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A REMARK ABOUT THE ANALYSIS OF THE ILLOCUTIONARY ACT OF ASSERTION*

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ABSTRACT. A Remark about the Analysis of the Illocutionary Act of Assertion. The starting point of this article is the Searleian analysis of the illocutionary act of assertion. I try to sketch an alternative interpretation of the illocutionary act of assertion based on the arguments brought forward by John R. Searle, Paul Grice, Rom Harré, Robert Brandom. This possible interpretation might help us raise some questions about the Searleian interpretation.

Keywords: *assertion, meaning, argumentation, convincing, John R. Searle, Paul Grice, Rom Harré, Robert Brandom*

In the 3rd chapter of his book *Speech Acts* John Searle focuses on the structure of the illocutionary acts. First he analyzes the speech act of promising, then he turns his attention to other speech acts, to that of the speech act of assertion too. In this paper I focus on the speech act of assertion. I will reflect on Searle's remarks about the assertion, and I will try to suggest that if we were to strive for consistency, we wouldn't accept his remarks without any hesitation. In my analysis I will rely on the arguments made by Paul Grice, Robert Brandom and Rom Harré. As a result of this undertaking I hope that I will raise some questions that should be considered when reflecting on the speech act of assertion.

The starting point of my paper are the remarks made by Searle, those which for clarity's sake, I will quote here in their entirety:

> "[Let us consider a]ny proposition *p*.
> 1. *S* has evidence (reasons, etc.) for the truth of *p*.

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2. It is not obvious to both *S* and *H* that *H* knows (does not need to be reminded of, etc.) *p*.

S believes *p*.

[The illocutionary act of asserting c]ounts as an undertaking to the effect that *p* represents an actual state of affairs.

Unlike *argue* these do not seem to be essentially tied to attempting to convince. Thus 'I am simply stating that *p* and not attempting to convince you' is acceptable, but 'I am arguing that *p* and not attempting to convince you' sounds inconsistent."[1]

Let us now consider a particular statement: "the grass is green", and see how Searle's analysis deals with it:

1. Consider the following statement: "the grass is green".
2. The speaker has evidence supporting the fact (that it is true) that the grass is green.
3. Neither for the speaker, nor for the listener it is obvious, that the listener knows that the grass is green.
4. The speaker thinks that the grass is green.
5. By uttering the statement "the grass is green" the speaker guarantees that it is a fact, that the grass is green.

Searle claims that in the case of the speaker uttering the statement "the grass is green", the speaker's intention to convince the listener is not part of the speech act itself. It is acceptable, according to him, if the speaker says "I merely assert the fact that the grass is green, but I don't want to persuade you of it", however it is unacceptable if he says "I argue in favor of the fact that the grass is green, but I don't want to persuade you of it". According to Searle the latter case is inconsistent. This means that the two assertions can't be both true at the same time: on the one hand if it is true that I argue in favor of the fact that the grass is green, it is false that I don't want to persuade you (meaning: I want to persuade you of the fact that the grass is green); on the other hand if it is true that I don't want to persuade you that the grass is green, it is false that I argue in favor of that (that is: I don't argue in favor of the fact that the grass is green, "I merely assert that…").

Searle's analysis raises several questions: 1. what is or what can be the speaker's intention when he utters the statement "the grass is green", and he doesn't want to convince the listener of his utterance's truth?; 2. does the fact that the speaker doesn't want to convince the listener of the truth of his statement mean that the

[1] John R. Searle, *Speech Acts*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 66.

speaker can be lacking (meaning: it is not always present) the intention to convince the listener, or does it mean that we generally don't think that the illocutionary act of asserting supposes the presence of the intention of convincing?

Let us consider the illocutionary acts. Searle claims that unlike the act of referring and that of predicating the illocutionary acts are complete speech acts. With the act of referring we just mention or name an object, and thus signal to the hearer that we will say something about that particular object (for example the grass), with the help of the act of predicating, we say something about the object that we have previously named, we attach an attribute to it (that it is green, for example). In terms of traditional logic: the act of referring marks the logical subject of the statement, and the act of predicating attaches the logical predicate to the logical subject of the statement. Searle claims that we have to distinguish the acts of referring and that of predicating from the complete speech acts, which according to him are asserting, inquiring, commanding, etc.[2] As a result of this differentiation we will observe that the same act of referring and predicating can appear as the component of different speech acts. As an example, in case of

> The grass is green.
> Is the grass green?
> I wish the grass was green!

It is the same reference and predicate that appears in these different utterances, but in case of the first utterance we speak of an assertion, in case of the second one about a question, in the third case about the formulation of a wish, etc. These latter ones are what we call illocutionary acts. It is peculiar of the illocutionary acts that the speaker "is characteristically saying something and not merely mouthing words."[3] But "[w]hat is the difference between just uttering sounds or making marks and performing an illocutionary act? One difference is that the sounds or marks one makes in the performance of an illocutionary act are characteristically said to have meaning, and a second related difference is that one is characteristically said to mean something by the utterance of those sounds or marks."[4]

In marking the first difference, the one between the sounds that were merely uttered and the illocutionary acts, the whole problem of meaning arises, while in marking the second difference the problem of meaning and intention comes to the front. We shall focus on both of these problems. Following Searle's inquiry we

[2] *Ibid*., p. 23.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] *Ibid*., p. 42.

will try to shed some light on both the issue of meaning, and that of meaning and intention with the help of Paul Grice.

I will borrow the definition of meaning from Grice himself, in the form that he formulated it in an article written after his famous *Meaning*. According to this definition by uttering a certain sentence a speaker expresses some kind of meaning if "[f]or some audience A, U intended his utterance of x to produce in A some effect (response) E, by means of A's recognition of that intention."[5] Reflecting upon our example: the speaker expresses a certain meaning, if by uttering the sentence "the grass is green" he produces a certain reaction in the hearer, by means of the hearer's recognition of the speaker's intention to produce a certain reaction in the hearer. In *Meaning* Grice defined this response in the fact that the hearer came to believe something. Put it simple: the speaker by uttering the sentence "the grass is green" wants the hearer to come to believe that the grass is green. Grice later improved on his initial view, because he considered it to be too strong. As a result of the improvement he later defined the intended effect in case of an assertion (indicative-type utterance) not in making the hearer believe what the sentence stated (in our case that the grass is green), but in the hearer believing that the speaker believes what he says, that is that the grass is green.[6]

Although there is a difference between the former and the latter conception of Grice, I don't think that the improved version changes the way we tackle the problem, for in both the first and the second case the speaker's intention is to produce a certain belief in the hearer: in the first case that things are as the assertion states they are, in the second case that the speaker believes that things are as the assertion states they are.

Without discussing the Searleian critique of Grice's conception of meaning in great detail, I will list them.[7] According to Searle Grice made two mistakes in regards with meaning. First: he didn't clarify the relation between meaning and convention, that is he didn't explain why certain sentences mean what they mean, and thus didn't explain the reason why we use specific utterances to produce certain speech acts. Second (and this is more important from this paper's point of view): Grice doesn't draw a clear line between the illocutionary and the perlocutionary acts. (Illocutionary acts are acts "done in uttering what one does"[8] (in case of the

[5] Herbert Paul Grice, "Utterer's Meaning, Sentence-Meaning and Word-Meaning", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 122.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 123.

[7] For a detailed analysis see P. Alpár Gergely, "Grice jelentéselméletének searle-i kritikája", in *Erdélyi Múzeum*, LXXVII., 4 (2015), pp. 148–155.

[8] *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Simon Blackburn, Oxford University Press, 1996, entry: Illocutionary act.

assertion "the grass is green" the act of asserting), and perlocutionary acts are acts "performed by speech only if certain effects are generated"[9] (the fact that the speaker makes the hearer believe that the grass is green, or that he makes the hearer believe that he, the speaker, believes that the grass is green).

In his *Utterer's Meaning and Intentions*[10] Grice reflects on Searle's criticism. Grice doesn't think that the Searleian criticism is valid. He firmly believes that Searle's counterexamples are not really counterexamples because Searle doesn't really want to improve on his theory, Searle instead wants to prove his own point.

Grice gladly accepts Searle's proposition according to which in normal circumstances we recognize the speaker's intentions based on the conventional meaning of sentences. That is, the reason that we know that the speaker intended to say that the grass is green, is that he uttered the sentence "the grass is green". But there wouldn't be a problem if the speaker (be him an American soldier in an Italian prison camp who intends to make his guards believe that, by uttering the sentence "the grass is green", he means he is a German officer) intended to express a different meaning than that of the conventional meaning of his utterance. This would be possible if the speaker (the American soldier) thought that his audience (the Italians) will reason in a certain way, and as a result of their reasoning they will reach the conclusion that the speaker expressed the meaning that he wanted to express: by uttering the sentence "the grass is green" the Italians (who don't speak German) will conclude that the American soldier wanted to express that he is a German officer. Thus the question arises: in the second case did the speaker by uttering the sentence "the grass is green" conventionally express that he is a German soldier? Not at all. He conventionally expressed that the grass is green, moreover, says Grice, the American soldier wouldn't have wanted the Italians to believe that he is a German officer by recognizing his intention. He can't make his intention clear, because that would reveal his identity. But he could have intended the Italians to reason in a certain way, and according to Grice this is precisely what the American soldier intended: for the guards to reach the conclusion (as a result of their reasoning) that he is a German officer.

In this respect we can consider that we have clarified the relation of speaker intention and convention. In specific situations the speaker uses certain utterances (e.g. "the grass is green"), because he intends to express the meaning that that specific utterance conventionally expresses (the grass is green). The second example is a bit more complicated, because the stress falls not so much on the sentence's conventional meaning, but on the meaning of the speaker's intention. Let us consider

[9] *Ibid*., entry: Perlocutionary act.

[10] Herbert Paul Grice, "Utterer's Meaning and Intentions", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 86–116.

Grice's third example for greater clarity. Grice recounts that once he overheard his friend's daughter's French lesson, and observed that the girl mistakenly believed that the meaning of an utterance was different than it really was: considering our example: she mistakenly believed that the meaning of the sentence "the grass is green" was "help yourself to some cake". Because Grice knew that the girl mistakenly believed that the meaning of the sentence was different than it really was, in an appropriate situation he used the sentence "the grass is green" to offer the girl some cake. The girl helped herself to some cake, and Grice correctly concluded that although the conventional meaning of the sentence was different than the one the girl thought it was, by uttering that specific sentence Grice successfully managed to offer the girls some cake. This instance is the perfect example that in some cases (if the circumstances are appropriate) the meaning of a sentence can be reduced to the speaker's intention. This is the type of meaning that Grice calls utterer's meaning.

Let us now turn to Searle's second critical remark. According to this whenever a hearer understands a meaning, Grice always presupposes a perlocutionary act, however, this is not always the case. We still focus our attention on the assertion. And here we will not say anything else, but repeat Grice's improved standpoint. In *Meaning* Grice defined the perlocutionary act produced by the utterance of a sentence (the statement's effect on the hearer) in the hearer's belief that the world is as the speaker described it. And according to the improved version the perlocutionary act manifests itself in the fact that the hearer believes that the speaker believes what the statement states. Earlier I have said that from the viewpoint of this paper there is no major difference between Grice's two formulations. Now I will specify my point: there is no major difference from the standpoint of the utterer's intention, for in both cases the utterer's intention is to have the hearer come to believe a certain fact.

A good explanation of his theory of meaning is given by Grice himself in his *Meaning Revisited*. In the first part of this article Grice presents the theory that lies in the background of his theory of meaning. According to Grice the core of the problem of meaning can be best described in the tripartite relation of thought, language and reality. There is a correspondence between thought and reality, which he calls the psychophysical correspondence. The psychophysical correspondence explains "the ways in which human beings and other sentient creatures get around and stay alive, as well as perhaps doing more ambitious things than that."[11] This quasi-theory acts as an explanatory bridge between the physical environment of humans and their behavior. The theory's central concepts are believing and wanting. Grice takes it as self-evident, thus he doesn't even explain further, that human beings want things,

[11] Herbert Paul Grice, "Meaning Revisited", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 284.

they have goals. It is also self-evident for him, that if nothing stands in our way in reaching our goals, we will try and reach them. For this, though, it is necessary for us to have such beliefs that correspond to the facts in the world. Because if our beliefs didn't correspond to the facts of the world, certain situations might arise in which our ambition to reach a certain goal and the action performed to reach that goal wouldn't be beneficial for us. And this cannot be the case. This cannot be the case because Grice supposes that as humans we are rational beings. And rational beings not only have goals, but they have goals that they think are advantageous for themselves. This line of thought explains why Grice thinks that the correspondence between thought and reality is desirable, and also thinks that it is important for humans to think that this kind of correspondence is desirable. Grice refuses to call this conception a theory; he also didn't think that by presenting his ideas he outlined several theories. According to him these ideas stem in folk psychology, they are in fact explanatory conceptions, and their sole advantage is that they simply work. This is Grice's explanation of the relation between thought and reality in a nutshell.

When it comes to the relation between thought and language Grice has a similar intuitive explanation. It is advantageous from the standpoint of a creature's survival and success for that creature to share its thoughts and conceptions with other creatures. This is where language plays its part. Language is the tool that enables creatures to share their experiences with one another, and thus it is useful for the parties to describe the world as it is. Here we also have to suppose a certain kind of correspondence between psychological states (e.g. beliefs) and utterances. If this correspondence holds, it enables the speaker/utterer to share his own psychological state with the hearer. Thus communication can be best described by the following threefold relation: a certain psychological state is followed by an utterance, and on the hearer's part this utterance is also followed by a certain psychological state. Successful communication is defined by two things: 1. that the utterer's and the hearer's psychological states are of the same type, and 2. that the shared states correspond to the facts of the world. There is a psycholinguistic correspondence between psychological states and utterances, and this correspondence is the one describing the relation between thought and language.

Grice now focuses on the link between language and reality. He shows that the two relate to one another in an indirect way, through thought. The question arises, of course: is there a direct link between language and reality? Grice's answer is a positive one, and he invokes the correspondence theory of truth as an explanation. Sentences, that is language, describes the world. A sentence is said to be true when it describes things in the world as they are. Thus the sentence "the grass is green" is true if the grass is green. But Grice doesn't stop here; he continues

with his explanation. We not only describe the world with sentences, we also describe our psychological states with them. This is in fact another way of saying that our beliefs are and our knowledge is propositional. The correspondence between our psychological states and the world manifests itself in the utterance of true sentences. And whenever we speak of sentences that describe the world and that are true, we also make reference to beliefs and psychological states. So to sum up what we have said thus far: whenever we deal with two of the connections of the threefold relation of thought, reality and language, we cannot do so without referring to the third element and connection.

Grice's two conceptions that are rooted in common sense are a good starting point in explaining his views on meaning. One of the pillars of Grice's view on meaning is that we, humans have goals (are goal-oriented), and in order to reach our goals we are ready to act. The other pillar of his view is that we are always ready to share our experiences of the world with one another, and our motivation in sharing our experiences of the world is also the fact that we have goals. The reason we share our experiences of the world with one another is that we want to change the state of the world, and we can only succeed in doing so if we describe the world according to reality. Language is the tool with the help of which we describe the world. There are two ideas that are present in Grice's conception: a teleological idea (humans are goal-oriented creatures), and an idea of double correspondence: the correspondence between thought and reality, and the correspondence between reality and language.

Both Grice and Searle accept the idea of the double correspondence. According to Searle the correspondence theory is the result of external realism, which he accepts. Accepting the position of external realism means that he accepts the following statement: there is an external world, and this external world is mind-independent. Following the correspondence theory we can state that it is through language that we access this objective external world. There are two types of sentences: sentences that describe the world as it is are true sentences, and sentences that don't describe the world as it is are called false sentences. In the history of thought true and false sentences were not considered equal; true sentences always played a special part. True sentences are special because they are the ones that describe reality. And if we now consider Grice's teleological idea, we know that in order for us to change the state of the world, we must know what is the world's current state.

In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle claims that "[b]y nature, all men long to know."[12] When doing sciences we follow our nature; we establish cause and effect relations, apply certain methods in our questioning and research, and as a result of all this we

[12] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Penguin Books, 1998, 980a.

formulate certain statements about the world. The statements of sciences are true statements, that is they are statements that describe the world as it is. The goal of science is to describe the facts in the world; if we manage to do this we say that we know how the world is.

Let us now give a quasi-definition of sciences, that is relevant from the point of view of this paper. Scientific knowledge and thus sciences are a set of well-ordered statements, or propositions that most of the time reveal cause and effect relations. A prime example of the definition is the classic syllogism of traditional logic: "Every man is mortal", "Socrates is a man", "Socrates is mortal". Every statement is a true proposition, and the propositions are presented in a certain order. Were we to rearrange the order of these propositions, the syllogism wouldn't be valid any more: "Socrates is mortal", "Socrates is a man", "Every man is mortal". In this latter example the third statement is not a valid conclusion of the two premises. We would also come up with the same result were we to utter these statements at different times during the course of a day, say in four-hour intervals. The first syllogism is a valid syllogism. This means that the conclusion follows from the premises because our inference (as a process) was correct, and the premises true. But the syllogism is not only valid, it is also convincing or persuasive. Or is the syllogism persuasive because it is valid? Logicians have quite a simple answer to this question. According to them the syllogism is valid because the relations between the extensions of terms make it valid, and by this they mean that the connection of the premises accepted as facts guarantees the truth of the conclusion.

Two questions arise at this point: 1. are the facts themselves persuasive?, and 2. do the remarks made about the syllogism of our example also apply to the types of sentences like "the grass is green"? The answers to these questions are interconnected. On the one hand we can claim that the grass is green and we can verify the truth of our claim by looking at it (perception). If the grass is indeed green we take it as a fact that it is green.[13] And if we want our explanatory chain to be finite, we have to agree on accepting certain claims as claims whose truth are beyond any doubt, whose truth we will not question. By doing so we take these claims to be convincing or persuasive. This is basically the idea that lays in the background of the correspondence theory of truth.

At this point I will cite two conceptions. The first one was elaborated by Rom Harré.[14] At one point in the process of examining the phenomena of persuasion and

[13] Bertrand Russell, "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description", in Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 25–32.

[14] Rom Harré, "Meggyőzés és manipulálás" in *Nyelv – kommunikáció – cselekvés*, ed. Pléh Csaba–Síklaki István–Terestyéni Tamás, Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2001, pp. 627–641.

manipulation Harré asks the question which focuses on the way scientific texts persuade us. Traditionally it has been thought that there is a difference between correct thinking (dialectic) and successful thinking (rhetoric). In the case of dialectic the persuasive force lies in the form, while in the second case the persuasive force lies in the way that the elements of the text are connected. In his essay Harré argues that this image is not authentic any more. He claims that in order for us to get a more realistic picture of how scientific texts are produced, and if we also want to expose the persuasiveness of this type of texts, we first have to give up two ideas that we have previously adopted. The first of these received ideas is that there is a clearly delimited realm of facts that we call the natural world; the second accepted idea is that a new theory can be developed purely by setting the facts in a logical order. Harré argues that the persuasive power of scientific texts is the result of the intertwining of analogies. In the beginning we compare something unknown to something that we already know: the similarities are already assumed, while imagination is the one filling the gaps in explaining the differences. But there is also another method that guarantees the success and persuasive power of scientific texts: it is often the case that researchers instead of having a preliminary question at the beginning of their research project, first come up with an answer, and then invent a question which apparently is answered by their findings. So the process is in fact inverted; scientists work out an answer to a non-existent question, then invent a question that suits their answer.

The second conception that I cite here is the one Robert Brandom elaborated in his article, *Asserting*. Brandom's question is a simple one: "[w]hat is it that we are doing when we assert, claim, or declare something?"[15] The classical theory of proposition that is rooted in Gottlob Frege's *Begriffsschrift*[16] discusses this issue using the terminology of semantics. According to this theory propositions are said to be either true or false, and the theory presupposes that in the case of every proposition we can name those truth conditions that make the propositions true or false. Within this framework the fact that we regard the conclusion of a syllogism to be true simply means that the set of the conclusion's truth conditions is a subset of the set of the premises' truth conditions. Brandom however doesn't ground his conception on this framework, but rather, like John Dewey and Ludwig Wittgenstein, sees inference (the process itself and the result of it, the utterance of an assertion, namely the conclusion) as social practice. And from this point of view the focus is not on the correspondence of an assertion (proposition) with reality any more, but

[15] Robert Brandom, "Asserting" in *Nous*, Vol. 17., No. 4., p. 637.

[16] Gottlob Frege, "Begriffsschrift", in Jean van Heijenoort, *From Frege to Gödel*, Harvard University Press, 1967, pp. 1–82.

on the assertion being in agreement with a certain community's social practice. Thus the problem of assertion as a speech act arises in a socially constructed structure, that is defined by responsibility and authority. In this context asserting a certain statement is identical with one's commitment to the truth of a particular assertion: in case of asserting the statement "the grass is green" we in fact commit ourselves to the truth of the sentence, that is to the fact that the grass is green.

The notion of commitment is of utmost importance. Committing ourselves to the truth of a statement supposes that whenever a situation occurs, in which the truth of that particular statement is questioned, we will be ready to defend its truth, and guarantee it. However in such a case we don't just defend the truth of our statement, but we also defend our right to assert that statement, we undertake justificatory responsibility for it. And to undertake justificatory responsibility for asserting a statement in the context of asserting as a social practice means to authorize others to assert further statements using the initial assertion as the point of departure, or to put it in logical terms: authorizing others to draw a conclusion based on our initial assertion as a premise.

Let us now return to our example: the sentence "the grass is green". Searle claims that it is acceptable for a speaker to say that he merely states something and doesn't want to convince the hearer, but it is unacceptable for the speaker to argue that something is such-and-such, and claim that he doesn't want to convince the hearer. It is clear that Searle is right in the second case, for the act of arguing that such-and-such is the case presupposes the speaker's intention to convince the hearer. If this wasn't the case, we wouldn't say that the speaker argues that something is such-and-such. However the first case is not that self-evident.

Consider the things Searle would say about a certain proposition *p* (be this in our case the sentence "the grass is green"). He affirms that the speaker has evidence that proves that the grass is green. These are probably assertions (cause and effect type explanations) based on which the speaker believes that the grass is green. The speaker also believes that (most probably based on the aforementioned assertions taken as proofs) the grass is green. Add to this the fact that neither for the speaker, nor for the hearer it is obvious that the hearer knows the grass is green, plus the fact that the speaker guarantees (meaning that in a controversial situation he undertakes justificatory responsibility and will be ready to defend the truth of his assertion) that the grass is green. Taken all these considerations into account I don't think Searle's argument is solid enough when he claims that in a case like this the speaker wouldn't want to convince the hearer that the grass is green. I see two options here. The first one: the speaker doesn't want to convince the hearer of the truth of his assertion, because the hearer never even doubted that the grass was

green; the speaker believes that the hearer believes that the grass is green, and the hearer believed the speaker when he stated that the grass was green. The second option is closely related to the first one: the reason the speaker doesn't want to convince the hearer of the truth of his assertion (that the grass is green) is that the hearer knows the rules of the speech act of assertion. He knows (even if he can't explicitly formulate the rules) that in case he questioned the truth of the speaker's assertion, the speaker would be ready to defend his assertion, that is he would be ready to argue that the grass is green by enumerating all those other assertions (premises) based on which he reached the conclusion (the assertion that he has just uttered) that the grass is green. All those other assertions that stand at the base of the so-called conclusion support the conclusion, are part of the argument that concludes that the grass is green.

Rom Harré argued that facts on their own are not convincing. What convinces us is our speech about facts, and the way we speak about them. Reasoning, or argument is a string of carefully ordered assertions, whose conclusion is also an assertion. The goal of an argument is to prove a point, or to convince the hearer of the truth of the argument's conclusion, to produce a certain belief in the hearer.

Robert Brandom showed us that we take justificatory responsibility for our assertions. This means, that in a questionable situation we as speakers are ready to defend our statement. We are ready to argue in favor of our assertion's truth, and thus produce a certain belief in the speaker, at least the belief that we believe what we say.

At the beginning of this paper I have asked the following question: what is the intention of a speaker, who utters an assertion, and doesn't want to convince the hearer? In this paper I argued that if we accept Paul Grice's teleological conception (humans are goal-oriented beings), the correspondence theory of truth (there is a certain relation of correspondence between thought, world and language), and also accept Rom Harré's and Robert Brandom's conceptions, we cannot resign ourselves to the idea that a speaker simply utters an assertion without the intention to convince (produce a certain belief in) the hearer of its truth, or to produce a certain a belief in the hearer regarding the assertion's truth. Potentially every assertion can be a conclusion of a certain argument, thus we have to accept the existence of some assertions (premises) that let us deduce the particular conclusion (and not any other) that we have arrived to. The fact that as speakers we are ready to make these premises explicit shows that we do not utter our conclusions by chance, but we have a certain goal in mind. Our utterances of assertions reveal that we are goal-oriented beings. In doubtful situations we can, and are ready to support our assertions with arguments, and in light of all this we cannot wholeheartedly accept the claim that as speakers when we utter an assertion we don't want/intend to convince our audience.

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