NON-ASSERTORIC INFERENCE

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1. Like many contemporary writers, we consider inferences involving commands an undisputable fact of which any completely general theory of logic must take account.[1] Yet, stating and commanding are but two of (about) three thousand illocutionary acts;[2] and once one has broken with the dictum that only assertions *can* stand in logical relationships, there arises the possibility not of just two or three modes of inference, but rather of an indefinitely large number. At any moment of linguistic history there may be a finite number of illocutionary acts which can enter into inference patterns; but our resource of illocutionary acts, like our lexicon, may develop and change. Given our present linguistic resources, we submit that the following are valid inferences.

    (A) Shoot all traitors!
          <u>John is a traitor.</u>
          therefore, Shoot John!
    (B) If I request you to pass him, then I promise that if you do, you will be rewarded.
          <u>Please pass him.</u>
          therefore, I promise that if you pass him you will be rewarded.
    (C) If I both request and order you to leave, then I really want you to leave.
          Please leave.
          <u>Leave!</u>
          therefore, I really want you to leave.

The foregoing arguments, exhibited in a form a speaker might pedantically adopt in propounding an assertoric argument, will perhaps seem unnatural

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1. We are grateful to Hugues Leblanc and Gerald Vision for illuminating discussions of this paper.

2. See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (1962), Lecture XII.