

## ADVOCACY AND ENACTMENT: EXERCITIVES AND ACTS OF ARGUING\*

**CRISTINA CORREDOR**

University of Valladolid, Spain

corredor@fyl.uva.es

### **Abstract**

Goodwin and Innocenti (2016) have contended that giving reasons may be a form of enactment, where a claim is supported by the very activity of making the claim. In my view, the kind of interaction that these authors are considering should be analysed as a form of advocacy, and therefore as an exercitive speech act. In this paper I will suggest that acts of advocating, *qua* illocutions, institute a normative framework where the speaker's obligation to justify cannot be redeemed by a mere "making reasons apparent". In general, giving reasons is part of the procedure in virtue of which the advocate's authority to exert influence is recognised by their addressees. This illocutionary effect should be distinguished from other perlocutionary consequences.

**Keywords:** Advocacy, enactment, exercitive speech acts, acts of arguing, Austin

### **1. Introduction**

In an insightful paper, Jean Goodwin and Beth Innocenti (2016) have contended that giving reasons may be a form of enactment, where a claim is supported by the very activity of making the claim. Following their study of two egregious cases of suffragist women defending the right to vote, they conclude that these women showed, by giving reasons in the public sphere, that they were rational beings, able to think and reason. According to the authors, the suffragists' conveying this idea was accomplished by means of the enactment of "making reasons apparent", and not due to their arguments performing a certain defining function or goal. In particular, they resist the idea that goals such as justifying a claim to an audience, rationally persuading an audience, or critically testing a claim in order to rationally resolve a disagreement can be seen as intrinsic, essential or constitutive goals of argumentation.

This paper takes Goodwin and Innocenti (2016) as a point of departure, and respectfully aims to contribute to the line of thought that they have opened. I am indebted to their joint reflection, which I find challenging and in many respects

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illuminating in what concerns the historical import of the early suffragist movement. The plan of this paper is the following. In section 2, I summarise some of the main tenets of the above-mentioned paper. Section 3 is also mainly expositive and takes into account some available views in the literature on the notion of advocacy and other related issues. In section 4, after a brief presentation of the Austinian framework I endorse, I will argue for a view of acts of advocating as exercitive speech acts. In connection with this, I will suggest, in section 5, that the required authority the speaker needs for her exercitive is granted to her, precisely, in virtue of her act of putting forward reasons in support of her position. Section 6 applies the proposed view to a reflection on the connection between advocacy and enactment, which is further illustrated in section 7 by taking into account Goodwin and Innocenti's (2016) case analyses. Section 8 briefly considers the notion of acts of arguing, before coming to certain conclusions (section 9).

## 2. Advocacy as a rhetorical form in enactment

Taking as a point of departure O'Keefe's distinction between argument<sub>1</sub> (the premise-conclusion units people exchange) and argument<sub>2</sub> (the transactions between speakers and audiences in which context the first occur), Goodwin and Innocenti present two case studies<sup>1</sup> with which they aim to demonstrate that making argument<sub>1</sub>s can accomplish different tasks from changing an audience's beliefs or attitudes relating to a claim. These case studies come from the early women's suffrage movement in the US, one from 1848 and one from 1869-1875.

In their reconstruction of these cases, the following statements hold: (1) a speaker makes a reason apparent; (2) the speaker cannot expect her audience to accept (infer, adhere to, take as justified) her claim; (3) the speaker does something by making a reason apparent. According to the authors, what the speaker does in (3) is to support her claim "by the activity of making the claim" (2016: 453). This move is identified as a rhetorical technique, namely, that of *enactment*, where the speaker is said to incarnate the argument, in the sense of being the proof of the truth of what is said (cf. Campbell and Jamieson, 1978: 9). According to Goodwin and Innocenti, their case studies show that, given the strong opposition against the suffragist movement, together with the prejudices concerning the role of women and their (lack of) intellectual capacity, it was

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<sup>1</sup> The two cases discussed by Goodwin and Innocenti are not particular instances of speech but general, historical frameworks where certain arguments were put forward in the public sphere. The first case mentions the speech that Elisabeth Cady Stanton gave several times after the first women's rights convention of 1848 (available at: *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony Papers Project*, retrieved from <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/ecswoman1.html>). The second case concerns the period between 1869-1875 in the United States and the authors refer back to the works by other scholars (in particular, J. M. Balkin and E. C. Du Bois) to give support to the reconstruction of the argument that is here presented and discussed in section 7.

unlikely that the audiences would take their demands for the vote seriously. Notwithstanding this, they contend (cf. p. 456) that the women's giving reasons in support of their claim in a public space showed to their audiences, and to themselves:

- C.1. that their attempts to vote were reasoned, and
- C.2. that the activity of a woman voting is supportable by reasons.

Thus, according to the authors, making reasons apparent was a strategy for accomplishing the goal of having a voice in the public sphere and being taken seriously.

I think this conclusion is sound and illuminates the kind of effect that the speech act of advocacy can achieve through the technique of enactment. Yet the authors go on to say,

Here we provide an argument that many asserted functions are parasitic on making reasons apparent. In order to affect an audience in any way (to persuade them, to induce them to alter their standpoint, etc.) a speaker first has to make a reason apparent. (2016: 458)

The suffragists' aim to have a voice in the public sphere and to be taken seriously was to be accomplished by means of a strategic making apparent of reasons. In the general case, the authors draw the conclusion that a speaker's argumentation can have the "mode of action" of making reasons apparent. Moreover, even if this action is unlikely to have an impact on the intended addressees, merely making reasons apparent could accomplish important individual and social tasks.

In my view, it is undeniable that giving reasons and making those reasons public can contribute to a variety of goals. Nevertheless, I doubt that, in the particular case of advocating in favour of a position (idea, person, course of action, and the like), mere enactment can accomplish the same effects as arguing. My aim in the next section will be to examine the notion of advocacy in its relationship to other related notions.

### **3. Advocacy, critical discussion, persuasion, and deliberation in argumentative interactions**

Advocacy is sometimes identified with arguing for a viewpoint. It is also taken to be a biased form of argument, where the arguer does not make efforts to solve a difference of opinion, but tries to persuade the audience.

At one end of the assessment, Daniel O' Keefe (2007) has highlighted the conflict that exists between the practical interests of an advocate who tries to persuade, and other normative interests, such as the interest to convey accurate information. What is more, he takes it that maximal effectivity in advocacy "may require abandoning what we would ordinarily take to be normatively desirable

practices of advocacy” (2007: 159). It is worth mentioning that the author supports his critical conclusions by appeal to several social-scientific research findings that seem to raise doubts about the role and efficacy of normatively-proper advocacy. O’Keefe sees these findings as a manifestation of the wider conflict of weighing between aims and ends. Interestingly, his views presuppose a normative conception of advocacy practices that are available to the analyst.

A contrasting, more positive point of view can be found in Marcin Lewinski, for whom in multi-party deliberation “advocacy is instrumental to making a reasonable decision” (2017: 91). He distinguishes two approaches to collective deliberations, namely, issue-based dialectics vs. what he terms role-based dialectics. Issue-based dialectics discusses one or many options on an issue by pooling all possible pro and con arguments on each option, based on their internal merits. In contrast, in role-based dialectics the parties’ positions are clearly defined and advocated by them. The goal is to select, upon critical examination, “the best” of these positions (cf. p. 101). Lewinsky rightly notes that a requirement of consistency in each party’s argumentative commitments is in force all through the deliberation.

From a more neutral point of view, Goodwin (2013) notices that advocacy can be equated to persuasion. As such, a positive or negative assessment would depend on the context in which it takes place. Whereas in persuasion dialogues, advocacy “promotes the collective goal of coming to a consensus or mutual understanding”, in information-seeking dialogues “advocacy will be taken as biased, irrelevant and possibly fallacious” (2013: 2). She herself puts forward a normative account where “The activity of advocating would be structured around two sets of obligations: obligations to the person, organization or cause advocated for, and obligations to the audience and other actors in the communication setting” (2013: 11-12). This author acknowledges that both sets of obligations may be in mutual tension, and considers that it will be the advocate’s task to decide in the face of the dilemma.

Although the three positions here considered contrast with each other in their overall assessment, they jointly contribute to a nuanced view of advocacy. The three of them coincide in seeing this practice as subjected to certain norms or obligations, and in contrasting (O’Keefe) or, assuming this contrast, trying to conciliate (Lewinsky, Goodwin) its instrumental goals with promoting decisions based on merit. It is relevant for our discussion that in the three cases, advocacy is seen as pre-eminently oriented to persuasion and, to that extent, as an argumentative activity, or at least as embedded in argumentative forms of dialogue. It seems to me that this idea, in part tacitly assumed, is worth of a more detailed analysis.

#### 4. Advocacy as an illocutionary speech act

My suggestion is that two different approaches to advocacy can and should be distinguished, namely, advocacy as a complex communicative activity that aims to persuade and gain adherence in favour of a position (Adv1), and the illocutionary speech act of advocacy (Adv2). Although I am not able to discuss (Adv1),<sup>2</sup> it can be pointed out that this is the approach mainly undertaken by the authors whose points of view have been considered in the preceding section. My present aim is to approach the notion of advocacy as a type of speech act and offer an account of it within an Austinian framework. As a preliminary remark, it is worth noticing that acts of advocacy in this second sense do not need to be accompanied by argumentation, nor do they need to be embedded into a persuasion dialogue. (Imagine e.g., a speaker who merely declares, “S is the best candidate for the job”, in a context where a candidate has to be selected). Nevertheless, I will suggest that there is an inner, built-in connection between the speech act of advocacy and the activity of arguing, in a way to be clarified below.

With respect to the speech act of advocating, and following Austin (1962), my suggestion is to see it as a subtype within the general type of exercitive speech acts. Exercitives are characterised for transferring or assigning an obligation, responsibility, or commitment on the addressee, by virtue of the influence, power, or authority accorded to the speaker. As Austin says,

An exercitive is the giving of a decision in favour of or against a certain course of action, or advocacy of it. It is a decision that something is to be so, as distinct from a judgement that it is so: it is advocacy that it should be so, as opposed to an estimate that it is so (1962: 154)

It may seem slightly puzzling for our discussion that Austin chose to characterise the general type of exercitives by appealing to the very action of advocacy. This move suggests that he considered advocating to be a primitive notion within his theory. In my view, however, such a way of proceeding only reinforces the consideration that acts of advocating are exercitive speech acts - one might say even that they are prototypical exercitives. To give support to this point of view, it can be taken into consideration that the general category of exercitives includes verbs such as urge, plead, beg, and others closely connected.

Furthermore, I endorse an Austinian approach to speech acts (as put forward by Marina Sbisa, see e.g. 2006 and 2009; see also Maciej Witek, 2015). This approach sees speech as a form of action and focuses on the normative aspects of the interpersonal and social relations that are established and affected through communicative interaction. The approach can be characterised by means of two theses, namely:

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<sup>2</sup> Some brief comments will be added below, in relation to the role of argumentation in both approaches to advocacy.

(T.1) To make a speech act is to bring about a series of changes in one's social environment (the context of interpersonal relationships, and/or the social world).

(T.2) These changes impinge on the interactants' normative stances, namely, their duties, obligations and commitments, as well as their entitlements, rights and authorisations, as mutually recognised and/or socially acknowledged.

Within this framework and following Austin, exercitives are taken to be illocutionary acts consisting of the making of a decision, or the exercise of authority or influence. Furthermore, in what affects the normative positions of speaker and addressees, exercitives presuppose some degree of authority or authoritativeness on the part of the speaker, and assign or cancel rights or obligations to or from the addressee (cf. Sbisà, 2006: 165). It is worth noticing that for the illocution to be successful it is not required that it effectively exercises influence or gains adherence. Even if the addressees are not moved accordingly, and assuming other conditions hold, it is their recognition of the type of act that has taken place, together with their recognition of the way in which it has affected their mutual normative positions, that makes of the speech act the illocution it is. (A particular act of advocating could result in the assignment of a commitment to adhere to the advocate's position, but also in the transference of a right to raise doubts and objections).

In my view, as said above, whenever a speaker advocates for a position, she is performing an exercitive speech act. If certain conditions are in place, with her performance the speaker presents herself as requiring from her addressees that they support her position, in what can be seen as an exercise of influence (provided the appropriate authority has been granted to the speaker). And, as already noticed, this is not the same as saying that in order for the speech act to be successful her audience must be influenced and moved accordingly. A speech act of advocating, whenever it is recognised as such by the interactants, also confers upon them a right to raise doubts and objections and ask for justification. Such a dialectical move brings about a corresponding obligation on the part of the speaker, namely, the obligation to adduce reasons in support of her claim. Apart from these illocutionary effects, I take it that if and when the illocution achieves the goal of persuading the audience, this latter effect should be seen as perlocutionary in Austin's original sense.<sup>3</sup>

In the particular case of acts of advocating, what is characteristic is that they are usually embedded in a wider argumentative discourse, in which reasons are adduced even before other interactants ask for them. My suggestion is that the argumentative explicitness that characterises the activity of advocating, beyond and above its being a means to achieve the goal of persuading, redeems an obligation that is constitutively present in the speech act. Notice that, as said before, acts of advocating *qua* exercitives presuppose some degree of authority

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<sup>3</sup> Arguments in support of this viewpoint are to be found in section 4 below.

(or authoritativeness) on the part of the speaker. It is in virtue of this authority's being recognised that the speaker's speech act can be seen as an exercise of influence. However, in a context where an advocate strives to gain the adherence of her addressees, her authority need not be initially granted, nor will it be granted in the general case. The person who advocates has to obtain the addressees' recognition that she has the appropriate authority (or else she needs to receive from them the required authorisation) to exercise her influence and pursue their adherence. The means that at her disposal, in a direct and attainable form, are those of the reasons she can give in support of her position. It is in virtue of the reasons adduced, and to the extent that those reasons can be understood and assessed by the addressees, that the advocate can be credited with the authority she needs for her speech act to be successfully performed.

A possible objection to the view I have outlined in the preceding paragraph would bring to the fore the fact that, in real contexts, advocacy aims to achieve the addressees' adherence, and for that (as O'Keefe, 2007, shows) every means available are instrumental and will be valued for their efficacy, including arguments. I think this possible objection is double-sided. On one reading, it appeals to the empirically attested fact that advocates acting in the public domain will try to gain support for their position by resorting to every means available to them; this effort may in some cases be exerted in dubious, not to say illegitimate ways (for example, by means of bribery or threat; we may think, for instance, of a conditional threat or bribe of the form, "If you support my position, I will/I won't..."). My answer to this reading of the objection is that the speech act, in such cases, could no longer be counted as advocacy. Instead, the corresponding illocution should be categorised as a different act.<sup>4</sup>

The second reading of the objection concerns the advocate's authority and how she manages to have it, so as to exert influence on her addressees. I address this point in the next section.

## 5. Authority in the exercitive speech act of advocating

In certain institutional settings, the position of the advocate is well-defined beforehand and her authority is correspondingly pre-established. In other, more informal settings, however, the advocate's authority must be accorded by means of a different procedure.<sup>5</sup> My suggestion is that this authority takes the form of

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<sup>4</sup> There is ample literature discussing acts of threatening and their status as illocution. Many authors follow Searle (1975) in treating threats as directive speech acts (which in Searle's original taxonomy is the type usually correlated to Austin's exercitives), but this has not been the only view on the matter. I cannot address this interesting issue here, but see e.g. Searle and Vanderveken (1985); Corredor (2001); Kissine (2013); Budzynska and Witek (2014).

<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to an anonymous referee for indicating to me the need to distinguish between an advocate's pre-established authority and her "reason-produced authority". S/he also suggests that the latter seems to involve a mechanism akin to accommodation. Concerning this point, and

authoritativeness, in that it depends on the addressees' crediting the advocate with the capability to perform her act. Whenever they recognise the speaker's situation as one in which she might be willing to try and gain the addressees' adherence (for instance, she is a political leader, or a social activist), it seems correct to consider that the required conditions for the successful performance of the act of advocating have been fulfilled. Also, if they explicitly raise doubts or in some way question the advocate's position, in a tacit way they are acknowledging the speech act as an act of advocacy. But very commonly, the person who advocates takes the initiative of offering reasons in support of her position. In this way, she presents herself as competent and entitled to advocate for her position, a position that is shown to be justifiable.

As a result, the interaction becomes an argumentative dialogue. Here, the advocate's authority is obtained on the merits of the reasons given, on condition that these merits be acknowledged by the addressees. It is in virtue of the force of an arguer's reasons, provided this force is recognised by her interlocutors, that she can be credited with the appropriate authority to influence her addressees' positions. Her authority comes from the authoritativeness that is bestowed upon her by her addressees. The fact that the addressees could be induced to a wrong idea of the true merits of the arguments (for instance, they might be persuaded by a fallacious use of an argument), in itself does not contradict my contention. In the particular case of advocacy, correspondingly, whenever an advocate has resource to argumentation to support her position, she is entering the domain of an argumentative dialogue where authority, in the form of authoritativeness, may be bestowed upon her on the merits of her arguments.

A possible objection here is that in advocacy, authority does not seem to be the key mechanism of influence; instead, the merits of the case itself (not who happens to be making the case) would be the driving force.<sup>6</sup> In respect of the first part of the objection, as related to the power the advocate has to influence her addressees, I think the observation is right. However, I take it to be concerned with the perlocutionary effect of the speech act. As already pointed out, the effectivity of the act of advocating in gaining adherence is perlocutionary. As such, it is different from its illocutionary effect, which has to be seen as conventional. Within the Austinian approach to speech acts I endorse, this effect is so seen

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although I agree with the idea that there can be accommodation in the way interlocutors assign and recognise each other's illocutions, it is unclear to me whether this type of contextual adjustment does answer to the effect that adducing reasons has in interaction. If the speaker argues for her position, she presents herself as competent in relation to the issue at stake and entitled to support it; moreover, with her reasons she transfers the same competence and entitlement to her addressees, who may be influenced accordingly. This argumentative interaction goes beyond a mere spontaneous attribution of the required authority to the speaker, as the case might be, if only accommodation were at work. Instead, it seems to me that acts of advocating commit the speaker to justify her position if required, as a constitutive feature of the act.

<sup>6</sup> Again, I am grateful to an anonymous referee for raising the objection I am here taking into account, thus helping me to better clarify this point.



because it is the result of the interactants' joint recognition that it has taken place. Moreover, it is an effect on the normative positions of the interactants (their obligations, responsibilities and commitments, and their rights, entitlements and authorisations, etc.), as mutually assigned and recognised.

In the general case, exercitives are categorised as the exercising of powers, rights, or influence; equivalently, making a decision in favour or against a certain course of action, or advocacy that it should be so, are exercitive speech acts. Respecting the illocutionary, conventional effect of such an act, as Austin puts it, "we would rather say that they confer powers, rights, names, &c., or change or eliminate them." (Austin, 1962: 155). Now, in the particular case of acts of advocacy, my suggestion is that their illocutionary effect consists of the mutual recognition that the speaker is giving support to a position (an idea, person, course of action, etc., possibly with different degrees of personal commitment and force), usually with the aim of gaining others' support as well. The addressees' recognition of the advocate's act as an act of the exercitive type presuppose that certain conditions are fulfilled, namely, (i) that the speaker is in a position to give her support; (ii) that the advocated position is supportable, in the sense that it can be shown to be correct, or that it is acceptable to other people; (iii) that the advocated position will not be effected in the normal course of events, etc. The exercitive speech act, whenever successful, assigns the speaker a right to give support to the advocated position, and commits her to being consistent with it; the exercitive also confers her addressees the right to take sides in favour of or against it. Moreover, and since the advocated position must be supportable, the exercitive also institutes certain dialectical obligations and rights. The addressees are entitled to raise doubts and objections, and the speaker is correspondingly obliged to answer to them. She can redeem this obligation by means of giving reasons that show the advocated position to be correct or acceptable to other people.

My contention has been that out of institutional settings, where the advocate's authority to perform her exercitive is pre-established, this authority takes the form of authorisation. The advocate has illocutionary authority in the sense that, if her speech act is correctly performed and successful, she is seen as empowered to give support as she does, in virtue of her addressees' recognition that she is so empowered. Giving reasons helps to show that her advocacy is correct, or that it is acceptable to other people.

In my view, the authority that is needed to try and influence other people is different from the type of authority, or authorisation, that is in force in acts of advocating *qua* illocutions. To influence other people is a perlocutionary effect.

Now, it seems an obligation to ask how this account of advocacy is connected to enactment, understood as a mere making apparent of reasons. In the next section my aim is to address this issue, trying to identify the differences between both types of action. I will argue that whereas advocacy is an illocutionary act, mere enactment should be seen, in the general case, as perlocutionary in its effects.

## 6. Acts of advocating and enactment

As argued above, in advocating in favour of a position an advocate can give reasons, which in turn may credit her with the authority that is appropriate to influence her addressees. My point has been that this authority has the form of authoritativeness, to the extent that it is bestowed by the advocate's addressees, and this move takes place in virtue of their recognition of the reasons given. My suggestion is now to turn the attention to the types of effect that advocacy and enactment can have, in order to compare them and try to establish their differences.

When considering the outcomes of acts of communicative interaction, one should be careful not to confound perlocutionary and illocutionary effects. According to Austin (1962), illocutionary effects have to be seen as conventional. Perlocutionary effects, in contrast, are consequences in the normal course of events, and as such may be explained in terms of causal relations. In order to clarify this conceptual distinction, Austin said,

It will be seen that the consequential effects of perlocutions are really consequences, which do not include such conventional effects as, for example, the speaker's being committed by his promise (which comes into the illocutionary act) [...] We must notice that the illocutionary act is a conventional act: an act done as conforming to a convention. (Austin, 1962: 102, 105)

The Austinian approach I favour interprets this conventionality as a social recognition or intersubjective agreement (possibly tacit) in that the effect has taken place, an effect that impinges on the normative positions (commitments and obligations, rights and entitlements, and the like) of the interactants. In advocacy, my suggestion has been that acts of advocating are exercitive speech acts; moreover, I have contended that it is in virtue of the addressees' recognition of the advocate's reasons that she is bestowed with the authority required for her exercitive. Other effects, like effectively influencing the addressees in the intended way, should be seen as perlocutionary.

In enactment, it is worth considering whether the effects can be assessed in a similar manner. Remember that, according to Goodwin and Innocenti (2016), a speaker making arguments can have the "mode of action" of making reasons apparent; and even if this action were unlikely to have an impact on the intended addressees, the mere making apparent of reasons might accomplish other individual and social tasks. In the cases they study, the suffragists' acts of advocacy could not have the intended effect on their addressees (that of gaining their support for the suffragists' cause). Yet, as these authors suggest, the suffragists' making reasons apparent would have had the effect of showing to their audiences that "she, a woman, was a person capable of making argument<sub>1</sub>s" (2016: 454). Innocenti and Goodwin's analysis of the social and interpersonal transactions that were going on seems to me sensible and sound. Undoubtedly,

their diagnosis of the effect that the suffragists' discourses might achieve in their context is also historically accurate. My concern has to do with the tacit contrast that they seem to establish between the rhetorical effect achieved through enactment and the effect that acts of arguing can have on an audience.

It seems to me that stressing the persuasive effects of enactment in advocacy<sup>7</sup> yields the undesirable result of blurring the proper illocutionary effect of the exercitive as such. We should carefully distinguish perlocutionary consequences (e.g. achieving persuasion) and illocutionary effects (the commitments and responsibilities, rights and authorisations, etc. instituted by the speech act). Even if making reasons apparent had the effect of persuading the suffragists' addressees that they were women capable of arguing in the public sphere, this idea (no matter its being right) was induced by means of an implicit inference. In contrast, the historical evidence supports the conclusion that, at this point at least, the women's explicit reasons were, for the most part, not taken into consideration in a serious manner. The conclusion to be drawn is that, in the general case, the induced idea was a perlocutionary consequence, and not an illocutionary effect as based on the recognition granted to the suffragists. To that extent, the women's speech was deprived of being a successful illocution.

I am aware that the above reflection may be disturbing, since it seems to suggest that the capability of performing actions through speech depends, in an essential and constitutive way, on the interlocutors' response. In the literature on speech acts and actions, attention has been paid to forms of interaction conceptualised as *silencing speech* and *subordinating speech*.<sup>8</sup> Here, the impact of certain forms of communication (pornography, hate speech, derogatory speech, and other related forms of discourse) on the addressees has been competently assessed, and this issue is still an open field of research, not to say of social concern. However, to my knowledge, the way in which the interlocutors' responsive actions may impinge on the social and interpersonal meaning and force of a speaker's speech has not been sufficiently studied. Here, the Austinian view emphasises the conventional character of the illocutionary effect, which depends on an interpersonal or social recognition that such an effect has taken place. Whenever this recognition or agreement (possibly tacit) does not take place, the

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<sup>7</sup> The fact that enactment is seen as having persuasive effects does not entail that Goodwin and Innocenti see advocacy as mere persuasion. This is not the case, and it is only fair to recognise it. In Goodwin (2014), a more complex theoretical approach is undertaken, where the act of advocating is seen as serving "to pick out the point being argued about and to establish the nature and extent of arguers' specific responsibilities to make good arguments" (83). Goodwin sensibly points also to the potential conflict that may arise between this commitment and another one also recognised, namely, the advocate's zeal to support their cause. In the paper here discussed, however, I take it that enactment is mainly seen as a strategy orientated to producing persuasive effects in acts of advocating, and this idea is the target of my discussion. My own view on the matter does not contradict it, but tries to advance an analysis of advocacy in terms of speech acts that categorises persuasion as perlocutionary.

<sup>8</sup> For general overviews, see: Mari Matsuda et al., 1993; Ishani Maitra and Mary Kate McGowan, 2012.

intended speech act may result in an unsuccessful one (not necessarily void and null, but nevertheless faulty in some respect).<sup>9</sup> It is a merit of Goodwin and Innocenti's essay that it brings to the fore a way in which a speaker can be deprived of the pragmatic force that allows one's speech to have an effect on one's social and interpersonal world, and thus on the obligations, commitments, rights, authorisations, etc. of the interactants, as mutually or socially recognised.

## 7. Discussion of case

In order to sustain and make more precise my point, it is worth paying closer attention to the case studies considered by these authors, and, in particular, at the conclusions they reached. As already seen (sec. 2), when considering the claims that turned out to be conveyed through enactment, they contend that the women's giving reasons in a public space showed to their audiences (and even to themselves),

- C.1. that their attempts to vote were reasoned, and
- C.2. that the activity of a woman voting is supportable by reasons.

It seems to me essentially correct to say that, in what concerns claims C.1 and C.2, enactment is used as a direct and effective means to induce in the addressees these conclusions. The authors' consideration that enactment showed the correctness of both claims even to the suffragists' themselves, strongly suggests that the claims were not intended by them as conclusions, at least not in a fully conscious and explicit form. If this were the case, then it would reinforce my contention that the inference leading to C.1 and C.2 should be seen as perlocutionary. Nevertheless, even if these two claims had been intended, this fact would not contradict the assessment that the effect so achieved was perlocutionary. For one thing, the addressees did not draw both conclusions because of their recognising the suffragists' authority to influence their opinions (which could have led to a successful illocution). Rather, they had to yield to the evidence that the suffragists' enactment represented for them, in what can be seen as a consequential effect.

Against my assessment, a possible objection would be the following. In the two studied cases, enactment was equivalent to showing the facts that could be adduced, *qua* reasons, in support of claims C.1 and C.2. A liberal conception of argumentation would take it that the giving of reasons can be effected by showing

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<sup>9</sup> Austin (1962) distinguished, within the common category of *infelicities* (speech acts incorrectly performed), the subcategories of *misfires* (failures to follow the conventional procedure, in their turn divided into misinvocations and misexecutions) and *abuses*. Only the former were doomed to result in null and void acts; abuses, in contrast, could give rise to a performed action, though faulty in some respect or other, as e.g. insincere promises (cf. 1962: 18, 25). As Marina Sbisà has contended (see ref. in her 2009), this view entails that illocutionary speech acts are subjected to defeasibility, which depends on the social or intersubjective recognition.

relevant facts and evidence, in a straightforward (and even possibly non-verbal) way. The suffragists' arguing in public would qualify as evidence to support both claims.

I am willing to endorse this point of view, in relation to claims C.1 and C.2. But notice that in order to induce these conclusions, the suffragists' discourses could not be random assertions. They had to give reasons of a kind appropriate to be recognised, even by their opponents, as supportive of the suffragists' position. They had to perform genuine acts of arguing. Only in this way, could enactment qualify as showing the facts that supported conclusions C.1 and C.2. To that extent, enactment was apt to become the justificatory redemption of an illocutionary act, namely, that of advocating in favour of C.1 and C.2. The addressees had to acknowledge this public action as appropriate supportive evidence, and, even if they resisted the suffragists' reasons, they nevertheless had to recognise the suffragists' authority to present their case and advocate for it.

Still, my concern is that this approach is not applicable to the general case, nor to other particular claims that the suffragists were trying to vindicate. My contention is that, in the general case, speech acts of advocacy belong to a normative framework within which the speaker's obligation to justify cannot be redeemed by a mere "making reasons apparent". To better see what is at issue here, it is worth considering other claims advocated by the suffragists. According to Goodwin and Innocenti (2016), they also defended the following claim:

C. No state can abridge women's right to vote.

This declaration conveys an elaborated tenet which is in need of grounding. In this particular case, enactment as a rhetorical device, as a mere showing in the public domain that one is able to give reasons, would have fallen short of providing the required justification. Given the historical context, and the strong unwillingness to accept claim C from the part of other relevant agents, the effort to gain support for this declaration was doomed to fail, and the corresponding advocating act was doomed to become null and void. This set of conditions made of the obligation to justify claim C, to sustain it by giving reasons, an imperative move in the interaction.

In fact, women arguing for their right to full citizenship and their right to vote acted accordingly. They assumed their obligation to justify and redeemed this obligation when advocating. Goodwin and Innocenti report that claim C was presented and argued for on many occasions. Their reconstruction of the argument in one of the studied cases (2016: 454) went like this:

- P1. Women are citizens of the United States.  
 P2. Voting is a privilege or immunity of citizenship.  
 P3. The (new) 14th Amendment to the Constitution provides that “no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.”  
 C. Therefore, no state can abridge women’s right to vote.

Note that, by giving reasons (P1 to P3), the suffragists provided their addressees with the kind of argumentative support needed for them to recognise the suffragists’ advocating exercitive. The suffragists’ adducing reasons eventually forced their addressees to credit the suffragists with the appropriate authority for their advocacy. The fact that, historically, it took a long time to influence addressees so that they gave their support to women’s voting rights does not prevent the suffragists’ discourse from being a successful illocutionary act of advocacy.

Interestingly, the suffragists’ redemption of their obligation to give reasons was not prompted by a corresponding request of justification from their addressees, but by their resistance to recognising the suffragists’ pursued illocution. In virtue of supporting their cause with reasons, the suffragists’ exercitive was to be recognised as such by their audiences. Even if, for a long period of time, these audiences were not moved in their attitudes (a perlocutionary effect), the illocutionary speech act was correctly, successfully performed.

## 8. Acts of arguing

In the preceding sections, the focus has been on the speech act of advocating as an exercitive. Earlier, a distinction was introduced between two approaches to advocacy, namely, advocacy as a complex communicative activity that aims to persuade and gain support in favour of a position (Adv1), and the illocution of advocating as a type of speech act (Adv2). It was pointed out that an act of advocating can be performed without presenting any arguments and detached from any embedding in a persuasion dialogue. Yet I have tried to show that this illocution is connected in an essential way to acts of arguing, in as much as the advocate’s capability to influence her addressees is dependent on the authority she may be credited with by them in virtue of so doing. In contexts of advocacy (as something different from contexts of e.g. threats or bribery), giving reasons is a procedure available to the speaker for her illocution to be recognised and successfully performed. If this contention is correct, then performing the illocution of advocating leads to acts of arguing in a conventional and direct form.

My interest lies in argumentation understood as a special communicative activity. As such, it can serve many different purposes, and the intention to persuade undoubtedly is a prominent one. This makes of argumentation a common

activity connecting the two approaches to advocacy here distinguished. Notice that (Adv1) sees advocacy as entering into persuasion dialogues, and thus also as usually involving argumentation, possibly together with the recourse to rhetorical devices and other means of persuasion. Notwithstanding this, I doubt that argumentation could serve the purpose of persuading (which is, as already said, a perlocutionary consequence), if it were not an essentially justificatory practice. Thus, I endorse the view according to which in argumentation, speakers present reasons, data, evidence, etc. in order to give support to a claim and thus present it as justified.

Moreover, I find insightful the reconstruction of arguments originally put forward by Stephen Toulmin (1958). Following Toulmin's model, I take it that whenever a speaker engages in the activity of giving reasons (facts, evidence, etc.) in order to present a claim as justified, she is presenting herself (usually in a tacit, implicit way) as committed to the inferential license that authorises the step from reasons to claim. I also find correct the point of view according to which argumentation, as a (pre-eminently) linguistic and communicative activity, can be analysed in terms of a speech act complex.<sup>10</sup> To that extent, my references to acts of arguing can be seen as entailing the tenet that giving reasons is part of a more complex speech act, which in any case answers to the general orientation outlined.

## 9. Conclusion

My point of departure was Jean Goodwin and Beth Innocenti's joint work on the pragmatic force of "making reasons apparent". In my view, the kind of enactment they are considering in their (2016) should be analysed as embedded in acts of advocacy. To the extent that it is so, I have suggested that the speech act, if successful, institutes a normative framework where the speaker's obligation to justify cannot be redeemed by a mere "making reasons apparent", without further qualification.

I have presented a view of acts of advocating as exercitive speech acts. My contention has been that, out of institutional settings where the advocate's authority is pre-established, the authority the speaker needs in order to perform her illocution successfully, that is to say, in order to be recognised by her addressees as an agent capable of giving support to a position (idea, cause, course of action, etc.) is bestowed upon her in view of the reasons she can give, and they can acknowledge, in support of her position. It is in virtue of the advocate's giving reasons that she can be credited with the capability to try and exert influence on

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<sup>10</sup> As is well known, a first treatment of argumentation as a speech act complex (and the introduction of the term) is due to the joint work of Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst (1982, 2004). A more recent use of the term, within the framework of an original and compelling theoretical model, is due to Lilian Bermejo-Luque (2011). Although I do not endorse in their entirety these (different) theoretical frameworks, I am indebted to both of them.

the addressees. This authority, in the form of authorisation or empowerment, is bestowed on her by the addressees' recognition that her position may be and is defended with reasons. I have contended also that the effective influence that the advocating act can, or cannot achieve - its effectively influencing the advocate's addressees as intended by her - should be considered a perlocutionary consequence, as something different from the conventional effect due to the illocution.

The previous ideas impinge on the relation between advocacy and enactment. To the extent that enactment is characterised as a mere "making reasons apparent", its power to induce certain inferences on the addressees (and other social agents) should be seen as a perlocutionary consequence. This general assessment does not contradict the possibility that, in certain cases, the very activity of arguing in public might qualify as directly showing the evidence that supports a particular claim. Here, my contention has been that this is only possible in certain particular cases, and only if the activity of "making reasons manifest" can be recognised as a correct performance of genuine acts of arguing.

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