide the hearer's deliberation or future action, which is salient in the case of advising.

[127] According to Siebel, "The success conditions of an illocutionary act are not meant to be conditions which go beyond its performance conditions. Rather, they are nothing else than the conditions under which an utterance is an act of that type" (2002, p. 128). I take 'success' to be what Siebel takes to be – at least to describe illocutionary and perlocutionary performance success, which makes the performance of an illocutionary act *proper*.

However, this failure does not seem central to what makes the manual an instruction. If the authors of the instructions had no intention that readers follow the manual, it seems to undermine the very purpose of the instructions. Even if there is illocutionary performance success, the absence of perlocutionary intention undermines the directive force of the instruction. The same holds for warnings. If I warn you not to swim due to a strong current, and you jump in anyway, the warning failed to achieve its intended effect. But if I had no perlocutionary intention to deter you, in what sense was it a proper warning?

The same point applies to advice. The hearer may disregard the advice, but if the speaker did not intend to guide, then it is unclear whether the speech act was one of advising at all. In all these cases, the hearer has been given the instructions, warnings, or advice, and what they do with them remains their own decision. As a result, the intended perlocutionary effect may not be realised. Nevertheless, if the speaker lacked the perlocutionary intention to get the hearer to φ (e.g., to influence or guide them), this undermines the directive nature of the speech act. Therefore, directives should be understood in terms of perlocutionary intention.

This also explains how some directives differ from others. Orders and commands are more easily associated with perlocutionary production success, in the sense that they aim at compliance. But even here, I do not claim that perlocutionary production success is required. Rather, these directives are better characterised by the kind of perlocutionary intention they typically involve (e.g., intending that the hearer complies), distinct from others that aim to guide. In sum, I will argue that we should understand directive speech acts in terms of the speaker's perlocutionary intention, not the realisation of the intended perlocutionary effect. In particular, I defend the claim that advice is a distinctive kind of directive that aims to guide, regardless of outcome.

In answer to the question posed in the introduction, (1b) *in what way does the speaker's intention determine whether an utterance constitutes the speech act of moral advising?*, this chapter is structured around three guiding questions:

1. Must a directive be performed with a particular perlocutionary intention?
2. Must directives succeed in producing their intended perlocutionary effects?
3. What makes advice a distinctive kind of directive?

My answer to the first question is *yes*, and to the second, no. The answer to the third question is that advice is a distinctive type of directive because it is a

hearer-first directive, whose perlocutionary intention is to guide the hearer, even if the intended perlocutionary effect is not realised. In the case of moral advice, it will be argued that, as a type of directive, it aims to guide through the speaker's having a certain perlocutionary intention: inviting the hearer to deliberate on moral values, principles, reasons, norms, or possible courses of action for the hearer's sake, and ultimately for morality's sake.

It is especially important to understand directives in the context of providing advice, as well as in the broader relationship between directives and moral language. Directives are closely related to moral language. Moral utterances can take the form of directives often, highlighting what one ought to do or refrain from doing. For instance, "I advise you to help those in need" and "Do not lie" aim to influence the hearer's future actions. Understanding the directive structure of moral language clarifies how moral advice functions as a distinct form of guidance – a topic explored throughout the thesis.

This chapter is structured as follows. §2 surveys traditional accounts of directives and introduces a distinction between speaker-first and hearer-first directives, arguing that this distinction better captures the range of directive speech acts. I also expand the scope of directive targets to include mental actions. §3 defends the claim that issuing a directive necessarily involves a perlocutionary intention, responding to Hare and Kissine's objections. In §4, I argue that success in producing the intended perlocutionary effects is not necessary to explain the nature of directives. §5 focuses on advice as a distinctive H-directive, best understood through the speaker's intention to guide. §6 considers a challenge from Kissine (2013a), who argues that directives are best understood not as attempts to cause or influence action, but as reasons for action. I will answer this challenge by arguing that they are not themselves reasons for action, but rather give reasons. This, I suggest, is compatible with the advice's being a directive speech act that guides action.

2. What Are Directives?

Before we turn to the role of perlocutionary intention and effect in understanding directives, we need a clearer picture of what directives are generally taken to be. This section surveys the traditional view (§2.1), introduces a distinction I propose between speaker-first and hearer-first directives (§2.2), and argues that the scope of directive acts must include attempts to influence mental actions (§2.3).

2.1 The Traditional Account of Directives

Traditional views, as exemplified by Searle, treat directives as attempts by speakers to induce compliance.[128] Searle (1975, p. 355) argues that "the illocutionary point of [directives] consists in the fact that they are attempts […] by the speaker to get the hearer to do something", and verbs that denote directives include *order*, *command*, *request*, *ask*, *beg*, *plead*, *pray*, *entreat*, and also *invite*, *permit*, and *advise*, among others (ibid., p. 356).[129] For example, orders and commands are directed attempts to get people to do things (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 14). This view is adopted by many philosophers and linguists, including Yule (1996) and Bach and Harnish (1979).

According to Condoravdi and Lauer (2012), directives are one of the common functions served by imperatives.[130] These directives are used to "get the addressee to do something or refrain from doing something", comprising orders, warnings, requests, and certain kinds of advice and pleas (ibid., p. 38). Whether a directive is an instance of a command, warning, request, piece of advice, or plea depends on felicity conditions and context, but what unifies these utterances as a class of directives is that the propositional content that the hearer φ-s, the speaker's desire, and the intended hearer inducement are

[128] This idea is not without predecessors. Before Searle, Ross (1968, p. 68) said that "The normal use of a directive in communication is to *advance* it to other people with a *directive function*, that is to advance it under such circumstances that it is – more or less – probable that it effectively will influence the behaviour of the recipient in accordance with the action-idea of the directive". Schiffer (1972, p. 95) thinks that "!" is an imperative class of kinds of illocutionary acts, where "A kind of illocutionary act *I* is an ! kind of illocutionary act if and only if, for any *S* and any *x*, *S* performed an act of kind *I* in uttering *x* only if, for some *A* and some ψ, *S* meant that *A* was to ψ by uttering *x*". However, as I have argued before, not all imperatives are directives, nor are all directives imperatives.

[129] 'Permit' is an interesting case because it does not sound like a directive to me for three reasons. First, common directives involve the speaker attempting to get the hearer to do something. However, 'permit' does not involve directing the hearer to perform an action. Instead, it involves the speaker granting permission or allowing the hearer to do something. This is more about enabling or authorising rather than directing. Second, the perlocutionary effect of 'permit' is not to bring about a specific action, but to grant the possibility of an action being performed. Lastly, the natural context for 'permit' typically involves indicative sentences stating permission, rather than imperative sentences directing action.

[130] Other functions of imperatives include wish-type uses, permissions and invitations, and disinterested advice. It is important to note that not all imperatives are directives, as imperatives refer to the sentence mood only while directives are a class of speech act type, differentiated by their illocutionary force being different from that of declaratives, commissives, assertives, and expressives (if we follow Searle (1975) and Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) classification).

present, given that the directives are uttered sincerely.[131] Some of the examples that Condoravdi and Lauer provide are the following:

(1)	Stand at attention!	(command)
(2)	Don't touch the hot plate!	(warning)
(3)	Hand me the salt, please.	(request)
(4)	Take these pills for a week.	(advice)
(5)	Please, lend me the money!	(plea)

Let us consider (1), an example of a command. How the traditional view would explain (1) is the following: (1) seemingly expresses the propositional content that the addressee stands at attention, conveys the sincere desire that the speaker wants the addressee to do so, and acts as an inducement for the addressee. The perlocutionary effect that this utterance aims to bring about is that the hearer stands at attention. Their analysis is consistent with Searle's: directives are used to produce certain perlocutionary effects from the hearer. Let us analyse (1) in terms of its different speech act elements, under the traditional view:

- Utterance: "Stand at attention!"
- Propositional content: That the hearer stands at attention.
- Sincerity condition: The speaker wants the hearer to stand at attention.
- Illocutionary act: Commanding.
- Illocutionary intention: To perform that particular illocutionary act – commanding.
- Illocutionary point: To attempt to get the hearer to stand at attention.
- Intended perlocutionary effect: The hearer stands at attention.

But in my view this traditional view misses an important distinction among directives. In what follows, I introduce a distinction between speaker-first and

[131] While many philosophers support the truth-conditional semantics for the propositional content of imperatives, there are many other possible interpretations. For example, Hare (1952) thinks that the content that is shared between a command, "Shut the door", and a statement, "You are going to shut the door", is 'Your shutting the door in the immediate future', which he called *phrastic*, and the part that is different between commands and statements is *neustic*. Ross (1968) thinks that it indicates "the action-idea which is the topic is presented as a pattern of behaviour", and Castañeda (1975) thinks that it refers to prescriptions, where the content of "Jones, go home!" is 'Jones to go home'. I remain neutral on the interpretation to be chosen for the directives in this chapter as not much hinges on whether I adopt 'propositional content' or other interpretations of imperatives, although I prefer non-propositional interpretations of imperatives.

hearer-first directives, which better captures the variety of directive speech acts.

2.2 Speaker-first Directives and Hearer-first Directives

The traditional view overlooks an important distinction: that there are at least two broad categories of directives, differentiated not by their illocutionary point – which remains to get the hearer to φ – but by whose interests they primarily serve, and whether reasons are offered in support.[132]

Some directives, such as commands, orders, and demands, are typically aligned with the speaker's interests or goals. The speaker who uses these directives attempts to influence the hearer's actions in accordance with their interests or goals. These speech acts often involve asymmetric authority, where the speaker occupies a position of power and expects compliance.[133] I will call these *speaker-first directives* (S-directives).[134]

By contrast, *hearer-first directives* (H-directives), such as recommendations, warnings, proposals, instructions, suggestions, and advice, are typically issued for the hearer's sake, and are often supported by reasons or explanations intended to help the hearer's decision-making.[135]

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[132] Ross (1968, p. 38) similarly classifies directives into personal and impersonal, the former of which include speaker-interested, hearer-interested, and disinterested directives.

[133] One might object that in institutional contexts, such as a military officer ordering a private to clean the latrines, the command may not directly serve the speaker's individual interests, but rather those of the organisation or collective. I acknowledge that in such cases, the speaker acts as a representative of institutional authority, and the directive reflects the interests or functioning of the collective. However, even in these contexts, the speaker usually has a reason, tied to their official role, to ensure that the order is followed. It would be uncommon for someone in such a position to issue commands they do not want obeyed. For this reason, these cases can still be treated as speaker-first directives, though the speaker's interest is better understood as role-based rather than personal or prudential.

[134] Similarly, Hamblin (1987, p. 9) says, "Commands and requests are made or issued in the putative interest of the utterer, independently of the interest of the addressee. This does not mean that the utterer really wants what he says, since the command or request can conceivably be one that he feels obliged to issue for some other reason. It also does not mean that the interest of the addressee is not served by it, which it no doubt very often is. But essentially, and typically, the object of a command or request is to get the addressee to do or bring about something that the issuer wants done, which the addressee would not be disposed to do otherwise".

[135] This 'sake' can be understood in an evaluative or non-evaluative way. The former is about favouring something for someone's good, while the latter is about how "signalling that the purpose, or the reason why we should favour something, is finally located in the person,

Hamblin (1987, p. 44) groups commands, orders, requests, and demands together as "wilful" and "non-accountable", with requests and demands being slightly lower in their degrees of strength of the illocutionary point than those of commands and orders. Hamblin says they are *wilful* because they are intentionally prescribed in a way that typically serves the speaker. The goal of these speech acts (e.g., "Do this now!", "Please, do this", or "I demand you do this") is to influence the actions of others, aligning them with the speaker's interests, desires, or goals. The speaker issues such prescriptions because they aim to achieve the intended perlocutionary effect: specific outcomes through cooperation or compliance from the hearer.[136]

Second, Hamblin notes that commands, requests, and demands are often treated as *non-accountable*; typically, the speaker is neither required nor expected to provide reasons (e.g., explanatory or justificatory) for their prescriptions.[137] For instance, when someone makes a simple request such as "Please give me the receipt", it is generally accepted that the speaker's desire or need is sufficient reason for making the request.[138] In such contexts, asking "Why?" might be considered unusual or even impolite. Likewise, a simple command from a general to a private, such as "Give me five push-ups, solider!", does not necessarily require further justification; the fact that the speaker has the authority to issue the command seems sufficient.

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period" (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2021, p. 149). When I say that advice is given for the hearer's sake, this can be understood in both ways. Evaluatively, the adviser gives health advice to promote the hearer's well-being, for example. Non-evaluatively, the adviser gives advice not necessarily because it is prudentially good or beneficial for the hearer, but because the reason the adviser gives advice is located in the hearer.

[136] Cf. Alm (2022, p. 127) says, "Compliance is not a constitutive aim of demands in the strong sense that a speech act does not count as a demand unless the demander in fact prefers compliance to noncompliance. Yet that preference is at least constitutive of the *practice* of demanding in the sense that cases in which the demander does not prefer compliance—and indeed enforced compliance—to noncompliance will necessarily be exceptional. That is why, in judging whether a demand is worthy of respect *qua demand*, we naturally look to the desire for compliance, even if no such desire is actually present".

[137] This non-accountability seems to be context-sensitive. In institutional settings, such as staff meetings, hearers frequently do ask why they are being requested or demanded to do something. In such cases, the norms of interaction often presume that reasons can be asked for and should be given. Hamblin's point, then, is best understood as applying to certain ordinary or default contexts where the speaker's directive is taken at face value, rather than as a universal feature of all S-directives.

[138] According to Enoch (2011, 2014b), requests are 'robust' reason-giving in such a way that the requester intends to create a reason and the fact that the requestee recognises this intention forms the basis for the new reason.

Unlike S-directives, H-directives are neither wilful nor non-accountable. H-directives are not wilful because they are not primarily issued to serve the speaker.[139] Instead, they aim at helping the hearer act in what the speaker believes to be the hearer's best interest, even if that interest is not immediately apparent to the hearer. For example, a supervisor might advise a student to take time off for the student's sake, even if the student does not currently believe that it is a good idea.

H-directives are also accountable. The speaker is expected to provide reasons and justifications when asked. This is because whether these directives achieve their intended perlocutionary effect depends largely on the hearer's understanding and acceptance of the underlying reasons.[140] For instance, when a teacher gives instructions on how to solve a problem, they typically explain the steps and reasoning behind them to ensure the student understands and can follow through correctly, and also the reasons why it is important to solve that problem. Similarly, when someone issues a warning, such as "Don't touch that! It's hot", they provide an explanation to ensure the hearer comprehends the potential danger and the reason for the warning.

One way to distinguish H-directives from S-directives is by the expectations surrounding refusal. While any directive can be refused in practice, S-directives, especially commands and orders, treat refusal as a failure to comply, and that failure is typically blameworthy.[141] Such directives create *pro tanto* obligations on the hearer, with noncompliance constituting a breach of duty. For example, when a manager orders that a report be submitted by noon, disobedience is understood as a failure to meet an obligation that warrants reproach.

By contrast, H-directives do not typically impose obligations, and when refused, they generally do not invite blame, which is a defining structural feature. A person who refuses a piece of advice, a recommendation, or a warning is not thereby subject to criticism or sanction for noncompliance. This

[139] Of course, H-directives, like other types of speech acts, can be uttered insincerely. For instance, an individual might conceal selfish motives or a desire for power under the guise of concern for others, as in the utterance: "I suggest that I become the chairperson because it will be beneficial for everyone".

[140] McLaughlin et al. (1992) list several categories where the hearer fails to follow advice. For example, it is possible that advice is not followed because the hearer lacked the will or desire to attain goal, a competing goal takes precedence, etc.

[141] However, refusing a request may not be blameworthy in some contexts, which shows that request may belong in S- or H-directives, depending on the speaker's standing and the content of request.

is not to say that H-directives never provoke frustration or disappointment, but that refusal is, in principle, permissible and blameless.

The phrase "take it or leave it" may function as a surface indicator of this distinction, though it is not constitutive.[142] In the case of S-directives, such a phrase would be incoherent or self-undermining, since the S-directive is issued as something to be followed, not merely considered. [143] In contrast, the fact that "take it or leave it" can naturally be attached to an H-directive reflects that such speech acts respect the hearer's autonomy – i.e., allowing a hearer to do what she chooses, even when the speaker disagrees (Fleming, 2016, p. 190). In issuing an H-directive, the speaker tells the hearer to φ for the hearer's sake, recognising that the hearer is free to reject it without incurring blame.

This distinction between S-directives and H-directives will be central in what follows. It not only helps to clarify different types of directive speech acts, but also prepares the next section, where I examine the role of perlocutionary intention and intended perlocutionary effects in S- and H-directives. Before that, I will expand our understanding of what kind of actions directives can be aimed at, especially mental actions.

2.3 Directives and Mental Actions

In this subsection, I clarify one important feature that traditional accounts of directives tend to overlook. Such accounts describe directive speech acts as attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to φ: to perform an action referred to by the directive. This is usually understood as a specific *physical* action. Although Searle (1969) does not explicitly restrict directives in this way, the

[142] Just as Austin provides a 'hereby' test to distinguish performative utterances from others, the ability to naturally attach 'take it or leave it' to an utterance helps determine whether a directive is an H-directive. This is not foolproof, however. "Take it or leave it" can be said in a threatening or coercive tone, turning it into an ultimatum. This kind of usage needs to be differentiated from what I am interested in – the invitational usage typical of advice.

[143] One might question whether the speaker's strong desire for compliance (or their unwillingness to attach "take it or leave it" to their advice) can change the nature of the directive from an H-directive to an S-directive. My answer is that the speaker's unwillingness to add "take it or leave it" does not necessarily turn an H-directive into an S-directive, as the distinction between these two types of directives hinges on the presence or absence of obligations, not on the speaker's level of desire for compliance. Speakers of H-directives can have strong perlocutionary intentions (i.e., a strong desire to influence or guide the hearer's deliberation and actions), but advice remains an H-directive as long as it respects the hearer's autonomy and avoids imposing blame or sanction for noncompliance, albeit personal disappointment and frustration.

examples he uses, such as instructing someone to hold a knife in their right hand or requesting that they pass the salt, mostly involve physical acts. This emphasis risks narrowing our understanding of the actions that directives aim to bring about. Instead, I emphasise that 'φ' also includes *mental* actions, such as 'think', 'reflect', or 'imagine', as in "I advise you to think twice about that decision" or "Imagine that you are in my shoes" or "Please reflect on what you've done wrong".

However, the mental actions that directives aim to bring about are not always explicitly referred to in the utterance. This is particularly clear in the case of advice. Suppose someone says, "I advise you to choose A over B," and gives supporting reasons. Even though the action explicitly referred to is choosing A, the hearer, before deciding to A, will typically deliberate – they will reflect on the reasons, weigh alternatives, or see A as a possibility. These mental actions are not named in the directive itself, but they are part of the hearer's decision-making process.

This suggests that directives can aim to change the hearer's mental state, even when that is not the surface content of the utterance. In such cases, the speaker is not merely trying to get the hearer to φ, but is trying to get them to reconsider, take φ-ing seriously, or see φ-ing in a new light. This point will be important in the coming sections, especially for understanding H-directives such as advice.

Expanding the scope of actions that a directive targets has an advantage. It aligns with work in dynamic semantics on the role of imperatives. Portner (2004) argues that imperatives serve to update the conversational 'To-Do List'; Charlow (2014) takes imperatives to be a property of plans, encoding the agents' strategies for what to do across a range of possibilities; Starr (2020) argues that imperatives directly change the preferences mutually assumed in a discourse. Given that imperatives are one of the ways to issue a directive, and if directives are attempts to get the hearer to φ or to get the hearer to perform mental actions that help them to decide whether to φ, then these mental actions can involve *updating* the To-Do List, *modifying* plans, or *changing* preferences. These actions fall squarely within the expanded scope of actions.[144]

[144] Of course, a speaker cannot simply force or cause such mental actions to occur. Directives can only set the stage; they *attempt* to get the hearer toward a deliberative process. Whether or not this process occurs, however, depends on the hearer. All that the speaker can do is make that attempt by issuing the directive.

One might object that assertives also aim to change the hearer's mental state. When making an assertion, the speaker intends to produce in the hearer the belief that p. Would that not also count as bringing about a mental action?

It is true that both assertives and directives may affect the hearer's mental state, but they each have differing roles in the speech act. Assertives are representational: they aim to describe the world, and their success depends on truth and sincerity, not on whether the hearer believes the content. The hearer's belief may be a consequence of an assertion, but it is not constitutive of the act. By contrast, directives aim to get the hearer to φ. This engages practical reasoning. When a directive is issued, any mental actions it could cause (e.g., deliberating, considering reasons, comparing options) are oriented toward deciding whether or not to φ. While both assertives and H-directives may cause mental actions, only directives concern practical reasoning.

These observations about mental actions suggest that the nature of directives cannot be fully explained by whether the hearer performs the action referred to in the utterance. In some cases, especially with H-directives such as advice, it is important to consider whether the speaker intends to get the hearer to deliberate about φ-ing, even if they decide against it in the end.

This section then suggested answers to the first two questions that I raised in the introduction: (1) Must a directive be performed with a particular perlocutionary intention? (2) Must directives succeed in producing their intended perlocutionary effects? The preliminary answers are: *yes* to the first, and *no* to the second. All directives are understood, in part, by the speaker's perlocutionary intention to bring about a certain effect. However, they need not succeed in producing that effect. To explain this, we need a more refined account of directives that distinguishes perlocutionary intention from the realisation of the intended perlocutionary effect. This is the topic of the next two sections.

3. Perlocutionary Intention

This section addresses the first guiding question of whether issuing a directive necessarily involves a particular perlocutionary intention – an attempt by the speaker to produce a certain effect in the hearer. I argue that directives cannot be properly understood without reference to such an intention. This view is challenged by Kissine (2013a) and Hare (1972). §3.1 and §3.2 present these

challenges in turn. In §3.3, I respond by defending the claim that directives require a certain perlocutionary intention.

3.1 Kissine's Criticism of Perlocutionary Intention

Kissine's (2013a) account provides a challenge to the traditional view by rejecting the necessity of perlocutionary intention for directive speech acts. According to Kissine, perlocutionary intentions – what traditional views have treated as the 'illocutionary point' – refer to the speaker's aim or attempt to produce certain responses through their utterance, such as convincing, persuading, or alarming the hearer.[145] According to Kissine (2013a, p. 15), "we can communicate – and perform illocutionary acts – without having the perlocutionary intentions prototypically associated with these illocutionary acts".[146] For example, the illocutionary intention behind an order is simply to perform the order successfully and sincerely, and an order can be given without a perlocutionary intention to bring about a particular perlocutionary effect in the hearer, such that the hearer obeys.

Through an example involving a boss and her secretary, Kissine (ibid., p. 103) tries to show that a directive does not depend on its prototypical perlocutionary intention:

> A boss is sick and tired of her secretary who never complies with what he is asked to do. But since the secretary is a union member, the boss needs a very good reason to fire him. So, she cooks up a little scheme. She asks the secretary to type a letter. She actually needs this letter to be typed, but, more importantly, she also expects that, as usual, the secretary will not do what he is told, and she intends to use his lack of compliance to fire him. […] somehow the secretary comes to know about the boss's scheme (perhaps, he overheard a private phone conversation). […] The best he can do, if he realises how the boss intends to fire him, is to type the letter to avoid further trouble.

In this example, the boss intends to exploit the secretary's habitual non-compliance to justify firing him. Although she genuinely needs the letter typed, she expects the secretary to fail to comply as usual. Nonetheless, as Kissine emphasises, this does not undermine the sincerity of her directive. As Kissine puts it, "the boss has an illocutionary intention to successfully (and sincerely)

[145] From here, I will treat 'perlocutionary intention' and 'illocutionary point' synonymously.
[146] Recanati (1987, p. 179) and Green (2003) make a similar point.

perform the order to write the letter. Yet, she has no perlocutionary intention that this order will produce the ordinarily expected causal effect on the secretary" (ibid., p. 15).

According to Kissine, the boss's scheme depends on the directive being a genuine one. The secretary could be fired for failing to comply with the boss's order to type a letter, but for the boss to fire him, the order has to be both genuine and successful. Kissine says, "That is, the boss does not intend to try and fail to perform a directive speech act; she really intends to perform one" (ibid., p. 103). On the traditional views, however, this speech act would be count as an insincere directive. According to Kissine, this is mistaken. The boss's order is sincere; her illocutionary intention is to successfully and sincerely perform the directive to write the letter (ibid., p. 102).[147]

If we follow the traditional view, there would be a mismatch between its being a directive illocutionary act (e.g., being an order) and its perlocutionary intention (e.g., to get the hearer to disobey the order). Under the traditional views, "such definitions of directive speech acts are framed in terms of a perlocutionary effect (causing A to decide to do something)", and according to Kissine, this is a mistake (ibid., p. 102). Kissine claims that this misconstrues the nature of illocutionary force.

On Kissine's account, the boss's directive is both genuine and successful, even if the speaker anticipates and intends a failure to achieve its perlocutionary effect. And even if the secretary knows about the boss's ulterior motive, according to Kissine, the order remains sincere. Kissine (ibid., p. 103) explains: "A now knows that she has no perlocutionary intention that he should type it. The moral is that even though A knows that S does not have the perlocutionary intention to cause him to make the utterance's propositional content true, he still interprets this utterance as a successful directive speech act". This is because the boss's illocutionary intention – to issue an order – is distinct from her perlocutionary intention – to cause disobedience. For Kissine, there is no mismatch in a directive being sincere despite an opposing or absent

[147] Note that Kissine (2013a) revises this example in Chapter 4. In Chapter 1, the boss gives the secretary an order: "Imagine, for instance, that a boss knows that her secretary does not obey her orders very often" (ibid., p. 15). In Chapter 4, the same example is used, but this time the boss makes a request of the secretary: "The secretary may be fired if he does not obey the boss's request to type a letter" (ibid., p. 103). For the sake of consistency, I will assume that the boss gives her secretary an order, not a request, because a request can be rejected without repercussions.

perlocutionary intention or effect.[148] His analysis thus challenges the claim by the traditional view that a directive should be analysed by referring to the speaker's perlocutionary intention to cause a certain perlocutionary effect. Instead, Kissine holds that a proper analysis of illocutionary force "must contain no reference to perlocutionary effects or intentions" (ibid., p. 15).

Kissine's example is meant to show that even when a speaker lacks the perlocutionary intention to cause a typical perlocutionary effect (such as compliance), the directive can still be genuine.

3.2 Hare's Criticism of Perlocutionary Intention

It is noteworthy that Hare's (1972) view on moral judgements parallels Kissine's criticism of perlocutionary accounts of directive speech acts, which define these acts by their attempt to cause action. Hare (1952, p. 13) points out that "to tell someone that something is the case is logically distinct from getting (or trying to get) him to believe it". In other words, performing an illocutionary act is different from trying to bring out a certain perlocutionary effect. Hare (1972, p. 7) writes, "Advice or orders do not *determine*, even partially, the conduct of the person addressed. They only tell him what to do". Similarly, according to Hare (1952, p. 29), "it must be part of the function of a moral judgment to prescribe […] to entail an answer to some question of the form 'What shall I do?'". He continues:

> A statement, however loosely it is bound to the facts, cannot answer a question of the form "What shall I do?"; only a command can do this. Therefore, if we insist that moral judgements are nothing but loose statements of fact, we preclude them from fulfilling their main function; for their main function is to regulate conduct, and they can do this only if they are interpreted in such a way as to have imperative or prescriptive force (ibid., p. 46).

On Hare's view, for a moral judgement to be action-guiding is for it to have prescriptive or imperative force. Like Kissine, he denies that such utterances must be analysed in terms of attempts to bring about bring out a certain perlocutionary effect, such as compliance. The distinctive function of moral language, for Hare, lies in *telling* the hearer what to do, not in the attempt to

[148] According to Kissine (2013a, p. 14), "perlocutionary effects should also be restricted to the effects that obtain because the affected person perceives the utterance as a phonetic, phatic, locutionary and/or illocutionary act".

cause the hearer to act accordingly. In contemporary terms, his complaint is that 'telling people what to do' – the illocutionary act – is often equated to 'getting (or trying to get) someone to φ' – the perlocutionary intention.

This is the same distinction that Kissine draws. To give an order or advice is one thing; to intend to bring about obedience or acceptance is another. For Hare (1972, p. 3), "although moral talk is often used in order to bring about changes in a person's behaviour, that is not the distinctive function of such language".[149] The primary function lies in the prescriptive act itself, not its intended perlocutionary effects being realised.

To strengthen his point, Hare (ibid.) compares two groups of verbs that describe what moral utterances do, one of which leaves the hearer free to choose (Group I) while the other does not (Group II):

Group I	**Group II**
Advice	Persuade
Order	Induce
Command	Cause
Tell (… to)	Get

He explains that verbs in Group I describe what we do in issuing moral directives – that is, performing certain illocutionary acts – while those in Group II describe what we *perlocutionarily* intend to do with our directives. According to Hare,

> in order to advise, etc., all we have to do is to tell our hearer something (say something to him); whatever he does thereafter, he has had our advice or our orders. […] On the other hand, to say "I persuade…" would not be all that was required in order to persuade; to bring about an effect, a change in the hearer's behaviour; if we didn't bring about an effect, we have not persuaded him, and bringing about an effect is not just talking, but something further (ibid., p. 4).

[149] It is important to emphasise that Hare does not deny that we sometimes use moral judgement to persuade someone. In fact, it is not hard to observe that moral judgements are often used as a means of persuasion or influence (Hare, 1972, p. 8). If we want to encourage someone to do something morally right, we often tell them that it is the right or good thing to do or that they should do it by backing ourselves up with reasons. However, it is important to distinguish what *we* usually do with moral judgements and what moral judgements do. For Hare, it seems that it is important to highlight what moral judgements do – they tell people what to do.

The purpose of advising, ordering, or commanding, for Hare, does not depend on achieving the intended perlocutionary effect. As he says, "Activities of Group I are complete and have fulfilled their purpose when the hearer has understood what has been said; it is not requisite for the fulfilment of their purpose that he should be thereby caused to act on the advice or orders" (ibid., p. 9). For example, when one says, "Don't lie", it is enough that the speaker told the hearer what to do – whether this directive be advice, command, or order – and that is all that is required for the explanation of a moral directive. Again, this parallels Kissine's view: having an illocutionary intention (e.g., to intend to give an order) and therefore performing a corresponding illocutionary act (e.g., giving an order) is all that is needed to explain the nature of directive speech acts; there is not a need for perlocutionary intention or for its intended perlocutionary effect to be realised. This is answering 'no' to the question: must a directive be performed with a particular perlocutionary intention?

While I fully accept Hare's and Kissine's point that directives can fail to produce their intended perlocutionary effects, I argue that, in the next subsection, issuing a directive necessarily involves a particular perlocutionary intention.

3.3 Perlocutionary Intention in Issuing Directives

In this subsection, I argue that the speaker's perlocutionary intention is essential to understanding directives. I do so by answering two questions positively: (1) must S-directives require a particular perlocutionary intention? If so, what is it? (2) must H-directives require a particular perlocutionary intention? If so, what is it? In both directives, I argue that they must. However, as I will show, answering the second question requires slightly modifying the traditional understanding of perlocutionary intention.

To begin with the first question, Kissine's example (2013a, p. 103) shows the role of perlocutionary intention in S-directives, though not in the way he claims. He argues that the boss issued a directive without any perlocutionary intention that the hearer type the letter. However, this is mistaken. The example shows not an absence of perlocutionary intention, but rather the presence of two conflicting ones.

The first intention comes from her ulterior motive, which is to fire the secretary. Since she has this ulterior motive, she intends her order to result in his not writing the letter. She is ordering him, and the reason she is doing so – her perlocutionary intention – is to attempt to get the secretary not to write the

letter. The second intention comes from her needs. The example states that she needs the letter writing, so she orders the secretary to do so. This shows that she intends to achieve something by giving this order, which also shows that she has a perlocutionary intention. These two perlocutionary intentions – to produce compliance and to produce disobedience – are clearly in tension. But the fact that they conflict does not show that she lacks perlocutionary intention altogether. On the contrary, it shows that she has at least one (and arguably both), undermining Kissine's claim that the order lacks perlocutionary intention.

However, even if we grant that the boss successfully and sincerely performs the illocutionary act of ordering, it is clear that she is not issuing the order for its own sake. Rather, she uses the order as a means to bring about a particular perlocutionary effect – whether that is compliance or refusal. In this respect, the directive is issued with a perlocutionary intention. The fact that a speaker uses a directive to produce some kind of effect indicates that a perlocutionary intention is part of the illocutionary act.[150]

What follows from this? That for an utterance to count as an S-directive, it must be issued with the intention of getting the hearer to φ, what I have called a perlocutionary performance intention. This, in a way, partially supports Searle's (1975, p. 355) point that directives share the common illocutionary point – i.e., perlocutionary intention – of being "attempts […] by the speaker to get the hearer to do something".[151] I do not claim that directives must succeed in producing their intended perlocutionary effects. But at least some directives – particularly speaker-first ones – cannot be understood as such unless they are issued with this kind of intention.

In arguing against the claim that perlocutionary intentions are unnecessary in issuing all directives, I will draw on Vanderveken (2005). He emphasises the importance of attempts in intentional actions. According to Vanderveken, "there is no action without attempt" (ibid., p. 326). To understand what

[150] Following Davidson (1963), I could also argue that understanding the boss's perlocutionary intention is to understand her primary reason for issuing the directive. A perlocutionary intention forms part of an illocutionary act, being the underlying reason and thus the cause of its performance.

[151] According to Rønnow-Rasmussen (1993, pp. 75–76), Searle's criticism of Hare is "based on the assumption that a sentence such as 'you ought to do it' has an assertive illocutionary act potential (cf. Cohen, 1970). But this is exactly what Hare denies. […] what Hare maintains is that a sentence such as 'You ought to do X' has both a prescriptive and an assertive act potential, where the former, he argues, is logically prior to the latter". However, my thesis does not hinge on this point.

Vanderveken means by 'action' and 'attempt', we need to examine his definitions closely. He says that "attempts are *mental actions* that agents *make*. An attempt to do something contains an *intention in action*. For to make an attempt is to do something with the intention of achieving a purpose" (ibid., p. 327).[152]

This means that any action involves the agent actively trying to accomplish something specific. The attempt itself is an intentional mental action directed towards achieving a particular goal. In the context of issuing a directive, if we analyse it in terms of perlocutionary action, this implies that the speaker must be actively attempting to produce the intended effect on the hearer. Without such an attempt, there is no intentional action to speak of, and thus no perlocutionary act.

While Vanderveken holds that *all* intentional actions involve attempts (including illocutionary acts) my aim here is to highlight that this point applies to perlocutionary acts no less than illocutionary ones. This is important because some theories (e.g., Kissine's or Hare's) tend to bracket perlocutionary aspects as non-essential to the act. My point is that the perlocutionary dimension, too, must involve an active attempt by the speaker to bring about the intended effect. Since all intentional actions involve attempts, a speaker's perlocutionary intention (understood as an attempt) cannot be treated as optional for directives.

Vanderveken (ibid., p. 328) acknowledges that an attempt can succeed or fail: "Each attempt is directed at an objective or aim and serves a certain purpose. It succeeds when that agent achieves his or her purpose. Otherwise, it is a failure". This means that every attempt made by an agent aims at achieving a specific goal, and the success of the attempt is measured by whether or not the goal is met. Vanderveken (ibid., p. 336) further elaborates:

> In order to achieve a purpose an agent must make the right attempt in the right circumstance. Suppose you want to threaten someone at a moment. You must speak to the right person and utter appropriate words. Otherwise your utterance is a wrong attempt. Moreover the context must be appropriate. If it is mutually known that you are unable to do what you say, your attempt is made in a wrong circumstance.

[152] This idea is also present in Lorini and Herzig (2008, p. 52): "we have a mental process called *attempt* (or *trying*) which, as emphasized above, is always caused by a present-directed intention and consists in an agent exerting voluntary control over the initiation and the execution of a bodily movement".

Vanderveken is here discussing attempts to perform illocutionary acts (e.g., threatening) and the conditions under which they succeed or fail. This point needs to be analysed with scrutiny – there are many attempts that are being taken place here – at least three. The first attempt is that the speaker attempts to perform an illocutionary act. The second attempt is that the speaker attempts to communicate their intention. The third attempt is that the speaker attempts to bring about the intended perlocutionary effect. Each attempt can fail for different reasons. If you did not speak to the right person, there would not be uptake, hindering communicative success. If you did not have the capacity to do what you say when you threaten someone, it would be a failure of felicity, as you lacked the standing to issue a threat.[153] My aim is not to conflate illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, but to point out that if perlocutionary acts are also intentional actions, as I said they are in the case of directives, then Vanderveken's broader point applies: they must also be directed attempts that can succeed or fail, depending on whether the speaker achieves their separate goal in each attempt.

One might object that if issuing an S-directive necessarily involves a particular perlocutionary intention – the speaker's attempt to get the hearer to φ – then *any* utterance of a directive would automatically count as a successful speech act, simply because the speaker forms that intention in speaking. But this seems too permissive.

My response is that this is precisely why we need to distinguish between different types of success, as introduced in §1. To succeed in *performing* a directive illocutionary act requires producing an utterance (i.e., performing a locutionary act) with an illocutionary performance intention (i.e., the intention to perform a particular directive act-type) and a relevant perlocutionary performance intention (i.e., the intention to attempt to get the hearer to φ). Nothing is required on the part of the hearer for *illocutionary performance success* and *perlocutionary performance success*. Together, they constitute what makes the performance of the directive illocutionary act *proper*.

This kind of success is indeed permissive, but permissively so by design: it tracks whether the speaker performed the act, not whether it was recognised as such or successful in bringing out its intended perlocutionary effects. The other two kinds of success – communicative success and perlocutionary production success – are not permissive. The former requires the hearer to recognise the

[153] This point will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

speaker's intention, and the latter requires that the intended perlocutionary effect is realised.[154]

Let us answer the second question now. Must H-directives require a particular perlocutionary intention? If so, what is it? H-directives are those issued for the hearer's sake, and compliance is not expected. For some of these directives, whether they are likely to achieve their intended perlocutionary effect depends largely on the hearer's understanding and acceptance of the underlying reasons. For these, since the hearer's understanding affects whether the intended perlocutionary effect will be realised, the speaker needs to have more complex perlocutionary intention than just to attempt to get the hearer to φ.

For prototypical S-directives, such as orders and commands, a direct perlocutionary intention (i.e., the speaker attempts to get the hearer to φ), seems to be enough. However, H-directives involve one of two related but distinct perlocutionary intentions, depending on the H-directive. The first one is as same as that of S-directives. The second is: *the speaker attempts to ψ*, where ψ is a perlocutionary act by the speaker, *in order to get the hearer to φ*. Both perlocutionary intentions aim at bringing out an intended perlocutionary effect, but the latter involves a perlocutionary action by the speaker, such as influencing, guiding, convincing, persuading, motivating, encouraging, etc.

Allowing two particular perlocutionary intentions means we can account for the wide variety of H-directives where both intentions are present. Some are straightforward H-directives where the first type of perlocutionary intention is present, such as "I suggest drinking more water" addressed to the hearer who suffers from mild dehydration symptoms. Some directives involve the second kind of perlocutionary intention where the action that is advised, recommend, or warned against has high stakes or involves many reasons that are for and against. In this case, by suggesting that hearer φ-s, the speaker attempts to ψ: convince or persuade the hearer in such as a way that the intended perlocutionary effect can be achieved. In both perlocutionary intentions, the directive is aimed at producing an intended perlocutionary effect in the hearer. This point will be further developed in §5 where I discuss advising as an H-directive.

Now I will address the concern that the proposed view is susceptible to an objection that Kissine raises. Kissine (2013a, p. 13) argues that perlocutionary acts "are performed by means of producing a certain utterance. […] In order to speak about perlocutionary acts, there must be a causal relation between the

[154] I return to these distinctions in §5.3, where I examine the role of uptake in the case of advice.

utterance and another event". Then does this not show that directives are not perlocutionary acts because the causal relation between the utterance and the event caused by the directive is not guaranteed? It is not guaranteed by causation that saying a directive, such as "leave!", will convince or persuade the hearer to leave the room. If there is no causal relationship, there is no perlocutionary act. All there is, according to Hare and Kissine, is an illocutionary act of saying a directive. Without a guaranteed causal relationship between the directive utterance and the hearer's action, directives are merely illocutionary acts.

In response to this objection, we can appeal to Grano's idea, which provides an insight that challenges this view. He emphasises that "outcome likelihood does not play a role in assessing the truth of try-sentences" (Grano, 2011, p. 433). Try-sentences are sentences that involve the verb 'try', which express an *attempt* to perform an action.[155] Grano emphasises that the truth of a try-sentence is assessed based on the presence of an attempt, regardless of whether the action is completed or the outcome is achieved. For example, "John tried to raise his arm" is true if John made an attempt to raise his arm, even if he was unable to do so due to being paralysed. This highlights that the central feature of try-sentences is the mental action and intention behind the attempt, not the realisation of the action.

Let us apply this to directives. If directives are to be understood as involving a particular perlocutionary intention, what the speaker is doing, when issuing S-directives, is attempting to influence others. When we put this into a sentence such as "The speaker attempts to influence others with S-directives", this would be true even if the hearer is not influenced by the speaker's utterance. For example, even if commanding someone to leave by uttering "Leave!" does not causally guarantee that the hearer leaves, the speaker's perlocutionary intention is there: the *attempt* to get the hearer to φ. Likewise, even if advising someone to take the pills for a week does not guide the hearer to take the pills for a week, the speaker's perlocutionary intention remains: an *attempt* to guide the hearer.

This view will mitigate Hare's (1972) worry. According to Hare, advice, along with commands and orders, often leaves the hearer free to choose their course of action.[156] This observation is accurate when we take *attempt* seriously: the

[155] Another helpful way of looking at this is from Kukla and Lance (2008, p. 15): "Notice that what a speech act *strives* to accomplish, as part of its normative function, is not the same as what it *does* accomplish."

[156] This is another place where Hare and Stevenson diverge: Hare (1972, p. 9) does not want the responsibility for changing the person's behaviour to lie with the speaker, whereas

speaker leaves the hearer free to choose, as the aspect of directives I am emphasising here is the speaker's perlocutionary intention of the utterance, not whether the outcome is realised. This is consistent with Grano's (2011, p. 434) point that "try-sentences do not entail any externally observable action, nor any particular likelihood of success in executing an externally observable action".

Directives can and should be analysed with a particular perlocutionary intention of the speaker, which is the speaker's *attempt* to produce certain effects on the hearer. While a guaranteed causal relationship between a directive utterance and the resulting event is not necessary, this intention remains integral to understanding directives.

To conclude, I have argued that directives must be performed with a particular perlocutionary intention; they must involve the speaker's attempt to bring about an intended perlocutionary effect in the hearer. This undermines the views of Kissine and Hare, who deny the necessity of such intentions. In the next section, I turn to the second question: must directives succeed in producing their intended perlocutionary effects? Here I argue for a negative answer.

4. Perlocutionary Effects and Moral Directives

In this section, I answer the second guiding question of whether directives must succeed in producing their intended perlocutionary effects. I defend the claims that (a) directives do not have to succeed in producing their intended perlocutionary effects, by examining directives that are used in moral contexts; (b) if we treat the intended perlocutionary effect as the primary explanatory feature of moral directives, then we cannot explain several common cases of moral judgement. These claims build on my earlier point (§3.3) that perlocutionary intention (especially understood as attempt) is central to understanding directives, even if the intended perlocutionary effects are not realised. In §4.1, I introduce early noncognitivist accounts that treat moral judgements as attempts to influence hearers. In §4.2, I examine Stevenson's stronger claim that moral judgements are only useful when they succeed in producing intended perlocutionary effects on avoidable actions. In §4.3, I argue that Stevenson's view cannot explain moral judgements made in the absence of a plausible hearer or audience. In §4.4, I show that speakers

Stevenson does not seem to mind if the person changes their behaviour solely because of the moral judgement given.

continue to issue moral directives even when they know they will not succeed, highlighting the explanatory role of perlocutionary intention. In §4.5, I consider judgements about past actions, which further challenge the idea that perlocutionary production success helps us to understand moral directives more than perlocutionary performance success.

4.1 Historical Context: Early Noncognitivism and Perlocutionary Intention

In this subsection, I focus on early noncognitivist accounts of moral language that treat moral judgements as directives – utterances aimed at producing intended perlocutionary effects in a hearer. The relevance of these accounts lies in their shared assumption that moral utterances are essentially action-guiding.[157] This helps set the stage for Stevenson's view that takes intended perlocutionary effects to be explanatorily prior to intention.

Many of these early figures emphasise the directive nature of moral judgements. Hägerström, for example, argues that issuing moral judgements, including commands or demands, involves an intention on the part of the speaker to change the attitudes or actions of others (Mindus, 2009, p. 93). Similarly, Kaplan (1942, pp. 293–294) observes that a so-called moral judgement "is not really a judgement at all, but an expression of the speaker's emotions and readiness to act in certain ways as well as an attempt to persuade his hearers to act in a similar fashion". Barnes (1934, p. 46) takes a similar view, suggesting that value judgements are expressions of approval, delight, or affection, and that "all attempts to persuade others of the truth of value judgement are thus really attempts to make others approve the things we approve".

This idea is perhaps most clearly developed in Ayer's early and later work. Ayer (1936, p. 64) argues that making a moral judgement involves delivering the uttered sentence with an imperative force that instantiates the effect of commands, "which are designed to provoke the reader to action of a certain sort".[158] For Ayer (ibid., pp. 67, 108), the evaluative terms used in the moral

[157] Note here that, although Hare's view is called 'universal prescriptivism', I do not include Hare as a philosopher who supports the view I describe here. This is because Hare refers to the genus of prescribing rather than species when talking about illocutionary acts such as commendation or advice (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 1993, pp. 68, 74). Therefore, the view that the early noncognitivists take here is too narrow to reflect Hare's view.

[158] It can be argued that the most brutal form of this view comes from Carnap (1935, p. 24) who said: "But actually a value statement is nothing else than a command in a misleading

judgement (e.g., 'good', 'wrong', etc.) express the speaker's feelings about certain objects to *evoke* the same feelings in the hearer and ultimately stimulate the action stated in the moral judgment. As he later put it, moral utterances are "persuasive expressions of attitudes and not statements of fact" (1972, p. 246).

Ayer (1936, p. 68) explains that moral terms can express a range of directive forces, from strong commands to mild suggestions:

> Ethical terms are calculated also to arouse feeling, and so to stimulate action. Indeed some of them are used in such a way as to give the sentences in which they occur the effect of commands. Thus the sentence "It is your duty to tell the truth" may be regarded both as the expression of a certain sort of ethical feeling about truthfulness and as the expression of the *command* "Tell the truth." […] In the sentence "It is good to tell the truth" the command has become *little more than a suggestion* (emphasis mine).

This view allows for gradations of directive force in moral directives, ranging from commands to gentle nudges. It provides a useful starting point for seeing moral directives as flexible in their force, a feature that becomes important when we consider advice and other H-directives.

However, Ayer's view has its limitations.[159] As Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 201) point out, "the issuance of a command […] requires that the speaker be in a position of authority over the hearer", where the power is institutionally sanctioned. It is doubtful that one has an authority over another, unless, arguably, one is a parent or a teacher, who holds a recognised position of authority in guiding or influencing moral action. This institutional authority grants the power to issue commands that are intended to be followed, whereas typical moral judgements made between adults do not carry the same authoritative weight.[160] Therefore, although some moral judgements might

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grammatical form. It may have effects upon the actions of men, and these effects may either be in accordance with our wishes or not; but it is neither true nor false. It does not assert anything and can neither be proved nor disproved."

[159] To be clear, I am *not* arguing that moral judgements serving as directives are *not* suggestions, orders, or commands. What I am arguing is that moral judgements should not be classified as only one type of directive. Moral judgements can be suggestions, advice, commands, orders, requests, etc., depending on various factors such as context, felicity conditions, and the speaker's intention. What I have argued against is analysing these solely through their perlocutionary effects.

[160] A similar point has been made by Ross (1968, p. 8): "Furthermore, the word 'prescriptive' seems inadequate for many types of utterance which it is intended to cover—for example friendly requests, advice, questions".

have the illocutionary force of commands, these cases are rare.[161] This shows that moral directives can also be understood in terms other than those of S-directives.

What unifies the views above is their emphasis on perlocutionary intention: the idea that moral utterances are sincere only if the speaker attempts to influence the hearer's attitudes or actions.[162] Ibberson (1986, p. 36) makes this explicit: "When I prescribe that someone do something my prescription is sincere if and only if I intend that he do what I prescribe." But what does it mean to intend this? Ibberson writes: "To intend that some event occur is to intend to do something which in the circumstances will result in that event occurring".

This brings us to a crucial distinction that we saw before: the difference between the speaker's perlocutionary intention and their illocutionary intention. Ibberson notes that "intention to get certain results by uttering that request is [not] the same as the intention that determines what I meant by the utterance" (ibid.). For instance, if I say "Give to charity!", I might intend both (a) to prescribe charitable action (illocutionary intention), and (b) to cause the hearer to donate (perlocutionary intention).[163] This distinction helps clarify why perlocutionary intentions are important in directive speech: they reflect what the speaker intends to achieve through their utterance.

To summarise, early noncognitivist views on moral language, from Hägerström and Kaplan to Barnes and Ayer, share the assumption that moral judgements function like directives. They treat moral language as aiming to influence the hearer in virtue of the speaker's perlocutionary intention. These views may differ in detail, but all pave the way for Stevenson's more explicit view, one that makes intended perlocutionary effects central to the function of moral utterance.[164] As I will argue, it is precisely in making the intended

[161] Ayer might say in reply that some moral judgements could be orders since orders do not require an institutional structure of authority, per Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 201). One can order in virtue of one's position of power, regardless of the institutional sanction. Even if that is so, more explanation is necessary because it is doubtful whether one has power over another regarding moral matters. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.
[162] Contemporary noncognitivists, such as Blackburn (1998) and Gibbard (1990), also endorse this view, which focuses on the perlocutionary intention of moral utterances.
[163] Sarcastic utterances can make the difference here clearer. Imagine that a father says to his son, "You keep your room so tidy!" when the room is a mess. In this case, although what is being said is that the room is tidy, the father's intention is not to communicate that the room is tidy. Rather, what the father intends to communicate is precisely that the room is dirty.
[164] While Ibberson's analysis highlights the role of sincerity and intention in prescriptive utterances, his focus differs from the emotive and persuasive aspects stressed by the noncognitivists.

perlocutionary effect explanatorily primary that Stevenson's account becomes problematic.

4.2 Stevenson's Account of Moral Judgement

Compared with the early noncognitivists introduced in the previous subsection, Stevenson (1938) seems to offer a stronger view: the point of moral judgements, he argues, lies in their potential to influence. His account highlights the conditions under which moral utterances are likely to succeed in this role. What distinguishes Stevenson is his claim that moral judgements are useful (and perhaps only useful) when they are addressed to actions that are avoidable.

Stevenson (1938) argues that the primary aim of moral judgements is not to describe existing attitudes but to influence and intensify them. Since Stevenson sees bringing out an intended perlocutionary effect as the primary function of issuing a moral judgement, he argues that the moral judgement should be directed only to avoidable actions. In other words, the more avoidable the action is, the more influential the judgement becomes. Just as one cannot make someone taller by telling them they should be, judgements cannot change unavoidable actions. Stevenson explains, "Since we are unwilling to talk aimlessly we confine our ethical judgements to actions of the first sort, to those which ethical judgements are likely to modify. But only avoidable acts, in the sense defined, are likely to be modified by ethical judgement. Hence only they are judged" (ibid., p. 50). For Stevenson, we should only make moral judgements about actions that can be avoided in the present or future, not those that cannot be or could not have been avoided.[165]

Applying Searle's traditional view on directives, we can say that Stevenson thought that the illocutionary point of moral judgement is to direct and influence the hearer. According to Stevenson (1937, p. 19),

> When you tell a man that he oughtn't to steal, your object isn't merely to let him know that people disapprove of stealing. You are attempting, rather, to get him to disapprove of it. Your ethical judgment has a quasi-imperative force which, operating through suggestion, and intensified by your tone of voice, readily permits you to begin to influence, to modify, his interests. If in the end you do not succeed in getting him to disapprove of stealing, you will feel that you've failed to convince him that stealing is wrong.

[165] See Ridge (2003) for a different interpretation of Stevenson.

> [...] Your ethical judgment doesn't merely describe interests to him, it directs his very interest.

Several points merit attention here. First, Stevenson's idea of 'quasi-imperative force' relates to illocutionary force, which aims to get the hearer to φ. This is evident when Stevenson says, "when you tell a man that he oughtn't to steal, […] you are attempting, rather, to get him to disapprove of [stealing]" (ibid.). Another important point is that Stevenson believes ethical judgement operates through suggestion, influencing and encouraging the hearer to φ: "Being suited for use in *suggestion*, they are a means by which men's attitudes may be led this way or that" (ibid., p. 20). By making a suggestion, we "encourage him and hence keep him from making mistakes" (ibid., pp. 21–22).[166]

It is a common misunderstanding that Stevenson advocated for something stronger, like a command or order, when analysing ethical terms. But Stevenson explicitly distances himself from such. He writes,

> "This is good" has something like the meaning of "I *do* like this; do so as well". But this is certainly not accurate. For the imperative makes an appeal to the conscious efforts of the hearer. Of course he can't like something just by trying. He must be led to like it through suggestion (ibid., pp. 25–26).[167]

The comparison Stevenson rejects is precisely one that treats ethical utterances as direct commands to action. His emphasis on being "led to like" makes clear that he treats 'like' here as an attitude, not as a proposition. Moral judgements work by drawing attention to the "object of interest", thereby "facilitating suggestion", where these make changes in the hearer in a "subtle" and "less fully conscious way" (ibid., p. 26). This subtlety is crucial: it makes ethical sentences suited to "counter-suggestion" and "the give and take situation […] so characteristic of arguments about values" (ibid.). In this light, Stevenson is best read as holding that moral judgements function as suggestions aimed at influencing the hearer's evaluative attitude.[168] If we apply the account

[166] Although I classify 'suggestions' as H-directives in §2.2, given Stevenson's use of the term 'suggestion', it seems more appropriate to categorise it as an S-directive, at least in this context. In some cases, suggestions may function more like S-directives, particularly when they serve the speaker's interest. In other cases, they may overlap both categories. This flexibility highlights the need for further research into the nature of 'suggestion'.

[167] What Stevenson seems to mean by an 'imperative' here is not just about the grammatical mood, but something stronger, such as an order.

[168] Stevenson's interpretation is also consistent with how early analytic philosophers, such as Ogden and Richards, thought moral judgements to be: a value judgement, such as "this is

developed in §3, Stevenson's view can be interpreted as treating moral judgements being as in the ballpark of H-directives rather than S-directives – as suggestions.[169]

What makes Stevenson distinctive among early noncognitivists is the priority he assigns to the perlocutionary effect. As we have seen, Stevenson holds that moral judgements must influence the hearer's actions by encouraging them to act differently than they would otherwise have done. On this view, moral judgements are successful only when addressed to avoidable actions, since only those can be influenced. Judging the unavoidable, Stevenson argues, is futile and should be discouraged because "judgments of unavoidable acts do not serve their purpose" (1938, p. 57). Even if influence is not always realised, Stevenson suggests that its possibility to influence matters in making moral judgements.

Stevenson's view that moral judgements should only be directed towards that which is avoidable, hence influenceable, marks a significant shift in emphasis. It places the perlocutionary effect at the centre of what makes a moral judgement useful. In the following subsections, I will examine and challenge this shift.

4.3 Judging Without Influence: FICTION and BAD-MOUTH

In this subsection, I will argue that there are several reasons why Stevenson's (1938) view is too strong: first, it cannot explain situations in which there is no audience present, as I will show using the examples of FICTION and BAD-MOUTH.[170] If Stevenson is right, why do we continue to make moral

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good", is "an emotive sign expressing our attitude to this, and perhaps evoking similar attitudes in other persons, or inciting them to actions of one kind of another" (1923, p. 125).

[169] A clarification: since Stevenson is discussing *ethical* sentences, my claim that they are H-directives should be understood in a *moral* rather than *non-moral* sense. Non-moral H-directives are typically given for the hearer's sake in an *evaluative* sense (i.e., promoting their interests), while in §3 I distinguished a *non-evaluative* sense involving non-instrumental valuing in moral contexts. While I am unsure whether Stevenson would accept the notion of non-instrumental valuing, we agree that moral directives need not appeal to the hearer's prudential interests, as he says an "ethical sentence centres the hearer's attention not on his interests" (1937, p. 26).

[170] The reason why I am focusing more on Stevenson's 1938 paper than his other works is that I want to emphasise the function of moral judgements that Stevenson is putting forward: moral judgements should be limited to acts that could have been avoided. Otherwise, they do not serve their purpoes.

judgements in the absence of a hearer? To address this question, let us first examine FICTION:

> **[FICTION]** I say, "That's really cruel", to a friend after reading about Baron Harkonnen's actions in *Dune*.

Judging the actions of fictional characters is a common practice, often reflecting broader moral evaluation. However, under Stevenson's account of moral judgement, such judgements appear pointless, as fictional characters' actions cannot be altered. This issue extends beyond fictional cases to judgements of historical figures or anyone who cannot be influenced by the speaker. If Stevenson's account is correct, it is unclear why we continue making moral judgements in these cases.[171]

Stevenson does consider this kind of case. He writes:

> We often make ethical judgments of characters from a novel. By building up in the hearer, through ethical judgments, an adverse attitude to an imaginary character, we prevent the hearer from taking this character as a model for his own subsequent conduct (1938, p. 49).

On this view, the moral judgement aims not to change the fictional character's behaviour, but to influence the hearer's future conduct by shaping their evaluative attitudes. Even if no action is directly influenced, the moral judgement still serves a deterrent function.

But this explanation faces two difficulties. First, it does not account for cases where there is no plausible aim to influence. Imagine my friend replying to what I said in FICTION: "Don't worry, I wasn't planning on becoming a galactic tyrant". The humour of this reply arises precisely because Stevenson's explanation is misapplied: there is no future action to be influenced. In this case, my intention was to evaluate Harkonnen's action, not to influence my friend. It is therefore misleading to treat all moral judgements as if they are aimed at the perlocutionary production success of influencing the hearer's behaviour.

Second, even if we assume I had a specific perlocutionary effect in mind – that my friend is influenced – when making the moral judgement, it implies that my friend might commit a severe action like genocide in the future. It is

[171] Chapter 5 will explain why we continue to make moral judgements (and give moral advice) in these cases.

unreasonable to think my friend plans to commit such an extreme act, and that I am trying to deter it by calling it cruel. One might think instead that the judgement targets something less severe, such as my friend doing something mildly cruel. But if Stevenson's account holds, the intended perlocutionary effect becomes either too narrow and implausible (as if I suspected my friend of genocidal tendencies), or too broad (as if my judgement were meant to discourage her from doing anything cruel whatsoever, even something as trivial as accidentally killing a snail while jogging). In either case, it is unlikely that these are the effects I intend to bring about.

Even if we reinterpret Stevenson more charitably, suggesting that moral judgements aim not at action but at disapproval, a similar problem arises. If my friend already disapproves of genocide, then the judgement is redundant. If she does not, then further reasons and discussion are likely needed. In that case, as Stevenson himself notes, my judgement would be open to "counter-suggestions" and further discussion. But this shows that moral judgement can involve more communication, not that its illocutionary point is to encourage disapproval in the hearer. It again suggests that Stevenson overgeneralises from cases where influence is intended to cover all cases of moral judgement.

Let us turn now to a second case:

> **[BAD-MOUTH 1]** A co-worker says, "He's such a drunkard", to her team, bad-mouthing Ernest behind his back.

If Stevenson is right, then this moral judgement will be futile unless it influences Ernest to deter him from being a drunkard or to disapprove of being a drunkard. Yet in this case, the target of the judgement, Ernest, is not present, so he cannot be directly influenced by it. Therefore, any perlocutionary effect must be aimed at someone else in this case. Stevenson (1938, p. 56) acknowledges that there are some exceptions. In cases like this, the speaker may aim to influence others' attitudes or responses towards Ernest, or even to promote her own status at the target's expense.

This leads us to a related case:

> **[BAD-MOUTH 2]** Ernest has developed a strong addiction to alcohol and cannot help but drink. One says, "We ought not to give [Ernest] a preeminent social position, because he is a drunkard" (ibid., p. 56).

This case shows that one could still make a negative judgement and influence the situation around Ernest. The first half of the utterance (i.e., "We ought not to give Ernest a preeminent social position") is a judgement that aims to influence people by discouraging them from giving Ernest a position. This judgement is effective because people can avoid giving Ernest a position. The second half of the utterance ("because he is a drunkard") serves to support the judgement: it states a reason for not giving Ernest a position. Unlike in BAD-MOUTH 1, the speaker here addresses an avoidable action (one that the hearers can refrain from) which makes the utterance a clearer candidate for Stevenson's account.

But even here, problems remain. Stevenson holds that moral judgements must target avoidable actions and be likely to influence behaviour. He writes: "Judgement of avoidable acts still depends upon the probability of controlling the acts by judgement" (1938, p. 55). This shows that, for Stevenson, it is not enough that the speaker *intends* influence. The judgement must be *likely* to succeed. But this bar is too high. Even if the speaker in BAD-MOUTH 2 intends to influence her team, the perlocutionary production success of her utterance cannot be guaranteed. As Kissine (2013a) notes, an utterance can give rise to a wide range of perlocutionary effects, many of them unintended. The team may come to think worse of the speaker rather than Ernest. Or they may not have intended to offer Ernest the position in the first place.

This raises a deeper concern. If the success of a moral judgement only depends on its intended perlocutionary effect, then we need clear criteria for when such judgements fail. But Stevenson's view does not clearly specify what counts as failure. What distinguishes a successful moral directive from a failed one? This matters, especially in cases where the speaker is insincere, the utterance is ignored, or the speech act misfires due to not satisfying felicity conditions. These are cases where the perlocutionary effect is absent, but the utterance may still function as a moral judgement. Without clear failure conditions, the explanatory power of Stevenson's account is weakened.

4.4 Against Uselessness: IGNORANCE and ADDICTION

In this subsection, I will argue that Stevenson's account fails to explain why we still make moral judgements even when the speaker knows that the utterance will not influence the hearer. This is evident in the cases of IGNORANCE and ADDICTION where the action in question could not have been avoided or cannot be avoided.

Stevenson (1938, p. 55) presents a case in which a military officer fails in a mission but could not have foreseen the outcome, even with an excellent grasp of the relevant facts:

> **[IGNORANCE]** If the failure of our army officer […] would have been prevented by a certain choice, but if he had no reason to foresee that it would, even on the basis of excellent knowledge of the circumstances confronting him, his commander would probably make no adverse ethical judgment.

Stevenson argues that if the military officer lacked foreknowledge of the undesirable outcome, even with a thorough understanding of the circumstances, it is unlikely that his commanding officer would issue a negative judgement such as "you ought to have known better". Any judgement of the officer's failure would only suggest that he should have acquired more knowledge, even if he had already taken great care to do so. Alternatively, further knowledge might have been too costly or simply unavoidable (ibid., p. 56). In this case, Stevenson would say that it is pointless to make a moral judgement. However, it is reasonable to imagine that his commanding officer would still do so, and I will explain why below.

Next, consider ADDICTION, a case where the range of avoidable actions is vague. This case is slightly adapted from Stevenson (ibid., p. 54):

> **[ADDICTION]** Consider a person who begins by taking a small amount of a drug and gradually becomes addicted. At some point, the desire to continue taking the drug may become so strong that stopping is no longer within their control. While it may initially be easy to judge that the person ought to stop, later stages of addiction make such judgement seem futile.

From this, Stevenson defines 'avoidability': "The stronger a man's interest must be, in order to prevent the action, the 'less avoidable' his action becomes" (ibid., p. 55). As the desire to φ increases, the less likely a hearer is to be influenced by moral judgement. Therefore, Stevenson concludes that moral judgements should be limited to avoidable actions: "Judgement of avoidable acts still depends upon the probability of controlling the acts by judgement" (ibid.). As the degree of avoidability decreases, the reluctance to make a judgement increases.

However, I question whether we really limit our moral judgements in this way, against what Stevenson says: "My purpose is to induce people to continue to judge avoidable acts alone, as they now usually do" (ibid., p. 57). There may be cases where we still give suggestions regarding moral matters even if we already know that the hearer will not follow the them or it is unavoidable that the hearer will do something that is against the suggestion. In other words, even if we know that our moral judgements, understood as directives, will not influence the hearer, we still express them. Consider the following examples. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus pleads indirectly but unmistakably with Mayella to tell the truth and do the morally right thing. Mayella and the jury ignore his appeal, and Tom Robinson is convicted. Atticus likely knows the odds, yet he says so anyway. Martin Luther King Jr., responding to white moderates who told him to wait, wrote in his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, "we can't wait", knowing his critics were unlikely to be moved. After Sarah Everard was murdered by a police officer in 2021, women gathered in London holding signs like "Enough is enough" and "Men: Do better". They knew full well that violence would continue, yet they spoke.[172]

Such utterances are not issued with an expectation of perlocutionary production success, but in recognition of a moral responsibility to speak. In Stevenson's terms, they may seem useless. However, there was illocutionary performance success – these speakers intended to perform a certain directive speech act. Why do we still speak in these situations? In other words, what are perlocutionary intentions? Perhaps, we cannot help but attempt to get the hearers to do something, even when we know too well that there will not be perlocutionary communicative success or perlocutionary production success. We speak, possibly because remaining silent would feel like a failure of moral agency. This is the least we can do: whether it is putting the utterance in the conversational record ("I told you not to φ"), doing everything conversationally possible to influence the hearer, expressing a conative state of disapproval, or even irrationally hoping the utterance might still make a difference.

This brings us to a broader question about Stevenson's project. While he offers a descriptive account of how moral language typically functions (e.g., the

[172] Compare also more everyday instances where directives are issued despite their likely failure. A parent tells a teenager, "Don't go out! You're grounded", fully expecting them to disobey. In an emergency, someone shouts, "Stay calm!" to a panicking crowd, knowing no one will. A commander tells a soldier not to run onto the battlefield to save a friend, knowing the soldier will ignore the order. In these cases, the speaker issues the directive despite knowing it will not be followed, because it still matters to say it.

purpose of influencing people is to lead them "to act in a way which they otherwise would not" (ibid., p. 49)), he also advances a normative account, claiming that moral judgements *ought* to be limited to avoidable actions (ibid., p. 57). On this reading, his descriptive account seems to serve a normative goal: regulating the scope of moral judgement. But even if we grant this normative goal, it is far from obvious that we *should* refrain from judging unavoidable actions.

Rather than prescribing limits on moral speech, I want to ask why speakers continue to make moral judgements even when they know those judgements will not influence others.[173] Stevenson says that "judgments of unavoidable acts do not serve their purpose" (ibid., p. 57), but what if influencing behaviour is not their only purpose? As I will argue, analysing directives by placing explanatory priority on their intended perlocutionary effects is a mistake, particularly if moral judgements are better understood as *suggestions*, or H-directives, under Stevenson's view. For some H-directives, the speaker's *perlocutionary intention* offers more explanatory power than the intended perlocutionary effect: what matters is that the speaker attempts to ψ in order to get the hearer to φ – even when φ-ing is unlikely or impossible.

4.5 The Problem of Past Actions

A further challenge to Stevenson arises in relation to moral judgements about past actions. Even if moral directives are primarily aimed at influencing future behaviour, Stevenson's view raises questions about the function of moral utterances that concern acts which cannot be undone. Consider:

> **[PAST]** Peter tells Judas, "You ought not to have done this", after Judas betrayed Jesus.[174]

On a straightforward reading, this utterance seems directed at an action that has already occurred and cannot be changed. If, as Stevenson argues, the function of ethical language is to influence conduct, particularly future

[173] There is an important distinction between two normative claims: "We should not make moral judgements if (we know that) they cannot influence others" and "We should not make moral judgements about unavoidable actions". These claims are not equivalent, and Stevenson explicitly makes only the latter. However, this still leaves open the question of why people make moral judgements even when they know their judgements will not influence others.
[174] Stevenson's example has been slightly modified by me.

conduct, then Peter's utterance appears, at first glance, futile. Judas has already betrayed Jesus; what is left to influence?

One might respond that the intended perlocutionary effect is for Judas to disapprove of his actions. This would indeed fall within the broad range of effects that moral judgements can bring about. However, Stevenson's account appears more narrowly focused: he ties the function of moral judgement to the probability of controlling future conduct (as we have seen in §4.4), rather than just expressing blame or inducing retrospective disapproval. According to him, the purpose of moral language is to form attitudes that influence future behaviour, rather than merely convey retrospective moral evaluation.

This focus on influencing future behaviour also helps to make sense of how Stevenson treats responses to moral judgement. Imagine Judas replying, "I couldn't help it at the time – I had no choice". Hearing Judas's answer, it is possible that Peter withdraws his judgement. According to Stevenson (ibid., p. 50), the connection between the sentences, "You ought not to have done this" and "I couldn't help it", is the following: "The latter statement is recognized as *a reason* for giving up the former because it shows, if true, that the former will not serve its purpose". For Stevenson, this connection is not based on logic but on human psychology; people would be unwilling to make an aimless moral judgement.

However, we do not always withdraw our judgements about unavoidable actions. We often make moral judgements about past actions. Why, then, do we continue to make judgements even when the past actions cannot be changed? Stevenson's (ibid., p. 49) explanation is as follows:

> we are trying to prevent similar actions in the future. The emotive meaning of 'ought' greatly assists us. It enables us to build up […] an adverse attitude to his act, making him recall it, say, with an unpleasant feeling of guilt. The feeling becomes associated not with the past act alone, but with all others like it.

Stevenson's explanation is that when Peter tells Judas that he ought not to have done this, Peter is not necessarily trying to change the fact that Judas has done something wrong, because it has already happened. Instead, Peter uses the word 'ought' to create a negative emotion and attitude, such as guilt and shame, towards Judas's action, which may prevent Judas from repeating the action in the future.[175] Peter wants Judas to associate guilt with this action and similar

[175] One could say that Peter's use of 'ought' functions similarly to what Fricker (2016) calls *proleptic blame*: a form of communicative blame that seeks not just to express resentment but

ones, discouraging Judas from repeating them. Here, Peter's judgement is intended to create negative feelings in Judas that will prevent similar failures in the future.

However, this explanation may be overly optimistic. Defenders of Stevenson might argue that Peter's judgement could influence Judas even if he never faces an identical situation again – for example, by discouraging betrayal more broadly or cultivating a general disposition against similar wrongdoing. Yet this defence raises further questions: How similar must the future situation be for the judgement to exert influence? And how can we determine whether it was Peter's utterance, rather than some other factor, that influenced Judas's later behaviour? Even if Judas refrains from betraying someone years later, we cannot easily attribute this decision to Peter's past moral judgement. At best, the perlocutionary effect remains speculative, and at worst, the judgement fails to perform its intended function.[176] In such cases, it is more plausible that Peter's utterance served another function, such as just expressing blame or regret, rather than aiming to shape future action.

What did we learn from this section? Applying Stevenson's own account, we learned that Stevenson made a judgement about moral judgements, stating that we – the readers – should avoid making moral judgements if the actions are not avoidable. The decision to stop making moral judgements towards unavoidable actions is itself an avoidable action. Therefore, Stevenson suggests that we stop making moral judgements about unavoidable actions. The intended perlocutionary effect of his argument is that we stop making such

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to bring about a transformation in the hearer. According to Fricker, "the illocutionary point is to bring the wrongdoer to remorse for what they have done, so that they come to be appropriately moved by new, shared reasons incorporating the point of view of the wronged party" (ibid., p. 176). This kind of communicative blame exerts pressure on the hearer to recognise reasons they may not yet fully acknowledge, thereby cultivating shared moral understanding. In this light, Peter's utterance might aim to treat Judas as someone who *ought* to come to remorse and moral recognition, even if he has not yet done so. Also see Bagley (2017).

[176] Similarly, Hare points out that while it is enough to give advice by telling someone, it is not enough to say that one has persuaded someone until a change in behaviour or a firm commitment to action occurs as a direct result of the persuader's influence. The person being persuaded must act on the persuader's words or actions, without any external factors. Hare's (1972, p. 4) examples that use persuaders' actions are as follows: "we can say 'We persuaded him to talk by using the thumbscrew' or 'The presence of so many supporters induced him to speak frankly', but not 'we ordered him to talk by using the thumbscrew' or 'The presence of so many supporters advised him to speak frankly'. This is because a thumbscrew is not a means of communication – it is used as a means of torture. Nor can the mere *presence* of supporters advise him, although the supporters can".

judgements. However, was he successful? Stevenson (1938, p. 57) recognises this potential issue and admits that his argument might be insufficient to influence us after all:

> Perhaps the reader has very curious purposes, or approves of acting in a purposeless fashion. I should then have to point out other matters of fact, which might more successfully direct his approval in the way I wish. In the end I might have to resort to persuasive oratory.

Stevenson admits that the perlocutionary production success of his own view that we limit moral judgement to avoidable actions is uncertain and may need to be made more persuasive. But perhaps it is enough that the *attempt* is made. What matters is that the speaker intended to attempt to influence the reader, and made a reasonable attempt to do so. Yet this, I highlight, supports the importance of perlocutionary intention: even if moral directives often fail to achieve their intended perlocutionary effects, what helps us to understand these directives is the speaker's intention – what the speaker is attempting to do in order to get the hearer to φ.

This, as I will show in the coming sections, is the advantage of taking perlocutionary intention as explanatorily prior for understanding directives, especially those best understood as H-directives, such as advice. There may be perlocutionary communicative failure and perlocutionary production failure, but as long as there is illocutionary and perlocutionary performance success, we can still understand what H-directives are, and why we use them.

5. Advising as a Directive Speech Act

This section addresses the third guiding question: what makes advice a distinctive kind of directive? I argue that advice is best understood as an H-directive that aims to guide the hearer's deliberation rather than to secure compliance. In §5.1, I distinguish guiding from influencing by focusing on the speaker's perlocutionary intention. §5.2 explains how moral advice functions as an invitation to deliberate. §5.3 examines whether felicitous advice requires uptake, arguing that it does not have to. Finally, §5.4 shows that advice uttered in the form of an indicative sentence can function as an H-directive when used in the appropriate context.

5.1 Differentiating between Guidance and Influence

I now turn to the distinction between *guiding* and *influencing*, in order to clarify the role of perlocutionary intention in advising. I argue that while advising may sometimes influence, its primary function is to guide: to contribute intentionally to the hearer's deliberative process. Though 'guiding' and 'influencing' are often treated as synonymous, they diverge in ways that matter for understanding how advice functions as an H-directive: guiding involves the speaker's *perlocutionary intention* to support deliberation, whereas influence is understood as its *perlocutionary effects*, which may be unintended, unconscious, or even manipulative. In what follows, I explore this distinction and its implications for understanding advice.

Influencing can be subtle, covert, or even manipulative. It need not be transparent: a speaker can influence through rhetoric (e.g., insinuations) or emotional appeals without ever explicitly stating what they want the other person to do. For example, nudging (e.g., unpleasant pictures on cigarette packs, opt-out default system for organ donation, etc.) is an example of influencing, as it is "deliberate changes to and designs of people's choice environments – the ways in which options are presented or framed – in attempts to predictably steer those in specific directions" (Schmidt & Engelen, 2020, p. 2).[177]

Importantly, influencing may occur even when the speaker does not intend the specific effect it has on the hearer. One can be an influence on someone without actively intending to influence them, as in cases where a person is described as a 'bad influence' despite being unaware of their effect. Similarly, it makes sense to say, "He influenced her all right, but not in the way he had intended", suggesting that influence can occur even when its actual outcome diverges from the speaker's intention. Influencing, then, is best understood in terms of perlocutionary effects: what a speech act in fact brings about in the hearer, whether or not this outcome was intended, recognised, or deliberated upon.

Guiding, by contrast, is an intentional action which can be realised through speech acts, often through advising.[178] When a speaker guides with words, they typically use a directive that is publicly accountable and subject to justification, as what is uttered becomes part of the conversational record. The speaker who guides recognises their role (or believes that they have the role) in shaping the

[177] Other examples of influencing can include 'cajoling', 'coaxing', and 'flattery'.
[178] Guiding can be realised through non-verbal means, such as through gestures (e.g., pointing to a noticeboard with job fair dates at an unemployment office or leaving an Alcoholics Anonymous pamphlet in the letterbox of someone who needs help with addiction).

hearer's deliberative or practical reasoning and can be held responsible if the guidance misleads. Crucially, guiding is not reducible to a perlocutionary effect because it is an intentional act by the speaker, and its success does not depend on whether the hearer recognises the hearer's perlocutionary intention or acts as the speaker intended.

Influencing typically aims to bring about an outcome, whether a change in action or belief, without necessarily requiring the hearer to understand the reasons behind it. The speaker's aim is to achieve a particular outcome, which can occur through subtle or manipulative means, and influence may arise even when unintended by the speaker. In contrast, guiding is intentional; the person who guides attempts not only to get the hearer to ϕ but also to help the hearer to understand the underlying reasons for it. Advising, in particular, is a paradigm of guiding: the speaker offers input with the aim of supporting the hearer's deliberation.[179] By contrast, many S-directives – such as commanding, ordering, or demanding – are oriented toward influencing and prioritise compliance.

This distinction matters because influencing can operate independently of the hearer's rational agency, potentially raising concerns about manipulation, whereas guiding, at least in principle, aims to respect the hearer's autonomy and invite the hearer to deliberate.[180] Guiding is thus best understood as an intentional action aimed at contributing to the hearer's deliberative process.

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[179] One may wonder if my analysis is in tension with the findings in social sciences where advice is taken to be an 'intrinsically face-threatening act' (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 2003; Goldsmith & MacGeorge, 2000; Locher, 2006), where 'face' is taken to be "socially situated identities people claim or attribute to others" (Tracy, 1990, p. 210). On this view, advice threatens face because it implies the hearer lacks competence or needs help coping with a problem (Feng & Magen, 2016, p. 752). However, face-threatening acts are not necessarily autonomy-undermining; one may threaten face without treating the hearer as less than a rational agent. My thesis challenges the assumption that all forms of advice threaten face. Instead, I argue that advising, as an H-directive, is uniquely positioned to respect rather than threaten the advisee's autonomy. Unlike S-directives, advising, as I argue in this chapter and the coming chapters, is aimed to guide the hearer by inviting them to deliberate. A key reason advice is seen as face-threatening is that it implies asymmetry: the adviser is more knowledgeable or competent than the advisee. However, in Chapter 5, I argue that advising operates under different speech act norms; it does not merely function to correct a perceived lack of competence on the part of the advisee. Rather, it engages with the advisee's existing concerns as it is given for the hearer's sake. The hearer is not positioned as incompetent but as a rational agent capable of deliberation.

[180] Arguing that advising is fundamentally a directive speech act and thus distinct from giving testimony, Wiland maintains that "testimony typically cannot be rephrased as advice", explaining, "If belief cannot be commanded, it cannot be advised either" (2021, p. 117).

This brings a new insight on perlocutionary intention – recall that a perlocutionary intention is the speaker's intention to bring about a particular effect in the *hearer* – but for advising, the speaker's perlocutionary intention is for *them* to guide the hearer, and the intended perlocutionary effect is that the hearer deliberates. In other words, the speaker's perlocutionary intention does not have to be limited to bring about an intended perlocutionary effect in the hearer; it can also include what the speaker intends to do by this utterance. Recall that in §3.3, I argued that H-directives must require a particular perlocutionary intention, and this intention can be the following: the speaker attempts to ψ, where ψ is a perlocutionary act by the speaker, in order to get the hearer to φ. This ψ-ing refers to the action that the speaker themselves intends to do in a perlocutionary sense; in case of advising, it is guiding.

Unlike influencing, guiding aims not only at bringing about a particular physical action but also a mental action, in that the hearer performs or understands the reasons for action. If a speaker successfully guides a hearer to φ, the hearer would ideally φ because they recognise the reasons for doing so, not merely because they infer that the speaker wants them to.[181] Suppose a moral adviser intends to guide someone to φ by highlighting moral reasons, but the hearer φ-s simply because they take it as an order. In that case, it is unclear whether genuine guidance has occurred. This is where perlocutionary intention and effect can diverge: the speaker's aim was to support reasoning, but the outcome may be mere compliance without deliberation. This distinguishes advising from other directive speech acts, such as ordering or requesting where the hearer's understanding of the underlying reasons may be secondary to achieving compliance.

Another key distinction concerns authority or credibility. Guiding often presupposes a recognised/deferred authority or expertise, where such authority is ideally regarded as a form of warranted credibility or trustworthiness rather than authoritative power.[182] The person guiding is understood to have credible insights, experience, or knowledge that can help the hearer deliberate about a problem. In contrast, one can influence without any authority or expertise to steer the hearer's action or change belief without having warranted credibility or trustworthiness. Influencing may raise questions about manipulation,

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However, I think that belief can be advised if we take advising to be guiding the hearer's mental state.

[181] Hence the adverb 'ideally' is included. It may also be the case that the hearer φ-s without deliberation because the advisee completely trusts the adviser or lacks the time to deliberate. This point will be revisited in Chapter 5.

[182] I will talk more about 'authority' and 'expertise' in Chapter 5.

autonomy, and consent, while guiding, although it can also be misused, at least *prima facie* respects the hearer's capacity for rational agency.

One might think that these subtle differences are hard to detect when we use directives, even when we advise others. We do want to influence others even when we advise them, especially when we feel that they can really benefit from our advice. Many of us appeal to emotion or persuasion to make advice more compelling. That is why I defined influencing as something which *can* be subtle, covert, or even manipulative and which *can* be done without any authority or expertise. However, this does not undermine the distinction. Rather, it shows that the perlocutionary intention and the intended perlocutionary effect may overlap in cases of successful advice, but they are not the same. While influencing and guiding are not mutually exclusive, not all instances of influence amount to guidance.[183]

One objection is that if advice does not aim to influence, then what is the point of giving it? Surely the purpose of advice is to influence the hearer's actions rather than simply provide guidance. At first glance, this seems intuitive. After all, advice often appears to influence action.

However, there may be several reasons for giving advice without primarily aiming to influence the hearer's actions. First, in some cases, the adviser may even deliberately avoid influencing the hearer to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. For example, an adviser might say, "I would φ, but it's just my preference. Take it with a grain of salt". Here, the adviser shares a personal perspective without attempting to sway the hearer, who is left to weigh the advice independently in light of their own considerations. Offering guidance in this way respects the advisee's autonomy without presupposing an intention to influence.

Second, advice may be sought not to influence action but to gain insight into the adviser's view. For instance, when an advisee asks, "What would you do if you were me?", they are signalling a desire to hear the adviser's perspective. The advisee may not intend to follow the advice, but they value it as input for their deliberations.[184] In this case, the adviser's role is to provide a perspective that the advisee can consider when making a decision. The advisee maintains

[183] In other words, influencing and advising can have some things in common. But advising, if it is not to influence but to guide, must be for the sake of the hearer (or if it is moral advice, it is also for the sake of morality).

[184] Similarly, in linguistics, Limberg and Locher (2012, p. 7) acknowledge that "there is no guarantee that advice, whether solicited or not, will be followed".

full autonomy in deciding whether to follow the advice or explore other options.

Lastly, advice can be offered as a potential option without presenting it as the only or best choice. For example, an adviser might say, "You could consider enrolling on that course. It's a good way to build your skills". This utterance does not aim to influence the hearer to enrol but merely highlights an option for their consideration. The value of the advice lies not in its persuasiveness, but in its ability to expand the range of possibilities available to the advisee. This enables them to deliberate and make a choice based on their own priorities and circumstances.

A related objection arises: even if the perlocutionary intention is not to influence, does the adviser's preference for the hearer to follow the advice not make it indirectly influential? When an adviser gives advice, their primary interest lies in the hearer's well-being or success.[185] Would it not naturally lead the adviser to want their advice to influence the hearer's course of action? After all, it seems reasonable to assume that the adviser, in giving advice, hopes it will contribute to the hearer's decision-making process, thereby indirectly influencing their actions.

While it is true that advisers often hope their advice will be influential, the conversational norms and practices that govern advising suggest a different picture. Advising usually involves offering reasons that the hearer is free to evaluate, accept, or reject. For instance, the hearer may challenge it as being unsuitable or unhelpful (Limberg & Locher, 2012, p. 6). If this happens, the adviser may even retract the advice entirely. This willingness to retract advice suggests that its purpose is not to compel or strongly influence action, but rather to provide guidance that the advisee can critically evaluate.

If the primary goal of providing advice were to influence others, advisers would be less willing to retract their advice when challenged. However, in practice, advisers often prioritise respecting the hearer's autonomy over their own desire to see it followed. Advising respects the hearer's freedom to deliberate and make their own decision, even if it means rejecting the advice eventually. Although advisers may reasonably hope that their advice is followed, the primary function of advice is to provide guidance that helps the hearer to engage with the supporting reasons and make their own decisions.

[185] As Björnsson and Finlay (2010, p. 17) say, "Advice is driven by an interest in putting the advisee in a better position to promote his values".

This emphasises the role of advice as an H-directive, aimed towards guidance rather than influencing actions.[186]

As I noted in the introduction, respecting autonomy can involve allowing another to make mistakes. According to Fleming (2016, p. 190), "People have a right to do what they do not have the most reason to do". In this way, the speaker's perlocutionary intention in issuing H-directives is not to compel compliance, but to guide them, respecting the hearer's freedom to deliberate and respond as they see fit, which foresees that the perlocutionary effect may not always be realised.[187]

Although this distinction aids in navigating the upcoming discussion, I want to further explore why giving advice as guiding action achieves its purpose through inviting the hearer to deliberate, especially in moral contexts.

5.2 Moral Advice and Invitation to Deliberate

In this subsection, I argue that when moral advice, as a type of directive, functions to guide, one of the ways it guides is by inviting the hearer to deliberate on moral values, principles, reasons, norms, or possible courses of action for the hearer's sake, and ultimately for morality's sake.[188] This feature distinguishes moral advising as an H-directive, which aims to guide the hearer

[186] The distinction between S-directives and H-directives combines two dimensions: the intended outcome (compliance vs. guidance) and the intended beneficiary (speaker vs. hearer). However, these dimensions can come apart. This suggests at least four possibilities: (1) compliance for the speaker's interest, (2) compliance for the hearer's sake (e.g., a parent ordering a child to take medicine), (3) guidance for the speaker's interest, and (4) guidance for the hearer's sake. I do not pursue these possibilities further here, but I note them as a valuable direction for future work.

[187] Importantly, this does not imply that all S-directives do not respect the hearer's autonomy. For example, a parent ordering a child to stop doing something dangerous need not be seen as undermining the child's autonomy. Hare (1972, p. 7) notes that "even orders do not impair the recipient's freedom to decide whether to obey them, any more than statements impair the hearer's freedom to decide whether to believe them".

[188] Cf. Williams (1995a, p. 42) emphasises that advice must be understood partly in terms of its intended deliberative effects. Even when offered in the "if I were you" mode, "[w]e are saying that the conclusion to φ […] can be reached from his S by a sound deliberative route, and that is something that involves such things as the exercise of his imagination and the effective direction of his attention. But among the things that will affect his imagination and his attention, we hope, is our advice itself and how it represents things" (ibid.), where S refers to the agent's actual motivational set (i.e., the set of his desires, evaluations, attitudes, projects, etc). The fact that advice is meant to shape the hearer's deliberation does not make it insincere; "the question of insincerity lies not in whether it changes the situation, but in what spirit it does so" (ibid.).

through moral reasoning that respects their autonomy, rather than aiming to secure compliance.

To clarify the formulation, 'for the hearer's sake for morality's sake', I draw on Rønnow-Rasmussen's analysis of 'for x's sake'.[189] As he explains, in phrases such as "favouring x for its own sake for a's sake", the first instance of 'sake' marks a non-instrumental valuing of x, while the second indicates that this valuing is finally grounded in the agent's relation to x, not in further ends: "'[S]ake' signals (or determines, if we are referring to the content) that we do not have an even more complex attitude of the following kind in mind: I favour x for b for c's sake" (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2021, p. 152). Then, to advise for the hearer's sake for morality's sake is to guide the hearer non-instrumentally, motivated by moral considerations that are not grounded in further ends. Understood in this way, moral advice invites the hearer to engage with or think about moral reasons addressed to them as ends in themselves, and as reasons for her to act upon, through her own deliberation, for her own sake.[190]

With this in view, we can now consider how the phrase 'invitation to deliberate' should be interpreted in the context of moral advice. The phrase should not be understood as an identity claim equating 'advising' with 'inviting'.[191] Instead, it should be understood as a metaphor or a manner of

[189] For the detailed discussion of 'sake', see Chapter 9 of Rønnow-Rasmussen (2021) and Chapter 5 of his (2011).

[190] One might object that inviting someone to deliberate does not always amount to giving moral advice. For example, if a speaker knows that the hearer is bad at deliberation and encourages them to think for themselves with the aim of leading them to an immoral decision, this seems more like manipulation or influence rather than genuine moral advice. This suggests that mere invitation to deliberation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for moral advice. To qualify as moral advice, the invitation must be given for the hearer's sake for morality's sake. This point will be developed in Chapter 5.

[191] One might object to the claim that moral advice can be understood as an 'invitation to deliberate' on the grounds that 'advising' and 'inviting' are two distinct speech acts. Advising is a directive while invitations appear to combine both directive and commissive elements. For example, Bach and Harnish (1979) and Hancher (1979) argue that invitations belong in the commissive-directive category. According to Hancher, invitations are "equally commissive and directive; neither force dominates. The class is *sui generis*" (ibid., p. 6). Invitations aim to influence the hearer's future action while also implying that the speaker is committed to making the proposed activity available. As Pérez-Hernández (2001, p. 77) puts it, "Invitations bind the speaker to a future action which involves allowing or facilitating the state of affairs in which the addressee will perform the action expressed in the invitation (if one invites someone else to a party, one will then have to allow that person to take part in it)". Of course, the classification of invitations as commissives is not uncontroversial, as Leech (1983) and Wierzbicka (1987) instead classify them as directives. One could also argue that the speaker is

speech that highlights the non-coercive, autonomy-respecting nature of advising. The kind of 'invitation' I have in mind is akin to expressions of encouragement that also convey a wish; they express the speaker's hope that the hearer will engage, while preserving the hearer's freedom to decline. For example, when teaching, I might say to a student, "May I invite [student's name] to share their thoughts?". This utterance is neither commissive, as it does not involve a commitment to future action for the speaker, nor an S-directive, as it does not demand compliance. Instead, it expresses both a wish for participation and a gentle encouragement to engage, while ensuring that the student remains free not to respond, without feeling obligated to participate or fearing repercussions.

Similarly, when I say that moral advice is an invitation to deliberate, what I mean is that advising creates an open, non-coercive space for the hearer to deliberate for their own sake. According to Arpaly and Schroeder (2013, p. 24), "Deliberation, at the least, requires bringing to mind ideas or images meant to have some rational relation to the topic being considered, in the service of reaching a conclusion about what to think or do". Then advice has some rational relation to the topic being considered, which is helping to achieve the hearer's goals. This preserves the autonomy-respecting nature of advising as an H-directive while distinguishing it from invitations in the traditional sense characterised above in the objection. Therefore, the 'invitation to deliberate' captures the nature of advising as an H-directive aimed at guiding action, without conflating it with the speech act of 'inviting' in the traditional sense.[192]

I emphasise that this 'invitation to deliberate' is particularly important in the context of moral advice, rather than non-moral advice. Many examples of disinterested non-moral advice, such as advising a traveller which bus to take, aim to guide the hearer toward achieving a specific goal, and typically do not

not committing to host the party in the robust sense that one commits when promising; rather, they merely presuppose or imply that the event will take place. I do not take a stand on this issue. The relevant point is that if invitations are taken to involve a speaker commitment, then describing advice as an 'invitation' risks conflating two distinct speech acts and misclassifying advice.

[192] This reply would block a similar potential objection, which is that advising is reducible to an indirect speech act, akin to Bach and Harnish's theory of indirect speech acts (as we have seen in Chapter 2). The objection would be such that if advising is providing guidance through an invitation to deliberate, it seems that the primary act (e.g., invitation to deliberate) is intentionally performed by means of the performance of another, literal act, which is giving advice. Advice, then, would derive its illocutionary force from inferential reasoning by the hearer rather than being a distinct speech act in its own right. However, when 'invitation' is understood as such, it is no longer a separate speech act from advising.

invite deliberation. Moral advice, however, gives reasons that guide what the hearer should or ought to do morally. For this reason, moral advice invites the hearer to engage with the reasons offered – to weigh, assess, and integrate them into their deliberation. Whether or not it is solicited, moral advice aims to help the hearer's reasoning rather than substituting for it.

Moral deliberation involves the reflective evaluation of reasons for action based on moral considerations, thereby fostering the practice of moral agency. MacIntyre (1999) defines moral agency as the ability to be justifiably held responsible for one's actions. In order to be justifiably held responsible for one's actions, one must deliberate upon the standards governing one's actions beforehand. When moral advice is accepted without engaging in deliberation, it risks undermining the advisee's moral agency by bypassing their capacity for reasoning. This can lead to manipulation rather than guidance, possibly reducing the hearer to a passive recipient of external guidance and compromising their autonomy and moral responsibility.

One possible objection to my view is that, although moral advice often functions as an invitation to deliberation, this is not always the case. Sometimes, an adviser may simply offer their advice without intending to invite deliberation, saying something like, "Don't think about it. Just do it!" or "I advise you to act without thinking". However, it is unclear whether such utterances truly count as instances of giving advice as they resemble warnings or demands. Even if we consider these to be advice, there are three specific contexts in which they could arise. First, the advisee may be under time constraints, making deliberation impractical. In such cases, it is not assumed that deliberation is unnecessary, but rather that it would have occurred had there been enough time. Additionally, the advisee may still have the opportunity to deliberate on their decision after following the advice. Second, such advice may be given when all the relevant considerations have already been exhausted. If the advisee has already deliberated thoroughly and reached a point where no deliberation is needed, advice not to deliberate further presupposes that the necessary deliberation has already taken place. Third, advisee should still have the option to refuse to follow the advice without incurring blame. Otherwise, these utterances would function more as S-directives than H-directives.

5.3 The Role of Uptake in Advice

This subsection considers whether felicitous advice requires uptake. I argue that (a) the illocutionary act of advising can be performed without uptake, and

(b) distorted or failed uptake does not necessarily render an illocutionary act infelicitous, provided the act was recognisable (i.e., *uptakeable*) to a competent hearer under normal conditions. To support this, I distinguish between illocutionary performance success and felicity, and propose a *uptakeability view* that preserves the speaker's autonomy and intention while accounting for the role of uptake in discursive injustice.

Let us first settle the definition. Uptake refers to the hearer's *interpretation* of the utterance: hearing an utterance and identifying it as a particular kind of illocutionary act.[193] Here, I adopt McDonald's (2022a, p. 921) minimal conception of uptake: "Let uptake be the hearer's interpretation of the utterance, such that to provide uptake is to hear an utterance and interpret it as a particular kind of illocutionary act".[194] As McDonald notes, this minimal definition accommodates both conventionalist and intentionalist views: "One might arrive at this interpretation by reasoning about the speaker's intention, or by noticing conventional features of the utterance, by a mixture of the two, or by some other process" (ibid.).

Now let us turn to where I disagree with McDonald in order to clarify my first claim that the illocutionary act of advising can be performed without uptake. I agree with the first half of her claim: "If a person's utterance is neither heard nor interpreted by anyone, it is implausible to say that they communicated with anyone, and therefore, I suggest, it would be implausible to say that they performed an illocutionary act" (ibid.). I am not convinced by the conclusion. I think the speaker can perform an illocutionary act without uptake: there can be illocutionary performance success without communication success.[195] Why

[193] As Austin (1962, pp. 115–116) puts it, "Unless a certain effect is achieved, the illocutionary act will not have been happily, successfully performed. […] Generally the effect amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution". I agree with Austin that an illocutionary act can be performed but still be unhappy – that is, infelicitous.
[194] Note that McDonald's definition provides a minimal account of uptake, treating it as a response to an utterance – a definition with which both intentionalists and non-intentionalists could agree. For example, Kukla, who interprets uptake in behaviourist rather than intentionalist terms, could also accept this definition. Kukla (2023, p. 5) defines uptake as follows: "Uptake is simply what we do in response to a speech act, insofar as that action expresses recognition of the normative change the original speech act makes. […] If a speech act gets no uptake at all, then it does not succeed in making a difference to the social world". For debates whether uptake belongs to the illocutionary act or to the perlocutionary act. For the related discussion, see Maitra (2009) and the reply by Sharma (2020).
[195] Recall that in the introduction, I cited Harris et al. (2018, p. 4) to distinguish different types of success: "To succeed in performing an illocutionary act requires merely producing an utterance with a communicative intention; nothing on the part of the addressee is required. To succeed in *communicating* via one's act requires that the addressee recognize what kind of

does this distinction matter? Because I have strong intentionalist leanings, but I also want to preserve the explanatory force of our intuitions in cases of communicative failure. To motivate this claim, let us begin with non-advice examples.

> **[ISLAND WARNING]** Imagine a person who discovers a remote and dangerous island. Before leaving, they erect a warning sign at the entrance in every language: "Danger: Wild Animals". Suppose no one ever visits the island.

Was an illocutionary act of warning performed? I think so. The speaker intended to warn, had a perlocutionary aim, and performed a locutionary act. There was, at least, illocutionary and perlocutionary performance success. Although such cases raise questions about the temporal boundaries of speech acts, I believe they at least suggest that performing an illocutionary act does not always require uptake. Without an audience, and therefore no uptake, the felicity of the act is indeterminate – like an exam that has been completed but never marked. However, the act itself has still been performed.

Consider the next example:

> **[INSULT IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE]** Suppose I insult someone in my own language, but they neither hear nor understand it. Perhaps I whisper it behind their back, or say it directly in a language they do not speak.

My intuition is that I still performed an expressive illocutionary act – an insult – even though there was no hearer uptake. The illocutionary act was performed without uptake, though perhaps not felicitously nor infelicitously.

We now turn to the second claim: distorted or failed uptake does not necessarily render an illocutionary act infelicitous. Consider a case where the hearer recognises and interprets the utterance as an insult but finds it amusing rather than offensive. There is illocutionary performance success and uptake (i.e., illocutionary communication success) but no perlocutionary production success.[196] Nevertheless, the illocutionary act was felicitous: it was understood as an insult. An objection might be: was it a successful insult if the hearer was

response one is trying to produce". This puts in me the same camp as Alston (2000, p. 24) who says that uptake is not necessary: if I say "Please could you bring me a towel" without you hearing me, it is plausible to say that I performed the illocutionary act, requesting.

[196] See McDonald (2022b) for the illocutionary/perlocutionary distinction in compliments.

not offended? I would say yes, if by 'successful' we mean illocutionary performance and communication success, not perlocution production success.

But suppose now that the hearer misinterprets the act entirely. They sincerely and genuinely take the insult to be a joke.[197] Some uptake occurs – they interpret it as a kind of illocutionary act – but not the one the speaker intended. This is a case of *distorted uptake*. Should we conclude that the illocutionary act was felicitous even though it was not interpreted as an insult? Some may say no: the act is infelicitous because there was illocutionary communication failure. Some might argue, however, that this distorted uptake reclassifies the act altogether: that the utterance is not an insult but a joke. One may pose a third possibility that the act can still be an insult and can even be felicitous despite distorted uptake. This third possibility is the view I aim to defend. Consider the following:

> **[INSULT AS A JOKE]** The speaker, who is lesbian, insults a Nazi for being a homophobe. The Nazi, however, laughs and interprets the utterance as a pure joke.

My intuition is that, regardless of this distorted uptake, the illocutionary act of insulting was felicitously performed.

Examining current theories of uptake can help to situate this intuition. McDonald (2021) distinguishes between two dominant views. According to the ratification theory, the hearer's role is limited to either ratifying or failing to ratify the speaker's attempted illocutionary act. On this view, the speaker determines the potential illocutionary force of her utterance, expressed in line with conventional norms; the hearer merely determines whether the act succeeds. If the hearer recognises the speaker's intention, the act is successful. If not, the act fails, and no illocutionary act is performed (McDonald 2021, p. 3511). In the distorted uptake case above, the ratification theorist would say the act was infelicitous, but would not say that the utterance was a joke. The speaker's intention still governs the act-type.

In contrast, the constitution theory of uptake suggests that uptake does not just merely ratify the force of an illocutionary act, but can actually constitute –

[197] It was intentional that I phrased it that the hearer is 'sincerely' or 'genuinely' giving distorted uptake because this case should be separated from a case where the hearer understands that the speaker is performing an illocutionary act, φ-ing, but pretends that the speaker is performing another illocutionary act, ψ-ing. This is, according to Caponetto and Cepollaro (2023, p. 585), 'bending' an illocutionary act.

constructs – it (ibid.).[198] The hearer's uptake can determine both whether an illocutionary act is performed and what kind of illocutionary act it is. The speaker does not fully determine the potential illocutionary force of her utterance. The hearer's uptake can constitute an illocutionary act in such a way that it becomes an illocutionary act that the speaker did not intend to perform. According to this theory, the illocutionary act that is performed by the person of colour is, in fact, a joke, not an insult.[199]

Even though I prefer the ratification theory, I wish to distance myself from it in one important respect. Let us look at an example:

> **[IMPLICIT BIAS]** A woman of colour, acting in her capacity as a PhD supervisor, advises her student to revise a draft chapter: "Based on my comments, I strongly advise you to restructure the introduction before submission". However, the student, a white man, genuinely responds: "Thank you for the suggestion".

The illocutionary act is thus misrecognised as a suggestion, in fact, downgraded, possibly due to implicit bias about gender or race. Here, my intuition is that the supervisor did give advice, and that the act was felicitous, even though the hearer misrecognised or misinterpreted it. If we conclude that this illocutionary act was infelicitous because of her student being biased, it seems to give too much power to the hearer to render any speech act infelicitous – and this is not the result I want from a theory of uptake. Likewise, even if the Nazi finds the insult genuinely amusing because he interprets it as a joke, this illocutionary act of insulting – where the speaker had relevant intentions, possessed appropriate standing, and used recognisable insulting words – should be interpreted as a felicitous illocutionary act, despite distorted

[198] The philosophers who seem to be defending the constitution theory of uptake include Kukla (2014), Langton (2018), and Tanesini (2018).

[199] The well-known case that Kukla (2014) puts forward is the case of Celia, a floor manager, who has the authority to give orders to the workers on her floor and does so, but compliance is low because of her gender – her workers take her as issuing requests instead (ibid., pp. 445–446). As Caponetto and Cepollaro (2023, p. 585) say, "Celia is a victim of discursive injustice: her utterances receive a distorted uptake, which constitutes them as different acts than the ones she was trying to perform". However, as McDonald (2021) notes, there are strong versions of the constitution theory and weaker versions. The latter view would hold that "the hearer's interpretation is bound by rationality and conventions. She can make it the case that a speaker performed an act she did not intend to perform, but the act the speaker ultimately performs must be sufficiently similar to the act she intended to perform. An attempted greeting cannot become a declaration of war, but an attempted order could become a request" (ibid., p. 3514).

uptake. For both cases, it seems unjust to grant the hearer such a power that could render an illocutionary act infelicitous.

So how can we make sense of these intuitions? I propose an account that makes space for them: the uptakeability view. I would like to sketch such a view which could provide an explanation for such cases where the hearer's distorted uptake should not carry that much power to render a speech act infelicitous. This view aims to offer a more fine-grained account of uptake by distinguishing actual uptake from *uptakeability*. Rather than saying uptake is *always* necessary for felicity (as constitution and ratification theories may say), or *never* (as some strong intentionalists might claim), I offer the following principle:

> An illocutionary act (which is not an abuse) is felicitous if (a) the speaker performs it with appropriate normative standing; and (b) the illocutionary act is *uptakeable* – that is, recognisable as the intended act-type by a competent hearer under normal epistemic and social conditions.

This implies that actual uptake is not necessary for felicity. Rather, it depends on whether the illocutionary act could have been taken up, as the speaker intended, by a competent hearer in that context, whose interpretive capacities are not distorted by structural injustice. This is a sketch, as the meaning of 'normal epistemic and social conditions' remains to be fully developed. Broadly speaking, it refers to the conditions under which a competent hearer could reasonably be expected to recognise the speaker's intended illocutionary act. Epistemically, this includes having sufficient linguistic and contextual understanding; the hearer interprets the conventional and pragmatic features of the utterance, is attentive to relevant background information, and is not subject to misperception. Socially, it involves conditions in which the speaker's illocutionary act-type would be intelligible to a competent hearer – where the speaker's race, gender, or social role do not, systemically block or distort uptake in advance. These are counterfactual conditions: could the act have been recognised by a competent, attentive, and responsive hearer, under conditions that are not distorted by structural injustice? Again, this is not a fully formed view, but the uptakeability view offers a starting point – one that preserves the force of the speaker's intended illocutionary act in the face of distorted uptake.

Let us return now to the insult-as-a-joke case. According to the constitution theory, the hearer's uptake constitutes the act: because the utterance is taken as a joke, the act becomes a joke. This is deeply problematic. It allows a Nazi

to transform a forceful, meaningful insult into humour. This seems to undermine the speaker's intention over her own illocutionary act.

The ratification theory fares better. It treats the case as a failure of uptake: the hearer failed to recognise the communicative intention, so the illocutionary act was not successfully performed. But this is also unsatisfying. The speaker clearly expressed the insult with the right intentions, in the right context, and with the relevant normative standing. To say that the act failed solely due to the hearer's misinterpretation denies the expressive power of illocutionary action, especially in cases where the act is justified and socially intelligible.

The uptakeability view gives us a better answer. The illocutionary act of insulting was both performed and felicitous because it was recognisable as such to any competent interlocutor. That the Nazi failed to interpret it due to arrogance, bias, or delusion does not defeat felicity. Distorted uptake occurred, but the act was uptakeable in the right way. In other words, the hearer should have interpreted it as an insult because it is an insult – a felicitous one. This view allows us to preserve the performance and felicity of illocutionary acts even in the face of distorted uptake.

Let us go back to the gender bias example. How should this be interpreted? On the constitution theory, this is a clear case in which the hearer's uptake constitutes the speech act: since the student takes it as a suggestion, not advice, that is what the speech act becomes.[200] But this gives the hearer too much power. It implies that members of marginalised groups can routinely fail to perform the illocutionary acts they intend, because biased hearers do not take them up as intended.

The ratification theory would also claim that the act failed, since the hearer did not recognise the speaker's intention to advise. Felicity fails because the speaker's intention was not ratified. But this too is unsatisfying since this also lets the hearer's bias determine felicity.

[200] I would like to make it clear that I am not assigning the strong constitution theory to Kukla. Kukla (2023) distinguishes three types of refusals: transgressive refusals, entitlement challenges, and constitutive refusals. Only the last type can "draw upon (limited, constrained) power of uptake to constitute the force of the speech act it responds to. […] Notice that it requires quite a bit of social support and ratification to work. Importantly, if one guy on his own treated his female superior's attempted orders as requests, while everyone else respected her authority, he would just come off as transgressively refusing, and not as actually shaping the force of her speech act. It is only if this response to her attempted orders is collectively sustained and ratified that it succeeds in shaping the force of her words. Uptakes also require uptake themselves, in order to have force" (ibid., p. 17).

On the uptakeability view, this act remains felicitous. The supervisor had full standing and made the illocutionary force of her utterance recognisable to a competent audience. Distorted uptake occurred, but the fault lies with the hearer – he should have recognised the illocutionary act as advice. The act is felicitous because the act was performed and uptakeable by a competent hearer under normal epistemic and social conditions.

This view offers a stronger account of discursive injustice: it allows us to say that speakers, especially those from marginalised positions, can perform felicitous illocutionary acts even when hearers distort them. The uptakeability view preserves both speaker intention and standing, and also the force of the illocutionary act, while avoiding the difficulties of both ratification and constitution theories.

I will end this subsection with a possible objection that I could expect from a ratification theorist, such as McDonald (2021). McDonald's concern is that marginalised speakers lack positive autonomy in practice because their intended acts routinely fail due to biased uptake. In her view, "Positive speaker autonomy is the capacity to ensure that one is performing the illocutionary act one intends to perform" (ibid., p. 3522). Therefore, "Indeed, one of the main motivations for emancipatory movements like feminism and antiracism is to point out the ways in which certain groups lack positive autonomy, and to develop strategies for increasing that autonomy. If we embraced a theory of speech or action which entailed that everyone had full positive autonomy, we would struggle to explain why emancipatory movements still exist" (ibid., p. 3523). But the uptakeability view says that these acts are still felicitous if they were uptakeable to a competent hearer. Then McDonald might ask, if the speech act is considered felicitous when there is distorted uptake, what exactly is the injustice? The ratification theory can explain the injustice in the fact that the illocutionary act is deemed infelicitous due to distorted uptake. The uptakeability view, by contrast, risks removing this very explanatory power: if felicity still obtains, then the injustice seems less severe. The uptakeability view obscures the very wrongs we need to expose.

My answer is the following. Where McDonald and I diverge is in how to understand the role of uptake in determining felicity, especially in cases of distorted uptake. McDonald maintains that felicity requires actual uptake. In contrast, I argue that felicity requires uptakeability, whether the act was recognisable to a competent hearer under normal epistemic and social conditions. This avoids making felicity entirely hostage to the interpretation of individual hearers, especially those who are biased, delusional, or ignorant. McDonald is rightly concerned about positive speaker autonomy: the ability to

perform the illocutionary act one intends. But tying felicity to actual uptake seems to give hearers excessive gatekeeping power. It also fails to distinguish between failure of recognition and failure of performance.

My view protects positive speaker autonomy by holding that felicity can be secured when the illocutionary act is uptakeable, even if, in fact, misrecognised or misinterpreted. On McDonald's view, when advice is downgraded to a suggestion or an insult is interpreted as a joke, the act is infelicitous. But this blurs the locus of injustice: it treats misrecognition as a failure of the speaker, rather than a failure of the audience. The uptakeability view reverses this: the speaker did perform a felicitous illocutionary act, and the hearer wrongs the speaker by failing to take it up as such. This shifts responsibility to where it belongs.

Another possible objection to my view comes from Langton's (1993) account of *illocutionary silencing*, or what she calls *illocutionary disablement*. Langton argues that in certain oppressive contexts, especially those involving structural gendered power, a speaker may fail to perform an illocutionary act altogether because the act is not recognised as such by the hearer. Consider her central example: a woman who says "no" to refuse sex, but whose utterance is not taken as a refusal. Langton says, "By saying 'no' she intends to prevent sex, but she is far from doing as she intends. Since illocutionary force depends, in part, on uptake being secured, the woman fails to refuse" (ibid., p. 321). Her intention is thwarted not just perlocutionarily (in that the man proceeds anyway), but *illocutionarily*: she does not succeed in refusing at all. The act misfires. The explanation Langton offers is that "something about her, something about the role she occupies, prevents her from voicing refusal" (ibid.). In these cases, Langton claims, the speaker is *silenced*: she is not merely unheard or misunderstood, but unable to perform the illocutionary act at all. This presents a direct challenge to the uptakeability view: if felicity can obtain in the absence of uptake, does this not ignore illocutionary silencing, where the speech act never takes place in the first instance?

My answer is that, according to the uptakeability view, the woman *does* refuse, and her refusal is not misfired, even if her refusal is not taken up by the hearer, so long as the act could have been recognisable as such to a competent interlocutor under normal epistemic and social conditions. She performs the illocutionary act, and it is felicitous (given sincerity). I would diagnose that the fault lies not with the speaker, but with the hearer who refuses to acknowledge the act as the speaker intended. Langton writes that "something about her, something about the role she occupies, prevents her from voicing refusal" (1993, p. 318), but I would say instead: something about the hearer – his bias

or his refusal to recognise the act – prevents uptake. The injustice is not that she fails to refuse, but that her refusal is denied. I think this matters. If we say the illocutionary act was not performed, we risk locating the failure in the speaker; if we say it was performed and uptakeably so, we can precisely identify where the wrong lies: with the hearer who could have recognised the act as the speaker intended, not with the speaker who failed to refuse.

To make my point clear, consider the following analogy. When I punch a wall, I exert force, even if the wall is too thick to dent. The failure to leave a dent does not mean I did not punch. The force was there – perhaps not enough to break through, but the action was performed. Similarly, when a speaker says "no" to refuse sex, she does refuse, even if the refusal is not uptaken. The illocutionary act was performed; the illocutionary force is there. The failure to realise the intended perlocutionary effect is due to structural injustice – where the hearer is not competent, or not under normal epistemic conditions, to interpret the act as intended. Over time, enough punches may crack the wall – or the wall will thin, as more hearers become competent.

In cases of discursive injustice, such as when a woman's advice is continually downgraded or their refusal is not uptaken, the uptakeability view shows how felicitous acts can be distorted, and why that distortion is a harm. It identifies misrecognition as a wrongdoing, not an illocutionary performance failure or a misfire. In short, the uptakeability view can explain not only when an illocutionary act is felicitous, but also why distorted uptake matters, and how discursive injustice operates without stripping speakers of positive autonomy.

5.4 Indicative Sentences in Advising – Can They be H-directives?

It is a matter of ongoing debate whether sentences in the indicative mood can function as H-directives. In this subsection, I propose that, in certain *contexts*, indicative sentences can indeed function as H-directives when the speaker has both an illocutionary intention and a relevant perlocutionary intention. When considering the nature of moral and non-moral advice to be guiding the hearer's action, one might question whether statements given in the indicative form can also guide action as H-directives. For example, imagine an adviser who responds to a moral dilemma about whether to lie to a partner with "Lying is wrong". Similarly, in a non-moral context, a doctor might advise a patient with the indicative sentence, "Paracetamol has fewer side effects than codeine", or a teacher might advise students that "The exam is difficult". At first glance, these utterances do not appear to be directives, which are typically

expressed with imperatives or modal verbs such as 'should', 'must', or 'ought'. However, I argue that they can be interpreted as directives, based on the speaker's illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions and context. Here, I focus on context, having discussed intentions in previous sections. Importantly, this interpretation does not reduce them to indirect speech acts.

Context plays a crucial role in determining the potential illocutionary force of an uttered indicative sentence.[201] As I emphasised in Chapter 2, utterances in the indicative mood do not always have assertive force. Consider, for example, a patient receiving medical advice on painkillers. The doctor says, "Paracetamol has fewer side effects than codeine". In this context, the utterance is naturally interpreted as advice intended to guide the patient towards choosing paracetamol over codeine. By contrast, in a medical conference discussing drug side effects, the same utterance would be interpreted as an assertion, conveying information.

Similarly, the context in which "Lying is wrong" is uttered determines its potential illocutionary force of the utterance. The directive illocutionary force is implicit in contexts when someone seeks moral guidance from an adviser. In other contexts, however, such as a child asking their parent for the examples of wrongdoing, the same utterance would function as an assertion describing lying as wrong, alongside stealing and murder, for example.[202]

It is crucial to distinguish the use of indicative sentences in advising from indirect speech acts. In indirect speech acts, the illocutionary force of the utterance differs from its literal meaning, requiring the hearer to infer the speaker's intention. For example, in saying "Could you pass me the salt?", the speaker indirectly requests the hearer to pass the salt, rather than asking if the hearer has the ability to pass the salt. Advice in indicative sentences, however, does not rely on such inference or standardisation (as discussed in Chapter 2) in order to be understood as such. Rather, in advising contexts, the indicative

[201] Sbisà (2002, p. 423) also emphasises the importance of considering the context: "The evaluative role of context still seems to be taken for granted in Searle (1969), where felicity conditions provide a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the appropriate performance of a speech act".

[202] Another reason for using indicative sentences in advising can also lie in politeness norms. Advisers may prefer indicative statements over imperatives as the latter might come across as forceful or judgemental, possibly reducing the effect of advice. Limberg and Locher (2012, p. 6) say that an advice-giver can use warranting strategies in order to give "credibility to their recommendations and to show expertise (e.g., citing a source, quoting facts and numbers, invoking personal experience to make a point). In contrast, they also often use mitigation strategies to downtone the impression that they might be imposing their view on the advice-seeker".

sentence is typically taken *prima facie* as advice, because the context and the purpose of the interaction render the directive force salient.[203] When a doctor advises a patient about which drug to take, "Paracetamol has fewer side effects than codeine", the patient needs not infer that this is advice; what is uttered is to be taken as directive due to the advisory context.[204] Likewise, when an advisee asks an adviser what to do, the adviser saying "Lying is wrong" can be taken to be advice where the hearer is not required to infer an indirect meaning from the indicative sentence.

If correct, my proposal broadens the recognised forms of H-directives beyond those generally accepted, such as those in an imperative mood or involving expressions such as 'should', 'must', or 'ought'. Given the standard treatment of indicatives as assertives, I recognise that this conclusion – that indicative sentences in advising can be interpreted as directives, based on their context and the speaker's intention to guide the hearer's action – will be controversial.[205]

In this section, I argued that advice is best understood as a H-directive aimed at guiding the hearer's deliberation. I have developed this view by distinguishing guidance from influence (§5.1), describing how moral advice invites deliberation (§5.2), examining the role of uptake (§5.3), and showing that even indicative sentences can function as H-directives (§5.4). This view is based on the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide the hearer, inviting deliberation through the speech act of advising. This sets the stage for the next section, in which I consider whether such directives should be understood as reasons for action.

[203] Opałek (1970, p. 170) also observes, "Directives are, for example, expressed also in the indicative mood, without resort to the use of 'deontic words'". In such cases, "we identify directives only by the situational context of the utterances in question, or by the fact that a given linguistic expression belongs to a text of some peculiar sort (e.g., a legal code)".
[204] Cohen (1964, p. 123) makes a similar point: "After all, if the utterance 'Your haystack is on fire' gives a warning that is rendered explicit by 'I warn you that your haystack is on fire', and if the warning is part of the meaning of the latter utterance, it is hardly unreasonable to suppose that the warning is also part of the former utterance's meaning, though inexplicitly so".
[205] Further research is needed to determine in what ways a directive can be inferred (or implicated) from an indicative sentence, for example, by conversational implicature, pragmatic modulation, or politeness norms. See Strandberg (2011) for a related discussion.

6. Are Directives Reasons for Action?

In this section, I examine a challenge to my account of directives that what primarily explains advising as an H-directive is the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide, rather than whether the hearer acts on it. This challenge comes from Kissine's (2013a) proposal: that directives are best understood as reasons for action, not as attempts to cause or influence action (§6.1). While I agree that directives can function as reasons for action, I argue that his proposal is inadequate for capturing the nature of H-directives, particularly advice, which may succeed even when they do not bring about the intended perlocutionary effect (§6.2). I further develop my view, arguing that moral guidance is often best understood as epistemic reason-giving, not as issuing a new reason for action (§6.3). The goal of this section is to clarify where my account of H-directives diverges from Kissine's, and to defend the claim that advice is best understood as an attempt to guide.

6.1 Kissine on Directives as Reasons for Action

As we have discussed in §3.1, according to Kissine, the traditional view of directives often conflates illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions. As Kissine (2013a) argues, this view fails to distinguish between what kind of illocutionary act the speaker intends to perform (the illocutionary intention) and what they intend to achieve in the hearer by the utterance (the perlocutionary intention).

Kissine argues instead that directive speech acts, such as commands, requests, and orders, should be understood as practical reasons for action rather than attempts to induce or influence action: "directive speech acts are not attempts to cause action, but reasons for A to act" (2013a, p. 102).[206] In other words, directives should not be understood as stemming from the speaker's desire or attempt to influence the hearer's actions, but rather as reasons to act.[207] On his

[206] This approach aims to parallel his treatment of constative speech acts, which are seen as justificatory reasons to believe rather than attempts to induce belief. See Chapter 3 in Kissine (2013a).

[207] It seems that there is an equivocation here between directives *being* reasons to act (Kissine 2013a), and directives *giving* reasons to act. For example, Jary and Kissine (2019, p. 122) say, "In our view, however, 'telling to' should not be glossed as 'presenting as potential and desirable', but rather as *giving* the addressee reason to bring about the state of affairs denoted by the utterance" (emphasis added). Following his original wording, I will interpret Kissine (2013a) as claiming that directives are reasons for the hearer to act.

view, a directive speech act "must constitute a reason to act", and whenever this reason "leads him to the relevant action, the directive speech act has been complied with" (ibid., p. 106).

Kissine rejects the idea that directives should be defined by their corresponding prototypical perlocutionary effects (ibid., p. 15). Perlocutionary effects are the actual outcomes or responses caused in the hearer by the utterance – including emotional reactions, changes in belief, or subsequent actions – which may or may not align with the speaker's intended perlocutionary intention.[208] The examples he gives as perlocutionary effects that are caused by directives are:

> By ordering you to leave, I cause your leaving; by telling you that there is a spider on my lap you frighten me; by saying that I am a friend of Chomsky's, I convince you that I am a pathological liar, and so on (ibid., p. 12).

Such causal effects do not, according to Kissine, define the nature of directives. Kissine (ibid., p. 105) emphasises that for a directive speech act to be fully complied with, it must not only make the propositional content true but also serve as a reason for action.[209] This distinction between being a cause for action and reason for action is crucial for understanding Kissine's view. He provides some examples to illustrate situations where the action is taken because of external pressure rather than the directive itself. Here is one example – a mother tells her misbehaving son at the dinner table:

(6) Go to your room without dessert.

Even after the mother tells the son to go to his room, the son does not leave the dinner table, so the father yells at him. Then the son rushes to his room. Even though the son eventually goes to his room – making the propositional content true – Kissine argues that the mother's order was not obeyed, because it was not the reason for the action. The action occurred due to the father's yelling, not the mother's directive. Thus, the directive has not been complied with. This example supports Kissine's argument that a directive has to be the reason for

[208] Austin's (1975, p. 109) definition is similar: perlocutionary effects are "what we bring about or achieve by saying something".

[209] For Kissine (2013a, p. 106), this propositional content does not have to be truth-apt: "Such utterances bring to the fore a proposition that is neither true nor false, but is compatible with s. If s is also compatible with some propositions that may lead to the decision to bring about the truth of p, then it follows that there is at least one possible world in the conversational background where the utterance leads to the decision to bring about the truth of p".

action, rather than the intention of the speaker or the realisation of the intended perlocutionary effect.

Kissine further rejects the claim, common in Searle and Vanderveken (1985), that the sincerity condition for a directive requires the speaker to desire that the hearer φ, as he shows with an example:

> (7) I don't want you to do this dirty job, but since you alone are capable of doing it, and since it is tremendously important for the country, I request of you to do it (Kissine, 2013a, p. 109).

In this case, the speaker explicitly lacks the relevant desire.[210] This suggests that directives can be issued sincerely without the speaker wanting the hearer to act. The request is presented as a reason for action, arising from practical necessity or duty rather than desire.[211]

Kissine's definition of a directive speech act is the following:

> An utterance *u* is a directive speech act with the content *p* with respect to a certain conversational background if, and only if, this conversational background contains at least one possible world *w* such that the occurrence of this utterance is necessary and sufficient for A to arrive (*ceteris paribus*) at the decision to bring about the truth of *p* in *w* (ibid., p. 105).[212]

[210] Kissine does not provide an explicit definition of 'desire' in his account (2013a), but he addresses it indirectly by criticising traditional views that associate directive speech acts with the speaker's desires. Kissine argues that speaker desire, in the context of directive speech acts, refers to the traditional sincerity condition where the speaker is thought to have a desire for the propositional content of the directive to become true (ibid., p. 108). This interpretation of 'desire' aligns with the idea that the speaker is emotionally or conatively invested in seeing the content of the directive come true.

[211] Kissine further supports this point with examples of advice and instructions where the speaker's desire for compliance is minimal or absent (2013a, p. 109). I agree with Kissine that in many cases, the speaker's desire can be absent from issuing a directive. However, in cases of issuing moral directives, especially moral advice, I think that the speaker's sincerity must be present – this point will be addressed in Chapter 5.

[212] One possible objection to this definition is that the requirement that an utterance *u* must be necessary for the addressee A to arrive at the decision to bring about the truth of *p* in *w* is too strong. If *u* is 'necessary', then A must rely on the utterance *u* and cannot arrive at the decision due to other factors, such as prior knowledge, other utterances, contexts, or reasoning. This requirement seems too strong because in many cases decisions can be influenced by multiple factors, not solely by a single utterance. Kissine (2013a, pp. 117–118) would answer to this objection by saying that this definition is not too strong because the necessity condition applies only within the specific conversational background in question. This background already

This definition emphasises the role of the conversational background in understanding directive speech acts. The meaning and force of directives are shaped by shared assumptions and the context, which determine whether an utterance is recognised as a directive and thus a reason for action in a possible world.

For Kissine, for an utterance to count as a reason to bring about a certain outcome, it is enough that there exists at least one possible world where the utterance is both necessary and sufficient for the hearer to decide to make *p* true (ibid., p. 105):

> to count as a reason to make *p* true, with respect to *s*, the utterance need not lead to the decision to bring about the truth of *p* in every possible world of the conversational background. All that is needed is that there be a possible world *w* in the conversational background such that the utterance at hand is sufficient and necessary in *w* for A to decide to bring about the truth of *p*. If these conditions are fulfilled, the utterance will be interpreted as a directive speech act with the content *p* (ibid., p. 104).

This definition makes clear that an utterance as a directive depends not on actual compliance but on its potential role as a reason for action in at least one possible world. Kissine's account thus offers an alternative to perlocutionary understanding of directives, treating them as reasons for action rather than attempts to cause action. In the following subsections I argue that it fails to account for the distinctive features of H-directives such as advice, where the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide remains explanatorily primary.

6.2 Challenging Kissine's View

One might initially think that my view of directives is compatible with Kissine's account, given that he too allows that directives need not always result in compliance, and that they may not always function as reasons for action in the actual world. Even though I think that directives can be reasons for action, I disagree with how he understands directives as reasons for action.

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includes shared presuppositions, contextual assumptions, and norms at the time of the speech act. *u* can be necessary in the sense that, given the constraints of that conversational background, no other factors would suffice to bring about A's decision to act in *w*.

Kissine and I differ in one important aspect. On his view, compliance is not required in this actual world; it is enough if there exists a possible world in which the utterance functions as a sufficient and necessary reason for the hearer's decision to act accordingly. The utterance is then counted as a directive. However, this does not apply to H-directives, such as advice. While S-directives are typically aimed at ensuring compliance, this is not the case for H-directives.[213] Even if there is *no* possible world in which an H-directive is complied with, it remains a directive.[214] Even without perlocutionary production success, an H-directive can still have perlocutionary and illocutionary performance success and perlocutionary and illocutionary communicative success. Regrading advice, what matters is not whether the hearer complies, but whether the speaker attempts to guide – that is, inviting the hearer to deliberate. Whether the hearer actually takes the advice as a reason for action or does so in some possible world is beside the point.

Imagine someone replies to your advice with the following:

> Thank you for your advice, but I've decided not to φ, because, although this would be good for my career, it would not be good for my family.

In this example, the advice was not followed through, but it is clear that the person receiving the advice understood that it was intended as advice, as shown by their reply expressing gratitude for the advice given. In other words, there was perlocutionary and illocutionary communicative success. In fact, it could even be said that the advisee accepted the advice – e.g., they took it as advice, entertained the thought of following the advice, imagined the consequences of following the advice, etc. – but ultimately decided not to φ, as accepting advice does not obligate the advisee to act on it.[215] This differs from Kissine's view,

[213] While Kissine might not explicitly deny the distinction between S- and H-directives, his definition of directives risks conflating the two by focusing on compliance in a possible world.
[214] One might object that if advice counts as a directive even when it cannot be followed through, the same could be said of commands. I would argue that this is the case, at least in situations where both perlocutionary and communicative success are achieved. While I do not offer a full account of the norms governing commands, it may be that commands typically presuppose the possibility of compliance. Issuing a command to perform an impossible action could undermine the authority of the speaker. By contrast, advice aims to guide the hearer's deliberation, so its directive force can remain intact even when the advised action is not feasible. What matters in such cases is that the speaker attempts to guide, and that the hearer possibly recognises this intention. This may help to explain why advice or a command can still count as a directive even when it cannot be acted upon.
[215] Another way of putting this is, as Potter (2000, p. 482) says, "To give uptake is not necessarily to agree with a speaker; one can take another seriously and yet disagree".

which takes an utterance to be a directive only when it is a reason to φ for a hearer in at least one possible world.

This is where I differ from Wiland who says that accepting advice "is not merely a matter of believing something new (although it typically includes that), but a matter of doing something. To accept one's adviser's advice is to *act* as she advises" (2021, p. 58). However, accepting advice to φ does not necessarily have to lead to that action φ. Advice can still be accepted when the advisee considers the reasons for φ-ing, takes the adviser's perspective into account, and updates their beliefs about φ-ing, without φ-ing in the end.

The same holds for other H-directives.[216] A person may accept a financial adviser's suggestion yet decide not to invest, or they may find IKEA instructions helpful yet deliberately assemble furniture their own way. We can even imagine that there is no possible world where these directives are reasons for action. In each case, the directive plays a deliberative role, but an intended perlocutionary effect does not occur. This is not a factor that constitutes whether an utterance is a directive or not.

In this way, Kissine's account risks reintroducing the very perlocutionary aspect he seeks to avoid. By defining a directive as something that counts as a reason for action in at least one possible world, Kissine risks implying that the speaker's illocutionary intention of the directive is to issue a certain type of directive that has the perlocutionary effect where the hearer takes the utterance as a reason for action in a possible world.[217] By contrast, my account of advice treats the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide as explanatorily primary. What matters is the speaker's perlocutionary intention, not whether what the speaker intends to bring about is realised or could be realised in some possible world. Again, I think that directives can be reasons for action; where I disagree with Kissine is that in order for an utterance to be a directive, it has to be a reason for action in at least one possible world.

[216] Similarly, Dorschel (1989, p. 327) says, "non-satisfaction of a directive by no means affects the validity of a directive (though non-satisfiability might indeed affect it). If an assertion isn't satisfied, it can't be valid; if an order isn't satisfied, it can be valid".

[217] I think it is also possible that S-directives may not need a possible world where an S-directive utterance, *u*, is not sufficient and necessary for the hearer to decide to bring out the truth of p in the conversational background such that the utterance at hand is sufficient and necessary in *w* for A to decide to bring about the truth of *u*. Even if these conditions are not fulfilled, the utterance may still function as a directive speech act.

6.3 The Limits of Kissine's Account: Moral Directives and Reason-Giving

While Kissine's definition of directives may be accurate on its own terms, it does not help us to better understand moral directives, which require more than mere compliance. To be fair, Kissine does not aim to account for moral directives. His view treats a directive as "a reason, for A, to bring about the truth of p" (ibid., p. 104).[218] However, this becomes inadequate when applied to moral contexts, where understanding the moral content of a directive – especially the reasons why certain actions are right, wrong, good, bad or impermissible – is often crucial if the hearer is to comply.[219] My concern is not that Kissine fails to do what he sets out to do, but that his account lacks the conceptual tools to explain what is distinctive about moral advice, a form of directive speech act.

To understand how moral advice functions, we need a finer-grained analysis of how speech acts can give reasons. One useful tool comes from Enoch (2014b), who distinguishes three kinds of reason-giving: (1) *Epistemic* reason-giving, where a speaker helps the hearer see a reason that already exists; (2) *Triggering* reason-giving, where the speaker's action triggers a pre-existing reason; and (3) *Robust* reason-giving, where the speaker's directive itself generates a new reason.

According to Kissine's account, a directive seems to be best understood as a form of robust reason-giving, since on his view, the utterance of a directive is itself a reason for action by being issued. For example, a parent telling a child to go to his room may impose on that child a new duty that did not exist a moment earlier. However, according to Enoch, even robust reason-giving presupposes an underlying reason: "for robust reason-giving to occur, there must be, independently of the attempt at robust reason-giving, a reason triggerable by such an attempt" (2014, p. 305). This means that directives do

[218] There are similar views. For example, Manne says, "And this is the sort of uptake which I think that advice aims to achieve – wherein the agent recognizes some potential reason as being a reason, which may be held to cement its status as being a reason proper" (2014, p. 108). Also see Hinchman (2005). I can sympathise with these views that advice can be a *prima facie* reason for the hearer to φ. It might not be the best reason for φ-ing, as it can be defeated, challenged, and retracted.

[219] I am not arguing for a strong thesis that one needs full understanding where one can cite different theories of morality or talk about their justification in detail. One is required to have *some* understanding that one thought about why one should not lie, instead of blindly relying on someone else's utterance.

not create reason from nowhere but rely on underlying normative circumstances.

This distinction becomes particularly important in moral contexts. Suppose someone says, "I stopped lying because a Reddit user told me to". While this might count as compliance as the speaker took the Reddit user's directive as a reason for action, it seems that the agent has complied for the wrong kind of reason. They acted not from an understanding of why lying is wrong, but merely in response to someone's say-so.

To capture what is missing here, we can return to Enoch's epistemic reason-giving: when someone issues a moral directive such as "Do not lie", they are pointing the hearer towards an existing reason. This directive does not create a new duty to not lie, but instead points to an existing moral reason. In other words, the reason(s) for not lying exist independently of any directive telling us not to do so. In this sense, moral directives function not by creating new reasons, but by guiding the hearer to see existing reasons. Then, complying with a moral directive involves both understanding and acting upon those existing reasons.[220] These reasons may be coming from deontology (e.g., one can appeal to duty and respect for moral law), consequentialism (e.g., one can appeal to the value of the consequences of moral actions), virtue ethics (e.g., one can appeal to the vices of lying), care ethics (e.g., one can appeal to the importance of relationships and the moral significance of care and empathy in guiding actions), particularism, folk ethics, or feelings of guilt or hurt from betraying trust.

The point is that moral directives are better characterised as epistemic reason-giving than robust reason-giving.[221] By contrast, non-moral directives, such as "Close the door", do not require this kind of understanding. In such cases, the utterance can count as a reason for action simply in virtue of being issued, what Enoch calls *robust* reason-giving.

A challenge to the claim that advice is a reason for action comes from Raz (2009b), who argues that advice is better understood as a reason for belief. According to Raz, "Advice, whatever the hopes of the adviser may be, is given

[220] Of course, there are exceptions. Moral directives issued to very young children, such as "Don't hit your sister", are often given without the expectation that the child will fully grasp the underlying reasons. In such cases, compliance is expected before understanding develops. Nevertheless, my point concerns the ideal of moral compliance, whereby acting for the reasons that make the action right is an example of exercising one's full moral agency.

[221] For many, moral language is based on universalisability and/or supervenience. If this is the case, moral directives must be supported by reasons.

with the intention that its utterance will be taken as a reason for belief, not for action" (2009b, p. 21). On his view, advice is epistemic: it is meant to inform the hearer's beliefs or evaluative judgement, rather than serve as a practical reason.

As Raz elaborates, "advice differs from other cases of conveying information primarily in being given with the belief that it is or may be relevant to an actual or hypothetical question facing the recipient […] and in being either intended by the adviser or expected by the recipient to be taken into account in the resolution of that practical problem" (ibid., p. 21fn22). Advice, then, may lead to action, but the adviser's perlocutionary intention is primarily informative.

In response, I argue that advice is a reason for action, even when it also contributes to belief formation. First, advice often lacks propositional content, and so cannot be fully understood as a reason for belief. As discussed in Chapter 2, the content of advice is often expressed in the imperative or subjunctive mood (e.g., "Eat healthier" or "I advise that you be more honest"), neither of which expresses a proposition to be believed.

Even when advice is expressed propositionally, such as "I advise you that the meeting is rescheduled", the speaker's intention is not simply that the hearer believe this, but that they do something in response. A speaker who utters this does not merely intend the hearer to believe that the meeting is rescheduled; the speaker also intends them to act on this information by adjusting their plans.[222] It would be strange to suggest that the speaker's intention is merely produce belief; the aim is for the hearer to take this advice as a reason to act – a reason to adjust their plans.

Moreover, even on Raz's own account, advice is offered in response to practical problems and is meant to play a role in their resolution. But such resolution typically involves acting, not just believing. If advice helps to bring about such resolution, then it functions as a reason for action. While advice may involve relevant information that contributes to reasons for belief, it is a means for reason for action: the belief formed by the advice is not for its own sake, but to guide the hearer's practical reasoning.

Thus, advice is intended as a way of guiding practical reasoning. The belief is not an end in itself, but a means for action-guidance. In this sense, advice is a reason for action, even if it also generates reasons for belief. This further

[222] This would be an example of 'triggering' reason-giving, as noted by Enoch (2014): the advice triggers a pre-existing reason that the students already had.

supports the claim that advising, as an H-directive, is best understood in terms of the speaker's intention to guide, which is to invite the hearer's deliberation.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that directive speech acts must be primarily understood in terms of the speaker's perlocutionary intention: their attempt to influence or guide the hearer. I introduced a distinction between performance, communicative, and production success, and showed that for hearer-first directives like advice, performance success – particularly the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide – is explanatorily primary. Against Kissine's view that directives are reasons for action in at least one possible world, I argued that advice can succeed as a directive even when it is not followed, and even when it fails to be a reason for action in a possible world. In moral contexts especially, advice functions as a form of epistemic reason-giving, pointing the hearer toward existing moral reasons rather than generating new obligations. In the next chapter, I extend this analysis by examining how perlocutionary intentions interact with the speaker's normative standing, drawing on Cuneo's (2014) Normative Theory of Speech. There, I argue that perlocutionary intentions and normative standing are not rivals but complementary.

4.Normative Standing and Perlocutionary Intention in Directive Speech Acts

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that a speaker's perlocutionary intention is necessary for understanding directive speech acts, especially advising. The relevant perlocutionary intention of the speaker – their attempt to guide the hearer – determines the potential illocutionary force of the utterance as an act of advising. In this chapter, I develop this argument by introducing another key explanatory element: the speaker's normative standing. I argue that normative standing is best understood as one of the felicity conditions of a speech act: it determines whether a performed directive is a misfire.[223] This chapter thus lays the theoretical groundwork for the next, where I identify specific felicity conditions for advising and moral advising.

To develop this argument, I engage with Cuneo's (2014) Normative Theory of Speech (NTS). Cuneo presents the NTS as an alternative to the perlocutionary intention view: the very view I defend. According to Cuneo, the speaker's normative standing – their rights, responsibilities, and obligations – *count-generates* illocutionary acts: when acts count-generate other acts, "they always do so in virtue of there being certain conditions that hold at the time of the performance of those acts" (ibid., p. 17). On this view, a speaker performs an illocutionary act only if and because they have the relevant normative standing in relation to their audience. In contrast, the perlocutionary intention view holds that a speaker performs an illocutionary act partially but primarily due

[223] Felicity conditions are usually understood as made up of two groups: "The first group is formed by those conditions which, if disregarded, make the act void (which is the case with misfires: the act is purported but void). The second group is made up of those conditions whose breach makes the act an abuse (the act is professed but hollow)" (Caffi, 2009, p. 442).

to the speaker's relevant perlocutionary intentions and the illocutionary intentions. Cuneo summarises this disagreement as a matter of explanatory priority: for the perlocutionary intention view, normative standing is generated by speech; for the NTS, it is a precondition for speech.

My position is that these two views are not rivals but complements. According to Cuneo, the perlocutionary view would accept both claims below, while the NTS rejects the second:

> An agent performs an illocutionary act by performing some locutionary act only if and because he expresses the relevant perlocutionary act intentions when performing that locutionary act.[224]
>
> In general, an agent's having the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of being a speaker is *not* that in virtue of which his performing a locutionary act count-generates his performing an illocutionary act. Generally speaking, these normative features do *not* generate but are generated by speech (ibid., p. 48; emphasis added).

I accept the first claim of the perlocutionary intention view, namely that an utterance amounts to an illocutionary act partly due to the speaker's relevant perlocutionary intentions.[225] I partly agree with the second claim; I argue further that normative standing – an agent's having the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of being a speaker – explains whether such an act misfires or not. In other words, perlocutionary intention determines what type of speech act is being performed, while normative standing determines whether the speech act misfires. This contrasts with the NTS which holds that the speaker's *normative standing* binds locutionary and illocutionary acts together.[226] As

[224] In speech act theory, 'perlocutionary intention' is used more than 'perlocutionary *act* intention'. Woudenberg (2021, p. 168) is another who uses 'perlocutionary act intention' to describe perlocutionary intention, as he describes an author's perlocutionary act intentions as follows: "Writers often aim to secure certain effects through their writings: they want to inform people, warn them, entertain them, and so forth. Authors of textbooks aim at educating a readership, whereas the author of a love letter wants to convince the receiver of the letter of their love. Even if the authors fail in these aims, they still had the intentions". I will take that Cuneo is using 'perlocutionary act intention' synonymously with 'perlocutionary intention'.
[225] Cuneo (2014, p. 25fn17) says that Barker (2004), Bennett (1976), and Schiffer (1972) also accept the first claim.
[226] There are many philosophers who broadly take the normative approach to speech acts. According to Harnish (2005, p. 23), "Normative theories of illocutionary acts involve the notion of *commitment*, or *taking responsibility* that certain conditions are satisfied". The pioneer of such a view is Alston (2000, p. 70) who says, "The utterance is made the

Cuneo (2014, pp. 2–3) says, "an agent can perform a speech act only if and because he has rights, responsibilities, and obligations of certain kinds *vis-à-vis* his audience".[227]

I argue that my complementary approach provides a more comprehensive explanation of directive speech acts than either theory taken alone.[228] By combining the insights of the perlocutionary intention view with those of the NTS, I can explain both what type of directive speech act is performed and whether it misfires. This approach sheds light on the distinctive features of both S-directives (such as commands and requests) and H-directives (such as advice and suggestions), especially when the speaker's authority is unclear or contested.

In particular, I show that felicity of advice given – specifically, whether it is a misfire or not – is determined by whether the speaker has the normative standing to advise, and whether this standing is recognised by the hearer. When this standing is challenged, the act may misfire if the challenge reveals that the speaker did not have normative standing in the first place. This chapter, therefore, answers the question posed in the introduction: (2a) *How does the speaker's normative standing, together with hearer recognition, determine whether an act of advising is felicitous?* It does so by showing how normative standing and hearer recognition jointly determine the felicity of advice. By arguing how normative standing and perlocutionary intention complement one

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illocutionary act it is […] not by any 'natural' facts about the speaker – his beliefs, perlocutionary intentions or whatever – but by a 'normative' fact about the speaker – the fact that he has changed his normative position in a certain way by laying himself open to the possibility of censure, correction, or the like in case the conditions in question are not satisfied". Searle (2001, p. 147) also emphasises commitments: "just about every kind of speech act involves a commitment of some kind or other". According to Kukla and Lance (2008, p. 155), "what a speech act – as a material act performed by and among agents within a discursive community – does is to draw upon the normative entitlements of its speaker in striving to change the normative commitments and entitlements of others. As such, in speaking, we make normative *claims* upon others". Similarly, Kukla (2014, p. 443) says, speech acts have force "only in virtue of the concrete social difference that they make, or how they are taken up in practice". According to McDonald (2022a, p. 920), different illocutionary acts institute different normative statuses for speakers and hearers. Also see Sbisà (2023a).

[227] Note that Cuneo uses 'illocutionary act' and 'speech act' interchangeably, as for him, perlocutionary intentions are not necessary or explanatorily dispensable for the explanation of speech acts in the NTS.

[228] Cuneo (2014, p. 25) acknowledges, "this thesis is not obviously incompatible with what is often presented as its main rival, the perlocutionary intention view. […] while it is possible to formulate a version of the perlocutionary-intention view that is incompatible with the normative theory, it is less satisfactory than the normative theory. This is largely because the normative theory yields a more unified account of speech".

another, this chapter develops a unified explanatory account of directive speech acts – one that builds on the impure intentionalist view and highlights the context-sensitivity of advice and the speaker's guiding role.

The chapter proceeds as follows. §2 introduces Cuneo's NTS and explains its central concepts, including count-generation and the priority of normative standing. §3 evaluates Cuneo's objections to the perlocutionary intention view, and I argue that his examples can be reinterpreted in a way that supports the complementarity of the two views. §4 applies the complementary approach to S-directives, such as commands, demands, and requests. I show that normative standing explains when these acts misfire, while perlocutionary intention determines their potential illocutionary force. §5 extends the analysis to H-directives, including advice and recommendations. I show that H-directives involve a distinct kind of recognition-dependent standing, and that perlocutionary intentions play an even more central role in guiding the hearer's deliberation. The next chapter will build on these foundations by examining the specific felicity conditions of moral advice.

2. Cuneo's Normative Theory of Speech

The previous chapter defended the view that perlocutionary intention is necessary for determining the illocutionary force of directive speech acts. In contrast, Cuneo's NTS claims that it is the speaker's normative standing (i.e., their rights, responsibilities, and obligations) that count-generates illocutionary acts. This section outlines the core elements of the NTS, including count-generation, standing powers, and the distinction between standing and generated normative features, setting up a comparison between the two views in what follows.

For Cuneo, 'count-generation' is a central concept that explains the relationship between illocutionary and locutionary acts, which is defined as following: "An agent's performing an action Φ *count-generates* his performing an action Ψ just in case his Φing generates his Ψing and his Φing counts as his Ψing (at least in part) in virtue of his Φing" (2014, p. 17). Applying this definition, Cuneo explains that a speaker "performs an illocutionary act by way of performing a locutionary act just in case his performance of that locutionary act count-generates his performance of that illocutionary act" (ibid.). For example, a speaker succeeds in performing an illocutionary act just in case

their uttering the sentence "Hume is the greatest modern philosopher" count-generates their having asserted *that Hume is the greatest modern philosopher.*

Cuneo (ibid., p. 19) explains that 'count-generation' hinges on specific conditions:

> when acts count-generate other acts (or other events), they always do so in virtue of there being certain conditions that hold at the time of the performance of those acts. These conditions are what explain the 'hook-up' between count-generating acts, on the one hand, and count-generated acts (or events), on the other. Central to the argument I offer is the thesis that these conditions include an agent's having the rights, responsibilities, and obligations that constitute a normative standing of a certain kind. Normative facts are among those conditions that bind locutionary and illocutionary acts together; they are, so to speak, 'action-binders'.

Among these conditions, Cuneo highlights the importance of *normative standing* – the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of the speaker – as the key action-binders that 'hook-up' locutionary and illocutionary acts. Normative facts, according to Cuneo, are what make this 'hook-up' possible and enable speech acts to have their illocutionary force.

An example Cuneo (ibid., p. 50) gives is that the difference between the home plate umpire yelling "Strike!" upon a pitcher's throwing a ball towards the home plate and a random audience member yelling "Strike!" is based on the umpire's *standing power*. Only because the umpire has the right to declare pitches strikes in a game of Major League Baseball in the first place, "he has declared the pitch a strike and the pitch now counts as a strike" (ibid.). The random audience member's yelling "Strike" would only startle a napping dog. According to Cuneo, "the case of the umpire reveals standing powers to be exactly the sort of thing that are ingredient in the count-generation of speech" (ibid.).

Here is another example. Imagine a US Postmaster General promises employees a three-percent pay raise (ibid., p. 41). This promise count-generates a specific obligation for the speaker to fulfil because the speaker already possesses a *standing power* – the authority derived from their very role – which enables them to impose an obligation upon themselves.[229] If the

[229] Here is an example that complicates Cuneo's account. Imagine an employee aspiring to become the next US Postmaster General, who promises a three-percent pay raise to fellow employees in an effort to gain their support. In this case, the promise lacks the standing power,

speaker were an ordinary employee or a bystander, such a promise would lack the requisite standing power, as the authority to count-generate the obligation would be absent.[230]

This standing power consists of an agent's having two rights: a *permission-right* to introduce normative alterations into the world, and a *claim-right* against others that they do not try to prevent that agent from bringing about such alterations (ibid.). When the Postmaster General imposes such an obligation on himself by promising a pay raise, having these rights ensures that the promising act does not violate the obligations that he already has in his participation in the practice of giving and receiving promises. This is because, by this permission-right, he is permitted to engage in this type of act under certain conditions with specific agents. Moreover, this power includes a claim-right against others, ensuring they do not prevent him from imposing this obligation on himself. It would be wrong for them to do so, all else being equal. In other words, *rights* are claims or entitlements against others.

This standing power is accompanied by *general* rights, responsibilities, and obligations, which Cuneo describes as *standing* (ibid.) When the Postmaster General performs an action of this nature, a general *obligation* is created where it is understood as a requirement to honour rights. According to Cuneo (ibid., p. 21), "obligations are, for example, considerations that, in the absence of countervailing considerations, yield all-things-considered duties". He has a duty to intend to follow through with what he has promised. If he does not fulfil this duty, he is justly subject to correction, admonition, or blame. The general *responsibility* is to present the world or speaker as they actually are. Cuneo says,

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as the speaker is not yet in a position of authority to make binding commitments about pay raises. Nevertheless, it seems intuitively plausible to describe the speaker's utterance as a promise, even if it is conditional (e.g., "If I am elected, I promise a three-percent pay raise"). This promise does not rest on the speaker's existing authority but on the future contingent commitment and the expectation it generates in the hearers. This example suggests that standing power may not provide grounds for count-generating promises. Instead, promises might rely on other factors, such as the hearer's recognition of the speaker's intent and the context in which the promise is made. The employee's promise could still function as a speech act by creating a conditional obligation tied to a future event (their election), even though it lacks the obligation created with an established authority like the Postmaster General. In other words, the power to promise is a power everyone has; it does not derive from a role-based authority. The authority is required to give employees a pay raise, but it is not required to make a promise.

[230] According to Cuneo, even in the state of nature (in a Hobbesian sense) where two people are making a compact – a promise to each other – in order for a promise to function, moral obligations must already exist (2014, p. 2).

> If I have the responsibility to act this way, then I have a reason or obligation to act this way, and I can be held accountable if I fail to do so. In another sense, however, responsibilities are not reasons or obligations but *liabilities*. This sense of "responsibility" is expressed in phrases of the form *S is responsible for Φing* or *S is responsible for having Φed* (ibid., p. 22).

What follows from this is that the speaker is accountable or liable to correction, reproach, or blame for having failed to present himself accurately, such as making a false promise.

Cuneo also adds that when a speech act is performed, not only are standing general rights, responsibilities, and obligations created, but also certain normative features called *generated* rights, responsibilities, and obligations are created, too. When the Postmaster General makes a promise to the employees of the US Postal Service, he has now *actually* presented himself as laying an obligation on himself to provide a three-percent raise to the audience. The employees now have the right to hold him accountable if he fails to intend to fulfil his promise. Similarly, when the Postmaster General says, "I am stepping down from my position as Postmaster General", he has now *actually* taken responsibility for things he has presented as so. If he says so without any intention of stepping down, then the employees are now entitled to correct, admonish, or blame him.

As we have seen above, Cuneo makes a clear distinction between (i) standing powers, (ii) standing rights, responsibilities, and obligations, and (iii) generated rights, responsibilities, and obligations (ibid., p. 41). Cuneo notes that this standing power can be divided into two groups: The first is *specialised* standing power. The Postmaster General can promise such things because he has a special normative standing – that of being the Postmaster General. The second is *generic* standing power, which is created "in virtue of being a participant in the practice of speech; nothing else is required" (ibid., p. 42). An example of this would be a stranger at the bus stop making small talk, saying "It looks as if it is going to rain". In this case, no special authority is required for performing the speech act. The ordinary speakers already have the generic standing power to perform speech acts, which is accompanied by standing rights, responsibilities, and obligations, like their specialised counterparts. In sum, Cuneo says,

> According to a natural way of thinking about ordinary speech situations, it is having both standing powers and these standing rights, responsibilities, and obligations that accounts (at least in

> part) for an agent's having particular generated rights, responsibilities, or obligations on a given occasion (ibid.).

A speaker's having rights, responsibilities, and obligations constitute *normative standing*. Cuneo argues that these normative standings are not mere background conditions but necessary for generating the speech act itself. Cuneo (ibid., p. 21) says that "agents perform speech acts by altering their normative status with regard to their audience, acquiring rights, responsibilities, and obligations", the normative standing of which is *pro tanto* in character.[231] For example, upon asserting a proposition p, the speaker acquires the normative standing *being an assertor of p.* Likewise, upon commanding someone to φ, the speaker acquires the normative standing of *being a commander of φ-ing*.[232]

This ordering is central to Cuneo's theory: the speaker's standing makes the illocutionary act possible, not the other way around. To clarify this, Cuneo contrasts his view with divine command theories, which typically hold that moral obligations are generated by God's illocutionary acts. According to Cuneo's NTS, this gets the explanatory direction backwards. It is precisely God's prior normative standing (e.g., God's moral authority) that enables God's commanding, which in turn generates obligations. For Cuneo, illocutionary acts alone cannot create such moral obligations. Following Clarke, Cuneo claims that the speaker must already have normative standing – rights, responsibilities, and obligations – in order to count-generate illocutionary acts at all (ibid., p. 13).

Cuneo contrasts his NTS with the perlocutionary intention view which holds that speech acts are generated by the speaker's intention to produce certain mental states in the hearer, as exemplified by Grice. According to Cuneo, those who hold the perlocutionary intention view think that "normative features do

[231] According to Alston (2000, p. 65), this obligation is *prima facie* in the sense that it can be overridden by other incompatible obligations.

[232] For Cuneo's own summary of the NTS, see his account (2014, p. 68), in which he captures his view as follows: "An agent's performing some locutionary act Φing count-generates her performing some illocutionary Ψing in virtue of her having the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of being a speaker. These normative features include the standing power to perform actions of certain kinds that are constitutive of Ψing, such as her having the right to lay obligations on herself and others. They also include the standing rights, responsibilities, and obligations that accompany this standing power, such as her having the obligation to present things as being a certain way only if they are that way. An agent's taking responsibility for things being as she presents them conceptually implies that she has generated rights, responsibilities, and obligations of certain sorts, such as being liable if things are not as she presents them".

not generate but are generated by speech. Promises generate obligations. Requests generate reasons. Assertions generate rights" (ibid., p. 48). Cuneo thinks that this explanation should be reversed, such that an agent performs some speech acts "only if and because he in fact has the relevant sort of standing power" (ibid., p. 50).

Cuneo provides three cases to challenge the perlocutionary intention view. He claims that if we can identify cases in which an agent performs a speech act without expressing (or even having) the requisite perlocutionary intentions, then we have strong reason to reject the claim that perlocutionary intentions account for the count-generation of speech (ibid., p. 51).

Consider the first case. Jake has become involved in a Nature mystery cult, which believes that Nature is an impersonal force that can be influenced through specific incantations (ibid.). Seeking to enhance his ability to manipulate Nature, Jake follows his cult's guidebook in his room and recites the sentences: "Nature is eternal" and "May its power be manifest!". Through these utterances, Jake expresses his beliefs about Nature, aligning with the cult's teachings. However, he does not have any perlocutionary intentions, as he does not intend for anyone – neither Nature, other people, nor himself – to engage with the content of his speech. His purpose is not to communicate but to manipulate, following the cult's practices. Thus, Jake performs illocutionary acts by pronouncing statements about Nature without intending any audience to respond to his utterances.[233]

Second, imagine a deeply pessimistic prophet (ibid., p. 52). God has commanded this prophet to testify to a specific truth, *p*. Based on the prophet's understanding of his audience, he has no expectation that they will pay any attention to his testimony; he is convinced that they will simply ignore him. As a result, he has no intention for his audience to engage with the content of his message. His view of the audience's religious and moral disposition is so bleak that he does not even intend to try to persuade them to engage with his message. Nonetheless, out of obedience to God and trust in God's truthfulness, he proclaims *p* anyway, affirming its truth. By all indications, the pessimistic

[233] One might point out that the example of Jake does not necessarily show that normative facts count-generates speech acts even though it might show that perlocutionary intention is not always necessary for speech acts. I agree, as Cuneo only talks about Jake expressing his various beliefs about Nature without mentioning Jake's normative standing. Maybe Cuneo could say that Jake expresses commitments to certain beliefs about Nature and aligns himself with the cult's practices by uttering these sentences, acquiring the normative standing of 'being a commander of Nature'. I will, however, argue that this utterance is not a proper speech act in the next section.

prophet has successfully testified to a fact. If this is the case, then expressing a perlocutionary intention is not a necessary condition for performing a speech act. Unlike Jake in the first scenario, the prophet acknowledges the presence of an audience that could accept, reject, or consider his message. However, he does not intend for them to engage with it.

Lastly, imagine Jake maintaining a private diary in which he uses many speech acts, such as assertives and directives, to write about his life as a band director (ibid., p. 53). His diary is so private that he does not intend for anyone else to read its contents. Jake is performing illocutionary acts of different kinds without intending for anyone to engage with them. Cuneo considers whether these cases involve his perlocutionary intention as "what accounts for Jake's having performed speech acts of various types by writing in his diary is the fact that Jake intends that he himself engage with the content of what he says" (ibid.). Cuneo's reply is that Jake's aim in keeping this diary is entirely therapeutic as his therapist recommended that he regularly record what he is thinking and feeling in a diary (ibid., pp. 53–54). This scenario challenges the perlocutionary intention view because it is not a necessary condition of an agent's performing a speech act "that he intend that his audience engage with the content of what he says, for some speech acts are performed with the intention that there be no audience to engage with them" (ibid., p. 54).

Cuneo concludes that these three counterexamples indicate that the perlocutionary intention view often leads to incorrect conclusions, "since it is false that an agent's expressing one or another perlocutionary intention is ingredient in the count-generation of speech" (ibid.). The point that Cuneo wants to make here is that perlocutionary intentions do not play the explanatory role claimed by perlocutionary-intention theorists.

To summarise this section, I introduced Cuneo's NTS, focusing on its central claim that a speaker's normative standing – their rights, responsibilities, and obligations – is a necessary condition for count-generating illocutionary acts. On this view, it is the speaker's normative standing, rather than their perlocutionary intentions, that explains how a locutionary act comes to count as an illocutionary one, and hence a speech act. In the next section, I turn to Cuneo's three cases intended to discredit the perlocutionary intention view. Although Cuneo uses these cases to try to show that speech acts can occur in the absence of perlocutionary intentions, I argue that they do not support his argument. When analysed properly, however, they support the idea that perlocutionary intention and normative standing play complementary but distinct roles in explaining speech acts. Perlocutionary intention helps to

determine which speech act was performed, while normative standing helps to determine whether it was a misfire.

3. Re-examining Cuneo's Cases

In this section, I assess Cuneo's three cases against the perlocutionary intention view – the view that perlocutionary intentions are necessary for the performance of speech acts. Cuneo argues that these cases show how agents can perform speech acts in the absence of such intentions: the first involves a speaker with no audience or perlocutionary aim; the second, a prophet who speaks out of obedience but has no intention to engage his audience; and the third, a case of self-directed speech acts in a private diary.

However, I argue that these cases do not undermine the perlocutionary intention view. Rather, they each mischaracterise the conditions under which a speech act can be performed or felicitous. In the first case, the utterance fails to qualify as an illocutionary act in the first place, even by the lights of Cuneo's own NTS (§3.1). In the second case, perlocutionary intention is present at the origin of the speech act (in God), even if not directly in the prophet, and normative standing plays a role in evaluating the speech act's felicity, not in explaining its performance success (§3.2). In the third case, perlocutionary intentions and normative standing operate within a self-directed speech, where the speaker is also the hearer (§3.3). These cases, when properly analysed, do not refute the role of perlocutionary intention in explaining how speech acts are performed. Rather, they reveal how perlocutionary intentions and normative standing play distinct and complementary explanatory roles: perlocutionary intentions help to determine what speech act is performed, while normative standing helps determine whether it is a misfire or not.

3.1 The First Case: Acts of Speech

To recall, the first case that Cuneo provides involves Jake, who tries to manipulate Nature by uttering sentences from his cult guidebook, such as "May its power be manifest", alone in his room. Cuneo claims that Jake lacks any perlocutionary intentions because he does not intend for anything or anyone (e.g., Nature, other people, or himself) to engage with his speech (ibid.,

p. 52). Despite this, Cuneo argues that Jake performs an illocutionary act by uttering these sentences.[234]

However, I argue that this example does not constitute an illocutionary act in the first place, even under Cuneo's NTS, making it irrelevant to the question of whether perlocutionary intentions are necessary for performing illocutionary acts. For a proper speech act to occur under Cuneo's NTS, certain fundamental conditions that Cuneo puts forward must be met, including the alteration of normative status and the presence of an audience capable of engaging with the content of the utterance. In Jake's case, these conditions are already absent.

First, Jake's utterance does not generate any normative change and thus fails to count as an illocutionary act under Cuneo's own conditions. Cuneo (ibid., p. 52) himself notes that "Jake has strange views about Nature; but he does not believe that an impersonal force, Nature, considers the propositional content of his linguistic acts". If Nature is incapable of engaging with Jake's utterance as an audience, the utterance cannot bring about any normative change. According to Cuneo's (ibid., p. 21) NTS, "agents perform speech acts by altering their normative status with regard to their audience, acquiring rights, responsibilities, and obligations". In Jake's case, no such alteration occurs. He does not gain any rights, incur any obligations, or assume any responsibilities from his utterance. Nature, as an impersonal force, cannot be obligated, persuaded, or otherwise engaged, which further confirms that Jake's utterance does not qualify as a proper illocutionary act. Jake's utterance and the context lack the conditions that would enable his utterance to alter his normative status. This is not to deny that speech acts, including assertions, can alter normative status. Indeed, on Cuneo's own view, they often do. But such alteration depends on the speaker's normative standing in relation to an audience capable of uptake, which is precisely what is missing in Jake's case. Without an audience to engage with the content of his speech, Jake's utterance cannot meet the condition of a proper speech acts as defined by Cuneo's own NTS.

Second, this is not a proper speech act but an act that merely involves *acts of speech.* Borrowing the words of García-Carpintero (2019, p. 447), "*Acts of speech* are acts such as clearing up one's throat by uttering words, or rehearsing a speech, or otherwise pretending to use language without really making

[234] Cuneo (2014, p. 52) says, "Jake has performed a series of illocutionary acts; among other things, he has pronounced Nature to be eternal. But he has not expressed any perlocutionary intentions. For he assumes there is no audience to engage with the content of his illocutionary act".

speech acts". Jake's utterance functions more like a mechanical action, similar to coding on a computer or triggering a machine, where language is not used as a medium of communication but as a tool to achieve a mechanical outcome. Here, Jake is pretending to use language without performing speech acts, as his utterance resembles the act of coding, playing a video game, or simulating a Chinese room scenario where an impersonal object is manipulated with language. For instance, clicking on a system dialogue box that says "Get ready for a fight" in a computer game is not a proper speech act, but pretending to use language; it is a physical signal that influences the computer. Likewise, Jake's uttering sentences from his cult guidebook, such as "May its power be manifest", is pretending to use language without performing speech acts.[235] This analogy highlights the difference between proper speech acts, which involve normative alterations, and acts of speech that lack these elements.

Jake's utterance is, at most, a locutionary act – an utterance with sense and reference – but it fails to rise to the level of an illocutionary act. As Austin (1962, p. 108) explains, when we say something,

> 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.

Although the performance of a locutionary act often coincides with the performance of an illocutionary act, the two are conceptually distinct. Cuneo (2014, p. 24) does note that "the three events of an agent's performing a locutionary act, his having the relevant normative standing, and his performing an illocutionary act, occur simultaneously". However, simultaneity is not necessity. The count-generation of an illocutionary act, according to the NTS, depends on the fulfilment of further conditions – the speaker's normative standing with respect to an audience. However, Nature, as an impersonal force, cannot engage with the content of Jake's speech or confer any normative standing upon him. In this case, the required condition for count-generating an

[235] The fact that Jake's utterance happens to be in English is incidental. Even if he were to recite a spell in a language he does not understand, such as Latin or an invented magical language, the act would still lack illocutionary force. The important thing is not the language itself, but the absence of an audience capable of recognising the speaker's normative standing.

illocutionary act is not met. Without an audience capable of establishing a normative relationship, the locutionary act cannot count as an illocutionary act.

The lesson to be learned from this first case is that not all acts of speech qualify as illocutionary acts. While Jake's utterance counts as a locutionary act, it fails to meet Cuneo's own normative conditions for being considered an illocutionary act. It does not show that illocutionary acts can occur without perlocutionary intentions, because it does not even constitute an illocutionary act in the first place.

3.2 The Second Case: Mediated Intention

Recall that, in the second case, Cuneo presents a deeply pessimistic prophet who proclaims a certain truth out of obedience to God but has no perlocutionary intention even to try to engage the audience with the content of his message. Cuneo (2014, p. 52) argues that this prophet has successfully testified to a fact, concluding that perlocutionary intention is not necessary for performing a speech act. This example seems to provide a strong argument against the claim that perlocutionary intentions are always required for performing a speech act. The prophet's utterance appears to succeed as a speech act, as he testifies to a divine truth even without his perlocutionary intention to bring about an intended perlocutionary effect in the hearers. However, this interpretation overlooks the communicative structure of the case and the source of its normative authority.

First, imagine the prophet as delivering God's commandments by transmitting their content, rather than issuing the directive himself. For example, Moses delivering the Ten Commandments might have no perlocutionary intention for his audience to engage with the message, due to pessimism. In that case, Moses is reciting God's commands, not issuing a directive himself. Thus, Moses's lack of perlocutionary intention is not unnecessary but irrelevant to his role as a transmitter of the message. The potential illocutionary force of the speech act is partially determined also from the original speaker, God, who issues the Ten Commandments with the relevant perlocutionary intention.[236] This shows that the structure of the case can preserve the role of perlocutionary intention, even if it is located upstream in a communicative hierarchy.

[236] One might worry that this introduces a revised or vicarious form of perlocutionary intention. But the example need not involve a modification of the perlocutionary intention view. It shows that in certain transmission cases, the relevant intention can be preserved upstream, with the speaker functioning as a conduit rather than an originator.

Importantly, this analysis does not depend on the actual existence of God, but only on the structure of the example as presented. The prophet's utterance functions as a mediated act of communication, similar to a spokesperson delivering an announcement prepared by someone else. In such cases, perlocutionary intentions can be preserved through transmission, even if the immediate speaker lacks them. This shows that the perlocutionary intention view can accommodate such examples by recognising that a relevant perlocutionary intention does not necessarily have to be directly possessed by the immediate speaker if the immediate speaker acts as a transmitter of a message.

How does the prophet's normative standing come into the story, if a proper illocutionary act is already performed by a prophet performing a locutionary and illocutionary act, and God having a relevant perlocutionary intention? The prophets' normative standing contributes to determining whether this speech act was a misfire. We need to distinguish two different speech acts in this example. First, there was God's command to the prophet to testify. Cuneo (2014, p. 52) notes, "God, we may imagine, has told this prophet to testify to a certain truth *p*". In what way was this command not a misfire? God has put himself on a normative hook, taking responsibility for both having the authority to lay an obligation on the prophet and for his actually having laid an obligation on the prophet. The fact that God can put himself on this normative hook by commanding shows that this speech act of commanding was not a misfire. Had he not had authority to command, he could not have been able to put himself on the normative hook, rendering the speech act infelicitous (in this case, a case of misfire). By commanding, God has created an obligation for the prophet to obey. Again, the fact that the command created such an obligation means that this speech act is not a misfire; a misfired command would have created no obligation. The fact that the prophet may be subject to blame from God had he disobeyed shows that the speech act of commanding was not a misfire.

But what about the second speech act that we are interested in here: testimony? Here, there was illocutionary performance success and illocutionary communicative success because the prophet intended to testify and arguably intended for the audience to recognise his illocutionary intention. What is the relevant perlocutionary intention here? Had there been no command from God for the prophet to testify, there might have been many relevant perlocutionary intentions, such as to persuade the audience of the truth of *p*, to appear sincere, to establish trust, or to raise awareness of God's nature. However, in this very context, precisely because God has commanded the prophet to testify, the

relevant perlocutionary intention of the prophet is the prophet's intention to obey God's command. The reason why he testifies – the illocutionary point of testifying – is to fulfil that obligation.

Now, just as in the case of God's command, the fact that the prophet's utterance counts as an illocutionary act does not settle the question of whether it is a felicitous one. In order to assess that, we must consider the prophet's normative standing. Suppose the prophet lacked the requisite role for being a person who can give such a testimony – imagine that he was not a prophet, after all. Then the act of testifying would be a case of misfire. His standing, derived from his role, is what makes the already performed illocutionary act of testifying not a misfire. In this way, normative standing again enters the picture not to explain how the act-type is determined, but to determine whether it was a misfire. The pattern is the same: perlocutionary intention determines the act-type, while normative standing explains its felicity.

The key lesson to draw from this discussion is that Cuneo's example does not show that perlocutionary intentions are unnecessary for understanding speech acts. Rather, it reveals how such intentions may be embedded within the communicative structure, even if not possessed by the immediate speaker. When speech acts occur within hierarchical or mediated contexts, such as a prophet conveying a divine command, the original speaker's perlocutionary intention (in this case, God's) continues to determine the potential illocutionary force of the utterance. Normative standing, by contrast, determines whether the illocutionary act was a misfire. If the act did not misfire, then the full illocutionary force would be settled, given that it was not an abuse. Cuneo's case therefore supports, rather than undermines, the continued role of perlocutionary intention in speech acts.

3.3 The Last Case: Self-Directed Speech Act

In the last case, Cuneo describes Jake maintaining a private diary in which he uses many speech acts, such as assertives and directives, to write about his life as a band director (ibid., p. 53).[237] His diary is so private that he does not intend for anyone else to read its contents. Cuneo argues that Jake is performing

[237] This case parallels the discussion about private blame. For example, Driver (2016) examines a problem for McKenna's (2011) conversational model of moral responsibility, which views blame as typically part of a conversational exchange. Driver argues that this model fails to adequately account for instances of private blame – blame that is not outwardly expressed and does not invite a conversational response.

illocutionary acts of different kinds without any perlocutionary intention for anyone but himself to engage with them.

There are a few things to be said about self-directed speech acts and the role of both normative standing and perlocutionary intentions in such context. Cuneo might argue that Jake's normative standing 'hooks-up' an agent's act of writing a sentence (locutionary act) with the speech acts (illocutionary act) that he thereby performs. Jake, as the speaker and audience of his diary, can alter his own normative status by making assertions, issuing directives, or making commitments to himself. For example, when Jake writes, "I promise to finish the rehearsal on time from now on", he is in the position to create a self-imposed obligation.[238] Similarly, a directive like "Jake, be kinder towards the members" can be written because he is in a position to make himself act in such a way. In this sense, Cuneo would say that Jake's normative standing is central to explaining how writing a private diary is an illocutionary act without any external audience.

However, in this case, there is a relevant perlocutionary intention. As I argued in Chapter 3, directives involve the speaker's relevant perlocutionary intention in trying to get the hearer to φ, whether it be changes in the hearer's physical or mental state. In the case of self-directed speech, the speaker's perlocutionary intention is directed at themselves. For example, when Jake writes a directive, "Jake, be kinder towards the members", his perlocutionary intention is such that he attempts to change his own action. When he promises himself to end the rehearsal on time, his perlocutionary intention might be to encourage or pressure oneself into action by creating psychological commitment. Even in self-directed speech, perlocutionary intentions are present, explaining how a self-directed speech act is performed.

Normative standings account for one of the felicity conditions of Jake's speech acts; whether such a directive or promise is a misfire or not depends on whether Jake is in a position to impose obligations or responsibilities on himself. When Jake writes "I promise to finish the rehearsal on time", the speech act is felicitous insofar as he treats himself as bound by that obligation. Similarly, the directive "Jake, be kinder towards the members" is not a misfire insofar as he has the right to demand such behaviour from himself and the responsibility to respond to that demand. Were these normative standings absent (for instance, if Jake disavowed any personal accountability), then the same

[238] Whether one can promise oneself is a contested issue; for arguments in support, see Rosati (2011) and Habib (2009).

utterances would be infelicitous. Thus, even in self-directed speech, normative standing continues to function as a felicity condition.

To conclude, the disagreement between the perlocutionary intention view and Cuneo's NTS concerns explanatory order, not mutual exclusivity.[239] As Cuneo himself acknowledges, the perlocutionary intention view does not deny the relevance of normative standing, just as the NTS does not deny that perlocutionary intentions can be present in speech acts.[240] According to Cuneo, the perlocutionary intention view holds that "the rights, responsibilities, and obligations that attach to speech are explanatorily downstream from it", whereas the NTS holds that such normative standings are prerequisite for count-generating illocutionary acts (Cuneo, 2014, p. 59). However, as I have shown, these two views are not rivals. Even in the examples Cuneo uses to dismiss the perlocutionary intention view, both perlocutionary intention and normative standing play distinct but complementary explanatory roles. Normative standing determines when a speech act misfires; perlocutionary intention helps determine what kind of speech act has been performed. In the next section, I turn to S-directives, such as commands, demands, and requests, because they are the most structured and role-sensitive directive forms. They provide a clear case for testing the explanatory power of both views, allowing me to develop the complementary view in detail.

4. S-directives: Normative Standing and Misfire

This section examines the relationship between two explanatory accounts for understanding S-directives: Cuneo's NTS and my own perlocutionary intention view. I focus on S-directives in this section because they are a useful

[239] To cite Cuneo (2014, p. 47), "normative theorists will sympathize with the perlocutionary intention theorists' claim that communicative intent is central to speech. Arguably, however, perlocutionary intention theorists should also be in considerable sympathy with the normative theorists' insistence that normative standings are important to speech. For, charitably understood, while perlocutionary intention views emphasize the role of perlocutionary act intentions in speech, they do not deny that a person's expressing these intentions is accompanied by his having the normative standing of being a speaker. Indeed, the recognition that agents possess such a standing is, arguably, lying just below the surface of their position".
[240] Cuneo (2014, p. 50) says, "After all, the perlocutionary intention view does not deny that normative features attach to speech acts". Also, "the possibility of an agent's laying himself open to rightful correction without successfully performing an illocutionary act is not an implication of the perlocutionary-intention view alone. Any view that recognizes the existence of malformed speech acts of certain kinds is committed to this conclusion" (ibid., p. 59).

test case: they are a diverse class of speech acts where both normative authority and perlocutionary intention are clear in different ways across subtypes, such as commands, demands, and requests. I will argue that, while the NTS offers an attractive account of how speakers generate normative consequences through speech – such as obligations and rights – it does not, by itself, explain what kind of directive speech act is performed. By contrast, my perlocutionary intention view, which I developed in previous chapters, holds that a speaker's perlocutionary and illocutionary intentions partly determine the potential illocutionary force of an utterance, whether it is a command, a request, etc.

The aim of this section is to show that these views are not competing but complementary. Normative standing, as explained by NTS, plays a role in determining one of the felicity conditions of S-directives: it explains when such acts misfire. But perlocutionary intention is needed to explain how an utterance comes to have the force of a specific kind of directive in the first place. I develop this argument through three cases – command, demand, and request – showing that: (a) perlocutionary intention is necessary for determining potential illocutionary force; (b) normative standing is necessary for determining one type of felicity – misfire; (c) felicitous directive acts can generate specific obligations which are explained by both perlocutionary intention view and the NTS.

4.1 Normative Standing and Perlocutionary Intention in Commanding

This subsection argues that normative standing and perlocutionary intention each play distinct but complementary roles in the explanation of directive speech acts, especially S-directives. Using Cuneo's Big Band example, I show that normative standing determines whether a performed directive is a misfire, while perlocutionary intention is necessary for helping to determine whether an utterance counts as a directive at all.

Cuneo (2014, p. 28) asks us to imagine that Jake, a director of the Big Band, waves four fingers in the air at the end of the performance of *Mack the Knife*. This gesture can be interpreted as issuing a directive, as he commands his band to play exactly four more bars of the tune they are presently performing. According to Cuneo's explanation under the NTS, this act is not only explained by convention, but also involves Jake altering his normative status with his band (i.e., the hearers). Cuneo (ibid., p. 32) says:

> Jake has put himself on the normative hook, taking responsibility for his both having the authority to lay an obligation on the Big Band and his actually having laid an obligation on the Big Band. Were Jake to have no such authority – say, because he is an imposter – or were he to stop conducting at the end of only two bars, then it would be appropriate to correct or admonish Jake for having failed to discharge the obligations (or responsibilities) incurred by his having raised four fingers in the air – once more, all else being equal.

Cuneo's analysis shows that Jake's role as a bandleader grants him normative standing, allowing him to generate rights and obligations through his directive. As the band director, Jake has at least two rights against the band: (a) a *standing right* that "they obey those directives that he issues that fall within his office as band director"; and (b) a *generated right* that "they stop performing *Mack the Knife* at the end of exactly four more bars of music" (ibid., p. 88). In addition, Jake also bears the responsibility for issuing the directive, as he would be liable for blame and reproach if he does not end the tune in four bars. By issuing the directive, Jake also imposes an obligation on the band members to comply.[241]

Cuneo argues that if the Big Band disobeys Jake's command, they violate two obligations. First, they fail to meet their *standing obligation* to obey directives issued within the scope of Jake's role as their bandleader. They disregard the general authority granted to Jake by his position. Second, they neglect the specific *generated obligation* to stop playing after four bars, which Jake specifically generated by issuing the directive. Disobedience would make the band members "open to reproach for having disregarded Jake's directive, refusing to acknowledge his authority" (ibid., p. 87). Under the NTS, the standing right to issue commands is tied to the obligations of the hearers to comply.

However, this analysis only tells part of the story. While Cuneo's NTS emphasises the central role of normative standing in explaining commands, this explanation is about whether normative standing provides one of the felicity conditions for Jake's directive, not whether this normative standing determines what illocutionary act an utterance (or gesture) is. If the Big Band disobeys Jake's command, it of course means that they are violating obligations. It does not mean that what Jake performed was not a command –

[241] This is similar to how Sbisà (2013b, p. 233) interprets commands: "a command changes the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the addressee, so that the addressee has a new obligation".

it was a successfully performed command, and it was not a misfire due to Jake's normative standing. Due to disobedience, there is no perlocutionary production success, but it does not mean that Jake's command was any less of a command. This is because Jake's perlocutionary intention to get his band members to play four more bars then stop contributes to determining the illocutionary force of the speech act. Without such a perlocutionary intention, this act would not count as a directive speech act.

To recap the Big Band case, Jake's social role makes it easy to determine whether his command was a misfire. As a band director, he already has a standing right; as members of the Big Band, they already have a standing obligation. To find out whether a speech act was a misfire, we just need to see if the speaker who commands the Big Band is really a band director. This will later be contrasted with other types of directive speech acts where it is more difficult to determine whether a performed directive is a case of misfire.

Another way of showing that normative standing and perlocutionary intention complement each other in explaining directives is by considering how speech acts become infelicitous when normative standing is absent. If Jake lacks the normative standing to command the band – for example, if he were an imposter – his directive would *misfire*. As Austin (1962, p. 25) explains, a misfire occurs when "the act purported to be done [is] null and void". Green (2018, p. 106) puts the same point this way: "in a misfire, one purports to perform a speech act but produces at most an act of speech: in saying, in all sincerity, "I bequeath the Taj Mahal to my niece Tatiana," I will bequeath nothing".[242]

Misfire arises in the Jake case because of his role as an imposter bandleader. Lacking the normative role of bandleader, even if he attempts to perform the speech act of commanding, it misfires. Cuneo (2014, p. 169) explicitly acknowledges this in the case of a misfired promise: "Since I [layman] lack the relevant sort of authority to promise anything [giving a police officer a three percent pay raise] of this sort, my speech act misfires; I have either failed to promise anything or my promise is radically malformed".

However, when discussing the imposter Jake specifically, Cuneo introduces a notable ambiguity. He writes: "Were Jake to have no such authority – say, because he is an imposter – or were he to stop conducting at the end of only two bars, then it would be appropriate to correct or admonish Jake for having failed to discharge the obligations (or responsibilities) incurred by his having

[242] See Langton (2018) for how 'blocking' what is presupposed in a speech act can also make speech misfire, offering a way of 'undoing' things with words, which has a retroactive character.

raised four fingers in the air – once more, all else being equal" (ibid., p. 32). This is puzzling. On the face of it, the imposter Jake case should be a straightforward misfire: lacking authority, Jake's attempted command misfires – the speech act is void. However, Cuneo's claim that Jake "incurs obligations" seems to imply that Jake's utterance is a case of *abuse*, the case with different kinds of insincerity. For the case of abuse, an illocutionary act is performed yet infelicitously. Under the NTS, normative standing count-generates an illocutionary act; the absence of such does not. So it cannot be the case that the imposter Jake's utterance amounts to a directive. Cuneo's account thus seems to blur the distinction between misfire and abuse, weakening the explanatory power of his NTS.

Once again, it is important to distinguish between different types of success, as we did in the previous chapter. Even though Jake is an imposter, there may be perlocutionary performance success, insofar as Jake intends to get the Big Band to play four more bars.[243] There is also illocutionary performance intention: Jake intends (or at least attempts) to issue a command.[244] There may be perlocutionary communicative success if Jake intends that the Big Band recognise his intention to bring about a certain response and if the Big Band recognises so; and likewise there may be illocutionary communicative success if he intends that they recognise his intention to issue a command and if they actually recognise that. There may even be perlocutionary production success: the Big Band might not realise that Jake is an imposter and may in fact continue playing for four more bars.

Nevertheless, because Jake lacks the authority to issue such a command, the speech act is still infelicitous: it misfires. A helpful analogy here might be that of someone who takes an exam but is later disqualified due to ineligibility. They took the test, answered all the questions, perhaps even got many answers right, but they were disqualified because they did not have standing to take the exam. Similarly, in Jake's case, there were performance success, communicative success, and perlocutionary production success, but without his normative standing, the speech act misfired.

Such a case of misfire contrasts with the case where Jake who is not an imposter raises four fingers with no perlocutionary intention of get the band to

[243] There is perlocutionary performance success as long as there is perlocutionary performance intention of the speaker such that the speaker attempts to bring about a certain perlocutionary effect by uttering the sentence.

[244] Illocutionary performance intention refers to the speaker's intention to perform a particular kind of illocutionary act (e.g., to issue a command).

play four bars (e.g., if he were gesturing by mistake).[245] Then this act would not count as a directive speech act in the first place, as there would be no illocutionary force – there is no perlocutionary intention nor illocutionary intention.

While the command case makes the complementary roles of normative standing and perlocutionary intention vivid, this becomes even clearer with other S-directives. In the next subsection, I turn to demands and requests, where the speaker's authority is often less prominent. These cases show more sharply that perlocutionary intention is needed to determine the type of directive performed, and that standing alone cannot explain this.

4.2 Demand and Request

This subsection aims to strengthen my argument that Cuneo's NTS explains one of the felicity conditions of S-directives, such as demands and requests, but cannot explain the illocutionary force of a specific type of directive. While it was relatively straightforward to determine whether a command misfires by appealing to the speaker's normative standing alone, assessing whether a demand or request misfires often also requires appeal to contextual features beyond role-based standing.

First, consider the speech act of making a demand. According to the NTS, the speaker issues a directive that obligates the hearer to perform a specific action. This act presupposes that the speaker holds normative standing, including standing rights, responsibilities, and obligations. The speaker's normative standing in making a demand entails having the authority to generate obligations through speech, and the hearer is thereby obligated to comply, provided that the demand falls within the speaker's rights, obligations, and responsibilities.

For example, imagine a friend demanding that I apologise to her. She exercises her normative standing as a friend, holding two rights against me: (a) a standing right to fair treatment, which I may have violated by treating her unfairly; and (b) a generated right that she acquires upon making the demand – a specific right to receive my immediate apology, assuming that the demand is justified. This generated right arises from the obligation I incur when I have

[245] A misfire also contrasts with an abuse, which is the other type of infelicity, the topic I will cover in Chapter 5.

wronged her. If, however, I have not wronged her, no such obligation exists, as the conditions for its generation are absent.

My friend is also responsible for making her demand. If she demands an apology without any justifiable cause, she may be open to reproach or blame. When a demand for an apology is justified, it imposes a *pro tanto* obligation on me to apologise – an obligation that requires me to act unless circumstances show that the demand is unjustified. In such cases, my apology must also be sincere; otherwise, I risk reproach for insincerity.

Note the difference between the example of Jake's command and the example of demanding an apology. In Jake's case, the speaker's normative standing is derived from Jake's social role as a band director, and the Big Band has a standing obligation in virtue of the fact that they have Jake as a band director. In this case where a friend demands that I apologise, I do not have a standing obligation to my friend to comply to her demands. Her generated right depends on whether the demand is justified, not whether she has performed a speech act of making a demand.

This explanation shows that normative standing provides one of the felicity conditions for a demand by enabling the speaker to create specific *pro tanto* obligations. The conditions for determining whether a performed demand is a misfire or not differs from those for determining whether a performed command is a misfire or not. However, this analysis is still incomplete for giving us the whole explanation of how a demand comes to have a certain illocutionary force. While normative standing explains *who* can make demands and *when*, contributing to the explanation of why they are felicitous, it does not by itself explain *what* makes an utterance a demand, rather than a command or suggestion.

On the perlocutionary intention view, the friend's perlocutionary intention to get me to apologise and her illocutionary intention to perform a certain illocutionary act – demanding – determines the potential illocutionary force of the utterance. Once that speech act is performed, the normative standing of the speaker and the relevant situation (e.g., whether the demand is justified) determines whether this speech act is misfired. If the speech act is not misfired, then it needs to be checked whether it is abused. If this speech act is not a misfire nor an abuse, then it is a felicitous speech act with its full illocutionary force, where specific obligations are created upon me – I am obliged to apologise to my friend in this particular context.

This distinction becomes clearer in cases where demands are issued without clear justification. For example, a co-author might sincerely utter, "I demand

higher research standards from you", even if my current standards are already high. The demand can only create a specific obligation for me to improve my standards if this illocutionary act was not a case of misfire, such as if my current standards fall short of reasonable expectations, and if the co-author's demand is proportionate and justifiable in the context of our collaboration. If these conditions fail, the demand misfires.

If I reject the demand, having already provided the highest research standards possible, I can contest the specific obligation generated without denying that the co-author has standing. For example, their standing remains intact because they exercised a permission-right (introducing normative alterations between me and them) and a claim-right (expecting that I do not prevent these alterations). Their standing contributes to determining whether the performed speech act was a misfire or not. However, whether I am in a position to receive such a demand also bears on whether the speech act misfires.[246] If I already have the highest research standards possible, this demand may misfire in such a way that it fails to generate a specific obligation upon me.

This analysis highlights why I partially accept (what Cuneo thinks is) the second claim of the perlocutionary intention view introduced in §1:

> In general, an agent's having the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of being a speaker is not that in virtue of which his performing a locutionary act count-generates his performing an illocutionary act. Generally speaking, these normative features do not generate but are generated by speech (Cuneo, 2014, p. 48).

Where I agree with this claim is that some normative features are indeed generated by speech. When a speaker performs a certain felicitous directive, they generate new, specific obligations for the hearer. I also agree with this claim because what count-generates his performing an illocutionary act is not the speaker's normative standing, but rather their perlocutionary intention and illocutionary intentions. However, I do acknowledge the role that normative standing plays: while not count-generating the illocutionary act, normative standing is nonetheless necessary for its one of its felicity conditions. It is a background condition that determines whether the speech act misfires. Normative standing does not generate illocutionary force, but it provides one of the felicity conditions for whether the illocutionary act misfired.

[246] In Langton's (2018, p. 155) terms, this might be called 'hearer-dependent' felicity conditions.

Given this picture, let us apply this to another S-directive, requests.[247] Let us consider an example: I request that a tourist delete a photo they have taken because I do not wish to be in it. If the NTS were to explain this speech act, the explanation would be such that, by making this request, I exercise my normative standing. I have two rights against the tourist: (a) a standing right to privacy which grants me the authority to make such a request; (b) a generated right which is created from issuing the request: the right that my privacy be respected by the tourist deleting the photo immediately. As the speaker, I also assume responsibility for the request. If I mistakenly believe I am in the photo and issue the request, I may be open to correction or reproach. Additionally, the tourist bears responsibility for deleting the photo; if they merely pretend to comply, they are blameworthy.

However, such an explanation has a limitation: my normative standing alone does not distinguish whether I am making a request, a demand, an order or some other directive speech act. In other words, this explanation would also go through if I replace 'request' with 'demand' or 'order' in the above example. Therefore, stopping at this point would only provide a partial explanation. While normative standing determines whether an illocutionary act misfired, the illocutionary force of the request is determined by the illocutionary intention to make a request and perlocutionary intention to get the hearer to delete the photo.

In conclusion, this section has defended a complementary view of S-directives, showing that normative standing determines whether a given S-directive is a misfire and perlocutionary intention determines a potential illocutionary force of an utterance. In §4.1, I argued that while normative standing determines whether a command is a misfire, it does not account for what illocutionary act is performed. In §4.2, I extended this view to demands and requests, where normative standing is less clearly role-based and more context-sensitive. I

[247] One could say that 'request' is a weaker directive than 'demand', for example, by appealing to Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 99): "there is a clear intuitive difference within, for example, the directive illocutionary forces between the strength of illocutionary point expressed by such strong verbs as 'order', 'command', and 'insist', and the strength of illocutionary point of the forces named by such weak verbs as 'suggest', 'advise' and 'recommend', and somewhere between these two classes lie forces expressed by such intermediate verbs as 'ask' and 'request'". This thought is similarly repeated in Huddleston and Pullum (2002, pp. 929–945). They further emphasise that the strength of the force of a given directive ranges on a spectrum, depending on how much it promotes compliance. Stronger directives, such as orders and commands, require compliance as the speaker typically holds power over the hearer, while weaker directives, such as invitations, leave compliance optional. Also see Burnette and Calude (2022).

showed that, even in these less hierarchical forms of S-directives, standing remains necessary for felicity, while perlocutionary intention remains necessary for illocutionary force. Together, these analyses support my core claim: normative standing explains when a directive misfires, and perlocutionary intention explains what kind of directive has been performed. This complementary view sets the stage for the next chapter, where I extend this view to H-directives.

5. H-Directives: Normative Standing and Misfire

This section extends the complementary view developed in §4 to H-directives such as advice, suggestions, and recommendations. My contribution here is twofold. In §5.1, I argue that H-directives still require normative standing to determine whether they misfire, in which case the misfiring is of a recognition-dependent kind, where the hearer's recognition partly determines whether the act misfires. In §5.2, by using examples of unsolicited advice, I show that the speaker's standing to advise can be recognised or challenged by the hearer in light of contextual judgements. Together, these features show the distinct felicity conditions of H-directives, supporting my broader thesis that normative standing and perlocutionary intention function in a complementary manner across different types of directives.

5.1 Explaining H-Directives: Lessons from S-Directives

Applying the lessons from §4 to H-directives reveals that, while normative standing and perlocutionary intention remain central to explaining these directives, these two elements function differently to how they do in S-directives. I proposed that three components work together to explain S-directives: (1) the speaker's normative standing and the context help to determine whether a directive misfires; (2) a felicitous speech act generates a specific (*pro tanto*) obligation for the hearer; and (3) the speaker's perlocutionary intention helps to determine the utterance's potential illocutionary force. While these apply neatly to S-directives, H-directives show distinctive features that complicate matters.

Let us begin with (1): does normative standing determine whether an H-directive misfires? With some cases – for instance, when a close friend suggests I exercise more, or when an Instagram influencer or doctor gives the

same suggestion – the speaker's normative standing seems to matter less to determine whether this speech act misfires. Unlike a bandleader issuing a command, the friend or influencer does not appear to rely on a role that confers normative standing. This might suggest that normative standing is irrelevant for H-directives.

However, this would be a mistake. In many cases, especially when it comes to advice and recommendations, hearers do respond to standing, albeit in a more recognition-dependent and context-sensitive way. For instance, when a legal professional or an experienced athlete offers unsolicited advice, we often assess whether they have normative standing to offer it. We might also reject unsolicited advice from someone who clearly does not know what they are talking about, saying something like, "You're not in a position to tell me that", thereby treating the speaker's standing as a condition for misfire. In such cases where advice is rejected, H-directives do involve a form of normative standing based on the hearer's recognition in light of context-specific features.

Turning to (2), it is true that felicitous H-directives do not typically generate obligations in the same way that S-directives do. For example, ignoring a friend's advice or declining a doctor's recommendation rarely invites blame in the same way as disobeying a command or failing to comply with a justified demand.

Finally, (3) still remains central: perlocutionary intention helps to explain how H-directives come to have their illocutionary force. Again, I argue that perlocutionary intention determines the type of H-directive performed, while the recognition-dependent standing determines whether it misfires.

Therefore, H-directives have different felicity conditions to S-directives. They still require standing, including a recognitional sort. In the next subsection, I consider examples of unsolicited advice as an example of when the speaker's normative standing is openly challenged, showing how a misfire can occur, depending on the hearer's recognition.

5.2 Unsolicited Advice: Hearer-Recognition and Felicity

Unsolicited advice – whether from strangers online offering exercise tips or men advising women on how to dress – highlights the distinctive structure of H-directives and poses a challenge to Cuneo's NTS.[248] According to the NTS,

[248] I agree with Archard's (2021, p. 605) point that "'unsolicited' need not mean 'unwelcome', although persistent advice to an unreceptive advisee evidently unhappy with being pestered is

a speaker's standing power includes both a permission-right to introduce normative alterations and a claim-right to be free from interference. However, unsolicited advice shows that, in the case of H-directives, the speaker's standing might be recognition-dependent: it depends on whether the hearer recognises or challenges the speaker's normative standing in that particular context.

Consider a man giving unsolicited advice to a woman on her attire, believing that he has the normative standing to issue such advice. The woman might respond with, "Who are you to tell me what to do?" or "I didn't ask for your advice", directly challenging the speaker's normative standing. Unlike S-directives, such as commands or demands, where the speaker's standing typically derives from a societal role and does not often require the hearer's recognition, H-directives such as advice may require the hearer's recognition of – or at least the hearer not challenging – the speaker's standing for the directive not to be a misfire.

Before proceeding, it is important to distinguish this recognition from the kind of uptake discussed in Chapter 3, namely my uptakeability view. There, uptake refers to the hearer's recognition of the illocutionary force (e.g., recognising an utterance as advice), not the legitimacy of the speaker's standing to offer it. In unsolicited advice, the hearer may fully recognise the illocutionary act as advice (thus satisfying uptake in my sense), yet still reject its felicity by challenging the speaker's standing.

This challenging of standing, when legitimate, may result in a misfire.[249] Unsolicited advice highlights how normative standing can appear to depend on the hearer's recognition. In unsolicited contexts, the hearer retains the power to accept or challenge standing, making it clear that standing power can be recognition-dependent in certain contexts.[250]

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rude". He points out that there are many circumstances where unsolicited advice must be offered: "an experienced climber notes that someone nearby is attempting a route up the mountain that only ends in a dangerous impasse; a garage mechanic not at work sees that a car about to be driven off has a serious fault; a doctor in company with a stranger is able to diagnose a condition that needs urgent treatment". I am interested in the cases of unsolicited advice where the hearer dismisses the advice, finding it rude or unhelpful, thereby rejecting the advice.

[249] According to Langton (2018, p. 157), a hearer saying "who are you to tell me what to do" would count as blocking the speech act: "To block a presupposition can be to block the speech act to whose force it contributes".

[250] This hearer's recognition can also be put in terms of 'refusal', as Kukla (2023) says, where an audience refuses to cooperate with a speaker by not giving it the uptake the speaker seeks.

Cuneo might argue that this flexibility is still compatible with the NTS, drawing on his distinction between *recognition-variant* and *recognition-dependent* facts (2014, p. 40):

> The fact *that Major League managers are prohibited from ejecting umpires* is recognition-variant insofar as baseball managers could easily have had powers different from those they in fact possess, since a conferring agent might have declared it so. A fact such as this is recognition-dependent insofar as baseball managers are subject to the prohibition against ejecting umpires simply because a conferring agent has declared that anyone who occupies that role is subject to that prohibition (but could easily have declared otherwise).

Making a parallel to an interpersonal setting, Cuneo might suggest that the hearer acts as a conferring agent akin to an institution. Just as Major League Baseball could declare whether managers may eject an umpire, a hearer can declare (e.g., acknowledge or reject) a speaker's standing to give advice. Under the NTS, norms governing advice can be *recognition-variant* (the speaker might have had authority under different social norms) and *recognition-dependent* (the speaker's authority actually holds only because the hearer confers it).

However, the analogy is imperfect. Unlike institutional recognition, which tends to be stable and externally imposed, interpersonal recognition is highly sensitive to context. Institutional rules are binding regardless of uptake; interpersonal standing, by contrast, can be more lenient. Consider again the man offering advice on a woman's attire: if she challenges and rejects his normative standing, it seems to reveal that the man did not have standing to advise her regarding her attire in the first place. Yet if the same man offers climbing advice at a bouldering wall, and if the woman recognises his competence, she might accept his normative standing and take the advice. In this case, it is not that standing is irrelevant, but that it is recognised contextually, perhaps because he is in fact knowledgeable or experienced in climbing. This suggests that the speaker's normative standing is context-sensitive, and the hearer helps to bring out whether the speaker has the standing or not. The hearer's rejection of advice can either be a legitimate challenge, revealing the speaker's lack of standing, or a distorted denial in which case the act might remain felicitous despite non-recognition.

This flexibility explains why unsolicited advice can misfire. The speaker's standing is *not* irrelevant. It still matters whether one is in a position to advise, but that position may also be recognised or challenged by the hearer. Crucially,

this does not conflict with my uptakeability view, which concerns the recognisability of the speech act as advice, not whether the speaker's normative standing is recognised. The hearer may recognise an utterance as advice while still pointing out that the speaker lacks standing to give such advice. Where standing is indeed absent, misfire follows – not from uptake failure, but from the speaker's lack of standing.

To conclude, the discussion of H-directives in this section shows that they can rely on a form of normative standing that is recognition-dependent. As we saw in the cases of unsolicited advice, the speaker's standing to advise can be recognised or challenged by the hearer in light of contextual judgements. This makes standing in H-directives more flexible than in S-directives, where it is typically role-based and resistant to denial.

These features support my claim that Cuneo's NTS and the perlocutionary intention view are complementary: normative standing (even if recognition-dependent) remains necessary for the felicity of H-directives, while perlocutionary intention explains their potential illocutionary force. Together, these elements provide a more comprehensive account of H-directives than either view could alone.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has defended a complementary view of directive speech acts, according to which perlocutionary intention and normative standing serve distinct explanatory roles. Perlocutionary intention helps to determine the kind of directive being performed – such as advising, requesting, or commanding – while normative standing determines whether the act misfires. Combining the insights of the perlocutionary intention view with those of the normative theory of speech provides a more comprehensive understanding of the type of speech act performed and its felicity conditions. This helps to clarify the structure of directive speech acts, especially in cases where the speaker's authority is ambiguous or contested.

Applying this complementary view to S- and H-directives, we saw that advice, as an H-directive, is sensitive to normative standing. The act may misfire because the speaker's standing depends on recognition by the hearer. These features make advice a particularly useful case for testing how intention and standing interact in directive speech.

This chapter therefore laid out the theoretical groundwork for the next chapter, in which I will identify the norms of advising, including the felicity conditions for both moral advice and non-moral advice. Building on Sbisà's (2018) tripartite model of speech act norms, I provide a more detailed account of the norms of advising.

5.Speech Act Norms of Moral Advice

1. Introduction

The previous chapters have established that the speech act of giving advice is a distinct type of directive aimed at guiding the hearer. In particular, in Chapter 3, I have argued that directive speech acts must be primarily understood in terms of the speaker's perlocutionary intention: their attempt to influence or guide the hearer. In Chapter 4, I argued for a complementary view of directive speech acts, according to which perlocutionary intention and normative standing serve distinct explanatory roles.

This chapter builds on those insights by focusing on the norms that govern the speech act of giving moral advice. It addresses the question posed in the introduction: (2b) *which norms govern the felicity and evaluation of moral advice specifically, and how should these be revised or refined in light of those that govern advice more generally?* Put differently, what makes an utterance of moral advice felicitous or even good advice? If moral advice is to be understood as a distinct kind of directive that invites deliberation, then it must be subject to norms that differ from those governing other speech acts. To answer this, I turn to Sbisà's (2018) tripartite model of speech act norms, which distinguishes between constitutive rules, maxims, and objective requirements. Sbisà's model is particularly useful here because it goes beyond traditional felicity conditions in speech act theory, allowing for a more fine-grained analysis of the normative structure of advice.

I have chosen Sbisà's model over the felicity conditions proposed by Austin and Searle for several reasons. Firstly, Sbisà's model is a more recent development, incorporating elements from both Austin's and Searle's work, including their widely accepted felicity conditions. By accounting for Austin, Searle, and Grice, Sbisà presents a more comprehensive view. The key advantage of Sbisà's model is her improvement on some weaknesses in

Austin's and Searle's views.[251] While Austin and Searle's norms help to define illocutionary acts, Sbisà (ibid., p. 28) notes that violations of their norms do not necessarily cancel the illocutionary effect.[252] She improves Searle's felicity conditions by developing constitutive rules that are necessary for certain speech acts to occur, and she introduces maxims that relate to the sincerity condition. Additionally, she proposes objective requirements for assessing whether a speech act is correct, proper, good, or true. This tripartite structure is particularly useful as it covers the constitution of a speech act, its effectiveness, and its evaluation. I also prefer Sbisà's model because it is one of the few that explicitly address the norms for specific speech acts, including advice, promise, and congratulation.[253] While many models propose general norms for all speech acts, Sbisà focuses specifically on the norms governing advice.

However, while Sbisà's model provides a strong foundation, I argue that it requires modification to accurately account for the speech act norms of moral advice. In §2, I argue that Sbisà's model requires structural modification: I reinterpret her constitutive rules as felicity-enabling rules, refine the understanding of maxims as regulative norms that govern optimal performance, especially in relation to sincerity and abuse, and propose that her so-called objective requirements are better understood as evaluative requirements – context-sensitive standards used to assess the quality of speech acts. §3 applies the revised felicity-enabling rules to moral advice, introducing knowledge, experience, and hearer-conferred standing as the features that determine whether a speech act of giving advice misfires. In §4, I reclassify two of Sbisà's constitutive rules as maxims and explore how maxims regulate the optimal performance of advice. Finally, §5 develops evaluative requirements for moral advice, arguing that advice is good when it contributes to the hearer's deliberation and enhances their moral understanding.

[251] For example, in her discussion of Austin's speech norms, Sbisà (2018, p. 26) criticises his approach, arguing that "Austin's rules are not themselves constitutive rules of any illocutionary act, but are templates for sets of such rules", making them incomplete. Her criticism lies in the fact that, while Austin's rules offer a framework for understanding performative utterances, they do not fully articulate the specific constitutive rules that define and regulate individual speech acts.

[252] See the definition of 'illocutionary effect' in Chapter 1.

[253] Other works addressing the norms for specific speech acts include Searle (1969, pp. 66–67) and Lance and Kukla (2013), among others. For assertions, see Goldberg (2011, 2023), and compare Chapter 5 of Jonas (2025) with my characterisation of the speech act norms of giving advice.

2. Understanding Sbisà's Speech Act Norms

In "Varieties of Speech Act Norms" (2018), Sbisà proposes a tripartite distinction to understand speech act norms: constitutive rules, maxims, and objective requirement.[254] Speech act norms, according to Sbisà (ibid., p. 24), are the norms that speech acts obey. She clarifies, however, that it is *not* the case that "the rules or norms applying to speech all belong to *one and the same kind*" (ibid., emphasis added). As she explains, linguistic rules, such as syntactic and semantic rules, governing language are different from those that regulate illocutionary acts. This distinction is accurate – while syntax and semantics dictate how words and sentences are constructed and understood, they operate differently from the norms that govern speech acts. In other words, the linguistic rules that govern how sentences are constructed and understood do not operate in the same way as the pragmatic norms that govern how speakers perform certain actions through speech, such as asking questions, issuing commands, or giving advice.

Sbisà's (2018) focus is on the latter type of norms governing illocutionary acts.[255] Therefore, she examines different speech act norms that apply only to specific speech acts, as they "play some kind of normative role with respect to one or other of the aspects of phases of speech act production and understanding (among which I take as salient the performance and recognition of the illocutionary act)" (ibid.). These speech act norms set standards for how certain speech acts are executed and understood. By understanding these norms, she suggests, we can better understand not only how speech acts are performed but also how they are recognised by hearers.

Taking her model as a starting point, this section proposes several changes to her speech act norms, particularly in relation to advice. In §2.1, I argue that Sbisà's constitutive rules should be understood as felicity-enabling rules. They do not define the illocutionary act-type of advice, but rather determine whether the act misfires due to a lack of normative standing. In §2.2, I replace the conditions of 'authority' and 'competence' with 'knowledge' and 'experience', respectively, to accommodate informal instances of advice-giving and to reflect how they belong to felicity-enabling rules. In §2.3, I address maxims, which are regulative norms that structure the ideal

[254] For a recent criticism of Sbisà's tripartite distinction, see Marsili (2023).

[255] According to Sbisà, norms and conventions are not the same, but some types of speech act norms – e.g., constitutive rules – are conventional, while others – e.g., maxims and objective requirements – are not. Sbisà uses 'norms' as a general term which can encompass certain rules that are also considered conventional.

performance of advice, and refine what 'abuse' means. In §2.4, I argue that Sbisà's 'objective requirements' are more accurately described as 'evaluative requirements': context-sensitive standards by which the quality of complete acts of advice is judged. Together, these revisions will lay the foundation for developing specific speech act norms for moral advice in the next section.

2.1 What are Constitutive Rules?

Let us first turn our attention to *constitutive rules*. In the speech act theoretical tradition, constitutive rules are "widely recognized as rules without which a certain act-type would not exist and performances of acts of that type could not occur" (Sbisà 2018, p. 25). Sbisà takes constitutive rules to be "speech act norms which, when complied with, enable us to perform the acts they define; they organize procedures or routines that are repeatable and recognizable from one occasion to another and whose function (the production of illocutionary effects) is only exercised against a background of intersubjective agreement" (ibid., p. 24). According to Sbisà, since the constitutive rules are set for the successful performance of a speech act, the violation of such rules results in the speech act failing or being 'unhappy': "The penalty for the violation of constitutive rules is infelicity, which may lead to failure in performing the act and therefore in bringing about its illocutionary effect" (ibid., p. 47).

As Sbisà acknowledges, her analysis builds on that of Austin and Searle: Austin (1962, pp. 14–15) identifies a set of norms essential for the effective execution of performative acts, as "There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect" and a set of rules of which "The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and completely", all of which "are necessary for the smooth or 'happy' functioning of a performative".[256] Similarly, Searle (1969, p. 38) says that "speaking a language is a matter of performing speech acts according to systems of constitutive rules". According to Searle, "constitutive rules constitute (and also regulate) an activity the existence of which is logically dependent on the rules" (ibid., p. 34), so these rules establish the conditions under which an utterance

[256] I have introduced what a performative is in Chapter 2. To repeat, according to Austin (1979, p. 235), performative utterances are such that "in saying what I do, I actually perform that action". If a performative meets certain criteria, known as *felicity conditions*, it is considered successful or 'happy'. I take advising to be a performative utterance, and likewise other speech acts, too. Doerge's (2013, p. 222) last two conditions of a performative utterance will be relevant here: An utterance t is a performative utterance if and only if "To utter t is to (attempt to) perform an illocutionary act" and "To utter t is not merely to say something".

qualifies as a particular speech act. For Searle, these constitutive rules are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for the successful and non-defective performances of an illocutionary act (Sbisà 2018, p. 25).[257] However, Sbisà seems to leave a possibility open for exceptions, characterising them as not individually necessary and jointly sufficient, but rather as *prima facie* characterisations (as Marsili (2023) notes).

Some of the points need clarifications and modifications. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, 'success' is used in different ways by different philosophers. My view, which is sympathetic to intentionalism, is that illocutionary *performance* success can be achieved even without felicity conditions being met because the speaker's illocutionary intention determines whether they performed the act. Whether the act is felicitous or not will need different rules. In order to determine whether a speech act misfired, we need to check whether the speaker has normative standing; in order to determine whether a speech act was an abuse, we need to check whether the speech act followed regulative rules. Distinguishing performance success from felicity provided grounds for taking into account both the speaker's intentions and normative conditions. This was part of my overall aim, especially in the previous chapter.

Given this aim, there is a need to modify Sbisà's constitutive rules. First, these rules are not constitutive; what constitutes an illocutionary act is the speaker's intention. Then these rules are speech act norms which, when complied with, enable us to perform the acts *felicitously*, rather than constituting them as such. Even without these rules, a certain illocutionary act-type would exist, and performances of acts of that type *could* occur. I agree that the penalty for violating constitutive rules is infelicity. When these rules are violated, the illocutionary act misfires, albeit achieving its performance (or communicative and sometimes even perlocutionary production) success. Again, a useful analogy is a student who takes a test, answers every question correctly, but is disqualified. Likewise, an illocutionary act can be performed, but without meeting certain felicity conditions, it will not be performed 'happily'.

Those who are not persuaded to my arguments may find this claim implausible. I hold that a child who intends to order her parents to clean her room, by saying "I order you to clean my room", is ordering her parents. An objection would be that, although the child says "I order" with a certain illocutionary and perlocutionary intention, she lacks the requisite standing; therefore, her utterance is not an order. She did not order her parents.

[257] I take that, for Searle, 'successful' means satisfying all constitutive rules, and 'non-defective' means satisfying all regulative rules.

My reply is as follows. Let us draw a parallel with another type of speech act. Imagine, for example, that a stranger witnesses someone being catcalled and turns to the victim and says, "I truly apologise for that". Suppose the stranger sincerely intends to apologise and performs the act of apologising. Here, the act misfires – the stranger lacks the standing to apologise on behalf of the wrongdoer. Nevertheless, there was illocutionary performance success: the act was performed but was infelicitous due to a lack of standing. It would be unnatural to describe the situation as one in which the stranger never apologised. In fact, we might find ourselves telling others: "You won't believe what happened today – this random stranger apologised to me when they had nothing to do with it!"

The same analysis applies to the child's case. She performed the illocutionary act of ordering, but it misfired due to her lack of standing. Again, even if her parents choose to comply, and hence the intended perlocutionary effect is achieved, that does not mean that the act was felicitous. Infelicitous speech acts can still bring about their intended perlocutionary effects. However, achieving the effect does not retroactively render the act felicitous. In other words, felicity conditions are not necessary for performance, nor for achieving its intended perlocutionary effects.

I, therefore, propose that we refer to these rules as 'Felicity-Enabling Rules'. Referring to them as 'Constitutive Rules' is misleading because the rules do not constitute whether the illocutionary act-type was performed or not, but rather whether it misfired due to a lack of standing. They are called 'felicity-enabling' because there are two ways to determine whether a speech act is felicitous: one way is to check whether it misfires, and the other is to check whether it is defective due to not following maxims. The felicity-enabling rules only concern the former – whether the speech act misfires. They enable felicity, but that is only half of the picture.

2.2 Constitutive Rules for Advice

Sbisà (2018, p. 36) offers the following five constitutive rules for advice:[258]

[258] One might question whether Sbisà's constitutive rules for advice are an appropriate starting point for this analysis. If these rules are inadequate for explaining what constitutes advice, why propose revisions? My claim can be understood as hypothetical: if one accepts Sbisà's constitutive rules for advice, then the proposed revisions are necessary to account for moral advice. Even if one rejects Sbisà's model, I believe my revisions contribute to a deeper

> -the speaker must have authority over the addressee with respect to the field of activities with which the piece of advice is concerned,
>
> -the speaker must have competence about the relevant features of the situation, especially those potentially relevant to the achievement of the addressee's goals,
>
> -it must be open to the addressee to choose one among various lines of conduct,
>
> -the speaker's words must be a realization of the procedure of giving advice, indicating a line of conduct or criteria for choosing it and clarifying that it is best suited to the addressee's goals, given the constraints and requirements of the situation,
>
> -when not clear enough from the situation (as when the speaker is officially in charge of giving advice to the addressee) or from the content of the speaker's utterance, some additional linguistic form must be used to make the act of advising recognizable, such as the explicit performance 'I advise…' or performative gloss ('This is my advice').

I take it that, since Sbisà is basing her rules on Austin, these rules are meant to be conventional – especially the last three. It is a kind of convention that, when advice is given, it must be possible – physically or metaphysically – to choose between several options; that the speaker's words must follow a certain recognisable procedure; and that there must be some linguistic form that marks the utterance as advice.

Although these are undoubtedly what is typically expected in the act of advising, there are some problems. First, if these were truly constitutive rules, they seem too demanding. For example, if the speaker's words do not indicate a line of conduct (the fourth rule), this would imply that the speaker is not performing the illocutionary act of giving advice at all. Similarly, if the situation or the content are not sufficiently clear for the hearer to recognise that the speaker is giving advice, and the speaker does not use a performative gloss or prefix (the fifth rule), it would again imply that no act of advising has taken place.

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understanding of the nature of moral advice, distinguishing it from non-moral advice. In either case, the exploration is valuable.

While I am sympathetic to Sbisà's view that these conditions are typical conventions of advice, I do not think they constitute the illocutionary act itself – for reasons given in Chapters 3 and 4 regarding the centrality of the speaker's intention. In particular, in Chapter 4, I argued that a speaker's normative standing determines whether a speech act misfires. Of Sbisà's constitutive rules, only the first two concern – and therefore indicate – whether such standing is in place. Therefore, I will argue that: with some modifications, only the first two rules belong under what I call *Felicity-Enabling Rules* (§3); the third rule belongs under *evaluative requirements* (§5); and the last two rules should be classified as *maxims* (§4). Of course, this reclassification depends on the intentionalist view defended in the previous chapters, according to which the performance of an illocutionary act depends primarily on speaker intention.

Before I argue for these points, let us understand what these rules mean, especially the first, second, and fourth rules, regarding 'authority', 'competence', or 'goals'.[259] This is important to clarify because I will make revisions to her rules that concern these terms.[260]

First, consider 'authority'. Sbisà appears to distinguish between formal authority, which requires an independent institutional basis, and informal authority, which may emerge through interpersonal recognition or accommodation.[261] The term 'accommodation' is originally from Lewis (1979), who defines it as a regular component of the dynamics of score change in the language game. As Sbisà (2018, p. 40) explains: "In addition to this,

[259] One might ask how this formulation differs from Cuneo's (2018) normative theory of speech. While both Sbisà (2018) and Cuneo (2014) acknowledge the importance of the speaker's authority (i.e., standing power), Sbisà introduces additional elements: the hearer's decision-making capability (her third constitutive rule) and the role of language use (her fourth constitutive rule). This is why I find Sbisà's approach more compelling than Cuneo's. Sbisà's emphasis on the constitutive rules provides a more precise and applicable model. Her model ensures that the content of the advice, as expressed through language, is contextually relevant and directly beneficial to the hearer, rather than relying heavily on the speaker's standing power, rights, responsibility, and obligation. Therefore, I take Sbisà's model to be the starting point for my revisions because it offers a clearer and more straightforward way of understanding and evaluating advice.

[260] In §3, I will also suggest revisions to the third rule, as I believe they are not fully applicable to the context of moral advice where moral obligations may limit the range of permissible actions.

[261] This is different from how Raz (2009b) explains authority. He thinks that authority is a species of power, and authority over persons and authority to perform certain actions should be distinguished (ibid., p. 19), According to him, "One has authority to do only those things that one is given permission to by somebody who has authority over the person whose interests are affected" (ibid., p. 20).

Lewis posits a tendency of the conversational score to evolve in ways that make whatever is done count as correct play. That is accommodation: a matter of context change again, but adapting the scores (the context) according to which a move is to be evaluated to that conversational move, rather than the other way around".[262] According to Sbisà (ibid., p. 42), accommodation "is a peculiar way in which constitutive rules can be made to function […] Such a peculiar way of functioning is governed by general principles, one of which concerns pattern recognition (a pattern can well be recognized from the presentation of some of its parts) and the other the by-default recognition of other minds or subjects".

In the case of formal authority, social recognition alone is insufficient: being perceived as an authority figure does not make one so. For example, a thief dressed as a policeman may temporarily mislead others into believing the he has the authority to issue orders; this does not make the thief a real policeman with actual authority (ibid., p. 43).[263] This suggests that formal authority cannot be created by being perceived as an authority figure; it must stem from something external to social recognition.[264]

According to Sbisà, the role of authority is particularly evident in advice-giving: "If it turns out that the speaker has no relevant authority or no relevant competence or that there is no point in advising since the addressee has no choice, the speech act, even if it presents itself as a realization of the procedure

[262] The difference between Lewis and Sbisà is that Sbisà does not have rules for accommodation "since the dynamics of illocution is enough to explain why the initial context is retroactively adjusted in certain cases" (2018, p. 42). I will assume that Sbisà is correct.
[263] Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 201) seem to diverge from Sbisà that they argue that orders can be given from a position of power, but commands strictly require authority: "The main difference between commands and orders is that orders do not require an institutional structure of authority. One can order somebody to do something simply in virtue of one's position of power whether or not that power is institutionally sanctioned. The issuance of a command, however, requires that the speaker be in a position of authority over the hearer. Without too much idealization, one can say that orders require that the speaker be in a position of power, and one form of this power may be institutional authority; whereas commands require that the speaker be in a position of authority and not simply one of power. To direct someone by invoking a position of authority or power commits the speaker to not giving him the option of refusal (the 'not' here is an illocutionary negation)".
[264] Similarly, Austin (1962, p. 28) says, "on a desert island you may say to me 'Go and pick up wood'; and I may say 'I don't take orders from you' or 'you're not entitled to give me orders' – I do not take orders from you when you try to 'assert your authority' (which I might fall in with but may not) on a desert island, as opposed to the case when you are the captain on a ship and therefore genuinely have authority".

of giving advice, cannot be the giving of a piece of advice" (ibid., p. 37).[265] For Sbisà, having authority is therefore a constitutive rule for an utterance to count as advice in formal contexts.

However, in informal settings, authority can be socially accommodated. Sbisà notes that "in default conditions the speech act may be taken as successfully performed advice, accommodating the relevant beliefs about the speaker's competence and the availability to the addressee of more than one course of action. The speaker's authority may also be accommodated, in informal settings at least" (ibid.). Her example is that informal leadership in a peer group can develop by accommodation, where the group members start accepting and following one member's directives (ibid., p. 43). This suggests that in everyday interactions, such as giving advice to your friends or colleagues, authority can be accommodated through social recognition and relevant beliefs, rather than requiring a pre-established institutional authority.[266]

Even though authority can be accommodated, I argue that it is too strong a requirement for advice-giving.[267] When a more advanced student advises a less experienced one on how to write a paper, it does not mean that the advanced student has informal authority, but shows that the student may be knowledgeable in this area. When a friend gives advice on romantic relationship issues, it does not mean that she is taken to have informal authority on the issues regarding romantic relationships; she is knowledgeable on what the person who seeks advice is like and what her past romantic relationships have taught her. If authority were a necessary constitutive rule for advice (or to use my term, 'felicity-enabling rule'), such instances would be infelicitous advising. To better capture these cases, I propose modifying the authority condition: that *the speaker must have knowledge with respect to the field of*

[265] Sbisà (2018, p. 33) thinks that acts of warning and advising or even naming and appointing are exercising authority (or 'exercitives').

[266] This is another point where Searle and Vanderveken diverge from Sbisà. For Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 28), an absence of authority can turn an order into a request (which can also be advice): "For example, given the same speaker, hearer, and time and place of utterance, an utterance of the sentence 'Leave the room!' might be an order (in a world of utterance in which the speaker is in a position of authority over the hearer, and he invokes his authority in the utterance) and yet in another world of utterance (where the speaker is not in authority) it might be merely a request".

[267] Another criticism of such a condition is made by Marsili (2023) who states that Sbisà's view is implausible – it would follow that when the adviser does not have the authority, the speaker is not advising at all. According to Marsili (ibid., p. 180fn27), "this seems wrong: this is at most a condition for *appropriate* advising".

activities with which the piece of advice is concerned. These cases will be further explored in §3.

Now let us discuss 'competence'. Sbisà discusses competence in the context of making assertions, presenting it as a publicly recognised ability to produce correct assertions based on necessary methodological experience. As she states, a speaker is "in a position to assert something when she (because of circumstances and personal competence) has publicly recognizable good chances to produce an objectively correct assertion, namely, an assertion that is true" (ibid., p. 39). Competence, then, is about the likelihood that a speaker's assertion aligns with the truth and is recognised as such by the public. Moreover, Sbisà says, "socially or intersubjectively ratified entitlement to make assertions" can be based on "recognized methodological competence in the specific field" along with acquaintance with data and reasoning ability, which enables the speaker to articulate knowledge in a way that is useful to the addressee (ibid.). If so, competence can also involve having the necessary methodological experience in the relevant field. An example of methodological competence would be a medical doctor making diagnostic assertions based on medical training and established diagnostic methods. A doctor's competence would be about applying established medical methodologies, such as interpreting lab results, following diagnostic protocols, and assessing symptoms in light of medical research, to assert that the patient is diagnosed with a certain illness.

Sbisà's understanding of competence in assertions could then be applied to advice, where the speaker has the publicly recognised ability to offer contextually appropriate guidance with their experience in the relevant context. Just as a speaker is competent to assert something when they have "publicly recognizable good chances to produce an objectively correct assertion" (ibid., p. 39), an adviser is competent when they have a publicly recognisable capability to provide advice that effectively serves the addressee's goals when they have the necessary experience in the relevant field.

As 'authority' could be accommodated in informal settings, 'competence' could also be accommodated. Sbisà says, "But in default conditions the speech act may be taken as successfully performed advice, accommodating the relevant beliefs about the speaker's competence" (ibid., p. 37). In informal settings, then, it is less about whether the speaker is competent, but more about the hearer's belief about the speaker's competence – whether the speaker is believed to be competent to give advice.

Nonetheless, a similar criticism can be applied in that 'competence' is too strong a requirement for advice-giving. An amateur pianist can give advice to a beginner even though the amateur is not competent (i.e., they do not have a publicly recognisable ability to provide consistent advice). The amateur pianist's competence may be privately recognisable just to the beginner, or the amateur may be competent in playing just basic chords. If so, the only requirement that the amateur needs to meet is that they have more experience than the beginner in playing the piano. Similarly, an amateur boulderer who has never given advice before can still offer good advice to a beginner. Again, if competence were a constitutive rule (or again, 'felicity-enabling rule' to use my own term) for advice, such speech acts would misfire. To better capture these cases, I propose modifying the authority condition to require that *the speaker must have experience in relevant situations, especially the experience potentially relevant to the achievement of the addressee's goals.*[268] These cases will be further explored in §3.

One last point about these first two constitutive rules is whether the adviser must be both knowledgeable and experienced, or if having either knowledge or experience is sufficient. My revisions aim to capture a wider range of advice-giving instances by acknowledging that, in some cases, the adviser's having knowledge is sufficient, while in others it is their having experience. Requiring both would be unnecessarily restrictive, as it would exclude instances where an adviser's strength in either knowledge or experience suffices. This distinction aligns with the idea that knowledge pertains to 'know-that' while experience relates to 'know-how'. I propose the following revision of the first rule:

> -the speaker must have experience with respect to the field of activities with which the piece of advice is concerned *or* the speaker must have knowledge of the relevant features of the situation, especially those potentially relevant to the achievement of the addressee's goals.

This revision allows for either knowledge or experience, thereby better capturing both formal and informal advice. In what follows, I will explore these revised conditions further in §3, especially applied in moral contexts.

[268] This is in line with how Wiland (2000a, p. 10) thinks: "we can see that in accepting advice, the advisee does what his advisor recommends, thereby trusting her practical judgment, because he believes that she has undergone experiences which put her in a better position to assess the relative importance of his own reasons for action".

Now, I would like to clarify what is meant by 'goals'.[269] In advisory contexts, 'goals' typically refer to the addressee's preferred outcomes or objectives which are often taken to be prudential.[270] A typical case of giving advice occurs when a hearer asks for it, specifying their goal and providing the adviser with the relevant context. Even though 'goals' can have a broader meaning – including the state of affairs that the hearer desires, wants, or has most reasons to pursue – H-directives, such as suggestions, recommendations, advice, and offers are given for the hearer's sake.[271] This means that advice may sometimes be in tension with the hearer's stated goals, if the adviser thinks that φ-ing does not, in fact, serve the hearer for their own sake. In such cases, it is typically expected that the adviser will clarify why φ-ing is not advised.

However, what if the adviser does not offer such clarification? One can imagine a situation where a speaker advises the hearer not to φ without explaining why. If Sbisà's fourth rule were constitutive, this speaker would not be performing the illocutionary act of giving advice, which seems counterintuitive. Therefore, it will be argued in §4 that this rule should instead be classified under maxims, understood as norms that guide optimal communicative behaviour.

2.3 Maxims

According to Sbisà, maxims "encode advice for optimal communicative behaviour from the point of view of the subjects involved" (2018, p. 29).[272] They are regulative rules, not constitutive ones: rules whose violation does not annul the speech act, but instead generates defects open to criticism. She says, "the procedure for achieving a certain conventional effect is optimally performed only if it complies with [maxims] too" (ibid., p. 31). She argues that the sincerity condition, which requires that the speaker have a certain

[269] This is important to clarify because 'goals' appear again in her objective requirement for advice.
[270] Of course, a hearer's goals do not always have to be prudential. One may ask for advice for how to choose the most effective charity, having the goal of helping others.
[271] According to Dobler (2023, p. 681), "Goals can be defined as states of the world that the agent wants to bring about".
[272] These maxims are Gricean, as Sbisà (2018, p. 29) says: "Grice's conversational maxims stemming from the Cooperative Principle, and the Cooperative Principle itself (Grice, 1989, pp. 26–27) are maxims. They serve the optimization of communicative behaviour in two main ways: when they directly inspire the speaker's utterances (see ibid., p. 26) and when speaker and hearer rely on the assumption that they hold in projecting or deriving conversational implicatures (see ibid., pp. 32–33)".

psychological state, such as genuinely holding the belief or intention relevant to the illocutionary act, is a maxim. A violation of the sincerity condition does not prevent the illocutionary act from being performed:

> their violation is never a fatal flaw in the procedure of performing an illocutionary act token: it does not lead to suspending or annulling the illocutionary effect. So an agent can well perform her illocutionary act successfully (in so far as its effect is concerned) without abiding by them (ibid., p. 28).

Sbisà follows Austin in this respect. As noted in Chapter 2, Austin (1962, pp. 14–15) distinguishes between constitutive rules (A and B rules) and sincerity-related rules (Γ.1 and Γ.2). According to Austin, while violating A and B rules may result in the speech act not being successfully performed, violating the Γ rules results in abusing the speech act although the act is achieved (ibid., p. 16). Sbisà follows this distinction and classifies sincerity as a maxim rather than a constitutive rule, reinforcing the idea that sincerity is not necessary for a speech act's performance. The violation of the maxim "generates defects that make the act liable to certain kinds of criticism (as an abuse of the procedure or as a performance followed by inconsistent behaviour)" (Sbisà 2018, p. 30).[273] In other words, "when a covert and non-repairable violation of a conversational maxims is discovered, the penalty for the speaker consists of criticism, damage to reputation, or loss of reliability, but does not include making the conversational episode 'null and void'" (ibid.). Thus, maxims serve as regulative rules for an ideal execution of a speech act, even though their violation does not nullify the act itself.

However, I want to refine what it means to say that the sincerity condition is violated, hence a case of *abuse*, particularly in cases involving perlocutionary intentions. Specifically, I aim to capture cases where the speaker's perlocutionary aim is intentionally concealed rather than where the speaker merely says something opposite to what they truly want to say. I argue that abuse involves insincerity often in the perlocutionary dimension – specifically, the intention to block perlocutionary communication success.

[273] Sbisà (2018, p. 28) continues, "So, an agent can well perform her illocutionary act successfully (insofar as its effect is concerned) without abiding by them. I will say that rules like these are constitutive in the weak sense, while only a subset of them, those fixing the requirements which must be complied with to ensure the success of the illocutionary act, are constitutive in the strong sense I prefer to use here".

Imagine that a speaker issues a directive, "Leave me alone", while desiring or hoping that the hearer will stay.[274] Here, the speaker performs the locutionary act – uttering "Leave me alone" – and has an intention to perform a specific type of illocutionary act, a demand. There is, therefore, illocutionary performance success. We can even suppose that there is also uptake: the hearer correctly interprets this speech act as a demand. So, there is illocutionary communication success as well.

What about the perlocutionary aspect? The speaker's perlocutionary performance intention – the reason why she performs such an illocutionary act – is to get the hearer to stay: an intention that conflicts with the literal meaning of the utterance. Suppose further that the speaker intends that the hearer recognise this intention – this is her perlocutionary communication intention. It is plausible that the hearer recognises such – for example, the hearer might confirm, "Are you sure?" or intuitively understand that the speaker is being ironic. In such cases, there is no attempt on the speaker's part to block perlocutionary communicative success. So even though the perlocutionary intention diverges from what is typical, this is not an abuse. Of course, the speaker may still be held accountable, but only for making the locutionary act, uttering "Leave me alone", the meaning of which is the opposite of her perlocutionary intention. The illocutionary act is sincerely performed, and the perlocutionary performance intention is not intentionally concealed. The speaker's choice of words is misleading, but the speech act is not an abuse. Even if perlocutionary communicative success is not achieved, the act is not an abuse, since perlocutionary communicative failure was not intentionally brought about by the speaker.

Contrast this with a case of lying. Suppose a teenager says to her father, "I was at home yesterday", when in fact she was at a party. She utters a sentence (locutionary act) and intends it as an assertion (illocutionary performance intention) – the structure of which is the same as the example above. What differs, however, is that her perlocutionary intention is to deceive: to get her father to believe that she was at home when she was not.

This is not a typical perlocutionary intention for assertion, which would normally involve a commitment to the truth of the propositional content (Searle, 1976, p. 10). In this case, both the locutionary act (the utterance) and the illocutionary act (the assertion) serve her perlocutionary aim (to deceive). In the previous case, however, her perlocutionary aim was not served by her

[274] This is similar to Armstrong's (1971, p. 432) example of an insincere command: a speaker commands "Get out!" but secretly hopes the hearer will disobey.

locutionary act. In the case of lying, the speaker intends that her deceptive perlocutionary intention not be recognised. That is, she aims to achieve her perlocutionary aim by intentionally hindering perlocutionary communicative success. This very intentional act – hindering perlocutionary communication success – is, I argue, central to abuse. Thus, the lie is a successfully performed assertion, but it is defective in virtue of its being an abuse: violating the sincerity condition. The insincerity lies not in the locutionary or illocutionary aspect, but in the intentional blocking of perlocutionary communicative success.[275] This distinction allows us to sharpen what counts as abuse: a deliberate intention to frustrate perlocutionary communication success.

Why does this matter for advice? As discussed in Chapter 2, I classified advice as having a perlocutionary aim of guiding the hearer for their own sake. So, a speaker who appears to be giving advice but intends to manipulate or mislead the hearer for the speaker's own sake is not actually giving advice, which creates a tension. Because, as we just saw above, if lying is a successful assertion yet an abuse, the same structure should apply to advice: self-serving advice should be successful advice, yet an abuse. However, I cannot say that. Because on my view, if the advice is given for the speaker's sake, then it not advice in the first place.

An example is a scammer who says, "I advise you to buy this cryptocurrency". Even though the scammer says "I advise", since his intention is to get the hearer to buy crypto for his own benefit, my view says this is not advice – advice is an H-directive. Hence, this is not even a case of abuse. This is a problem for my view: either advice is sincerely given for the hearer's sake, or

[275] False promising follows a similar pattern. Imagine the speaker says, "I promise to pay you back tomorrow", but has no such intention. Here too, the speaker performs the locutionary and illocutionary act successfully: she utters a promise and intends it to be the illocutionary act of promising, and there is hearer uptake. Her perlocutionary intention is to deceive the hearer into believing that she will repay the debt. Once more, the speaker intends to prevent the hearer from recognising this perlocutionary intention. Perlocutionary communicative success is deliberately blocked. Hence, this too is a case of abuse.

it is not advice.[276] This implies that there is no such thing as insincere advice – my view makes an abuse structurally impossible.[277]

The following is my solution to this tension. The scammer's utterance is not advice. However, it could be a successful directive of another type – perhaps a type of S-directive. If the speaker hides this self-serving perlocutionary intention, it is a case of abuse of the directive they performed, not of advice. In other words, this is an abuse in the locutionary form of advice, where the actual illocutionary act is an S-directive masquerading as an H-directive. In such cases, the abuse lies in performing a dishonestly motivated directive that blocks perlocutionary communicative success.

One may still wonder – is there such thing as advice that is an abuse? I argue that there is: it occurs when the adviser intentionally hinders perlocutionary communicative success. It occurs when the adviser sincerely intends to guide the hearer for their own sake yet withholds relevant information that would allow the hearer to properly deliberate about the advice. I will discuss this further in §4.

Now that I have explained what I consider to be a violation of the sincerity condition, let us look at how my view differs from Sbisà's maxims. Her maxims for advice are:

> -the speaker must believe that it will be good for the addressee, in view of his goals, to behave as advised;
>
> -the speaker must behave consistently with the piece of advice provided, for example neither hindering nor pre-empting the addressee's compliance with it (ibid., p. 37).

[276]I do not assume that the sincerity condition pertains solely to what the speaker wants or desires. It may also involve a range of conative states, such as preference or pro-attitudes. For instance, Brentano (1969, p. 26) holds that 'better' means that one good is preferable to another and that it is correct to prefer the one, for its own sake. Similarly, Ewing (1959, p. 149) notes that any favourable attitude to something includes choice, desire, liking, pursuit, approval, or admiration.

[277] There are some philosophers who endorse this view. According to Condoravdi and Lauer (2012, p. 43), "the speaker of an imperative cannot be taken to be insincere with respect to the desire he communicates with an imperative". Schwager (2006) and Kaufmann (2012) also think that when an imperative is used, the speaker always endorses the realisation of the propositional content in some way. Also see Heal (1976).

Sbisà adds, "Compliance with the first maxim is assumed by default and compliance with the second is standardly expected" (ibid.).[278] It seems that the first maxim concerns the sincerity condition, while the second maxim concerns how the speaker should behave in light of their advice. For example, if I advise someone to φ, I should not hinder them from φ-ing – or at least from deliberating about it.

As I argued above, I disagree with Sbisà's point that the first maxim is a regulative rule; rather, it defines the illocutionary act-type: advice. If the speaker does not believe that this 'advice' will be good for the hearer – if it is not given for the hearer's sake – then it is not advice in the first place, in my view. The second maxim is the only regulative rule that should be retained. In §4, I will argue that the same applies to moral advice.

2.4 Objective Requirements

Sbisà defines 'objective requirements' as normative standards for what Austin (1962, p. 139) calls 'accomplished utterances' or what she calls 'complete speech act tokens', which encompass both their illocutionary force and locutionary meaning.[279] According to Austin, even when an illocutionary act,

[278] I will quickly mention that I will read Sbisà's second maxim charitably, as it can be interpreted in such a way that it does not account for practical constraints that might affect the relevance of advice. If an agent lacks the ability to act on the advice, or has overriding reasons not to do so, then advice that does not take these aspects into account risks being inapplicable or unreasonable. So Sbisà's second maxim should be read as "[…] the advisee's compliance with it *if they were to do so*". Searle (2001, p. 147) says that when a person gives an order, they are committed to many things, but one of the things is the belief that "the person to whom he or she gives the order is able to do it". Likewise, when an adviser advises, they are also committed to the belief that the advisee is able to do it. Williams (1995a, p. 40) makes a similar point: "Now 'ought to' in the modality of advice implies 'can', because advice aims to offer something as a candidate for a deliberative conclusion. If Φ-ing is not available to the agent, 'You ought to Φ cannot function as a piece of advice about what he should now do".

[279] The term 'complete speech act' has been used by many philosophers before, but mainly began with Searle (1969, p. 23): "Austin baptized these complete speech acts with the name 'illocutionary acts'" where the examples of these complete speech acts are asserting, questioning, commanding, and expressing a wish. His idea is that when a speaker performs a speech act, they do more than just refer to an object or predicate something about it; they also intend to accomplish a specific illocutionary act with their complete utterance. Sadock (2006, p. 60) writes, "The form of a complete utterance used to accomplish a complete speech act, including the propositional portion of the locution and the IFID, he [Searle] therefore wrote as *F(p)*", where IFID is short for 'illocutionary force indicating device'. Sbisà (2009, p. 233) also uses the term: "Searle strongly affirmed a view of speaking as a rule-governed form of behavior, the basic unit of which, the speech act, consists in the production of a sentence token

such as making a statement, is successfully performed, meeting its felicity conditions, there remains an additional step of determining whether this accomplished utterance "corresponds with facts". Sbisà (2018, p. 32) thinks that Austin refers to this step as an objective assessment of the accomplished utterances.[280]

Before we have a detailed look into what 'objective requirements' are, let us have a clear grip on what Austin means by 'correspondence to facts' to avoid misunderstanding. As Sbisà emphasises, it is important to note that Austin's (1962, p. 123) usage of 'correspondence to facts' does not imply a strict one-to-one mapping between a true statement and "its own precisely corresponding fact". Instead, Austin (ibid., p. 122) distinguishes two sets of conventions, *descriptive* and *demonstrative*, where his theory of truth correlates statements (or assertions) to 'historical situations' found in the world by means of the latter convention, in contrast to the former convention where sentences correlate with the types of situation, thing, or event found in the world. Sbisà's (2018, p. 32) interpretation of Austin's 'correspondence to facts' is, in the case of assertions, "that the pertinent situation in the world, demonstratively identified, is as the assertion says it is: that it is correct to speak of it as the speaker has done, in the light of the facts, but also of certain elements of the context, among which are the speaker's goals in making the assertion".[281] Therefore, when an assertion is assessed according to its 'correspondence to facts', these facts include not only historical situations, but also the context in which the assertion is performed.

Nor should it be assumed that Austin's assessment of 'true' or 'false' for assertions is to be understood in a traditional truth-conditional way.[282] Austin asks us to assess whether "France is hexagonal" is true or false. This assertion

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under certain conditions. In this view, widely adopted by other philosophers and linguists, the illocutionary act coincides with the complete speech act (Searle 1969: 23), and its characteristic linguistic form is the complete sentence".

[280] The context in which this term appears in Austin (1962, pp. 140–141) is the following: "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?".

[281] Austin (1962, p. 52) says, "we see that in order to explain what can go wrong with statements we cannot just concentrate on the proposition involved (whatever that is) as has been done traditionally. We must consider the total situation in which the utterance is issued – the total speech-act" where not only the 'historical situation' is considered but also the felicity conditions of the act of asserting.

[282] Austin (1962, p. 142) seems to adopt a more flexible way of understanding what is 'true': "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".

can be assessed as true, which can be good enough for a top-ranking general but not for a geographer (Austin, 1962, p. 142). Repeating this idea, Austin says, "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" (ibid). So Austin's understanding of whether an assertion is assessed as 'true' or 'false' is richer than expected; it is context-sensitive, taking into account the situation in which the utterance is made. Austin (ibid., p. 144) summarises this idea:

> 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 […] 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.

Therefore, 'truth' for Austin is not simply a matter of whether a proposition corresponds to a fact; it is an evaluative term used to assess the act of stating itself. This is a pragmatic – not merely semantic – understanding of truth.

Then it is reasonable to assume that Austin thinks that the speech acts other than assertion "are also liable to be assessed in the dimension of 'correspondence with facts'" (Sbisà, 2018, p. 33). In other words, other speech acts, such as commands, promises, requests, wishes, etc., are also to be assessed in the dimension of 'correspondence with facts' (i.e., whether they met the objective requirements). In these speech acts, they will be evaluated with evaluative terms other than 'true' or 'false'. For example, whether an estimate is 'correct', advice 'good', a judgement 'right', a verdict 'fair', an order 'just', or blame 'merited' (ibid.). For example, assuming that a piece of advice, "eat more vegetables", is given (and all constitutive rules for advice are met), in order to evaluate whether this advice is good or bad, we need to consider whether this advice corresponds with facts, such as its context.

Even though one may accept that different speech acts have different evaluative terms for their assessment, as in 'good' advice or 'fair' verdict, I have some doubts as to whether to call this requirement 'objective'. I will,

therefore, offer reasons to instead call them *evaluative* requirements.[283] In order to do so, I first explain why Sbisà thinks that these requirements should be understood as 'objective'.[284]

According to Sbisà,

> the requirements or standards of overall correctness for a speech act can be called objective, since they are to be complied with objectively. In order for an assertion to be true, it does not matter what the speaker or the receiver believe […] it matters how the assertion […] actually relates to the historical situation to which it refers. Truth and falsity (as well as other values […]) are therefore 'mind-transcendent': any of the participants […] might be wrong about whether a certain assertion is true or false, or a certain piece of advice good or bad, and so on. […] [M]eeting the requirement at issue 'objectively' means merely that only one of the disagreeing participants (or at most one) can be right in her application of the relevant assessment criteria (ibid., p. 34).

Some of her ideas align with Austin's (1962, p. 139) views, as he too rejects a subjectivist interpretation of such assessments: "attempts to say that the use of the expression 'is true' is equivalent to endorsing or the like are no good". However, it seems a little bit of a stretch to say that truth and falsity are 'mind-transcendent', and only one of the disagreeing participants (or at most one) can be right in the assessment. As we have already seen, Austin thinks that the assessment of an assertion, such as "France is hexagonal", can be true in one context (e.g., a schoolbook or military map) but not in another (e.g., geography or historical research).

Sbisà acknowledges that Austin's discussion has been a source of inspiration for contextualists.[285] However, she adds that "it should be kept in mind that his

[283] I am not implying here that only one evaluative term can be attached to a speech act. Advice can also be merited or fair.

[284] Marsili (2023) marries the notion of 'objective requirement' with 'illocutionary goals', turning this requirement into conditions for success (pp. 178–179). However, I agree with Sbisà (2023b, p. 317) that this move is not convincing because "complying (or failing to comply) with the commitment one has undertaken is not the same as having said and therein done the right (or the wrong) thing. Achieving or failing to achieve the addressee's compliance with a directive is even farther away from having said and therein done the right (or the wrong) thing when uttering an imperative sentence".

[285] Contextualism is the view that the meaning of words and sentences is heavily influenced by the context in which they are used. A key aspect of contextualism is its stance on semantic content: the meaning of a sentence is not fixed solely by its linguistic components but also

original considerations focus on the context-dependency of truth-falsity assessments (or in Austin's terms, of assessments in the dimension of correspondence with facts), not on the context-dependency of expressed propositions" (2018, p. 34fn8). While I agree with what Sbisà says regarding contextualists, I also find it to be in tension with what Austin says. According to Austin, "[w]e must consider the total situation in which the utterance is issued – the total speech-act" (1962, p. 52). He adds, "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" (ibid., p. 143). These remarks suggest that, for Austin, truth-falsity assessments depend on context in a broader sense. On this view, it is possible that more than one interpretation or assessment can be appropriate, depending on the context. Sbisà's idea of 'objectivity', by contrast, implies that only one participant (or at most one) can be right in applying the relevant criteria, an implication that sits uneasily with Austin's broader view.[286]

I propose that changing these normative standards used to assess accomplished speech acts should be called 'evaluative' rather than 'objective'. The term 'evaluative' more accurately reflects what Austin and (possibly) Sbisà aim to capture when considering whether an utterance was the right (or proper) thing to say in a given context. Austin (1962, p. 144) highlights this issue:

> 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 (emphasis mine).

Similarly, Sbisà (2018, pp. 33–34) suggests that the evaluation of a speech act depends on whether the speaker was right to perform it in that context: "what is at issue is […] whether the speaker was *right* in performing that speech act

depends on the context of its utterance. Contextualists include Travis (2000, 2008), Carston (2002), and Récanati (2003).

[286] One could still insist that at most one participant can be right given one and the same context. While I agree that this might hold for certain speech acts, such as assertions, the same may not necessarily apply to advice. In the case of advice, it is possible for one hearer to evaluate a piece of advice as good while another evaluates it as not good, even within the same context. This is because the evaluation of advice depends on the advisee's ability to deliberate and engage with the reasons provided, which can vary between individuals.

for those aims in that context, given how things are in the world" (emphasis mine).[287] Moreover, Sbisà (ibid., p. 47) describes the penalty for failing to meet these requirements in evaluative terms, noting that the speech act is judged 'wrong' or 'unfit':

> The penalty for not meeting the objective requirements has both an interactional and an objective side. The former consists of the negative assessment of the speech act as not being the *right* thing to say and do in the circumstances, and of the speaker as responsible for making a '*wrong'* speech act. The latter consists of the mere fact that the speech act is *unfit* to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the speaker or possibly of other participants in that situation (emphasis mine).[288]

This evaluative nature is also evident in how a particular speech act is assessed. Sbisà (ibid., pp. 36–37) describes 'good' advice in terms of its aptness to help the addressee achieve their goals:

> The accomplished piece of advice is 'good' advice if it is *apt* to help the addressee to achieve or approximate his goals in a manner conforming to the other possible constraints and the requirements of the situation (emphasis mine).

There are three important observations to make here. First, the terms describing *all* speech acts that are assessed by the requirements are 'right', 'wrong', 'proper', 'appropriate', 'unfit', and 'apt', which seem to be a mixture of being normative and evaluative. Normative terms like 'right' or 'wrong' could concern whether the speaker ought to have said what they did, while evaluative terms like 'apt', 'unfit', or 'appropriate' could concern how well the speech act was suited to its aims and circumstances. Second, evaluation is not fixed to one speech act type. The terms that attach to a particular speech act, such as 'good'

[287] Sbisà (2023b, p. 317) emphasises the point about an act being right (or wrong) again: "having said and therein done the right (or the wrong) thing when uttering an imperative sentence". However, she acknowledges that "I admit that this idea of a speech act being subject to an objective assessment as saying and therein doing the right (or the wrong) thing is rather vague and should be further specified" (ibid.).

[288] Sbisà (2018, p. 38) also uses 'appropriate' or 'deserved' to describe an act of congratulating meeting the objective requirements: "there is a subtle difference between an act of congratulating being due and therefore appropriate, that is, conforming to its own constitutive rules, and the congratulations actually being actually deserved". It is, unfortunately, confusing when she describes a promise as 'correct' or the act of promising as 'righteous': "the promise is objectively correct when the speaker was right in promising that addressee, in that situation, for those aims and with those expected consequences, to perform that feat, and the promise was, therefore, a righteous action" (ibid., p. 35).

advice, 'fair' verdict, 'merited' blame, 'correct' promise, or 'just' order, are not exclusive to one type of speech act but can be applied to others. One can say that advice is 'fair', a verdict 'just', blame 'correct', or a promise 'good', suggesting that these evaluations can vary depending on the content and the context. Lastly, Sbisà's conditional formulation of her requirement (i.e., […] is 'good' advice *if* it helps […]) implies that a piece of advice may still be evaluated as 'good' even if it is not apt to help the addressee to achieve their goals or if it is not appropriate in a specific context.[289]

From these observations, we can see that evaluating speech acts (whether advice is 'good', an order 'just', or a speech act 'appropriate', etc.) depends on many different 'facts', including contexts such as speaker's intention, the addressee's needs, open-mindedness, psychological stability, cultural or political context, or the broader purposes of the interaction.[290] The terms used – 'right', 'proper', 'apt', 'good', 'fair', 'merited' – indicate that we are dealing with an evaluative judgement about how well the speech act is assessed from both the speaker and the hearer (and possibly also from how its effects unfold over time).[291]

This observation motivates the proposal to modify Sbisà's 'objective' requirement as an 'evaluative' requirement. Unlike the 'objective' requirement where only one person (or at most one) can be correct in their judgement, the 'evaluative' requirement acknowledges that multiple hearers might reasonably arrive at different evaluations of the same complete speech act token. For example, a teacher's advice, "Study for your final exam three hours a day!", may be good advice for some students who have time to study and bad for others who have work or family commitments.

Moreover, this shift aligns more closely with Austin's understanding of truth and 'correspondence to facts', which emphasises context, purpose, and the role

[289] This implication follows because Sbisà's conditional formulation (i.e., X is 'good' advice if it helps Y) does not strictly rule out cases where advice could still be considered good even if it does not help the advisee achieve their goals or is inappropriate in a given context. Since a conditional statement does not entail its converse, her formulation leaves open the possibility that advice could be 'good' for other reasons, even when the stated condition is not met.
[290] I am aware of the fact that there is a difference between evaluating the performance of a speech act (i.e., whether it was an appropriate or apt thing to say in this context) and the content of a speech act (whether the content of the speech act is good, correct, or just). However, considering that both are about evaluations (whether it is the act or the content), I think that the 'evaluative' requirement can encompass both kinds of evaluations.
[291] Sbisà (2018, p. 37) also notes that the assessment of advice as 'good' or 'bad' is not based solely on immediate judgements which depend on the hearer's current situation and consequent expectations, but can evolve over time as the consequences of the advice unfold.

of speech acts within a given context. Moving to an 'evaluative' requirement thus allows for a more flexible and encompassing assessment of speech acts, one that accommodates the diversity of evaluative terms such as 'good', 'correct', 'apt,' 'fair,' 'merited,' and 'just'.

In §5, I will propose a revision to this requirement, addressing two key points. First, I will expand the scope of evaluation to account for the range of evaluative terms that can be applied to advice, both moral and non-moral. Just as non-moral advice can be evaluated as 'helpful', 'great', 'better', 'useful', 'good', 'valuable', 'appropriate', or 'excellent' (as well as with negative evaluations), moral advice, too, can be evaluated in multiple ways. Second, I will examine the conditions under which this evaluation takes place. Moving from an 'objective' to an 'evaluative' requirement acknowledges that multiple hearers may reasonably arrive at different assessments of the same speech act. By adopting an 'evaluative' rather than an 'objective' requirement, we can better account for the diverse evaluations of advice based on context and purpose.

3. Applying Felicity-Enabling Rules to Moral Advice

This section examines the role of knowledge and experience in the context of moral advice, focusing on the revised version and its limitations in moral contexts. Recall that the revision concerns the speaker's standing to give advice:[292]

> The speaker must have experience with respect to the field of activities with which the piece of advice is concerned *or* the speaker must have knowledge of the relevant features of the situation, especially those potentially relevant to the achievement of the addressee's goals.

Let us talk about knowledge first. According to the second disjunction, the adviser must possess knowledge of the relevant features of the situation. In the case of moral advice, this means the speaker must have moral knowledge. But what does it mean to have moral knowledge?

[292] Austin (1962, p. 51) highlights this point, noting that "the question of goodness or badness of advice does not arise if you are not in a position to advise me about that matter". According to Austin, being in a position to advise is key to ensuring the correct execution of the speech act of advice.

The nature of moral knowledge is a vast topic that deserves a full discussion. However, due to space constraints, I will instead take a broad approach, following Sliwa (2016), who argues that moral knowledge consists in knowing what the right thing to do is, whether a person is knowledgeable or ignorant of the correct first-order moral theory. This means that a person can possess moral knowledge without explicitly endorsing or even being aware of a particular first-order moral theory.[293]

A second question follows: what does it mean to have moral knowledge of the relevant features of a situation? Again, I do not commit myself to any particular metaethical view of how moral knowledge is acquired.[294] Whatever epistemic route one takes to gain moral knowledge – whether through perception (McGrath, 2004), observation or discernment (Dancy, 1993; McNaughton, 1988), inference from right-making features (Enoch, 2014a), imagination, intuition, our affective responses, or moral reasoning (Sliwa, 2017, p. 548) – is sufficient for my purposes. The key point is that possessing moral knowledge relevant to a particular situation requires an understanding of the morally salient features of that situation, regardless of the specific epistemic mechanism by which this knowledge is achieved.[295]

Importantly, this condition does not require the speaker to be a moral expert.[296] A person may be in a position to give moral advice because they are familiar

[293] I am taking this from Sliwa (2016, p. 401), and it includes counterfactual robustness: "The agent's moral knowledge means that she would not have been easily mistaken about what the right thing to do is". Examples of moral knowledge, according to Sliwa (2017, p. 546), "include knowing that an action is right or wrong, just, fair, sexist, racist, or kind; knowing what the right (wrong, just, fair, sexist, etc.) thing to do is; knowing why an action is right (or wrong, just, fair, sexist, etc.); and so on".

[294] However, it is unclear whether error theorists can give moral advice.

[295] One example of knowing what morally salient features are could be knowing what actions fall under certain thick ethical concepts, as Williams (1995b, p. 206) says: "An all-round advisor, however, who is prepared to help you to decide what is the best thing to do *period,* may well contribute some ethical insight to this, and that insight may take the form of certain kinds of knowledge under ethical concepts – that a certain course of action would be cowardly, for instance, or would count as a betrayal, or would not really be kind, and contributions of this kind can offer the person who is being advised a genuine discovery. So here there is, in a sense, some ethical knowledge, it seems: knowledge of truths under 'thick ethical concepts'".

[296] A lot has been said about accepting moral judgements from those who seem to have moral expertise (Hills, 2013; McGrath, 2011). Some philosophers have argued that we can gain moral knowledge from the judgements made from moral testimony (Driver, 2006; Hopkins, 2007). I am not denying this: judgements made from moral testimony might well have an impact on people's moral views. What I am saying here is that there might be cases where some moral experts do not want to influence the hearers when they are making moral judgements but merely want to utter their testimony.

with a specific type of moral issue, such as population ethics, AI ethics, or business ethics. This means that they are aware of specific moral considerations that the hearer should deliberate on.[297]

Would this point conflict with the view that moral philosophers are not well suited to give moral advice? For example, Ayer thinks that "it is silly, as well as presumptuous, for any one type of philosopher to pose as the champion of virtue. And it is also one reason why many people find moral philosophy an unsatisfying subject. For they mistakenly look to the moral philosopher for guidance" (1972, p. 246). Similarly, Broad (1952) maintains that it is not the job of moral philosophers to tell individuals what they should or should not do, since they do not possess a special kind of moral knowledge inaccessible to the general public. According to Broad (1995b, p. 205), moral philosophers do not hold any privileged information about morality that would justify them taking on roles akin to clergymen offering guidance.

Their point, I take it, is not that moral philosophers should never give advice, but that we should not assume they are especially well-positioned to do so just because they are philosophers.[298] They should not be regarded as 'champions of virtue'. In agreement with Hills, I acknowledge that moral philosophers can play a role as moral experts, albeit a limited one, as she says, "some people may be better informed than others about moral matters, have more experience and better judgement. Experts can still play an important role in helping others achieve moral understanding, by explaining as far as possible what kinds of considerations are important, how important they are and in what way" (Hills, 2009, p. 126). On this view, moral philosophers can give advice, provided they meet the same conditions we expect of any adviser.

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[297] The question of whether moral experts can exist will be bracketed, as this question is a controversial issue (Cholbi, 2007; Jones & Schroeter, 2012; McGrath, 2008, 2011). Singer (1972) argues that moral expertise is possible because moral philosophers might have a deeper understanding of moral concepts and the logic behind moral reasoning because they work full-time on moral issues. There are also philosophers who claim that there is no such thing as a moral expert, including Caplan (1989), Crosthwaite (1995), Cowley (2005), and Archard (2011). Williams (1995b, p. 205) also dismisses the idea of deferring to a moral expert. I am only arguing that it is possible to give moral advice whether or not one is a moral expert.

[298] There may be other reasons to refrain from giving advice, however. According to Wiland (2021, p. 175), "Thus when an adviser advises an advisee to V, the advisee often acquires new reasons to V, reasons he lacked before: a reason to avoid a new source of regret, and a second reason to avoid the disapproval or disappointment of the adviser and of others who know that he was so advised. A wise adviser knows she may be unintentionally doing this too, so she sometimes refrains from issuing advice at all".

One last point I want to raise is that, as I will discuss more in §3.3, moral advice can challenge the hearer's prudential goals, so the adviser's having moral knowledge of the relevant features of the situation may be enough for the rule, rather than also the features being "potentially relevant to the achievement of the addressee's goals". So, the knowledge-rule should be revised to: *the speaker must have moral knowledge of the relevant features of the situation.*

Having explored moral knowledge, we now turn to the role of having moral experience in giving moral advice. What is moral experience? Moral experience is a multifaceted phenomenon encompassing both the cognitive and affective dimensions of our everyday interactions with moral values. It involves not just conscious deliberations and judgements about right and wrong, but also the broader, often unarticulated, interpersonal and emotional processes that shape our understanding of morality.

According to Smith (2012, p. 202), moral experience includes diverse elements of interpersonal dialogue, such as non-linguistic behaviour and activities that constitute interpersonal understanding, regulative ideals governing the logic of moral thought, norms that regulate exchange of moral views, expression and discussion of moral emotions, witnessing people's behaviour, and seeing the effects of our decisions.

According to Horgan and Timmons (2005, p. 64), there are at least four different types of moral experience: "(1) experiences involving both deliberative and spontaneous moral judgments – call them *judgmental moral experiences*, (2) moral experiences that do not involve conscious moral judgment (cases of ethical comportment), (3) experiences constitutive of the psychological attitude of 'coming down' on some moral issue, and (4) experiences associated with grasping or understanding moral claims". Similarly, Hunt and Carnevale (2011, p. 661) define moral experience as "a person's sense that values that he or she deems important are being realised or thwarted in everyday life. This includes a person's interpretations of a lived encounter, or a set of lived encounters, that fall on spectrums of right-wrong, good-bad or just-unjust". What all these accounts share is the view that moral experience is a rich and embedded engagement with morality, blending reason, emotion, and lived encounters with moral values.

Then what does it mean for a speaker to have experience with respect to the field of activities with which the piece of advice is concerned? It could mean that the speaker has confronted and reflected on a variety of moral dilemmas, learning to recognise the complexities of morally significant situations. It could also be that the speaker has had broader interactions with different moral norms

and institutions and has seen many consequences of moral actions firsthand.[299] Such experience can contribute to a more reliable moral sensibility or reasoning process.[300] According to Wiland (2021, p. 91) "Instead of looking for a moral epistemology that is grounded in moral theory, we might have more success uncovering the justificatory sources of our moral views by looking to what we might call 'moral experience'".[301] On this view, having moral experience is sufficient to ground standing in advice-giving contexts.

However, one may question whether moral advice can only be felicitous when given by someone with moral knowledge or experience. For example, one can ask moral advice from one's parents, asking whether getting a divorce would be the morally right thing to do; the parents may not know more about the divorce process or may not have experienced the situation at stake. In this case, it seems that the parents still can provide moral advice.[302] Similarly, a person in a long-term relationship might ask a friend whether it would be good for them to break up with their partner. The friend may have never been in a serious romantic relationship but can still provide moral advice by considering self-respect, well-being, and fairness. A person might ask a therapist whether they should report ethical misconduct in the workplace. The therapist may have no experience in that specific industry or detailed knowledge of the situation, but they can still offer moral advice.[303]

To explain these situations, I argue that in moral contexts, the standing to give moral advice can be granted by the hearer, either by the hearer's trust or by

[299] As Wiland (2021, p. 102) notes, "undergoing various forms of suffering can educate one about how bad various bad things are; so too, undergoing various kinds of injustice can educate one about how severe or minor disparate kinds of inequalities are".
[300] Talking about qualities of being an adviser, Williams (1995b, p. 207) says, "We have also some 'marks of reliability'. However, these are not best characterized in terms of possessing information, but rather in terms of certain capacities, such as judgement, sensitivity, imagination and so forth".
[301] Of course, moral experience can be the source of moral knowledge. As Wiland (2021, p. 99) says, "Rather than attributing moral knowledge to those with a particular academic or professional training, we should instead regard those who have experienced life's joys and sufferings for themselves, as well those who have experienced face-to-face the individuals affected by the choices under consideration, to have a cognitive leg up on those who have not".
[302] I thank Fanny Chef Holmberg for this example.
[303] There can be more cases. It is possible that a parent may ask their child for moral advice, such as regarding whether they should forgive a friend who betrayed them. The child may not have extensive life experience or knowledge, but their sense of honesty and emotional clarity may provide the parent with a valuable insight. Recently, people have started to ask ChatGPT for advice (both moral and non-moral), which does not seem to have moral knowledge or experience, and they accept its advice at face value.

their belief that the advice-giver has knowledge or experience.[304] In other words, when the speaker believes they lack knowledge or experience, the hearer can confer normative standing to the speaker, positioning them as someone with the standing to give advice. In non-moral settings, it is easier to recognise that the adviser has knowledge and experience due to hierarchical differences or their social role, as we think that doctors, teachers, sports coaches, and lawyers are in a position to give advice.

Moral advice, on the other hand, frequently occurs in peer-to-peer settings where the adviser may not actually have knowledge or experience. In these peer-to-peer interactions, as Limberg and Locher (2012, p. 6) observe, "an advice-seeker positions the advice-giver in a role of having something to say about the issue raised". I argue that this positioning itself can confer the adviser's standing in peer-to-peer contexts. The advice-seeker trusts the advice-giver as a person who can provide moral advice even if the advice-giver is not knowledgeable or experienced.[305] Or the advice-seeker believes that the advice-giver has knowledge or experience even if the advice-giver does not think that they have it. Either way, the advice-seeker confers the standing to give advice to the other person who is seen and deemed as capable of providing moral advice.

One might point out that this distinction between moral and non-moral advice is not particularly unique. While it is true that the position to give advice can be granted by the advice-seeker in both moral and non-moral contexts, the nature and significance of this differ in subtle ways that make it a distinctive feature of moral advice.

Non-moral advice typically relies on external standards of knowledge, experience, authority, expertise, and formal qualifications, allowing the advice-seeker to defer to authoritative sources independently and verify the quality of the advice. The trust that the advice-seeker has towards doctors, teachers, sports coaches, and lawyers does not have to stem from whether the advice-seeker personally finds them trustworthy.

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[304] Similarly, Sliwa (2025, p. 12) says, "I believe that in giving hermeneutical advice, the advisor does not simply adduce practical reasons for pursuing some line of inquiry. Rather, she presents herself as a knower. She claims epistemic authority about which moral perspective is apt in a given situation. Accepting hermeneutical advice involves an act of deference to this epistemic authority".

[305] It is important to clarify that I am not advocating a strong claim, such as the idea that one should completely defer to the judgement of any adviser whom one trusts. As Elga (2007, p. 483) rightly points out, "not even a perfect advisor deserves absolute trust, since one should be less than certain of one's own ability to *identify* good advisors".

In contrast, the hearer's trust in the adviser or the belief that the adviser has knowledge or experience in the context of receiving moral advice are more closely tied to the interpersonal relationship between the adviser and the advisee.[306] The advice-seeker trusts the advice-giver based on the advice-seeker's own experience and perception of the advice-giver's moral character and insights.[307] As Wiland (2004, p. 378) observes, "We look for advice not only to those we regard as experienced, but also to those we simply regard as good people". This, in turn, can strengthen the moral relationship between the adviser and the advisee.[308]

Bearing these discussions in mind, I propose the following revised felicity-enabling rule for giving moral advice:

> -the speaker must either (a) have moral experience with respect to the field of activities to which the piece of advice is concerned, (b) have moral knowledge of the relevant features of the situation; or (c) have been conferred the role of adviser by the addressee when neither (a) nor (b) is satisfied.

4. Revising the Maxims of Advice

This section re-evaluates and revises Sbisà's maxims of advice in order to examine the regulative rules of advice-giving. These rules provide the second half of the picture of felicity conditions. The main aim is to show that some of the rules that Sbisà categorises as constitutive are more accurately classified as

[306] Another way to frame this is to say that advising, particularly in the case of moral advice, is an invitation to trust the adviser's moral competence. As Hinchman (2005, pp. 372–373) observes, "It can be reasonable to trust the moral advice of someone whom you have not positively assessed as morally competent, as long as you have evidence that she is addressing you from non-self-interested motives and neither of the defeating conditions holds". This highlights that trust in moral advice does not necessarily require a thorough evaluation of the adviser's knowledge or experience; rather, it can be based on the perception of the adviser's good intentions and the absence of any reasons to doubt their integrity.

[307] Sliwa (2025, p. 12) also says, "When Sara accepts her friend's hermeneutical advice and comes to think about her activity as work – starts paying attention to how work, recognition, and leisure is divided in her relationship, starts wondering about whether it is fair – she does so *because she trusts* her friend's moral judgment. Asking someone for hermeneutical advice in a difficult situation is an act of trust".

[308] Wiland (2003, p. 309) points out that "an advisee can deliberately take his adviser's advice, despite regarding the advice as less than sound, in order to foster solidarity with his adviser". This shows that, in some cases, the relational dynamics between adviser and advisee may influence the acceptance of advice, even when the advice itself is not seen as entirely reliable.

maxims, which are rules that govern how advice is optimally given and received, although they are not essential for illocutionary success. In §4.1, I argue that the requirement to provide reasons, originally provided by Sbisà as part of a constitutive rule, is better categorised under maxims. I show that while advice without supporting reasons may still count as advice, it is defective in a way that could prevent it from achieving its intended perlocutionary effect, namely that the hearer deliberates. In §4.2, I apply this revision to moral advice, arguing that providing normative reasons is crucial for it to effectively function as moral advice rather than non-moral. In §4.3, I turn to Sbisà's fifth constitutive rule, concerning the recognisability of advice, and argue that this too should be reclassified as a maxim. My aim throughout this section is to refine the regulative rules surrounding advice-giving, especially in moral contexts, by clarifying which rules guide optimal communicative behaviour.

4.1 Reassessing Sbisà's Fourth Constitutive Rule

Recall that Sbisà's fourth constitutive rule for advice is as follows:

> -the speaker's words must be a realization of the procedure of giving advice, indicating a line of conduct or criteria for choosing it and clarifying that it is best suited to the addressee's goals, given the constraints and requirements of the situation.

This rule posits that the speaker's words must indicate a line of conduct best suited to the addressee's goals, given the constraints of the situation. On one interpretation, this rule implies that the speaker must also provide some justification for why the proposed line of conduct is best suited to the addressee's goals: namely, by offering reasons. This suggests that providing reasons is an expected part of the advice-giving procedure, which is most effective when accompanied by reasons, since this supports its guiding and deliberative function.[309]

Recall that Sbisà defines maxims as regulative rules. Unlike constitutive rules, maxims do not determine whether a certain speech act has been performed, but rather whether it has been defective. If a speech act does not satisfy the regulative rules, it is considered defective. Hence, failing to follow the maxims can invite criticism, such as accusations of abusing the procedure or behaving

[309] It is important to distinguish: (a) there being reasons for the advice (i.e., ontological), (b) the adviser's believing correctly or not that there are such reasons (i.e., epistemological), and (c) the adviser's giving such reasons to the advisee, whether or not they are genuine reasons. I am mostly interested in (c) in this formulation, but I will also touch upon (a) and (b).

inconsistently afterwards. Sbisà (2018, pp. 30–31) argues that, although following the maxim is not necessary for the speech act to produce its intended conventional effect, doing so ensures that the act is executed in the best possible way. My view is that violating them does not prevent the speaker from achieving illocutionary success. One could draw an analogy here with a qualified student taking a test and not getting the ideal grade (an A) due to errors (defects) in their answers.

We sometimes offer advice without providing reasons, and the hearer may not expect them.[310] The cases below are such examples.

> [**DOCTOR**] A doctor, having *some reason* to believe that reducing alcohol consumption will improve the patient's health, advises the patient to drink less, but did not state those reasons.[311]

> [**ARTIST**] An experienced painter, with *no* specific reason in mind and acting on a hunch, advises an aspiring artist to use more intense colours and unconventional textures, believing that this will benefit him.

Although neither the doctor nor the artist gives reasons in support of their advice, they still gave advice. The key difference between the two cases is that the doctor provides advice based on specific reasons, whereas the artist relies on her intuition.

There are three things that need to be clarified. The first is that the hearer may not be able to evaluate whether the given advice is good advice if the reasons for advice are not provided by the speaker. In the [DOCTOR] example, the doctor advises the patient to drink less. She has some reasons for her advice: the patient will have lower blood sugar and lower blood pressure, which will benefit the patient's health. However, she does not provide these reasons. Without knowing the reasons, the patient cannot determine whether this piece

[310] This point is consistent with Archard's (2021, p. 607) claim: "Advice can be given without reasons ('It would be good to do Φ. Full stop') but standardly is supported by reasons in favour of doing what is advised".

[311] One can even imagine a family member later asks the patient why he has started drinking less. The patient responds, "The doctor advised me to". The family member, puzzled, replies, "I also advised you to drink less some time ago. I didn't know the reasons why, and I still don't, but you should". While the content of the advice remains the same, the key difference between the doctor's advice and the family member's advice is whether the speaker had a reason for giving the advice.

of advice is a good one that is worth following. Although this is an important point to discuss, evaluating the quality of advice is different from determining whether a given illocutionary act is defective. Since we are focusing on the regulative rules of giving advice (i.e., maxims), our discussion about this point must wait until the next subsection.

Second, is it necessary for the speaker to know their reasons for the advice to be considered non-defective? Not necessarily, but if they do not know the reasons, they will not be able to provide them, which will make the advice defective in some sense. Let us return to the [ARTIST] example. The experienced painter advises the aspiring artist: "My advice is that experimenting with intense colours and unconventional textures might bring more life to your work. I can't pinpoint the reasons why, but I have a hunch – it will suit your artistic expression better". When a friend asks why the aspiring artist has started using more intense colours and unconventional textures, he replies that the experienced painter advised him to do so. The aspiring artist accepts the advice without needing specific reasons. The adviser's knowledge, experience, and intention may be enough to ensure that the illocutionary performance is successful and does not misfire, although it would be defective in the absence of reasons.

To clarify this, I draw an analogy to how philosophers have reasoned with supervenience. Most often, we cannot specify exactly what the supervenience base is, but logically, we cannot deny that one exists. As Hare (1984, p. 1) says, "For supervenience is a feature, not just of evaluative words, properties or judgements, but of the wider class of judgements which have to have, at least in some minimal sense, reasons or grounds or explanations". Similarly, advice is presumed to be grounded in reasons, even if those reasons are inarticulate. The adviser's judgement may reflect years of practical experience, even when they cannot specify the precise grounds for their advice.

Lastly, must the speaker's reasons be relevant for the advice not to be defective? Somewhat. In [DOCTOR], the doctor's reason for her advice could be something absurd and irrelevant for the atheist patient, such as "By drinking less, some gods will be pleased, and they will bless the patient's health". Reasons are an important aspect of effective advice. The presence of reasons can help us to evaluate whether advice is good, bad, strong, or weak. However, the absence of reasons *does* determine whether the advice is defective. Again, even defective advice can bring out its intended perlocutionary effects. The advisee is still free to choose: they can accept or reject the advice based on their judgement, or follow the doctor's advice without taking seriously the doctor's reasons. Like in [ARTIST], when the reasons are absent, even though

the advice is defective, the advisee can trust the adviser's knowledge or experience. Trust can make up for the absence of explicit reasons, particularly in cases where the adviser's sincerity is presumed.[312] For instance, just as 'I φ-ed because I promised so' can be a sufficient reason to φ, 'I φ-ed because my supervisor advised me to' can also be a reason to φ, provided that there is trust in the adviser. Therefore, providing reasons can enhance the effectiveness of advice, and the absence of reasons does render advice defective.

Accordingly, I propose the following revision to Sbisà's fourth constitutive rule – it should be relocated to maxims, as it clarifies a regulative rule for how advising should be optimally performed:

> -the speaker's words must be a realisation of the procedure of giving advice, indicating a line of conduct or criteria for choosing it and clarifying *with reasons* that it is best suited to the addressee's goals, given the constraints and requirements of the situation.

If this rule is not met, then the advice would be deemed defective. However, as I have argued in §2.3, I clarified what would specifically count as an *abuse*: an abuse occurs when the adviser intentionally hinders perlocutionary communicative success. It occurs when the adviser sincerely intends to guide the student for their own sake yet withholds relevant information that would allow the hearer to properly deliberate about the advice.

An example would help. A PhD supervisor says to their student: "I advise you to apply for this prestigious grant". The supervisor genuinely believes this is in the student's best interest: it would strengthen their CV, open doors for postdocs, and attest to their competitiveness. Therefore, the supervisor's perlocutionary performance intention is sincerely to guide the student for their own sake. However, the supervisor intentionally conceals the fact that if the student applies for this particular grant, they will no longer be eligible for internal funding that would allow them to remain in the department for an additional year. The student had mentioned that this was an important consideration due to family circumstances. The supervisor believes that the

[312] This point can be supported by Hinchman's (2005) discussion of trusting the adviser. The advisee may rely on trust in the adviser's judgment or expertise, as he says, "it is not reasonable for you to trust an adviser unless you have evidence that you can count on her to advise from a perspective of care for you" (ibid., p. 369).

grant is still the better option overall but chooses not to mention the trade-off, fearing that the student might not apply if they knew about it.[313]

In this example, the illocutionary act is advice: the supervisor sincerely intends to guide the student for their own sake. But the act is an abuse, because the speaker intentionally frustrates perlocutionary communicative success: the student cannot fully recognise the guiding intention, since the speaker withholds information relevant to that intention.

4.2 Applying Maxims to Moral Advice

Building on the discussion from §4.1, I propose the following revised maxim for moral advice:

> -the speaker's words must be a realisation of the procedure of giving advice, indicating a line of conduct or criteria for choosing it, clarifying with *normative (or justificatory) reasons* given the constraints and requirements of the situation.

This maxim is important because without normative reasons, it is difficult to see how "I advise you to φ" counts as moral advice rather than non-moral advice. Imagine that the speaker says, "I advise you to donate to charity". It may be that the speaker has given the advice for morality's sake, so this piece of advice could remain *prima facie* moral advice without normative reasons. However, without normative reasons, the hearer has no grounds to evaluate whether the advice is moral. Suppose that the reason that the speaker gives is something like "donating to charity will make others look up to you, as you will gain better reputation". Then this advice would not count as moral advice but non-moral advice.

Moral advice, by definition, is not arbitrary. Some facts count in favour of the advisee's φ-ing, and that is why the moral adviser advises the advisee to φ. In other words, if φ-ing is morally advisable, there are normative reasons that

[313] A similar point has been made by Jonas (2017, p. 821): "when an advisee recognises an advisor as one who has no personal stake in the matter at hand, she has a reason to regard his advice as sincere, in that it represents a true account of what the advisor believes that the advisee has most reason to do. If the advisor's interests are at stake, the advisee cannot discount the possibility that advice represents a means by which he is advancing them, rather than a true representation of his belief about what the advisee has most reason to do. Then, the advisee's need to separate out the reasons that she has to do x from the reasons that the advisor has to advise her to do x, forms an obstacle rather than an aid to an agent's deliberations, and may cause her to discount the advice altogether as untrustworthy".

support φ-ing.[314] In the context of moral advice, it is always legitimate to ask for reasons, and this justification is what grounds the maxim above.[315]

What differentiates moral advice from non-moral advice is that moral advice is given not only for the hearer's sake but also for morality's sake (see Chapter 3). Moral advice aims to highlight values that are final and non-instrumental, thereby sometimes challenging and overriding the advisee's prudential goals.[316] Furthermore, the normative force of moral advice is distinct from that of non-moral advice because it appeals to moral reasons, which can carry greater normative weight than purely prudential reasons.[317] When someone gives moral advice with justifying reasons, they are pointing to pre-existing reasons, as discussed in Chapter 3. These moral reasons have a stronger normative force, capable of overriding the hearer's prudential goals.[318]

One might worry that moral advice loses its advisory character and begins to resemble a demand if what moral advice does is to point to existing normative reasons. Moral advice does not have a typical conditional structure of advice

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[314] A parallel way of describing this idea is provided by Rønnow-Rasmussen (2006, p. 103): "Values are not like butterflies that happen to settle on a flower. Whatever we understand by 'value' it surely does not refer to some entity that merely happens to accrue to objects. There is a dependence relation here; the value of the object results from its having the natural properties it has".

[315] According to Hare (1981, p. 42), "the thesis of universalizability requires that if we make any moral judgement about this situation, we must be prepared to make it about any of the other precisely similar situations". For Hare, universalisability is a defining feature of moral language, making it logically legitimate to ask for justification – for example, "Why is it that I ought to φ?". This does not mean that people necessarily have a strong grasp of reason-giving features in every case, but it highlights the logical legitimacy of expecting reasons for moral directives. According to Hare, this is tied to supervenience; see Rønnow-Rasmussen (2006) for the related discussion.

[316] According to Hare (1981, p. 24), overridingness is a "logical property of moral language, besides universalizability and prescriptivity, namely that which distinguishes *moral* from other evaluative judgements".

[317] It is beyond the scope of my thesis to discuss how reasons carry normative force, and how this normative force relates to the reasons-internalism/externalism debate. I will assume that reasons and normativity are tightly connected together. For example, according to Raz (1999, p. 67), "the normativity of all that is normative consists in the way it is, or provides, or is otherwise related to reasons". Williams (1995a, p. 36) says, "It is important that even on the internalist view a statement of the form '*A* has reason to φ' has *normative force*". Schroeder (2007, p. 81) also states, "to be normative, is to be analyzed in terms of reasons".

[318] If what one means by 'prudential' is 'good-for', one may think that 'good-for' should be understood in terms of what benefits the agent (as Zimmerman (2009) thinks). Then morality, which is usually taken to be 'good-simpliciter', always overrides what is 'good-for' the person. Here, I am not arguing for the strong claim that morality always overrides prudential values, nor that 'good-for' is not part of morality. See Rønnow-Rasmussen (2021).

(e.g., "If you want to x, then my advice is that you should φ"), so it issues what looks like a categorical imperative.[319] I think this misunderstands the role of moral advice. Consider the analogy with a legal adviser: a lawyer may advise a legally compliant course of action, explaining the risks or duties involved, yet still leave the decision to the client. Likewise, a moral adviser can point to moral reasons or obligations without thereby demanding compliance. The hearer remains free to accept or reject the advice; advising invites deliberation, not compliance.

To see how the satisfaction of my proposed maxim for moral advice works, consider, for example, a CEO whose goal is to maximise profit. A financial adviser, offering non-moral advice, might say, "Move your factory to a country where there are fewer labour rights" and provide a prudential reason: "so you can benefit from a cheap labour force". Non-moral advice typically works within the bounds of the advisee's existing goals, offering guidance based on their preferences and priorities.

In contrast, moral advice may not always align with the addressee's prudential goals. For instance, a moral adviser may advise the same CEO to prioritise fair labour practices over profit maximisation.[320] This advice does not align with the initial goal of increasing profit but instead challenges the owner of the factory to reconsider their priorities in light of moral considerations.[321] One of the ways in which the moral adviser can give such advice is by asking what normative ethical theories oblige us to do. As discussed in Chapter 3, moral advice may draw from normative ethical theories such as deontology, utilitarianism, or contractualism. In all such cases, the adviser presents moral reasons that are non-instrumental and potentially overriding of the advisee's prudential goals.[322] By doing so, this maxim is satisfied.

One may object: in what ways is this maxim helping to facilitate effective advice if the given advice does not align with the addressee's goals?[323] Advice,

[319] See Wanderer (2014).
[320] Sneddon (2023, p. 10) gives a similar example: "One might advise a criminal to turn herself in – this could be both genuine advice and good advice – without assuming that doing so would be good for the criminal. We can advise people to abide by other-directed moral rules without assuming that this serves their self-interest".
[321] Wiland (2021, p. 171) also considers this possibility: "Sound advice, of course, can lead you to be motivated to do things that you already have reason to do. Indeed, this is the spirit in which advice is usually best given and received. But advice also can change what you have reason to do, this in multiple ways".
[322] This example and the reasoning are inspired by Southwood (2010, p. 62).
[323] This worry is also mentioned by Williams (1995b, p. 207): "An advisor, and the person seeking advice, may not share the same presuppositions. Someone could be a capable and

by definition, seems to presuppose that the adviser is helping the advisee to achieve their goals, and that what I am calling 'moral advice' is not truly advice, unless the advisee already cares about acting morally but is uncertain about how to do so. Thus, moral advice can only be given in situations where the addressee already has some moral concerns. In such cases, the maxim would help. However, it seemingly cannot be given in situations where the addressee does not yet see morality as relevant to their decision-making, rendering the maxim irrelevant.

However, I argue that this way of understanding advice is too narrow. Even in non-moral contexts, the advisee's goals may not always align with the given advice. Consider cases where a teacher advises a student, "You should prioritise deep learning over chasing high grades", or where a doctor advises a patient, "Focus on long-term health, not just quick weight loss". In these cases, the adviser's aim is not simply to serve the addressee's immediate instrumental goals but to guide them in such a way that they can redirect those goals towards an end that is intrinsically valuable to them. In other words, such advice is given for the hearer's *sake*. As I have emphasised in Chapter 3, H-directives are given for the hearer's sake, aiming to invite the hearer's deliberation and thereby guide their action. So, even though the given advice may not be best suited to achieving hearer's current goals, as long as the speaker provides supporting reasons, this maxim is satisfied.[324]

Similarly, moral advice does not have to assume that the advisee already has a moral goal in mind. Instead, following the maxim can introduce moral considerations that challenge or override the advisee's current prudential goals.[325] And this is precisely what this maxim requires. Moral advice can challenge or redefine those goals even more effectively when the maxim is satisfied. A related concern arises: if the hearer has no interest in receiving

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insightful advisor, to Catholics, for instance, who accepted the value of chastity, but be no use to someone who did not; in the opposite direction (so to speak) a seeker after advice might think that some well-regarded and shrewd advisor displayed a louche and opportunistic consequentialist outlook".

[324] Similarly, Wiland (2021, p. 122) says, "Apt advice does not always aim to benefit the advisee, but it does aim at something that the advisee could be motivated to do. Advice that fails to engage with the advisee's cares and concerns is ipso facto inapt as advice. (It might serve some other function)".

[325] It does not mean that moral advice is always against the hearer's goals. When one gives moral advice, such as "My advice is that you φ because it's good for you", it can also, sometimes, capture what is moral. One way to do so is to say that the moral thing to do is to do what is good for you by appealing to the objective list theories of well-being (See Hurka (1993) and Fletcher (2015)).

moral advice – for instance, if they are an amoralist – in what sense is the adviser giving advice at all? One might argue that, in such cases, the utterance does not count as advice but merely as a moral judgement, statement, or testimony.

I have two answers. First, one can perform a speech act of giving moral advice, even without there being uptake or the intended perlocutionary effects being realised, as I argued in Chapter 3. This is because the illocutionary intention (intending to perform an illocutionary act of giving moral advice) and perlocutionary intention (to guide the advisee) are in place. Second, giving moral advice does not have to always serve the advisee's interest – the adviser is giving moral advice for the hearer's sake as well as for morality's sake. In this sense, the adviser can still be performing the act of moral advising, even if the hearer is unwilling or unable to receive it as such.

This brings us to why the maxim matters in practice. This maxim is useful because, first, providing reasons enhances the effectiveness of the advice. By offering normative or justificatory reasons, the adviser helps the hearer understand the moral grounds for the advice, making it more reasonable and increasing the likelihood that the hearer will take it seriously and deliberate upon it. This practice of giving reasons strengthens the advice, as the hearer gains more evidence to support why the advice should be deliberated upon and followed.[326]

Second, providing reasons respects the hearer's autonomy. By offering justification, the adviser acknowledges the hearer's capacity for moral reasoning. Although the adviser provides reasons, the hearer retains the autonomy to accept or reject the advice. This respect for autonomy is a crucial aspect of moral agency, which refers to having the capacity to make up one's own mind and being responsive to reasons.[327]

Third, offering reasons facilitates moral deliberation. Moral advice is not merely about guiding physical action; it also aims to engage the hearer in deliberation. Reasons form the basis of this deliberation, inviting the hearer to reflect on whether the advice should be accepted as a reason for action. Without justification, advice may not fully achieve its aim of guiding deliberation and

[326] As Fleming (2016, p. 184) notes, "In advice the reason for action is not based on the act of advising. Rather there should be a reason that exists independently of one's speech act".
[327] See Arpaly (2003, p. 125) for different varieties of autonomy. Arpaly distinguishes at least eight different varieties of autonomy, including making up one's own mind and being responsive to reasons.

action.[328] The absence of reasons may leave the hearer uncertain about whether the advice is more than *prima facie* moral.

Now consider a difficult case. Imagine that, after a friend advised you to tell your wife that you have been earning more than you told her, you ask why. Then the friend gives you a reason: "because it's Monday and Monday is a good day to be moral". Today being a Monday does not provide a justificatory reason for the moral advice, as we all know.

There are several ways to analyse this example. One way is to say that this advice was not given for your or morality's sake, so it is no longer even advice, let alone moral. Another is to say that the advice misfires because the speaker lacks knowledge or experience, or because you do not deem the speaker to be knowledgeable or experienced. If that is the case, the advice will misfire. However, since it was not advice in the first place, there is no possibility of misfire.

However, this still does not mean that the intended perlocutionary effect will not be achieved. You can still follow the advice without taking the speaker's reason seriously. You can, on your own, deliberate on reasons why you should tell your wife that you have been earning more than you told her, such as the wrongness of deception or the importance of maintaining trust. If there is this possibility, the friend's directive – "tell your wife that you've been earning more than you told her" – albeit not being advice, can still help you to deliberate.

4.3 Reassessing Sbisà's Fifth Constitutive Rule

Finally, I want to include one additional maxim from Sbisà's original list of constitutive rules:

[328] One may ask on what basis these reasons justify moral advice. One answer is supervenience. As I have discussed before, supervenience, in the context of metaethics, is that moral properties are dependent on natural properties in such a way that there cannot be a difference in moral properties without a corresponding difference in natural properties. According to Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011, p. 10), supervenient properties are dependent properties: "To insist that value always accrues to an object *because* it has a certain other, non-evaluative properties is to express a belief, by implication, that there is a relation of dependence between value and those other, subjacent (i.e., underlying properties)". Similarly, Meyers (2012, p. 18) says the supervenience thesis is that "if two actions have the same natural properties, then they must have the same moral properties (and, conversely, different moral properties require some difference in natural properties)". I will assume that many metaethicists, except for moral nihilists or fictionalists, will accept supervenience.

> -when not clear enough from the situation (as when the speaker is officially in charge of giving advice to the addressee) or from the content of the speaker's utterance, some additional linguistic form must be used to make the act of advising recognizable, such as the explicit performance 'I advise…' or performative gloss ('This is my advice') (Sbisà, 2018, p. 36).

This rule should be reclassified as a maxim, for two reasons: it is not constitutive of the act of advice, even on Sbisà's own account, and it does not function as a felicity-enabling rule. As traditionally understood, constitutive rules are those without which the act in question would not count as that act at all; they define the very nature of the speech act. However, as I argued in Chapter 3, recognisability is not necessary for an utterance to count as an illocutionary act-type such as advice.

Felicity-enabling rules, by contrast, concern the speaker's normative standing: for example, being knowledgeable or experienced in the relevant domain enables felicitous advising. These rules determine whether the act misfires. In contrast, recognisability – understood in terms of uptake – may affect felicity, but not always. As I noted in Chapter 3, an illocutionary act can be taken up or not, but lack of recognition does not by itself render the act infelicitous.

Given this, the fifth rule is best understood as a maxim, a regulative norm that improves the communicative effectiveness of the speech act but does not define or enable it. It serves the practical function of ensuring that, when contextual cues are insufficient, the speaker supplements them with explicit linguistic forms to help the hearer identify the act as advice. In situations where the speaker's utterance is unclear or ambiguous, adding a performative like "I advise…" or a gloss such as "This is my advice" will facilitate effective communication.

Importantly, failure to comply with this maxim may render it defective. It opens the speaker to criticism (e.g., "Why didn't you make it clearer that you were giving advice?") for failing to meet expectations of communicative clarity. Thus, it is a matter of making the illocutionary act more effective in communication. Therefore, this rule concerns the optimal performance of the act rather than its felicity or constitution, and it should be classified accordingly as a maxim.

5. Evaluative Requirements Applied to Moral Advice

This section develops norms of evaluating moral advice as 'good'. I argue that advice should be evaluated in terms of its role in the hearer's deliberation, rather than by whether it leads to a desired outcome. §5.1 introduces and revises the evaluative requirement for non-moral advice, focusing on how good advice guides deliberation. §5.2 extends this to moral advice, adding the further condition that it must also improve the hearer's moral understanding. §5.3 argues that Sbisà's third constitutive rule concerning the availability of alternatives should instead be treated as an evaluative condition, and explores cases where good moral advice may function to reinforce or affirm rather than expand choice. §5.4 concludes by synthesising these insights into a unified evaluative requirement for moral advice.

5.1 Evaluating Good Advice

This subsection explores the norms of evaluating advice. As I have explained in §2, an evaluation of advice involves a range of normative (e.g., 'right', 'fitting', 'appropriate', etc.) and evaluative (e.g., 'good', 'bad', 'excellent', 'unhelpful', 'mediocre', etc.) terms. Shifting from an 'objective' to an 'evaluative' requirement better accommodates diverse evaluations based on context, purpose, and hearer variability. What is important to emphasise here, however, is that we are looking for "the requirements or standards of overall correctness for a speech act" (Sbisà 2018, p. 34), not whether the content of the advice is 'good'.[329] In other words, we want to find out the requirement for evaluating whether the speaker has "said and therein done the right (or wrong) thing" (Sbisà, 2023, p. 217).[330]

Recall that Sbisà's objective requirement for advice is:

[329] For example, a piece of moral advice, such as "Don't lie, no matter what, for morality's sake", includes moral content but the utterance itself may not be appropriate in certain contexts.

[330] Another reason for including such evaluative requirements is that the constitutive rules do not ensure that a more knowledgeable, experienced, or trusted adviser will always provide good (or effective, appropriate, or helpful) advice. An additional evaluative requirement may be necessary to assess whether the advice, once given, meets the standard of being 'good'. Furthermore, there may be cases where an adviser gives good advice despite not adhering to the maxims, perhaps due to time constraints. While following the maxims generally increases the likelihood that advice will be evaluated as good, it is not a strict requirement for all cases.

> -the accomplished piece of advice is 'good' advice if it is apt to help the addressee to achieve or approximate his goals in a manner conforming to the other possible constraints and the requirements of the situation.

According to Sbisà, this requirement is needed to evaluate whether a given speech act of giving advice is good, with the possibility of the evaluation changing as the consequences of the advice unfold over time. For example, suppose a friend comes to you for advice. She is faced with a moral dilemma about whether to report a colleague for unethical behaviour that could harm others in the workplace. You advise her to report because the safety of her colleagues is paramount, but she feels that the reasons not to report are more important, such as the possible negative impact on her own career and the company's reputation. Your friend may assess your advice as 'bad' right now, as she thinks that risking her career is a bad choice. Over time, the evaluation of your advice may change to 'good' as your friend observes the negative consequences of her decision not to report.[331] This example shows that the evaluation of advice may change over time.

Another way of explaining this case would be to evaluate the speech act of giving advice as 'good' if, at least in one possible world, it is apt to help the advisee achieve or approximate their goals. In the example above, the advice was initially not apt to help the addressee achieve her goals. However, retrospectively, she realised that following the advice would have been the better choice. If there were a possible world in which the advisee followed the advice, it would have been good. For example, this is what Kissine (2013a, p. 105) could say, appealing to his definition of directive speech acts. So, a possible revised version of the objective requirement could be:

> -the accomplished piece of advice is 'good' advice if, *in at least one possible world*, it is apt to help the addressee to achieve or approximate his goals in a manner conforming to the other possible constraints and the requirements of the situation.

This revision would support Sbisà's claim that, even if no one evaluates advice as good in the present or in this actual world, it can still be good, if, in at least one possible world, it is apt to help the addressee to achieve his goals.

[331] Different evaluative terms can also be used here. For example, the speech act can be evaluated as the 'wrong' thing to say in this context, given the circumstances now. However, the evaluation can change over time, as the friend judges it to be the 'right' thing to say as the negative consequences unfold.

To illustrate, consider an adviser who advises the advisee to φ, but the advisee chooses to ψ instead. The adviser believes that their advice is good, yet the advisee successfully achieves his goals by ψ-ing. Due to the advisee's limited knowledge, he never realises that φ-ing would also have been a good choice. In this scenario, even though neither the adviser nor the advisee recognises that the advice is good in the actual world, we can still say the advice was good because, in at least one possible world, it could have helped the advisee achieve his goals.

However, I find this revision too permissive. By allowing advice to be considered 'good' as long as there exists a possible world where it benefits the advisee, we risk failing to evaluate whether the utterance was the right thing to say in the actual world.[332] As I argued in Chapter 3, the purpose of giving advice is not necessarily to ensure compliance or achieve its intended perlocutionary effect. Rather, its aim is to guide the hearer's decision-making process by becoming part of their deliberative process.[333] In other words, advice invites the hearer to consider or reflect on whether to φ, engaging with the advice during their deliberation, regardless of whether there is a possible world where it helps the addressee to achieve or approximate his goals.[334] When the advice is deliberated on, it is to be evaluated as 'good'.[335] Based on this understanding, I propose the following revised requirement for non-moral advice:

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[332] This reply reflects Sbisà's (2023b, p. 317) worry in parallel: "complying (or failing to comply) with the commitment one has undertaken is not the same thing as having said and therein done the right (or wrong) thing. Achieving or failing to achieve the addressee's compliance with a directive is even farther away from having said and therein done the right (or the wrong) thing when uttering an imperative sentence". Whether advice turns out to be good in a possible world is not the same thing as having said and therein done the good (or bad) thing.

[333] What could this process look like? According to Tubert (2016, p. 182), "Deliberation may involve processes like revising false beliefs or discovering that a certain course of action is the means to a given end. And in fact, the deliberative process may add or subtract elements from the agent's motivational set".

[334] This is consistent with Hacker's (2007, p. 239) definition of deliberation: "Only a language-using creature can reason and deliberate, weigh the conflicting claims of the facts it knows in the light of its desires, goals and values, and come to a decision to make a choice in the light of reasons".

[335] I can be pushed further on this point regarding whether deliberation is a fully rational process on my account. I will echo Williams (1981, p. 110): "There is an essential indeterminacy in what can be counted a rational deliberative process. Practical reasoning is a heuristic process, and an imaginative one, and there are no fixed boundaries on the continuum from rational thought to inspiration and conversion".

> -the accomplished piece of advice is 'good' advice if, *by being included in deliberation*, it guides the addressee's decision-making, in a manner conforming to the other possible constraints and the requirements of the situation.

This requirement seems particularly relevant in explaining one of the key functions of non-moral advice: guiding the hearer for their own sake.[336] If the advice becomes part of the advisee's deliberation, this suggests that the advice was initially perceived as *pro tanto* good, or at least *prima facie* good.[337] When the advisee decides to follow the advice, and if it is, in fact, good for the advisee, the advice is re-evaluated from being *prima facie* good to being *actually* good.

5.2 Evaluating Good Moral Advice

For the speech act of giving moral advice to be evaluated as good, it seems that more conditions need to be added because it should not only guide the addressee's decision-making but also deepen the addressee's moral understanding, helping the addressee understand why φ-ing is to be done for morality's sake.[338] I argue that the evaluative requirement for moral advice (i.e., for the speech act of giving moral advice to be evaluated as 'good') must meet two other conditions: (a) it must be included in the hearer's deliberation, *and* (b) their moral understanding must improve as a result of receiving the advice.[339]

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[336] According to Arpaly and Schroeder (2013, p. 24), "Deliberation, at the least, requires bringing to mind ideas or images meant to have some rational relation to the topic being considered, in the service of reaching a conclusion about what to think or do." Then advice has some rational relation to the topic being considered, which is helping to achieve the hearer's goals.

[337] My suggestion parallels Hinchman's (2005, p. 361) definition of advice in that it gives a *pro tanto* reason: "S advises A to φ (sincerely) iff A recognizes that S, in telling A that he should φ, intends that A gain access to a pro tanto reason to φ through this very recognition".

[338] I use 'good' as 'instrumentally good' in this context. There may be a possibility of the speech act of giving moral advice to be *finally* good, but I will bracket this possibility for now.

[339] This is inspired by Fleming's (2016, p. 185) account: "The advisee entertains the possibility that the advisor is wiser in the matter at hand. Without this the activity would have no point. This happens in two ways. Initially, an advisee merely consents to entertaining the advice. The advisee consents to hearing his advisor out. At a second stage, after the advisee hears the advice, the advisee can decide to act on it or not. This is a second step of consent when the advisee decides to the let advisor's judgment serve as a supplement to or a proxy for the advisee's practical reasoning. The advisee might realize that the advisor has pointed him to a

As I argued in Chapter 3, the purpose of giving moral advice is to guide the hearer's action, which includes their mental action, particularly their moral reasoning and decision-making. If the given moral advice is not considered during deliberation, it may not be evaluated as good, even if it is moral advice. Moral deliberation is a reflective process in which one examines reasons for action based on moral considerations.[340] Giving good moral advice contributes to this process by deepening the hearer's moral understanding, potentially leading to morally better decisions.[341]

An objection I can expect immediately is that advice not taken may still be good but ineffective. I agree that the content of advice may still be good even if it is not deliberated upon. However, here we are interested in evaluating whether the performance of the speech act – giving moral advice – is instrumentally good. If this is the case, then the evaluation of whether what the speaker has said and done is a good thing would rely on what the hearer does with the performed speech act.

One might worry that (a) is too subjective, as it is not always apparent whether the hearer engages in deliberation after receiving advice. However, I do not view this as problematic. According to Harman (1976, p. 442),

> Reasoning is not the conscious rehearsal of argument; it is rather a process in which antecedent beliefs and intentions are minimally modified, by addition and subtraction, in the interests of explanatory coherence and the satisfaction of intrinsic desires. One is not ordinarily aware of all of the relevant beliefs, desires, and intentions – nor is one ordinarily aware of the details of the change that reasoning brings about. One may not even be conscious that any reasoning at all has occurred.

Harman's point highlights that reasoning (which I take to be synonymous with deliberation) often occurs beneath the level of conscious awareness. This

consideration that the advisee now takes to be a reason". One may think that this is compatible with non-moral advice, and I think it is because advice can be both moral and non-moral.

[340] As Beauchamp and Childress (1994, p. 13) say, "As we deliberate, we usually consider which among the possible courses of action is morally justified, i.e. which has the strongest moral reasons behind it. The reasons we finally accept express the conditions under which we believe some course of action is morally justified".

[341] This is supported by Sliwa (2025, p. 15): "When her friend simply tells Eleanor that eating meat is impermissible, she is not giving Eleanor any hermeneutical advice. She is simply answering a yes-or-no question. Herein lies the problem. Mary's advice is subpar *qua* advice: what she says may be true but it is not good advice. It fails to give Eleanor a perspective on the situation she is faced with. The problem is not that Eleanor defers. It is that she settles for poor moral advice".

means that even if the hearer does not engage in overt deliberation after receiving moral advice, the advice can still influence their beliefs and intentions in subtle ways. Therefore, whether the speech act of giving moral advice is good does not hinge on the hearer's conscious awareness of deliberation but rather on the fact that it becomes part of their deliberative process.

Next, what does it mean that the hearer's moral understanding must improve as a result of receiving the advice? One answer is that the hearer is in a better epistemic state after receiving the advice, particularly in their capacity to make moral decisions.[342] Receiving moral advice should enable the hearer to make more informed, reflective, and independent choices on moral matters, thus improving their decision-making process.[343] Good moral advice can also serve as a form of testimony which enhances moral understanding or reduces moral uncertainty and ignorance, provided the moral adviser is reliable and trustworthy.[344]

An objection might question whether both conditions – (a) inclusion in moral deliberation, (b) improvement of the hearer's moral understanding – must be satisfied for moral advising to be evaluated as good. Could fulfilling just one of these conditions be sufficient? I argue that both conditions must be met.

First, including the advice in the hearer's moral deliberation is necessary but not sufficient on its own. It is necessary because moral deliberation is the process through which the hearer exercises their reasoning, whether deciding what to do or what to believe. Deliberation typically takes place before a

[342] Note that this epistemic state can involve not only having more reasons, but also knowing that the adviser approves or reassures of certain actions or norms, contributing to lessening uncertainty.

[343] There is evidence from experimental research that supports this claim. Yaniv (2004) finds that advice influences decision-making and improves judgement accuracy, as receiving advice from others significantly enhances the accuracy of their decisions. Dala and Bonaccio (2010) find that how receiving different types of advice, such as information about alternatives or decision-making strategies, helps decision-makers make more autonomous and accurate decisions, particularly by providing them with the necessary tools to reflect on various choices.

[344] In a way, this puts me in the optimist camp about moral testimony, which endorse the claim that we can gain knowledge from moral testimony. The philosophers in this camp include Jones (1999), Driver (2006), Hopkins (2007), and Fricker (2006). One may worry that moral knowledge is not possible for non-cognitivists. However, if knowing that my moral adviser advises me to φ because she approves of φ-ing counts as knowledge, it is possible for non-cognitivists to make sense of moral knowledge.

decision is made, and it is essential for the hearer to engage with the advice during this process in order to make an informed decision.[345]

However, if the moral advice only becomes part of the hearer's deliberation but does not improve the hearer's moral understanding, it is not evaluated as good. This is closely connected to the maxim we discussed in §4. Imagine that I receive the following moral advice: "Don't cheat on your exam". I deliberate on the advice but can fail to understand the moral significance of not cheating, as I may be an egoist who thinks cheating is permissible, as long as I do not get caught. Without the adviser providing the normative reasons why I should not cheat, the advice itself may not improve the hearer's moral understanding. Therefore, we ultimately evaluate the speech act of giving advice as not good (or not good enough).

What if the hearer is already aware of the adviser's reasons or has a clear understanding of the moral norms in question? Is the advising here then evaluated as not good, either? Imagine Jordan giving advice to Sam: "Sam, my advice is that you just return the lost wallet to the owner" when both Jordan and Sam know that Sam would naturally do this without hesitation. Here, the advice does not improve Sam's moral understanding but strengthens the moral norm and Sam's confidence. In this case, the given moral advice is not evaluated as instrumentally good. However, this does not mean that it cannot be evaluated differently – it can still be evaluated as effective, helpful, or useful; even more, it may be an appropriate or right thing to say in this context precisely because it helped Sam to be more confident in making his moral decision to return the wallet.

Lastly, although it is necessary for the advisee to improve their moral understanding after receiving moral advice, this condition alone is not sufficient for the advice to be evaluated as good. This suggests a weak claim: the given moral advice is evaluated as instrumentally good for the advisee when it leads them to deliberate independently on the advice they receive.[346] Imagine that a moral adviser advises us to φ for the normative reasons x, y, and z. We may not have been aware of these reasons, so they contribute to our

[345] As Harman (1976, p. 442) says, "As the result of practical reasoning, one forms the positive intention of doing A".

[346] My account is also compatible with Sliwa's (2017) view of moral understanding (i.e., ability to know right from wrong), even though Sliwa's account is contrasted with that of Hills (2009), because I also accept, like Sliwa, that moral understanding can also be achieved by relying on the moral testimony of trustworthy and sincere advisers. Again, I am concerned with what helps us to evaluate moral advice as good, not whether moral advice counts as second-hand knowledge that justifies one's belief.

moral understanding of why we should φ. However, it is also possible that we take this advice at face value and decide to φ without deliberation – perhaps because we are too tired to think or because we uncritically idealise the adviser.[347] If this is the case, then even if the act of advising is effective in guiding action, its evaluation as *good* remains questionable.

This aligns with Williams's (1996, p. 115) account of deliberative assistance, which holds that sound deliberation is essential for determining what one has reason to do: "What someone has reason to do will be what he can arrive at by a sound deliberative route; and he can arrive at a conclusion or resolution by a sound deliberative route, perhaps, only if he could be led to it by deliberative assistance that operated within those constraints". One such constraint is that "The assistant will be truthful, in the sense both of telling the truth and of helping the agent to discover the truth. The assistant will be truthful about his own procedures and motives, with the result that these can be transparent to the agent; the assistant has no hidden agenda in his dealings with the agent" (ibid., pp. 115–116). This strengthens the idea that moral advice is evaluated as good when it facilitates the advisee's own deliberative process, ensuring that their moral understanding is actively engaged rather than passively received.

There may be at least four worries about my evaluative requirement. The first is that this requirement sounds too subjective, as the evaluation of 'good' is based on whether moral advice is included in the advisee's deliberation and improves the advisee's moral understanding of the matter. This point draws on Fleming (2016, p. 181) who says, "I argue for an informed subjectivist account of good advice. Since advice concerns what the advisee is to do, respecting autonomy requires that the advisee is final arbiter of whether it is good advice". According to Fleming (ibid., p. 188), an objectivist account of good advice would claim that "the quality of advice depends on the objective reasons that support the option it advises. Advice is good in so far as it leads one to do what one has most reason to do. The quality of the advice varies with the strength of the reasons that support it". Since I am not arguing that advice is evaluated as good only if it leads someone to act on what they have the most objective reason to, I am not advocating an objectivist view of good advice. Therefore, the worry is precisely that the two conditions I propose should be understood as a *subjectivist* requirement for moral advice.

[347] As I have pointed out above, one may not even be conscious that any reasoning at all has occurred, so it can be argued that deliberation occurs as soon as one hears these reasons, even in milliseconds. Therefore, improving one's moral understanding necessarily entails deliberation. I am not arguing against this possibility, but I also think that it is also possible that one follows the advice without deliberation because deliberation is mentally costly.

This concern is valid, but I suspect that Fleming and I are using 'good' in different ways. As I am building on Sbisà's model, I am interested in evaluating "whether the speaker was right in performing that speech act for those aims in that context, given how things are in the world" (Sbisà, 2018, pp. 33–34), not whether the content of moral advice is good. In other words, my evaluative requirements are meant to evaluate the speech act of giving moral advice, regarding whether it fulfils its intended purpose in the given context. Therefore, I am arguing that the evaluative requirement helps us to evaluate the speech *act* of giving moral advice as good if, in virtue of this very act, the advisee engages in moral deliberation and improves their moral understanding.

The second worry is that the act can still be evaluated as good even though the advisee may not deliberate or improve their moral understanding, because of the nature of joint agency in advising, as some philosophers would argue.[348] It may be too strong an evaluative requirement that the advisee deliberates and improves their moral understanding in order for the act to be evaluated as good. According to Wiland (2021, p. 165),

> Advice does not change the fact […] that an individual who does not grasp what he should do cannot himself act in a morally worthy way. But an individual who takes the advice of someone like Sophie will partially constitute a joint agent who can act in a morally worthy way. Thus, if he does not grasp what he should do, the only way he can participate in morally worthy action is by relying upon someone who does grasp this. Advice is not a barrier to morally worthy action; it is a pathway toward it.

In other words, if an adviser and an advisee can together constitute a joint agent, and their actions can be morally evaluated and have moral worth, why can the speech act of giving advice not be evaluated as good?[349]

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[348] Habgood-Coote (2024) and Fleming (2016) take advising to be joint action. Habgood-Coote takes advising as collaborative deliberation; likewise, Fleming (2016, p. 183–184) says, "advising occurs when two or more individuals reason together about what the advisee is to do. It is joint deliberation that aims at an intention or an action by only some of the deliberators. […] If we do not require cooperation, then we reduce advice to the expression of normative judgment about another's situation. In doing so, a distinct type of social interaction gets removed from the philosophical scene. That would ignore an important part of social life".

[349] Wiland (2021, p. 140) says, "advising duos can be *responsible* for what is thereby done, and that the best explanation for this is that they are indeed joint agents. That is, they are responsible for what is done, because they together do it. […] When one individual successfully directs a second individual to do something, *who* is responsible for what is thereby done? I will argue that often *both* are, and this is because they are thereby acting *together*".

My response is that I understand advising as a distinct type of speech act whose primary function is to guide the advisee's deliberation, not merely to bring about the right action or secure compliance. Although Wiland is right that joint agency can make the advisee's action morally worthy, this does not mean that the act of giving advice should be evaluated as good unless it plays its intended role, namely, contributing to the advisee's own process of moral reasoning and understanding.

Good moral advising, on my view, is not merely a means of bringing about the morally right action but a means of guiding moral deliberation, regardless of whether the advisee follows the advice. If an advisee follows advice without engaging in deliberation, they may act morally right, but this does not mean the advice has fulfilled its purpose. Consider a case where an advisee follows advice blindly out of deference. Even if their action is morally worthy within their joint agency, the advice itself has failed to contribute to the advisee's sound deliberative route in the way that good moral advising should.

Furthermore, joint agency does not dissolve the significance of individual deliberation. If the only way an advisee can act morally is by deferring entirely to another person, it raises concerns about moral autonomy. While joint agency might explain how an agent can participate in morally worthy action, it does not eliminate the role of advice in guiding for moral deliberation and improving moral understanding. Therefore, my claim remains intact; moral advising is evaluated as good when the advisee deliberates upon it and improves their moral understanding, even if joint agency allows for performing a morally worthy action in some cases.

The third worry is about the intuitiveness of evaluating insincere (e.g., deceptive or manipulative) advice as good. Wiland (2021, p. 171) presents the example of a father who uses reverse psychology on his son: "A father advises his son to do the opposite of what the father actually believes is best for the son, knowing that the son will rebel by flouting the advice, thereby acting as the father hopes".[350] In this case, it seems that the given advice can be

[350] A similar case is presented by Hare (1972, p. 54): "The sadistic schoolmaster, who commands his boys to keep silent in the hope that this will cause them to talk so that he can beat them, is still commanding or telling them to keep quiet". In this case, the school master is issuing an insincere command because his utterance is precisely that the students keep quiet, but he intends to bring about the outcome where the students do not keep quiet. In other words, "Prescribing does not necessarily involve, according to Hare, intentions that someone should make something the case" (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 1993, p. 82).

evaluated as instrumentally good for the advisee, regardless of whether the advisee deliberated upon the advice.

While it is true that insincere advice can sometimes lead to beneficial outcomes, this does not mean that we evaluate the speech act of giving advice as good. Instead, it suggests that the adviser must meet certain constraints (such as truthfulness and transparency, as Williams (1996) argues) for the advising to be evaluated as good.[351] It is important to emphasise that giving advice insincerely can still be evaluated as 'effective' because it may help to achieve the advisee's goals in certain contexts; it is still a speech act of giving advice albeit a defective one. What I want to highlight here is that, if this speech act is meant to guide the hearer for the hearer's sake, this is evaluated as 'good' when it contributes to the advisee's deliberation, as it aids the advisee's decision-making process.

The last worry for my account is how it handles cases of evaluating contradictory moral advice, where one adviser advises φ-ing while another advises against φ-ing. For example, in the case of abortion, one adviser might advise not to abort due to the moral status of the foetus, while another might advise to abort based on the rights of the pregnant individual. If moral advice is evaluated as good insofar as it contributes to the advisee's deliberation, how should we evaluate cases where one piece of advice directly contradicts another? This raises two concerns: first, whether two acts of giving contradictory advice can both be considered as good, and second, whether conflicting advice undermines the nature of advice by leaving the advisee without clear guidance. If advice is meant to guide the advisee, then contradictory advice could be seen as impeding, rather than aiding, deliberation.

This worry assumes that the primary function of moral advice is to provide clear direction on what to do, but my account does not require advice to eliminate all uncertainty or resolve moral disagreement. Instead, moral advice is evaluated as good when it contributes to the advisee's deliberation and deepens their moral understanding, even if different advisers offer conflicting advice. In cases of moral disagreement, such as abortion, advisers may provide conflicting yet well-reasoned arguments grounded in different moral theories. Both pieces of advice can still be evaluated as good if they help the advisee to deliberate and deepen their moral understanding. Even when the advice is conflicting, it still provides the advisee with perspectives to consider,

[351] These constraints are already included in my view of H-directives and advice; see Chapter 3.

arguments to evaluate, and reasons to weigh, all of which aid the hearer's deliberation. This reflects the inescapable difficulty of making a moral decision in reality. It involves the advisee deliberating and reflecting on what they should do, as Williams (1985, p. 21) emphasises when he repeats Socrates's point, "Practical thought is radically first-personal. It must ask and answer the question 'what shall *I* do?' […] a good life must have reflection as part of its goodness: *the unexamined life*, as he put it, *is not worth living*". One may resort to giving commands, orders, or demands if the hearer is to be explicitly told what to do morally. While such speech acts are sometimes necessary, in some contexts, advice may be preferable to commands, orders, or demands, as it instead aims to guide the hearer through deliberation and moral understanding.

One may think that expecting the advisee to deliberate every time they receive advice is too demanding. Wiland (2021, p. 70) says, "while moral understanding is intrinsically valuable insofar as it is a part of moral virtue, so too is the disposition to accept moral testimony when needed". He would say the same with accepting moral advice, which he takes to be a kind of directives – on what to do rather than what to believe. There is virtue in accepting moral testimony or advice "from those he sees to be in a better position to determine how he should live" (ibid., p. 72). I agree with Wiland on this point. For example, some young children may not understand why they should not lie or take someone else's toy home – they may need to be told what to do, and when they ask why, it is common for parents to say, "because I told you so".

However, where I differ from Wiland is that while accepting advice or testimony from trusted sources can indeed be virtuous, moral compliance demands more. Even when relying on others' advice, the hearer should ideally deliberate before accepting it. This means that the advisee should actively engage with the possible reasons behind the advice, even if they are not fully capable of moral understanding. This is because engaging with moral agency should involve respecting autonomy and practical reasoning, even in contexts where reliance on others' advice is necessary. While deference to trusted advisers can play an important role in moral development, the goal of moral advising is to help the advisee to engage with deliberation. In this way, moral advice serves as guidance – an invitation to deliberate, distinguishing it from S-directives like commands or orders, which often aim at compliance without requiring such engagement. This highlights the role of moral advice as a tool for fostering deliberative moral agency.

5.3 The Role of Choice in Good Advice

This subsection examines the third constitutive rule for advice given by Sbisà, with the aim of clarifying how this rule should figure in the evaluation of advice as 'good'. Recall that Sbisà's (2018, p. 36) third constitutive rule is as follows:

> -it must be open to the addressee to choose one among various lines of conduct.

This rule addresses a key feature of the context in which advice is given: that the addressee is in fact in a position to choose among alternatives. However, this cannot be a constitutive rule even on Sbisà's own terms. Constitutive rules are those without which the act would not count as that act, but advice does not cease to be advice because there are no alternatives. Moreover, this formulation risks collapsing into a truism: whenever one is advised to φ, there is always – physically or metaphysically – the option not to φ. The bare availability of alternatives is a structural feature of action, not a norm specific to advice. It is, therefore, more plausible to interpret this rule as an evaluative one: the accomplished piece of advice is 'good' advice if it is given in a context where the addressee faces a range of alternatives.

That said, advice can still be given in contexts where this evaluative condition is only weakly met or where the existence of alternatives is not practically at issue. Sometimes, advice is given even when it is clear to both speaker and hearer that the hearer will naturally follow the advised course of action. For example, one might say, "My advice is that you should φ. But we both know that you will φ".[352] As Archard (2021, p. 608) notes, advice can still serve to reinforce the hearer's beliefs: "Advice is a speech act that seeks to induce in the advisee a change of mind (or, we should allow, reinforcement of a view already held but perhaps held uncertainly or tentatively)". In such cases, the speaker may not intend to introduce a new alternative, but to strengthen the advisee's confidence in what they already take to be the right action.

So why do people seek advice when they already know what to do? One reason is that they may want to know the adviser's opinion, regardless of their own decision. Receiving advice may provide an additional reason to take action, reducing uncertainty and increasing resolve. Another possibility is that the

[352] A similar case is when both the adviser and advisee are aware that the advice will not be followed. For instance, when a parent says to her teenager, "I advise you to stay home", even if both parties know this advice will not be complied with, this illocutionary act is still the act of advising.

advisee wants to test or compare their own reasons with those of the adviser, thereby enriching their deliberation.[353]

These considerations can be particularly salient in the case of moral advice. Imagine a situation where something negative occurred at a community event, and a respected community member, Elsa, is chosen to speak publicly about the incident. Elsa is chosen because she is known for her honesty, and her friend Fanny advises her by saying, "Elsa, my advice is that you just speak truthfully about what happened during the event". Both Elsa and Fanny know that Elsa will naturally speak truthfully under normal circumstances. Fanny's advice here does not aim to alter Elsa's action but rather reinforces the moral norm of honesty. The advice, in this case, functions as a moral affirmation, strengthening Elsa's confidence and resolve.[354]

This example shows that, in such contexts, the speech act of giving moral advice can be evaluated as appropriate, even when the addressee is already inclined to act morally. In such cases, advice helps to strengthen the

[353] One may still wonder what counts as 'advice' if advice is not about guiding the hearer to perform an action that they will not naturally perform under normal circumstances. Certainly, the mere fact that the advisee wants the adviser's opinion about what they should do does not mean that they want advice. I agree that, while not all requests for information constitute requests for advice, advice can also be about endorsing a particular course of action based on the adviser's judgment. Even if an advisee does not explicitly ask for 'advice' in the conventional sense, their inquiry may still invite an advisory response, depending on their reasons for seeking the information. For example, someone might ask, "What would you do in my situation?" without formally requesting advice, yet the response they receive could function as advice. Moreover, advice can serve purposes beyond guiding action, although I argue that it is their primary purpose; it can provide reassurance or validate a decision, even when the advisee is already inclined toward a particular choice. While not every request for information is a request for advice, it does not follow that advice must always be explicitly solicited or that its function is limited to cases where the advisee lacks knowledge or conviction for their action.

[354] This also applies to non-moral cases. For example, a running coach can still advise a marathon runner to hydrate regularly, even though both know that the runner will naturally do so.

addressee's choice.[355] It can clarify the importance of the action, support the agent's confidence, and reinforce their understanding of a moral norm.[356]

This suggests that the goodness of advising cannot be fully captured by its success in helping the addressee choose among alternatives. In moral contexts especially, it plays other roles: reducing moral uncertainty, strengthening moral motivation, and reaffirming values.[357] Even when the hearer is already likely to act rightly, advice may still contribute to their deliberation in a way that merits evaluation as 'good'.

In light of this, we can revise our evaluative requirement to include this broader function:

> -the accomplished piece of advice is 'good' advice if it either (a) helps the addressee choose among various lines of conduct, or (b) serves to reinforce a moral norm, reduce moral uncertainty, or affirm the addressee's moral decision.

However, this revision requires a further refinement, particularly in relation to moral advice. In some cases, advice may not just support what the addressee already intends to do, but instead guide them toward a single morally acceptable course of action, narrowing the range of permissible options.

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[355] An example of this is given by King (2022, pp. 263–264), which he calls a deliberative episode: "when we have time, we sometimes *go looking for further morally significant considerations* before reaching our verdict. This means that we reflect carefully on our circumstances, aiming to identify the aspects that matter as exhaustively as we can, and then to identify the sort of response that each thing that matters calls for from us. […] during continued deliberation we periodically engage in this sort of monitoring more actively. We ask ourselves something like, "OK, and is there anything else that I should take into account?", mentally scanning the normative landscape for further factors to consider before reaching our overall verdict about what we should do".

[356] This is in line with Wiland's (2004, p. 374) observation that "sometimes people use advice to motivate themselves to do what they already think they should do". He continues, "The weakest form of trusting advice is where you already think that you should Φ, but your confidence in this opinion is boosted by your adviser's advice to Φ. That is, sometimes we seek advice simply to confirm what we already tentatively think".

[357] How advice resolves uncertainty could be that, by being included in deliberation, it helps determine what to do, as the definition of deliberation is, according to Arpaly and Schroeder (2013, p. 23), "For a mental activity to be deliberation, it must be aimed at determining what to think or do". According to Williams (1981, pp. 104–105), "Such a deliberative process can both reveal to an agent reasons she previously did not know that she had as well as make her realise that even though she thought she had a reason to do something, she in fact does not. […] Deliberation is, at least in part, a process of *imagination* and *creation*, where new desires and beliefs can emerge".

Consider the following example: a husband has been lying to his wife about his salary and feels guilty. He asks a friend for advice on what to do. The friend replies, "It's up to you, but my advice is to tell your wife that you've been earning more than you told her". Technically, the husband still has multiple options: he can continue to lie or choose to tell the truth. But morally speaking, only one option is permissible. In this case, the advice does not aim to enable choice between equally viable options but to guide the addressee toward the morally required one.[358]

Kolnai (1961, p. 201) expresses this idea well: "deliberation is in fact an exercise of freedom in some sense aiming at the *restriction* of freedom, namely at producing not simply action but action as it reasonably ought to be, should be or must be, analogously as it were to the correct solution of a theoretical problem". In moral deliberation, the purpose is not to preserve maximal choice but to identify and act upon the right course of action. Good moral advice, in such contexts, supports that outcome.

Therefore, we need a further clarification in our evaluative requirement: in cases where moral obligations constrain the range of permissible options, the advice may still be good because it helps to guide the hearer to act morally.

> -the accomplished piece of moral advice is 'good' advice if it either (a) helps the addressee choose among various lines of conduct, or (b) when moral obligations narrow the available options, serves to reinforce a moral norm, reduce moral uncertainty, or affirm the addressee's moral decision.

5.4 A Unified Evaluative Requirement for Moral Advice

The previous subsections have shown that evaluating moral advice involves more than assessing whether it leads the hearer to act in accordance with their goals or even with moral norms. What makes moral advice 'good' depends on how it is received and integrated into the hearer's moral reasoning.

In §5.2, I argued that moral advice should be evaluated as good if (a) it is included in the hearer's deliberation, and (b) the hearer's moral understanding improves as a result. In §5.3, I examined how advice may still be good even

[358] Williams (1995a, p. 36) entertains this idea: "One example of this, which is uncontentiously related to questions raised by the internalist view, is given by advice in the 'if I were you…' mode. Taking other people's perspective on a situation, we hope to be able to point out that they have reason to do things they did not think they had reason to do, or, perhaps, less reason to do certain things than they thought they had".

when it affirms a single morally permissible action or reinforces an already held belief. These are not competing requirements but complementary ones. Together, they suggest a unified evaluative requirement: the speech act of giving moral advice is good when it contributes to the hearer's moral agency by becoming part of their reasoning and by improving or supporting their moral understanding.

Accordingly, we can now revise and establish the evaluative requirement for good moral advice as follows:

> -the accomplished piece of moral advice is 'good' advice if it (a) is included in the hearer's deliberation, *and* (b) either helps the hearer to choose among alternative courses of action, or reinforces a moral norm, reduces moral uncertainty, or affirms the hearer's moral decision.

This captures both the deliberative role and the guiding function of moral advice. It accounts for cases where advice introduces real alternatives and for cases where the advice supports assurance in moral reasoning, even when only one option is morally permissible.

6. Conclusion

Sbisà (2018) provides a valuable taxonomy for understanding speech act norms, distinguishing between constitutive rules, maxims, and objective requirements. However, as this chapter has argued, her model requires significant revision to account for the distinct normative structure of moral advice. Building on the intentionalist view developed in earlier chapters, I have restructured Sbisà's tripartite model to better reflect how speaker intention, normative standing, and moral deliberation are factored into the norms of advice-giving, especially in the context of moral advice.

First, I reclassified constitutive rules as felicity-enabling rules, arguing that they do not constitute the act-type of advice but determine whether it misfires due to a lack of normative standing. Crucially, I replaced Sbisà's conditions of 'authority' and 'competence' with 'knowledge', 'experience', and conferred standing. This allows for informal and peer-to-peer contexts of advice to count as felicitous, even when the adviser lacks formal expertise.

Below is the felicity-enabling rule for moral advice:

> -the speaker must either (a) have moral experience with respect to the field of activities to which the piece of advice is concerned, (b) have moral knowledge of the relevant features of the situation; or (c) have been conferred the role of adviser by the addressee when neither (a) nor (b) is satisfied.

Second, I reclassified and refined the maxims of advice as regulative norms that determine whether an illocutionary act of advice, though successfully performed, is defective. These maxims govern the optimal performance of advice. Importantly, I reclassified two of Sbisà's original constitutive rules – the requirement to clarify the line of conduct (i.e., giving reasons) and the recognisability condition – as maxims, since their violation does not prevent illocutionary success but renders the act suboptimal. For moral advice in particular, the maxim to provide normative reasons is central, as it preserves the role of advice as a reason-giving practice that respects the hearer's autonomy and facilitates moral deliberation.

The revised maxims for moral advice are as follows:

> -the speaker's words must be a realisation of the procedure of giving advice, indicating a line of conduct or criteria for choosing it, clarifying with normative (or justificatory) reasons given the constraints and requirements of the situation.
>
> -when not clear enough from the situation (as when the speaker is officially in charge of giving advice to the addressee) or from the content of the speaker's utterance, some additional linguistic form must be used to make the act of advising recognizable, such as the explicit performance 'I advise…' or performative gloss ('This is my advice').
>
> -the speaker must behave consistently with the piece of advice provided, for example neither hindering nor pre-empting the addressee's compliance with it.[359]

Third, I replaced Sbisà's objective requirements with evaluative requirements. I argued that moral advice is evaluated as good based on whether it enters the hearer's moral deliberation and either deepens their moral understanding or helps to affirm, reinforce, or clarify a moral decision. This allows for advice to be good even when it challenges or overrides the hearer's existing goals, and even in contexts where there is only one morally acceptable course of action.

[359] This maxim remains unchanged from original.

The evaluative requirement for moral advice is:

> -the accomplished piece of moral advice is good if it (a) is included in the hearer's deliberation, *and* (b) either helps the hearer to choose among alternative courses of action, or reinforces a moral norm, reduces moral uncertainty, or affirms the hearer's moral decision.

In the concluding chapter which follows, I will summarise the thesis and explore several implications that emerge from the preceding analysis of moral advice.

6.Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I will summarise the key findings (§1), explore the implications of the preceding analysis of moral advice and outline directions for future research (§2), and provide concluding remarks (§3).

1. Summary and Key Findings

The motivation behind this thesis was the fact that, despite its central role in guidance in everyday life, the practice of giving moral advice has been largely overlooked by contemporary moral philosophy. My contribution lies in applying speech act theory to develop a comprehensive account of the pragmatics of moral advice, focusing on its function as a directive speech act that guides the hearer.

To answer the central questions of this thesis – (1) *What determines that an utterance constitutes the speech act of moral advising?* (2) *Under what conditions is such an act felicitous?* – I formulated four sub-questions.

Chapter 2 tackled the first sub-question: (1a) *is moral advice necessarily expressed in the imperative mood? If not, how is it recognised as advice when expressed in other moods, in particular the indicative mood?* I argued for a negative answer. By proposing the *Priming View,* I suggested that a performative prefix, such as "I advise", acts as a cognitive prime, causing a priming effect. Hearing the performative prefix, the hearer – who is under the priming effect – is expected to interpret the utterance as having a particular illocutionary force. This provides an explanation of how the hearer comes to recognise force directly from the performative prefix, even when the utterance is in the indicative mood. When an advisory explicit performative is used, the hearer is prepared to engage with the following content of advice. This explains how advisory explicit performatives can guide action by directly priming the hearer to anticipate the content of the advice, even when the grammatical mood is indicative.

Chapter 3 tackled the second sub-question: (1b) *in what way does the speaker's intention determine whether an utterance constitutes the speech act of moral advising?* I argued that the speaker's illocutionary and perlocutionary intention constitutes the performance of the illocutionary act. Specifically for moral advising, I argued that the perlocutionary intention of the speaker is such that the speaker attempts to guide the hearer for the hearer's sake and also for morality's sake. I showed that advising is best analysed as belonging to the family of directive speech acts. While directives are commonly assumed to induce compliance from the hearer, I challenged this assumption and argued that advice attempts to guide action by inviting the hearer to deliberate. On the intentionalist view developed in this chapter, the potential illocutionary force of an utterance is determined by the speaker's illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions. Directive speech acts, I argued, must be primarily understood in terms of the speaker's perlocutionary intention: their attempt to influence or guide the hearer. For hearer-first directives like advice, the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide is explanatorily primary. This distinguishes advice from other kinds of directives. An illocutionary act of advising can be successfully performed as a directive even when it is not followed, and even when it fails to be a reason for action in a possible world, because what constitutes the speech act of advising is primarily the speaker's perlocutionary intention to guide, in which the speaker invites the hearer's deliberation.

This chapter also introduced and defended the uptakeability view, which contributes to speech act theory, especially intentionalism, by refining how an illocutionary act can be felicitous. While some intentionalists hold that uptake is never required, and others argue that felicity requires actual uptake, I argued that it can instead depend on whether the illocutionary act was uptakeable – that is, recognisable as the intended illocutionary act-type by a competent hearer under normal epistemic and social conditions. This view preserves the speaker's autonomy and intention, while avoiding giving the hearer, especially in contexts of discursive injustice, excessive power to render an illocutionary act infelicitous. It avoids the problems faced by both the ratification and constitution theories, and offers a more fine-grained account of communicative failure in such contexts. By grounding felicity in uptakeability, rather than in actual uptake, this view allows us to say that a speaker can perform a felicitous illocutionary act even when distorted uptake occurs.

Chapter 4 tackled the third sub-question: (2a) *how does the speaker's normative standing, together with hearer recognition, determine whether an act of advising is felicitous?* I argued that an act of advising is felicitous when the speaker has the relevant normative standing and this standing is recognised

by the hearer. My argument was supported by a complementary view of directive speech acts, developed in this chapter, where that perlocutionary intention and normative standing play distinct explanatory roles. While perlocutionary intention helps to determine the type of directive being performed, normative standing determines whether the act misfires and contributes to the act being felicitous or not. For H-directives like advice, the hearer's recognition of the speaker's standing is important, as it reveals whether the speaker actually has the standing to give advice. When advice is unsolicited, the hearer can recognise or challenge the speaker's normative standing, which shows that this standing can be recognition-dependent. This sheds light on how the hearer can recognise or challenge the speaker's standing to advise in light of contextual judgements.

Chapter 5 tackled the last sub-question: (2b) *which norms govern the felicity and evaluation of moral advice specifically, and how should these be revised or refined in light of those that govern advice more generally?* I argued that the felicity of moral advice is governed by 'felicity-enabling' rules that track the speaker's normative standing and by maxims, while its evaluation depends on whether advice supports the hearer's moral deliberation and deepens their moral understanding. Building on Sbisà's (2018) tripartite model of speech act norms, I revised her constitutive rules as felicity-enabling rules. I argued that they do not determine the illocutionary act-type of advice, but rather whether it misfires due to a lack of normative standing. I refined the specifics of these rules by replacing the terms 'authority' and 'competence' with 'knowledge' and 'experience', and by including standing conferred by the hearer. Furthermore, I revised and refined the maxims of moral advice as regulative norms that govern optimal performance, emphasising the central role of providing normative reasons. I also replaced Sbisà's objective requirements with evaluative requirements, arguing that moral advice is evaluated as 'good' when it becomes part of the hearer's moral deliberation and either deepens their moral understanding or helps to affirm, reinforce, or clarify a moral decision. These revised requirements allow for advice to be evaluated as good even when it challenges or overrides the hearer's existing goals, and even in contexts where there is only one morally permissible course of action.

This chapter also made a contribution to the analysis of abuse by refining the sincerity condition in cases involving perlocutionary intention. I argued that sincerity violations should be defined by whether or not the speaker intentionally blocks perlocutionary communicative success. This analysis allows us to differentiate between misleading utterances and genuine cases of abuse, where the speaker intends to conceal their perlocutionary intention.

When applied to moral advice, a tension emerged: if advice is understood as an H-directive aimed at guiding for the hearer's sake, then advice given for the speaker's sake is not advice at all, hence not even an abuse of advising. I resolved tension by showing that such utterances are cases of abuse involving a dishonest S-directive in the locutionary form of advice. However, advice can still be an abuse, when the speaker intends to guide the hearer for the hearer's sake but deliberately withholds relevant information that would help the hearer to deliberate properly. In such cases, the speaker intentionally frustrates perlocutionary communicative success: the hearer cannot fully recognise the guiding intention, since the speaker withholds relevant information. This analysis refines how the sincerity condition should be applied to advice, contributing to the broader understanding of how to determine a case of abuse in perlocutionary terms.

2. Implications and Future Research

2.1 On Explicit Performatives and Metaethics

The embedding of imperatives and subjunctives in explicit performative utterances raises important questions about their truth-aptness. Since imperatives ("Stop lying!") and subjunctives ("That you not lie") are typically not considered truth-apt, their embedding in explicit performatives, such as "I advise that you not lie" or "I advise you to stop lying", challenges the assumption that such utterances can be assigned a truth-value.[360] This raises a potential challenge for cognitivism, which holds that moral statements express truth-apt propositions.

If explicit performative utterances of moral advice lack truth-value, this would lend support to non-cognitivism, which holds that moral sentences express emotions, desires, plans, attitudes, or prescriptions. On this view, advisory explicit performatives, such as "I advise you to…", aims to invite deliberation, making them functionally similar to expressions of attitudes, such as approval, disapproval, or encouragement.

[360] According to Wiland, "Moral cognitivists and noncognitivists alike can agree that there is such a thing as sound advice, even if they disagree about whether there are any moral truths about which we can testify" (2021, p. 126).

Cognitivists, who take moral statements to be truth-apt, would need a way to explain how explicit performative utterances retain their propositional content. Indirect theories (Bach and Harnish, 1979) provide one possible solution by arguing that explicit performatives, while being statements, indirectly convey directives. The truth-value, on this view, is assigned to the underlying proposition, preserving compatibility with cognitivism.

Where does this leave the Priming View? The Priming View posits that advisory explicit performatives function by priming the hearer to expect guidance. Whether this view aligns with cognitivism or non-cognitivism depends on how it is further developed. If advisory explicit performatives function as pragmatic cues for guidance, then the Priming View would align better with non-cognitivism. However, if the Priming View is understood as a cognitive mechanism that shapes how the hearer interprets the speech act without negating its propositional content, then it could be made compatible with cognitivism. For instance, "I advise you that lying is wrong" could both prime the hearer and convey the truth-apt proposition, "Lying is wrong". If so, future research could explore whether and how the Priming View can be supplemented with an account of propositional content. This could involve examining whether advisory explicit performatives can contain an implicit assertion that preserves truth-value, even as they function pragmatically to guide deliberation.

2.2 Subjunctive Mood in Moral Language

One of the key insights of this thesis is that moral advice is not primarily about prescribing actions but rather about guiding action, inviting deliberation and respecting the hearer's autonomy. While much of the literature on speech acts and moral language has focused on imperatives and declaratives, the role of the subjunctive mood in moral language remains underexplored.[361] Yet, as observed in Chapter 2, the subjunctive mood can be embedded in explicit performatives, and it seems to allow that the speaker and the hearer both be the target of the utterance.

Unlike imperatives, which often issue directives to a second-person subject, subjunctives allow for collective moral guidance. For instance, while an explicit performative with an embedded imperative, such as "I advise you to

[361] Love (2012) and Klenk (2021) explore a possibility of emphasising the subjunctive mood in ethics. Much attention has been paid to subjunctive conditionals, not the sentence mood itself. For subjunctive conditionals, see Levi (1977), Weatherson (2001), and Williamson (1988).

be more kind", is a directive towards a hearer (or a group of hearers that excludes the speaker), an explicit performative with an embedded subjunctive, such as "I advise that we be more kind", includes the speaker in the target audience of the advice.[362] This subtle difference suggests that mood choice in moral speech acts affects the scope of the target audience of moral advice.

If the target audience of the advice can include the speaker, this raises interesting questions about the normative standing to advise, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Normative standing in advisory speech acts presupposes a distinction between adviser and advisee, often grounding the standing to advise in the adviser's knowledge or experience. However, the possibility of group-directed advice including the adviser as one of the advisees – especially when expressed in the subjunctive – complicates this picture. Can one have the standing to advise oneself in the same way one advises others? Future research could further analyse the relationship between the subjunctive mood and the collective target of the advice. The subjunctive mood, by broadening the possible audience to include the speaker, can suggest that moral advice may sometimes function as establishing a shared moral commitment.

2.3 Advice and the Internalism/Externalism Debate

The discussions about moral advice may have some implications for the internalism/externalism debate, regarding reasons for action.[363] Williams's (1995a, p. 35) internalism about reasons states that an agent "has a reason to Φ only if he could reach the conclusion to Φ by a sound deliberative route from the motivations he already has". If we accept reasons internalism, then when A receives moral advice to Φ, this advice must be part of A's sound deliberative route in order for it to be followed. Wiland (2021, p. 128) interprets Williams in this way: "suppose Bernard Williams is correct: the advice to V is apt only if the advisee has something in his motivational set that V-ing serves".[364]

[362] Note that, although possible, it sounds less natural to utter, "I advise us to be more kind" with an embedded imperative.

[363] Note that these discussions are about normative (justifying) reasons, not about explanatory (motivating) reasons.

[364] Another way of putting this thought is to say that "your reasons just are those considerations a good adviser would cite in advising you" (Wiland, 2021, p. 173). This thought is repeated by Manne (2014, p. 91): "reasons are the kinds of considerations that would ideally be apt to offer to another person when we are reasoning with her, or (similarly) offering her collaborative advice or friendly suggestions, about what she ought to do".

However, Wiland argues that while Williams's internalism may be correct, "accepting Williams's internalism about reasons does not force us to conceive of advice as aptly or ideally based upon ways to achieve the ends the advisee already has. It might be true that every reason for action is related to some subjective motivation of the agent whose reason it is, and yet apt advice is not necessarily based upon only the existing reasons of the advisee" (ibid., p. 129). In other words, even if reasons internalism holds, it does not mean that advice must always align with the agent's pre-existing subjective motivational set.

Wiland further notes that advice can also *change* the agent's subjective motivational set. He argues that an advisee may develop new motivations by receiving advice, influenced by interpersonal pressures, respect, or the fear of letting the adviser down.[365] As he puts it, "Sound advice, of course, can lead you to be motivated to do things that you *already* have reason to do. Indeed, this is the spirit in which advice is usually best given and received. But advice also can *change* what you have reason to do, this in multiple ways" (ibid., p. 171). If this is correct, then advice can generate *new* reasons by reshaping what the agent is motivated to pursue.

An interesting implication of this discussion is that it suggests a new way of understanding reasons internalism: one that remains loyal to Williams's emphasis on the subjective motivational set while recognising that motivations can change due to new advice. This, however, raises a further question: Should these newly introduced reasons be viewed as *external reasons* if the advisee's motivational set does not change, or are they what Williams (1995a, p. 40) calls 'optimistic internal reasons'? As he puts it, "I suspect what are taken for external reason statements are often, in fact, optimistic internal reason statements: we launch them and hope that somewhere in the agent is some motivation that by some deliberative route might issue in the action we seek" (ibid.).[366] Further research may be needed to examine whether these new reasons should indeed be classified as external or whether they are still of

[365] According to Wiland (2021, pp. 175–176), "Thus when an adviser advises an advisee to V, the advisee often acquires new reasons to V, reasons he lacked before: a reason to avoid a new source of regret, and a second reason to avoid the disapproval or disappointment of the adviser and of others who know that he was so advised. A wise adviser knows she may be unintentionally doing this too, so she sometimes refrains from issuing advice at all. This all means that reasons for action are not captured perfectly by an ideal adviser's advice. For even sound advice can change your practical reasons".

[366] A similar idea is repeated by Sliwa (2025, p. 10): "Successful uptake of a communicative act that deploys a framing device does not merely consist in accepting a proposition but in actually acquiring (or activating) the relevant set of cognitive and affective dispositions: in structuring one's thinking about the situation in a particular way".

internal reasons, ones that may not be immediately accessible to the agent but can emerge.[367]

3. Concluding Remarks

Moral advice guides action by inviting the advisee to deliberate, allowing them to arrive at their own conclusion within the constraints imposed by morality itself. As the proverb goes, you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink. Moral advice, likewise, guides the hearer, inviting them to consider φ-ing, and leaves them free to choose.

[367] Williams (1981, p. 104) indeed says, "As a result of such processes an agent can come to see that he has reason to do something which he did not see he had reason to do at all. In this way, the deliberative process can add new actions for which there are internal reasons, just as it can also add new internal reasons for given actions. […]. Reflection may lead the agent to see that some belief is false, and hence to realise that he has in fact no reason to do something he thought he had reason to do".

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How to Guide with Words

This thesis examines moral advice as a distinctive type of speech act that guides deliberation. I argue that it is best understood as a hearer-first directive: it aims to guide the hearer for their sake and for morality's sake, while respecting their autonomy. Drawing on speech act theory, I develop the priming view to explain how explicit performatives function in advisory contexts. I distinguish advising from commanding, requesting, and giving testimony, and clarify how the speaker's illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions together determine the type of the speech act performed. I also revise the felicity conditions of advice, showing that the speaker's normative standing can be conferred by the hearer and that uptake is not always required. Finally, I offer a revised account of the norms that govern moral advice, including felicity-enabling rules, maxims, and a unified evaluative requirement. This thesis advances debates in the philosophy of language and the norms of moral discourse, informing practical contexts in which advice is given, including cases of discursive injustice and situations where it is unsolicited.

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