In the last chapter we offered, with the help of Austin, a performative analysis of Augustine’s advice to the preacher at the end of *De dono perseverantiae*, going on to read his four works as a whole through the lens the analysis provided. We encountered two obstacles in the course of the chapter, one of which we put down to an (albeit persistent) anomaly within Augustine’s own argument, concluding that it should be excised in the service of a reparative reading of the four works. The second obstacle presented more of a challenge, and we concluded that it brought us up against the limits of the analysis itself. Specifically, we argued that a performative analysis broke down in the face of the congregation’s identity over time and in relation to the eternal divine plan—which came to the fore in Augustine’s modified version of case A, in which the preacher addresses the congregation as those who have been chosen by God.

The present chapter has the purpose of supplementing the previous one at just the point where a performative analysis broke down. It will take its cue from the underexplored dimension of Augustine’s advice to the preacher identified at the end of the last chapter: the shifts in the group singled out for comment, or more specifically, the shifts in pronoun phrase (from ‘some of you’ to ‘you’ in case A; from ‘the rest of you’ to ‘if any of you’ in case B; and from ‘if any of you’ to ‘if any’ in cases C and D). It will treat these under the heading of ‘indexicality’, beginning with a linguistic definition of this phenomenon: as we will see, the personal pronoun ‘you’ is (in most of its uses) an indexical term. This will, in turn, yield a broader, analogous definition, rooted only loosely in the linguistic phenomenon.

I. **Indexicality**

I will follow Geoffrey Nunberg’s account of linguistic indexicality in ‘Indexicality and Deixis’. His will be the most helpful for our purposes, in
the first place because it complicates what he calls the standard picture in a way which gains a confirmatory (and therefore illuminating) foothold in Augustine's advice in case A; and in the second place because it draws on and overlaps with C.S. Peirce's account of the index, which in its wider resonances will be a bridge to our broader understanding of indexicality. For the latter, we will draw on Peirce's definition of the ‘vague sign’ (rather than specifically on his concept of the indexical sign) and its interpretation and development by Peter Ochs. In this first section we will offer a detailed exposition of Nunberg’s analysis, and will draw out the resonance with Peirce. This will enable a brief introduction of Peirce's vague sign. However, a fuller exploration of the latter in the light of Ochs's interpretive development will only be undertaken in the course of our analysis of Augustine’s advice, since the complex concepts involved will be most easily understood by way of examples. Nunberg’s theory will gain purchase in relation to case A (with ramifications for cases B to D), while Peirce and Ochs will be drawn on most extensively in respect of case B.

We will start out with a definition of linguistic indexicality informed by Nunberg's analysis, but which will gain further precision as we expound the latter. If it appears off-puttingly technical at first, it will become clearer over the course of the exposition. Indexical expressions are those whose reference is a function of their context of utterance, and whose meaning helps pick out the relevant aspect of the context for the purpose of determining the referent. In both respects they are to be contrasted with referential expressions such as proper names (e.g. Job, Israel, or the earth) or definite descriptions (e.g. the first book of the Bible), whose referents stay relatively constant across different contexts, and whose meaning contributes entirely to the content of what is being said in the utterance, rather than indicating an aspect of the context, which in turn becomes the basis for inferring the interpretive content. (We will explain this two-stage process in the case of indexicals below.) Paradigmatic examples of indexical expressions are the first and second person pronouns, ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘we’, demonstratives such as ‘this’ and ‘that’, and

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2 Nunberg 1993: 3. This is embodied in the ‘direct reference’ theories of indexicals developed by Kaplan and others (see Kaplan 1989).
4 For good, complementary descriptive and classificatory accounts of indexicality or deixis, see Fillmore 1997, Levinson 1983: 54–96, and Green 1989:1–35.
5 Cf. Nunberg 1993: 1 and Ricoeur 1992: 28–30. Highlighting the contextual sensitivity of indexicals does not imply the denial that all language is contextual; it points rather to a more specific and radical kind of contextuality.