

Could it be that religious authority includes a performative as well as an executive and a nonexecutive (i.e., epistemic/exemplary) aspect?

If it does, I should suppose that its performative and executive aspects are related quite closely—perhaps being themselves but aspects of an aspect, i.e., the non-nonexecutive aspect, as distinct from the other nonexecutive aspect. Thus, when a priest or duly ordained minister pronounces—publicly or privately—the absolution of sins, she or he is exercising performative authority, whereas, when she or he says, "Be reconciled to God!" or "The body (or blood) of Christ given for you," she or he is exercising executive authority.

Certainly, some exercises of performative authority are included among the rights and responsibilities belonging to a particular office—just as the absolution of sins is one of the rights and responsibilities of the priestly or ministerial office. So, in this case, at least, the only way to exercise one of the rights and responsibilities belonging to a certain executive authority is to exercise performative authority.

In any event, religious authority is not just a species of nonexecutive (i.e., epistemic/exemplary) authority. It is also a species of executive (or, perhaps, executive-performative) authority.

In all of this, I am naturally assuming the meanings given to the operative terms, "executive," "nonexecutive," and "performative" by Bochenski.

15 September 1999