In 1955 John Austin set out the tenets of speech act theory during a series of lectures he gave at Harvard University. Central to his argument was the premise that in addition to propositional content, utterances have “illocutionary force.” That is, in speaking we not only make references to the empirical world; we also convey our intentions. Whereas Austin’s concern was with classifying types of illocutionary force, Habermas’s conviction was that four universal types of illocutionary force (a.k.a. four validity claims) are necessarily linked to every utterance. A speech act will fail (i.e., it will be unacceptable to the hearer) if it is judged objectively false, socially nonnormative, subjectively disingenuous, or linguistically unintelligible. Think about it: There are four and only four reasons why people refuse to take what other people say at face value. To my knowledge, nobody has yet come up with a fifth reason why communications break down. Can you?