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Speech Acts

With the help of a suitably refined notion of speaker meaning, I define a speech act as any act that one can perform by saying and speaker meaning that one is doing so, so long as certain background conditions obtain. Illocutionary force is thereby subsumed under the notion of speaker meaning in that an act's force is an aspect of how one means what one says (or does) rather than an aspect of what one means in saying what one does. This perspective provides grounds for rejecting conventionalism about speech acts (what I elsewhere call *force-conventionalism*), and replacing that view on which the force of an utterance depends primarily on the intentions with one makes it. From this perspective I also argue for a new way of understanding illocutionary silencing, as well as for a more parsimonious approach to indirect speech acts than is widely accepted today.