Goodness And Truth

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1. Introduction

'True and false', says Aristotle rather cryptically at *De Anima* 3 431b10–11, 'are in the same genus as good and bad.' I shall argue that they are analogous. Of course, 'good' and 'true' are used in many ways. 'It was good of you to ask', I say, 'but I'm no good at chess'; or 'She's a true friend, and also true to her principles.' I do not claim that the analogy holds for all these uses; but I hope to show that saying one thing is true or false *of* another is analogous to saying that something would be good or bad *for* something; that both are forms of speech, and that as thinking true of something what is true of it is thinking truly, so thinking good for something what is or would be good for it is thinking rightly. My thesis applies both to language and thought; but in discussing truth it will be most convenient to start with speech, and in discussing goodness to start with thought. I shall take truth first, since that provides the model I want for goodness. Then, after developing the analogy with goodness, I shall say what I mean in this connection by a 'form' of speech or thought.

2. Truth

Sometimes people say things that are true, sometimes things that are false. Are there things, then, that are true or false independently of thought and speech, and do we come along and say these things? Are statements and beliefs true or false through catching those properties from the things we say and think rather as we ourselves catch measles and mumps from persons we sit next to in the underground? That sounds like a fairy tale. For what are these true and false things people say and think? No astronomer has ever observed one; no entomologist has ever captured one. They seem (like sense-data and universals) to be entities known only to philosophers. Of course it is false that seven and five make eleven and that Caesar died in his bed. We can construct a 'that' clause like 'that Caesar died in his bed' or a noun-phrase like 'seven and five's

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making eleven' which will serve as a subject-expression for the predicate-expression 'is false'. But who that is ignorant of grammar would say 'There is such a thing as that the sun has risen' (Frege's example), let alone 'There is such a thing as that Caesar died in his bed'? That Caesar died in his bed is something that did not happen, a non-event. The equality of 7 + 5 to 11 is not a mathematical fact but a non-fact or untruth.[1] Mathematics does not contain untruths as well as truths, nor does history contain non-events.

If I say 'Theaetetus is seated' and you say 'Theaetetus is not seated', there is something I say Theaetetus *is* that you say he *isn't*, some property I say he *has* that you say he *lacks*, something I *assert* of him and you *deny* of him. Here again we have existential quantification but this time not over Fregean 'thoughts' that are true or false absolutely, *sans phrase*. We are quantifying over predicates, which at best are true or false *of* things. I say that something is true of Theaeteus, namely that he is seated, which you say is false of him.

Are predicates too things known only to philosophers? By a 'predicate' here I mean not a word or phrase but a thing that is predicated. If I say 'Theaetetus is seated' I predicate the seated position of Theaetetus, and the seated position is something known to physiotherapists. If I say 'Mars is spherical' I predicate sphericality of Mars, and sphericality is something known to mathematicians.

Are the seated position, then, and sphericality predicates? In English we have at least three different phrases for the linguistic act I call 'predicating': 'saying one thing is or is not another', 'saying that something is true or false of something', and 'saying that something is had or lacked by something'. Corresponding to these, we have three different sorts of linguistic item which may be said to express predicates: we have ordinary adjectives like 'seated', 'spherical', which express what something is said to be or not to be; 'that' clauses introduced by a pronoun like 'that he is seated' which are used in reported speech to express what we say is true or false of something, and abstract nouns or phrases like 'the seated position' which signify the things we say something has or lacks. No doubt in other languages there would be different phrases for predicating and different grammatical forms for expressing what is predicated. But if the linguistic act of predicating is the same, the things predicated are the same, whatever grammatical form we use, and they are not chimerical or known only to philosophers. Or those

[1] An *anepistemosune*, as Plato puts it, *Theaetetus* 199 e.

that *are* known only to philosophers are things like mental and moral qualities in which philosophers have made an honest corner.

Nouns like 'lion' and 'water' resemble adjectives like 'seated' and 'spherical' in belonging to the basic vocabulary of our language, and the things they signify are known to people other than philosophers; the species lion is known to zoologists, the natural substance water to chemists. I think, however, that their primary use is not in sentences like 'That's water', 'That's a lion' but in sentences like 'A lion ate him', 'There are no lions here', to which I shall come presently.[2]

We cannot deny the reality of shapes, colours, or bodily postures. What we can deny, and must in order to avoid perplexities about universals, is that being and having are relational predicates, and that 'Theaetetus is seated' is equivalent to 'Theaetetus stands in the relation of being to seated' or 'Theaetetus stands in the relation of having to the seated posture'. That could be guessed from the fact that some languages, like Tahitian and Marquesan, have no verbs of being or having. They have no native verbs for telephoning or photocopying because before the Europeans came they did not telephone or photocopy, but their persistent lack of verbs of being and having is not due to their not being or having anything. If the moon causes the tides we can say that the tides are caused by the moon, but we cannot say, if the moon is spherical, that spherical is *been* by the moon. If there is no such action or relation as being or having, nor is there such a relation as being true of, since it is *true of* the moon that it is spherical if and only if it *is* spherical or *has* the property 'spherical' signifies. But while there are no such actions or relations as these, there are such ways of speaking, such forms of speech, as saying something is something and saying it is not that thing.

Do we need both forms? Why not make do with just one, saying something is something? Then we can treat saying 'Theaetetus is not seated' as asserting of Theaeteus that he *has* the negative property of not being seated. Philosophers have countenanced negative predicates,[3] but they are far more problematic than positive predicates. Artists as well as physiotherapists study the seated posture, but no one studies the non-seated posture. We might try to define the property of not being seated as that

[2] On apparently predicative uses see my *The Analytic Ambition*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1991, ch. 9.

[3] Aristotle, *De Interpretatione* 19b19–20a1; P.F. Strawson, *Subject and Predicate in Logic and Grammar* (London: Methuen, 1974), 6.

property which belongs to all those things, and only to those things, which are not seated. But on a realistic view, no property is common and peculiar to the members of this vast class, and how is the class to be defined? If the things that are not seated are the things to which the property of not being seated belongs, then the definition of that negative property is circular. If they are the things to which the property of being seated *does not* belong, the things that *lack* that property and *are not* seated, then besides saying that things are something or have a property we must be able to say they are not something or lack a property.

Granted these two ways of predicating, asserting one thing of another and denying one thing of another, we can give sufficient conditions for speaking truly. If I assert of something what is true of it, or deny of it what is false of it, I speak truly. Conversely if I assert of something what is false of it, or deny of it what is true of it, I speak falsely. This is the account Plato proposes in the *Sophist*: 'A false speech is one that says that things that are, are not, and that things that are not, are' (240 e 10–241 a 1), or, more fully, 'Things said about you, but things that are other said as the same, and things that are not said as being—that sort of composition of verbs and nouns looks like really and truly becoming false speech.' (263 d 1–4).

Plato's examples are speeches in which we assert or deny one thing of another. His account will not hold for statements of number and quantity. If I say 'There are mosquitoes here', I speak truly if there are some objects of the sort specified, and falsely if there are none. If I say 'There is no wine' I speak truly if there is no quantity of the substance specified, and falsely if there is some. Saying that some number or quantity is present or exists (in some definite place, no doubt, or some relationship to something definite) is not saying that something is true of something; quantifying is not predicating; but it seems to be an equally basic form of speech. In both cases, grasping sufficient conditions for speaking truly is part of grasping the meaning of the expression—the adjective or noun—used. And as there are no such relations as being or not being, so there are no such activities as being some or none.

Besides saying that one thing is true or false of another and saying that there are some things or no objects of some kind, we can say that something is not the case, or that if one thing is the case another is. We do this by using conjunctions like 'if', 'or', 'because', and sentential operators like 'it is not the case that'. Further conditions must be specified for speaking truly or falsely when we

use these operators. What if I say 'It is not the case that Theaetetus is seated' and Theaetetus no longer exists? What if I say 'If Theaetetus is seated he is not flying' or 'If there had been only one chair in the room, Theaetetus would not have been seated'? It is tempting to say that as nature gives us the integers and we create the other kinds of number, so nature fixes conditions for speaking truly when we simply predicate or quantify, but beyond that we need rational debate and decision. We should be in trouble if we could not give sufficient conditions for speaking truly and falsely in the simplest cases, but there is no reason why there should be a single set of conditions for speaking truly or falsely which apply to all possible cases, however complicated.

However that may be, for the purpose of developing the analogy with goodness we need consider only cases where we assert or deny one thing of another. These are ways of speaking. Plato thought there was no difficulty in applying his account to thought, because 'thought and speech are the same thing except that the discourse which the soul carries on inside itself without putting it into sound is what we call "thought".' (263 e 3–5) That is over-simple—in general assertion presupposes belief, and we can say things we don't believe. But verbs of thinking have the same grammar as verbs of saying. They can be used with 'of'. And if we speak truly in asserting of something what is true of it and denying of it what is false of it, presumably we think truly in thinking true of something what is true of it, and thinking false of it what is false of it.

Absolute denial, saying that something is not the case, is a different way of speaking from denying one thing of another, and similarly thinking something is not the case is a different way of thinking from thinking something is false of something, and will have truth conditions similar to absolute denial. In 'Negation' Frege seems to dispute this.[4] It is not immediately clear whether thinking it is not the case that Theaetetus is standing is a negative way of thinking something positive or a positive way of thinking something negative. Frege seems to argue for the second alternative. I shall consider his argument in section 4. But that thinking something not to be the case *is* a negative way of thinking rather than a thinking of something negative is indicated by a grammatical fact. The idiomatic way of reporting the thought is to negate not the verb in the 'that' clause but the verb of thinking. I might say 'You don't believe capital punishment deters murderers.

[4] P. Geach and M. Black, *Frege, Translations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952).

You don't think that if it were restored murder would cease.' This means not that it is false of you that you believe these things, but that you have an attitude to them of disbelief, rather as 'You don't *want* capital punishment restored' means you have a attitude towards its restoration of aversion.

3. Goodness

Besides being had or lacked, properties are acquired or lost. Theaetetus comes to be seated and ceases to be seated. And besides thinking it true or false of him that he is seated I can think the seated posture a good or bad one for him to acquire or lose; I can think that it would be good or bad for him to sit down or stand up. Good or bad, that is, in the circumstances: there is no property it is good for a thing to acquire or bad to lose no matter what is the case.

How should we construe 'for' in 'It would be good for Theaetetus to sit'? 'Guinness is good for you' means 'Guinness is beneficial to you'. But I can think a property would be a good one for something to acquire without thinking it would benefit that thing. I might think red a good colour to paint my door, but a door is an inanimate object and nothing can benefit it. Theaetetus can be benefited, and I might think it would be good for him to sit precisely because sitting would benefit him—take the weight off his feet. But I can think the posture a good one for him to acquire without thinking it would benefit him, for instance if I am sitting behind him at the theatre. Thinking a property would be a good one *for* a particular thing to acquire is thinking it would be good if *that thing* acquired it.

'True' and 'false', besides a use with 'of', have an absolute use. If it is true of a cork that *it* stands in a certain relation to a bottle, namely that it is *in* it, it is true *sans phrase* that *the cork* is in the bottle. Similarly if that relationship would be a good one for the cork to lose to the bottle, it would be a good thing *sans phrase* were the cork to leave the bottle.

Acquiring or losing a property is a change. Having a property might be called a 'state of affairs'. Can a state of affairs be good? Of course it can, but the goodness or badness of a state of affairs has to be explained in terms of that of a change. If I think either that something's acquiring a property would be good or that its losing it would be bad, I think it a good property for the thing to have. Sitting behind Theaetetus I probably think the standing posture a bad one for him to have.

And what is it to think it would be good or bad if something acquired a property? I shall not dodge that crucial question, but first a word about the terms 'right' and 'wrong'.

Changes can be caused or prevented. Your acquiring the seated posture can be caused or prevented by various forms of action, including ordering and forbidding. Furthermore purposive behaviour includes refraining as well as acting. Some philosophers think that rest is a *physical* reality alternative to motion, that there could there be time-stretches during which nothing whatever happens. However that may be, inaction is certainly a *practical* reality alternative to action: besides causing and preventing on purpose we can refrain on purpose from causing or preventing.

Suppose, then, I think it would be good for Theaetetus to sit down: I think it would be right to do what would cause this event, and to refrain from what would prevent it. And the converse holds: if I think it would be right, say, to urge him to sit down, or to refrain from removing the only available chair, I must think his sitting down would be somehow good. In general, thinking a change good is equivalent to thinking it right to do what will promote it and to refrain from what will impede it. On the other hand thinking it would be bad if Theaetetus sat down is thinking it would be wrong to do what would cause this, or to refrain from what would prevent it.

In general, if I think it right to refrain from doing something I think it wrong to do it. But is thinking it would be right to do something equivalent to thinking it would be wrong not to do it? There are various ways in which it can be right to do something: it can be obligatory, pleasant, advantageous or kind; and there are corresponding ways in which it can be wrong: against the rules, boring, disadvantageous, unkind. If it is obligatory to send your children to school it is against the rules not to; but it does not follow, if doing something would be pleasant, advantageous or kind, that not doing it would be boring, disadvantageous or unkind.

In section 2 I mentioned statements of number and quantity. Besides thinking that there are many mosquitoes or that there is no wine, we can think the presence of mosquitoes or the absence of wine good or bad. If I think such a state of affairs good, I think it would be right to do what will produce or preserve it, and to refrain from doing what will prevent or end it; if bad, the reverse.

Such, in outline, are the analogies I see between, on the one hand, truth and falsehood and, on the other, goodness and badness and rightness and wrongness. But are they genuine analogies? It is tempting to say: 'The belief that it would be good for Theaetetus to

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sit down begets a desire that he should acquire the seated posture, and this desire moves me to action promotive of this outcome—to saying "Do sit down, Theaetetus" for example.' But if we say this, thinking something good will not be *analogous* to thinking something true; it will be a special case of it. We are construing the thought that Theaetetus's sitting down would be good as a belief which may itself be true or false: the belief that the outcome has (or would have, whatever may be the significance of the mood-change) the property of being good. Thinking it right to say 'Do sit down, Theaetetus', is thinking that the action of uttering those words has the property of rightness. But I argued that thinking it true of Theaetetus that he is seated is not thinking that being seated stands to him in the relation of being had: supposing there is such an activity as being or such a relational property as being true of leads to difficulties about universals. If thinking it would be good for Theaetetus to become seated is analogous to thinking it true of him that he is seated, it cannot be thinking that becoming seated has the property of being good for him, nor can there be such properties or relations as being good or right: if we suppose there are we get into difficulties about the objectivity of value. Thinking good and bad and thinking right and wrong must be *forms* of thought, not thoughts with a specific content. But what forms?

In general, thinking an outcome or property good is desiring it and thinking it bad is being averse to it. If I think acquiring the seated posture would be good for Theaetetus, thinking this is already wanting that posture for him, and if I think it would be good absolutely were Theaetetus to sit down, that is already a kind of desire that Theaetetus should sit down. (There is no need to spell out the variations for thinking a property, as distinct from a change, good or bad.) An outcome can be good in various ways, pleasant, advantageous, an obligation, a kindness, and it can be good in one way and bad in another. But equally there are different ways of wanting, and we can want something in one way and be averse to it in another. If desiring were experiencing a bodily sensation like pain, 'some sensation of the sort we call disagreeable',[5] desiring something could not be thinking it good. In fact, however, bodily sensations are things of which we are aware as objects of aversion or desire, not themselves modes of desire or aversion, and desiring something or being averse to it are alternative ways of being aware of it.

[5] Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1921), ch. 3, 67.

Whereas properties and changes are thought good or bad, acting and refraining are thought right or wrong. Is thinking it right to do something wanting to do it, and thinking it wrong to do it being averse to doing it? It would not be unnatural to talk of desire and aversion here. But it is more idiomatic to talk of willingness and unwillingness or eagerness and reluctance. If I think an outcome good I am willing or eager to do what will promote it, and unwilling or reluctant to do what will prevent it. Willingness and reluctance, however, resemble desire and aversion in being mental attitudes towards something.

But if desire and aversion are ways of thinking of an outcome, how do they differ and how can they be characterised? Aristotle says: 'Let good be defined as that which is an object of choice for its own sake, and that for which we choose something else, and that at which all things aim, or all sentient or intelligent things.' (*Rhetoric* 1 1362a21–4) The expression is awkward, but he seems to be suggesting that thinking something good is having it as an objective, as *that to secure which*. This suggestion can be developed to cover badness or evil. As I said just now, purposive behaviour includes both acting and refraining. We act *in order to* cause or prevent, and refrain *lest* we cause or prevent. If I act to cause something, to be consistent I should refrain from action that would prevent it, and if I act to prevent something I should refrain from action that might cause it. This, of course, is practical consistency. Logical consistency attaches to beliefs: logically inconsistent beliefs cannot both be true. Practical consistency attaches to actions and attitudes: practically inconsistent actions cannot both be right.[6] So there are two roles an outcome can play in purposive behaviour. It can be (1) that to cause which we act, and lest we prevent which we refrain, or (2) that to prevent which we act, and lest we cause which we refrain. In case (1) it may be called a 'positive objective' and in case (2) a 'negative'. An outcome which is a positive objective is an object of desire, and we think it good. An outcome which is a negative objective is an object of aversion, and we think it bad or evil. To sum up, thinking something good is not believing it to possess the property of goodness, but having it as an object of desire and a positive objective. Thinking it bad is having it as an object of aversion and a negative objective.

[6] Not actions that cannot both be done. If that were right, people could not act inconsistently, and they do. Actions which cannot both be done are rather logically than practically inconsistent.

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That is how the analogy works for thought; what about language? Is saying that something is good or right a form of speech, and if so what? Grammarians recognise such forms of speech as advising, ordering and forbidding; it is part of learning a new language to learn how to order and forbid things in it, and advise for and against lines of conduct. As R. M. Hare liked to say, words like 'good', 'bad', 'right', 'wrong', and 'ought' give a speech the form of a counsel or command. Unfortunately Hare himself muddled this point because he thought asserting and ordering are acts performed in speaking when in fact they are ways of speaking,[7] and he also gave it a sceptical air by omitting to say that as statements can be true or false, so counsels and commands can be right or wrong. Just as if I assert of Theaetetus what is true of him and deny of him what is false of him I speak truly, so when I order him to do what it is right for him to do, and forbid him to do what is wrong for him to do I command rightly, whereas if I order him to do what is wrong for him to do, or forbid him to do what is right for him to do I command wrongly.

Here a sceptic might ask 'What is it for a course of action to be right or wrong? What is it for an outcome to be good or bad?'. But that is just to ignore all I have been saying, to reject the analogy between goodness and truth, and to require goodness and rightness to be properties things have or lack. I said that whether a change is good or bad will depend on circumstances. There is seldom any doubt whether a given circumstance makes a particular change good or bad, other circumstances being ignored; debate is about whether a circumstance which makes it good is outweighed by another that makes it bad. But making a change good, or providing a reason for promoting it, is not giving it a property. The entry of Xanthippe might make it good for Theaetetus to acquire the standing posture, but it would not impart a quality to that outcome in the way exposing his skin to the sun might impart a dark colour to it.

It is often said that meaning can be explained in terms of truth. It can equally be explained in terms of goodness. Just as if I know what 'paunchy' means, I know what is true of Socrates if he is paunchy and what is false of him if he is not paunchy, so I know what is good for him if it is good for him to become paunchy, and

[7] Locutionary, not illocutionary acts, as I argue in 'Force, Form and Content in Linguistic Expression', *Aristotelian Society*, Proceedings NS **84** (19883/84), 'Beyond the literal meaning,' *British Journal of Aesthetics* **25** (1985) and *The Analytic Ambition*, ch 3.

hence I know under what conditions a person who says 'Socrates, don't become paunchy' advises rightly or wrongly. Just as it is part of knowing what a property is, to know the difference between having and lacking that property, so it is another part to know the difference between its being a good property and a bad, between its being a positive and a negative objective that something should acquire it.

Saying one thing is false of another is different from saying that something is not the case. There is an analogous distinction between, on the one hand, forbidding or advising against something, and on the other, cancelling an order or withdrawing a piece of advice. I can say 'The seated posture would be a bad one for Theaetetus to acquire' or 'The seated position would not be a good one.' When we withdraw a piece of positive advice we may use a phrase like 'it is not the case that' or 'not true that', but just as, strictly speaking, counsels and commands are right or wrong rather than true or false, so are withdrawals and countermands. And as it may be debatable when someone making an absolute denial speaks truly, so it may be debatable when someone withdrawing or countermanding speaks rightly. The same goes, of course, for conditional and disjunctive counsels and commands.

4. Forms of speech and thought

In 'Negation' Frege argues that if thinking that something is not the case were a way of judging alternative to thinking that something is the case, then *modus ponens* would fail for inferences with negative minor premises. For example:

If Franz was not in Berlin, he was innocent.

It is not the case that Franz was in Berlin.

So Franz was innocent.

Frege says that if there are two alternative ways of thinking, the thought in the second premise will be 'the thought that the accused *was* in Berlin',[8] meaning apparently that if the first premise is of the form:

Not-P implies Q

the second premise will be of the form:

P

Why did he think this follows? Why not suppose it is precisely because thinking something is not the case *is* a special way of

[8] 'Negation', 130.

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thinking, that the second premiss of the inference is of the form not-P? When you think that Franz was in Berlin, and I think that that was not the case, surely if we were thinking different things instead of thinking the same thing differently, our thoughts would have the forms P and Q.

Frege says that the one and only way of judging is 'acknowledging the truth of something',[9] and describes the analogue in speech, asserting, as putting forward as true.[10] 'Asserting' in this sense is simply another word for speaking truly or falsely, since whenever we do this we may be said to put forward something as true—hence the paradoxicality of 'What I am saying is false.' So saying that something is not the case is not an alternative to asserting in this sense. On the face of it, however, it is one way of asserting, one form of assertive speech, among others. We can also say that if one thing is the case, then another is, that one thing happened because another did, that something was done lest something else should occur, and, more fundamentally, we can assert or deny one thing of another and say some number, definite or indefinite, of things of a certain sort are present or that none is. There are as many ways of asserting as there are logical forms of proposition, and more, since logicians do not usually recognise forms of speech in which we use non-truthfunctional connectives.

Similarly with counselling and commanding. If we equate these with speaking rightly or wrongly, then all counselling and commanding purports to be right. Even prohibitions are issued as good and wise. But as there are various ways of asserting, so there are various ways of counselling or commanding. There are conditional and disjunctive commands; and there are the simple, basic forms: saying that some outcome or state of affairs is good or bad, and saying that doing something or refraining from something is right or wrong.

Frege could not take this line because he held not only that there are things which are true or false independently of our speaking and thinking, but that we can express one of these things in words without putting it forward as true, and 'apprehend' it in thought without 'judging'.[11] Constructing an indicative sentence suffices for expressing one of these things, but to assert we must do something more: perform an additional 'illocutionary' act or give our utterance

[9] 'Negation', 126 note.

[10] 'The Thought', in *Philosophica Logic*, P.F. Strawson (ed.) (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 22.

[11] *Ibid.*

assertive 'force'. The true or false things are of various logical forms, but asserting is the same for all of them. Frege says that actors and poets do not assert or lie. Certainly they do not say speak falsely with the aim of deceiving people, and we are not deceived. Still, if we maintain what Max Black called 'the vanishing distinction' between expressing something true or false and speaking truly or falsely, we require two puzzling notions: a notion of bare expressing (with its mental analogue apprehending or 'entertaining') and the notion of a true or false thing.

I prefer[12] to say that asserting and counselling or commanding are alternative ways of speaking, for which constructing indicative and imperative sentences is sufficient, and predicating as true or false are alternative ways of asserting. This enabled me in section 2 to dispense with things which are true or false independently of our speaking and thinking, and in section 3 I was able to give an analogous account of counselling rightly or wrongly without invoking equally dubious things which are good or bad independently of thought and speech, things from which a metaethical realist might wish to say our desires and counsels catch their rightness and wrongness.

Perhaps it will be objected that to talk of ways of speaking is too vague. Verbs of speaking collect up all kinds of adverbs of manner like 'poetically', 'ungrammatically', persuasively', 'arrogantly'. I reply that these signify manners in which we *speak* only inasmuch as they signify manners in which we assert or counsel, in which we predicate, quantify, order, forbid, explain. But perhaps I can best explain the notion of a form of speech which I am using by sketching a further use.

Verbs of being and becoming do not signify anything by themselves, there is no such thing as just being. But they combine with other words, adjectives or 'complements', to signify things. There are such things as being seated, being spherical. Similarly verbs of saying and thinking do not signify anything by themselves. There is no such thing as just saying or thinking. They combine with words like 'good' and 'bad', 'true' and 'false' to signify things. There are such acts as saying to be good or bad, saying to be true or false (which is the same as saying to be or not to be). But whereas verbs of being combine with complements (and quantifiers with nouns) to signify things that enter into the content of speech and thought, verbs of saying and thinking combine with 'good', 'true' and the rest to signify forms of speech and thought. Saying is

[12] See note 7 above.

saying to be good or bad, saying to be true or false, and also saying to be present or absent or few or many. Once we separate verbs of saying and thinking from the words that fill them out, both the verbs and those other words become baffling. Being, goodness and the rest make thought and speech intelligible rather as colour in glass makes it visible. It is easy to see the windows of Chartres. But if we removed all the colours, the windows would become invisible like the air around us, and colours by themselves have only very dubious existence.

Yearhaugh

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