*Propositions, Instructions, and Performatives**

1.0 A **proposition** expresses *what is*—e.g., that it is raining, that the door is closed, that 2+2 = 4. Therefore:

1.1 A proposition is always either *true* or *false*.

1.2 A proposition can have different degrees of *probability* with respect to our knowledge.

1.3. A proposition always refers to a so-called *state of affairs*, i.e., it expresses how things stand in relation to one another, and thus what is. (For this reason, a proposition can be true or false: true, if things stand in relation to one another as it says they do; false, if they stand in some other relation.)

2.0 An **instruction**, by contrast, expresses, not what is, but *what one should do*. Therefore:

2.1 An instruction is *neither* true *nor* false. (It can be correct, right, moral, to the point, and so on; but it can never be true, any more than it can ever be false.)

2.2 An instruction *cannot* be said to be more or less probable. (Naturally, we can ask questions *about* an instruction, and the answers to them will be either true or false and more or less probable. But these answers are not themselves instructions, but rather propositions about an instruction, and, as such, capable of being true or false and more or less probable. The instruction itself, however, is never true, never false, and never probable.)

2.3 An instruction does not mean what is but *what should be.* (It cannot say what is because the state of affairs with which it is concerned first has to be actualized by the action for which it calls.)

3.0 A **performative** *effects* what it means.

Performatives hardly seem likely to be confused with either propositions or instructions. But clear as the difference between propositions and instructions may also seem, it is commonly missed or misunderstood. One reason for this is that propositions *about* instructions, although not themselves instructions, are

mistaken for such. In reality, however, propositions about instructions are a very special kind of propositions, namely, so-called *practical propositions*. Because a practical proposition also refers to an action, it is easily confused with the corresponding instruction.

Nevertheless, propositions and instructions are two different kinds of things, and their difference is of great significance for the theory of authority. Because there are two kinds of relevant ideal constructs that could comprise the domain of an authority, there are also two kinds of authority: the one exercised with the help of propositions, the other with the help of instructions. The first may be called "knowledge-authority," or, better, *epistemic authority*," the second, "superior-authority," or *deontic authority*." The first kind of authority is the authority of one who knows, the second kind, the authority of a superior.

It should be clear that one and the same person can hold both kinds of authority with respect to the same subject(s) and in the same domain—or, actually, in two domains that are closely connected because, in this case, the domain of epistemic authority comprises the practical propositions corresponding to the instructions comprised by the domain of deontic authority. Indeed, one could say that, in this case, the practical propositions that correspond to the instructions constitute their foundation. Therefore, deontic and epistemic authority do not exclude one another.

On the other hand, the two kinds of authority are mutually independent, in that deontic authority in a domain and epistemic authority in the corresponding domain do not necessarily go together, however desirable it may be that they do so. A superior is a superior, and thus has deontic authority simply because she or he is a superior, not because she or he knows better.

*According to Bochenski

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One point at which I might need to take issue with this is 1.3. Judging from Bochenski's examples in 1.0, I can only suppose that 2+2 = 4 somehow refers to what he later calls "a state of affairs." In that event, he would appear to allow for necessary as well as contingent states of affairs, and I would have no substantial quarrel with him, provided he allowed for *unconditionally* as well as conditionally necessary (or possible) states of affairs such as mathematical propositions, being only conditionally necessary, are commonly understood to refer to. But if "states of affairs," or "how things stand in relation to one another," is taken in its usual meaning as referring only to certain contingent facts, as distinct from anything necessary, then it would follow from Bochenski's formulation either that there cannot be such a thing as a metaphysical proposition or that a metaphysical proposition cannot express what *necessarily* is, but, being logically like a scientific proposition, can express only what *contingently* is. Therefore, I might need to reformulate 1.3 to read in some such way as this: "A proposition always refers *either* to a so-called state of affairs, and thus to what contingently is, or to the strictly necessary conditions of the possibility of any state of affairs, and thus to what *necessarily* is."

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