SPEECH ACT THEORY AND DECONSTRUCTION

SPEECH ACT THEORY AND DECONSTRUCTION: A DEFENCE OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NORMAL AND PARASITIC SPEECH ACTS

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I examine a distinction made in Speech Act Theory between normal uses of language and uses of language that are said to be parasitic on them. Fictional, theatrical, comedic and metaphoric uses of language may be said to be parasitic on normal language in so far as their intelligibility requires a prior grasp of the rules or conventions of normal language such as is used in everyday cases of asserting, promising, marrying and ordering, for instance.

Jacques Derrida argued that uses of language could not be determined as exclusively either normal or parasitic and that thus such a distinction could not be made. That is, he argued that it was not possible to make a distinction between fictional promises and real life promises, for instance; or between literal uses of words and metaphorical uses. I show that the distinction can be made and that, although uses of language cannot be determined as exclusively either normal or parasitic in the work of J. L. Austin, they can be in that of John R. Searle.

In arguing for this thesis, I show how Searle, in his attempt to defend Austin and Speech Act Theory against Derrida's criticisms, failed to appreciate many aspects of Derrida's work and thus misconstrued his critique and defended Austin and Speech Act Theory against somewhat of a straw man.

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To My Parents

In every serious philosophical question uncertainty extends to the very roots of the problem.

We must always be prepared to learn something totally new.

Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Colour*

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

Works by Austin:

HDTW	*How to Do Things with Words*
PC	Performative-Constative
PP	*Philosophical Papers*

Works by Derrida:

Aft	Afterword
D	*Dissemination*
Diff	Différance
EHOG	*Edmund Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry'*
FSW	Freud and the Scene of Writing
Ltd	Limited Inc abc...*
MP	*Margins of Philosophy*
OG	*Of Grammatology*
Oto	Otobiographies
Pos	*Positions*
S&P	*Speech and Phenomena*
Sec	Signature Event Context*
Sp	*Spurs*
W&D	*Writing and Difference*

Works by Searle:

ALIA	Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts
E&M	*Expression and Meaning*
Int	*Intentionality*
LSFD	The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse
MCR	Meaning, Communication, and Representation
RD	Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida
SA	*Speech Acts*
TIA	A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts
WTUD	The Word Turned Upside Down

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* References to these works are given in two forms. The first number after the abbreviation refers to the *Glyph* edition the second (in parentheses) refers to the Northwestern University Press edition; see Derrida, *Limited Inc.*

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I examine, and defend in a certain form, the drawing of a distinction between normal uses of language and uses that are said to be parasitic on them. This distinction is made in the philosophies of J. L. Austin and John R. Searle. It was attacked by Jacques Derrida. I support Derrida's criticism of it in Austin's philosophy but defend its use by Searle. More specifically, I show that, although the distinction is defensible in both philosophies, it is only in Searle's that one can distinguish between speech acts that are exclusively either normal or parasitic.

The distinction was first introduced by Austin in work of his (most notably his *How to Do Things with Words*) in which he attempted to see language as a kind of social activity rather than merely as a matter of stating truly or falsely. Austin showed how language may be used to make promises or declarations (as well as assertions), to baptize or to marry, to bet or to express emotion. He also showed how such acts might fail. He called their failure, their being unhappy or infelicitous. Also he felt that these acts could be parasited. By this he meant that they could be used in novels, poems, jokes, on stage and even in quotations. There was something the matter with such parasitic uses which, Austin thought, was related to unhappiness.

Distinctions between uses of language that are happy or unhappy, and normal or parasitic, are also made by Searle in his theory (specifically in *Speech Acts*, *Expression and Meaning* and *Intentionality*). His way of accounting for them is different to Austin's. I show that the Searlean way is better. I do this largely by means of considering a penetrating critique of Austin's theory by Jacques Derrida in which he questions the possibility of making the distinctions that Austin makes given the theoretical apparatus that Austin adopts. I show that Derrida raises problems with

Austin's theory that are insuperable given Austin's mechanisms (some of these problems however may be due to his theory's not having been sufficiently developed); but I argue that, although Searle misunderstood Derrida's critique and defended Speech Act Theory against what was, in effect, a watered-down version of what Derrida had to say, Searle's theory can be defended against the types of criticism that Derrida brings against Austin and against those criticisms that Derrida explicitly brings against Searle. In other words, I argue that a distinction between normal speech acts and their parasites can be defended in the work of Searle but not in the work of Austin.

By way of further introducing the topic of this dissertation I shall present a characterization of the basic issues to be dealt with. The normal/parasitic distinction is sometimes rendered the normal/abnormal distinction and sometimes it is also said to account for two distinctions at a lower level of generality, viz. serious/non-serious and literal/non-literal. To distinguish between normal and parasitic language is to distinguish between uses of language that are primary and other uses that are in various ways dependent on them (or derived from them). This in turn presupposes that language is like an instrument which, although it have proper functions, may be used for others too. As such, it may be likened to a feather duster made to dust around fragile objects and in awkward corners. The properties of the duster however allow it to be used to tickle. Here dusting is the *primary* use and tickling is *secondary*.

If language is characterized in some such way, then this implies that language has proper functions, and that it can be intentionally used according to its functions or in secondary ways. The normal, serious, primary purpose of language will be intentionally to perform certain conventional acts such as asserting or promising, for instance. Other uses will be secondary. Uses that are not (necessarily) primarily concerned with the performance of conventional social activities include joking, writing poems and novels and teaching languages. For instance, in joking the point is to amuse. So if something is asserted or promised that will be a secondary consideration. Thus a primary function of language is made secondary and vice-versa. Similarly in writing poetry, the assertions and declarations

involved will be secondary to the aesthetic use of language. And in teaching a language, phrases of the language will not be used (at least not initially) to perform any conventional social activity but for pronunciation exercises, tests of comprehension and translation.

In one sense, a parasitic use of language is not a failed use. One can distinguish between normal uses of a language such as asserting, promising or commanding and the various failed attempts at these uses. For instance 'commanding' one's superior officer in an army will not succeed since a condition of giving a command is being in a position somehow superior to that of the person one is commanding. Such a 'command' will be a failure but it will not (or not always) be parasitic. One might, of course, issue such a command as a joke. If it is not a joke (or some other sort of parasite), for instance, then it will simply be a failed, 'unhappy' or 'infelicitous' command. To distinguish between normal and parasitic uses of language is not *per se* to distinguish between successful and failed uses. A parasitic use of language is not a mistaken use but rather is quite deliberate (or at least it may be so). So the normal/parasitic distinction is not the successful/failed distinction. We shall see however that, for Austin, they may be related.

It is important to be able to make distinctions between the happy and the unhappy and between the normal and the parasitic because without these distinctions Speech Act Theory would not be possible. If one could not make the normal/parasitic distinction, then one could never give the conditions under which a promise, for instance, would be successfully made. This is because a promise that could not be determined as serious or literal could not be essentially characterized just as one could not define what a duster was unless one could distinguish between its primary function and its secondary functions (which may not be enumerable). If one could not maintain a general difference between promises made by people playing roles on stage and promises made by the same people off stage, then one could not say that the 'promise' made on stage entailed commitments which the promise made off stage did not entail. One would not be able to say that in one case certain rules were in operation but

that some of them were suspended in the latter case (because of the nature of the context or because certain conventions were being invoked).

For Austin, in order to distinguish normal uses of language from parasitic uses, and similarly in order to distinguish successful from failed uses, one must consider their specific 'total' context — i.e. context including 'internal' features such as intentions and 'external' features such as a certain social situation. Uses of language cannot be unhappy or parasitic independently of their total context. These utterances have contexts that are proper to them (e.g. one says 'I declare you man and wife' at a wedding). The proper total context of a use of language is the social situation in which it is used but it also must include the user's intentions too since some utterances may not be determinable as normal or parasitic without also considering the utterer's intention (e.g. an unhappy promise is an insincere one and insincerity is largely a matter of 'internal' features).

For Searle, the distinction is made solely in terms of the utterer's (or writer's) intentions. Initially this makes his theory look more impoverished than Austin's since the differences between plays and novels, and real life, seem to be more than a matter of what their authors intended. Indeed such differences seem to be textual and contextual. But, as we shall see, Searle's intentional criterion (together with his drawing a logical distinction between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate) enables him to escape certain of Derrida's criticisms of Austin. It does this, as we shall see, by allowing that there may be no textual or contextual mark of the speech act in question which would be observable by any hearer (or reader).

Take some line of poetry and consider whether there is anything about it that tells whether it is a line of poetry or perhaps a mistaken use of language. Sometimes it may appear to be obvious that it is poetry (if the line is evidence of much skill, for instance). But at other times it will not be clear and one will (according to Austin) have to consider context. One could check, for instance, whether it was published in a book of poetry. Those learning English sometimes come up with rather interesting utterances that might in other contexts be taken as poetry. For instance,

they might come up with utterances that might seem to be complicated metaphors, rather than simply mistakes, were it not clear that the context in question was a person beginning to learn a language. For Searle, the only way of deciding whether such an utterance were intended metaphorically would be by discovering (in whatever manner) that the speaker (or writer) intended it metaphorically. There might be no textual or contextual mark of it.

In this dissertation I examine how such distinctions and presuppositions are expounded in the speech act theories of Austin and Searle. I examine the reasons for such distinctions, their feasibility and whether they stand up to close critical examination by Derrida. The latter made a very fundamental attack on the normal/parasitic distinction, on the distinction between happy and unhappy utterances, and on the presuppositions of (what he considered to be) any possible system that would embrace such distinctions. His examination of the type of framework in which such distinctions are made forces one to reconsider the basics of Speech Act Theory. The notions of 'proper' and 'total' contexts, which are fundamental to, and foundational in, Austin's Speech Act Theory, are shown to be indefensible. And it is because of this that there can be no nice discrimination of the serious from the non-serious, or linguistic hosts from their parasites in his theory. It no longer becomes possible to distinguish the normal from the parasitic except relatively or perspectivally.

I proceed as follows. First I outline (in Chapter Two) the main features of Austin's theory, especially that part of it which he calls 'Speech Act Theory'. I emphasize what he says about meaning, intentionality and context in order to clarify his understanding of the nature of language. Then I examine some of Searle's criticisms and modifications of Austinian Speech Act Theory. I pay especial attention to his distinction between literal sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning.

Then (in Chapter Three) I consider Austin's and Searle's ways of making the normal/parasitic distinction. I show how Austin relates parasitism to a certain kind of infelicity associated with misunderstanding or failing to 'secure uptake', and I point to initial problems with the

distinction in Austin's speech act theory. For example, some normal speech acts seem to be parasitic on what Austin's theory would characterize as parasites. Thus the normal speech act would seem sometimes to be a parasite. In this chapter too I show how useful Searle's distinction is between speaker's utterance meaning and literal sentence meaning in explaining the relation between normal speech acts and their parasites. I show how it enables him to explain how one utterance can function in many different ways. For instance, one utterance can be made as an assertion of a philosophical point, an indirect contradiction of a point made by someone else, and as a joke.

Next (in Chapter Four), by way of introducing Derrida's criticisms of Austin, I examine Derrida's treatment of traditional ways of making a distinction between speech and writing. But first I outline a basic concept in his philosophy which he uses in his criticism of Austin and Searle. This is the notion of 'iterability' (and 'iteration'). It is basically the notion of sameness in spite of difference; and it is intended to explain how things that are very different (e.g. the word 'cat' as written and as pronounced) can nevertheless be the same thing. Using this notion he argues that something, which he calls the 'Classical' theory of writing (supposedly common to all of Western thought and thus *a fortiori* to Austin), is wrong. He sees his attack on this theory (and the notions of irreducible polysemy and the permanent or structural possibility of failure that go hand in glove with his attack on this theory) as undermining the foundation of Austinian Speech Act Theory and, specifically, the normal/parasitic distinction. The foundation in question is the 'proper' context. Derrida sees Austin's characterization of the proper context as ordinary, normal and serious, and the concomitant exclusion from consideration of non-serious utterances, as enabling conditions of Speech Act Theory. He sees his investigation as showing that this putative foundation and the attempted exclusion of the parasitic, are arbitrary and, in fact, impossible. He affirms the permanent, structural possibility of parasitism and, as a consequence, the impossibility of Austinian and Searlean Speech Act Theory. I show however that his investigation does not compel one to agree that Speech Act Theory, as

such, is impossible but only that it needs to be revised. Indeed I show that Speech Act Theory survives in Searle.

Finally (in Chapter Five) I examine Searle's interpretation of Derrida's critique of Austinian Speech Act Theory. Here I show that Searle was largely misguided in his attack on Derrida mainly due to his not understanding Derrida's terminology well. However I show that, despite the failure of his critique of Derrida, his theory of normal and parasitic speech acts is defensible against Derrida's criticisms. More than this though, his theory is able to account for insights that Derrida has while including them in a theory that accounts for the uses of language in a systematic way. In short, his theory is able successfully to explain the relations of normal and parasitic uses of language in a way that is clearer and more systematic than Derrida's. It shows that Derrida's critique, or attempted deconstruction, of Speech Act Theory fails.

In short, this dissertation defends the view that the normal/-parasitic distinction is defensible and that, with Searle's theory of speech acts, it is possible to distinguish between normal speech acts and their parasites. I do this by means of rejecting Derrida's fundamental attack on the possibility of making the distinction and of distinguishing between normal uses of language and parasitic uses.

Chapter Two

SPEECH ACTS AND THEIR HAPPINESS

In this chapter I shall show what a speech act is and how it may be either happy or unhappy. In order to do this efficiently I must approach the matter systematically. Although it might seem that the first question that I should ask would be 'What is a speech act?', I shall first of all investigate the motivation for a theory of speech acts. I do this in order to show later on, after I have introduced the distinction between serious and parasitic speech acts, that, just as the statement (or 'constative') and the performative must be (in a sense) synthesized in order best to explain linguistic practice, so also the normal (or 'serious') and the parasitic must also be synthesized. I begin therefore by explaining how the speech act emerges from a synthesis of what are known as constatives and performatives. When I say that the two must be synthesized, I am essentially just saying that what was once seen as evidence of two different things is now seen as evidence of one thing with two dimensions (or general characteristics).

As well as showing how the speech act emerges, in this chapter I also show how it may be happy or unhappy (or 'felicitous' or 'infelicitous' — the difference in terminology here will not be significant in what I shall be saying). Later I shall show that, just as a general distinction cannot be made in Austin's theory (although it can in Searle's), between speech acts that are exclusively either serious or parasitic, so also a distinction between speech acts that are happy or unhappy cannot in general be made.

Since there are two main theories of speech acts, and since they differ significantly on the matter of serious and parasitic speech acts, in what follows I shall investigate the two theories (viz. the Austinian and the Searlean) separately. Later on it will be necessary to discriminate between criticisms that affect the distinction as made by Austin and those

that affect it as made by Searle. First I shall investigate Austin's theory and then I shall show what Searle changed and added. In this regard I shall pay especial attention to Searle's greater emphasis on the meaningful component of speech acts. Later I shall show how it plays a significant part in preserving the normal/parasitic distinction.

In line with the above-mentioned articulation of my proposed treatment of matters, I divide this chapter in the following manner: first, I investigate the development of the speech act from a synthesis of the constative and the performative; secondly, I consider Austin's speech act theory; and thirdly, I show how Searle's speech act theory is a development of it.

2.1 Austin's Rejection of the Constative/Performative Distinction

Austin's theory of speech acts emerges from his consideration, and rejection, of a distinction which he sees as central to philosophy of language up to his own work. This is the distinction between utterances that are meaningful, which are all thought to be statements of what is or is not the case, and utterances that are meaningless. This view holds that only statements are ever meaningful. But Austin rejects this pointing to another class of ordinary utterances which are neither meaningless nor constative (i.e. of the nature of a statement). He calls such non-constative, meaningful utterances 'performatives' since they are utterances the production of which, given certain conditions (to be investigated), serves as the performance of some conventional social act. So instead of the traditional constative/nonsense distinction Austin in effect postulates two distinctions: constative/performative and meaningful-utterance/meaningless-utterance. In this section I shall explain why Austin rejects the traditional distinction (as he sees it) and why he ultimately even rejects his own constative/performative distinction. I shall call his view between the rejection of the traditional distinction and the rejection of the constative/performative distinction Austin's theory of performatives. This I shall contrast with what took its place after the latter distinction was abandoned, *sc.* Speech Act Theory.

So to investigate the theory of performatives. The utterance of a performative, as already mentioned, is the performance of a conventional act through making a certain utterance in a certain context. For instance, saying 'I will' in response to the judge's or priest's question 'Will you take...?' at a marriage ceremony at which one is being married is *eo ipso* the act of marrying the person named. Those words do not report the event of one's marrying, rather they effect it. The utterance here of 'I will' does not assert anything which could be discovered to be either true or false. It states neither truly nor falsely that one is marrying, rather it makes it true that one is marrying. Nor, of course, does its being in the future tense mean that it is a prediction about what one will do.

There is an asymmetry between constatives and performatives which Austin expresses by talking about their different directions of fit [see *HDTW*, 47ff]. To state something is, as it were, to fit words to the world. The statement will be true if it does actually fit (however determined) and false otherwise. To utter a performative though is to fit the world to (one's) words — to use language to bring about a new state of affairs in the world. That is, a constative reports a state of affairs whereas a performative is a conventional means for bringing one about and often without further ado. For instance, if I say 'I promise...', then, without further ado, I have promised.[1]

A difference between the performance of a promise and, for example, a baptism is that in the former case but not in the latter uttering certain words is sufficient to perform the act. Simply saying 'I promise...' counts as promising whereas simply saying 'I baptise you...' does not count as baptizing without further ado. In order to baptise one must ordinarily (i.e. not in emergency cases) be some kind of religious cleric, e.g. a priest. Also, one must perform certain actions such as pouring water on the baby's brow or immersing it. Without these concomitant actions the utterance in question would not effect the child's baptism. Similarly, without the words there would be no baptism.

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[1] Here I am for the moment going along with Austin's assuming that those uttering these performatives and constatives are being 'serious'.

This draws attention to the importance of the context of a performative utterance. The utterance of certain words in a certain context constitutes a performative. What the words are and what the context is will have been established through convention.[2] Later I shall show that convention cannot 'establish' contexts but for now I shall, for the purposes of explication, let this pass. Performatives that are uttered in appropriate contexts are said to be 'happy' (or 'felicitous') as opposed to 'unhappy' (or 'infelicitous') [see *HDTW*, 14ff]. So, for instance, for the words 'I promise' to be a promise I cannot be in the situation where I have just been ordered, by someone in command over me, to do that very act I purportedly promise to do. More clearly, in the case of a baptism, the child must not be known to have been baptized already.

Not only this though; performatives may be assessed for happiness or unhappiness in another manner. A performative is defective if it is uttered insincerely. To say 'I promise...' while intending not to fulfill what one thereby promises is to promise defectively (as opposed to not promising at all as in the previous example). One's utterance is unhappy in that it has not been executed with the appropriate intentions, beliefs or attitudes.[3]

Just as a statement is judged, according to Austin, as to whether it corresponds to the state of affairs it purports to represent, so also a performative is judged as to whether it brings about the state of affairs it purports to. One judges a person's statement about a certain state of affairs by asking whether what he said was a true account of it. One

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[2] This is not to say that there will be some written document nor even that the rules in question will ever have been thematized. On conventions see David Lewis, *Convention: A Philosophical Study* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969).

[3] To promise while intending not to fulfill is to make a defective promise. This mirrors a factor of statements in a correspondence theory of truth: they may fail to refer to anything ('The present king of France is bald') or they may refer alright but simply be untrue [see *HDTW*, 20f]. Similarly, one may fail to promise or one may promise badly. Ultimately this makes Austin extend the happy-or-unhappy dimension of assessment to statements as well as performatives and it leads in part to the rejection of the constative/performative distinction.

judges a person's performative utterance purporting to bring about a certain state of affairs by judging whether it conventionally succeeded (if there is a possibility that it could have failed) or whether it was sincere (in certain cases where sincerity is germane). To take the case of promising, one will not have promised if one utters 'I promise...' and it is clear that there is no possibility of one's doing what one promises. In this case, it is conventionally accepted, such an utterance does not count as a promise. So this utterance would be unhappy and the person would not have managed to promise.

The various types of performative unhappiness must be investigated further. Infelicity is a matter of how performative utterances operate in a given context. This is the 'total speech act' or 'total speech situation' [*HDTW*, 52 & esp. 76 & 148]. It consists of both 'internal' and 'external' circumstances (or intentional and worldly circumstances). These two aspects of the total situation or context are approached by systematically outlining the types of things that can go wrong with a performative and thus, by contrast, what can go right. And it is worth noting here that a performative that is happy is one that is not unhappy. It is determined negatively by examining the total context to see whether there is anything wrong. This notion of total context (i.e. context including the speaker's intentional states) will be important when I come to consider criticisms of Austin in later chapters. I shall show later that, because a context cannot be 'totalized' in this manner, the performative (and more especially the speech act) cannot actually be determined.

Where a performative is unhappy due to external circumstances it is said to 'misfire'. This may be due to 'misinvocation' or 'misexecution'. In the former case conventions either do not exist as appealed to or are incorrectly appealed to. There are thus two types of misinvocation: 'non-plays' [see *HDTW*, 31, 31 n. 1, & 18 n. 1] and 'misapplications' [see *HDTW*, 17f]. The former is where a convention does not exist although one seems to be appealed to (as, for instance, would occur if a man were to stand his wife in front of him in company and utter 'I divorce you' [see *PP*, 238]); the latter is where a convention is wrongly applied (as, for example, occurs when a married man commits bigamy [see *HDTW*, 16f]).

In the case of 'misexecutions', the other type of misfire, the conventional procedures are not fully carried out [see *HDTW*, 17ff]. Here again there are two sorts: 'flaws' and 'hitches'. To take the former; if one party during the marriage ceremony says 'I will' and the other says 'I won't', then the marriage ceremony is 'flawed' [see *PP*, 238]. An example of a 'hitch' would be where one offers a bet but it is not accepted by anyone. Here, according to Austin, one has not succeeded in betting because the conventional procedure has not been completed [see *PP*, 238].

To complete the classification that Austin offers one must consider performatives that are unhappy due to intentional (or 'internal') circumstances.[4] These are 'abuses' rather than misfires and there again are two types: 'insincerities' and 'non-fulfillments' or breaches of committment [see *HDTW*, 16ff; *PP*, 238f; PC, 14f]. To promise without the intention of keeping to what one promises is to abuse the procedure [see *HDTW*, 16; *PP*, 239] or even, as Austin sometimes puts it, to abuse the *formula* 'I promise...' [see PC, 14]. A case of the abuse described as non-fulfillment is where one sincerely promises but does not fulfill one's promise [see *PP*, 239].[5]

Here is a schematic rendering of these distinctions, based on Austin's [see *HDTW*, 18]:

A. *Misfires*: Externally Unhappy Utterances.
   1. *Misinvocations*: appropriate act fails conventional criteria.
      a. *Non-Plays*: no appropriate convention.
      b. *Misapplications*: convention misapplied.

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[4] By 'internal' Austin does not mean some 'fictitious inward act', a spiritual inner *counterpart* of the action that is observable [see *PP*, 236; *HDTW*, 9ff]. This does not deny however that there are any 'offstage performers' but only that they are the *true* performers, as it were, words being *merely* signs of them.

[5] In a later chapter I shall have occasion to consider whether, because of facts such as these (viz. misfires and abuses), an account of language will have what might broadly be termed an ethical-political dimension.

2. *Misexecutions*: appropriate act rendered defective.
   a. *Flaws*: conventional procedure partly rejected.
   b. *Hitches*: conventional procedure not completed.

B. *Abuses*: Internally Unhappy Utterances.
   1. *Insincerities*: appropriate intention(s) absent.
   2. *Non-Fulfillments*: intention(s) not fully carried out.

This typology of infelicitous performatives does not purport to be a table of *categories* of infelicity. Austin is quick to point out that it "is not complete, and they are not mutually exclusive; they never are" [*PP*, 239; cp. *HDTW*, 23f]. As an instance of the types' not being mutually exclusive, he gives the example of promising a donkey to give it a carrot. Is this a non-play (there being no convention of promising to donkeys) or a misapplication (the convention of promising not extending to donkeys)? Austin thinks that it is perhaps both. A case of possible 'overlap' would be where, at a ship's launching, the wrong person seizes the champagne bottle and proclaims 'I name this ship the *Generalissimo Stalin*' while smashing it against the ship's bow and then kicking away the chocks. Again Austin is not worried about how to classify this act (wrong-person-right-act or incomplete procedure, either a misapplication or a hitch).

This typology is not complete either because, emphasizing that performatives are actions, Austin points out that they are "subject to certain whole dimensions of unsatisfactoriness to which all actions are subject but which are distinct — or distinguishable — from what we have chosen to discuss as infelicities" [*HDTW*, 21]. Here he has in mind such factors as being constrained to act, as when one promises with a knife to one's throat, or generally acting unintentionally.

Austin is thus not proposing his list of infelicities as either complete or mutually exclusive; nor is he claiming that no one could do any better.

> Thus the way we should classify infelicities in different cases will be perhaps rather a difficult matter, and may even in the last resort be a bit arbitrary. But of course lawyers ... have invented all kinds of technical terms and have made numerous rules about different kinds of cases, which enable them to classify fairly rapidly what in

> particular is wrong in any given case [*PP*, 240; cp. *HDTW*, 23].

Here Austin is being pragmatic; he is in effect, as his typical recourse to the habits of lawyers evidences, saying that our classification will largely depend upon our concerns.

Conventions are in fact, according to Austin, inherently vague:

> It is inherent in the nature of any procedure that the limits of its applicability, and therewith, of course, the 'precise' definition of the procedure, will remain vague. There will always occur difficult or marginal cases where nothing in the previous history of a conventional procedure will decide conclusively whether such a procedure is or is not correctly applied to such a case [*HDTW*, 31].

Conventions, however they arise, clearly apply to certain activities and not so clearly to others. It may never have been necessary for a society clearly to have used a convention in a certain way and in that case it will not have been important for that society to have been clear about that particular case. Austin's example here, although it is rather bizarre (it concerns baptizing a dog), does show how difficult it is to decide what type of infelicity would be involved in trying to baptize an animal; the reason, or part of the reason, is the fact that society does not have to consider such cases. It is, so to speak, beyond the scope of (the use of) that convention.

So Austin has put forward a theory of performatives which reflects the vagueness of conventions in that it refuses to categorize nicely the various ways one may make, or fail to make, a performative utterance. At this point he only seems to be certain, on the one hand, that there are meaningful utterances that cannot be either true or false but only happy or unhappy, and, on the other hand, that the only other meaningful utterances are capable of truth or falsity but not of happiness or unhappiness [see *PP*, 235; *HDTW*, 5]. Constatives are assessed for truth or falsity and performatives are assessed for happiness or unhappiness.

Eventually Austin finds that performatives can be assessed in a true-or-false dimension and constatives in a happy-or-unhappy dimension. This will render the constative/performative distinction either just fuzzy or useless, and will motivate their synthesis. But before I come to that I shall briefly contrast the *logic* of performatives with that of constatives.

This, together with a demonstration of how constatives can be assessed for felicity and performatives for truth-value, will enable us to consider whether the constative/performative distinction is just fuzzy but still useful or simply not useful.

With regard to the logic of performatives and constatives Austin considers *presupposition*, *implication* and *entailment*. Statements are said to imply other statements (or the truth or falsity of other statements) whereas acts are not said to imply other acts. Similarly, constatives presuppose certain states of affairs and, together with other statements, entail certain conclusions whereas acts are not said to presuppose or entail anything. My act of sneezing, for example, does not logically presuppose, imply or entail any other act or statement. If performatives are acts, then one would likewise expect that they would not presuppose, imply or entail anything.

Consider Austin's examples of presupposition, implication and entailment. Here are three sentences he examines:

(1) 'All John's children are bald, but John has no children.'

(2) 'The cat is on the mat, but I don't believe it.'

(3) 'All the guests are French, but some of them aren't.' [PC, 17]

With regard to (1), the first conjunct presupposes that John has children and thus that the statement 'John has children' is true. The second conjunct contradicts this. Thus the statement is involved in a contradiction since it denies what it presupposes.

Turning to (2), notice that, although the first part presupposes neither the second part nor its contrary (the cat may be on the mat with or without my believing it), to *assert* the first conjunct implies that one believes it (if one ignores lying, joking, etc.); it thus implies that it would be true for the utterer of the first conjunct also to assert 'I believe the cat is on the mat' and false for him to assert the contrary. Since he does assert the contrary, his assertion contradicts what his asserting it implies that he believes.

Similarly, the utterer of (3) contradicts himself. To take the first part of his claim, 'All the guests are French' entails that 'It is not the case that some of the guests are not French'. But the second part of the assertion, viz. 'some of them aren't', that is 'Some of the guests are not French', entails 'It is not the case that all the guests are French'. So the first part of the sentence entails the contradiction of the second part and the second part of the sentence entails the contradiction of the first part. That is,

(3) $\forall x\,(Fx \rightarrow Gx) \;\&\; \exists x\,(Fx \;\&\; -Gx)$
(i.) $\forall x\,(Fx \rightarrow Gx) \rightarrow -\exists x\,(Fx \;\&\; -Gx)$
(ii.) $\exists x\,(Fx \;\&\; -Gx) \rightarrow -\forall x\,(Fx \rightarrow Gx)$

The first conjunct of (3) entails the contradiction of the second; and the second conjunct entails the contradiction of the first. Thus (3) is a contradiction.

Austin shows next that there are factors similar to presupposition, implication and entailment that concern performatives: "these three ways of failing to get by correspond to three of the ways in which a performative utterance may be unhappy" [PC, 18]. Here too there are three examples:

(4) 'I bequeath you my watch, but I haven't got a watch.'

or

Not owning a watch, saying 'I bequeath you my watch.'

(5) 'I promise to be there, but I have no intention of being there.'

or

Not intending to be there, saying 'I promise to be there.'

(6) 'I welcome you, but get to Hell out of my house.'

or

In the course of abusing a guest, saying 'I welcome you.'

or

Saying 'I welcome you', but proceeding to abuse the guest.[6]

From what has been said above about infelicities it should be clear that (4) is a misapplication since the convention of bequeathing is invoked but cannot be applied. Also (5) is an abuse of the institution of promising since it involves insincerity. And (6) is also an abuse but, in this instance, that of non-fulfillment. Austin in this context does not use all of these terms but it may help in what follows to have them fixed as such.

These three examples of performative infelicities show similarities with the invalid forms of reasoning associated with the constatives in the first three examples. Compare (1) and (4): just as 'All John's children are bald' presupposes (given an existential interpretation of 'all') that John has children, so 'I bequeath you my watch' can be said to presuppose that I own a watch.[7] So the claim is stronger than merely pointing out that bequeathing a watch involves having one to bequeath; the claim is that there is an interesting similarity between this involvement and presupposition in so far as the prerequisite for genuinely bequeathing a watch is that one should own one, just as the prerequisite for making genuine assertions about John's children is that John should have children (or that 'John has children' should be true or, at least, be believed to be true).

With regard to (2) and (5): Austin says that

> Just as my saying that the cat is on the mat implies that I believe it is, so my saying I promise to be there implies that I intend to be there. ...If we don't hold the belief, or again don't have the intention, appropriate to the context of our utterance, then in each case there is a lack of sincerity and abuse of the procedure [PC, 18f].

Just as making statements implies that one has certain beliefs, so similarly uttering certain performatives implies that one has certain intentions. If one in either case does not, then one is abusing either the convention of stating truly (although it is not clear that there is such a *convention*) or of promising. In the one case one will be generally expected to be telling

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6 See PC, 18f. Here (6) is my extrapolation from what Austin says.

7 Surprisingly, Austin changes from 'All John's children are bald' to 'John's children are bald' at this stage — presumably to avoid this problem of the existential interpretation of 'All'.

the truth as one sees it and, in the other, promising something that one actually intends to perform.

Regarding (3) and (6): here Austin's attempt to find a parallel is a little more strained. Entailment has to do with the compatibility of statements as to their truth-value: 'All the guests are French' and 'Some of the guests are not French' cannot both be true in the same universe of discourse. Making the first claim commits me to holding claims that are consistent with it. Saying 'I welcome you' also involves commitments, specifically to behave welcomingly and not abusively. Just as accepting 'All the guests are French' requires one also to accept 'Some of the guests are French', so, somewhat similarly, 'I welcome you' requires treating you welcomingly (especially in what one goes on to say) on pain of being incoherent or capricious. In greeting, just as in making assertions, one will be generally expected to be consistent (construing this word broadly enough to avoid equivocation).

So far it has been shown how (4) looks like (1); (5), like (2); and (6), like (3). Austin however also wants to see things the other way around where instead of (1), (2) and (3) being the paradigms, (4), (5) and (6) are. He wants to show that just as (4) seems to involve presupposition, (5) implication and (6) entailment, so, similarly, (1) seems to involve a misfire, (2) to involve an abuse of procedure (*sc.* insincerity) and (3) also to involve an abuse of procedure (*sc.* non-fulfillment).

Consider first (1) as a type of misfire. A performative that misfires (by means of non-play, misapplication, flaw or hitch) is said to be 'void' and so similarly may a statement that only purports to refer:

> we can take over for [the] doctrine [of the constative] the term 'void' as employed in the doctrine of the unhappiness of the performative. The statement on the subject of John's children is, we may say, 'void for lack of reference', which is exactly what lawyers would say about the purported bequest of a watch. So here is a first instance in which a trouble that afflicts statements turns out to be identical with one of the unhappinesses typical of the performative utterance [PC, 18].

Just as the performative is only purported, so also the statement is only a purported statement (on the ultimately perhaps unacceptable assumption that a statement must be exclusively either true or false); in both cases

there is lacking some factor which could make the utterance happy. Alternatively one can say that in both cases there is presupposed some fact or event which does not actually obtain.

The case regarding (2) is clearer. Saying that the cat is on the mat implies that one believes it is because it is nonsense to say 'The cat is on the mat, but I don't believe it'. This is not to deny that both conjuncts can be true together, but only that they can be truly *asserted together*. Austin wants to say that there is an abuse of procedure here too. The convention of stating something is for stating truly to the best of one's knowledge. Not to do so is to be insincere. Even if (2), as it stands, is convincingly characterized as insincere (and it is not), it is such nonsense that, rather than believing that someone who makes it is being insincere, one would believe that they were perhaps mentally ill. However if one did not believe that the cat were on the mat but asserted that the cat were on the mat, an alternative version of (2) [see PC, 17], then one would clearly be being insincere and would be universally regarded as being so. Asserting what one does not believe might, in this case, be considered an abuse of the convention of assertion.[8]

Austin also shows that (3) may be construed as a non-fulfillment or 'breach of committment'. He rhetorically asks whether, having claimed that 'All the guests are French', I do not "commit myself in a more of less rigorous fashion to behaving in future in such-and-such a way, in particular with respect to the statements I will make?" [PC, 19]. Clearly like (6) there is abuse involved in (3). One will expect someone to derive the statement 'Some of the guests are French' rather than 'Some of the guests are not French' in a way similar to the way one expects someone who says 'Welcome!' to behave welcomingly.

In his comparison of the logic of constatives and performatives, Austin is successful in showing interesting similarities between the compatibility of conventional acts in society and the compatibility of

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[8] There is however no general convention that one should only assert what one believes. Joking and flattering are two of many exceptions here. But I shall leave such cases to be discussed later. Then one can examine how much leaving them out of account vitiates this study.

utterances in rational speech. There is the similarity between denying what one presupposes and bequeathing what one does not own. Also, saying what one does not believe, or asserting that one does not believe what one says, is similar to promising something that one does not intend to fulfill, or promising something and saying that one does not intend to fulfill one's promise. Likewise denying what one's assertions entail is like committing oneself to a certain course of action and then acting in a contrary manner. Such similarities show at least that constatives and performatives are similar in the ways they are bound up with the conventions of social life. They both either fit or fail to fit happily into the total speech situation, or context, and they both commit the utterer to accepting other statements or to behaving in certain ways.

In *HDTW* Austin concludes this investigation of the logic of constatives and performatives by pointing out that "there is a danger of our initial and tentative distinction between constative and performative utterances breaking down" [*HDTW*, 54; cp. *PP*, 251]. Considering the happy-or-unhappy dimension of assessment he points out that it "may infect statements (or some statements)" just as consideration of truth-or-falsity "may infect performatives (or some performatives)" [*HDTW*, 55]. The language of danger, breakdown and infection is noticeable and I shall examine it more closely later.[9]

What should one conclude from all of this? That there is no constative/performative distinction? That there is no *exact* constative/performative distinction but only a fuzzy one? Should the concepts of constative and performative be given up? It does not follow that, because a distinction is not without exception, it is not a valid distinction.[10] Failure to find a criterion (or set of criteria) to distinguish constatives

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[9] Austin also considers various grammatical and lexicographical criteria of performativeness. His reasons for rejecting these are convincing. But I shall not go into them here [see *PP*, 241-3; *HDTW*, 56-64].

[10] Here I accept this principle as obvious. It is, however, disputed, as I shall show in a later chapter. Derrida categorically rejects it. He also thinks he can undermine Searle's speech act theory on the basis of showing some of his distinctions to be fuzzy. But later I shall defend it. See Chapter Five.

from performatives does not mean that there is no such distinction. The fact that one recognizes that the criteria do not always work shows that one is able to make the distinction but is simply not able to state a rule whereby one can distinguish them. However, it shows that there is a danger of the "initial and tentative distinction between constative and performative utterances breaking down" [*HDTW*, 54]. This appears to be Austin's attitude, or fear, in the first five lectures of *HDTW*. However in Lecture VI and VII, before the introduction of his Speech Act Theory, Austin abandons his apparent worry about not finding some criterion that would be foolproof.

In fact Austin abandons the constative/performative distinction because his investigation of possible criteria leads him to appreciate a better way of dealing with the issues involved.

> It is time then to make a fresh start on the problem. We want to reconsider more generally the senses in which to say something may be to do something, or in saying something we do something (and also perhaps to consider the different case in which *by* saying something we do something) [*HDTW*, 91f].

His investigation of the constative/performative distinction can be seen to serve as a warrant for his proceeding to treat all utterances as in a sense performative.[11] Now he will, instead of speaking of performatives and constatives, speak of speech acts. This need not be taken to imply that Austin thinks that a constative/performative distinction cannot be made. Obviously it can be, since it is, but it cannot be done precisely and even where there seem to be clear cases of constatives, the fact that they can be preceded by 'I state...' or 'I assert...' shows that they could conceivably be performative.

Austin's investigation of the constative/performative distinction may be viewed (whether or not it was intended to be) as a dialectical investigation. It starts out with two apparently separate classes: utterances

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[11] L. W. Forguson makes a similar point: "The important point that Austin saw ... is that there really *is* no good reason to distinguish between performative and other *sorts* of utterances at all." Forguson, 'In Pursuit of Performatives', in K. T. Fann, ed., *Symposium on J. L. Austin* (New York: Humanities Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 419.

that are true or false but not happy or unhappy (statements or constatives) and utterances that are happy or unhappy but not true or false (performatives). But then with claims, as it were, from the performative side that some so-called constatives look somewhat performative, and claims from the constative side that some performatives have a constative dimension, the distinction begins to dissolve, as it were. One sees how much like performatives constatives are and vice-versa. The upshot of this dialectic is a synthesis of the performative and the constative as the speech act. I shall show in the next section how speech acts may be said to have performative and constative dimensions.

The speech act thus arises from a dissatisfaction with constative/performative terminology which in turn arises from dissatisfaction with the statement/nonsense distinction. Each step marks a better model for interpreting linguistic phenomena and is warranted by its plausibility and its strengths as compared to the previous model. One could say that Austin rejects constative/performative as an *opposition* between two types of acts but not as a distinction between dimensions of one act.

Ultimately therefore the constative/performative distinction is not abandoned because it is useless or fuzzy but because it seemed that it might break down on further investigation and, more importantly, a consideration of it leads to a better approach, one which can deal with linguistic phenomena, especially those that cannot be determined as exclusively either constative or performative, without making that distinction. Later I shall show how similar points may be made about the other distinctions, especially the normal/parasitic distinction.

2.2 Austin's Theory of Speech Acts

Having examined what he calls the 'sea-change' [*HDTW*, 150] that his theory undergoes during the first seven lectures of *HDTW*, as a result of which all language use comes to be viewed as having a performative and a constative dimension, Austin proceeds in the remaining five lectures to investigate speech acts, i.e. those units of speech that have both a performative and a constative dimension.

The speech act can be investigated under three different headings: (1) as meaningful speech, (2) as speech with a certain conventional force, and (3) as speech with a certain non-conventional effect. Here (1) can be regarded as the speech act's constative dimension while (2) and (3) can be regarded as together constituting its performative dimension. The first of these in turn can be investigated under three subheadings: (a) the production of the actual noises that are, so to speak, the 'vehicles' of meaning, (b) the production of certain words in certain syntactical order and in a certain language by means of the production of those noises, and (c) the production of the latter to communicate a specific message, usually but not necessarily about a concrete situation.

To introduce Austin's terminology: the speech act as meaningful utterance is the *locutionary* act; as meaningful utterance with a certain conventional (performative) force, it is an *illocutionary* act; as meaningful utterance with a certain conventional force non-conventionally bringing about a certain effect, it is a *perlocutionary* act.[12] The locutionary act is at one level the production of certain noises and as such it is dubbed the *phonetic* act; through the production of those noises the speaker intentionally produces words in syntactic arrangements and, in this respect, the act is called a *phatic* act; finally through the production of words in syntactic arrangements, with certain intentions and in certain contexts, it conveys certain messages and is in this respect dubbed a *rhetic* act.

With regard to the scope of this section: various of Austin's critics suggest alternative ways of sectioning the speech act. But I shall be concerned only with what Austin said about the various aspects of speech acts and whether that is acceptable. I propose first of all to investigate the locutionary act under its three headings and then the illocutionary act. The perlocutionary act will be mentioned briefly and mainly to indicate the limits of the illocutionary act. Then I shall investigate the problematic distinction between the meaning and force of an

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12 The words 'illocution' and 'perlocution' are formed from the Latin words for 'in' and 'by'. An illocution is what one does *in* making a locution; a perlocution is what one does *by* making a locution.

utterance, the question being why Austin does not assimilate the force of an utterance to its meaning.[13]

With regard to the locutionary act, Austin claims that in order for there to be a speech act certain noises must be produced by the human voice: "to say anything is ... always to perform the act of uttering certain noises..., and the utterance is a phone" [*HDTW*, 92]. This is obviously untrue, since one can say something by means of writing, the production of graphemes. There are also many other 'vehicles' (so to speak) of speech, other sign-systems such as semaphore, Morse code, smoke signals, etc. At one point however Austin allows that utterances can be in the form of writing. This is when he speaks of "the utterance (in writing) of the sentence" [*HDTW*, 57]. It is clear however that he considers spoken language to be the paradigm of utterance and writing to be its "rather crude" reproduction [see *HDTW*, 74]. I shall consider this matter in Chapter Four where I shall show how it can be criticized in such a manner as to unsettle the foundations of Austin's speech act theory.

Before considering the phatic act I should remark that, whereas phones are just noises, phonemes are the sound-units of a particular language. So we must not take Austin to be distinguishing between phonemic and non-phonemic noises at the level of the phonetic act. His 'phone' is not yet a phoneme. Although Austin does not say this, what he goes on to say, as we shall see, calls for this. It is at the phatic level then that actual languages are first considered. Here one utters

> certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types belonging to *and as* belonging to a certain vocabulary, in a certain construction, i.e. conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar, with a certain intonation, &c [*HDTW*, 92].

Here the phones become phonemes, which intentionally express words from the lexicon of a certain language, and are intentionally produced in an order prescribed by the syntactic rules of that language. The phones are produced as conforming to the phonemic, lexical and syntactic conventions

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[13] This question should not be confused with the question of whether the meaning of an utterance may determine its force (and thus whether the locution/illocution distinction is worth making). I shall consider this, in the next section, when I deal with Searle, who holds such a view.

of a certain language. I take it that this does not mean that the phemes (as the results of phatic acts are called) are always *well* pronounced or *well* formed sentences. One does not cease to speak a language if one mispronounces words within certain limits (for instance, native English speakers do not fail to speak Russian merely because they cannot roll, or trill, their r's).[14] Also, one does not cease to speak a language if one makes certain syntactic errors, again within certain limits (such as, for instance, 'If I would have been there, I would have seen it'). These limits would probably be determined by the ability of another speaker of the language either mentally to correct the mistake or to get the intended sense in spite of the mistake.[15]

To pass from the phonetic act to the phatic act one must have certain intentions conforming to certain conventions: one must intend one's phones to express utterances that conform to the conventions of a certain language. The monkey that produces phones indistinguishable from those that the English speaker produces when he says 'go' does not say the word 'go' because he did not intend his phonetic act to conform to the conventions of English. His act is not an intentional act in accordance with conventions [*HDTW*, 96].

To show that merely uttering phones is not the same as uttering phonemes, words and phrases, consider the following example of Austin's. One is asked the following trick question: 'If cold water is iced water, what is cold ink?' One responds: 'Iced ink'.[16] Here one intentionally produces the phonemes /ist'ink/ but the phones one produced could also be

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14 This matter is discussed by Willard Van Orman Quine in his *Word and Object*, Studies in Communication Series, ed. Leo L. Beranek *et al* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1960), 85-90.

15 The issue of how speakers interpret such ungrammatical (or otherwise putatively deviant) utterances is dealt with by Donald Davidson in his 'A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs', in *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality: Intentions, Categories, Ends*, edited by Richard E. Grandy and Richard Warner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 157-174. I shall further consider these issues and this paper in a later chapter.

16 See George Pitcher, 'Austin: A Personal Memoir' in Berlin *et al*, *Essays on J. L. Austin* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), 23; cp. *HDTW*, 124.

interpreted as the phonemes /i'stink/ although they were not intended as such. Or, since Austin does not speak in terms of phonemes, one would have uttered the phones that go to make up the utterance of 'I stink' but one would not have uttered those words since one had not that intention as the context makes clear, the relevant context here being the fact that one was asked about iced liquids. This shows the importance of context of utterance: it is context, including the speaker's intentions (i.e. 'total' context), that determines which phatic act the phonetic act gives rise to.

Intentionally conforming to linguistic conventions in specific contexts gives rise to rhetic acts which Austin describes as being "generally to perform the act of using [a] pheme or its constituents with a certain more or less definite 'sense' and a more or less definite 'reference' (which together are equivalent to 'meaning')" [*HDTW*, 93].[17] It is clear, although Austin does not actually say so, that it is the total context that determines what rhetic act, if any, is performed in the performance of a phatic act. One can utter a pheme as an example of a piece of English, for instance, in which case it will not be a rheme (as the product of a rhetic act is called) since it will not be *used* to convey anything. Such a production of the pheme is a mere *mention* (although Austin does not use this term here). The context generally makes it clear how or whether the speaker intended to use the pheme.[18] We shall see later that Austin excludes mentions as not being serious speech acts but rather parasites.

The relation between phemes and rhemes is somewhat complex. To state the matter briefly first, change of context can affect the same pheme to produce different rhemes but context cannot affect different phemes to produce the same rheme. That is, the same pheme, or different tokens of the same type, can be used to express different rhemes in

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[17] Austin qualifies this somewhat by allowing that one might have rhetic acts which do not refer, e.g. 'All triangles have three sides' [see *HDTW*, 97].

[18] Cf. Forguson's contrast of the phatic and the rhetic as the determinable and the determinate in his 'Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts', in Berlin *et al*, *op. cit.*, 163ff.

different contexts but different phemes, or tokens of different types, can never be used to express the same rheme. So different phemes cannot express the same rheme but the same pheme can express different rhemes. The rheme, in other words, is not the same as a proposition in that it is tied to a specific pheme. All Austin will allow is that two different phemes can be 'rhetically equivalent' [see *HDTW*, 97f].

The trouble with this distinction is that there seems *prima facie* to be no point to it. To say that two phemes are rhetically equivalent but do not express the same rheme seems to be gratuitous hair-splitting. However Austin claims that it is important to keep the distinction in mind. Further, he seems to think that, properly speaking, different phemes do not express the same statement since he says that rhetically equivalent acts express 'the same statement', putting the latter three words between inverted commas, but in another sense not the same statement where the identity of the rheme is in question, and here those three words are not put between inverted commas. I take it that these factors show that Austin may be at least suspicious of such entities as propositions. He may not want to allow for different expressions' being of the same proposition.

I interpret Austin's distinction as follows: the rheme is the product of the rhetic act; it is what is stated in a statement, promised in a promise, ordered in an order, etc. Various of these products may be equivalent in that they have meanings that would generally be regarded as in practice substitutable for one another. They are thus rhetically equivalent. If we interpret Austin in this manner we can see how it allows him to avoid idealist, or idealist-sounding, entities such as propositions. He thinks he would be committed (as we shall see) to some such metaphysical or language-transcendent entity were he to allow that two different phemes could express the same rheme.[19]

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[19] Clearly a theory that is committed to less postulated entities is better than one that is committed to more (all other things being equal). At least, this is true if one accepts Occam's Razor. Austin's attempt to do without propositions may be construed as an exercise in caution and not necessarily as an avowal of the view that propositions are necessarily language-transcendent entities and thus possibly redundant.

Austin's move away from his theory of the performative to Speech Act Theory is a move away from such (possibly) ideal entities towards the concrete. He contrasts the two theories respectively as the 'special' and the 'general' theory,[20] and advocates the need for the general theory as one which would avoid the traditional theory's problems:

> the need for the general theory arises simply because the traditional 'statement' is an abstraction, an ideal, and so is its traditional truth or falsity....
>
> ...The total speech act in the total speech situation is the *only actual* phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating [*HDTW*, 148].

This clearly expresses Austin's dislike of abstract entities such as the 'statement'. Since the proposition is (or, at least, may be) such an abstract, ideal entity, I take it that Austin's remarks similarly apply to it.[21] He thus stresses the rhetic act by contrast as a dimension of an actual phenomenon. Rather than saying that some information was communicated or conveyed, Austin prefers to see information as an effect.[22] We shall see that Searle does not think that his committment to the proposition commits him to language-transcendent entities.

Next, I shall contrast the locutionary act with the illocutionary act. The question to be asked here is whether the force of an utterance is not part of its meaning (and thus whether Austin's notion of locution is not too narrow).[23] Is it not true to say that 'The cat is black' means

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[20] He does not specify that of which the theories are special and general forms but it is presumably language.

[21] In an earlier paper Austin assimilates the philosopher's use of 'proposition' to his use of 'the meaning of a sentence' [see *PP*, 118f]. Also he speaks of the notion with clear disapproval in a work written around the time of *HDTW* [see *PP*, 169]. In the latter paper Austin argues against construing facts as bogus entities as an example of which he gives propositions.

[22] I shall point out below how Derrida regarded this as a valuable development in the theory of communication.

[23] In the next section I shall show that, for Searle, the meaning of an utterance sometimes determines its force (and thus that the distinction between locutions and illocutions is not sufficiently general). He however does not assimilate meaning and force. This is what I am examining here.

that the cat is black and that similarly 'I promise' means that I promise? To clarify the question, it is true that 'The cat is black' means that the cat is black and that 'I promise' means that I promise; but is the way that the first utterance means what it means the *same* as, or *similar* to, the way that the second utterance means what it means? For Austin, I suggest, the two senses of 'means' are to be distinguished and rightly so. Austin marks this type of distinction by calling the first the meaning or sense-cum-reference of an utterance and the second, the force of an utterance. Thus, 'The cat is black' said of a specific cat in a specific context means that that cat is black, in other words it refers to that cat and attributes blackness to it. On the other hand, 'I promise' means that I promise in that it has the force of bringing it about that I have undertaken to do something. For instance, if I have just said 'I will be there' (which might either be a prediction or a promise), the 'I promise' indicates that my utterance has the force of a promise and not of a prediction. It is in this sense of 'means' that one can say that 'I will be there' means that I promise to be there. To conflate these two senses of 'means' would instigate confusion: meaning, on one construal, is sense and reference and, on another, is force. In what follows I shall use 'means' (and its cognates) only in its first sense.

In order to clarify the nature of illocution and to explain why Austin says that the illocutionary force of an utterance is *not* to be construed as a consequence of the locutionary act of uttering it [see *HDTW*, 114], I shall now consider the perlocutionary act, which *is* said to be a consequence of the locutionary act, and distinguish it from the illocutionary act.

The perlocutionary act, as already mentioned, is the bringing about of a certain effect by means of the use of language, that effect being non-conventionally brought about. A man who says to his wife, for instance, 'I promise you a diamond ring' may please her. There is no convention though whereby uttering 'I promise you a diamond ring', or promising something, or even promising specifically good things (even diamond rings), pleases its audience. The effect was purely 'natural', we may say. There is however a convention, as already indicated, whereby one

who utters 'I promise' thereby promises. The utterance in question conventionally brings it about that a diamond ring was promised but non-conventionally brings it about that a woman was pleased. The conventional effect, to use provisionally the language of cause and effect, is the illocutionary effect and the non-conventional effect is the perlocutionary effect.

The act was an illocutionary act of promising and a perlocutionary act of pleasing. However, Austin warns that "we must avoid the idea ... that the illocutionary act is a *consequence* of the locutionary act" [*HDTW*, 114].

> What we do import by the use of the nomenclature of illocution is a reference, not to the consequences (at least in any ordinary sense) of the locution, but to the conventions of illocutionary force as bearing on the special circumstances of the occasion of the issuing of the utterance [*HDTW*, 115].

Phatic acts and rhetic acts are not the consequences of phonetic acts. We have already seen why this is so: the noises must be made with the intention of conforming to the lexical and syntactic conventions of a particular language. Austin wants to point out now that illocutionary acts, similarly, are not the consequences of performing locutionary acts. They are not consequences "in any ordinary sense" because bringing something about by intending to conform to convention and by being understood to do so, is not a matter of effecting the state of affairs in question so much as holding it to obtain. Thus, saying 'I promise' does not *causally* bring it about that I promise; rather it *is* (or is constitutive of) the fact that I promise.[24]

However, in some cases it may not be possible to decide whether an act is illocutionary or perlocutionary. As an example of an act which could be construed as either illocutionary or perlocutionary, Austin mentions a man's swinging his stick. This act may be equivalent to his saying 'I warn you' in which case it is illocutionary or it may be equivalent to his speaking with an (unintentional) 'edge' to his voice

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[24] Since no special circumstances are required in order to promise (as opposed to finding the defendant guilty in court) the reference in the above quotation to 'special circumstances' may be ignored.

which serves as a warning to his audience (that he is not to be trifled with, for instance) in which case the fact that the audience is warned is a perlocutionary effect of his swinging his stick. The issue here is whether swinging one's stick is conventional and, as Austin perceptively remarks, "it is difficult to say where conventions begin and end" [*HDTW*, 119]. The act could be classified either way.[25]

P. F. Strawson claims, against Austin, that there are illocutions that are not conventional. He gives three examples which will force us either to modify the above criterion, reject the illocution/perlocution distinction or account for the examples. Here is his first example:

> Surely there may be cases in which to utter the words 'The ice over there is very thin' to a skater is to issue a warning (is to say something with the *force* of a warning) without its being the case that there is any statable convention at all (other than those which bear on the nature of the *locutionary* act) such that the speaker's act can be said to be an act done as conforming to that convention.[26]

The other two examples are similar enough. With regard to this example, it is not clear that there is no such convention. On the one hand, one *could* say that there is an ethical principle that skaters tend to follow which requires telling other skaters about dangerous situations one has encountered. This is surely not just skaterly *bonhomie*! It is not obviously wrong to say that skaters *do* follow such a code of ethics or etiquette and expect others to follow it.[27] Strawson's examples show at most that we must be cautious about this criterion of illocution.

On the other hand however, it could be said that Strawson is operating with too narrow a conception of convention as is apparent from

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25 I have already noted Austin's pointing to the vagueness of conventions when I considered his remarks abut purporting to promise something to a donkey.

26 Strawson, 'Intention and Convention in Speech Acts', in Fann, ed., *op. cit.*, 384. The second example involves saying 'Don't go' as an entreaty, not a request; and the third involves the response of a listener to a speaker having the force of an objection. See *op. cit.*, 385.

27 What the skater did can be construed as conventional given Lewis's final definition of convention. See Lewis, *op. cit.*, 78.

his comment on a remark Austin makes about convention. Here first is what Austin says:

> Speaking of the 'use of "language" for arguing or warning' looks just like speaking of 'the use of "language" for persuading, rousing, alarming'; yet the former may, for rough contrast, be said to be *conventional*, in the sense that at least it could be made explicit by the performative formula; but the latter could not [*HDTW*, 103].

Referring to the 'oddly qualifying remark' here, Strawson comments that there seems to be no such sense of 'conventional' but merely of 'being *capable* of being conventional'.[28] Austin's point though, which may be being missed here, is that the fact that one could say 'I warn you that...' or 'I argue that...', which are conventional performative formulae, instead of simply saying, for instance, 'The ice over there is very thin', shows that making such statements as the latter is conventional in some circumstances. That one need not use the formula in question indicates that there is a convention to be appealed to implicitly by asserting that the ice is thin since otherwise one would have used the formula.[29]

Perhaps though it could also be argued that warning was a perlocutionary act in this instance. The speaker, this argument goes, did not need to appeal to any convention because he knew that mentioning that a certain part of the pond was covered with thin ice would be sufficient to get the skater to keep clear of it (by making him apprehensive or whatever). As I have already pointed out, Austin says that "it is difficult to say where conventions begin and end". It is thus difficult sometimes to see where illocutions end and perlocutions begin. Strawson's examples are thus valuable in showing that the illocution/perlocution distinction is somewhat fuzzy, a point which Austin would certainly accept (as I shall now try to show).

In the previous section I showed how Austin rejected the constative/performative distinction as a distinction between two exclusively

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28 See Strawson, *op. cit.*, 386.

29 And, incidentally, it is by no means clear that conventions must be statable. Strawson appears to assume that they must be.

different uses of language and continued to accept it only as a distinction between two different dimensions of acts of speech in general. Austin then, in the final five lectures (plus the end of Lecture VII), examines the speech act, which is the name given to units of speech with constative and performative dimensions. It is not an act made up of various components which fit together to constitute the total speech act but rather an act of many dimensions which cannot ultimately be sharply divided from one another.

The distinctions are largely matters of empirical research of the total speech situation and thus are not likely to be hard and fast. Austin admits that "typically we distinguish different abstract 'acts' by means of the possible slips ~~between~~ cup and lip, that is, in this case, the different types of nonsense which may be engendered in performing them" [*HDTW*, 147]. Here Austin is presumably using the word 'nonsense' loosely to cover infelicity in general. In Lecture X he investigates the use of 'in' and 'by' to distinguish illocutions from perlocutions but ultimately finds that as tests they break down [see *HDTW*, 123]. Similarly in Lecture XII he attempts "a list of *illocutionary forces* of an utterance", of "families of related and overlapping speech acts" [*HDTW*, 150]. Again he draws attention to the "wide possibilities of marginal or awkward cases" and emphasizes that what he has to say is not to be construed as definitive [see *HDTW*, 152]. Thus Austin eschews any kind of metaphysic of speech acts; he does not analyze them into various fixed categories, nor does he divide them into various fixed components, or purport to discover non-empirical entities such as propositions in them.[30] In a later paper, in fact, Austin mentions that what he does could be described as 'linguistic phenomenology' [see *PP*, 182]. It is investigating the way language is ordinarily used which demands describing linguistic practices in their everyday situation and in the situations where they for some reason or another are defective. Throughout *HDTW* Austin shows himself ready to redescribe the total speech situation as soon as one way becomes implausible. Even his final suggestions are offered as suggestions requiring

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30 Searle was considerably more successful in devising a taxonomy of illocutionary acts [see *E&M*, 1-29].

much further work. Searle may be considered to have attempted some such further work. I move on to consider that now.

2.3 Searle's Theory of Speech Acts

In this section I shall examine three basic issues. First, I shall consider Searle's replacing the locutionary act with the propositional act (whose components are the reference act and the act of predication) and show why such a complication is warranted. Secondly, I shall consider Searle's reasons for rejecting Austin's locution/illocution distinction — basically he shows that the locutionary act, which he conceives of somewhat differently and calls the propositional act, is a dimension of the illocutionary act. And thirdly, I shall consider Searle's additions to Speech Act Theory; I shall consider the development of his theory of utterance meaning away from its Gricean origins. I shall show, in the next chapter, how Searle's theory of meaning enables him to formulate a more sophisticated account, than Austin's, of the relations between normal speech acts and parasites. What I shall be mainly interested in, in this section, is Searle's account of reference and predication, his development of Grice's theory of speaker's utterance meaning (what Grice calls non-natural meaning, or 'meaning$_{NN}$'), and finally his abandonment of such a theory by postulating a logical distinction between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate (the former intention being said to be independent of the latter and prior to it).

2.3.1 Searle's Modified Analysis of the Speech Act

Searle accepts Austin's rejection of the constative/performative distinction as a distinction between two different types of acts. He accepts that the speech act is the basic unit of meaning and force, or the most basic linguistic entity with both a constative and a performative dimension. He also accepts that there are illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts. His understanding of the latter is similar to Austin's but his understanding of the former is quite different. Searle does not distinguish between the illocutionary act and the locutionary act but rather between the illocutionary act and both an utterance act and a propositional act. In this section

I shall examine why Searle rejects the locution/illocution distinction. As pointed out in the previous section, locution and illocution cover language as meaningful and language as having conventional force. The same phonetic act under one description was meaningful, which means that it had sense and reference, and under another description had a certain conventional force, which means that it counted as a conventional social act of a certain sort (such as ordering or promising).

Although Searle accepts that the speech act is both meaningful and of some conventional force, he analyzes the dimensions of the speech act differently. The major difference is Searle's postulating a propositional act which is subdivided into a reference act and an act of predication. Searle thus accepts the proposition which, as we have seen, Austin's scruples prevented him from embracing. He also speaks of the (incomplete) speech act of predication which Austin did not mention. Here is an outline of the two systems:

Austin	*Searle*
	(a) Utterance Act.
(a) Locutionary Act:	(b) Propositional Act:
(i) Phonetic Act, (ii) Phatic Act, (iii) Rhetic Act.	(i) Reference Act, (ii) Act of Predication.
(b) Illocutionary Act.	(c) Illocutionary Act.
(c) Perlocutionary Act.	(d) Perlocutionary Act.

With this outline in mind I shall now investigate Searle's analysis of the speech act with reference to Austin's.

The most basic act in Searle's system is the uttering of morphemes, words and sentences [see *SA*, 24]. A morpheme is an element of word-form which is functional in a linguistic system. It is thus very different to Austin's phone. It is phones combined into certain types of units that have a function in a language. Thus the utterance act does not correspond to Austin's phonetic act and, in fact, there is nothing in Searle's system which does. This is not to say that he rejects the idea of

a phonetic act though. He recognizes it but does not include it [see ALIA, 424].

The utterance act is a speech act without a determinate meaning.[31] To perform an utterance act without performing a propositional act would be to "utter words without saying anything" [*SA*, 24]. It would seem then that the utterance act corresponds roughly to Austin's phatic act which was the act of uttering the vocables, words and syntactic units of a specific language. In short, since the utterance act is the producing of morphemes, words and sentences (without regard to whether they are being used or merely mentioned) and the phatic act is the production of vocables, words and grammatical units in a specific language (again without regard to whether they are being used to say anything or are merely being mentioned), the similarity here is close enough to warrant my proceeding with the provisional understanding that Searle's utterance act is the same as Austin's phatic act.

Searle's propositional act does not correspond to Austin's rhetic act though. Both of these acts concern language use as meaningful in the sense of having definite sense and reference. Searle however allows that different utterance acts can involve the same propositional act [see *SA*, 24], whereas Austin, as we have seen, denies that the different phatic acts can produce the same rhetic act. Also, whereas Austin holds that there *can* be a rhetic act that is not illocutionary, Searle denies that there can be a propositional act without there being an illocutionary act.[32]

As outlined, one can investigate the propositional act under two headings: the reference act and the act of predication. The former is a complete speech act because one can refer to some object without saying anything about it. One cannot say something though without that something being putatively, if not actually, about some object; so the act of predication is an incomplete speech act. With regard to the reference

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[31] I shall explain below why it is not meaningless but non-determinately meaningful.

[32] I shall return to the matter of illocution below.

act, Searle accounts for the use of referring expressions in reference acts as follows:

> Any expression which serves to identify any thing, process, event, action, or any other kind of 'individual' or 'particular' I shall call a referring expression. ...It is by their function, not always by their surface grammatical form or their manner of performing their function, that referring expressions are to be known [*SA*, 26f].

So 'a man' in 'A man came' refers; but it does not refer in 'John is a man'. This is clear from the fact that the expression only serves to identify a man in the first example. In the second it predicates the property manness of John. Clearly then 'is a man', which is a predicate, cannot stand on its own; it must accompany some referring expression. This is why Searle says that the act of predication "is not a separate speech act at all" [*SA*, 122].

Searle says that we must distinguish between the sense of a referring expression and the proposition communicated by its utterance. The sense is conveyed by the descriptive general terms given or implied by the referring expression "but in many cases the sense of the expression is not by itself sufficient to communicate a proposition, rather the utterance of the expression *in a certain context* communicates a proposition" [*SA*, 92]. So 'the man', for instance, has a sense independently of any particular context but only in *some* particular context will it be used to refer to an individual.

This means, I think, that an utterance of 'The man is drunk' construed as a mention, and not as a use in a specific context, is not a propositional act even though it has a sense. There is an act of predication involved but no reference act since the putative referring expression is not functioning, i.e. is not identifying anything in some context. It would seem then that Searle's utterance act covers cases of meaningful utterances that do not refer to anything and do not express any proposition. Searle however claims, as we have seen, that utterance acts are not acts of 'saying anything'. Now since 'The man is drunk' is not a propositional act it could only be a mere utterance act. So, while they have a sense, utterance acts do not refer to anything and thus express

no proposition. To be clear about the matter then, 'The man is drunk' although it is literally meaningful (it means the man is drunk), may not express any proposition (it may not assert that any man is drunk).

The utterance act corresponds to Austin's phatic act as already mentioned. The phatic act did not have a determinate sense or reference but, to use Forguson's term (already mentioned), a *determinable* sense. The same, we now see, can be said of Searle's utterance act. It requires a specific context in order for its referring expression actually to refer. The propositional act then, like the rhetic act, has by contrast a *determinate* sense and reference. The main difference between the latter two acts is thus the one already mentioned, viz. that the same proposition can be expressed in two utterances of different types whereas the same rheme can not. The other significant difference, already mentioned, is Searle's discovery (for Speech Act Theory) of the act of predication.

The question to ask now is whether this different analysis (and I have shown above that it is only slightly different) adds anything to Speech Act Theory or, more specifically, anything that could not be arrived at with Austin's concepts. Thus far we can see that Searle's postulation of an act of prediction may be an advance on Austin. However the cost of this 'advance' is the adoption of the propositional act. The propositional act makes Searle's view seem, if not actually be, more metaphysical than Austin's. It is time therefore to consider whether there is in Searle such a reason for the propositional act that is not a reason for the rhetic act. Is the change worth the cost? The reason can be found in Searle's postulation of deep structures in language.

I quoted above a passage from Searle that says that it is by their function that referring expressions are recognized and not, or not always, by their surface grammar. Thus 'That man is drunk' said here in this text does not refer even though the expression 'that man' may look like a referring expression. It is only a referring expression when it is used in a specific context to say of a specific man that he is drunk. It is therefore the function of the expression not its surface form that defines it.

The surface grammar of a sentence is what one thinks of as grammar *simpliciter*. One uses the word 'surface' to qualify it only when one has deep grammar in mind as a contrast, i.e., in this instance, when one has in mind a grammar of sentences concerned solely with their function. If one examines utterances in terms of how they function (or what acts they perform), then one can get a grammar that isolates such features as propositional indicators, referring expressions, predicates and illocutionary force indicators. The illocutionary force indicator, for instance, marks an utterance as either an assertion, an order, a promise or some such performative and may or may not be represented at the surface level by an illocutionary force indicating device such as an Austinian explicit performative.[33] Searle emphasizes that there need be no device at the surface level to indicate what sort of illocutionary act is being performed. Often *context* will make it clear in 'actual speech situations' what the force of an utterance is. Thus context rather than any device may determine the illocutionary force.

Context can also, although Searle does not seem to say so explicitly, determine the propositional indicator. For instance, 'I'll be there' said by a speaker in a particular tone of voice may constitute a promise. Here the proposition expressed is that the speaker will be there and the illocutionary force indicating device is his intonation.[34] The two are not separate at the surface level. And 'I promise', which is an explicit performative, has a propositional content when said in response

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33 "The illocutionary force indicator shows how the proposition is to be taken, or to put it another way, what illocutionary force the utterance is to have; that is, what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance of the sentence. Illocutionary force indicating devices in English include at least: word order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood of the verb, and the so-called performative verbs" [*SA*, 30].

34 The linguist Leonard Bloomfield points out that there are pitch phonemes as well as vowel phonemes and consonant phonemes. Thus different intonations of the same phrase may constitute different meanings or forces. This point is mentioned by Jonathan Cohen, 'Do Illocutionary Forces Exist?', in Fann, ed., *op. cit.*, 430.

to 'You'll be there, won't you?'. It has the propositional content that the speaker will be there.

It would seem that Searle's innovations do pay the cost of his introducing the proposition because now it is possible to formulate a deep grammar of speech acts through considering how they operate in their contexts. And the proposition here need only be construed as a logical device for analyzing speech acts in their situation. There is no hint of metaphysics in any of this.

2.3.2 Searle's Criticism of Austin and Development of a Theory of Meaning

Having presented the differences between Searle's theory and Austin's I shall now address Searle's specific criticisms of Austin's theory, especially of his locution/illocution distinction, which lead him to his differently structured speech act. Basically Searle's reason for rejecting the distinction is that, since meaning sometimes determines force, the distinction is not completely general. For instance, the meaning of 'I promise' determines the force of that utterance act as an illocutionary act of promising. It is by virtue of its meaning that 'I promise' counts as a promise.

To examine the details of this criticism: Searle rightly characterizes Austin as committed to the view that "Utterances which [are] different tokens of the same locutionary type [can] be tokens of different illocutionary types" [ALIA, 407]. Thus 'I am going to do it' may sometimes be mere prediction and at other times be a promise without its meaning changing. Searle formulates the criticism as follows:

> it seems that [this distinction] cannot be completely general, in the sense of marking off two mutually exclusive classes of acts, because for some sentences at least, meaning, in Austin's sense, determines (at least one) illocutionary force of the utterance of the sentence [Thus 'I hereby promise that I am going to do it'] may on occasion be other illocutionary acts as well, but it must at least be a promise [ALIA, 407].

The example here is an explicit performative, an explicit promise. Austin of course would not deny that it will always be used with the force of a

promise. Now Searle's critical point here is that there is no locutionary act here.

To investigate this criticism: one could not convincingly deny that a typical utterance of 'I promise...' is an illocutionary act but, as we have seen in §2 above, it is not wrong to say that under one description it is a meaningful act and, under another description, an act with a certain force. Searle however is denying that one can abstract from the illocutionary 'nature' of the utterance to consider it solely in terms of locutionary meaning. In other words, he is saying that it can be described as an illocution but not as a locution. Conventionally, 'I promise [something]' determines my promising that something by virtue of its meaning.

Although meaning here determines force, the force of the utterance is not its meaning in the same sense as the cat is on the mat is the meaning of 'The cat is on the mat'. That would be to equivocate over two senses of meaning already outlined. Searle however shows that force can be assimilated to meaning to the extent that meaning determines force. In so far as he shows this, he shows that not all speech acts can be analyzed into illocutionary and locutionary acts since sometimes the illocution cannot be abstracted from. This therefore justifies his leaving the locutionary act out of his analysis of the speech act. And so his analysis of the speech act is in this respect an improvement on Austin's.[35]

I now turn to Searle's theory of meaning and communication in order to examine his further criticism of Austin which is as follows:

> Austin sometimes talks as if in addition to the meaning of sentences there were a further set of conventions of illocutionary force; but in precisely those cases where there is a distinction between force and meaning, the force is not carried by a convention but by other features of the context, including the intentions of the speaker; and as soon as force is tied down by an explicit

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[35] For a slightly different argument on this point see Mats Furberg on 'archetypal performatives' in his *Saying and Meaning: A Main Theme in J. L. Austin's Philosophy*, second edition (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield; Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 283ff.

> convention it becomes, or in general tends to become, part of meaning [ALIA, 414].

In other words it is either meaning, *or* intention and other features of context, rather than convention, that determines an illocutionary act which has no illocutionary force indicating device, as the illocutionary act that it is. So 'How do you do?' is an idiom whose meaning, according to Searle, cannot be paraphrased 'In what manner or condition do you perform?'. It has the force of a greeting. But how does it have this force? Is it solely the speaker's intention that determines it in a certain context as such?

Meaning may sometimes, it would seem, be a matter of intending a certain effect in a certain context. This is what H. P. Grice means by meaning$_{NN}$ (or non-natural meaning).[36] For my purposes the formulation of it given by Strawson will suffice.

> S non-naturally means something by an utterance x if S intends (i1) to produce by uttering x a certain response (r) in an audience A and intends (i2) that A shall recognize S's intention (i1) and intends (i3) that this recognition on the part of A of S's intention (i1) shall function as A's reason, or a part of his reason, for his response r.[37]

Searle points out that this makes communication, or saying something and meaning it, a perlocutionary act. Understanding the meaning becomes merely a consequence of the act (viz. a response to it) [see *SA*, 44]. But sometimes the only 'effect' of an act of communication is understanding (and not necessarily some response such as belief). In Austin's terminology this is 'securing uptake' and in Searle's terminology it is bringing about an 'illocutionary effect'. Here is how Searle formulates it: "the speaker S intends [i-2] to produce an illocutionary effect IE in the hearer H by means of getting H to recognize S's intention [i-1] to produce IE"

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[36] See H. P. Grice, 'Meaning' in P. F. Strawson, ed., *Philosophical Logic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 39f.

[37] Strawson, *op. cit.*, 386f. He presents a counter-example to show that this account is insufficient. But I shall not go into that here. Suffice it to say that I believe that Strawson shows that communication may sometimes be a matter of a more complex reflexive intentionality.

[*SA*, 47]. Here we have the intention to be understood to be intending to bring about an *illocutionary* effect.

But sometimes, Searle shows against Grice, meaning is more than that. "Meaning is more than a matter of intention, it is also at least sometimes a matter of convention" [*SA*, 45]. Sometimes what one means is a matter of convention and sometimes all three factors (viz. intention, context, convention) need to be taken into account. A sentence may have a certain meaning independently of what I intend to effect by uttering it in a certain context. Meanings may thus be conveyed intentionally or conventionally.

Take Searle's example of an American soldier who wants his Italian fascist captors to think him a German so that they will let him go. He can only recite a phrase of a German song to them to make them think him a German-speaker and thus a German soldier. What he intends to bring about in that context by means of reciting '*Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühen*?' is that they should believe that he is German. But this sentence does not mean what Grice is committed to holding that it means, viz. 'I am a German soldier'. Its *conventional* meaning is still what would be translated into English as 'Do you know the country where lemon trees blossom?' even though the American intends that it should make the Italians believe that he is a German soldier. So the conventional meaning is different to the meaning$_{NN}$ *à la* Grice.

Searle derives the following scheme to explain conventional meaning:

S utters sentence T and means it (i.e., means literally what he says)
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S utters T and

(a) S intends (i-1) the utterance U of T to produce in H the knowledge (recognition, awareness) that the states of affairs specified by (certain of) the rules of T obtain. (Call this the illocutionary effect, IE)

(b) S intends U to produce IE by means of the recognition of i-1

(c) S intends i-1 will be recognized in virtue of (by means of) H's knowledge of (certain of) the rules governing (the elements of) T [*SA*, 49f].

Here to understand T is to know its meaning and to know its meaning is to understand the rules for the use of T. So T has a conventional meaning which is expressible in semantic rules for the use of T. Now to use T with its conventional meaning, in other words to say T and mean it with its conventional meaning, is to intend that H understand that T' (the conventional interpretation of T, let us say); to intend him to understand it by virtue of his recognition of one's intention that he should understand that T'; and to get him to understand T' by means of his knowledge of the rules governing the conventional use of sentence T. In this situation T is "a conventional means of achieving the intention to produce a certain illocutionary effect in the hearer" [*SA*, 48].

In *SA* Searle rejects the Gricean account of meaning in favour of the above account. The Gricean account cannot even be modified to take into account features of the American Prisoner example. One cannot

> amend Grice's account so that meaning is analysed in terms of understanding. That would be too circular for one feels that meaning and understanding are too closely tied for the latter to be the basis for an analysis of the former [*SA*, 47].

In later works, Searle reintroduces (before, in still later works, again abandoning) what is basically the Gricean view (although as a supplement to his *SA* view which then becomes recognized, by contrast, as a notion of *literal* or *sentence* meaning). In *E&M* he distinguishes between literal, sentence meaning and *speaker's utterance meaning* [see *E&M*, 77]. For instance, in introducing metaphor (which I shall investigate in the next chapter) he speaks of "utterances in which the speaker means metaphorically something different from what the sentence means literally" [*E&M*, 76]. Other instances where sentence meaning and utterance meaning 'come apart' are irony and indirect speech acts.[38] These are

> occasions where one succeeds in communicating what one means even though both the speaker and the hearer know that the meanings of the words uttered by the

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38 An example of an indirect speech act would be where one says 'Can you reach the salt?' but means it not as a question but as a request. On indirect speech acts, see *E&M*, 30-57.

> speaker do not exactly and literally express what the speaker meant [*E&M*, 77].

Utterance meaning here would seem to be Grice's meaning$_{NN}$ modified to be illocutionary rather than perlocutionary. In Lewis's words, in such cases "coordination [i.e., in effect, communication] will be achieved not by force of precedent but by force of salience".[39] The context, in the case of utterance meaning, will make it clear what the intention was. That is, if the audience manages correctly to interpret what S intended, then he will have communicated with him (his meaning will have been communicated to him) by virtue of his having managed to make plain his intention to communicate what he intended. He will not have communicated by virtue of convention.

Before going on to show how Searle modified his view of utterance meaning (moving away again from the Gricean type theory), I shall account for the advantages of this development. It shows how Searle's Speech Act Theory can explain how the force of an utterance may be determined by context when it is not determined by the meaning of a sentence. In order for someone to appreciate that one is making him a promise, even though one does not use the terms 'I promise', it is sufficient to tell him what one will do, in such a context as to make it clear that one is promising. For instance, if he is sick and one says to him 'I'll be around tomorrow to get you some groceries', the situation will make it clear that one is promising. There is no need to postulate (Austinian) conventions of illocutionary force here.

Now I shall investigate how Searle modified his theory of meaning (i.e. as expounded in *SA* and *E&M*). In his later work (e.g. *Int* and MCR) Searle changes his mind concerning the analysis of (sentence and utterance) meaning. He now rejects "the idea that the intentions that matter for meaning are the intentions to produce *effects* on audiences" [*Int*, 161]. In the language of *SA*, uttering sentence T and meaning it will no longer be accounted for as the using of a conventional means to produce an illocutionary effect on some hearer. Likewise utterance meaning will not be accounted for in terms of intentions to produce an

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[39] Lewis, *op. cit.*, 159.

illocutionary effect in some hearer. In Austinian language, meaning will no longer be a matter of securing uptake. Searle thus separates the intention to represent from the intention to communicate one's representation. He points out now that what is represented is not what is communicated: what is represented is a state of affairs, but what is communicated (if there is any communication) is the representation of the state of affairs (not the state of affairs itself) [see MCR, 213]. So Searle says that

> representation is prior to communication and representing intentions are prior to communication intentions. Part of what one communicates is the content of one's representations, but one can intend to represent something without intending to communicate [*Int*, 166].

One can intend to mean something without caring whether one will be understood or not. That is, one can intend to represent some state of affairs without intending to communicate that representation.

The means whereby utterances (or other sorts of acts) take on meanings is as follows: the act is performed with the intention that it should have the same conditions of satisfaction as the corresponding belief. Searle gives the example of a soldier signalling, by raising his arm, that the enemy is retreating. The soldier intentionally imposes on the act of raising his arm the conditions of satisfaction which his belief that the enemy is retreating would have. The conditions of satisfaction that his belief would have would be the enemy's retreating; that is, his belief that the enemy was retreating would be true if the enemy were retreating and false otherwise. In general,

> an intention to represent is an intention that *the physical events which constitute part of the conditions of satisfaction (in the sense of things required) of the intention should themselves have conditions of satisfaction (in the sense of requirement)* [*Int*, 167f].[40]

Searle gives a schematic outline of the argument in which he distinguishes between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate:

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[40] Not all speech acts involve intentions to represent. Expressives do not represent anything.

1. *In U (utterance) of X, S means that A,*

in one sense of 'meaning' is equivalent to;

2. *In U of X, S intends that X represent the state of affairs that A,*

which entails;

3. *In U of X, S intends that a criterion of success of U of X will be that the state of affairs that A obtains independently of U;*
4. *In U of X, S communicates (intentionally) that A to H*

entails 1., which is equivalent to 2. 4, then, is equivalent to:

5. *In U of X, S intends$_1$ that S represent that state of affairs that A, and S intends$_2$ that H recognize intention$_1$. H recognizes intention$_2$ and thereby recognizes intention$_1$* [MCR, 216f].

Here points 1 to 3 concern the intention to represent and points 4 and 5 concern the intention to communicate that intention. The intention to represent is not tied to an intention to produce an illocutionary effect such as understanding.

Note that in this theory it is sufficient to intend that U of X should represent A for it to represent A, and thus to mean A. And we have seen that what applies to U of X would also apply to any other type of act (e.g. raising one's hand). By intending that raising one's hand should represent that the enemy is retreating, one makes one's raising one's hand mean that the enemy is retreating. The American Prisoner then, on this account, only had to intend that '*Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühen?*' should represent the state of affairs of his being a German soldier (which of course did not obtain) in order for it to represent that state of affairs. He also intended to communicate this representation of the state of affairs. This he did by intending$_2$ that his Italian captors recognize his intending$_1$ that that German sentence represented his being a German soldier.

We shall see later that this distinction between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate, together with the distinction between literal word or sentence meaning and speaker's utterance

meaning, enables Searle's distinction between normal and parasitic speech acts to be defended from Derrida's criticisms.

On this later view of Searle's one can make any utterance or act mean what one wants it to mean by intentional fiat. This is a view widely rejected in contemporary philosophy. It is known as Humpty Dumpty's view of meaning. In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice meets Humpty Dumpty with whom she has an argument. At one stage Humpty Dumpty says 'There's glory for you!'. Alice responds: 'I don't know what you mean by "glory"'. Humpty Dumpty retorts: 'Of course you don't — till I tell you'. Alice couldn't have known that Humpty Dumpty meant by 'glory' 'a nice knock-down argument' which is what he intended it should mean.[41] One would think that, in order for 'glory' to mean 'a nice knock-down argument' in this context, Alice would have had to have had some way of figuring out that that is what it meant. Donald Davidson, for instance, points out that

> you cannot change what words mean ... merely by intending to; ... but you can change the meaning provided you believe (and perhaps are justified in believing) that the interpreter has adequate clues for the new interpretation.[42]

In other words, there must be some connection between meaning and communication. There must be some shared understanding in virtue of which Alice would be able to interpret the utterance as meant by Humpty Dumpty. The speaker and the hearer, or interpreter, must share some common understanding that will account for the meanings of their utterances. Davidson points out that this need not be a *prior* understanding.[43] There must be some feature of what Austin calls the 'total speech situation', to which the hearer, or interpreter, has access, which would make it possible for the hearer to interpret the utterance correctly.

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[41] See Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass And What Alice Found There*, ed. Roger Lancelyn Green, World Classics Series (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 185ff.

[42] Davidson, *op. cit.*, 165.

[43] See Davidson, *op. cit.*, 166.

However Davidson gives no reason why the intention to represent must be accompanied by an intention to communicate. One can admit that Humpty Dumpty was behaving very strangely by having a conversation with Alice without communicating to her that he was using some words with special meanings and without communicating those meanings to her. What was queer about what Humpty Dumpty did was not that he somehow acted illogically but that he said things to Alice without intending to communicate to her what he meant. In conversation one normally seeks to communicate. Humpty Dumpty conversed without seeking to communicate.

We shall see that Searle, in his account of parasitic discourse (e.g. in his theories of fictional discourse and of metaphor), uses such a pure intentional criterion to distinguish between normal illocutions and parasites. In a later chapter, after I have examined his theory of parasitic utterances, I shall come back to this difference between intentions (or what Austin, as we have seen, calls 'internal' circumstances) and 'total' context (which comprises both internal and external circumstances).

To conclude this section. I have shown how Searle analyzes the speech act differently. The major differences are (1) his introduction of the propositional act with its component acts of reference and predication, and (2) his introduction of a distinction between literal word or sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning. In the next chapter I shall show how Searle supplements his theory of reference with a theory of parasitic reference which is important to his theory of fictional discourse. I shall also show how he utilizes the distinction between literal or conventional meaning and utterance meaning in his theory of metaphor. Both fictional discourse and metaphors are parasitic. Later too (in Chapter Five) we shall see how useful the distinction between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate can be in defending Speech Act Theory from criticisms brought by Derrida (which I shall examine in Chapter Four).

Chapter Three

SPEECH ACTS AND PARASITES

Having shown what a speech act is and how it may be unhappy, I shall now consider how it may become parasitic. For Austin it becomes parasitic, aetiolated, abnormal or non-serious outside its total and proper context. In his theory parasitism and unhappiness are closely related. For Austin the parasite is the use of speech acts in abnormal contexts (i.e. outside their normal or proper contexts); thus context determines the parasite. But for Searle it is the use of language non-seriously or non-literally in any context; thus intention determines the parasite.

I begin by showing how Austin relates parasitism to a certain type of speech act unhappiness where there is failure to 'secure uptake'. In a later chapter I show that, because contexts cannot be determined as proper, uptake can never be secured and thus that all speech acts are permanently open to unhappiness and parasitism. In *this* chapter I emphasize that parasitism refers to an order of dependence and I suggest an initial complication of this by showing that often the order is reversed. I show too how problematic Austin's distinction is between reported rhetic acts (which are said to be normal) and reproduced phatic acts (which are said to be parasitic). Finally, in this regard, I show that one can argue that what Austin analyzes as parasites can be analyzed as ordinary, albeit specialized, speech acts governed by their own conventions.

Next, I consider the more sophisticated notion of parasites in Searle. Some parasites for Searle are pretended speech acts (they are non-serious) others are actual speech acts (but are non-literal). For instance, fictional discourse consists of pretended illocutions such as assertions about characters that really do not exist. Utterances involving metaphors (which occur frequently in poetry) are non-literal but nonetheless may be real illocutions. For Searle 'parasitic' basically means 'dependent'; a

parasitic speech act is one that is dependent on a normal speech act by being intended either non-seriously or non-literally.

In Searle's theory of fiction and of fictional discourse the parasite is explained by means of a theory of parasitic reference. Failure of reference is usually an error. Sometimes though, if the speaker-writer is only pretending to refer, then we have, not an error, but a parasite. The speaker-writer intends to invoke certain horizontal conventions in order to suspend the normal operation of the constitutive rules (e.g. the rules of reference). As for Searle's theory of metaphor, in discussing a particular poet's speaking of her life as a loaded gun, Searle points out that what she says is obviously literally false. This egregiousness, he says, is a clue that she does not intend her utterance to be taken literally but rather metaphorically. In order to explain non-literal utterances I shall use the distinction between literal sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning which I investigated in the last chapter.

Later, when I investigate how meanings disseminate on account of utterances' (i.e. locutionary acts' or utterance acts') being irreducibly polysemic, I shall show the connection between the permanent possibility of infelicity and of parasitism and how these are permanently possible because of the lack of a proper, total context due to what I shall explain as iterability and citationality. I shall show too that utterances cannot be tied to the original intentions of those uttering them or to the proper contexts in which they were originally uttered.

In line with what I have outlined of the subject matter of this chapter, I have divided what follows into two main sections. The first is concerned with the Austinian notion of parasites and the second, with the Searlean notion. These sections are further subdivided in accordance with the articulation of subject matter as just outlined.

3.1 Austinian Parasites

It is clear from *HDTW* that for Austin the paradigm of meaningful utterance is an utterance that is both serious and literal. Utterances that are not serious are said to be *infected* by a certain *ill* and this ill is said

possibly to infect all utterances [see *HDTW*, 21f].[1] Austin in fact thinks the difference between such serious utterances and non-serious utterances to be so great as to be describable as involving "a sea-change in special circumstances". He expresses this view concisely as follows: "Language in such circumstances is in special ways — intelligibly — used not seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use — ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language" [*HDTW*, 22]. Non-serious discourse is thus thought of as an infection, an abnormality, a parasite and an aetiolation.[2] Austin however recognizes the intelligibility of such discourse and, although he excludes its consideration 'at present', he admits that it "might be brought into a more general account" [*HDTW*, 21f]. So presumably the 'doctrine of the *etiolations* of language' would be a branch of this more general account (and presumably this general account would be more a theory than a doctrine). Clearly then Austin envisages at this stage a doctrine or theory of performative utterances that would include abnormal discourse.

This attitude towards lying, joking, acting, etc., is not abandoned with the development of Austin's theory of the performative into his speech act theory. At that later stage of *HDTW* Austin seems to see abnormal discourse as involving an interference in communication. Speaking of joking, acting and writing poetry he points out that the meaning and force of the relevant utterances may be clear without its being clear which of these types of parasitic speech act is being performed. For example, Austin says that it will be unclear whether 'Go and catch a falling star' is a joke, poetry or a piece of acting (although its meaning and force will be clear). He then makes the application of this doctrine of aetiolations to the case of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts as follows:

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[1] This possibility will be investigated further in later chapters. There I shall consider whether this general possibility of unhappiness is somehow essential to speech acts (or performatives) rather than accidental. This is a claim made by Derrida against Austin. His thesis is that failure (i.e. unhappiness) is a permanent possibility of speech acts.

[2] Austin sometimes writes 'etiolation' and sometimes 'aetiolation' [see *HDTW*, 104].

> There are aetiolations, parasitic uses, etc., various 'not serious' and 'not full normal' uses. The normal conditions of reference may be suspended, or no attempt made at a standard perlocutionary act, no attempt made to make you do anything, as Walt Whitman does not seriously incite the eagle of liberty to soar [*HDTW*, 104].

Presumably Whitman's apparently *referring* to the eagle of liberty here constitutes an abnormal illocutionary act and his apparently encouraging such a non-existent bird to fly constitutes an abnormal perlocutionary act. It should be noted of course that Whitman *is* being serious although he is not being literal.[3] We shall see later that Searle too speaks of the conditions (or 'rules' in his case) of reference being suspended. He will explain it by means of what he calls 'horizontal conventions'.

3.1.1 Unhappiness and Parasitism

It seems likely that there should be some connection between abnormal discourse and the infelicities which I discussed in the previous chapter. Abnormal discourse would seem sometimes, for instance in the Whitman example, to involve the misinvocation of the conventions respectively of referring (it being perhaps conventional only to attempt to refer to what one has reason to believe exists) and ordering (there being no convention of ordering birds especially non-existent ones!). In fact the difference between abnormal discourse and the infelicities would seem to have to do with the intentions of the speaker (and we shall see that this is something that Searle makes explicit in the case of fictional discourse). Whitman is not simply mistakenly acting as if he were referring to the non-existent eagle of liberty, he is deliberately writing as if he were referring to it while knowing that it does not exist. He is thus, it might seem, inviting misunderstanding, especially when he appears, further, to be ordering this non-existent bird to soar. He is intentionally and openly, I suggest, misinvoking these conventions.

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[3] Cf. LSFD, 60 on the serious/literal distinction in Searle. Incidentally, there seems to be no mention of an eagle of liberty in the complete poems of Whitman.

For Austin such discourse *is* in fact infelicitous and he relates it to yet another type of infelicity which arises from 'misunderstandings'. To see this relation one must return to Austin's temporary exclusion from consideration (already mentioned) of abnormal utterances in his theory of the performative. Austin connects this exclusion with another temporary exclusion as follows. Referring to the former exclusion, he says

> It is partly in order to keep this sort of consideration at least for the present out of it, that I have not here introduced a sort of 'infelicity' — it might really be called such — arising out of 'misunderstanding'. It is obviously necessary that to have promised I must normally
>
> (A) have been *heard* by someone, perhaps the promisee;
>
> (B) have been understood by him as promising.
>
> If one or other of these conditions is not satisfied, doubts arise as to whether I have really promised, and it might be held that my act was only attempted or was void [*HDTW*, 22].[4]

The question to ask here is what feature of misunderstanding in this sense would require a consideration of abnormal discourse. An unheard or misunderstood 'promise' might be *either* not a promise at all *or* merely either an attempted promise or a void promise. If this situation is compared to Whitman's apparent incitement of the eagle of liberty to soar it can be remarked that here similarly one could ask whether there was no incitement, attempted incitement or a void incitement. Similarly, with regard to the question of the apparent reference to a non-existent bird, it can be asked (albeit somewhat less intelligibly) whether there was no reference, attempted reference or void reference. So the similarity between these two types of infelicity (viz. abnormality and misunderstanding) would seem to be related to the odd or special circumstances of their utterance which in both types of case make it unclear whether the utterance in

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[4] It is not clear to me whether it makes much sense to speak of something's being "obviously necessary ... normally". The 'normally' here would seem to cancel the 'obviously' or the 'necessary' or both. Are some things not necessary in special (non-normal) circumstances? Or are they merely not *obviously* necessary in those circumstances? Questions of necessity and possibility with regard to infelicity and parasitism will be important later when I consider Derrida's critique of Speech Act Theory.

question was *either* not the act that it purported to be, *or* either the attempting such an act or a void act of that kind.

In pursuing this matter it is worth noting what more is said later on in *HDTW* about infelicities arising out of misunderstanding when Austin discusses 'securing uptake':

> Unless a certain effect is achieved, the illocutionary act will not have been happily, successfully performed. ...Generally the effect amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution. So the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of *uptake* [*HDTW*, 116f].

Misunderstanding thus arises when uptake is not secured, i.e. when either the force or the meaning of the utterance is not appreciated.

Why though cannot the infelicity of abnormal discourse be said to disappear in a manner similar to that in which misunderstanding is obviated? If Whitman is taken to be reciting a poem, then his hearers will not erroneously take him to be referring to any real bird known as the eagle of liberty because, for instance, they will be aware that there is no actual eagle of liberty and that Whitman knows that. They will also be aware that metaphor is a device frequently used in poetry and that thus this is likely to be a metaphor. So they will take him to be really referring to some actual or imagined eagle but seen as a metaphor for a certain conception of liberty.[5] Or they may take the use of metaphor here to suspend any referential interpretation. Likewise they will not take the poet to be inciting any bird to fly: since there is no specific bird in question, readers will be motivated to ask themselves what it means for the eagle of liberty to soar given that it here symbolizes (or is a metaphor for) a conception of liberty. And if it is asked how they know that Whitman is speaking metaphorically one can answer that Whitman is writing a poem and that if there is no such bird, then it is reasonable to suppose that Whitman is being metaphorical and thus literary rather than literal. The fact that he will also use other typically poetic devices such as rhyming, metre and alliteration will signal that the context is a poem

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[5] I return below, in the discussion of Searle, to the ontological status of the eagle of liberty.

and thus that metaphor also is likely to be being used. We shall see how Searle's theories of fiction, fictional discourse and metaphor can be used to articulate these issues better; we have seen already that failure to communicate one's intention does not make an illocutionary act unhappy.

The point here is that the poet, like the joker or the actor, can secure uptake in the sense that he can make it clear that he is speaking or writing poetry. Now Austin mentions that one can avoid the infelicity he calls 'misunderstanding' by taking 'special precautions': "Special precautions are taken in law to avoid this and other infelicities, e.g. in the serving of writs or summonses" [*HDTW*, 22; cp. 57f].[6] But the poet, the actor and the joker can also take such 'precautions'. The poet uses techniques which I have just mentioned, the actor may declaim his lines in a stylized manner or on a stage, and a joker may preface his jokes with 'Did you hear the one about the...?' and other such stock phrases. If such 'precautions' can be taken, then surely the infelicity of abnormal discourse can be avoided.

These techniques would seem to be conventions associated with acting, joking and composing poems and such conventions would seem to be applicable in all seriousness. Even joking (or comedy), as the *cliché* has it, is a serious business with its own conventions and thus does not necessarily involve either misfires or abuses. If there were no such conventions associated with so-called abnormal discourse, then perhaps one could see it as merely involving the unhappy use of normal discourse. Since there are such conventions though, it is best to see poetry, joking and acting not as being infelicitous ordinary language but as normal forms of, perhaps specialized, discourse.[7]

It looks therefore as if such abnormal speech acts may be quite felicitous in so far as it is clear *both* what force and meaning they have

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[6] It will be worth recalling in later chapters that Austin here sees some *written* documents as means for avoiding misunderstanding. The significance of this will only be clear after the next chapter.

[7] We shall see that, whereas Searle agrees that there are horizontal conventions (as already mentioned), he still relates parasitic discourse and infelicity in the case of fictional discourse.

and how they are to be taken, above and beyond that, with regard to a dimension of poetry, humour, drama, etc. However, even if it can be maintained that they are happy utterances in this sense, it can nevertheless *still* be maintained that they are parasitic upon normal usage. In other words, even if it is shown that abnormal usage is quite felicitous, or capable of being such, it can still be maintained that it is parasitic. Describing a form of discourse as parasitic is meant, I take it, to indicate that that discourse reproduces ordinary, everyday, literal discourse in special circumstances (however one determines what special circumstances are, an issue which I shall investigate below). It 'lives off' such discourse to the extent that it requires certain regularly occurring situations which it can transform in various ways. The poet, for instance, may proclaim his love for the Muses in a poem just as a lover in 'real life' might proclaim his love for some real person in a letter. In such a situation the poet is using language that is characteristic of situations where people proclaim love for one another to express his devotion to the arts. He is taking language from the contexts of which it is more characteristic with the intention of using it in a special context to surprise the reader and start him thinking about the nature of the poet's commitment to art. The reader's mind will thus be focused on the similarities and differences between the love of art and romantic love. However, I shall now argue that, at the end of the day, all 'parasitic' can legitimately connote for Austin when said of uses of language is that some uses of language depend on some other uses of language for their intelligibility. And I shall also argue that it may often be so-called 'everyday' uses of language that are parasites.

To use the term 'parasite', which is often (if not usually) a pejorative term, may seem to classify such types of discourse as somehow unhealthy. Austin (unlike Searle whom I shall examine shortly) seems to intend this pejorative sense since he uses it in conjunction with language of infection, non-seriousness and aetiolation. In its pejorative senses, judging from COD, a parasite is a self-seeking hanger-on or an unprofitable dependent person or thing. The word is however also used more neutrally to connote *either* animals or plants that live in or on others,

drawing nutriment directly from them, *or* plants that need some support. So clearly, whether pejorative or not, 'parasite' connotes an organism that is in some sense supported by some other thing. In the case of parasitic discourse that other thing is presumably normal discourse.[8]

To say that the use of language in poetry and drama, for instance, is parasitic in this sense is *prima facie* persuasive. However when one examines further one can see that, although there may be much in these disciplines that is borrowed from 'real life', it is not a simple matter of their being parasitic on 'real life' and never the other way around. Oscar Wilde said once that "Life imitates art more than art imitates life". And François de la Rochfoucauld said that few people would fall in love if they did not read about it first. What they say carries conviction. In fact it could be said that our present conception of romantic love, for example, is largely an invention of poets and perhaps philosophers. To take an example, Richard Wagner (whom we may regard as a poet) developed a love story, told by Gotfried von Strassbourg and others, which was ultimately based on the legendary lives of a Cornish or Breton nobleman and an Irish princess — *Tristan und Isolde.* The concept of the *Liebestod* and the very spiritual notions of love associated with it were probably not found in real life though; they were developed by poets and philosophers. *Now* of course such a work can be used to illustrate romantic love (or Romantic love) and people can learn about romantic love from it. Indeed readers' lives are sometimes strongly influenced by works of literature as is clear from the numerous suicides occasioned by the reading of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers.*[9] More significantly though, it is not uncommon for people to 'borrow' phrases or

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[8] I shall return in Chapter Five to the question of whether Austin was making a value-judgement in calling these uses of language 'parasites' and 'aetiolations'.

[9] It can be noted too that poets often write poems for their loved ones as, for example, Shakespeare wrote most of his sonnets for William Herbert. Here the poem is a stylized public form of communication. The sonnets are used to express love and jealousy and also to rebuke. It is difficult to see why they should not be speech acts.

expressions from works of literature which they feel would express their own sentiments better than any language they could otherwise think of.

Even if, *pace* Wilde, such reversal of parasitism is not very frequent, it is nevertheless possible and therefore shows that 'ordinary' discourse can itself be parasitic in the sense outlined above. Even if we interpret what happens as due to people living in fantasy worlds distorted by their reading of abnormal discourses, nevertheless such fantasy lives are quite ordinary and widely to be met with. Ordinary people poeticize and dramatize their everyday lives. So-called abnormal discourse would thus seem to be part of normal discourse or at least the two cannot be separated as mutually exclusive domains. If there is to be a pathology of abnormal language therefore, it will be a pathology of everyday language. I shall return to this matter of the relation of parasites and their hosts in a later chapter where I consider the view that a general distinction cannot be made between hosts and parasites. Later in this chapter I discuss Searle's view of their relation.

3.1.2 Reports and Reproductions

The question of parasitic discourse is investigated in another way in *HDTW*. Austin says that the phatic act is mimic-able but not reportable whereas the rhetic act is reportable; that is, the phatic act is reproducible and the rhetic act is reportable. In this subsection I shall undermine such a distinction.

To examine the distinction further: an utterance from 'real life' may be reproduced in a novel and in fact "every utterance can be just reproduced in inverted commas, or in inverted commas with 'said he' or, more often, 'said she', &c., after it" [*HDTW*, 96].[10] This is clearly a

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[10] Later I shall investigate a controversy over essentially this point. Here Austin is introducing what one might call a principle of quotability (viz. every utterance can be quoted). Later I shall compare and contrast it with what Derrida will call a principle of 'citationality'. Basically, this principle points to the fact that every utterance or text can not only be quoted but repeated in other kinds of ways in other contexts. For Derrida, citationality is (in effect) an essential attribute of every utterance or text. He even suggests that every utterance or text is already a citation. But

parasitic use of the utterance. It is "the 'inverted commas' use of 'said' as we get it in novels". All quotations are in fact parasitic for Austin [see *HDTW*, 92, n. 2].

Reproduced utterance must not to be confused with reported utterance. Here is what Austin says about the latter:

> the rhetic act is the one we report, in the case of assertions, by saying 'He said that the cat was on the mat', 'He said he would go', 'He said I was to go' (his words were 'You are to go'). This is the so-called 'indirect speech'. If the sense or reference is *not* being taken as clear, then the whole or part is to be in quotation marks [*HDTW*, 96].

So the whole or part of the rhetic act that is being reported may be in quotation marks if it is not clear. What Austin means is that, in reporting what someone said concerning some event, one was not clear what the reference of one or more (perhaps all) of the terms used was. He gives the following example: "He said I was to go to 'the minister', but he did not say which minister". The expression was presumably 'You are to go to the minister'. But the speaker does not know the reference of all the words. He knows what 'You are to go to...' means (who 'you' refers to, etc.) but not what 'the minister' refers to. But of course it might not be clear what he means at all in which case what is reported will be the following: "He said 'You are to go to the minister' but he did not say which minister, how to get there or who precisely was to go". This report of what the speaker said can be construed as indirect speech, or *oratio obliqua*, according to Austin in the above quotation. It is thus to be contrasted with the *oratio recta* involved in reproducing phatic acts.

The question now is: when the whole utterance is unclear and is thus put in inverted commas why is it a reported rhetic act and not merely a reproduced phatic act? That is, why is it *oratio obliqua* rather than *oratio recta* (which latter it looks more like)? And also, why then is it not parasitic? The answer here, I think, is that Austin is committed to holding that reported speech is in fact sometimes parasitic. It is language taken out of its original ordinary context, in ignorance of that to which it

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more about that in later chapters.

refers, in the same way as mimicking someone's saying 'She has lovely hair', which is Austin's example of a reproduced phatic act, is taking an utterance out of its context without regard to what it refers to.

Perhaps this can be cleared up if we compare this report/reproduction distinction with the use/mention distinction. In neither the case of the reproduced phatic act nor that of the reported rhetic act (i.e. the case in question which is wholly in inverted commas because unclear) is the relevant utterance being used. It is merely being mentioned. Mimicking someone's saying 'She has lovely hair' is a type of mention just as the speaker is mentioning rather than using the relevant utterance in "He said 'You are to go to the minister' but he did not say which minister, how to go there or who precisely was to go". In the latter case the speaker could only mention what the other speaker had said because he was not sure what the speaker had been referring to. It is not surprising to find that a phatic act can be mentioned but it *is* surprising to discover that a rhetic act should be mentionable. As already stated though, Austin will allow that there may be rhetic acts which have no reference; he gives the example of 'All triangles have three sides'. As long as there is a definite sense, the utterance can constitute a rhetic act. This however makes it impossible to distinguish between two mentions one of which is said to be a reproduced phatic act and the other a reported rhetic act; the sense of 'She has lovely hair' seems to be quite definite and clear and, if it is being mimicked, then it is not simply an instance of grammar.

Now Austin says that reproduced phatic acts are to be found in novels, as already mentioned, and this implies, together with what I have explicated of his notion of parasitic discourse, that such reproduced phatic acts are parasitic and thus abnormal. However it is not clear that such utterances in novels cannot be construed as reported rhetic acts and thus normal. For instance, if a character in a novel says 'Ottawa is the capital of Canada', then it seems quite in order to say that not only has that utterance a definite sense but also a definite reference. But if it has either (and it certainly has a definite sense even if one does not want to say that it refers), then it is a reported rhetic act, or perhaps a *reproduced* rhetic act (since in this case there is no prior utterance that

is being reported), and not (just) a reproduced phatic act. If it is a reported (or reproduced) rhetic act though, then it must be normal. The fact that the character who is reported to have said it is imaginary, is of course irrelevant to this consideration (at least as far as the question of definite sense goes but perhaps not, as we shall see, as far as questions of reference go).[11]

The considerations of this section, I take it, go to show that Austin has not managed to show that fictional language is not normal given his view of normalcy. He has not established a general difference between language as it is used in jokes, poems and drama and language as it is used in 'normal' contexts.

3.2 Searlean Parasites

Like Austin, Searle speaks of parasitic speech acts, but he does not seem to use the word 'parasitic' in the same pejorative manner (although he would not agree that Austin was using the word pejoratively, as we shall see in Chapter Five). Also his theory of parasitism is better developed than Austin's especially in his theories of fictional discourse and of metaphor.

His basic distinction between parasitic forms of discourse and those that are normal or ordinary is similar to Austin's: "I contrast 'serious' utterances with play acting, teaching a language, reciting poems, practicing pronunciation, etc., and I contrast 'literal' with metaphorical, sarcastic, etc." [*SA*, 57n]. Here the types of acts that are non-serious and non-literal are similar to those that Austin gives (only it is surprising to see that teaching a language and practicing pronunciation involve a non-serious use of language). It is clear that the word 'serious' is not being used here as it ordinarily is. However it is also clear that Searle is calling

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[11] This issue of fictional characters' speech acts will be thematized in the discussion of Searle's theory of fictional discourse below.

what in his sense is non-serious and non-literal usage, parasitic [see *SA*, 57].[12]

3.2.1 Parasitic Reference

I shall deal first with the question of parasitic reference.[13] Here Searle offers an example similar to Austin's example of acts where the reference of one of the terms ('the minister') is unknown. Searle points out that a speaker and a hearer can continue their conversation about a person named Jones while only the speaker knows whom 'Jones' refers to. The hearer, in talking about Jones, only knows Jones under a description such as "The person referred to by my interlocutor as 'Jones'". Here the hearer's reference to Jones is said to be "parasitic on that of the original speaker" [*SA*, 89]. The hearer, in speaking of Jones, does not know Jones and therefore does not really know whether he is referring to anything that actually exists. He could not, to use Searle's term, provide 'a genuine identifying description', e.g. 'Jones, the bus conductor on the 11A'. This use of the term 'Jones' only refers if the original speaker could in fact provide such a description.[14]

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[12] This is also implied in RD where composing a novel (which involves non-serious, fictional discourse) or a poem (which usually involves non-literal, metaphoric discourse) is said to be a case of parasitic discourse [see RD, 206].

[13] See *SA*, 94ff on the constitutive rules for the speech act of reference. The second semantical rule of reference is as follows: "R [a referring expression] is to be uttered only if there exists an object X such that either R contains an identifying description of X or S is able to supplement R with an identifying description of X, and such that, in the utterance of R, S intends to pick out or identify X to H" [*SA*, 96].

[14] That, at least, would be a test of non-parasitic and intentional reference. One would have to add this qualification because, to take an example, one could maintain that I can now, sitting in my room outside of which there is a corridor (in which there may or may not be anyone for all I know) speak of 'the man in the corridor'. Pursuing this line of argumentation, one could say that my utterance may refer to a man who is, unknown to me, in the corridor. One could then say that if I do not go out and have a look, then I can never provide a 'genuine identifying description' but that that does not mean that my utterance did not refer but only that I do not know that it did and could not satisfy someone

Given that this is so, what does 'parasitic reference' mean? It can only mean that the hearer believes he is referring to someone, Jones, because he believes that the original speaker knew that *he* was referring to someone when *he* spoke of Jones. In other words the hearer, in referring to Jones, is depending on the speaker to the extent that the hearer is taking the speaker's referring to Jones as evidence that there is a Jones and that thus he, the hearer, is actually referring to someone when he speaks of Jones. To call this parasitic reference then clearly *is* to say something interesting about reference, or the use of referring expressions in such cases, viz. that they refer indirectly to their object by way of someone else's primary reference.

Such parasitic reference can be compared to, and contrasted with, the type of reference (if any) that takes place in poetry and works of fiction. To take the case of fiction first. Speaking of Santa Claus and Sherlock Holmes, Searle says

> One can refer to them *as fictional characters* precisely because they do *exist in fiction*. To make this clear we need to distinguish normal real world talk from parasitic forms of discourse such as fiction, play acting, etc. [*SA*, 78].

Searle distinguishes between *exists* and *exists-in-fiction*. Something which exists-in-fiction may not in fact exist *sans phrase*. I think that Searle's point is that to say that a character exists will have different implications depending on whether the universe of discourse in question is a work of fiction or the real world.

In LSFD Searle says some more about such parasitic reference. The author in writing a work of fiction refers to something or someone that does not exist. At this stage the author is not even referring to a fictional character. The author is only *pretending* to refer: "by pretending

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sitting in my room with me that it did. One could thus say that my sentence referred but that *I* did not. It would then have been by accident that what I said referred; I did not intend that it should. So one could agree with Searle that *I* have only referred to Jones if I can provide a 'genuine identifying description'. For Searle though, to say that an expression refers independently of the speaker is nonsense [see *SA*, 28]. Stipulating that it *is* nonsense avoids the counter-intuitive results of the example of accidental reference and is to that extent justified.

to refer she pretends that there is an object to be referred to" [LSFD, 71]. Thus her reference is unhappy. However, "by pretending to refer to a person she creates a fictional person. Now once that fictional character has been created, we who are standing outside the fictional story can really refer to a fictional person" [LSFD, 72]. The author by pretending to refer to an object or person that does not exist creates that object or person as a fiction. In LSFD Searle does not make it clear *how* this occurs but it presumably can be explained in terms of the account of parasitic reference in *SA* which I have just outlined. When someone else refers parasitically to that to which the speaker (or, in this case, the writer) pretendedly (and thus unhappily) refers, then that hearer (or reader) will not be mistakenly referring to nothing but actually referring to something which, although it does not exist *sans phrase*, does exist-in-fiction.[15] In the case of parasitic reference to 'Jones' where Jones does not in fact exist, one is referring to a fiction if the author is pretending and one is willing to share his pretence [see LSFD, 71], and to nothing if he is not so pretending. Depending on whether or not the speaker is either pretending to refer or mistakenly attempting to refer, one will it seems, in referring parasitically to that to which he putatively refers, be referring, in the former case, to a fictional entity or, in the latter cases, to nothing at all.

To take Searle's example from Iris Murdoch's *The Red and the Green*: Second Lieutenant Andrew Chase-White, a recently commissioned horse-guard living in Dublin, never actually existed in the real world. Murdoch however, knowing that there is or was no such person, deliberately, but without any attempt to deceive, used those names as if there were some person to whom they referred. In fact though, this character, as he has now become, did not at that point either exist *sans phrase* or *in-fiction*. But a reader who comes along and reads about this apparent Lt. Chase-White will refer parasitically to 'Lt. Chase-White'.

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[15] One could say here that if two or more people talk about some object that has not up until that point existed, and if they know that but nonetheless continue to talk about it, that then that object comes into some form of existence by convention. Not only a fiction but perhaps also a truce can come into existence in this way.

For him it will be as if Chase-White existed. If this reader knows that he is reading a work of fiction, then he will know that the writer could not provide any genuine identifying descriptions but only invented ones. He will know that 'Chase-White' does not refer to anyone who ever existed and that the putative identifying descriptions of him in the novel are spurious. He will however be prepared to pretend with Murdoch that there is such a character. This name and set of identifying descriptions then constitute the creation of the fictional character Lt. Chase-White who still does not exist however but only exists-in-fiction. In this manner one can see how the parasitic reference of fictional discourse is related to the infelicity associated with parasitically referring to that which does not actually exist.

3.2.2 Pretended Assertions

I shall now consider what Searle says about the nature of the utterances made in the fictional discourse used by Murdoch. Here I shall show that he establishes a logical difference between real world illocutions and fictional illocutions. For Searle all of Murdoch's 'assertions' about Chase-White are parasitic or, what one might call, pseudo-assertions. "She is pretending, one could say, to make an assertion, or acting as if she were making an assertion, or going through the motions of making an assertion, or imitating the making of an assertion" [LSFD, 65]. Why though does Searle say that such apparent assertions as, for example, Murdoch's "Second-Lieutenant Andrew Chase-White ... pottered contentedly in a garden on the outskirts of Dublin on a sunny Sunday afternoon in April nineteen sixteen",[16] are not simply false assertions rather than not assertions at all?

The reason can be gleaned from an examination of Searle's list of the rules for the performance of the illocutionary act of asserting. Here are those constitutive rules:

1. The essential rule: the maker of an assertion commits himself to the truth of the expressed proposition.

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16 Searle punctuates the passage differently.

2. The preparatory rules: the speaker must be in a position to provide evidence or reasons for the truth of the expressed proposition.
3. The expressed proposition must not be obviously true to both the speaker and the hearer in the context of utterance.
4. The sincerity rule: the speaker commits himself to a belief in the truth of the expressed proposition [LSFD, 62; cp. *SA*, 65].

In *SA* Searle also mentions the propositional content rule to the effect that for an utterance to be an assertion it must express some proposition p. That is, an utterance must not simply be an utterance act but a propositional act. Rather than describing or analyzing assertions though, these rules would *appear* to legislate what an assertion may be.[17] It would not be obviously wrong to say that Murdoch *says*, or *asserts*, that Lt. Chase-White was pottering in his garden. Let us therefore examine how these rules would exclude Murdoch's assertions about Lt. Chase-White.

First, the preparatory and sincerity rules here do not apply to Murdoch's utterances. One can have no evidence for something one is making up and clearly the question of obviousness or otherwise will not arise; also one cannot fail to be sincere since whatever one says is invention and thus, so to speak, make-believe.[18] Secondly, the essential condition simply rules out fictional utterances. It appears to be the most legislative of these supposedly constitutive rules.[19]

The case of the propositional content rule is problematic though. Perhaps that is why Searle did not mention it with the other rules in LSFD. Does Murdoch perform propositional acts in *The Red and the Green*? Recall that the propositional act involves the reference act and the act of

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[17] Consider how the above rules might be said to be somehow ethical in a Kantian sense (i.e. as involving moral legislation). Derrida, as we shall see in Chapter Five below, thinks of the rules of Speech Act Theory as involving an ethical dimension. Searle rejects this.

[18] Of course novels can be unconvincing if they take too much liberty with situations similar in many respects to the real world but very different in others. For instance, novels set in history, as Murdoch's is, will be judged as to whether they catch the spirit of the times as revealed by History. Thus Chase-White may not be simply fictional.

[19] However with regard to assertions made by the character Lt. Chase-White this does not apply. In fact all of theses conditions, with the *possible* exception of the essential condition, would be fulfilled.

predication. The utterance I have just cited fails to refer to Lt. Chase-White because he never existed. It does however involve an act of predication, viz. "...pottered contentedly in a garden...". But there are utterances in some novels that do refer. For instance, in Murdoch's novel there are references to Dublin and other real places. Searle though points out that works of fiction are not exclusively composed of fictional utterances. Thus he makes a distinction between fictions and fictional discourse [see *LSFD*, 74]. In fictional discourse then, it would appear, there are no propositions. However the matter is still not clear. I have just quoted Searle saying that once the author creates the fictional character by pretending to refer to someone that does not exist, her readers can then refer to a fictional character — "we who are standing outside the fictional story can really refer to a fictional person". If we can, then Murdoch's utterances are propositions for her readers but not for her. However since she is presumably a reader of her own texts, they will be propositions for her too *qua* reader. Thus fictional discourse does consist of propositions.

None of the above-mentioned rules from LSFD in fact apply to Murdoch's utterances because from her point of view as speaker-writer the utterances do not express propositions. And, from the point of view of the reader, Murdoch's utterance about Chase-White fails the essential rule. The other rules are not applicable. So clearly, Searle's rules do logically distinguish between utterances of fictional discourse and assertions in 'real life' situations.

It is clear that the fictional utterances are neither true nor false when first made because at that stage they do not refer (either to real persons and events or to fictional characters and events). But for the reader, for whom they *do* refer, they are also neither true nor false because they, in a sense, bring about their own truth since they refer to the universe of discourse that was brought into existence by the author's original use of them. Their direction of fit is not word-to-world nor world-to-word but rather both word-to-fictional-world (or word-to-fictional-universe-of-discourse) and fictional-world-to-word. That is, they describe a fictional world which they also bring into existence. This, I think, is a good enough reason to deny that they are assertions. They look

like assertions but perform more (or just differently) than assertions usually do (in newspapers, for example). They are thus logically different to assertions.

3.2.3 Intention and Horizontal Convention

It is in fact the speaker's (or writer's) intentions that determine whether what they say is fictional according to Searle. Let us investigate this intentional criterion of fiction. We have already seen that fiction is a matter of pretence. We shall now see that this is the only criterion, there being no textual criterion:

> the identifying criterion for whether or not a text is a work of fiction must of necessity lie in the illocutionary intentions of the author. There is no textual property, syntactical or semantic, that will identify a text as a work of fiction [LSFD, 65].

This passage is not denying something which is quite obviously true, viz. that there are identifiable styles of fiction and thus that one could determine from a book's style whether or not it were fiction. There are such styles which are associated with certain textual idiosyncracies frequently laid bare by literary critics. There *are* therefore certain styles associated with the writing of literature. Searle however only has to point out here that one could write a work of non-fiction in one of these styles. There is nothing about them that makes them only suitable for fiction.

At different times then literary conventions will vary and there is nothing to prevent someone from writing factually whilst adhering to such conventions. Searle recognizes such literary conventions but points out that it is not the conventions themselves but their *use* which suspends the ordinary rules of illocution such as those of assertion which I have just quoted. These 'horizontal conventions', as Searle calls them, are used to "suspend the normal operation of the rules relating illocutionary acts and the world" [LSFD, 67; cp. *SA*, 79]. The use of these conventions, in Searle's view, will signal that the author is only pretending to perform the illocutionary acts that he seems to be performing:

> the pretended performances of illocutionary acts which constitute the writing of a work of fiction consist in

> actually performing utterance acts with the intention of invoking the horizontal conventions that suspend the normal illocutionary commitments of the utterances [LSFD, 68].

It is thus the use of the conventions, whereby the author signals that he is now writing fiction, that enables readers to determine that the utterances that they hear (or read) constitute fictional and not factual illocutions; or, in Searle's terms, whether they are pretended or actual illocutions.[20]

This aspect of Searle's theory clearly marks a significant advance on Austin's. Not only does Searle not have such a pejorative attitude towards parasitic discourse, he does not, as I take it these latter considerations show, consider it to be the unhappy use of language. Regarding whether it is non-serious, it should be noted that Searle uses the word 'serious' in two senses: one is the ordinary meaning that is the opposite of humorous or frivolous; the other is the technical meaning, which I have already investigated, which roughly means pertaining to the use of discourse for the purposes of communication and not using it for pronunciation, in play-acting or for telling jokes. Some uses of language are non-serious in both senses (e.g. joking) but others are non-serious in the second sense only (e.g. non-humorous poetry) [see LSFD, 60]. In this latter sense, of course, Walt Whitman, for instance, is serious in his poetic use of language and also his use of language is not unhappy because he uses poetic techniques such as versification which is, and was in nineteenth century America, a convention the use of which lets the reader know that the content was intended as poetry. Thus Whitman used horizontal techniques, thereby avoiding the possible charge of unhappily using language.

3.2.4 Metaphor

I must now examine how Searle might have dealt with Whitman's eagle of liberty. The eagle of liberty is a metaphor and not the name of a fictional character or object. That much is probably obvious. The mention of the 'eagle of liberty' need not be taken as denoting a fictional

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[20] Thus there can be no mechanical means of deciding whether some utterance is fictional [see WTUD, 79].

character or object; it will rather be taken as a metaphor. I think Searle would agree that a different horizontal convention thus comes into play in such poems than comes into play in works of fiction. Of course poets create fictional characters too, T. S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock for instance, and so some of their apparent references are pretended but some too are not.

The example that Searle gives of metaphor is from the first verse of an untitled poem by Emily Dickinson [quoted in *E&M*, 82]:

> My Life had stood — a Loaded Gun —
> In Corners — till a Day
> The Owner passed — identified —
> And carried Me away —

Here 'a Loaded Gun' does not refer to some fictional gun. When the poet speaks of her life up until a certain point as a loaded gun she does not literally mean what she says. It is obviously false as a literal assertion. This egregiousness is a clue, according to Searle, that the expression is being used non-literally and in fact metaphorically. One could say, although Searle does not, that the reader here brings into play a principle of charity. He notices that, taken literally, the utterance is nonsense so he (ideally at least) tries to think why the poet wants to make an association between her life and a loaded gun. So the reader tries to think of distinctive features of loaded guns which might also be said to be features of the poet's life. In Searle's reading, the loaded gun is interpreted as a metaphor standing for the notion of unrealized potential.

To isolate the general points here, Searle is saying that a poet is being metaphorical when she deliberately says 'S is P' and means 'S is R' where P does not mean R. What happens is that "the utterance of P calls to mind the meaning and, hence, truth conditions associated with R, in the special ways that metaphorical utterances have of calling other things to mind" [*E&M*, 104]. Now we have seen one way in which one determines whether the utterance is in fact metaphorical, viz. by determining that it is nonsense if taken literally. There are other ways but we need not be

concerned with them.[21] When one has determined that the utterance is in fact metaphorical, then one will need a strategy (or strategies) for determining the value of R. One determines values of R by investigating real or supposed distinctive features of P. Then one will have a set of possible values of R which one will need to limit in some way. One does this by considering which of these values of R are possible or probable properties of S. Searle in fact gives various principles for computing R given P. For instance, one could select those P things which are by definition R. For example, giants are by definition big, so if the metaphor P is 'giant', then this principle will suggest 'big' as the value of R. Another principle is that R should be, or should generally be taken to be, a salient feature of P things. There are many possible principles; Searle lists only eight but states that he believes that there are more [see *E&M*, 107ff]. In *Int* he points out that "there is no algorithm for discovering when an utterance is intended metaphorically" [*Int*, 149], and that, even when one knows that the utterance is intended metaphorically, there is no algorithm for calculating the value of the metaphor.

The question of metaphor is not exhaustively investigated by Searle. He confines his investigation largely to metaphors that can be expressed in the form 'S is P'. There are other forms of course such as 'S P-relation S", e.g. 'Sam devours books'. He points out too that "there are many metaphors whose interpretation does not rely on any perception of literal similarity between the extension of the [P] term and the referent of the [S] term" [*Int*, 149]. And it is important to note too that he does not think that metaphors can be given a fully adequate literal paraphrase:

> The best we can do in the paraphrase is reproduce the truth conditions of the metaphorical utterance, but the metaphorical utterance does more than just convey its truth conditions. It conveys its truth conditions by way of

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[21] Often it is some sort of defect of the utterance when taken literally that alerts the reader that the utterance involves metaphor. "The defects which cue the hearer may be obvious falsehood, semantic nonsense, violations of the rules of speech acts, or violations of conversational principles of communication" [*E&M*, 105]. However sometimes it may simply be that the person in question is known to like expressing himself metaphorically. Or the expression in question may be typically used metaphorically.

> another semantic content, whose truth conditions are not part of the truth conditions of the utterance. The expressive power that we feel is part of good metaphors is largely a matter of two features. The hearer has to figure out what the speaker means — he has to contribute more to the communication than just passive uptake — and he has to do that by going through another and related semantic content from the one which is communicated [*E&M*, 116].

The truth conditions of the utterance taken literally are different to those of the utterance taken metaphorically (and thus the meaning differs). For instance, it was false for Dickinson to say, literally interpreted, that her life was a loaded gun. But it was true to say that her life evidenced a realizable, and possibly destructive, potential. The way that Dickinson communicates by means of this metaphor is more complex than the paradigm of communication which is the interpretation of literal utterances, in which the speaker says what she means, in the light of assumptions shared by the speaker and her audience. Here, in a sense, the hearer is given only a suggestion or clue as to how to go about discovering the intended meaning. The speaker does not say what she means but only suggests it. The hearer then has to try various strategies to isolate a likely meaning. These strategies may yield various different interpretations with different shades of meaning. So when Searle says that the speaker, in speaking metaphorically, says 'S is P' and means 'S is R' he is not ruling out the possibility of her also simultaneously meaning 'S is Q', etc. A 'Loaded Gun' can mean unrealized potential and something deadly dangerous at the same time.

It is clear that this interpretation of utterances that use metaphors relies on the distinction between literal sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning that I investigated in the last chapter. Dickinson's utterance literally means that her life stood a loaded gun. Taken literally it seems to be nonsense. Because Dickinson is a poet and her work appears in a book of poetry perhaps, or for some reason that Searle does not mention, one decides that she is being metaphorical. That means that one can allow that she deliberately uttered the nonsensical sentence in order, in the context in question, to convey some other meaning.

I noted in the previous chapter that in his later work Searle moved further away from the Gricean analysis of what Searle calls speaker's utterance meaning. He divorced the intention to represent from the intention to communicate. I presented Searle's example of the soldier devising a signal to indicate that the enemy was retreating. The soldier made his raising his hand represent the state of affairs of the enemy's retreating by his intentionally conferring the same conditions of satisfaction on it as his corresponding belief that the enemy were retreating would have had. I suggested that, if one can do this, then one can (like Humpty Dumpty) make any utterance or other act mean what one wants it to mean solely by intentional fiat. If that is the case, then the parasitic discourse of fiction and poetry could not be parasitic for the reason that they were dependent on literal discourse for their meanings. That would no longer be the case. It would only be in their manner of being communicated that they would be dependent on literal discourse.

3.2.5 Double and Hybrid Illocutions

I mentioned in the previous chapter that Searle holds that, in performing one utterance act, one can perform two illocutionary acts. Let us call these 'double illocutions'. One of the illocutions will be literal the other will be indirect. The latter are called 'indirect speech acts'. Thus, although 'I want you to do it' is literally a statement, it may be intended in many situations as a request. Indirectly it would be a request. This is accounted for by means of the distinction between literal sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning, which I have already investigated.

One can also make a literal illocution and a parasitic utterance by means of the same utterance act. Let us call these 'hybrid illocutions'. Searle does not explicitly give an example of one. However, in LSFD, he mentions the following example to justify his making the distinction between fictions and fictional discourse which I examined above. The

example can be used to explain hybrid illocutions.[22] He mentions Leo Tolstoy's claim at the start of *Anna Karenina* that "Happy families are all happy in the same way, unhappy families unhappy in their separate, different ways". And he contrasts it with Vladimir Nabokov's misquotation of it at the start of *Ada*: "All happy families are more or less dissimilar; all unhappy ones more or less alike". Searle comments that Nabokov is "indirectly contradicting (and poking fun at) Tolstoy"; and, he continues, "Both of these are genuine assertions, though Nabokov's is made by an ironic misquotation of Tolstoy" [LSFD, 74]. In a sense Nabokov was both making a genuine philosophical assertion (just as Tolstoy was) and, at the same time, *both* an indirect assertion (i.e. an indirect speech act) contradicting Tolstoy *and* a joke. An assertion is, of course, a serious illocution (whether it is direct and literal or indirect and non-literal) but a joke is a non-serious utterance.[23] Nabokov's utterance would thus seem to be doubly parasitic since, as well as being a literal assertion, it involves both an indirect assertion and a joke. Thus Nabokov's intention in uttering it was complex. In my terms, his utterance is both a double and hybrid illocution.

Nabokov presumably wanted his utterance to be read by readers who would be familiar with Tolstoy's novel and would realize that, as Searle puts it, he was both contradicting and poking fun at Tolstoy (as well as making a philosophical point of his own). In Searlean terms, Nabokov's utterance has a literal meaning and, when read (as Nabokov presumably intended) in the context of Tolstoy's novel, a double speaker's (or writer's) utterance meaning one of which was non-serious.

The non-serious utterance meaning, since it is not a pretended utterance, was not non-serious in the same way that Murdoch's fictional utterances are. Although, it is not clear what rule is being suspended from operating or what horizontal convention is being used, it is clear that

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[22] In WTUD Searle criticizes Jonathan Culler for thinking that he, Searle, was committed to holding that the same utterance could not be both a use and a mention. He points out in response to Culler that his theory does allow for such hybrids (in my words) [see WTUD, 78].

[23] Some jokes may be non-literal too, but the one in question is not.

Searle's theory can account for such a complex phenomenon by means of his intentional criterion. In a later chapter I shall introduce Derrida's notion of citationality which, I shall show, is a nice way of explaining this phenomenon and the other types of parasitic discourse mentioned by Searle. I shall compare and contrast it with Searle's way of dealing with this utterance. There I shall consider whether a pure intentional criterion is sufficient to explain such phenomena. I shall defend the view that it is sufficient.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have compared and contrasted Austin's and Searle's theories of parasitic discourse. I have shown how Searle's is a development of ideas that appear in a cruder form in Austin's. Searle avoids many of the problems of Austin's view mainly by means of his notions of speaker's utterance meaning (to explain non-literal parasites) and parasitic reference (to explain non-serious parasites). For Searle, parasitism would appear to connote the dependence of some language forms on others. Fictional discourse, metaphorical utterances and jokes are logically dependent on literal discourse. For Austin however parasites were characterized as uses of language in abnormal contexts. Such uses were characterized as 'not serious' and 'not full normal' uses of language. And Austin downgraded such uses by referring to them by means of the language of infection, aetiolation and breakdown.

In the following chapters I consider first certain criticisms made by Derrida of Austin's theory, or doctrine, of parasitic discourse. I show that his distinction cannot in general be sustained. Then in the following chapter I consider Searle's defence of Austin against Derrida's attack. This will lead to a consideration of how and to what extent the Derridean critique of Austin may be applied also to the basics of Searle's more refined theory of parasites. There I will be particularly concerned with the legitimacy of Searle's postulated rules and vertical conventions.

Chapter Four

ON THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE PURELY SERIOUS

In the previous chapters I showed how the total and proper context (in the case of Austin) and intention (in the case of Searle) determine the speech act (or performative) that is being made and whether it is happy or unhappy, normal or parasitic. In this chapter I shall show that Austin's proper context cannot be determined and that his total context cannot be totalized. That is, I shall show that the contexts, in which one might make a normal happy speech act, cannot be determined because the intentional origin of speech acts (i.e. the speaker or writer) cannot control his utterances in such a way as to make them unambiguous, happy and normal.

To do this, I shall examine the notions of iterability, citationality and dissemination in the work of Derrida, for the following general reasons. Derrida's examination of the nature of speech and writing shows that utterances are irreducibly polysemic; they give rise to a range of possible interpretations of which none can be determined as primary, i.e. as the univocal literal meaning. This factor is known as dissemination. It is related to the factor of iterability: utterances are repeatable but their repetition embraces alteration; in other words, the repetition of an utterance is not the repetition of some self-identical unit — the repetition will be both the same and different. This factor can be seen to account for citationality: every utterance can be cited in different contexts which will modify it. And there is no criterion for selecting just one context as the proper one. In this chapter I shall account for the relations between the factors of dissemination, iterability and citationality.

I shall consider Austin's speech act theory in the light of these factors. However, I shall show that his theory, in effect, recognizes a principle of citationality and evidences an awareness of the problem of

determining the meaning of locutions. Then I shall show how Derrida's treatment emphasizes these aspects of Austin's work in such a way as to demonstrate the impossibility of determining a performative or speech act as (exclusively) either happy or unhappy, normal or parasitic.

Here is how I proceed in this chapter. First, I consider the notion of iterability since it plays a major role in Derrida's criticism of Austin and can also be used to explain dissemination and citationality (which are also used in this criticism). Secondly, I use the concept of iterability in an investigation of Derrida's critique of the basic picture of the relation between intentions and utterances or texts, which picture, I then show, Derrida rightly claims Austin adheres to — later I shall examine to what extent Searle adheres to it; this picture or view will be known as the Classical theory of writing (for reasons that will be investigated). Thirdly, I show how the notion of iterability and the critique of this basic picture of the relation between intentions and utterances or texts may be used to undermine Austin's notion of a proper and total context. Fourthly, I show how this makes a determination of speech acts as (exclusively) either happy or unhappy, normal or parasitic, impossible given the Austinian apparatus. However I shall argue, mainly in the following chapter, that this impossibility does not mean that the distinctions in question are false distinctions (as Derrida holds).

4.1 Iterability

The issue here may be characterized in the following manner. If I write the word or sign 'cat', and then write it again ('cat'), then I have repeated something. I have repeated the word 'cat' and the act of writing that word. I take it that it is indisputable that the two instances of the word are the same in some respect. They are both the same, as they exist on paper, in so far as they may be said to be copies of one another or two instances of the same signifier.[1] So the act of repeating a signifier is the act of producing another instance of the same signifier. The second

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[1] The signifier is roughly the physical aspect of a sign as opposed to its semantic aspect.

instance of the signifier is both different, and similar, to the first instance: it is different to the extent that it is physically distinct from the other (and it is in a different place), and it is similar in so far as it is notionally the same.

It is this idea, that the two are notionally the same, that should not be passed over too quickly. Consider the following figure:

CAT
CAT

In one sense, there are two words in this figure, but in another sense, there is only one word. It is because the lower word is regarded as a repetition of the upper word that one may say that there is one word repeated. Here it would be equally legitimate to say that the upper word is a repetition of the lower one. They are repetitions of one another. Each word may be said to be a replica of the other. They replicate one another.

Consider some very general things that might be said about the above figure. One could say that the two words are identical or the same. To say that something is identical or has identity has two main interpretations historically. The first is exemplified in the philosophy of John Locke and the second in that of Gottfried von Leibniz. I shall explain Derrida's view by way of contrast with these traditional views.

For Locke something that has identity is "the same with itself".[2] Thus identity is a type of sameness. If something were not the same with itself, it would not be (or have) an identity. Also, identity pertains to something for as long as it exists the same with itself. So a substance has identity for as long as it continues to exist and is the same substance with itself; similarly with other sorts of beings, e.g. a heap of stones continues to be the identical heap that it is for as long as it exists the same heap with itself. If the substance of which it is formed is dispersed, even if only one stone is removed, then the *heap* is not the same with what it was before it was dispersed or the one stone removed.

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[2] Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, collated and annotated, with prolegomena, bibliographical, critical, and historical, by Alexander Campbell Fraser, in two volumes, volume one (New York: Dover, 1959), book II, chapter XXVII, §1.

Locke's notion of identity is nominalistic: to answer questions as to the identity of an item, one first considers the name of that item and the idea (or complex of ideas) associated with that name; the idea (or complex of ideas) corresponding to the name determines the identity of the thing named — "such as is the idea belonging to [a] name, such must be the identity".[3] The idea corresponding to a name may be complex (e.g. the idea of a carriage consists *inter alia* of the idea of wheels, shafts, a chassis, etc.) but it will be the idea of one thing if it has a single name; 'carriage' names one thing whose concept is complex, being composed of many ideas. The following quotation may serve to clarify what Locke means:

> whatever be the composition whereof the complex idea is made, whenever existence makes it one particular thing under any denomination, *the same existence continued* preserves it the *same* individual under the same denomination.[4]

Thus before one can determine identity one must decide what sort of being one is considering. And one does this by considering the sense of the terms one is using. The identities one recognizes depend upon the language one is using.

Leibniz holds that any two objects that are (qualitatively) indiscernible are identical. His principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles states that "It is not true that two substances may be exactly alike and differ only numerically...".[5] Otherwise put, "if everything that is true of A is true of B, and vice versa, and hence if there is no discernible difference between A and B, then A is identical with B [(ϕ) $(\phi A \equiv \phi B)$ -> A = B]".[6] Any two things that are qualitatively distinct are different things and any two things that are different things are qualitatively

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3 Locke, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XXVII, §8.

4 Locke, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XXVII, §29.

5 Quoted in Benson Mates, *The Philosophy of Leibniz: Metaphysics and Language* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 132.

6 Hidé Ishiguro, *Leibniz's Philosophy of Logic and Language* (London: Duckworth, 1972), 17.

distinct. This does not mean that they will not be indiscernible to every or any human being. It only means that they will be at least discernible for God who is omniscient. The principle is rationalistic: indiscernibles are identical because God would not have had 'sufficient reason' to make two things that were absolutely similar.[7]

On these views, what is the difference between sameness and identity? For Locke, identity is the type of sameness something bears to itself. Two eggs may look the same. But they will not be identical (in relation to one another) because they are two rather than one. Each egg is only identical with itself (for as long as it exists), however similar it may be to anything else. For Leibniz though (on one interpretation)[8], if (as is never the case) the two eggs were so similar as to be qualitatively indiscernible, they would be identical. They would constitute one thing for this reason.

For Derrida, to the extent that identity is understood in its Lockean or Leibnizian senses, there are no identities. In order to see this, I shall first examine what he says about sameness or 'the same': "the *same* ... is not the identical. The same, precisely, is ... the displaced and equivocal passage of one different thing to another, from one term of an opposition to another" [Diff, 17]. In order to understand sameness in terms of a 'displaced and equivocal passage of one different thing to another', a very mysterious claim, I shall investigate what Derrida says about repetition as, what he calls, '*iteration*'.

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[7] Leibniz's philosophy of identity is complex. I shall not go into the details of it here. I just note that there are disputes as to whether he held the obverse of his principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, *sc.* the Indiscerniblity of Identicals [A = B -> (ϕ) (ϕA ≡ ϕB)]; and as to whether his so-called *salva veritate* principle (viz. "That A is the same as B means that one can be substituted for the other in any proposition without loss of truth [*salva veritate*]" [quoted in Ishiguro, *op. cit.*, 19]) concerns the substitutability of things or of concepts. On these matters, see Ishiguro, *op. cit.*, 17-34, and Mates, *op. cit.*, 122-36.

[8] That is, if the obverse of the principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles holds. Even if Leibniz did not hold this, it is part of the Leibnizian tradition.

What happens when something is repeated? An other instance of that something comes into existence. Repetition is always thus tied to alterity, or otherness [see *Sec*, 180 (7)]. In the case of signs, what is regarded as a repetition may appear quite different. For instance, the set of phonemes uttered to say the word 'cat' are very different to the set of marks inscribed to write it. Also, the word may be written in many different scripts and uttered with different pronunciations. All of these differences are differences of the same sign. There are other differences however that would make such a difference as to yield a different sign. The identity of a sign is determined by whatever the speakers of the language in question regard as the same in spite of differences between two or more items. The sign's putative identity depends on its being recognized as the same. Thus the two instances of the putatively identical thing must be recognized by the speakers-writers of the language as similar, or the same, before they can be judged to be identical. In Lockean terms, to decide that they are identical is to decide that one of the two or more things that are judged to be the same has its continued existence in the other. The judgement of sameness in a sense creates the identity. Thus identity survives as a type of sameness (but not the type of sameness required by Leibniz, viz. indiscernibility). This is what is behind the following distinction made by Derrida:

> the structure of iteration ... implies *both* identity *and* difference. Iteration in its 'purest' form — and it is always impure — contains *in itself* the discrepancy of a difference that constitutes it as iteration. The iterability of an element divides its own identity *a priori*.... It is because this iterability ... splits each element while constituting it ... that the remainder, although indispensable, is never that of a full or fulfilling presence [Ltd, 190 (53)].

Something may be a sign only in so far as it is repeatable; and its status as a sign comes through its being repeated. Therefore any one instance of it is determined in its 'identity' by other repeated and different instances. This is what Derrida means when he says that there is no first time of a sign: "A sign is never an event, if by event we mean an irreplaceable and irreversible empirical particular. A sign which would take place but 'once' would not be a sign" [*S&P*, 50]; "As soon as a sign emerges, it begins by

repeating itself [*par se répéter*]" [*W&D*, 297].[9] This is the paradox: it is repetition that makes the sign a sign; it is its repetition that makes it identifiable the 'first time' (which amounts to a problematization of the notions of the origin and repetition of signs). This is what Derrida means when he says that the sign's (or any element's) iterability 'divides its own identity *a priori*' or splits it as it constitutes it. A sign's identity is whatever about it that remains (i.e. is seen to remain) in its iterations. In other words, a sign must have a replica. There must be something about the original that is in some sense repeatable in order for it to be a sign. This is decided in usage, practice. The minimum required is that it should be recognizable.[10]

With regard to the Lockean notion of identity, if a sign has identity only to the extent that it is recognized as the same as some other sign (as Derrida's view implies), then there can be no Lockean identity of signs. This is because identity depends on more than the sign's relation to itself. The identity of a sign is split.

I shall now use this notion of iterability in my investigation of a view of speech, writing and their relations which Derrida sees as being characteristic of the whole history of philosophy. In investigating this theory I shall pay especial attention to what it says about the impossibility of speakers' or writers' controlling the meanings of their utterances. The theory is known as the Classical theory of writing.

4.2 Derrida and the Classical Theory of Writing

The theory that I shall examine in this section distinguishes between speech and writing by means of the following criterion: in speech

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9 Perhaps '*par*' would be better translated here as 'through'.

10 Nelson Goodman makes a similar point in discussing replicas: "An inscription need not be an exact duplicate of another to be a replica, or true copy, of it; indeed, there is in general no degree of similarity that is necessary or sufficient for replicahood" — Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), 131, n. 3. For an interesting example of a mark that might be the repetition of an 'a' or of a 'd', see Goodman, *op. cit.*, 139, n. 7.

the hearer is present to the speaker whereas in writing the reader is absent from the writer. And, because presence is privileged over absence, speech is privileged over writing. In fact writing is seen to be a means of recording speech while speech is a means of recording intentions (i.e. intended meanings). Writing is thus thought to be at a remove from the speaker-writer's intentions. Derrida shows that speech, as described by this theory, is impossible. In fact only writing is possible and speech is shown to be a type of writing — in order to avoid confusion, he sometimes says that speech and writing are arche-writing. I shall show that this implies that the hearer-reader is absent from the speaker as much as he is absent from the writer. Thus the factors that interfere in the communication of the writer's intended meanings to the reader will be factors interfering in the communication of the speaker's intended meanings to the hearer. The primary factor of interference is difference of context which will determine the speaker-writer's utterances differently for the hearer-reader.

According to Derrida the Classical theory of writing "is the interpretation of writing that is peculiar and proper to philosophy" and of which "I do not believe that a single counter-example can be found in the entire history of philosophy as such" [*Sec*, 175 (3)]. The view is, for instance, exemplified in the works of William Warburton (1698-1779) and the Abbé de Condillac, Étienne Bonnot (1714-1780).[11]

The purpose of writing in this view is to *re*present the ideas of one person to another (or others). The one who is addressed is (typically) not present and so cannot be spoken to directly. Writing is thus for absent persons. In Warburton's words,

> There are *two* Ways of communicating the Conceptions of our Minds to others; the first by SOUNDS, and the second by FIGURES. For there being frequent Occasion to have our Conceptions perpetuated, and known at a Distance, and *Sounds* being momentary and confined, the way of *Figures* or *Characters* was, soon after that of *Sounds*,

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11 I treat the idea mainly as expounded by Condillac and Warburton. However the ideas are mostly Locke's. See Locke, *op. cit.*, volume two, bk. III. He however does not compare or contrast speech and writing.

> thought upon to make those Conceptions lasting and extensive.[12]

Condillac virtually repeats this idea:

> When mankind had once acquired the art of communicating their conceptions by sounds, they began to feel the necessity of inventing new signs proper for perpetuating them, and for making them known at a distance [*et à les faire connoître à des personnes absentes*].[13]

Typically writing is written in the absence of the receiver and read in the absence of the writer. Note that, although this is not explicit in either writer, such absence could be either temporal or spatial. One can, for instance, write letters to people in other countries or notes to be found and read some time in the future.

Another idea that Derrida includes in the Classical theory is the view that writing is a *supplement* to speech, by which he means that writing is either added to speech, replaces it or is an extension of it. Derrida says that the Classical view sees writing as a means of communication that "*extends* the field and the powers of locutory or gestural communication" [*Sec*, 175 (3)]. In Warburton and Condillac one sees the view expressed that writing may replace speech when one wants to communicate with those who are absent. Jean-Jacques Rousseau expresses a view in which writing may be seen to be added to speech or to be an extension of it:

> Languages are made to be spoken, writing serves only as a supplement to speech. ...Speech represents thought by conventional signs, and writing represents the same with regard to speech. Thus the act of writing is nothing but a

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12 Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated*, a facsimile reprint in four volumes, volume II (1741) (New York & London: Garland, 1978), 67.

13 That is, 'and for making them known to persons who were absent'. Condillac, *An Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, a facsimile reproduction of the 1756 translation by Thomas Nugent with an introduction by Robert G. Weyant (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971), 273.

> mediated representation of thought [quoted in *OG*, 144 & 295; cp. 303 (quotation)].[14]

So where there cannot be speech, writing must do. It will not represent thought directly though, but rather speech representing thought.

Derrida isolates three main attributes of the Classical view which interest him, viz. simplicity of origin, continuity of production and homogeneity of dimensions [see *Sec*, 175f (3f)].

There are at least three possible interpretations of what simplicity of origin may mean with regard to the Classical theory. Derrida may be referring to a view dominant in the eighteenth century (to be found in Warburton, Condillac and Rousseau) that languages developed from a simple origin (such as need or passion), their first forms being inarticulate cries and gestures, these gradually and continuously being developed into the complexities of words and syntax and these eventually being written down; or he may be referring to the view which postulates a subject as the source of communication. And possibly it is the idea, rather than the subject, that is the simple origin of the message that is communicated either in speech or writing. In sum, the simple origin may be the source, or *archè*, from which both speech and writing developed, the subject that communicates in speech or writing, or the idea communicated in speech or writing. Then the continuity of derivation or production would be the process of the development of speech and writing from the source or the lack of any major difference between a subject's expressing himself, or an idea's being expressed, in speech or writing. Homogeneity of dimensions would then connote the lack of a radical difference between speech and writing as vehicles, so to speak, of communication.

What are the differences between speech and writing for the Classical theory? Clearly from the above quotations of Warburton and

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14 Compare Ferdinand de Saussure: "Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first" — *Course in General Linguistics*, introduced by Jonathan Culler, edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye with Albert Riedlinger, translated by Wade Baskin (London: Peter Owen, 1974), 23. For further comparisons, regarding linguistics, of Rousseau and Saussure, see Derrida, 'The Linguistic Circle of Geneva' in *Margins*; see especially *MP*, 148ff.

Condillac it is the absence of the receiver (of the communiqué) from the sender that distinguishes speech from writing. In other words, speech is for communication where the sender and receiver are present together whereas writing is for when they are apart or absent from one another.

Derrida focuses on this notion of the absence of the speaker or sender and of the hearer or receiver. In the Classical view, absence is thought of as a modified or supplemented presence — "as a continuous modification and progressive extenuation of presence. Representation regularly [supplements] presence" [*Sec*, 177 (5)]. Condillac thinks of absence as a distant presence. The representation that writing is, substitutes for the immediate presence of the sender and receiver, or it enables the distance somehow to be bridged, as it were. This view then does not explicitly thematize a type of absence that would *not*, according to Derrida, be a distant presence, viz. the absolute absence of death.

Although the sender is distant from the receiver, Condillac says that writing will, by means of the imagination, "represent to [the receivers] only the very *same* images that they had already expressed through actions and words" [quoted, with Derrida's emphasis, *Sec*, 176 (4)]. I interpret this as saying that the ideas (or intentions) of the sender are present to the receiver even though he is absent. Although the two are absent from one another, the sender's ideas are made present by means of writing.

In light of this, Derrida's complaint that Condillac does not examine the absence of the sender and of his intentions may seem bizarre:

> One writes in order to communicate something to those who are absent. The absence of the sender, of the receiver [*destinateur*], from the mark that he abandons, and which cuts itself off from him and continues to produce effects independently of his presence and of the present actuality of his intentions [*vouloir-dire*], indeed even after his death, his absence, which moreover belongs to the structure of all writing — and I shall add further on, of all language in general — this absence is not examined by Condillac [*Sec*, 177 (5)].

This clearly begs the question as to whether in fact, or in Condillac's opinion, the sender's absence *is also* the absence of his intentions. In other words, there is a jump here from the notion that the sender and

receiver are absent from one another, to the view that the sender's intentions are also absent from the text (i.e. that they are not to be read there). And also this seems to be strikingly inconsistent with what Derrida has just shown, viz. that for Condillac writing represents 'the very *same* images' as gesture and speech. Derrida is taking it as agreed that the writing produces effects independently of the writer's intentions merely because the writer is not there at hand.[15] But of course it is not necessarily a question of exclusively either one or the other. The writer's intentions may be read there but the text may give rise to other interpretations too. But that is something that can also happen to speech. And Condillac need not be presumed to deny this.

Is Derrida not attributing to Condillac the rather mysterious view that unless the sender is somehow there exercising some sort of authority over his words, that then they do not express his intentions at all? And is he not simultaneously recognizing the opposite view in Condillac, viz. that writing represents the same images as speech? The problem centres on what the word 'absence' means in Condillac. He does not expand upon the issue. So one cannot decide. This however does not licence Derrida's jump. However, instead of regarding the absence of the sender and the receiver as a type of presence, Derrida sets out to show that their presence can be construed as a type of absence. He wants to show that the sender cannot even in speech make his intended meanings fully and exclusively present in his words (i.e. that his being there does not make what he says, or expresses through voice and gesture, un-mis-interpretable or unambiguous) and that *essentially he is no more present in his words as a speaker than he is absent from his words as a writer.*

In Aristotelian terms, the specific difference that determines writing as a species of the genus, language, is absence [see *Sec*, 179 (6)]. Now, if absence can be shown to be a feature of *all* signification, then

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15 But 'intentions' in the above quotation is a translation of the French expression which is more literally translated as 'wanting to say'. Now of course the wanting to say is over and done with in the case of writing in the sense that the writer is not there and then wanting to say. In another sense though it does make sense to speak (even concerning dead writers) of what they want to say in their texts.

either this specific absence will have to be of a special type, or there will be no essential difference between writing and the other forms or species of language, i.e. speech and gesture. First I shall examine how Derrida construes absence in the case of writing. Then I shall show how he discovers such an absence in speaking also.

The sender's and the receiver's absence is not merely a distant presence because writing may survive the death of the sender and of any particular receiver:

> this distance, divergence, delay, this deferral [*différance*] must be capable of being carried to a certain absoluteness of absence if the structure of writing, assuming that writing exists, is to constitute itself. It is at that point that ... *différance* ... as writing could no longer (be) an (ontological) modification of presence. In order for my 'written communication' to retain its function as writing, i.e., its readability, it must remain readable despite the absolute disappearance of any receiver, determined in general. My communication must be repeatable — iterable — in the absolute absence of the receiver or of any empirically determinable collectivity of receivers. Such iterability — (*iter*, again, probably comes from *itara*, *other* in Sanskrit, and everything that follows can be read as the working out of the logic that ties repetition to alterity) structures the mark of writing itself, no matter what particular type of writing is involved... [*Sec*, 179f (7)].

The argument here is, as it stands, invalid, viz. that, if writing is essentially characterized by absence, then it must be able to function in the most extreme case of absence. Strictly speaking, that does not follow. However, what Derrida is getting at is that writing may best be understood by examining how it functions in an extreme case, viz. where the receiver in general has died.

The passage claims that the absence that characterizes writing must be a possibly absolute absence. And by 'absolute' I take it that Derrida means complete, that is, in this case, the most complete or extreme case of absence. Thus writing would be that language which functioned even if the sender, and the one to whom the writing is sent, were to die. When the receiver dies he is absent in the most radical sense; he has ceased to exist. If there is such a thing as writing, then it must function (i.e. as readable or as the understandable expression of meaning)

in the absence of the language-user who writes and the language-user who reads. Writing must be what it is in the absence of any of those who know how to read it (but not in the absence of them all); there must therefore be a break in the homogeneous space of communication (i.e. speech and writing must be essentially heterogeneous). He says that if there were only two people who knew a language and they wrote some communication, then that writing must be able to function even if both of them were to die. Otherwise there is no such thing as writing.

This means that writing is what it is in abstraction from being related to any particular empirical subject. If writing operates regardless of whether any *particular* language-user continues to exist or live, then it is not capable of being private but must be structurally or essentially open to a public. Writing must survive readers and writers

> to the extent that, organized by a code, even an unknown and non-linguistic one, it is constituted in its identity as mark by its iterability, in the absence of such and such a person, and hence ultimately of *every empirically determined 'subject'*. This implies that there is no such thing as a code — organon of iterability — which could be structurally secret. The possibility of repeating and thus of identifying the marks is implicit in every code, making it into a network [*une grille*] that is communicable, transmittable, decipherable, iterable for a third, and hence for every possible user in general. To be what it is, all writing must, therefore, be capable of functioning in the radical absence of every empirically determined receiver in general. And this absence is not a continuous modification of presence, it is a rupture in presence, the 'death' or the possibility of the 'death' of the receiver inscribed in the structure of the mark... [*Sec*, 180 (7f); emphasis added].[16]

So, because of *iterability* writing must function in the absolute absence of any but not all of those who could possibly (if not actually) read it. How then does it function? Language in general, and writing in particular, is typically said to function if it both expresses what the speaker-writer wants to say and if it is understandable to any 'competent' and attentive

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16 The relation between writing and death is examined more thoroughly in his *S&P* and in 'Freud and the Scene of Writing' [see *W&D*, 196-231].

speaker-writer of the language in question. However might there not be some writers who would, because of the 'nature' of that to which they make reference, remain understandable to only one hearer-reader, namely the speaker-writer?[17] Derrida seems to reject this; he says that it will always be possible to understand what it is possible to express in writing. What is expressed will not be the very same as what is understood though.[18]

In a sense this is paradoxical: one could say that if one does not grasp something in the sense with which it was intended, one has not understood it. Derrida is allowing that it might still be said that one understood what was said. There is a possibility of equivocation here which should be examined. One may utter a sentence and one's *sentence* may be understood. But one may utter that sentence with the intention of communicating some information over and above the literal meaning of the sentence and the information may not be conveyed although the sentence may be understood. Consider Searle's indirect speech acts where one's utterance meaning differs from the literal meaning of the sentence. So one could understand what was *said* in one sense but not in another (just as, if it were ambiguous or metaphorical, one might understand one sense but not another). What the sentence conveys may depend to some extent upon the context.

Now if all writing (and speech) conveys meaning in both these manners, or (at least) if it always possibly does, then understanding will typically be not just understanding a sentence's literal meaning(s) but also what one might call its contextual meaning(s), that is, the meaning(s) which a sentence might convey when understood as uttered in a specific context (what Searle calls speaker's utterance meaning). But, if understanding what a writer (or speaker) means involves understanding both the literal and contextual meanings of what he says, then one could say that,

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[17] Here I consider only the case of whether there can be secret *written* codes. The case of speech will be dealt with below.

[18] For Derrida this even applies to hearing/understanding-oneself-speak (*s'entendre parler*). In other words even one's own self-understanding is mediated through language [see *S&P*, 77ff].

if the context that the sender is aware of is different to that of which the receiver is aware, then the meaning intended may not be the same as the meaning understood.

But it is not just this distinction between literal and contextual meaning that Derrida is referring to. He holds that the literal meaning is determined by context too and that this context may vary from speaker to hearer. Searle holds a similar thesis, as I shall show in Chapter Five (§2.2), but for him the context to which literal meanings are relative may be common to the speaker and the hearer. For Derrida this is not the case. There is no proper context which would be the context of literal meanings. In order to examine Derrida's view, I shall consider the case of a secret or private language.

Private languages are languages that are said to be secret because the code that would allow them to be interpreted is not made known. It may be known only to the person who invented it. Derrida however is claiming that, even if the code *is* unknown (generally), writing will still function because of iterability. That is, so long as the spacing of the text and the repetitions of its elements are noted by someone, the structure of the text can be known. An interpretation of the text that respects its articulation or spacing and the iterations of its elements will be a possible understanding of that text, given that to understand a text, for Derrida, is not necessarily to interpret it in the precise way intended by the writer.

To take an example; every day that I drink a double whiskey I mark the occasion on my calendar with a 'DW'. It is my intention, for whatever reason, to record my consumption of double whiskeys. On those same days perhaps it so happened I did not work. Someone who watches my calendar might interpret those marks (i.e. 'DW') to mean 'didn't work'. If I do not tell anyone about my code, and if no one notices my habit of drinking double whiskeys but does notice the periodicity of my not working, then how would anyone ever truly decipher 'DW'? There is a fact of the matter though, to be clear about it, in that I am certain that what I intend 'DW' to mean is 'double whiskey'. But those signs can yield other equally explicatory interpretations which are equally respectful of the text. Derrida implies that such interpretations are understandings

and make my code not structurally secret. This is because he claims, as we have seen, that writing must be iterable and decipherable in the absolute absence of the reader in general. But some marks, like 'DW' in the above, are decipherable in many possible ways. So even if they are not structurally (or essentially) secret, that does not mean that an understanding (or decipherment) of them will be an understanding of what was intended.

Elsewhere Derrida says that "the effects or structure of a text are not reducible to its 'truth,' to the intended meanings of its presumed author" [Oto, 29]. Also, "the mark that [the writer] abandons ... cuts itself off from him and continues to produce effects independently of ... the present actuality of his intentions" [*Sec*, 177 (5)]. It looks *prima facie* as if Derrida may misunderstand what 'secret' means. Further consideration however will show that this is not the case.

The Classical theory is committed to the view that a code cannot be structurally secret because, if writing must function in the possible absence of any specific receiver (as explained above), then it could never be secret. If *per impossibile* its code were secret and any possible specific receiver (and this would include the sender) for whom it were intended were to die, then it would no longer be understandable. But then it would not *ex hypothesi* be writing; this is because, if writing is that species of language whose specific difference is absence, and if the extreme case of absence is death, then writing must be capable of functioning given this absolute absence, or death, of any specific receiver. If it is not so capable, then it is not writing.

So on the Classical view, and on Derrida's view, writing functions regardless of whether any specific receiver, including the sender, continues to exist. On the Classical view, either the code which the writer of DW used is not structurally secret or DW is not an instance of writing.[19] Since it *is* an instance of writing, its code is not structurally secret. If one wants to reject this, then one must reject the Classical theory of writing.

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[19] Or, more generally, *either* writing is not as Classically defined *or* there are no secret codes of writing.

To gather these elements together: if absence is the specific difference of writing as explained above, then there can be no secret code. If there is a secret code, then writing does not exist as characterized Classically. So (exclusively) either codes of writing are not structurally secret or writing is not characterized structurally by absence. I shall now go on to show (1) that, for Derrida, since all language (i.e. speech and writing) is indeed characterized structurally by absence, then either there can be no secret codes or all codes are possibly secret, and (2) that therefore all language, given the Classical theory of writing, is writing (or 'arche-writing'). In other words, I shall show that all language is writing and that thus either there are no secret codes in language or all linguistic codes are possibly secret.

Before going on to examine how Derrida shows that the structure of writing, as laid bare by his investigation (or, perhaps, deconstruction) of the Classical theory, is also applicable to speech, I should be clear about the main features of the deconstructed Classical theory of writing. Writings, written signs, can be read outside their context of inscription (the time and place of their writing). Indeed that is what they are for — they are for an absent reader. The writing remains readable despite the disappearance (either temporarily or ultimately through death) of the writer or of any reader. Everything about the writer might be forgotten and his intention lost, but still that writing would be readable. The writing's continuing to exist will not ensure that that intention is recovered as the one intended by the writer though because writing will function in other contexts besides the context of its inscription. "No context can entirely enclose it. Nor any code..." [*Sec*, 182 (9)]. This fact of the detachability of writing from its proper context arises because of iterability. Because of iterability, a piece of written text can be cut out of its original context (in the sense of, for instance, a book, letter or monument, as well as situation in general, of which it was a part) and put in another (i.e. cited in another) which will alter its meaning. Iterability also allows the writing to be disengaged from its referent.

I shall now examine this factor of detachability in the case of both speech and writing. With regard to elements of spoken language,

> let us say that a certain self-identity of [an element of spoken language] is required to permit its recognition and repetition. Through empirical variation of tone, voice, etc., possibly of a certain accent, for example, we must be able to recognize the identity, roughly speaking, of a signifying form [*Sec*, 183 (10)].

In other words, the elements of speech must be iterable. They are part of a code, just like the elements of an alphabet. The spoken elements, whether they be words, signs or phrases, may be used in different contexts, i.e [i.] to refer to different things (this is obviously true of indexicals such as 'this man here') or [ii.] to mean different signifieds (for instance, 'the presidency' said in Ireland signifies something different to that same term said in the United States) or [iii.] to register different intentions. So given the analysis of writing and what was said about its elements (known as graphemes), one can argue rhetorically that the phoneme is a grapheme (meaning that the characterization of the grapheme fits that of the phoneme):

> This structural possibility of being weaned from the referent or from the signified (hence from communication and from its context) seems to me to make every mark, including those which are oral, a grapheme in general; which is to say ... the non-present *remainder* [*restance*] of a differential mark cut off from its putative 'production' or origin [*Sec*, 183 (10)].

Speech functions despite the absence of its referent from either the speaker or the hearer. If the sky is blue, for example, and I say 'The sky is blue', then that will be intelligible whether or not either the speaker or his hearer is aware of the blue sky. The utterance is thus iterable in the absence of its referent. It is intelligible even if the speaker is mistaken or lying. Not only can the referent be absent without speech failing to be intelligible, so also may the signified. The speaker may say things without paying attention to, or understanding, what he is saying. One can for instance read out a historical document without understanding what it means but that will not prevent one's hearer from finding it intelligible. Also, some signifiers appear not to have any signified (or, at least, not to have any that is comprehensible) and yet they are meaningful. For

instance, consider the sign 'squared circle'.[20] And a phrase that normally is meaningless, like 'the green is either', may not always be so. It is its context of utterance that will determine whether it is or not. Succinctly stated, "as 'the green is either' or 'abracadabra' do not constitute their context by themselves, nothing prevents them from functioning in another context as signifying marks" [*Sec*, 185 (12)]. Consider the following context: Q. 'Can you tell me where the village green is?' A. 'Well, I'm not certain, the green is either to the left of the church or near the court house'. In this context, 'the green is either' is part of a text in which it makes very good sense.[21]

It is here that Derrida introduces his most controversial thesis in *Sec* (which I referred to above), viz. that, strictly speaking, there is no *proper* context. If speech or writing can be understood in the absence of the original referent, signified and intention, then neither is tethered to a present context which could be called its proper context. The context for the sender and for the receiver may be different. If so, there is no proper context.

> And this is the possibility on which I want to insist: the possibility of disengagement and citational graft which belongs to the structure of every mark, spoken or written, and which constitutes every mark in writing before and outside of every horizon of semio-linguistic communication; in writing, which is to say in the possibility of its functioning being cut off, at a certain point, from its 'original' desire-to-say-what-one-means [*vouloir-dire*][22] and from its participation in a saturable and constraining context. Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written (in the current sense of this opposition), in a small or large unit, can be *cited*, put between quotation

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20 "'Squared circle' marks the absence of a referent, certainly, as well as that of a certain signified, but not the absence of meaning" [*Sec*, 184 (11)].

21 I do not accept though Derrida's point that 'the green is either' "itself still signifies an *example of agrammaticality*" [*Sec*, 185 (12)]. It may *be* such an example but it surely does not signify one [see RD, 203]. But even if it be judged not to have either a referent or a signified, nevertheless it does have some meaning, i.e. it is meaningful (or may be meaningfully used) as an example of agrammaticality.

22 I.e. intention.

> marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering [*and* inscribing itself][23] [in] an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable. This does not imply that the mark is valid outside of a context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center or absolute anchoring [*ancrage*]. This citationality, this duplication or duplicity, this iterability of the mark is neither an accident nor an anomaly, it is that (normal/abnormal) without which a mark could not even have a function called 'normal' [*Sec*, 185f (12)].

The point is, as I take it, that any sign can be meaningful in different ways in an indeterminate number of contexts ('an infinity of new contexts') and that there is no criterion of normalcy or ordinariness of context that will select just one of those contexts as proper or central.[24] As explained by means of the previous example (i.e. concerning 'the green is either'), every sign is determined in its signification by all of the other signs which it also participates in determining; it is also determined by its iterability. That process is never finally completed. What a sign means is therefore determined by all the other signs and by all those contexts in which it is iterated.

The impossibility of the proper context implies that there can be no proper interpretation of speech or writing. This implies that either there are no secret codes in speech or writing or all linguistic codes are possibly secret. And both disjuncts here may be true: if there is no proper context, then no one can decide what some code shall mean because their (total) context has no privilege; and if there is no proper context, then everything one says or writes is to some extent secret, i.e. to the extent

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23 In Ltd, 220 (79) Derrida recommends this emendation.

24 It will be important to recall this point about an utterance's being inscribable in an 'infinity of new contexts'. Searle speaks of Derrida's endorsing what he calls 'free play': he speaks of "Derrida's assumption that without foundations we are left with nothing but the free play of signifiers" [WTUD, 79]. Derrida denies that he was ever committed to such a view: "from the point of view of semantics ... 'deconstruction' should never lead either to relativism or to any sort of indeterminism" [Aft, 148]; "I never proposed 'a kind of "all or nothing" choice between pure realization of self-presence and complete freeplay or undecidability.' I never believed in this and I never spoke of 'complete freeplay or undecidability'" [Aft, 115].

that it cannot be non-polysemically encoded. If the proper context could be determined and what one says could be non-polysemically encoded, then if one could interpret it at all in its proper context, one would interpret it correctly — thus it would not be secret.

It is important to note that Derrida's language here emphasizes words like 'possible' and 'can'. Disengagement and citational graft are *possibilities*. And every sign *can* be cited. This does not propose that any interpretation of a sign is as good as another (in whatever sense) nor that there is no sense to our calling certain meanings 'normal'.[25] All Derrida is denying is some privileged context that would be central or an 'absolute anchoring' for the others. Some uses of language are clearly strange in certain contexts and others are more natural. It is only by using the phrase in various different contexts that one comes to designate some as 'normal' and others as 'abnormal'. However there may be much disagreement over whether certain uses of language are normal or abnormal. Whether one accepts an utterance as meaningful depends upon one's ability to put it into some context. And that depends upon one's experience and, indeed, imagination.

4.3 Austin as Classical

In this section, and in the light of the above investigation of the Classical theory, I shall examine the general claim made in *Sec*, that Austin, in effect, subscribed to the Classical theory of writing. I shall show that this is true. Then, in the final sections of this chapter, I shall show that, because there is no criterion to select proper contexts, constatives and performatives, or speech acts, cannot be determined as exclusively either normal or parasitic.

In Chapter Two I noted that Austin seemed to downgrade writing as a means of communication *vis-à-vis* speech. Utterances were primarily thought of as spoken and, in his formulation of the three acts into which the locutionary act may be analyzed, Austin overlooked the fact, which he

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[25] He does, for instance, recognize the possibility of determining interpretations that falsify a text [see Oto, 24]. More about this in Chapter Five.

admittedly later rectified to some extent, that not all locutions are spoken and thus not all locutions have a phonetic act component as opposed to what one might call a graphematic act component. I mentioned that he covered this lapse to some extent by speaking of utterances in writing. At that point I deferred treatment of the issue.

Only in one or two locations does Austin really thematize the relation of writing to communication. He says that certain features of speech are only imperfectly captured in writing. In making this point he is subscribing to the Classical view that writing is a means of (imperfectly) recording speech.[26] He points out, for instance, that one cannot hear the tone of voice of the speaker; that can only be described, more or less (in)accurately, in writing. So in interpreting his words one has less to go on. Commenting on the fact that the same expression, 'It's going to charge', can be a warning, question or protest, Austin remarks that

> These features of spoken language are not reproducible readily in written language. For example we have tried to convey the tone of voice, cadence and emphasis of a protest by the use of an exclamation mark and a question mark (but this is very jejune). Punctuation, italics, and word order may help, but they are rather crude [*HDTW*, 74].[27]

Of course one can say things at greater length and then to some extent bypass the problem here. For instance, instead of saying 'It's going to charge' in an ominous voice indicating warning, one could conceivably say 'Look out! It's going to charge'. And when that is written down it is still clearly a warning. However the point is that there are some things that will be lost when an expression is written down even if they can be, to some extent, compensated for.

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[26] On this view see *OG*, 144 and compare, for instance, Saussure, *op. cit.*, 23 and Rousseau, 'Essay on the Origin of Languages', in *On the Origin of Language*, translated by John H. Moran and Alexander Gode (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 16-22.

[27] Consider Rousseau on this issue: "In writing, one is forced to use all the words according to their conventional meaning. But in speaking, one varies the meanings by varying one's tone of voice, determining them as one pleases" — Rousseau, *op. cit.*, 23f.

The other location in *HDTW* where Austin thematizes the difference between speech and writing is that passage where he discusses how an utterance is 'tethered' to its origin, or 'source' as Derrida calls it. When an utterance is not in the present indicative active, then the utterer is typically referred to not by name or by the personal pronoun 'I' but by the fact that it is he who is speaking and thus the source of the utterance. It is the speaker's voice and he is there making the utterance in question. But when he cannot be there and does not use his name or the pronoun 'I' (and, in fact, often even when he does), he will often indicate in the written document (because, if he is absent, that is what it will be) that it is he who is the source by signing it with his name. But perhaps, I might add, his handwriting would identify him as the sender just as his voice alone might identify him if he were to send a tape-recording of his message.

To separate the elements here, the source of a spoken utterance may be indicated by the speaker's being there speaking (or by his tone and style of speaking) and the source of a written utterance may be indicated by the writer's signature's being appended (or by the writing's being in his handwriting style). In both of these ways "The 'I' who is doing the action does thus come essentially into the picture" [*HDTW*, 61]. The advantage of using the present indicative active form though is that "this implicit feature of the speech-situation is made *explicit*".

Derrida criticizes this, as one might expect, by pointing out that in speech the speaker is not present to his words, i.e. his intended meaning is no more obvious or unequivocal, simply because he is present, than it would be if he had written. The above analysis of speech, in which speech is shown to involve the absence of the speaker, accounts for this. Derrida describes the presence of the speaker as analogous to the presence of the signer to his signature:

> the signature also marks and retains [the writer's] having-been present in a past *now* or present [*maintenant*] which will remain a future *now* or present [*maintenant*], thus in a general *maintenant*, in the transcendental form of presentness [*maintenance*]. That general *maintenance* is in some way inscribed, pinpointed in the always evident and singular present punctuality of the form of the signature. Such is the enigmatic originality of every

> paraph. In order for the tethering to the source to occur, what must be retained is the absolute singularity of a signature-event and a signature-form: the pure reproducibility of a pure event [*Sec*, 194 (20)].[28]

The argument, here being attributed to Austin, is that the signature is a permanent mark identifying the signer and his presence to, or in, the text. That is, by reading the signature (in the future) we recognize the signer (his presentness) and that the text is his. But this mark of origin is reproducible by the signer, otherwise it would not be recognized as his signature. It must be repeatable and yet serve only to identify him. Thus it must be both original (i.e. authentic) and repeatable.

A signature is something that is both original and a repetition.[29] It is that way of writing one's name that one has devised to be a special mark of one's own. It is ideally a way of writing one's name that can only be done by oneself. The ideal signature is one which only one individual can repeat. It is for Derrida the impossible ideal of something original that remains so even when repeated.

To see what my signature is you must observe more than one instance of it. If you see many, then you may discount the slight variations as inessential. My signature will be however much of the structure of each that is the same. This means that a signature is identified through iteration. My signature is an effect of iteration: it is determined by the similarities of the various instances of the marks I make on the various occasions that I intend to write my signature.[30] But someone else, if he is dexterous enough (and perhaps sinister enough too), can repeat my

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[28] A less cumbersome rendering of the first part of this translation might be: "the signature also marks and retains [the writer's] having-been present in a past present which will remain a future present thus in a general present, in the transcendental form of presentness. That general presentness...".

[29] It will always be a repetition for the reasons mentioned above to show that a sign never takes place just once. One only determines what one's signature is by devising some way of writing one's name that one then succeeds in repeating.

[30] This should contribute towards understanding Derrida's claim that presence (like speech, consciousness, meaning, truth, etc.) is an effect of 'general writing' [see *Sec*, 195 (20)].

signature. In that case my signature cannot be original in the sense of being identifiable only as mine. There is no way to distinguish the 'genuine' signature (my own repetitions of my signature) from those made by some forger or counterfeiter.[31]

> Effects of signature are the most common thing in the world. But the condition of possibility of those effects is simultaneously, once again, the condition of their impossibility, of the impossibility of their rigorous purity. In order to function, that is, to be readable, a signature must have a repeatable, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to be detached from the present and singular intention of its production. It is its sameness which, by corrupting its identity and its singularity, divides its seal [*sceau*] [*Sec*, 194 (20)].

Its iterability makes a signature imitable and thus it does not constitute a tethering to the utterance-origin. The signature is determined in its 'identity' by iteration. Two instances are recognized as the same signature and that can happen whether they are produced by the same person or not.

Similar points can be made about style of speaking (on a tape-recording) or style of writing. Style is identifiable only through iteration and no one can control iteration. None of these ways then can tether a text to its source. And even the speaker's being there uttering whatever he has to say cannot tether the spoken text to its origin because the elements of speech are not controlled by the speaker but rather by the whole community of speakers throughout which those elements are repeated and from whose repetition (and recognition of sameness) those elements arise. So the source of speech or writing is not really its source since a text only arises through repetition. The source is thus absent.

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[31] What counts as the repetition of a signature is not fixed. As a matter of fact, which I can attest to having worked as an invigilator during exams where I was required to match students' signatures on their identification cards with their signatures on their exam papers, repetitions of signatures are mostly only similar in just a few respects. My own signature too varies depending on the type of pen I am using, the texture of the paper I am writing on, the position and orientation (relative to me) of the surface on which I am writing, and possibly other factors. What others and I regard as my signature varies within certain limits that are hard to specify. If a forger saw enough instances of my signature, he would recognize which features were salient.

This section should suffice to show that Austin's theory is Classical and also how the critique of the Classical theory of writing generally applies to it. Austin shares the same view of the relations between intention, speech and writing that Condillac, Warburton and Rousseau did. I shall next consider further Derrida's treatment of Austin's specific Classical theory in the light of the deconstruction of the Classical theory in general which I have just investigated. In doing this I shall show how the argument against proper contexts prevents one from making general distinctions between speech acts that are happy or unhappy, and normal or parasitic. And I shall point to some awareness of this problem in Austin.

4.4 Deconstructed Speech Acts

Here I shall defend Derrida's general criticisms of Austin (*qua* exponent of the Classical theory), viz. that he failed to appreciate the graphematic nature of locutions and the fact that the performative/constative and serious/parasitic distinctions *necessarily* could not be nicely applied to them. Such criticisms are however, I shall argue, overstated to some extent. I begin by investigating Austin's speech act situations in the light of the above account of iterability, citationality and the rejection of the idea of proper contexts.

4.4.1 Iterability and Abnormal Contexts

Consider the marriage situation: in that context, as I have already noted, to say 'I will' when one has been asked whether one takes one's bride or groom to be one's lawfully wedded wife or husband, when that question is asked by a person with the appropriate authority (such as a priest or judge) and when one is not already married, is to marry. Of course the context will vary depending on whether one is having a religious wedding and, if so, of what sort.[32] But each type of wedding will

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[32] For instance, one may not even have to be *alive* in some religions. Consider the following report from Reuter's news agency: "A couple who have been dead for more than 15 years were married in Malaysia at an

have its specific considerations. None of these contexts though are absolutely determinable (i.e. determinable by some rule that would account for all possible legitimate variations), as Derrida shows. But the contrary is not something claimed by Austin and it goes against his whole philosophy to hold that there are any absolute distinctions (i.e. mutually exclusive oppositions) when it comes to language.

For instance, Austin points out, as we have seen, that social conventions are specified with practical issues in mind. A child, for example, must be baptized, according to some religions, in order for it to be eligible for admission to Heaven. Various problem situations associated with baptism are dealt with and conventions are adopted or emerge to govern those cases. Accordingly the context of a baptism becomes more precisely determined (or the rules of baptism are fixed by more riders). But, since the issue of baptizing a dog has never arisen (let us assume), it is not clear whether following all the baptismal procedures and observations, except for having a dog instead of a baby as their subject, would constitute a baptism: it might be a perverse or sacrilegious baptism or not a baptism at all.[33] Procedures according to Austin are, in fact, inherently vague [see *HDTW*, 31 (quoted above)]. Indeed Austin's whole effort in *HDTW* goes towards trying to formulate rules (in a practical way that takes as its model the ways of lawyers) to categorize speech acts that are resistent to being unambiguously accounted for one way rather than another. Thus the whole book is an affirmation of the thesis that context

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elaborate Chinese wedding designed to pacify their souls. ... Effigies of the couple were placed before an altar at Tuesday's wedding, witnessed by 80 onlookers at a temple at Penang. The wedding included a ceremony at which the newlyweds presented tea to their elders through a medium" — *Globe and Mail* (Toronto) May 12, 1988, p. C7.

[33] Austin mentions that marriage with a monkey would be 'a mockery'. He also mentions a case where a saint reputedly baptized penguins: "When the saint baptized the penguins, was this void because the procedure of baptizing is inappropriate to be applied to penguins, or because there is no accepted procedure of baptizing anything except humans? I do not think that these uncertainties matter in theory, though it is pleasant to investigate them and in practice convenient to be ready, as jurists are, with a terminology to cope with them" [*HDTW*, 24].

is not absolutely determinable. To *this* extent then, Austin would agree that there is no proper context.

Austin does however recognize a distinction between the serious and the non-serious (and between the literal and non-literal) and thinks he can leave the latter out of consideration while he is examining the former. His whole investigation of speech acts is limited to felicities and infelicities within 'ordinary circumstances' [*HDTW*, 22]. Non-serious language such as dramatic, poetic or comedic uses are said to be 'parasitic' on ordinary language. According to Derrida though, those contexts would be some of the contexts which, because a certain utterance is used in them, determine the meaning of the utterance in question. That is, an utterance or sign is determined by its iterability and not just specifically its iterability within a certain type of context. So Derrida, unlike Austin, is committed to the view that 'non-serious' and 'non-literal' uses of language also determine its meaning.

Take the word 'rose' and consider what it means. It signifies a type of bush with flowers and thorns. When people use the word 'rose', they usually mean one to understand that they are talking about the bush or its flower. But the word has been used for centuries by poets as a metaphor for beautiful or innocent persons. Indeed it has become a woman's name. We learn in History of the Wars of the Roses in fifteenth century England between the House of York (whose emblem was a white rose) and the House of Lancaster (whose emblem was a red rose). When Hotspur, in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*, refers to York's Richard II of England as "that sweet lovely rose" [1.03.175] and his murderer and deposer, Lancaster's Henry Bolingbrook (later Henry IV), as "this thorn", readers are aware that in this context (which is non-serious) Hotspur is alluding to Richard's innocence, purity and to his status as a Yorkist, and to Henry as an infliction on England and as a murderer. The rose is now an emblem of England. Given all these associations which would be obvious to most who have been taught English at school, the word 'rose' can be used with what is colloquially termed many shades of meaning.

Non-serious citations of utterances, or speech acts, are *qua* citations, instances of the iteration of the utterance which determine it in

its identity. As I pointed out above in my section on 'abnormal discourse', real life can be parasitic on literature just as literature may be parasitic on real life. I cited Oscar Wilde and François de la Rochfoucauld in this context. Turns of phrase can originate in poems and works of literature and be iterated there and in real life. The non-serious context is *a priori* no less important in distinguishing the utterance's meaning. I also pointed out that certain conceptions of love (specifically romantic and Romantic conceptions) are formed to a large extent by poets and philosophers. And it may be in works of literature from the nineteenth century that the current word 'love' and phrase 'I love you' get many of their shades of meaning. If this is so, to any extent, then ordinary language can be parasitic on 'abnormal' and 'non-serious' language. In that case it is not clear whether the host precedes the parasite or vice-versa. So,

> ultimately, isn't it true that what Austin excludes as anomaly, exception, 'non-serious,' *citation* (on stage, in a poem, or a soliloquy) is the determined modification of a general citationality — or rather, a general iterability — without which there would not even be a 'successful' performative? So that — a paradoxical but unavoidable conclusion — a successful performative is 'necessarily' an impure performative, to adopt the word advanced later on by Austin when he acknowledges that there is no 'pure' performative [*Sec*, 191 (17)].

In a footnote to this passage Derrida quotes Austin's recognition that the same sentence can be used both constatively and performatively [see *HDTW*, 67]. For instance, 'I shall be there' may be both a statement and a promise. As we have seen above, Austin finds that it is not possible to give an exhaustive list of criteria to distinguish performatives and constatives (and he encounters similar problems later in his lectures when he passes to his speech act theory). Derrida's explanation for this is that the "graphematic root of citationality (iterability) ... creates this embarrassment" [*Sec*, 191 (17), n. 10)]. He considers this an important insight that Austin failed to have:

> Austin has not taken account of what — in the structure of *locution* (thus before any illocutory or perlocutory determination) — already entails that system of predicates I call *graphematic in general* and consequently blurs [*brouille*] all the oppositions which follow, oppositions

> whose pertinence, purity and rigor Austin has unsuccessfully attempted to establish [*Sec*, 187 (14)].

These are the two criticisms that I want to focus on here: (1) that Austin failed to take account of the graphematic nature of locution, and (2) that he failed to recognize the *necessary* impurity of performatives. For Derrida 'impurity' means not just that performatives have a constative dimension (and constatives a performative dimension), as Austin showed, but also that the normal and the parasitic are likewise impure. So he will show that performatives are necessarily impure, i.e. that they necessarily have a constative dimension and both normal and parasitic aspects.

In what follows I shall show that Austin recognizes, in effect, what Derrida would call a principle of citationality. As I showed in Chapter Two, when he is investigating the constative/performative distinction he examines utterances in various different contexts to show that, although cited in one context they may look purely constative, when they are cited in another type of context they may look performative. It is this impurity (discovered by various experiments at citation) that leads him to abandon the constative/performative distinction. Derrida shows that this impurity is necessary and not just accidental. We shall see that what Derrida does is to show that, without the foundation of a proper context, and recognizing that 'hosts' may be parasitic on 'parasites', 'normal' utterances are only relatively normal and 'parasites' relatively parasitic because the only thing that distinguishes between them is difference of context, and there are no proper contexts. So Austin is no more justified in holding on to the normal/parasitic distinction than he would have been justified in holding on to the constative/performative distinction after it had been shown ultimately to be an impure (or insufficiently general) distinction.

4.4.2 The Graphematic Nature of Locutions

To deal with the first criticism.[34] In *Sec*, as I have already noted, Derrida claims to believe that there are no historical counter-examples to

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[34] My treating Derrida's critique as involving two criticisms is heuristic. I show below that they are really one criticism.

the Classical theory of writing [see *Sec*, 175 (3) (quoted above)]. This means that he considers Austin's theory to be Classical also. However, pointing out that Austin's theory of speech acts is a theory of speech only as communication,[35] Derrida gives Austin credit for putting forward a "category of communication that is relatively new", viz. "the communication of an original movement..., an operation and the production of an effect" [*Sec*, 186 (13)], this being contrasted with communication as "the transference or passage of a thought-content".[36] Derrida's comment here is perspicacious. I showed above how Austin sought to avoid any commitment to bogus entities such as propositions. And I take it that, in Austin's sense, there is no important difference between communicating a proposition and communicating a thought-content.[37] Thus he seeks to avoid commitment to thought-contents.

It is strange that Derrida, having pointed this out, should later go on to say that "The performative is a 'communication' which is not limited strictly to the transference of a semantic content that is already constituted and dominated by an orientation toward truth" [*Sec*, 187 (13f)]. This allows that the performative does transfer a semantic content [*un contenu sémantique*]. But if the performative does so, then how can it be that the "notions of illocution and perlocution do not designate the

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35 Derrida does not elaborate on this criticism. He quotes the French translator of *HDTW* to the effect that Austin does not consider 'reflex-exclamations'. An example might be where one denounces one's own stupidity on stubbing one's toe while making one's way to the bathroom in an empty house at night. One does not make the denunciation with the intention of communicating to anyone.

36 If this is so, then clearly the latter, which is an aspect of Condillac's philosophy (which is presented in *Sec* as Derrida's prime example of the Classical theory), is not essential to the Classical theory of writing.

37 I pointed out in Chapter Two, §2, that Austin considers propositions to be bogus entities. Thought-*contents* would be such in Derrida's sense.

transference of a thought-content [*un contenu de sens*]" [*Sec*, 186 (13)].[38] The performative, as I showed above, becomes, in Speech Act Theory, a dimension of the speech act (its other dimension being constative). Now if the performative is said to transfer a semantic content (and the word 'content' [*contenu*] is unaustinian in that it suggests a bogus entity), then *a fortiori* the constative does (since it is more concerned with matters of making claims that may be true of false). The performative is actually less characterizable as an act of communicating a meaning than the constative, or than illocutions and perlocutions (since the latter more clearly always involve a constative dimension in that they are always locutions). Talk of meanings as contents, rather than effects, is anyhow not apt in discussing Austin.

To gather these elements together: Austin rejects propositions throughout his philosophy, so it is accurate to say that he does not see language as being used to transfer thought-contents (or 'semantic contents') from one mind to another (he actually sees communication as a matter of bringing about certain effects such as uptake). Derrida accepts this with regard to illocution and perlocution, but rejects it with regard to the performative. But if a performative communicates a thought-content, then so must a constative. And surely, if illocutionary and perlocutionary acts are dimensions of the speech act which latter has a constative and a performative dimension, then what applies to the performative applies to the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts too.

Related to the issue of propositions or thought-contents is that of the speaker's supposed ability intentionally to control his speech act in a total speech situation. I shall now investigate Derrida's criticism (which I accept) of Austin's view that speakers can control the speech situation in such a manner as to be able to express their intentions unmistakably. In this I am still concentrating on the issue of communication and why Derrida claims that Austin does not recognize the graphematic nature of locution.

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38 Part of the problem here, and with *Sec* in general, is that it does not clearly thematize the differences between the theory of the performative and that of speech acts.

Referring to Austin's idea of 'total context', by which I take it he means the total speech situation [see *HDTW*, 52 (and Chapter Two, above)], Derrida says that

> One of [its] essential elements — and not one among others — remains, classically, consciousness, the conscious presence of the intention of the speaking subject in the totality of his speech act. As a result, performative communication becomes once more the communication of an intentional meaning, even if that meaning has no referent in the form of a thing or of a prior or exterior state of things.[39] The conscious presence of speakers or receivers participating in the accomplishment of a performative, their conscious and intentional presence in the totality of the operation, implies teleologically that no *residue* [*reste*] escapes the present totalization. No residue, either in the definition of the requisite conventions, or in the internal linguistic context, or in the grammatical form, or in the semantic determination of the words employed; no irreducible polysemy, that is, no 'dissemination' escaping the horizon of the unity of meaning [*Sec*, 187f (14)].[40]

Here Derrida points out that Austin is, in the Classical manner, advocating a view which accepts communication as the communication of an intentional meaning (as outlined in §1). Such a view ignores the factor of dissemination, which is what Derrida calls the inability of writing to sustain a univocal meaning (as I shall explain in a moment). Thus the

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[39] Performatives bring about states of affairs (whereas constatives refer to those that already exist). On world-to-word fit *vis-à-vis* word-to-world fit see Chapter Two, §1; cp. *Sec*, 186 (13f).

[40] On this latter point Derrida appears to vacillate. For instance: "writing, that is, ...a *dissemination* irreducible to *polysemy*" [*Sec*, 195 (20f)]. It is not at all clear that both of these mean the same thing. Again, in this context, note Derrida's remark that "from the point of view of semantics ... 'deconstruction' should never lead either to relativism or to any sort of indeterminism" [Aft, 148]. This means that 'irreducible polysemy' or 'dissemination' cannot mean indeterminate polysemy (or what is known as free play). Again he speaks of a mark's breaking with every given context and "engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable" [*Sec*, 185 (12)]. Is not something illimitable indeterminate (and vice-versa)? This looks like what diplomats call 'constructive ambiguity' or, pejoratively, what Michel Foucault, according to Searle, called 'terrorist obscurantism'. I shall return to this matter in Chapter Five. Suffice it to note at the moment that Derrida appears not to be clear on what exactly his investigation shows.

argument, presented above, rejecting the Classical conceptions of speech and writing, applies to it. If it does apply to it though, then the intention of the utterer-writer cannot be said to govern the meaning of the speech act. This is because of citationality which I have just examined. The differences of the hearer's situation will determine the speech act's meaning differently. It is also because of the related factor of dissemination which I shall examine shortly.

In the above quotation Derrida explains that in the Classical theory the speaker intentionally controls the context of the communication. For Austin, the speaker is (or may be) aware of the total situation in which he will perform his speech acts. Speaking, and understanding speech acts, involves the possibility of being aware of the total situation. If the speaker and the receiver are so aware, then no aspect of what is said will escape them. In other words, it is possible for language-users to use speech acts in certain situations where no aspect of what is happening escapes them.

Indeed this seems to be the norm of Speech Act Theory. Austin says that in *HDTW* "The total speech act in the total speech situation is the *only actual* phenomenon, which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating" [*HDTW*, 148]. It is what he accounts for when he analyzes normal speech act communication *via* a consideration of some of the things that occasionally go wrong. Where utterances are not unhappy, nothing has gone wrong. Nothing has gone wrong because the maker of the constative or performative has 'secured uptake'. That is, nothing has escaped the speaker and receiver such as the definition of some of the conventions in play, the nature of the grammatical constructions used by each, or the meanings of the words. Where nothing like this escapes the speaker and the receiver there is no dissemination. Dissemination occurs then when and where there is not this type of control.[41]

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[41] I have already noted that Austin was aware that conventions are inherently vague. In this regard, I quoted his remarks to the effect that it is practically unimportant how one categorizes the 'baptism' of a penguin. Such issues for him are theoretically unimportant and practically resolvable. He makes a similar point about illocutions: "Difficulties about conventions and intentions must arise in deciding upon the correct

But can one ever have a situation where one can be sure that one has not missed some significant aspect of the situation? Derrida says that this possibility will always remain open. That is, it will always be possible to discover some further aspect of the situation that will affect one's understanding of what happened there. He devotes a book, *Dissemination*, to exploring this permanent possibility.[42] In an essay of that work, 'Plato's Pharmacy', Derrida shows, more than two thousand years after the fact, that Plato's *Phaedrus* means more than Plato and his interpreters were aware it meant.

I shall not try to reproduce here his extremely complex interpretation and analysis of the text but point to a few significant particulars that it establishes. First, a key word in the *Phaedrus* is '*pharmakon*' which can mean *inter alia* 'poison' and 'remedy'. Most interpreters interpret it as exclusively either one or the other depending on the context. Derrida insists on reading it as both. His interpretation of Plato is very unorthodox and he is aware of this. But, he points out and shows, it is not possible to say (1) which of the meanings of '*pharmakon*' (and its cognate terms) are being used voluntarily by Plato, (2) which of them Plato is aware of but not seeking to appeal to, and (3) which of them he is not aware of at all. The matter is not decidable. Derrida feels that language and texts are so complex in their interrelations that it is not possible ever to exclude the possibility of having said more than one intended.

> Plato does not make a show of the chain of significations we are trying progressively to dig up. If there were any sense in asking such a question [as what do all of these

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description whether of a locution or of an illocution: deliberate, or unintentional, ambiguity of meaning or reference is perhaps as common as deliberate or unintentional failure to make plain 'how our words are to be taken' (in the illocutionary sense). Moreover, the whole apparatus of 'explicit performatives' ... serves to obviate disagreements as to the description of illocutionary acts. It is much harder in fact to obviate disagreements as to the description of 'locutionary acts'. Each, however, is conventional and liable to have a 'construction' put on it by judges" [*HDTW*, 116, n. 1].

[42] I examine the notion of permanent or necessary possibility below [see §4.4.3].

> meanings of the word '*pharmakon*' (and its cognates) have to do with writing (which is said in the *Phaedrus* to be such)?],[43] which we don't believe, it would be impossible to say to what extent he manipulates it voluntarily or consciously, and at what point he is subject to constraints weighing upon his discourse from 'language.' The word 'language,' through all that binds it to everything we are putting in question here, is not of any pertinent assistance, and to follow the constraints of a language would not exclude the possibility that Plato is playing with them, even if his game is neither representative nor voluntary [*D*, 129].

Derrida's reason for suspecting that Plato may not be voluntarily playing on the various meanings of '*pharmakon*' is that he does not put emphasis on those places where the two senses alternate. But such suspicions do not allow Derrida to rule out that possibility.

Of most interest to Derrida is the fact that one cognate of '*pharmakon*' is not used by Plato. He uses the cognates '*pharmakeia*' and '*pharmakeus*' but not '*pharmakos*'. Thus this word is absent from the text. And yet it is part of the Greek language, which is a system, and thus it has a systematic effect on the meanings of the other terms.

> Some such force, given the *system* of the language, cannot *not* have acted upon the writing and the reading of this text. With respect to the weight of such a force, the so-called 'presence' of a quite relative verbal unit — the word — while not being a contingent accident worthy of no attention, nevertheless does not constitute the ultimate criterion and the utmost pertinence [*D*, 130].

Derrida shows that '*pharmakos*', which can mean 'scapegoat' or 'magician' (which latter is also the meaning of '*pharmakeus*'), names something (in its sense as scapegoat) which although not mentioned in the *Phaedrus*, can be connected with it circumstantially. The circumstance in question is a ceremony, in which (human) scapegoats were taken from Athens and killed, on the sixth day of the Targelia festival — the very

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[43] This question is pointed because Plato's *Phaedrus* is a critique of writing as a poison [*pharmakon*], to which it puts itself forward as a remedy [*pharmakon*] even though, since it is written, it is also a poison, and thus a poisonous remedy. "The pharmaceutical operation must therefore *exclude itself from itself*" [*D*, 128]. 'Pharmaceutical' here means 'having to do with the *pharmakon*'.

same day of the year on which Socrates was born. Socrates (referred to by Plato as a *pharmakeus*) was to die a *pharmakos* by drinking *pharmakon* [see *D*, 133-4]. If one asks whether the word '*pharmakos*', absent from the *Phaedrus*, has any effect on that text in spite of its absence, then one is up against the problem of how much was (voluntarily) controlled by Plato and how much are rather potentialities of meaning arising from the complex relations of texts to the languages and contexts in which they are written.[44] And this difficulty warrants one's holding that language's effects are not (necessarily) calculable or controllable in the way that would be required for one to be sure of mastering one's speech act in its 'total' context as required by Austin's Speech Act Theory.

In a work on the French dramatist, Antonin Artaud, Derrida compares a spoken utterance to a piece of mail, an open letter or the purloined letter of Edgar Allen Poe's famous short story. The following passage is useful (despite its dubious logic):

> The *letter*, inscribed or propounded speech, is always stolen. Always stolen because it is always *open*. It never belongs to its author or to its addressee, and by nature, it never follows the trajectory that leads from subject to subject. Which amounts to acknowledging the autonomy of the signifier as the letter's historicity; before me, the signifier on its own says more than I believe that I mean to say, and in relation to it, my meaning to say is submissive rather than active [*W&D*, 178].[45]

The chain of signifiers *pharmakon-pharmakeus-pharmakeia-pharmakos* may be seen as an example of autonomous signifiers which belong in chains that their users may or may not recognize. Whether they do or not, their intentions are largely submissive to potentialities of language. In the words

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[44] Jonathan Culler puts the issue well: "in relying on textual and linguistic configurations, as in 'Plato's Pharmacy,' one puts in question the possibility of distinguishing with surety between structures of language or texts and structures of thought, between the contingent and the essential" — Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 146.

[45] The image of speech and writing as an open letter is dealt with extensively in Derrida's *The Post Card from Socrates to Freud and Beyond*.

of the *Sec* passage last quoted, '*pharmakos*' might be a residue escaping the 'present totalization', i.e. some feature of the Greek language and the current context which escaped the notice or control of Plato. Derrida's claim is that such 'residues' are permanent possibilities; they cannot be ruled out.

In this section I have argued that Austin in his investigation of the infelicities and the total speech situation allows that speech situations can be controlled by speakers and hearers in such a way as to avoid infelicity and secure uptake. I have shown how Derrida's arguments against the possibility of the proper context (which I investigated earlier in the chapter) and for the irreducible polysemy (or dissemination) of utterances demonstrate that such control and securing of uptake cannot be secured. This establishes that locutions are graphematic, i.e. they are of the nature of writing in the Classical theory. I turn next to the related question of whether successful performatives are *necessarily* impure (whatever that may be discovered to mean), which is the second broad criticism by Derrida that I shall deal with. This will involve a consideration of the normal/parasitic distinction. I shall show that Austinian speech acts cannot be determined as exclusively either one or the other.

4.4.3 The Necessary Impurity of Performatives

Derrida claims that Austin's work shows that the possibility of failure (i.e. of infelicity) is a permanent (structural or necessary) possibility of performative utterances, but that Austin excludes the risk of such failure as accidental. In other words, Austin shows that performatives are characterized by an *essential* risk of failure and yet treats that risk as if it were *accidental.* And Derrida characterizes this necessary possibility of failure as a necessary impurity of performatives and constatives (i.e. he claims that constatives and performatives are necessarily impure because there is a necessary possibility that they will be unhappy). In this section I shall explain what he means.

First, here is the criticism on the matter of how Austin characterizes the possibility of failure:

> Austin does not ponder the consequences issuing from the fact that a possibility — a possible risk — is *always* possible, and is in some sense a necessary possibility. Nor whether — once such a necessary possibility of infelicity is recognized — infelicity still constitutes an accident. What is a success when the possibility of infelicity [*échec*] continues to constitute its structure? [*Sec*, 189 (15)]

What this means is not so perspicuous. It says that somehow the possibility of infelicity continues to constitute the structure of the putatively successful performative or speech act. This suggests that there is no time at which one can say that the performative or speech act has been a success because it will continue to be possible for it to fail (or to have failed).

What Derrida is suggesting here concerns the distinction he makes elsewhere between eventual possibility (or eventuality [*éventualité*]) and necessary possibility. In accounting for the former, he says that "it can happen that a mark functions without the sender's intention being actualized, fulfilled, and present, and which *to this extent* must be *presumed*" [Ltd, 195 (57)]; and in explanation of the latter, "it pertains, *qua possibility*, to the structure of the mark as such, i.e., to the structure precisely of its iterability. And hence must not be excluded from the analysis of this structure" [Ltd, 183 (47)]. The first type of possibility refers to something that might accidentally happen to something; the latter refers to something that might happen to something because of the type of thing that that something is. To take an example: a meteor might fall on me, that is an eventual possibility; but my ageing is a necessary possibility, something that can happen to me by virtue of my being the sort of being that I am. And it is something that continues to be possible for as long as I continue to exist.[46]

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[46] Certain language in *Sec* suggests this distinction between eventual and necessary possibility: "does the quality of risk admitted by Austin *surround* language like a kind of *ditch* ... which speech [*la locution*] could never hope to leave, but which it can escape by remaining 'at home,' by and in itself, in the shelter of its essence or *telos*? Or, on the contrary, is this risk rather its internal and positive condition of possibility?" [*Sec*, 190 (17)].

The criticism, in the above passage from *Sec* (which could be read as wrongly suggesting that all possibilities are necessary and permanent), is then that Austin confused eventual with necessary possibility with regard to infelicity. Thus Derrida is suggesting that infelicity is a possibility as essential to performatives and speech acts as the possibility of ageing is to humans (if my example captures a essential possibility for human beings). It is a necessary and permanent possibility. Of course what is necessarily and permanently possible might never happen. The point is that infelicity continues to be a possibility of performatives and speech acts that may be judged to have been successful. Let us take some examples where one might judge that a performative or speech act had been successfully performed but later had to reconsider.

Take the case of baptism. Imagine an extreme situation where someone is about to die but wishes to be baptized and assume that it is clear that the person is eligible (however determined). In the situation in question let us say that there is no water but plenty of other liquids such as beer. Is a baptism happy which is 'by the book' but for the fact that beer rather than water is poured on the candidate?

Another example: suppose, in the same extreme circumstances, everything is by the book except that the baptizer forgets the words at certain stages. Or suppose that the candidate for baptism suffered from amnesia some years back and cannot remember that he was a fervent Satanist beforehand who committed himself to serving the Devil and renouncing God.

A final example: suppose that prior to a marriage ceremony the 'groom' says that during the following hour, in which the marriage is due to take place, he will utter affirmative statements, promises, vows, etc., when he means their negation. When, during the ceremony, he says in response to the priest's or judge's question as to whether he takes so-and-so to be his wife (etc.), he replies 'I will', is that felicitous or not? Is that a bad marriage (or are there only good marriages?) or not a marriage at all?

Taking all of these examples, one can say that at some moment during the ceremonies in question some residue escaped the present

totalization [see *Sec*, 187f (14) (quoted above)]. In the case of the baptism with beer, the cleric did not know the requisite convention and there may not have been one. Or he may have assumed that beer would be a legitimate substitute (in the absence of any tradition suggesting the contrary). Later however it might have turned out that there were significant theological reasons for avoiding such a substitution. Similarly with the amnesic Satanist: at the moment of his baptism he had no reason to believe that he was a Satanist. Nor had anyone else participating in the rite. As regards the groom, he does not realize that he is committed to the opposite of what he says (if indeed he is). All of these ceremonies are haunted, as it were, by the possibility of failure. Derrida's claim is that, because a context cannot be totalized or decided as proper, such failure haunts all performatives or speech acts.

Even if somebody assures one that there are conventions and rules to deal with such cases, it will always be possible to invent cases artificially that would not be clearly covered. Derrida's point in the last-quoted passage is that such infelicities (if that is what they are) are always possible.

In many of these cases, it may be only after the fact that it is decided that they are infelicitous. For instance, assume the Satanist in the above example was baptized according to the rites of some newly formed sect, the Really Christian Church. This (imaginary) church had never decided about such a case. But when it is reported to one of their senior clerics, they decide (according to their recognized procedures) that a person in such a case is not baptized. Was he baptized before they came to that decision or does this mean in retrospect that he never was? Possibly one, possibly the other. Even in religions that are thousands of years old such problem cases are possible. And it is possible that many cases that are considered felicitous would not be if things were investigated more fully. Rules that have been in use for thousands of years can be reinterpreted. Something which one person may simply pass off as an accident another may see as undermining the whole ceremony.

This necessary possibility of infelicity is then related to the possibility of parasitism which, according to Derrida, is a necessary

possibility of locutions even before one considers the illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects of the speech act in question.

> The opposition success/failure [*échec*] in illocution and perlocution thus seems quite insufficient and extremely secondary [*dérivée*]. It presupposes a general and systematic elaboration of the structure of locution that would avoid an endless alternation of essence and accident [*Sec*, 189 (15f)].

Before the question of success or failure can be properly considered then, one must be clear about the locutions involved. That is, prior to the consideration of the nature of the possibility of infelicity, there is another possibility which ought to be considered. "Austin ... excludes ... the 'non-serious,' 'parasitism,' 'etiolation,' 'the non-ordinary'..., all of which he nevertheless recognizes as the possibility available to every act of utterance" [*Sec*, 190 (16f)]. If they are possibilities of every act of locution, Derrida seems to be suggesting, they are then rather necessary than eventual. But Austin has deferred treatment of what he calls his 'general account' which could illuminate the relation between normal and parasitic locutions.[47] This would have to be investigated, Derrida thinks, in order for locution to be analyzed structurally, i.e. essentially. Without such an investigation one cannot properly decide when an act has been a success or a failure. It is only when one has determined what successful and failed locutions are that one can determine what success and failure are with regard to illocution and perlocution.[48]

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[47] This 'more general account' [*HDTW*, 22] should not be confused with what Austin calls his 'general theory' [*HDTW*, 148] which is what he calls his speech act theory to contrast it with what I have called his theory of the performative, his 'special theory'. The French translator translates the former as '*une théorie plus générale*'. See Austin, *Quand dire, c'est faire* [How to Do Things with Words], introduction, traduction et commentaire par Gilles Lane, L'Ordre philosophique, collection dirigée par François Wahl (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970), 55. Derrida follows this in referring to it as "that 'general theory'" [*Sec*, 189 (16)].

[48] This explains Derrida's earlier remark that "'Ritual' is not a possible occurrence [*éventualité*], but rather, *as* iterability a structural characteristic of every mark" [*Sec*, 189 (15)]. What this means is that the locutionary act is as much ritual, i.e. conventional activity, as the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts or as theatrical performances, for instance. Every mark is essentially conventional, arbitrary, ceremonial or

So Austin's exclusion of the parasitic is an exclusion of a structural possibility of locution, the permanent possibility of parasitism. And, as shown already, non-serious citations are no less important than serious ones in determining the identity of a locution through its iteration. Now the question is what this has to do with showing that "a successful performative is necessarily an 'impure' performative" [*Sec*, 191 (17)]. This is supposedly the "paradoxical but unavoidable conclusion of the above".

Here Derrida is referring to Austin's acknowledgement that performatives (and constatives) are not pure. Austin shows this in Lectures VI and VII and it is what leads to his adopting Speech Act Theory. To recap: both the performative and the constative are impure because it is impossible to devise a criterion for performatives that would show them to be non-constative and similarly, for constatives, a criterion which would show them to be non-performative.

If there are no pure performatives, then necessarily a successful performative (if there can be one) will not be pure. Austin shows that the best candidates for pure performatives, for example 'I bid you welcome', can be cited in contexts where it cannot realistically or convincingly be denied that they have a constative function [see *HDTW*, 79]. This possibility is intimately connected to the permanent possibility of failure or parasitism in that it is citationality or iterability that accounts both for the permanent possibility of failure just as it accounts for this impurity.

Now Austin by the end of Lecture VII had recognized the impurity of performatives (as shown above in Chapter Two, §1). Derrida's criticism is that he failed to see *why* they were impure (because of citationality or iterability) and that such impurity was *necessary* (because citationality, or iterability, which allows a mark to be identified in the first place, allows a performative to be cited in a context where it may be constative).

If utterances are iterable and citable, then they can be cited in contexts which, if the utterances are performative, will make them constative, and if they are constative, will make them performative. If they are essentially citable in this way, then they represent a necessary

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ritualistic and thus what is a success and what a failure, what serious and what not serious, is not rigorously determined.

possibility of failure. And given that there is no proper context an utterance cannot be restricted to one context in which its purity might be guaranteed and thus its felicity. Another way of saying this is to say that performatives and constatives are necessarily impure.

What I differentiated as two different criticisms are in fact then the same criticism which is that Austin failed to take account of the graphematic nature of constatives, performatives and locutions. Their graphematic nature accounts for their necessary impurity. I take it that Derrida's point here is a valid one: constatives and performatives are necessarily impure in both senses of impurity that I isolated (i.e. utterances are not purely either constative or performative, normal or parasitic, because of their citationality). In Chapter Two (§1) I noted that Austin abandoned the constative/performative distinction after displaying its impurity (or fuzziness). But the fact that Derrida's point is valid does not mean that it is valid as a criticism. Contrary to what Derrida supposes, Austin could have maintained the distinction but with the understanding that it was not a clear-cut distinction between two mutually exclusive classes. All that Derrida's argument shows is that the normal/parasitic distinction is, like the constative/performative distinction, impure: and necessarily so because of citationality. It does not show that the distinction cannot be made. Derrida however thinks that there can be no such thing as a conceptual distinction that is not precise. But I shall leave consideration of this until later. Then I shall show that Derrida is wrong on this matter.[49]

For the moment I shall simply concentrate on the fact that Derrida is in effect arguing that Austin should abandon the distinction between normal and parasitic utterances just as he abandoned the distinction between constatives and performatives. And he is showing that the distinctions are *necessarily* impure. Clearly, just as the speech act was a

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[49] I shall return to this issue of vague concepts and distinctions between concepts when I consider Searle's critique of Derrida's treatment of Austin in Chapter Five. In the dispute between them the issue in question is dealt with openly. I shall support Searle's defence of the distinction against Derrida who argues that Searle must abandon the distinction because it is not precise.

new way of investigating language that proved to be fruitful, so also a new way of examining what were formerly distinguished as normal and parasitic would be worth devising. So, even if one ultimately finds that Derrida does not provide reasons logically compelling Austin to abandon the normal/parasitic distinction, he does provide good reason for attempting to see things in a different manner — in a manner as different as Speech Act Theory is different to Austin's theory of the performative. What he suggests might be possible is a typology of forms of iteration. It is that that I shall next investigate.

4.4.4 A Typology of Forms of Iteration?

Having leveled his criticism, Derrida goes on to point out that he does not reject Austin's distinctions out of hand. He proposes that it *might* be possible "to construct a differential typology of forms of iteration" [*Sec*, 192 (18)]. He admits that the type of citation of an utterance that takes place in the theatre is different to the type that takes place elsewhere:

> Could a performative utterance succeed if its formulation did not repeat a 'coded' or iterable utterance, or in other words, if the formula I pronounce in order to open a meeting, launch a ship or a marriage were not identifiable as *conforming* with an iterable model, if it were not then identifiable in some way as a 'citation'[?] Not that citationality in this case is of the same sort as in a theatrical play, a philosophical reference, or the recitation of a poem. That is why there is a relative specificity, as Austin says, a 'relative purity' of performatives.[50] But this relative purity does not emerge *in opposition* to citationality or iterability, but in opposition to other kinds of iteration within a general iterability which constitutes a violation of the allegedly rigorous purity of every event of discourse or every *speech act*. Rather than oppose citation or iteration to the non-iteration of an event, one ought to construct a differential typology of forms of iteration, assuming that such a project is tenable and can result in an exhaustive program, a question I hold in abeyance here [*Sec*, 191f (18)].

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50 Austin's phrase is 'comparative purity' [*HDTW*, 139] which is translated in the French edition as '*pureté relative*'. See Austin, *Quand dire*, 144.

In the passage in question, Austin is speaking of the relative (or comparative) purity of *constatives*. And they are comparatively pure because they have no 'perlocutionary object' specifically associated with them. He makes this point tentatively:

> The most that might be argued, and with some plausibility, is that there is no perlocutionary *object* specifically associated with stating, as there is with informing, arguing, &c.; and this comparative purity may be one reason why we give 'statements' a certain special position [*HDTW*, 139f].

By arguing one may hope to convince someone of something. That would be the perlocutionary object of one's arguing. And it is usually the consequence sought by arguing. But one may not seek to bring about any consequence at all by stating something. Or there may be any number of things one may be seeking to do such as to shock or interest someone. Stating is then comparatively pure as a constative, unlike arguing which is comparatively impure since there is usually the perlocutionary object of convincing someone. This makes arguing somewhat performative. An argument is generally an impure constative.

Derrida speaks of the 'relative purity' of *performatives*. He may be applying Austin's comments on the comparative purity of constatives to what he says elsewhere about the three following expressions: 'I thank', 'I am grateful', 'I feel grateful'. The first is a performative utterance, the second is performative but also descriptive and thus impure (i.e. it is somewhat constative), the third is a report (i.e. a constative) [see *HDTW*, 79]. Of course 'I thank' can be cited in contexts where it would be clearly constative. (E.g. 'What do you do when someone gives you a present?' 'I thank them'.) But relative to the second expression it is pure, a relatively pure performative.

The above quotation from Derrida seems to imply that Austin somehow relates the issue of purity to that of seriousness. He does not do so explicitly. Howsoever an expression may have 'relative purity', it does not have it by being serious, although of course it must be serious because Austin has excluded parasites. It is *Derrida* who points out that the issues of purity and seriousness are connected in Austin. He is showing that a performative is pure to the extent that it is both non-constative and

serious. The passage in question (from *Sec*) says that performatives are iterable utterances; they are citations but not of the same nature as those utterances would be if they were iterated in a play, a philosophical reference such as *HDTW*, or a poem. When they are iterated in 'normal' circumstances, they are relatively pure. Although Austin does not make this point, it is consistent with what he does say.

The point of the passage I just quoted from Derrida is to establish that, if some performatives are relatively pure, that is not because they are not repetitions. They can be repetitions and relatively pure while remaining distinguishable from relatively non-serious utterances. In other words, it is not the case that a performative is pure because it is original (i.e. not a repetition) but because it is a repetition of a certain sort, viz. a repetition in a context that makes it more performative rather than less. So 'I thank' as mentioned above can be repeated in contexts where it is a relatively pure performative and in other contexts where it is less pure (i.e. where its constative dimension is more apparent), as I have just indicated. In such a context 'I thank' is both a repetition and relatively pure but is not non-serious (or, at least, it is relatively serious).

Utterances are generally iterable as well as being iterable in specific ways. Every utterance is an iteration; so if a typology of utterances is possible, it will be a typology of forms of iteration. Derrida speaks of "a general iterability which constitutes a violation of the allegedly rigorous purity of every event of discourse or every *speech act*". Any utterance is repeatable. It is *generally* iterable. And *specifically* it can be repeated in a number of ways: in a play, as an example in a text book on performatives, in a poem. These specific iterations are, in Austin's terms, non-serious. But the utterance, or 'event of discourse', can, as we have seen, be repeated in a context where it would be (1) a relatively pure performative, (2) partly descriptive and thus impure, (3) a relatively pure constative. The difference between (1) and (2) (and between (2) and (3)) is simply a matter of degree. If Austin admits that there are no pure performatives (and his moving on to give a Speech Act Theory involves this admission), then relatively pure performatives are not to be contrasted

with pure (or impure) ones but with different kinds of relatively pure ones.

From the perspective of the theory of the performative, Speech Act Theory is the theory of relatively pure performatives. That is, Speech Act Theory, as I have shown, arose when Austin decided that the constative/performative distinction did not distinguish (or need not be regarded as distinguishing) between different types of utterances but between dimensions of utterances. He showed then that some utterances were more performative than others. Those utterances *vis-à-vis* the others were relatively pure. But none of the utterances were completely pure, i.e. completely performative (as opposed to constative) or completely constative (as opposed to performative).

Derrida claims that the relative purity of performatives emerges "in opposition to other kinds of iteration within a general iterability which constitutes a violation of the allegedly rigorous purity of every event of discourse or every *speech act*". What Derrida is doing is *either* confusing purity with normalcy *or* assimilating the issues of purity and seriousness. I suggest the latter. He is pointing out that utterances are (in Austin's terms) relatively pure or impure, and relatively serious or non-serious, depending on how they are repeated, i.e. in what contexts.[51] In other words, both purity and seriousness are relative matters and are determined by iteration. It is how an utterance is repeated that decides whether it is relatively pure or impure and relatively normal or parasitic (i.e. serious or non-serious); the example I have just given should bear this out. Derrida then proposes the possibility of, what he calls, a 'typology of forms of iteration'.[52]

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[51] So 'I shall be there' said in a situation of some gravity would be a relatively pure performative. Said in response to a request for information as to who would be at the party, it would be relatively impure. It could also be repeated in a joke where it would be clear that it were relatively non-serious. In the situation of some gravity it would be relatively serious.

[52] However, in 'Limited Inc abc...', which I shall be considering in the next chapter, Derrida says that "Everything is possible except for an exhaustive typology that would claim to limit the powers of graft or of

But would Austin's general theory necessarily have been anything other than what Derrida calls "a differential typology of forms of iteration"? It *could have* been such. Austin temporarily deferred such considerations.[53] Derrida attacks the very idea of doing this. But does he not also "hold [it] in abeyance here" [*Sec*, 192 (18)]? It would seem that Derrida thinks that the matter can indeed be put on hold. Why should it be possible for him to hold the question in abeyance and it not have been possible for Austin to do the same?

If Austin meant by 'normal' what were non-theatrical, non-literary, non-comedic and non-poetic uses of performatives, then clearly he had determined what the terms 'normal' and its contraries, 'parasitic', 'etiolated' and 'non-serious', meant. He might have conceded, as he did with practically every other distinction, that this distinction was not a total contrariety with the two classes being mutually exclusive. And if he had admitted that the host was sometimes parasitic on the parasite, would that have bedeviled everything he went on to do after temporarily excluding from consideration the normal/parasitic distinction?

The answer here is clearly 'No'. For instance, illocutions and perlocutions can be distinguished in theatrical and poetic language. Whitman's incitement of the eagle of liberty to soar is a non-serious perlocutionary act and his referring to such a fictitious bird is a non-serious illocutionary act. At least it is either a non-serious illocutionary act or an infelicitous one. Either Whitman is deliberately referring to a fiction (or pretending to refer to a reality) or he is mistakenly attempting to refer to something which happens not to exist. Whether or not one is aware of the fact that Whitman is not being serious, one knows that he is purporting to refer and is thus purporting to perform an illocution and one also knows that he is purporting to incite and is thus purporting to

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fiction by and within an analytic logic of distinction, opposition, and classification in genus and species" [Ltd, 243 (100)]. I shall argue that the emphasis here should be placed on the 'exhaustive'. He is proposing that an *exhaustive* typology is not possible, and not that a typology *sans phrase* is not possible.

53 It is clear from *HDTW*, 21f that the exclusion from consideration is temporary.

perform a perlocution. In order to distinguish between these two aspects of Whitman's act, it does not matter whether he is being serious or not. That is a different consideration. So the question of the seriousness of utterances can be temporarily put on hold as Austin does in order to investigate other features of performatives and speech acts.

Here we encounter the question of intention once again: whether the speaker-writer was being serious or not may be seen as a matter of intention, the question being, in the Whitman example, whether the poet believed that there were an eagle of liberty and, if he was only pretending that there were one, whether he intended to pretend to incite such a bird to soar. What the poet intended may be seen to be the criterion of what he did with regard to the issue of its being serious or not (as is suggested more in the Searlean theory of speech acts, which I shall be investigating in the next chapter in the light of Derrida's criticisms of Austin). Of course it is a matter of interpretation whether Whitman was being serious or not — a poet might refer to something real and might incite it to do something. This may be what Derrida had in mind when he pointed out that in the proposed typology of forms of iteration "the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance [*l'énonciation*]" [*Sec*, 192 (18)]. What will disappear is not intention as such but only intention thought of as 'through and through present to itself and to its content', that is, intention thought of as being in full control of the meaning of the utterance. For it may be clear what the poet meant and what he was doing but not clear whether he intended it seriously or not.

The reason why intention cannot be construed as present, in this way attributed to Austin, is because of the nature of iteration: "The iteration structuring [the utterance] *a priori* introduces into it a dehiscence and a cleft [*brisure*] which are essential" [*Sec*, 192 (18)]. In Derrida's other terminology, the utterance is irreducibly polysemic, it disseminates, which means that it cannot be restricted to any one meaning, serious or non-serious, since its meaning is determined by its iterations both serious and non-serious and the speaker, of course, neither knows

about all those iterations nor can he control them. The conventionality of meaning, the fact of utterances' intelligibility being governed by convention and convention's arising from the utterances' use by the community at large and its various subgroups, means that utterances are public matters and cannot be controlled by individuals as such. One may only use these utterances with one's own perspectival grasp of them. So utterances are *essentially* polysemic. And, depending on whether one thinks of the poet as being mistaken or deliberate, one will judge his utterance to have been a failed illocution (or perlocution), *or* a non-serious illocution (or perlocution). There is no proper, serious context.[54]

It is hard to say to what extent Austin was aware of what is fundamentally at issue here: on the one hand, he did believe it possible to elucidate the total speech act in the total speech situation and that a 'more general account' could be formulated that would explain parasitic uses as deviations from the norm. On the other hand, his exercise in trying to formulate rules for differentiating various types and aspects of speech acts can be construed as an exercise in exposing the lack of precise distinctions involved.[55] Throughout *HDTW* Austin postulated various distinctions only, ultimately, to show that the distinctions could not be accounted for by precise rules and that there seemed to be many instances to which the distinctions did not apply. Now he did not examine the normal/parasitic distinction but, if he had, then he could have treated it in a similar fashion. In other words, just as he devised speech act theory when he saw the impurity of constatives and performatives, he could have devised something analogous to what Derrida calls a typology of forms of iteration if he had investigated the normal/parasitic distinction and seen

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54 We shall see below how Searle's distinction between literal word or sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning, and between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate, enables him to avoid such a criticism. The speaker can control the utterance meaning of what he says (but not its literal meaning) although he cannot ensure that it is communicated. In other words he cannot ensure that he will be understood as meaning what he does in fact mean.

55 This is essentially the reason behind Stanley Fish's calling *Sec* a tribute to Austin; Fish, 'With the Compliments of the Author: Reflections on Austin and Derrida', *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (Summer 1982): 721.

that it was not a precise distinction. But, as I have already remarked, he did not *have to* abandon his theory of the performative when the discovered that the constative/performative distinction was impure; similarly he would not *have to* abandon the normal/parasitic distinction on discovering that it was vague. In other words, the fact that in Austinian speech act theory an utterance cannot be determined as exclusively normal or parasitic does not mean that the normal/parasitic distinction cannot be made.

In the next chapter I shall consider Derrida's treatment of unhappiness and parasitism in Searle's philosophy. However I shall first of all investigate Searle's reaction to Derrida's treatment of Austin. This I shall do for two reasons: in order to examine more precisely the technicalities of Derrida's critique and because Searle makes certain interesting points about his own view in contrast to Derrida's. I shall show that Searle provides a means of determining some speech acts as exclusively either normal or parasitic — his intentional criterion. So in his theory, not only can the normal/parasitic distinction be made (as it can in Austin's theory) but utterances can be determined as exclusively either one or the other (as they cannot in Austin's theory), because of his use of the literal-meaning/utterance-meaning and representation/communication distinctions.

Chapter Five

ON THE REDUCIBILITY OF POLYSEMY AND THE CONTROL OF PARASITISM

In this chapter I have two main purposes: first, to consider Searle's reaction to Derrida's critique of Austin on the issue of the normal/parasitic and happy/unhappy distinctions; secondly, to consider to what extent (if at all) the Derridean critique of Austin in this regard may be extended to Searle. The questions to be asked here are: can the normal/parasitic distinction be made in Searle's speech act theory (in the way that it can in Austin's theory, *pace* Derrida)? And can speech acts be determined as exclusively either normal or parasitic in Searle's theory (given that Derrida shows that they cannot in Austin's theory)?

I shall answer both these questions affirmatively. However, I shall also show that Derrida successfully defended his critique of Austin against Searle, and this largely because Searle misunderstood many of Derrida's arguments, specifically those concerning iterability and citationality. Searle's theory, however, stands up better to Derrida's critique than Austin's did in that Searle can distinguish between speech acts that are exclusively normal or parasitic. In fact Searle does not subscribe to the Classical theory of writing, in so far as he does not think of writing as logically dependent on speech but only contingently (although he does think that writing is historically younger than speech and that it relates to its context differently). Ultimately I shall show that Derrida's account of the relations between speech acts that are said to be happy or unhappy, and normal or parasitic, is inferior to Searle's: to a point the Derridean explanation in terms of citationality is equal in explanatory power to the Searlean explanation in terms of vertical rules and horizontal conventions. However, I shall argue, Searle's view encompasses Derrida's (by being

more complete in a way that I shall explain below) and should be preferred also because it is, unlike Derrida's view, systematic.

Not only is the distinction between normal speech acts and parasites defensible in Searle's theory (as I argued it was in Austin's) but individual speech acts can be determined as normal (i.e. literal or serious), parasitic or as involving normal and parasitic aspects. This becomes possible largely because of Searle's distinction between representation and communication. It is the speaker-writer who determines whether his utterance act is normal or parasitic. And this determination is made whether it is ever successfully communicated.

In the course of this chapter, I shall show how Derrida's notions of dissemination, citationality, and parasitism have rough counterparts in Searle who recognizes literal ambiguity and vagueness of sentences, the possibility of performing more than one illocutionary act with one utterance act, and the possibility of speaking seriously or literally *and* non-seriously or non-literally at the same time (all of which I have already shown in Chapter Three). Also, the difference on essential points between them seems not to amount to much: for Derrida polysemy is irreducible and the possibility of parasitism and unhappiness is permanent and structural. We shall see however that Derrida, by 'irreducible polysemy' or 'dissemination', does not mean indeterminate polysemy or so-called 'free play'. Essentially dissemination is no more than ambiguity. For Searle not all utterances are polysemic; and, although he realises that all utterances are logically possibly parasitic and that some are actually both normal and parasitic, he shows that this is not a fact about utterances that would prevent normal illocutions and parasites from being differentiated. Derrida does think so, and it is he who is wrong.

In the previous chapter I showed that for Derrida there can be no proper, total context as envisaged by Austin. But I have shown already, in Chapter Three, that Searle does not distinguish between normal utterances and parasites in terms of contextual differences; his distinction is determined by the speaker's or writer's intentions. So in this chapter I investigate what criticism Derrida has of *this* means of distinguishing between normal and parasitic utterances. Ultimately, I show that he has

none that are successful. To this end I compare Derrida's notion of citationality with Searle's notion of the intentional use of rules and conventions. I argue that up to a point Derrida's approach is as good as Searle's and that Searle's theory can be supplemented by ideas in Derrida's view. But I reject Derrida's view that Searle's speech act theory falls foul of its own distinction between normal speech acts and parasites by virtue of his admission that his rules of speech acts are rules of idealized speech acts. Derrida states explicitly that he believes that if a distinction is not without exception (i.e. if it is not nice), it is not a distinction at all; Searle explicitly rejects this. I shall defend Searle's view. The upshot of my argument is to show that, with regard to some speech acts, although one cannot necessarily determine them as exclusively either normal or parasitic, happy or unhappy, this is a fact that Speech Act Theory can accommodate.

So in this chapter I shall show: (i.) that Derrida successfully defends his critique of Austin's account of the relation between the normal and the parasitic against Searle; (ii.) that Searle's distinction between vertical rules and horizontal conventions is a defensible way of distinguishing between utterances that may be termed 'normal' and those that may be termed 'parasitic'; and (iii.) that, although the normal/parasitic distinction may not be nicely applicable to utterances, that is not a problem for Speech Act Theory.

First (in §1) I deal with Derrida's and Searle's different uses of terminology that is basic to their critiques of each other. I shall point out that Searle's grasp of Derrida's terminology is weak and that either Derrida's grasp of Searle's terminology is weak or his use of it is ironic. My intention is to consider their dispute on the issue of iterability, context and (sentence and utterance) meaning first (in §2), and then, certain basic disagreements and (implicit) agreements having been noted, their conflict over the question of serious and parasitic contexts (in §3), including the question whether the distinction between the two types of context is axiological in any sense and whether serious speech acts are, in fact, fictions (or, in Derrida's terminology, 'counter-fictions').

5.1 Terminology

Here my main concern is with how Searle understands Derrida's word 'iterability'. I have given an interpretation of it in Chapter Three, §2. Here is how Searle understands it. To say that a linguistic element is iterable

> is just to say that the logician's type-token distinction must apply generally to all rule-governed elements of language in order that the rules can be applied to new occurrences of the phenomena specified by the rules. Without this feature of iterability there could not be the possibility of producing an infinite number of sentences with a finite list of elements [RD, 199].

Here Searle's interpretation of Derrida is poor. To show this I shall contrast what repetition means to someone who accepts the type/token distinction with what iteration means to Derrida.

Consider the following situation. A person, X, who has never heard of iteration or the type/token distinction is brought into a room by Professor Y. The latter requests X to observe his behaviour in the ensuing minute. During that minute he makes marks on the blackboard similar to those in the following figure.

CAT
CAT

Y asks X how many words he wrote on the board during that minute. If X answers 'one', Y indicates that there are two separate words on the board. If X answers 'two', Y indicates that there is only one word on the board. X is confounded. Now if Y were Searle, he would point out that there were two word-tokens of the same word-type. Thus to the extent that there are two words, the words are tokens. And to the extent that there is one word, the word is a type. At this stage X's astonishment might vanish. However he might be troubled by the fact that now there were (or seemed to be) three things at issue: two tokens and one type.

If Y were Derrida though, he would reassure X that he had every right to be confounded. The two words are one word, they are the same *and* different and this is because they are iterations of one another. It is because language-users judge that two items, however different, are repetitions of one another that they regard them as being two instances of

the same thing. It is the judgement of sameness in spite of difference that determines each of the items, which are judged to be the same as one other, to be the sign or word that it is.

So, at the most basic levels of analysis or description, what is on the board is radically different for Derrida and Searle. For Derrida there is an iteration; for Searle there are two tokens of one type. Derrida attempts to explain the marks without introducing what may be a non-empirical entity (viz. the type).

It is thus Derrida who would seem to be more like Austin in his suspicion of 'bogus entities'. Searle however would deny that what he was doing was postulating a third thing. In *SA* he asserts that "notation is no sure guide to commitment" [*SA*, 112]. The gist of the argument is that "Anything which is said in the form of an existential sentence can be rephrased in some other form" [*SA*, 111]. His view is controversial.[1] Whatever the truth of the matter, one is more likely to be indulging in platonism (understood in the sense of postulating non-empirical entities to explain appearances) on Searle's view than on Derrida's. So perhaps Searle, *qua* Y in my example, is not committed to the existence of a third thing. But certainly platonism is a greater danger with his view than with Derrida's. Thus Searle's remarks in the above-quoted interpretation of Derrida's notion of iteration are not helpful.

In Searle's view Derrida confuses iterability with permanence. I present his criticism first:

> The way in which a written text is weaned from its origin is quite different from the way in which any expression can be severed from its meaning through the form of 'iterability' that is exemplified by quotation. The two phenomena operate on quite different principles. The principle according to which we can wean a written text from its origin is simply that the text has a permanence that enables it to survive the death of its author, receiver, and context of production. This principle is genuinely 'graphematic'. But the principle according to which quotation (citation) allows us to consider an expression apart from its meaning is simply this: since any system of representation must have some representing devices

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[1] Consider Searle's argument with the Quinean criterion of ontological commitment [see *SA*, 106-113].

> whether marks, sounds, pictures, etc., it is always possible to consider those devices quite apart from their role in representation [RD, 200-201].

Here Searle isolates two phenomena in order to inquire into their principles. I shall examine these phenomena now and the explanations of them put forward by Searle. It will be convenient to name the two phenomena: call $\phi 1$ the phenomenon of weaning a text from its origin, and call $\phi 2$ the severance of an expression from its meaning by means of quotation. In Derrida's terminology $\phi 1$ is called 'remainder' and $\phi 2$, 'rupture' [*Sec*, 181f (9); cp. RD, 199]. Together with spacing, they are said to be three essential features of writing. In other words, according to Derrida, they are graphematic. Although I have not up until now focussed on these terms, I have discussed writing as "the non-present *remainder* [*restance*] of a differential mark cut off from its putative 'production' or origin" [*Sec*, 183 (10) (quoted above)] which can be grafted onto (or into) another context (its not having any proper context). In the terminology I have favoured above, $\phi 1$ is writing's being absent from its original context and $\phi 2$ is its not having a proper context to which it could be confined.

For Searle, $\phi 1$ is 'genuinely graphematic' but $\phi 2$ is not. Remainder, but not rupture, is graphematic. What does this mean for Searle? For Searle, $\phi 1$ or remainder is to be explained by the fact that writing is, unlike speech, permanent. It remains when the speaker-writer is not there, even when he is dead. This is a version of the Classical theory of writing which contrasts writing with speech by pointing out that only the former continues to exist when the writer is absent. I dealt with this in the previous chapter. Derrida argues that all language-use is characterized by absence of the sender.

That Searle is interpreting Derrida Classically is confirmed by his rejection of $\phi 2$ or rupture as not graphematic. This denies that it is a special feature of writing that it should break with every context. Searle insists that $\phi 2$ is a matter of quotability. Thus, since both writing and speech can be quoted, the principle of $\phi 2$ is not 'especially graphematic'.

> We can always consider words as just sounds or marks* and we can always construe pictures as just material objects. But ... this possibility of separating the sign from the signified is a feature of any system of representation

> whatever: there is nothing especially graphematic about it at all [RD, 201].
> * This of course is not the normal purpose of quotation, but it is a possible purpose [Searle's note].

That is, rupture is not a graphematic principle since it is not only permanent, written marks that can be considered apart from their meanings by means of this unusual form of quotation. But this is not an accurate account of rupture. It is not simply a matter of graphemes' and phonemes' being considered as marks or sounds divorced from any signification they might have when considered as signifiers. Rupture implies that a signifier can be grafted onto innumerable contexts in which it can be made sense of. There is no *one* context that would constitute a *proper fit*, as it were. I discussed this in the previous chapter as the non-totalizability of contexts or the lack of proper contexts.

Given my examinations in Chapter Four above, Searle's criticisms can be dealt with as I have just done. But before I move on I must deal with Derrida's curious reaction to them in 'Limited Inc abc...'. I shall argue that Derrida, in responding to Searle's criticisms, is being ironic, and that he is being ironic throughout that work. This, I shall suggest, is because 'Limited Inc', as an attack on the serious/non-serious distinction, is deliberately written in a style that attempts to be both serious *and* non-serious. The best term for such a style (although not precise) is 'irony'.[2]

First of all, Derrida clears up a few points. The remainder could not be the factor of permanence, as Searle maintains, because *Sec* explicitly speaks of it as 'non-present' [Ltd, 188 (51); cp. *Sec*, 183 (10)]. He also points out that *Sec* speaks of the *oral* mark's remainder; and that cannot be interpreted to mean a permanent remainder because oral marks are clearly not permanent. He agrees with Searle though that the principle of $\phi 1$ is 'genuinely graphematic' even though he must know that Searle understands the word in the Classical sense. But of course *he* does not (since he sees all language use as writing). So either he is making a simple mistake or he is being ironic.

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2 Derrida himself calls it 'dual writing' [see Aft, 114].

He also apparently agrees with Searle when the latter says that the principle of $\phi 2$ is not 'especially graphematic'. But rupture is indeed graphematic. It is only on the Classical view that it is not. Again Derrida is either simply mistaken or he is being ironic.

This kind of 'agreement' happens throughout 'Limited Inc'.[3] I hope to show throughout this chapter that it may be explained as follows. Derrida feels that Searle made no real effort to understand his work, especially *Sec*. He feels that Searle has treated his work trivially and superficially. In response he insists on treating Searle superficially. So he interprets 'graphematic' in the Classical sense where Searle uses it. Given that he understands the word in Searle's sense, he can of course agree with him.

Now to interpret Searle's words more straightforwardly. Let it be granted that he uses 'graphematic' in Derrida's sense of pertaining to arche-writing. It can be said that he (wrongly) interprets Derrida to be saying that some marks are *only* iterable by that type of citationality (and this word may be taken as the genus of use and mention, i.e. inscriptions and utterances before consideration of their status as uses or merely

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[3] Throughout 'Limited Inc' Derrida plays at being undecidably serious or frivolous. Witness his discussion of the copyright Searle took out on his 'Reply'. This discussion both ridicules Searle as a philosopher for being so proprietary about his 'Reply' and makes serious points about the very notion of writing's possibly belonging to someone. Discovering that Searle gives credit to two others for discussing with him the issues in 'Reply' [see RD, 208, n. 1], viz. Hubert Dreyfus and Dagmar Searle, and pointing out that he, Derrida, discussed many matters with Dreyfus, Derrida opines that perhaps the copyright should be in all of their names (and the names of any others who discussed the matter with any of them). Thus he refers to the '3+n authors' of 'Reply' and a *Société à Responsabilité Limitée*, whose acronym is S.A.R.L. and which is the name of the French copyright society. In the middle of this Derrida tries a speech act: 'Let's be serious' [Ltd, 168 (34)]. This is repeated five pages later and the reader wonders whether Derrida was being serious for all of those pages before he realizes that it is not important — which of course is the point. Then at the end of the work: "I promised (very) sincerely to be serious. Have I kept my promise? Have I taken Sarl seriously? I do not know if I was supposed to. Should I have? Were they themselves serious in their speech acts? Shall I say I am afraid they were? Would that mean that I do not take their seriousness very seriously?" [Ltd, 251 (107)]

mentions) exemplified in quotation.[4] Quotation may be, and in fact for Derrida is, a form of citation or iteration.[5] It is one way in which a mark (phonetic or graphematic in the traditional senses) may be divorced from its origin. So, quotation (i.e. $\phi 2$) is only one form of citation or iteration. But any use of a mark is an iteration. Every time an expression is repeated (whether that repetition be construed as a mention or a use) it is iterated and it is such iteration that divorces a mark from its origin and context. This is because a sign (or signifier) that would take place just once is not possible [see Chapter Three, §2 (above)].

In a nutshell then, Searle interprets the word 'graphematic' in the Classical sense meaning pertaining to graphemes. He claims that a text can be weaned from its origin (i.e. the writer and his situation) because permanent written texts are able to survive while writers and their situations pass away. What enables a text to do this is writing. Thus this is a graphematic issue. Derrida however denies permanence, so he does not accept this principle. In his terms it is not graphematic. His reasons for calling it 'graphematic' in Ltd are ironic. Searle also claims that both spoken and written utterances can be considered apart from their meanings (as just sounds or marks). This, for him, is not a graphematic issue then as opposed to a phonetic issue, so he denies that the principle here should be called 'graphematic'. Derrida though sees speech and writing as arche-writing and thus calls the principle 'graphematic' since it is so in his usage of the word whereby its prime meaning is pertaining to arche-writing.

Then, given that Derrida's critique of the Classical theory of writing is successful (which I accept), Searle's critique of *Sec* as I have presented it so far is erroneous. Having cleared up terminological problems,

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[4] COD defines the transitive verb 'to cite' as "summon to appear in lawcourt; quote (passage, book, author) in support of a position; mention as an example or in official dispatch". To quote in support of a position is sometimes to use, e.g. "As my textbook says 'Sodium is a soft metal'". The noun is 'citation'. In French, *'citer'* and *'citation'* are similarly defined.

[5] And I shall discuss the relation between citation and iteration in §3 (below).

I can now deal with Searle's criticisms of Derrida on the issue of the relations of meaning, intentionality and context.

5.2 Meaning, Intentionality and Context

In this section I shall deal, in two subsections, with Searle's criticisms concerning what Derrida claims regarding the relations between intentionality and context, respectively, and meaning. In the first section I shall show that Searle is wrong when he claims that Derrida holds that intentions are absent from written texts. This will enable me to clarify what Derrida says about how intentions relate to texts and contexts. In the second section I shall show *first* that Derrida in effect subscribes to the Searlean distinction between speaker's utterance meaning and sentence meaning; *secondly*, that what Derrida means by dissemination is very similar to what Searle means by literal ambiguity; and, *thirdly*, in the light of this I shall show that Searle is wrong when he claims that, because Derrida *supposedly* thinks that intentions are mysterious entities which lie 'behind' utterances and which must be conscious, he does not realize that 'a meaningful sentence is just a standing possibility of the corresponding (intentional) speech act'. I shall show that Derrida does accept such a view to some extent; however *he* points out that because of dissemination the sentence, like the speech act, will not be meaning*ful*. That is, just as intentions are not fully present in utterances, so fungible intentions (to use Searle's words) are not fully present in meaningful sentences. I shall show that Searle's theory can accommodate what is at issue here.

5.2.1 Intentionality in *Sec*

Searle construes the argument of *Sec* to be claiming that, because the mark is separated from its origin and context of production, intention is simply absent from writing. Otherwise stated, what he is claiming is that it is *Sec*'s claim that, because of iterability, there is no trace of intentionality in a text. Searle, in opposition to this, says that

> intentionality plays exactly the same role in written as in spoken communication. What differs in the two cases is not the intentions of the speaker but the role of the

> context of the utterance in the success of the communication [RD, 201].

The implied criticism attributes to Derrida a distinction between speech and writing with regard to the speaker's or writer's intentions that he does not make, namely, "that intentionality is absent from written communication" [RD, 201] and it claims that context determines the utterance in a different manner in each case.[6] For instance, Searle says that "In speech one can invoke all sorts of features of the context which are not possible to use in writing intended for absent receivers, without explicitly representing these features in the text" [RD, 202].[7] So Searle, in opposition to what he interprets Derrida to be saying, claims, first, that intentions are present in writing, and secondly, that there is an important difference between the context of speech and that of writing, viz. that the context of speech can be implicit (it need not be explicated by the speaker) whereas the context of writing must be made explicit in the written text itself. This is a form of the Classical view that writing is a lesser form of language than speech: in writing one has to work harder to say what one wants. Searle also agrees with the Classical view that writing is dependent on speech, although he, unlike Rousseau, Condillac and Saussure, claims that the dependence of writing on speech is "a contingent fact about the history of human languages" [RD, 207]; the

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[6] And here intention is not one of those aspects of context that differs.

[7] I have already shown this view in Austin and Rousseau [see Chapter Four, §2]. However, although the question regarding the distinction between writing and speech was dealt with in *Sec* (including the questions of intention *vis-à-vis* speech and writing), the question of their relations to their types of contexts was not *explicitly* dealt with.

dependence is not logical.[8] However, Searle does not subscribe to the Classical view that intentions are somehow absent from writing.[9]

Searle thus claims, while believing that on each point he is contradicting a point held by Derrida, <1> that writing is contingently dependent upon speech, <2> that intention is present playing the same role in speech and writing and <3> that the role of context is different in speaking and writing — that the context of speech may be implicit but that the context of writing must be explicit.

Derrida indeed rejects <1> and <3> but accepts <2>.[10] In accepting <2> he rejects Searle's implied criticism that he did not accept such sameness of role [see Ltd, 198 (60)]. In rejecting <3> he points out that he does not distinguish between intention and context in the clear-cut way that, according to his interpretation (which I shall examine below), Searle does (both on his own behalf and on Derrida's) [see Ltd, 220 (79); cp. *Sec*, 185f (12) (quoted above)]. This explains why he rejects <1>: if intention and context are not properly separable but form a total context, and if that total context is the same in both cases, then speech is essentially the same as writing; and if speech is writing, or a text, there is no dependence (either contingent or necessary) of writing on speech or vice-versa. That is, Derrida rejects the traditional distinction between speech and writing (as shown above in my account of his critique of the Classical theory of writing). Phonemes (or morphemes) and graphemes are just different sorts of marks but their total context is not necessarily any different because of that.

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[8] Searle points out that the dependence does not obtain in the case of mathematical notation. In Derrida's 'Limited Inc abc...' this is called 'simplistic' but it is not dealt with [see Ltd, 248f (104)]. There Derrida seems to point to *Of Grammatology* for a discussion; see *OG*, 3f on scientific scripts, for example.

[9] I have already questioned whether such a view can even be attributed to Condillac.

[10] Re. <1> see RD, 202; cp. Ltd, 219f (78f) (on the lesser status of writing) and see RD, 207; cp. Ltd, 248 (104) (on the contingent dependence).
Re. <2> see RD, 201; cp. Ltd, 198 (60).
Re. <3> see RD, 201ff; cp. Ltd, 219 (78).

Searle though, it could be objected, is not using 'writing' in Derrida's deconstructed sense of arche-writing, but in its usual sense and perhaps in *that* sense it is a matter of the history of the development of languages that writing developed after speech. However, Searle ought to be aware, having read *Sec*, that Derrida is of the view that speech is essentially describable in the same way that writing is in fact traditionally described, and thus that for Derrida to say that writing is contingently dependent on speech is no more significant than saying that it is contingently dependent on itself. I have already cited *Sec* in this regard.[11] The idea is found more explicitly in *OG*:

> I ... suggest that the alleged derivativeness of writing, however real and massive, was possible only on one condition: that the 'original,' 'natural,' etc. language had never existed, never been intact and untouched by writing, that it had itself always been a writing. An arche-writing whose necessity and new concept ... I continue to call writing only because it essentially communicates with the vulgar concept of writing. ...[Writing] *breaches* living speech from within and from the very beginning [*OG*, 56f].

In Ltd Derrida refers to such passages as these, which are part of his analysis of traditional theories of writing. He passes off as 'simplistic' Searle's judgement that the one is contingently dependent on the other. However he does not go into the issue again except to say that "Structural and historical laws have constructed this 'dependence' everywhere where it has manifested itself, with everything it has produced, above all in the way of symptoms and of lures" [Ltd, 248 (104)]. In other words, this judgement of dependence was some sort of inevitable error (which is explained in *OG*, for instance). He does however criticize Searle for not being aware of his examination of this issue in texts other than *Sec*, texts which form 'the implicit context of *Sec*'.[12]

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[11] The "structural possibility of being weaned from the referent or from the signified (hence from communication and from its context) seems to me to make every mark, including those which are oral, a grapheme in general" [*Sec*, 183 (10); quoted above in Chapter Four, §2].

[12] The background texts which are *explicitly* mentioned in *Sec* are *S&P*, *Pos* and *D*. See, for instance, *Pos*, 71 on 'writing'.

In short then, Derrida's response to <1> is that he has shown in texts to which *Sec* makes implicit reference, that both speech and writing are arche-writing, which involves deconstructing the opposition speech/-writing, which in turn involves disallowing any analysis which would show even a contingent dependence of either speech or writing, one on the other. With regard to <2> and <3>, Derrida sees the intention as somehow part of the formation of the 'total' context:

> Intention, itself *marked* by the context, is not foreign to the formation of the 'total' context.... To treat context as a factor from which one can abstract for the sake of refining one's analysis, is to commit oneself to a description that cannot but miss the very contents and object it claims to isolate, for they are *intrinsically determined* by context [Ltd, 198 (60); my emphases].[13]

Intention is thus said to be marked by the context and to form with it a total context which intrinsically determines utterances. Clearly the writer's intending takes place in the same context as the actual production of graphemes. So intentionality, both as regards attitude and content, is part of the total context of production and Derrida is not rejecting intention any more than he is rejecting context. Intention takes place in a context which it affects (or determines) and by which it is affected. It marks, and is marked by, the context. That is, the intention and the text produced are marked by the same context. So the text is marked by the intention and the context that marks the intention — i.e. by the 'total' context. We shall see later that this is not always the case; as Searle points out, the intention to represent and the intention to communicate are not the same. And so an intention need leave no mark on a text.

Derrida in fact shows a conflict in Searle who elsewhere explicitly rejects a sharp distinction between intention and context although in criticizing Derrida he uses such a distinction. He refers to the speaker's

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13 Here "'total' context" echoes Austin's 'total situation', 'total speech act' and 'total speech situation' [see *HDTW*, 52]. Austin includes sincerity in this, so presumably Derrida is here agreeing with Austin if sincerity is taken to be intentional.

intentions as part of the context of utterance [see ALIA, 414 (quoted above in Chapter Two, §3].[14]

Is there any justification for Searle's thinking that *Sec* had claimed or implied that intentions were ever absent from utterances or inscriptions? Here is the passage which might lead one to believe that *Sec* claimed that intentions were (or at least could possibly be) absent from writing:

> To be what it is, all writing must ... be capable of functioning in the radical absence of every empirically determined receiver in general.
>
> ...What holds for the receiver holds also, for the same reasons, for the sender or the producer. To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a sort of machine which is productive in turn, and which my future disappearance will not, in principle, hinder in its functioning, offering things and itself to be read and to be rewritten. When I say 'my future disappearance' [*disparition*: also, demise, *trans.*], it is in order to render this proposition more immediately acceptable. I ought to be able to say my disappearance, pure and simple, my non-presence in general, for instance the non-presence of my intention of saying something meaningful [*mon vouloir-dire, mon intention-de-signification*], of my wish to communicate, from the emission or production of the mark. For a writing to be a writing it must continue to 'act' and to be readable even when what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed, be it because of a temporary absence, because he is dead or, more generally, because he has not employed his absolutely actual and present intention or attention, the plenitude of his desire to say what he means, in order to sustain what seems to be written 'in his name' [*Sec*, 180f (8)].

First of all, writing must *be able* to function given the *radical* absence of the receiver-in-general. This also applies to the sender (i.e. the writer). So, to be explicit, writing must be able to function given the radical absence of the writer. Now, the passage also speaks of the 'intention of saying something meaningful' (although this is not so clear in French). This intention is not the intended meaning though. One must distinguish

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[14] Of course, for some purposes it may be better to treat them as separable and in some not. In his later work Searle treated them as logically separate. More about this later.

here between the intention to be meaningful and the intended meaning (intention). It is the intention of saying something meaningful that is said to be non-present. However, the word 'non-presence' is potentially misleading. It does not mean absence. In his letter to Houdebine, to which I have already referred, Derrida explains non-presence:[15]

> It has happened that I have spoken of nonpresence, in effect, but by this I was designating less a negated presence, than 'something' (nothing, indeed, in the form of presence) that deviates from the opposition presence/-absence (negated presence), with all that this opposition implies [*Pos*, 95].

The point is that non-presence is not absence (and, by extension, that intention's being non-present is not the same as its being absent). The fact that a conscious act should be intentional does not mean that the intention is conscious (in Derrida's language, that intention is present to consciousness).[16] One may not be fully conscious of one's intention. In order to understand this issue of non-presence I shall go on to show that, for Derrida, intentions can never be fully 'actualized' (i.e. realised or expressed in utterances). They can never be made fully present in language because of dissemination.

It is the final part of the last-quotation-but-one that is important. And it is cited again in Ltd [see Ltd, 193f (56)]. Writing must be able to function in the limiting cases where the writer is dead or (and this is emphasized when the passage is re-cited in Ltd) when the writer has not "employed his absolutely actual and present intention or attention ... in order to sustain what seems to be written 'in his name'". This seems to point to the case where the writer is not paying close attention to what he is writing. I take it though that this means that writing's function is not affected by the writer's not paying very close attention to what he is writing. For instance, he may be writing absent-mindedly. Then however the point is almost too obvious: one can understand what someone's

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15 Note that in this passage he is not referring to *Sec*.

16 Searle points this out also: "rather few of one's intentions are ever brought to consciousness as intentions" [RD, 202].

writing means without knowing whether he was (fully) aware of what he was saying.[17]

Now Derrida's interpretation of *Sec* in Ltd interprets this passage in this manner:

> *at no time* does *Sec* invoke the *absence*, pure and simple, of intentionality. Nor is there any break, simple or radical, with intentionality. What the text questions is not intention or intentionality but their *telos*, which orients and organizes the movement and the possibility of a fulfillment, realization, and *actualization* in a plenitude that would be *present* to and identical with itself [Ltd, 193 (56)].

The intention is present in some sense but it is not fully actualized in Derrida's sense of not being encoded in a way that would not be irreducibly polysemic. And this is so whether one is conscious of what one is saying or not. Because intention is not fully actualized (and cannot be) Derrida does not want to say that it is present. So the point about intentionality that Derrida most wants to bring out is that it cannot fully *actualize* itself in language. Since every text (spoken or written) can be interpreted polysemically and because (as explained in Chapter Four, §1), owing to contextual differences of reading, every meaning disseminates when the text, in which it is, is interpreted, there can be no *simple and full* presence of an intended meaning in a text.

In short then, Derrida is right in saying that *Sec* does not claim that intentions are absent from writing. However, since Derrida speaks of the radical absence of the receiver in general [see *Sec*, 180 (8)], it is understandable that Searle should have thought (initially anyway) that he meant the absence of any trace of the sender (which might include his intentions). But 'radical absence' does not cover absence of intention (in the sense of intended meaning) but only absence of the intention to mean, which I glossed as absence of consciousness of what one intended, or that one intended.

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[17] As I explained in Chapter Four, §1, language can be meaningful in the absence of the referent and even of the signified. See the 'sky is blue' example which I discussed and which is given at *Sec*, 183f (11). Compare also what Derrida says (in Oto) about Nietzsche's failure of attention to what he wrote in his earlier lectures (which I mention below).

So far in this chapter I have clarified what is meant by iterability in Searle and Derrida, and I have examined Searle's and Derrida's understanding of the relation between intention and context (both in the case of speech and writing). I have, I hope, established that Searle is thinking of these issues Classically and is thus failing to understand Derrida and his critique of Austin. In the following sub-section I shall further compare Searle's and Derrida's views on these issues with a view to tackling their conflict over the serious/non-serious distinction in §3.

So far I have established that Derrida does not say that intentions (which he sees as marking, and being marked by, context) are absent in the case of writing (which he sees, like speech, as an instance of arche-writing); he says rather that they cannot be fully actualized (i.e. cannot be made exclusively present) in a text. Now I shall consider, in order to deal with another criticism by Searle (viz. that Derrida in effect thinks of all meaning as utterance meaning with intentions being mysterious entities which lie behind utterances), whether there is in Derrida any distinction like Searle's distinction between speaker's utterance meaning and literal word or sentence meaning. I shall show that there is and that the criticism is therefore unwarranted.

5.2.2 Meaning: Intentional and Contextual

As already remarked, Searle distinguishes between speaker's utterance meaning and literal meaning (or contextual and conventional meaning, see Chapter Two, §3). He argues that there is such a thing as literal sentence meaning but that it is (often and perhaps always) relative to context, i.e. to a background of assumptions. This, he points out, is not a claim about ambiguity, vagueness or indexicality. And, even though literal meaning is relative to context in this way, it must not be confused with speaker meaning.

In this section I shall show, *first*, that Derrida accepts a distinction similar to that between literal meaning and utterance meaning, and that he is wrong when he, in effect, accuses Searle of regarding these utterance meanings as corruptions which ought to be abstracted from in analyzing the speech situation. *Secondly*, I shall show that there is no

major difference between what Derrida calls dissemination (or irreducible polysemy) and what Searle calls literal ambiguity. Both Searle and Derrida reject the notion of semantic indeterminacy (or 'free play'). So *irreducible* polysemy is not *indeterminate* polysemy; it is, in fact, literal ambiguity. *Thirdly*, I deal with Searle's claim that Derrida thinks that intentions 'lie behind' utterances and that all intentions must be conscious; here I shall show that Derrida does not accept such theses. Rather he accepts a thesis that is similar (in respects to be investigated) to Searle's view that a meaningful sentence is the standing possibility of the corresponding intentional act (i.e. that it is a fungible intention). Derrida thinks that meaning is never fully present in meaning*ful* sentences; thus, as we shall see, he has reservations concerning Searle's thesis. I shall show that these reservations can be addressed by Searle's theory. With these matters settled I shall be able to go on, in the next section, to deal with the specific question of the normal/parasitic distinction.

5.2.2.1 Sentence Meaning, Utterance Meaning: in Searle and Derrida

Here is a concise statement of an essential set of distinctions made by Searle:

> it is a category mistake to suppose that an utterance of a token and a token are identical and it is a mistake (derived from the previous one) to suppose that where utterance meaning differs from sentence meaning, the token acquires a different meaning from the type. ...the same utterance can involve many tokens, as when one publishes one's utterances in printed form, and the same token can be used in the making of several utterances, as for example, when one holds up the same 'STOP' sign on several occasions. Every utterance does indeed involve the production or use of a token, but the utterance is not identical with the token, and where utterance meaning differs from sentence meaning, the token does not change its meaning. Barring diachronic changes, special codes, and the like, the meaning of the token is always the same as the meaning of the type. Sentence meaning, type or token, needs to be distinguished from the speaker's utterance meaning, and the sentence-utterance distinction

> is not the same as the type-token distinction [*E&M*, 119f].[18]

This means that one's use of a token does not change that token's type. Thus 'The cat is on the mat' means the cat is on the mat no matter how one uses that sentence. When one is using it as a code it means something else as well (i.e. it has an utterance meaning over and above its literal sentence meaning). Also, the utterance of 'The cat is on the mat' can be in various different tokens such as various printed and spoken forms. And the token 'The cat is on the mat' (or 'STOP', in the above) can be 'uttered' in various ways. For instance, as it appears here one can cut it out and use it somewhere else (given a scissors and some glue).

Thus there is a distinction between utterances and tokens even though the former cannot exist without the latter, i.e. even though one cannot make an utterance without producing some token. The utterance and its token can have different meanings, but the utterance meaning does not affect the token's literal meaning. Thus whatever the speaker might mean by uttering 'The cat is on the mat' cannot change the fact that this token (and every token of that type) means the cat is on the mat. So there are two fundamental and separate distinctions being made, viz. sentence/utterance and type/token.

Speaker's utterance meaning and sentence meaning are both context dependent. Over and above the context dependence of the utterance of 'The cat is on the mat' (where its indexicals are only determined relative to the context of utterance which decides which cat it is and where the mat is), there is a contextuality of its literal meaning. The meaning of 'The cat is on the mat' is "relative to a set of contextual assumptions" [*E&M*, 120].

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18 Note that the paper in question here, 'Literal Meaning' [*E&M*, 117-36], first appeared in 1977 (when it was read at a conference in Vienna), the same year as Ltd. But in 1975 Searle published 'Indirect Speech Acts' [*E&M*, 30-57] in which this distinction between sentence meaning and utterance meaning is explored. The former paper is used here though because, although it may not be a text of which Derrida ought to have been aware, it expresses more clearly issues that he could have been aware of had he read the latter paper and Searle's contrasting of illocutionary and perlocutionary accounts of meaning in *SA*, 42ff. In Derrida's own words, it would be 'the implicit context of' RD [see Ltd, 248 (104)].

This dependence on contextual or background assumptions is easily shown. For instance, it would be problematic to speak of a cat's being on a mat outside some gravitational field. However it might still be said and Searle gives an example to show this: looking from a space-ship window, mats float past with cats near them in such a relation that, relative to the ship, it can be said that in some cases the cat is on the mat and in the others the mat is on the cat. And there are innumerable other contexts to which the statement about the cat is also relative. But I shall not go into them [see *E&M*, 123ff].[19]

Now to connect this discussion of literal meaning with the issue of intentionality: Searle points out that "the notion of literal meaning of a sentence is in a sense the notion of conventional and hence fungible intentionality" [*E&M*, 131; cp. RD, 202]. A sentence's literal meaning is its conventional intentionality or something that can serve for, or replace, intentionality. That is, it is its being about something by convention. Searle explains that intentions or intentional states are *about* something. So a literal meaning is something which can do the work of a state of mind that is about something.

In RD this notion of fungible intentionality is in effect broached. There Searle argues that "The iterability of linguistic forms facilitates and is a necessary condition of the particular forms of intentionality that are characteristic of speech acts" [RD, 208]. By 'linguistic forms' he means

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[19] If the background conditions, to which the literal meaning of the sentence is relative, were enumerable and specifiable, they could then be formulated as aspects of the semantic content of the sentence or as presuppositions of its applicability. But such conditions are not specifiable because, depending on the power of one's imagination, one can invent all kinds of possible contexts in which it would not be clear whether the sentence had a meaning without making further assumptions. For instance, one could consider contexts where natural laws were different in various respects or where it might not be clear whether the object were a cat (e.g. if there is a statue of a cat on a mat, is it true to say in that situation 'The cat is on the mat'?) and similarly with mats. Searle's argument here, as he points out, is not a rigorous proof that background conditions are indefinite and thus could not be specified and postulated as semantic conditions of the sentence, but his ability to present strange contexts in which the applicability of the sentence would be in doubt is support enough for his assertion. Searle points out that similar considerations apply to speech acts other than assertions [see *E&M*, 126ff].

words and syntax. He claims that it is by virtue of our being masters of sets of recursive rules that we are able to generate an infinite number of speech acts which can communicate an infinite number of new things. It is knowledge of these linguistic forms and rules that enables us to communicate. And even when a sentence has been weaned from its origin

> there is no getting away from intentionality, because a *meaningful sentence is just a standing possibility of the corresponding (intentional) speech act.* To understand it, it is necessary to know that anyone who said it and meant it would be performing that speech act determined by the rules of the languages that give the sentence its meaning in the first place [RD, 202].

Knowing the linguistic elements and rules of the language in question enables one to determine what was intended by the author of a sentence, an author who is no longer present (to be questioned, etc.).

Before considering this any further though, I should emphasize that this factor of literal meanings' being fungible intentions does not undermine the distinction between utterance meaning and sentence meaning. A sentence has a literal meaning, a fungible or conventional intentionality. This means that it is *by convention* about whatever state in the world it is about. In Lewis's words (already cited in Chapter Two, §3), its meaning is by force of precedent. It has been established by convention that sentence tokens of that type, in whatever context they are uttered, are about something specific. 'The cat is on the mat' by force of precedent means the cat is on the mat. But not all intentionality is conventional in this way. Emily Dickinson's 'My Life had stood — a Loaded Gun' shows how the utterance of a sentence can express a speaker's meaning in a way that is not governed by conventions. In Lewis's words, it is communication by force of salience. I have already explained Searle's account of how metaphors work. Also I showed how Searle demonstrates how one can make two illocutionary acts by means of one utterance act. For example, 'I want you to do it' is literally an assertion; but it is also an indirect speech act, viz. a request [see Chapter Three, §2.5].

Searle insists that the utterance meaning's context dependence is different to the sentence meaning's context dependence. And clearly there is a general difference here. Before examining how Derrida would regard

this, I must clarify further how Searle understands this opposition. Here are Searle's words regarding the two types of context dependence:

> A ... skeptical conclusion that I explicitly renounce is that the thesis of the relativity of literal meaning destroys or is in some way inconsistent with the system of distinctions ... that centers around the distinction between the literal sentence meaning and the speaker's utterance meaning, where the utterance meaning may depart in various ways from literal sentence meaning. ...The modification that the thesis of relativity of meaning forces on that system of distinctions is that in the account of how context plays a role in the production and comprehension of metaphorical utterances, indirect speech acts, ironical utterances, and conversational implications, we will need to distinguish the special role of the context of utterance in these cases from the role that background assumptions play in the interpretation of literal meanings [*E&M*, 133f].

Clearly Searle maintains the distinction between sentence and utterance meaning in spite of the fact that both are determined by context. In the case of utterance meaning, there is a special role of context over and above the role of context in determining literal meaning. I take it that the context to which literal meanings are relative is one to which speakers in general have access but that the context to which utterance meanings are relative is some special context. The background assumptions of sentence meanings are assumptions made by the speakers of the language. It is those speakers' conventions that determine the meanings of the language. And no individual can change conventions. But individual speakers can control special contexts as is clear from cases where metaphors or passwords, for instance, are used. Clearly the conventional, literal meaning of 'The cat is on the mat' is the cat is on the mat even if for some utterance, in special contexts, it might *also* mean (as a code) something like the surveillance equipment is in place.

Derrida too is aware of such differences. He quotes a puzzling fragment from the French edition of Nietzsche's *Nachlass* — 'I forgot my umbrella'. The phrase literally means I forgot my umbrella (or, at least, Searle would say so). But no one knows the special context of the remark. In other words we know what the phrase means, but we do not know what the author was intending to do in the special circumstances in which he

wrote it. Derrida discusses this example and another example given by Searle, viz. 'On the twentieth of September 1793 I set out on a journey from London to Oxford' [see RD, 201]:

> the functioning of the mark, a certain iterability, hence a certain legibility that is operative beyond the disappearance or demise of the presumed author, the recognition of a certain semantic and syntactic code at work in this phrase [i.e. 'On the twentieth...'] — none of all this either constitutes or requires a full understanding of the meaning*fulness* of this phrase, in the sense of the complete and original intentionality of its meaning (-to-say), any more than for the phrase, 'I forgot my umbrella,' abandoned like an island among the unpublished writings of Nietzsche. A thousand possibilities will always remain open even if one understands something in this phrase that makes sense..., all possibilities that [Searle] would no doubt subsume under those contextual elements excluded from [intention or a text] by hypothesis, or under the 'corruptions' excluded by [granting the assumption that the author said exactly what he meant and one understood what he said] [Ltd, 201 (62f)].

To be clear about it, Derrida holds that "Everyone knows what «I have forgotten my umbrella» means" [*Sp*, 129]. But "We never will know *for sure* what Nietzsche wanted to say or do when he noted these words, nor even that he *wanted* anything" [*Sp*, 123]. In short, we know what the sentence means but will never be sure how Nietzsche meant it (i.e. intended it). On the basic issue here, there would seem *prima facie* to be no important difference between Searle and Derrida, because Derrida seems to be making what is in effect Searle's distinction between literal sentence meaning and speaker's (or writer's) utterance meaning. If so, then Derrida is wrong when he says that Searle would count the possibilities mentioned above (of utterance meanings) as corruptions. I shall come back to this point in a moment (in the next sub-section) to consider whether, when Derrida says that we know what that phrase means, he means that we know its literal meaning or just some interpretation of its irreducibly polysemic meaning.

Incidentally, Searle does not clearly distinguish between sentence meaning and utterance meaning in his critique of Derrida's interpretation of Austin. He explains meaning as fungible intentionality (although he does not use the word 'fungible'): "To the extent that the author says what he

means the text is the expression of his intentions. It is always possible that he may not have said what he meant" [RD, 202]. In a sense he equivocates over 'intentionality' during his critique of Derrida in that he writes as if understanding a sentence's fungible intentionality were understanding its intentionality *sans phrase*. But, as we have seen, there is more to his view of intentionality than that.

5.2.2.2 Free Play, Dissemination and Literal Ambiguity

As remarked, Derrida points out that we know what the above-quoted phrase of Nietzsche means but we do not fully know how he intended it. In one sense, we clearly understand what was intended but in another we do not. If Searle were right that Derrida claims that intentionality is absent from writing, then his argument against him would be a good one because a sentence always expresses a fungible intention. But Searle does not consider whether Derrida might have meant not this fungible intention but the writer's or speaker's intention.

Derrida claims that on what is in effect the issue of fungible intentionality he is 'more or less in agreement' with Searle except that he, emphasizing the '-ful' in 'meaningful', does not accept that intentions can ever be fully actualized:

> on the one hand, I am more or less in agreement with Sarl's statement, "...there is no getting away from intentionality, because a *meaningful sentence is just a standing possibility of the corresponding* (intentional) speech act" [RD, 202], I would, on the other hand, add, placing undue and artificial emphasis on *-ful*, that for reasons just stated, there cannot be a 'sentence' that is fully and actually meaning*ful* and hence (or because) there can be no 'corresponding (intentional) speech act' that would be fulfilled, fully present, *active* and *actual* [Ltd, 195f (58)].

In other words Derrida agrees to some extent (not specified) that meaningful sentences are fungible intentions, but he rejects the view that intentions can ever be fully present in a text. Thus fungible intentions would not be fully present in texts. This is in line with Derrida's view of irreducible polysemy or dissemination which I have already investigated. The 'reasons just stated', referred to in the passage, have to do with the

fact that iterability (which accounts for dissemination) prevents intentions from being actualized.[20] They are repeated a few pages later where Derrida says that he finds 'untenable' Searle's 'ideal hypothesis' that an author said what he meant: "the very structure of the mark (for example, the minimum of iterability it requires) excludes the hypothesis of idealization, that is, the adequation of meaning to itself..." [Ltd, 199 (61)]. That is, iterability means that dissemination is unavoidable. Thus, there is no idealized meaning of a sentence. And I take it that this excludes any univocal sentence meaning for *any* sentence. In short, not only can the speaker not actualize his intentions in utterances, the whole community of speakers to which he belongs cannot determine conventional non-disseminating meanings for any sentence. In effect, not only is the speaker-writer absent from his words, the whole linguistic community is also absent (because of iterability). Important to note here is the difference (already mentioned) between something's being absent and its being not fully present. Derrida regards this as a meaningful distinction, Searle does not.

Here the example is Searle's 'On the twentieth...'. Derrida remarks that this is not the clearest of examples since it has the indexical 'I'. But so has the quotation from Nietzsche that he gives a page later. And yet, admittedly in another work, *Spurs*, he says that we all know what Nietzsche meant. That seemed to suggest that there were some sentence meanings that we all had access to merely by being speakers of the language in question. Notice though that Derrida, in the last quotation, speaks of this idealized meaning as 'the adequation of meaning to itself'. He rejects such an ideal entity because (as shown in Chapter Four, §1) iterability (which connotes identity in spite of difference) rules it out (the process that constitutes the identity of an item splits it too).

However although Searle speaks of types and of literal meanings his theory of meaning is not idealist. As shown, he sees sentence meanings as being relative to backgrounds of assumptions and he does not deny that, with advances in scientific understanding (for instance), those

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20 I return to investigate this notion more fully below.

assumptions may change. He accepts that 'being on', 'cat', and 'mat' may be understood differently in different places or at different times. Only he denies that this forces us to give up the notion of sentence meaning. For the speaker to say what he means, Searle's relevant hypothesis in this instance, is not for the speaker to utter a sentence that has an absolute and immutable meaning (or even an unambiguous or non-vague meaning). Why should Searle be committed to this any more than Derrida when he says that we all know what Nietzsche meant? If we all know what Nietzsche meant, then presumably he did too. But not only did Nietzsche mean it, he also said (wrote) it. So he said what he meant. And that is what Searle's hypothesis accounts for.[21]

Searle believes in literal ambiguity and vagueness of sentences. Thus his view embraces a notion of polysemy. But he holds that ambiguity is never infinite.[22] He accuses Derrida of assuming "that without foundations we are left with nothing but the free play of signifiers" [WTUD, 79]. Derrida, we have seen, speakers of *irreducible* polysemy (or dissemination). But the thesis of irreducible polysemy could not be a claim that signs, words or sentences having *indeterminate* meanings because for Derrida the polysemy of texts is determinable: "from the point of view of semantics ...

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[21] And of course Searle could agree with Derrida that what Nietzsche meant and what he understood what he said literally to mean may not coincide. But Nietzsche may have fully understood the sentence that he wrote and thus may have intended it literally.

[22] See his discussion of the meaning of the word 'open' in *Int.* He gives the following examples: 'Tom opened the door', 'Sally opened her eyes', 'The carpenters opened the wall', 'Sam opened his book to page 37' and 'The surgeon opened the wound'. He comments: "It seems to me that the word 'open' has the same literal meaning in all five of these occurrences. Anyone who denied this would be forced to hold the view that the word 'open' is indefinitely or perhaps even infinitely ambiguous since we can continue these examples; and indefinite ambiguity seems an absurd result" [*Int*, 145]. What differs, according to Searle, "is the way the semantic content is understood.... In each case the truth conditions marked by the word 'open' are different, even though the semantic content is the same" [*Int*, 146]. In other words, the word 'open' means open in all of these sentences. But a wall is open in a way different to the way eyes may be open; the conditions under which it will be true to say that a wall was open are different to those under which one can say that someone's eyes were open.

'deconstruction' should never lead either to relativism or to any sort of indeterminism" [Aft, 148]; also,

> I never proposed 'a kind of "all or nothing" choice between pure realization of self-presence and complete freeplay or undecidability.' I never believed in this and I never spoke of 'complete freeplay or undecidability' [Aft, 115].[23]

But if dissemination is not irreducible polysemy as *indeterminate* polysemy, then surely it is plain old ambiguity.[24] Derrida seems just to be saying that all utterances are ambiguous without being undecidably ambiguous. He is rejecting a firm meta-context (e.g. Searle's Background or Network).[25] Such meta-contexts have a 'margin of play'. But that *ex hypothesi* does not make them indeterminate. One can determine the margin of play (the range of 'oscillation' of the determinate possibilities of meaning of the text in question). In other words, one can determine the polysemy of a text (although one cannot reduce it). But how does this differ from what Searle says in this regard, viz. that the Background and the Network can change? Is this the opening in the meta-context?[26]

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23 The quotations within this quotation are from Searle's WTUD. Gerald Graff quotes from it in his question to Derrida (in the letter to which 'Afterword' is a response).

24 "What has always interested me the most, what has always seemed to me the most rigorous..., is not indeterminacy in itself but the strictest possible determination of the figures of play, of oscillation, of undecidability" [Aft, 145]; "undecidability is always a *determinate* oscillation between possibilities (for example, of meaning, but also of acts). These possibilities are themselves highly *determined* in strictly *defined* situations (for example discursive — syntactical or rhetorical — but also political, ethical, etc.)" [Aft, 148].

25 "The ties between words, concepts, and things, truth and reference, are not *absolutely* and purely guaranteed by some metacontextuality or metadiscursivity. However stabilized, complex, and overdetermined it may be, there is a context and one that is only relatively *firm*, neither absolutely solid [*fermeté*] nor entirely closed [*fermeture*], without being purely and simply identical to itself. In it there is a margin of play, of difference, an opening" [Aft, 151].

26 Note that Searle says Derrida correctly saw that there were no foundations (such as British Empiricism's sense data or Husserl's phenomena) but failed to realize that this was not a problem for philoso-

I think that both Searle and Derrida realise that, although a writer may say what he means quite literally, we may not be able to know what he means (as opposed to what that which he said also means) because we are not aware of the 'total' context of the remark (of all of its background assumptions). Derrida has more to say on the issue: readers may not be able to distinguish between various interpretations which a text will sustain (and for which the author is thus, in a sense, responsible) and the interpretation that was intended. For instance, Nietzsche made various remarks in an early work of his and they can be interpreted as proto-fascist. Indeed the Nazis used them as such. Derrida points out that, although the remarks do sustain a proto-fascist interpretation, they may not have been intended as such. He distinguishes a writer's intended meaning from meanings which, although the writer may not have intended them, he is responsible for *qua* writer of the text. He thus distinguishes intended meaning from other meanings that the text can be interpreted as sustaining:

> the effects or structure of a text are not reducible to its 'truth,' to the intended meanings of its presumed author, or even its supposedly unique and identifiable signatory. And even if Nazism, far from being the regeneration called for by these lectures of 1872, were only a symptom of the accelerated decomposition of European culture and society as diagnosed, it still remains to be explained how reactive degeneration could exploit the same language, the same words, the same utterances, the same rallying cries as the active forces to which it stands opposed [Oto, 29].
>
> One may wonder how and why what is so naively called a falsification was possible (one can't falsify just anything), how and why the 'same' words and the 'same' statements — if they are indeed the same — might several times be

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phy in the sense that knowledge does not become impossible: "Derrida sees that the Husserlian project of a transcendental grounding for science, language, and common sense is a failure. But what he fails to see is that this doesn't threaten science, language, or common sense in the least. As Wittgenstein says, it leaves everything exactly as it is. The only 'foundation,' for example, that language has or needs is that people are biologically, psychologically, and socially constituted so that they succeed in using it to state truths, to give and obey orders, to express their feelings and attitudes, to thank, apologize, warn, congratulate, etc." [WTUD, 78].

> made to serve certain meanings and certain contexts that are said to be different, even incompatible [Oto, 24].

Nietzsche may not have intended anything fascistic by his remarks. Nevertheless he inscribed those remarks, in a text that bears his name, and published (or delivered) them. He is responsible not just for what he intended, however hard he tried to state that unambiguously, but also for other interpretations that the text sustains (because of its margin of play). Derrida is pointing out that the distinction between what Nietzsche wanted to say and different interpretations of what he said is not a clear distinction and that the writer's responsibility, anyhow, cuts across that distinction. Nietzsche wrote the text which has various determinable meanings (or which has a determinable play of meanings) between which we cannot decide as to which he intended.

Granted that there are utterances whose literal meaning may be hard to determine (such as those utterances of Nietzsche's in his 1872 lectures), may there not be utterances that have literal meanings that are not polysemic at all (not to mention not irreducibly polysemic)? It would seem that a sentence such as 'I forgot my umbrella' is clear and unambiguous (or non-polysemic). As Derrida and Searle both realise, this has nothing to do with how it will be taken in some situations. That is, this says nothing about how clear or unclear its utterance meanings may be. However it may be used in any particular context to convey utterance meanings, it has a clear and, it would seem, non-polysemic literal meaning (or just 'meaning' *sans phrase*, since Derrida does not use any qualifying phrase). For Searle, the background assumptions shared by speakers of a language would be common at a certain level.[27]

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[27] Searle contrasts the 'deep Background' with the 'local Background': the former "would include at least all those Background capacities that are common to all normal human beings in virtue of their biological makeup — capacities such as walking, eating, grasping, perceiving, recognizing, and the preintentional stance that takes account of the solidity of things, and the independent existence of objects and other people"; the latter "would include such things as opening doors, drinking beer from bottles, and the preintentional stance that we take toward such things as cars, refrigerators, money and cocktail parties" [*Int*, 143f].

In sum, there does not seem to be a great difference of view between Derrida and Searle on the question of the meaning of sentences (despite the fact that the two of them thought that there was). Both regard meanings as relative to contexts and (deeper) meta-contexts; and both realize that these contexts are not firm and unchanging; they both also realize that sentences relate to their contexts in such a way as to make polysemy (or ambiguity) a feature of many sentences. The difference is that Derrida, because of his notion of iterability (or because of his understanding of what it implies), believes that sentence meanings will always be polysemic whereas Searle allows the possibility that there may be univocal sentences. The sentence 'I forgot my umbrella' is unambiguous. Iterability does not make a difference as to how this is literally understood.

5.2.2.3 Fungible Intentions and Meaning*ful* Sentences

I shall now deal with the criticisms of Derrida that I mentioned above. According to Searle there are two 'obstacles' which prevent Derrida from understanding the thesis that 'a meaningful sentence is just a standing possibility of the corresponding (intentional) speech act', viz. (1) he thinks intentions 'lie behind' utterances,[28] and (2) he thinks all intentions must be conscious [see RD, 202]. I shall now show that not only does Derrida not make these two mistakes, he actually holds a thesis very similar to the one just mentioned (but with a significant reservation, already mentioned, viz. sentences are never meaning*ful*).

I just showed that Derrida holds a view that is similar enough to Searle's above-mentioned thesis in that he holds that there is a minimal making sense of sentences.[29] For instance, we can all make sense of Nietzsche's umbrella remark. Thus we know that its meaning is something that he possibly intended. If Derrida does understand this though, then

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[28] This criticism seems gratuitous and bizarre. But I will discuss it below.

[29] This, it should be pointed out, follows from his argument, which I examined in the previous chapter, that there cannot be a secret code. Iterability makes all writing interpretable.

there can hardly be obstacles to his understanding it. Of course, as we have seen, Derrida finds the word 'meaningful' problematic: "there cannot be a 'sentence' that is fully and actually meaning*ful* and hence (or because) there can be no 'corresponding (intentional) speech act' that would be fulfilled, fully present, *active* and *actual*" [Ltd, 195f (58); quoted above]. So strictly speaking, for Derrida, there would be no correspondence between a sentence and any intention. However Derrida realizes that Searle is not speaking in such a strict sense. He believes, rightly, that their discussion on this issue has been largely a matter of equivocation.[30] In short, Derrida does subscribe to Searle's thesis that a meaningful utterance is the standing possibility of the corresponding intentional speech act. But, because of his theses on dissemination and citationality, he does not believe that utterances and intentions ever correspond (one to one).

However, given that Derrida accepts the above-mentioned thesis, does he nevertheless make the two assumptions just mentioned? Regarding (1), it seems strange to accuse Derrida of holding such a view when *Sec* is very much concerned to do away with the Classical idea of communication as the transfer of thoughts from one mind to another. One of the consequences of Derrida's analysis of the Classical theory of writing is "the break with the horizon of communication as communication of consciousnesses or of presences and as linguistical or semantic transport of [intention] [*vouloir-dire*]" [*Sec*, 181 (8)]. In response to Searle, Derrida points to *Sec*'s "*explicit* criticism from the initial pages ... on, of the concepts of 'representation,' 'communication,' and 'expression'" [Ltd, 205 (66)]. However, Searle is probably thinking of language in *Sec* of intentions' being or not being present to utterances and writings. For instance, it speaks of a writer's not employing "his absolutely actual and present intention or attention, the plenitude of his desire to say what he means" [*Sec*, 181 (8)]. This looks as if the scenario in question is a writer who has certain ideas that he is trying to put into writing. It looks as if the

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30 "I am aware that the English expression 'meaningful' can also be understood in terms of [the] minimum of making-sense. Perhaps the entire equivocation of this discussion is situated here" [Ltd, 203 (64)].

writer's succeeding in expressing himself would depend upon his being able to actualize them in utterances by somehow manipulating his ideas and signs. But my discussion of *Sec* should show that such language is otherwise interpretable. Also, my discussion of Derrida's treatment of Nietzsche's putatively proto-fascist remarks shows how a writer may fail to consider carefully what he is writing (i.e. fail to consider the margin of play of text he is writing) and thus be responsible for 'falsifications' of what he says. This is a failure of 'absolutely actual and present intention or attention'.

In rebutting this charge, Derrida attempts, as it were, to turn the tables on Searle. He thinks that Searle's talk of the 'realization of intentions' is symptomatic of this view. Searle says that "in serious literal speech the sentences are precisely the realizations of the intentions" [RD, 202]. This, Derrida thinks, is to assume intentions that are essentially psychological. However, when Searle speaks of 'realizations' all he need be taken to mean is the forms in which intentions are found; intentions can be expressed by sentences and by utterances, i.e. as literal meanings or utterance meanings.

In short, neither Searle nor Derrida subscribes to the view expressed in (1). But what about (2)? Derrida regards it as quite gratuitous: "not only does *Sec* say that all intentions are *not* conscious: it says that *no* intention can *ever* be fully conscious, or actually present to itself" [Ltd, 213 (73)]. This is indeed said in *Sec*: "given the structure of iteration, the intention animating the utterance will never be through and through present to itself and to its content" [*Sec*, 192 (18)]. That is, even intentions are such as they are through iteration. They thus do not have a simple identity or presence any more than a sign.

Derrida says that "Intention is a priori (at once) *différante*" [Ltd, 194 (56)]. This means that intentions are conceived of as being determined as *différance*:[31]

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31 We met this term already in Chapter Four where Derrida, explaining how writing must be iterable in the absence of the writer and the receiver, explains the type of absence in question as "this distance, divergence, delay, this deferral [*différance*]" [*Sec*, 179 (7) (quoted in

> intention or attention, directed towards something iterable *which in turn determines it as being iterable*, will strive or tend in vain to actualize or fulfill itself, for it cannot, by virtue of its very structure, ever achieve this goal [Ltd, 194 (56); my emphasis].

Intention, a mental state that is about something, is determined (in the sense of 'affected', I take it) by the thing that it is about. So my intention to eat ice-cream would be determined by the ice-cream that I intend to eat in so far as my intention is an intention to eat that ice-cream. It is directed at something in the world.[32] Thus the intention is not purely psychological since it is determined partly by its object. If this is so (and I shall examine the issue in greater depth in a moment), then with regard to (1), intentions for Derrida are not behind utterances, nor, with regard to (2), are they fully conscious.

Let us look at the argument here more closely. If I desire to eat an ice-cream, decide to do so (i.e. intend to eat an ice-cream), and say 'I shall eat an ice-cream', then it would seem that I am (or, at least, may be) fully conscious of what I want, what I intend to do and what I am saying in saying that I intend to do it. But of course my desiring to eat an ice-cream and my intention actually to do so are dependent on certain features of the context and belong to a network of other intentions. For example, I must believe that ice-cream can be eaten. And I must have some awareness of what ice-cream is (e.g. that it is cool, sweet and made from some dairy products). Not all of this will be in my mind when I say 'I shall eat an ice-cream'. To this extent, my intention is not fully conscious (viz. in so far as it is part of a network of related intentions

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Chapter Four, §2)]. The word could be roughly paraphrased as difference-cum-deferral. It comes from the French words *différence* (difference) and *déférance* (deferral): '*différ*ence' + 'déférance' = '*différance*'. The strange spelling is simply strategic — "the *a* of *différance* indicates this indecision as concerns activity and passivity" [*Pos*, 27]. This semantic point is elucidated at Diff, 7-9.

[32] And if I intend to paint a picture of Lt. Chase-White, then my intention will be determined by Lt. Chase-White. On Searle's analysis of Chase-White as a fictional character, then my intention would be determined by that fictional character (rather than some other one or some real person). Thus it will be the intention to paint a cavalry soldier of the British Army at the turn of the century.

and is set against a local background of institutions such as, in this instance, the ice-cream retailing business). On these points Derrida and Searle are in agreement.

However, my intention in this instance, Derrida says, is *iterable* because it is directed at something iterable. Ice-cream is iterable in the sense that what counts as ice-cream depends on what different things consumers (and producers) recognize as the same in some respect(s) such that they call it the same thing. What we know as 'ice-cream' is made according to many different recipes and most of us are not aware of many of the differences. For example, in deciding whether the product sold as ice-cream by the company called Beatrice is actually ice-cream we do not necessarily examine its list of ingredients closely but rather taste it and see whether it is cold, sweet and made from some dairy products. Ice-cream also comes in many different flavours; its flavouring's being different does not make the stuff in question not ice-cream (new flavours are periodically developed). These differences of flavour and recipe are not recognized as being differences that distinguish between ice-cream and what is not ice-cream. In so far as I have an intention to eat ice-cream, my intention, Derrida implies, is determined by this process of iteration.

I may not be aware that what I intend to eat (believing myself to be intending to eat ice-cream) may actually be sherbet. If I believe that the stuff known as 'sherbet' is called 'ice-cream', then what I believe to be my intention to eat ice-cream will not be determined by the thing that I believe it to be about, *sc.* ice-cream, but by sherbet. The stuff called 'sherbet' is different to the stuff called 'ice-cream' in a way that is recognized as significant by English-speakers. To *this* extent, my intention (which I wrongly believe to be an intention to eat ice-cream) is determined by the iteration of the thing that it is (really) about, *sc.* sherbet. This is so because, although 'ice-cream' literally refers to ice-cream, I believe (in effect) that it also refers to sherbet. Thus in *my usage* 'ice-cream' refers not only to ice-cream but also to sherbet. Therefore my intention is an intention to eat sherbet and is thus determined by the iterability of sherbet even though I wrongly believe that my intention is to eat ice-cream.

This supports Derrida's claim (quoted above) that intention, by being directed at something iterable, is determined, by that iterable thing, as in turn iterable. In other words, my intention is determined as iterable by being directed at something that is iterable. But, if this is so, then Searle's claim that Derrida thinks that intentions must be fully conscious is false. I can desire and intend to eat sherbet without being conscious that what I desire and intend to eat is sherbet. I am not conscious that I desire and intend to eat sherbet because I wrongly believe that I desire and intend to eat ice-cream.[33]

Finally, with regard to the issue of context: I have already mentioned Searle's differentiation between contexts of speech and writing. The former can be appealed to implicitly whereas the latter must always be explicated. Derrida points to this and the mere few lines that Searle chose to devote to context in RD. He calls it an 'exclusion' of context [see Ltd, 219 (78)]. This clearly is wrong, or at the very least an exaggeration, since Searle does thematize context of utterance both in RD and elsewhere. The American Prisoner example shows this clearly. The prisoner communicates by means of manipulating certain features of context rather than by any conventional speech act. Also, in his descriptions of idealized cases of promising, Searle thematizes the situations in which they must occur. Indeed Searle's Preparatory conditions seem to be concerned with what is properly to be called context: in the case of promising, the Preparatory conditions cover the speaker's beliefs about the hearer's

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[33] What I intend to do and what I believe I intend to do are different in this context. I believe I intend to eat ice-cream but what I actually intend to eat is sherbet. If, in a restaurant, I point to the stuff in question (sherbet) and say to the waiter 'I'll have some of that pink ice-cream' and am thereupon informed that the pink stuff is sherbet, then if I say 'Oh, is that what you call it well bring me some anyway' it is clear that I have referred to sherbet using the wrong name, viz. 'ice-cream'. But if I say 'Oh, it's sherbet is it? Well, never mind, bring me some ice-cream', then it will be clear that I have mistaken sherbet for ice-cream rather than referred to sherbet by a wrong name. The two types of case should not be confused. Also, suppose the stuff in question were rancid, then one could in one sense say that I desired rancid sherbet but in another sense that would be false. My intention is not solely determined by the thing that it is about — it is also determined by my beliefs about the thing.

preferences and what each would expect to happen in the normal course of events [see *SA*, 53f, #4 & #5; cp. *SA*, 66f; cp. Chapter Two, §3 (above)]. So it is wrong of Derrida to ask pointedly, as he does, whether "such a lack of interest in the effects of context marks a corruption or degeneration of the Austinian heritage" [Ltd, 219 (78)]. And, of course, Searle's discussion of background assumptions in 'Literal Meaning' bears this out.

The issue of context though leads us into §3 where I examine Searle's responses to Derrida on behalf of Austin and Speech Act Theory. There the main focus of discussion is on Austin's and Searle's putative exclusion of the parasitic. Since this brings in questions of intentions and special (or abnormal) contexts, it will be an occasion to investigate further aspects of Derrida's and Searle's dispute over elements of the Classical theory of writing.

But first I should sum up the findings of this section. In rejecting Searle's three criticisms of Derrida, I showed that Derrida accepts a distinction similar to Searle's distinction between literal sentence meaning and utterance meaning. I also showed that Derrida does not embrace a textual relativism: there is no major difference between what Derrida calls dissemination and what Searle calls literal ambiguity (although their explanations of this phenomenon are very different). Both Searle and Derrida reject the notion of semantic indeterminacy; dissemination is, in fact, due to literal ambiguity. The play of texts that Derrida speaks of is not a free play but rather what he glosses as a determinate oscillation of meanings in a text. I showed also that Derrida accepts Searle's view that a meaningful sentence is a fungible intention but that he thinks that meaning is never fully present in meaning*ful* sentences. This is because, due to iterability which introduces a margin of play into the most fundamental contexts in which utterances are situated, sentences disseminate. I pointed out that this was overstated since the very example which he gives is not literally polysemic at all.

5.3 Serious/Parasitic: Derrida *contra* Searle

The main focus of Searle's critique is Derrida's attack on the distinction made by Austin between serious, normal discourse and discourse

that is non-serious, abnormal and parasitic on ordinary discourse. Here there are four basic criticisms offered by Searle: [1] Derrida wrongly conflates iterability, citationality and parasitism, and, on the basis of this, wrongly accuses Austin of implicitly denying quotability; [2] he wrongly attributes to Austin a conflation of the non-fiction/fiction distinction with the speech/writing distinction; [3] he misunderstands the status of Austin's exclusion of parasitic discourse; and [4] he wrongly construes this exclusion as ethical. In what follows, I shall deal with these criticisms in two subsections: the first subsection will deal with the first two criticisms which concern the logical or theoretical nature of the serious/non-serious distinction; the second subsection will deal with the supposed axiological nature of the distinction. I shall defend Derrida from Searle's accusations. However I shall also show that, even though Derrida's critique of Austin was not unsound in the ways noted by Searle, his criticism cannot be successfully applied to Searle's speech act theory. Searle manages successfully to distinguish between 'normal' and 'parasitic' speech acts and he defends the normal/parasitic distinction.

5.3.1 Parasiting Citations and Citing Parasites

In this subsection I examine how citations and parasites may act on one another (a topic I broached in Chapter Three). I shall consider the status of parasited citations and cited parasites: are they parasites, citations or hybrids of some sort? Derrida says that the citation/parasite distinction may be parasited. I shall show that he attempts to deconstruct the opposition (and that that is what he means when he speaks of parasiting the distinction). However, I shall show that Searle provides a way of making the distinction. This will establish that Derrida has not deconstructed the citation/parasite distinction in general (even though he may have succeeded as far as Austin's philosophy is concerned).

Searle's first criticism of Derrida's critique of Austin, i.e. [1], has two parts: (a) Derrida wrongly conflates iterability, citationality and parasitism, and (b) on the basis of such a conflation, wrongly accuses Austin of having implicitly denied quotability. First I shall explain the criticism (using the clarification of terminology that I have already

provided) and consider it in the light of what I have already presented regarding Austin. Then, in the light of this, I shall examine Derrida's response. I shall support his defence of his critique of Austin but reject his critique of Searle.

5.3.1.1 Citationality, Iterability, Parasitism and Idealization

Searle understands Derrida to suppose "that by analyzing serious speech acts before considering the parasitic cases, Austin has somehow denied the very possibility that expressions can be quoted" [RD, 206]. This is confused according to Searle who sets out to make some distinctions that would avoid the confusion.

Parasitic utterances are those normal, serious utterances that become non-serious and abnormal through being used or mentioned in extraordinary circumstances or contexts. Mostly the utterances are *used* in these contexts rather than mentioned. That is, the poet, novelist and actor are usually not mentioning normal utterances but using them. They are usually not quoting anyone but using utterances written by playwrights (in the case of the actor) or using utterances that are also used in everyday life (in the case of novelists, playwrights and poets). So Searle points out that parasitism is not just a matter of mention or quotation. He thinks however that Derrida is committed to the view that parasitism is citationality; and he thinks that citationality is the same as quotability (and I have already cited COD to the effect that to cite is to mention or to quote). But, of course, *for Derrida* a quotation is only one type of citation [see §1 (above)]. I showed above that citationality is the genus of use and mention. So if Derrida did equate parasitism with citationality, an argument to the effect that parasitism is not quotation would be inadequate as a refutation. This argument is therefore inadequate. Parasitism, in Derridean terms, is the citation of an utterance in an *extraordinary* context. So it is not true that Derrida held that 'the phenomenon of citationality' (with citationality understood as quotability in the sense of mention but not of use) was 'the same as the phenomenon of parasitic discourse' [RD, 206].

Before proceeding therefore, it should be remembered in what follows that Searle thinks that citation is quotation or mention. Now Derrida said in *Sec* that non-serious citations were 'the determined modification' of general citationality (or iterability, but I defer treatment of that term in this context for a moment) [see *Sec*, 191 (17)]. What this means is that non-serious utterances are a certain type of utterance in general. To take an example, 'I love you' is a sentence that is often used and mentioned. That is, people utter it to tell other people that they love them; and sometimes they are quoted. In Derrida's terms, it is often cited. Sometimes though it is used or mentioned in non-serious contexts. That is, sometimes it is employed as a non-serious citation.

Take, for instance, the school bully who walks up to the plainest girl in school and says to her, in an exaggerated tone before his friends and hers, 'I love you'. That would be ironic or sarcastic — a non-serious use of that sentence. Some of his friends might tell the story later and gleefully quote the bully's sarcastic remark. That would be a serious mention of the non-serious utterance of that sentence.[34] Again some snoop might overhear someone uttering this sentence to someone else. That person might quote the other later in a way that would be clearly a parody. Such would be a non-serious mention of the utterance. In effect, what Derrida is saying is that the bully's and the snoop's citation of the utterance are non-serious. Thus, 'I love you' is generally citable. This is what is meant by its general citationality. It can be cited seriously or non-seriously. The latter is a 'determined modification' of its citationality.

Derrida's point in *Sec* is that Austin excludes this determined modification of citationality. And he points out that without citationality in general there could not be any 'successful' performative. So Austin excludes one of the types of the general citationality and not the other, viz. serious citations.

I have already examined Austin's view: the original utterance is a serious speech act and its quotation is a reproduced phatic act, which,

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[34] Note though that for Austin *any* mention of the sentence is parasitic. Quotation *simpliciter* (or *oratio recta*) is an aetiolation [see *HDTW*, 92, n. 2].

unlike the reported rhetic act involved in *oratio obliqua* (e.g. 'The bully said that he loved her'), is aetiolated and thus non-serious.[35]

Now, although Searle misinterprets the word 'citationality' as mere mentionability or quotability, this does not necessarily detract from an objection he makes to Derrida on this point: "parasitic discourse of the kind we have been considering is a determined modification of the rules for performing speech acts, but it is not in any way a modification of iterability or citationality" [RD, 206]. This contradicts Derrida's view that parasitic discourse is a determined modification of *citationality*; it is rather a determined modification of the *rules* for performing speech acts (i.e. the Propositional Content, Preparatory, Sincerity and Essential rules which I mentioned above). It should be noted though that Searle's rules are for what he admitted were idealized cases of promising, ordering, asserting, etc. However given these *idealized* cases, Searle constructs rules that would allow them to be used non-seriously. I explained this in Chapter Three where I also showed that Searle's rules for ordinary assertions exclude fictional assertions. It is to his 'horizontal conventions' of LSFD that he is referring when he speaks of 'a determined modification of the rules for performing speech acts'. These horizontal conventions are used to "suspend the normal operation of the rules relating illocutionary acts and the world" [LSFD, 67; also quoted above].[36] So, for instance Arthur Conan Doyle pretends to be Dr. Watson making assertions about Sherlock Holmes. This is an instance of one horizontal convention whereby an author writing first-person narrative fiction may make pretended assertions [see LSFD, 68f]. We have seen already that there are also principles for deciding that utterances are intended metaphorically. In the case of Emily Dickinson's poem already mentioned, the reader realizes

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35 In Chapter Three I have already called this distinction, between reproduced phatic acts (*oratio recta*) and reported rhetic acts, into question.

36 "[W]hat makes fiction possible ... is a set of extralinguistic, nonsemantic conventions that break the connections between words and the world established by the [vertical rules]. Think of the conventions of fictional discourse as a set of horizontal conventions that break the connections established by the vertical rules" [LSFD, 66].

that, taken literally, her utterances are absurd (or egregiously false). He therefore considers that Dickinson may be speaking metaphorically and he uses various principles (some of which I investigated in Chapter Three) to figure out the metaphor.

Before considering Derrida's treatment of idealization and rules, I shall now examine what he says in this context. Derrida would say that writing in verse involves a determined modification of the citationality of the utterances in question. That is, the poet by writing or speaking in verse uses the utterances that he makes in a special way that marks them as art rather than more commonplace utterances. To take an example from Seamus Heaney:

The First Gloss

Take hold of the shaft of the pen.
Subscribe to the first step taken
from a justified line
into the margin.[37]

These utterances are written in verse form and are included in a book of poetry. All the poems are laid out in a format that is quite conventionally a poetry format. The first line of the poem is a command or exhortation. However the fact of its being in a poem does not mean that we are not to take the command seriously. As a reader, I see no reason to deny that I am being told literally to take hold of a pen. The fact of the verse form here, does not seem to bring a horizontal convention into play (the order may be a genuine order and the poem can be read non-metaphorically, non-ironically, etc.) although the citation's being in the form of poetry does make that citation a poetic use of language.

In a novel, to take another example with another purpose, one might take the author to be speaking seriously (in the sense of reporting some actual events) were it not for the fact that the utterances in question are presented in a certain manner. There are certain features of the text in question, and its context, that may tell one that the work is a novel. When one studies the novel formally one is introduced to certain general features of various types of novels. Some novels are quite stylized

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37 Seamus Heaney, *Station Island* (London & Boston: Faber & Faber, 1984), 97.

with a narrator making it obvious that they are fictions. Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* is a clear case. But others attempt to be as 'realistic' as possible. There are only minimal indications (if any) that one is dealing with a novel. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* is an example and George Steiner's *The Portage to San Cristobal of A. H.* is an example of a novel based on fact. The former might have been a collection of letters; and the latter is an account of the discovery and capture of Adolph Hitler in South America based on the abduction of Adolph Eichmann. But, of course, like Fielding's novel, they come in paperback form with the categorization 'fiction' or 'literature' on the back cover with the ISBN number. The context (their cover categorization, blurb, the section of the bookshop in which they are usually found) makes one accept these works as novels. All of this, I take it, is suggested or indicated by Derrida's saying that non-serious citations are determined modifications of citationality.

Now, such determined modifications of citationality may be interpreted to be somewhat like cues and one might say that there is some convention or rule to the effect that when one notices such features one should treat the utterances in question in a certain way. Thus, taking Searle's example, one notices that the narrator of the text (Dr. Watson) is not the author of the book (Conan Doyle) as indicated by the title page. In this manner one could accept Searle's notion of horizontal conventions or determined modifications of the rules of speech acts.

Derrida, however, in effect provides criticisms of Searle's way of putting this. He sees problems with Searle's notions of idealization and semantic rules. I shall now consider the former (the latter is considered below in the course of §3.1.2). Basically Derrida thinks that, since a sharp distinction cannot be made between the normal and the parasitic speech act and since normal speech acts are thus (in a sense) idealizations (all of which Searle admits), the notion of a normal speech act is only comprehensible as a fiction (what he calls a 'counter-fiction'). The argument here centres on whether a distinction that is not sharp is a legitimate conceptual distinction at all. Derrida says that it is not; Searle says that it is. I shall support Searle.

First here is Searle's defence of his use of idealizations in Speech Act Theory:

> certain forms of analysis, especially analysis into necessary and sufficient conditions, are likely to involve (in varying degrees) idealization of the concept analyzed. In the present case, our analysis will be directed at the center of the concept of promising. I am ignoring marginal, fringe, and partially defective promises [*SA*, 55; quoted Ltd, 207 (68)].

He proceeds to expound the conditions of promising and the semantic rules for the use of any illocutionary force indicating device associated with promising.

Derrida though affirms "the structural impossibility and illegitimacy of such an 'idealization,' even one which is methodological and provisional" [Ltd, 206 (67)].

> Searle acknowledges the necessity of an 'idealization of the concept analyzed' at the very moment when he undertakes to define the 'structure of illocutionary acts.'[38] In the face of 'the looseness of our concepts,' which could 'lead us into a rejection of the very enterprise of philosophical analysis,' he ... considers this 'looseness' as something extrinsic, essentially accidental, and reducible [Ltd, 207 (67)].

Clearly Derrida is amused by this way of proceeding. In his opinion, what Searle is doing is simplifying reality in order to explain it. He is creating in effect a fiction, an ideal concept — that is a concept that lends itself to the methods of his speech act theory. He wonders whether this can be serious.

> Because the model speech act of current speech act theory claims to be serious, it is normed by a part of its object and is therefore not impartial. It is not scientific and cannot be taken seriously. Which is what constitutes the drama of this family of theoreticians: the more they seek to produce serious utterances, the less they can be taken seriously [Ltd, 211f (72)].

In this use of idealization, Speech Act Theory is involved in what Derrida calls 'counter-fiction' [Ltd, 243 (100)]. The idealized serious speech act is a fiction set over against the parasite. In this manner Derrida attempts to

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38 This is the title of *SA*, Chapter Three.

show that the serious is non-serious (*qua* fictional) which, he hopes, will amount to a deconstruction of the serious/non-serious opposition here.

But Derrida is wrong to say that such idealizations are structurally impossible and thus cannot be taken seriously. The claim here should be looked at more closely. Derrida thinks that because a distinction cannot be made precisely, it cannot (or should not) be made at all: "in the order of concepts..., when a distinction cannot be rigorous or precise, it is not a distinction at all" [Aft, 123]. He also thinks that if a 'concept' is not precise, it is not a concept at all.

> One can hardly believe one's eyes reading the following assertion in [WTUD]: 'He [Jonathan Culler] also mistakenly supposes that the theory of speech acts seeks some sort of precise dividing line between what is and what is not a promise.' 'Mistakenly'? Really? In fact, I suppose exactly what Culler supposes. And I still suppose it. And I believe we are right [Aft, 124; cp. WTUD, 78].

> [F]or me, from the point of view of theory and of the concept, 'unless a distinction can be made rigorous and precise it isn't really a distinction.' Searle is entirely right, for once, in attributing this 'assumption' to me [Aft, 126; cp. WTUD, 78].

So, for Derrida, a distinction is not a real distinction unless it is precise, and a concept is not a concept unless it is precise. Searle proposes the opposite. Concepts and distinctions can be vague or fuzzy. And so one may have to describe what are only clearer examples of the concept or distinction in question. The idealization that results cannot be characterized as a counter-fiction, whether that means a type of fiction or something set up such that it legitimizes the distinction between serious and non-serious promises. This is because, first of all, the idealization is obviously not a fiction (at least, not in the sense that it involves any pretence or the invention of some metaphysical entity) and, secondly, the idealized speech act is not set up over against fictional speech acts but against marginal speech acts that are nonetheless normal (i.e. in this case non-fictional).

Searle is relying on work done by Ludwig Wittgenstein which shows how concepts may have no necessary or sufficient conditions but

nevertheless may be usable. Wittgenstein's most famous example is of the concept of a game:

> if you look at [games] you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. ...don't think, but look! — Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. We pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost. — Are they all 'amusing'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again this feature has disappeared. ...
>
> And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.[39]

This shows that we have the concept of game even though we cannot give a definition of the word 'game' that would account for all games. Thus the concept here is not precise; it is "a concept with blurred edges".[40] According to Wittgenstein one gets someone, who does not know what 'game' means, to understand what one means by giving him examples. There is no more foolproof way, of doing it. If one gives a definition that is no less likely to be misunderstood.

What Searle is doing in the case of promises is giving the rules for the more obvious ways one promises, i.e. by means of explicit promises. In other words, he is giving a definition of one sort of promise (*sc.* the explicit promise) and telling us that there are other ways of promising (i.e. various ways of promising implicitly). He recognizes that there are many other ways of promising that will not be covered by his rules for explicit promises. His rules are not put forward as necessary or sufficient conditions of promising. They are rather rules of explicit promises which Searle

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39 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe, third edition of translation (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), §66.

40 Wittgenstein, *op. cit*, §71.

characterizes *vis-à-vis* implicit promises, as idealized promises (the others being marginal).[41]

So far I have shown that Derrida does not confuse citationality with parasitism and that he is not wrong in saying that parasitism involves a determined modification of citationality. And I have shown that Searle's idealization of the concept of promising is a defensible procedure and not characterizable as an exercise in (counter-) fiction. I deferred consideration of iterability however. Searle's claim was that Derrida confused citationality, parasitism and iterability. Now I must distinguish these three from one another.

Iterability (as I explained in Chapter Four, §1) connotes the fact of every mark's being repeatable. Repetition is said to occur when one mark is identified as the same as another. Thus when I write 'cat' and 'CAT' and then speak the word, the fact that each set of marks or phones is regarded as a repetition of the others makes the three the same. Citationality though is a somewhat different notion. It connotes the fact that a mark or utterance can be repeated in different contexts and can thus be used in different ways.[42] It is explained in terms of the horticultural and surgical practice of grafting.

As surely as citationality is not parasitism, so iterability is not. If Derrida did not confuse citationality with parasitism, as I have just argued, then he surely did not make the even more basic mistake of confusing iterability with parasitism. And he did not confuse iterability with citationality either, although there is not a very great difference

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41 Compare how, according to Wittgenstein, one conveys what 'game' means: "What does it mean to know what a game is? What does it mean, to know it and not be able to say it? Is this knowledge somehow equivalent to an unformulated definition? So that if it were formulated I should be able to recognize it as the expression of my knowledge? Isn't my knowledge, my concept of a game, completely expressed in the explanations that I could give? That is, in my describing examples of various kinds of game; shewing how all sorts of other games can be constructed on the analogy of these; saying that I should scarcely include this or this among games; and so on". *Op. cit.*, §71.

42 It may not be clear from *Sec* that there is a distinction between citationality and iterability but in Ltd Derrida asserts that they are different [see Ltd, 242 (98)].

between them. Searle though, I should point out (and as I showed with a different emphasis in §1), misunderstands the word 'iterable'. He thinks it means "repetitions of conventional ... forms" [RD, 207]. But this is not right. I showed in Chapter Four that the form or type only arises through the repetition of certain marks or through certain marks' being deemed or recognized to be the same. So, properly speaking, it is the marks that are iterable. Only by virtue of the marks' being said to be repeated may one say that a conventional form has been repeated.

Thus Derrida does not confuse citationality, iterability and parasitism. But Searle does confuse citationality with quotability in *Sec* (although not in his own work) and he misunderstands iterability. Also his critique of Derrida's view that parasitism constitutes a determined modification of citationality is wrong. I have also shown that Derrida's critique of Searle's notion of idealization is wrong. Having straightened these matters out I can now consider the second part of Searle's criticism, viz. that (on the basis of conflating citationality, iterability and parasitism) Derrida wrongly accused Austin of having denied the possibility of quotation. I shall return also to the issue of the respective merits and demerits of Derrida's notion of citationality *vis-à-vis* Searle's notion of vertical rules and horizontal conventions.

5.3.1.2 Quotability, Parasitism and Semantic Rules

Now I shall consider Derrida's reaction to Searle's criticisms. Here I shall mainly be concerned with his reaction to the second part of this criticism by Searle, viz. that (on the basis of conflating citationality, iterability and parasitism) he wrongly accused Austin of having implicitly denied quotability. In Searle's words, Derrida 'supposes' that by excluding non-serious discourse, Austin had denied quotability (and Searle, of course, understands quotability to be citationality). I have already shown that the first part of the accusation is unjustified; now I shall show that the latter part is also unjustified. In this subsection I shall also consider Derrida's retort that Searle's rules for speech acts are not able to deal with issues that his notion of citation is able to deal with. Specifically, he thinks that

Speech Act Theory cannot deal with parasites of parasites. I shall show that this is false.

Derrida explicitly rejects the second part of the criticism (i.e. concerning the supposed confusion of quotability and parasitism in the critique of Austin); *Sec* "*never* said or suggested" it [see Ltd, 241 (98)]. He then goes on to explain what *Sec* did say or suggest:

> It was said rather that by the exclusion of which we have just spoken, he deprived himself of the means that would have enabled him to take into account both the *possibility* of citation within that allegedly normal structure, and certain other things as well. He deprives himself of the means with which to account for a possibility inscribed in the use he himself calls 'normal.'
>
> ...What *Sec* was driving at, without confusing citationality with parasitism (or fiction, literature, or theatre), was the possibility they have in common: the iterability which renders possible *both* the 'normal' rule or convention *and* its transgression, transformation, simulation, or imitation. From this, *Sec* drew consequences different from those drawn by Austin; above all, the illegitimate and unfeasible character of the exclusions proposed either on strategic grounds or on methodological (idealizing) ones [Ltd, 241 (98)].

By excluding the non-serious (which, as I have already shown, is for Derrida a necessary possibility), Austin ignores a feature of all language-use, a feature which accounts for the possibility of serious and non-serious utterances. That feature is citationality, an utterances's potential for being inscribed in an unlimited number of contexts and of giving rise to various possible contexts. It is this aspect of iterability (and here citationality is clearly implied to be an aspect or type of iterability) which is the condition both of serious and parasitic utterances; more accurately, of utterances' being used in serious and non-serious or parasitic contexts. By ignoring citationality (or by not recognizing it) and by excluding parasitism, Austin (Derrida feels) went astray.

Derrida goes on to explain why this exclusion of Austin's is significant. He attempts to deconstruct the normal/parasitic opposition:

> parasitism ... is always susceptible to the parasitism of citation, just as citationality can always be parasited by the parasite. The parasite parasites the limits that guarantee the purity of rules and of intentions... [Ltd, 241f (98)].

A parasite can be cited and parasited; a citation can be cited or parasited. A poem, for instance, can be recited or it can be parodied; and a speech can be printed or quoted, or it can be incorporated into a play or a joke. So there can be serious citations of non-serious utterances just as there can be non-serious citations of them (i.e. the recitation and the parody of the poem) and there can be non-serious citations of serious utterances and serious citations of them (i.e. the speech incorporated into a play and printed in a newspaper). So serious utterances can be of non-serious utterances just as non-serious utterances can be of serious utterances. Thus, this argument goes, the serious and the non-serious, the normal and the parasitic, are to some extent mutually implicated in one another. Therefore, according to this argument, the 'limits' of, or boundary between, the serious utterance and the parasite are parasited. It is not obvious what this means, but it may mean that the limits are not taken seriously, that is by those who seriously cite non-serious utterances. Thus Searle's rules of speech acts would not be so pure.

Before examining this feature, I should investigate more closely what Derrida's claim is here. How are the limits that guarantee the purity of rules and intentions parasited? Derrida has more to say on the issue. Consider in reading the following quotation whether he effectively takes back what he said in *Sec*, viz. that there could be a typology of forms of iteration (see Chapter Four, §4.4), or whether he is saying that such a typology is still possible but that it could not place limits on what would count as a parasite:

> once iterability has established the possibility of parasitism, of a certain fictionality altering at once ... the system of (il- or perlocutionary) intentions and the system of ('vertical') rules or of ('horizontal') conventions, inasmuch as they are included within the scope of iterability; once this parasitism or fictionality can always add *another* parasitic or fictional structure to whatever has preceded it ... everything becomes possible against the language-police; for example, 'literatures' or 'revolutions' that as yet have no model. *Everything is possible except for an exhaustive typology that would claim to limit the powers of graft or of fiction by and within an analytical logic of distinction, opposition, and classification in genus and species* [my emphasis]. The theoretician of speech acts will have to get used to the idea that, knowingly or not,

> willingly or not, both his treatment of things and the things themselves are marked in advance by the possibility of fiction, either as the iterability of acts or as the system of conventionality. He will therefore never be able to *de-limit* the object-fiction or the object-parasite except by another counter-fiction [Ltd, 243 (99f)].

I take it that the claim being made in this passage is that, because of the permanent necessary possibility of parasitism (which I investigated in Chapter Four), an exhaustive typology is not possible. But (needless to say) the passage is obscure: it is not clear whether *any* typology or just an *exhaustive* typology (of the sort mentioned) is being said not to be possible. I have shown that in *Sec* Derrida thinks that a 'typology of forms of iteration' might be possible but that he defers the question: "one ought to construct a differential typology of forms of iteration, assuming that such a project is tenable and can result in an exhaustive program, a question I hold in abeyance here" [*Sec*, 192 (18)]. This passage from Ltd distinguishes between the tenability of the typology and its exhaustiveness; thus it is reasonable to suppose that Derrida believes that a tenable typology may not be exhaustive.

My response here will be conservative: I shall assume (given lack of clear evidence to the contrary) that Derrida continues to believe that a typology is possible but is simply pointing out that it cannot be exhaustive; and the reason why it cannot be exhaustive is because there can be many *layers* of citation or parasitism, as it were, and because of the necessary possibility of parasitism which means that we can never finally decide that some utterance is not parasitic.[43] However I shall show that Searle's speech act theory provides a nice way of dealing with these layers of citation and this necessary possibility of parasitism while at the same time making logical distinctions between serious or literal speech acts and their parasites — specifically fictional utterances, metaphors and jokes.

To recap, what Derrida is claiming is that because there can be serious and non-serious citations of serious and non-serious utterances

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[43] This latter is what he means by saying, in the above quotation, that things "are marked in advance by the possibility of fiction".

(and serious and non-serious citations of these, and so on *ad libitum* but probably not *ad infinitum*), and because any utterance is necessarily possibly parasitic, there can be no exhaustive typology such as he supposes Speech Act Theory sets up or purports to set up. In responding to this one must keep in mind that Searle devised a typology of speech acts. He showed that logically there can only be five types of speech act (viz. assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations).[44] He pointed out in LSFD that these illocutionary acts could be fictional if the person performing the utterance act in question were only pretending. He also pointed out that there are many principles according to which metaphors operate and that he could only formulate some of them. In fact he did not deny that there may be an unlimited number of such principles. In short, there is a fixed number of types of speech act and thus a fixed number of types of pretended speech act. But the number of principles of metaphor is not said to be limited. And, as I showed in Chapter Three, one utterance act does not necessarily imply only one illocutionary act at most. One utterance act can involve more than one illocutionary act, and it can involve parasitic speech acts too.

I shall now show that what Derrida establishes with his notions of citationality and iterability does not show that what Searle has proposed is impossible. In fact Searle's theory can better account for the complexities of discourse than can Derrida's notion of citation.

An exhaustive typology such as Searle offers and which gives the structures and the rules of serious speech acts (i.e. 'vertical' rules) and a set of rules for generating non-serious speech acts from them (i.e. 'horizontal' conventions or rules), is not possible, Derrida claims, because, due to iterability, there can be a parasite of the parasite. That is, as I have just explained, there can be serious or non-serious citations of serious or non-serious utterances. Indeed Derrida may be suggesting that things can get more complicated than that. One can have non-serious

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[44] On this typology, see 'A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts' [*E&M*, 1-29]. There are twelve principles on which the taxonomy rests [see *E&M*, 2-8]. As mentioned, the twelve principles yield five types of illocutionary act [see *E&M*, 12-20].

citations of non-serious citations of serious citations of non-serious citations, for instance. It is not clear at what level of complexity one would have to stop.

Searle's theory allows for such complexity. I have already briefly examined his treatment of indirect speech acts in which by uttering one utterance act one can perform two illocutionary acts. 'I want you to do it' is literally an assertion but it can be uttered as a request. In Austinian terms, it is an impure constative since it has a performative dimension (which would be demonstrated by showing that in certain contexts it operated as a performative). For Searle, the speaker's utterance meaning makes it a request. This meaning is communicated by means of the context. Other examples include the following: 'I would appreciate it if you would get off my foot' is literally an assertion but the speaker intends it as a request; similarly with 'Can you reach the salt?'. As Searle says, "it takes some ingenuity to imagine a situation in which their utterances would not be requests" [*E&M*, 31].

Furthermore, Searle proffers Nabokov's remark at the start of *Ada* (which I mentioned in Chapter Three) as an example of an utterance which is an assertion on one level but is also a contradiction of a remark made by Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina*. It is also intended as a joke. In other words the author intended the remark to be taken as an assertion; he also intended that it should be read in the context of Tolstoy's novel and that it should be taken as 'poking fun' at Tolstoy. In Derridean terms, Nabokov's remark is a citation in two contexts, viz. *Ada* and *Anna Karenina*; and it is a parasite since it is intended to be a parody of the remark as cited in the latter context.

Consider another example. This one is clearly a parody. It is from James Joyce's *Ulysses* — a book named after the fabulous Greek hero Odysseus, known in Latin as Ulysses, who is the hero of Homer's epic, the *Odyssey*. *Ulysses* is written in a way which is a parody of the *Odyssey* in many different manners (e.g. literary style, characterization, formal similarity of events). But it is nowhere stated by Joyce in his book that it is in any way a parody of Homer's poem. In the following quotation from it a character, called Alf Bergan, buys a glass of ale from barman, Terry.

The passage is written in a Homeric style (or at least in the style of some of the notable translations of the *Odyssey*) which is somewhat inappropriate given the decidedly non-heroic scene.

> Then did you, chivalrous Terence, hand forth, as to the manner born, that nectarous beverage and you offered the crystal cup to him that thirsted, the soul of chivalry, in beauty akin to the immortals.
>
> But he, the young chief of the O'Bergan's, could ill brook to be outdone in generous deeds but gave therefor with gracious gesture a testoon of costliest bronze. Thereon embossed in excellent smithwork was seen the image of a queen of regal port, scion of the house of Brunswick, Victoria her name, Her Most Excellent Majesty, by grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British dominions beyond the sea, queen, defender of the faith, Empress of India, even she, who bore rule, a victress over many peoples, the wellbeloved, for they knew and loved her from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, the pale, the dark, the ruddy and the ethiop.[45]

The humour comes with the use of heroic language to describe mundane matters. What is worth pointing to for my purposes is how the passage is comic by being situated in two contexts (at least): the world of the pub and the world of Homeric heroes and gods. The humour is conveyed by our being aware of the heroic style of translations of Homer and by our simultaneously being aware that scenes such as this are usually described in more mundane language. In fact the passages immediately before and following the above passage are written in a colloquial style. The next sentence after is as follows: "What's that bloody freemason doing, says the citizen, prowling up and down outside?" (a character called 'the citizen' wondering why Leopold Bloom is pacing up and down outside the pub).

Here the writer clearly intends the way he writes this episode to bring to mind the world of gods and heroes, and the mundane world of a Dublin pub. So it is his style of writing the episode (alternately heroic and mundane) together with such things as the name of the work, which is not

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[45] James Joyce, *Ulysses*, the corrected text edited by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (New York: Garland, 1984), §12, ll. 287-301.

explicitly related to anything that happens in *Ulysses*, that indicates that the passage in question is to be read in the context of (certain translations of) Homer's *Odyssey*.

Derrida would explain this passage as citable in various contexts; Searle would explain it by means of distinguishing between its literal meaning and various other utterance meanings it has which are communicated by means of various textual devices such as style, title, characterization. Searle can account for everything that Derrida accounts for by means of speaking of its citability in various different contexts, by means of his vertical rules and horizontal conventions.

In this subsection I showed that Derrida does not accuse Austin of somehow denying quotability, as Searle maintained, but only of leaving out of account the permanent possibility of parasitism. I also showed that Searle's rules for speech acts are able to deal with the various layers of citationality that Derrida points to when he speaks of citations and parasites of other citations and parasites. Derrida's attempt to deconstruct the opposition normal/parasitic failed. I showed that Searle's speech act theory provides a nice way of dealing with these layers of citation and with the necessary possibility of parasitism while at the same time making logical distinctions between serious or literal speech acts and their parasites. I showed that in fact Searle's theory can better account for the complexities of discourse than can Derrida's notion of citation.

5.3.1.3 Non-Fiction/Fiction and Speech/Writing

I turn now to Searle's second criticism, *sc.* [2], and Derrida's response. The criticism is that Derrida wrongly attributed to Austin a conflation of the non-fiction/fiction distinction with the speech/writing distinction. Searle is wrong in this. Here is the criticism in Searle's own words:

> Derrida assimilates the sense in which writing can be said to be parasitic on spoken language with the sense in which fiction, etc., are parasitic on nonfiction or standard discourses. But these are quite different. In the case of the distinction between fiction and nonfiction, the relation is one of logical dependency. One could not have the concept of fiction without the concept of serious dis-

> course. But the dependency of writing on spoken language is a contingent fact about the history of human languages and not a logical truth about the nature of language [RD, 207].

The dependence of fiction on non-fiction is logical (i.e. one could not understand what fictional discourse was unless one first understood normal, referential uses of language), according to Searle, and the dependence of writing on speech is contingent. Derrida, according to Searle, sees the two dependences as logical and thus, or on the basis of this, assimilates them. The criticism here is ambiguous: does Searle mean that Derrida wrongly likens the two dependences or that he sees one as an instance of the other? Since Searle gives one no reason to believe that Derrida assimilated the two in the latter sense, I shall assume that he only means to point out that Derrida wrongly implied a similarity between the two dependences. The other alternative is very unlikely.

Searle implies that writing is dependent on speech and claims that this dependence is not a logical one but a contingent one. First of all, Derrida rejects the dependence. He also rejects Searle's suggestion that *Sec* postulated such a dependence. In *Sec* Derrida asserted that writing was historically viewed as parasitic on speech. I examined this view in Chapter Four, §2. His view, he states, was that writing was said to be parasitic on speech; he also pointed out the same with regard to fiction and non-fiction. But he did not say that there was any similarity in the putative parasitisms [see *Sec*, 191 (17f); cp. Ltd, 247 (103)]. I have already investigated the question of the supposedly contingent dependence of writing on speech. Derrida rejects such a dependence, seeing both as instances of arche-writing. In responding to Searle, he also rejects the claim that fiction is logically dependent on non-fiction, pointing out that there is no non-fiction without fiction. Whatever else non-fiction is, it is non-fiction precisely to the extent that there is fiction, serious to the extent that there is the non-serious, and normal to the extent that there is the abnormal. If non-fiction is, *qua* non-fiction, logically dependent on fiction; and if fiction is, *qua* fiction, logically dependent on non-fiction, then we have a case of mutual logical dependence. And if fiction is said to be parasitic on non-fiction because of this logical dependence, then, this

argument shows, non-fiction is parasitic on fiction. Derrida says that "one could with equal legitimacy reverse the order of dependency" [Ltd, 248 (104)].

However, there is a danger of equivocation here. This reversibility disappears once one decides that fiction is analyzable as pretence. To say that some act is pretended is to presuppose the existence of the pretended act. Thus the act that is being rendered fictional by means of the pretence will be logically prior to the fictional rendering of it. And so the latter is dependent on the former without the former being dependent on the latter. What Derrida's response establishes is that, as soon as there is fiction, there is by the same stroke non-fiction, and the world is divided into the fictional and the non-fictional. In that context to speak of fiction is to speak of something set over against the non-fictional, and vice-versa. So although Derrida's response is insightful and the point he makes correct, what he says does not refute Searle's claim.

To sum up, Searle's criticism of Derrida is unfounded. He does not make the assimilation in question. However, the dependences that Searle proposes are both tenable (even if one of them is empirically disputable, viz. that writing is contingently dependent on speech). In one sense, fiction is no more logically dependent on non-fiction than vice-versa (but in another sense this is false). Writing, though, as analyzed by Derrida is not contingently, or otherwise, dependent on speech. If Searle wants to dispute this he will have to provide evidence.

To conclude this section (i.e. §3.1): I have shown, against Searle, that Derrida does not confuse citationality, iterability and parasitism. And I have shown that he is unjustified in saying that Derrida wrongly accused Austin of having denied the possibility of quotation. Derrida did not make this accusation. He does not accuse Austin of denying quotability but only of leaving out of account the permanent possibility of parasitism. I also defended Derrida's view that parasitism constitutes a determined modification of citationality, although I went on to show that Searle's theory can accommodate the essential point in a way that is more effective than Derrida's. In this section too I showed that Derrida's critique of Searle's notion of idealization is wrong and that his attempt to deconstruct the

normal/parasitic opposition failed. Searle's rules for speech acts are able to deal with the various layers of citationality that Derrida points to when he points to the possibility of layers of citations (i.e. citations and parasites of other citations and parasites) without giving up the normal/parasitic distinction. In the next section I shall consider the criticisms Searle makes of Derrida which concern questions of the status of the normal/parasitic distinction: is it axiological, metaphysical, ethical, political?

5.3.2 Axiologies and the Serious/Parasitic Distinction

In this subsection I show why, *pace* Searle, the serious/parasitic distinction, as made by Austin (but not necessarily as made by Searle), is axiological and metaphysical (and not merely strategic); and, *pace* Derrida, why it is nevertheless not ethical (i.e. why the axiology in question is not ethics). I shall deal with the two criticisms of the subsection (i.e. [3] and [4]) separately. First I shall show why the distinction, as made by Austin, is in fact axiological (but probably is not in Searle); and, secondly, I shall show that making the distinction has no ethical implications (i.e. it does not imply that there is something somehow immoral about parasitic forms of discourse).

5.3.2.1 A Merely Strategic Distinction?

Turning to [3], according to Searle, Austin's exclusion of parasitic discourse from consideration is a matter of research strategy and is not, as Derrida thinks, a metaphysical exclusion. Also the temporary exclusion, is not a source of great difficulties for Austin's subsequent research, as is evidenced by its success. This putative success was supposedly facilitated by Austin's recognition of a logical difference between parasitic and serious discourse [see RD, 204f]. In this response, Searle makes three assumptions, viz. that the distinction in question is simply logical (as opposed to logical and metaphysical too); that making the distinction does not undermine in some way Austin's analysis of speech acts; and that the analysis is in fact successful.

I have pointed out already [see Chapter Three] that Austin speaks of non-serious utterances as infected by an ill, as parasites and as aetiolations of language. Such terms or metaphors make the distinction more than just logical. They suggest that in these cases something has gone wrong with language, just as something has gone wrong to a plant with an infection, infested with greenfly or deprived of sunlight.[46] If Austin had only used one of the terms (or metaphors) 'parasite', 'aetiolation' or 'infection', then one might have said that he did not intend the evaluative aspect of those terms or metaphors. But he chose three words with clear evaluative force.

Indeed Derrida questions Searle's saying that Austin's exclusion is a matter of research strategy based on a merely logical distinction:

> The axiology involved in this analysis is not intrinsically determined by considerations that are merely logical. What logician, what theoretician in general, would have dared to say: B depends logically on A, therefore B is parasitic, nonserious, abnormal, etc.? ... All of [those attributes] mark a *decline* [*déchéance*] or a *pathology*, an ethical-ontological determination [*dégradation*]: i.e. more or less than a mere logical derivation [Ltd, 235 (92)].

Here Derrida uses a very Austinian argument against Searle. In effect, he appeals to ordinary language: would one (ordinarily) say that if B is logically dependent on A, then B is parasitic on A (and is thus non-serious and abnormal)? Clearly one would not. To go on and use those adjectives betokens some type of pathology of language. The language of aetiolation and infection is clearly pathological. But, accepting that it is more than merely logical and leaving aside for the moment the ethical question, is it also ontological or metaphysical?

Derrida argues that it is in fact also 'metaphysical' (which I shall explain in a moment). He argues that "Every strategical operation, or more classically, every methodological aspect of discourse, involves a decision ... concerning metaphysics" [Ltd, 236 (93)]. Austin's strategical exclusion is

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[46] I should remark here though that Austin speaks of the happy-or-unhappy dimension of assessment *infecting* statements, and the true-or-false dimension *infecting* performatives. And he wonders about a *breakdown* of the performative/constative distinction [see *HDTW*, 54f and *PP*, 25 (quoted above in Chapter Two, §1)].

thus ontological according to Derrida. There are two 'indications' of it: (1) a hierarchical axiology, and (2) the positing of a 'simple, intact, normal, pure, standard, self-identical' origin.

With regard to (1), here Derrida is thematizing his critique of metaphysics which he believes sets up oppositions of concepts in which one member has priority over the other in the sense that the one is said to be a debased version of the other. Examples of such axiological hierarchizations are: normal/abnormal, standard/parasitic, fulfilled/void, serious/non-serious, literal/non-literal. More succinctly, the hierarchizations are of the form positive/negative and ideal/non-ideal.[47] This is a very general characterization of one feature of metaphysics, its pairs of concepts (like form/matter, infinite/finite, act/potency, essence/accident, transcendent/immanent) where one term is positive or ideal and the other is negative or non-ideal (as, for example, matter in Plotinus's philosophy is the lowest form of existence, and as potency tends towards its fulfillment in actuality, for Aristotle).

To deal with (2): the positive or ideal aspect of the metaphysical oppositions are regarded as simple, intact, normal, pure, standard and self-identical. But the negative, non-ideal aspect is a derivation, complication, deterioration or accident. Thus the positive and ideal are given axiological priority over the negative and non-ideal.

Both (1) and (2) are features of all metaphysics according to Derrida. They are thus criteria of metaphysics:

> All metaphysicians, from Plato to Rousseau, Descartes to Husserl, have proceeded in this way, conceiving good to be before evil, the positive before the negative, the pure before the impure, the simple before the complex, the essential before the accidental, the imitated before the imitation, etc. And this is not just *one* metaphysical

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[47] Deconstruction is largely a matter of assailing metaphysics by examining such oppositions or hierarchizations, showing how one term is given priority over the other throughout Western metaphysics, then opting for the supposed inferior or negative term as a name for the concept that emerges from showing how each term is implicated in the other. This has been examined by Alan Megill using Hegelian terminology. He posits a four-fold dialectic of deconstruction: position, negation, negation of the negation (thus far Hegel) and deconstruction. See his *Prophets of Extremity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 272-5.

> gesture among others, it is *the* metaphysical exigency, that which has been the most constant, most profound and most potent [Ltd, 236 (93)].

The positive and ideal are given a certain priority over the negative and the non-ideal. This is clear in the case of Plato: reality is ideal and good whereas the world of illusion, Nature, is non-ideal and bad. In Rousseau an age of goodness and truth precedes that of evils such as enslavement, tyranny and alienation. It would take me too far afield to go into Derrida's investigations of these metaphysicians.[48] Suffice it to say that he does present compelling evidence that such philosophers posited such axiological hierarchizations in which the inferior elements were thought of as somehow accidental or derived.

But is Austin's serious/parasitic distinction axiological? It is clearly descriptive, but is it also evaluative? Austin never says that parasites, aetiolations or ills are bad. Thus he never uses the terms with an *explicit* evaluative meaning. I suggest though that Derrida is correct in interpreting Austin as using the tem 'parasitic' evaluatively because, although 'parasitic' is not uncommonly used purely descriptively, 'ill' and 'aetiolated' (which Austin uses in conjunction with 'parasitic') are rarely

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[48] On Plato, see 'Plato's Pharmacy', *D*, 63-171; cp. Christopher Norris, *Derrida*, Fontana Modern Masters, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Fontana, 1987), 28-63.

On Rousseau, see *OG*, pt. II; cp. John Llewelyn, 'Jacques Derrida's Reading of Rousseau', *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 82-95; Paul de Man, 'The Rhetoric of Blindness: Jacques Derrida's Reading of Rousseau', in his *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 102-41; Norris, *op. cit.*, 97-141; Gregory L. Ulmer, 'Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man on/in Rousseau's Faults', *The Eighteenth Century* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 164-81.

On Husserl, see *S&P*, *EHOG*, and 'Form and Meaning', *MP*, 157-73; cp. David B. Allison, 'Derrida's Critique of Husserl: The Philosophy of Presence', Ph.D. dissertation (Pennsylvania State University, 1974); B. C. Hopkins, 'Derrida's Reading of Husserl in *Speech and Phenomena*: Ontologism and Metaphysics of Presence', *Husserl Studies* 2, no. 2 (1985): 193-214; Martin Schwab, 'The Rejection of Origin: Derrida's Interpretation of Husserl', *Topoi* 5 (September 1986): 163-75.

if ever used without their evaluative meaning.[49] It would be unusual, to say the least, for someone to say 'X is ill — that's good' where X is not something regarded as evil. Serious discourse is not evil; so to say that it is ill (in certain non-serious contexts) is to use the term 'ill' evaluatively. If one says that the use of discourse in contexts that make it non-serious is parasitic, and if one glosses that as meaning ill, then one must be using the term 'parasitic' evaluatively too. As already stated, if Austin had used only one of these terms or metaphors, then the case that he was using it evaluatively would be harder to make. But the cumulative effect of the use of 'parasitic', 'aetiolated', 'ill' and 'infected' makes it difficult to deny that he intended to speak evaluatively. I take it that this shows, or tends to show, that Austin is speaking evaluatively or axiologically when he makes his serious/non-serious, normal/parasitic distinction.

If Derrida is right in his characterization of metaphysics, then one must agree that the positing of a serious/non-serious, normal/parasitic, axiological hierarchization and the exclusion of the parasitic, non-serious or abnormal is metaphysical. That Austin's exclusion was temporary is irrelevant here. He excluded the parasitic from consideration to investigate the normal, but not with the intention of coming back to re-examine the exclusion. Rather he intended to give an account that would show systematically and generally how language was parasitic. I have already shown that Austin's 'doctrine of the *etiolations* of language' [*HDTW*, 22] would be a part of a general account of utterances that Austin envisaged [see Chapter Three].

Derrida then points out that the same metaphysical exclusion is found in Searle and that, contrary to what he supposes, Searle has himself not offered a general theory of speech acts that would cover parasitic utterances. Searle claimed, during his critique of Derrida, that "Once one has a general theory of speech acts ... it is one of the relatively simpler problems to analyze the status of parasitic discourse" [RD, 205]. He

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[49] On the distinction between evaluative and descriptive meaning see, for instance, R. M. Hare, 'Descriptivism' in W. D. Hudson, ed., *The Is-Ought Question: A Collection of Papers on the Central Problem in Moral Philosophy*, in the series Controversies in Philosophy, ed. Anthony Flew (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1969), 240-58.

claimed to have done so in LSFD [see RD, 205, n. 4]. Derrida though cites the closing remark of LSFD to show that Searle does not think there that he has offered such a general theory: "there is as yet no general theory of the mechanisms by which ... serious illocutionary intentions are conveyed by pretended illocutions" [LSFD, 75; quoted in Ltd, 240 (96)]. Here Searle is referring to the fact that works of fiction can have serious themes or 'messages'. And he is admitting that he has no general theory to account for this. Of course this does not mean that Searle had no right to say that, given the general theory of speech acts that he proposes, it would be relatively simple to give an account of parasitic discourse. But he has not given a full account. And, if he had done so, it would have been in a manner that Derrida holds to be metaphysical since he accounts for parasitic discourse by means of horizontal conventions. They would thus be derivations or complications.

However, since Searle protests that the normal/parasitic distinction is merely strategic and logical, he clearly sees his own theory of the parasite as not being axiological. He does not use the terms 'infected' and 'aetiolated' in conjunction with the term 'parasitic'. In fact he uses no other such metaphors that would indicate his having taken an axiological stance towards parasitic discourse. In LSFD it is clear that fictional discourse is non-serious, not because serious messages are not conveyed by fictional works (we have seen that Searle thinks that they are — although he has not given a logical analysis of why that is), but only because the writer was seen to be pretending to make assertions rather than actually making them. It is not clear that any axiology is involved in this. There may be many senses in which a person who is pretending may also be behaving seriously but in the sense in which he is pretending he is not being serious. I should also note in passing that 'serious' can be used pejoratively (e.g. 'You're so serious' is usually not a compliment) as well as approvingly (e.g. 'He's a serious scholar').

In sum then, Derrida is right in holding that Austin's exclusion of the parasitic is not simply logical or strategic but metaphysical. The two criteria he uses are that Austin's exclusion involves an axiological hierarchization and the positing of a simple origin from which there is a

derivation or deterioration. Austin's language shows that he sees the normal and serious as better (in some sense which I next investigate) than the non-serious or parasitic and as the origin from which the latter is a deterioration. Such a view can indeed be seen to have been expressed by Austin. However, Searle does not use the term 'parasitic' pejoratively. There is no evidence that he posits normal/parasitic as a hierarchical axiology; and thus one of the criteria that would allow Derrida to declare his view metaphysical is absent.

5.3.2.2 Is the Distinction Ethical or Political?

I turn now to Searle's final criticism, i.e. [4], viz. that Derrida construed the exclusion of parasitism as moral and that this construal was unwarranted. In considering [3], I showed that the exclusion (on Austin's part) was metaphysical. The strategic exclusion was not simply logical but also axiological in its hierarchization of concepts; and thus it was metaphysical. Derrida wants to say that the axiology in question was ethics. In other words, he wants to show that Austin's exclusion of the parasite was an exclusion of something somehow immoral. He speaks of Speech Act Theory's 'fundamental, intrinsic moralism' [Ltd, 240 (97)]. He also claims that Austin's speech act theory is political. I shall refute the claim that Austin intended anything ethical or political by his exclusion.

Searle's argument is that, in saying that fiction is parasitic on non-fiction, Austin meant 'parasitic' in the sense in which one may say that the definition of rational numbers is parasitic on that of natural numbers. Such parasitism "does not imply any moral judgement and certainly not that the parasite is somehow immorally sponging off the host" [RD, 205]. I shall show this to be true. He also points out that parasitic discourse is part of ordinary language in Austin's sense since at that time (circa. 1955) 'ordinary language' meant language that was in everyday use as opposed to technical, symbolic or formalized languages. What was extraordinary about poems, plays and novels was their circumstances not their language [see RD, 206].

It is true that Austin understood parasitism as the use of ordinary language in special circumstances. It involved "a sea-change in special

circumstances". However he spoke of the language used in such circumstances as being 'heir to' certain "kinds of ill which infect *all* utterances" [*HDTW*, 21].[50] The ill is infection or aetiolation. Thus, before considering whether this is an ethical matter, it is clearly axiological. This is because an aetiolated or an infected organism is generally of less value (to a gardener, for instance) than one that is healthy or has had its proper exposure to sunlight. Austin confines himself to utterances made in 'ordinary circumstances' [*HDTW*, 22].

Austin uses the language of illness, aetiolation and parasitism together. If he had not, then perhaps one might have been persuaded by Searle's claim that he was not using the term 'parasitic' to suggest that there was a case of 'sponging off the host'. If one speaks of ills and aetiolations, and is thus speaking axiologically, and if one then speaks of parasites, then the most reasonable interpretation of that is that one is continuing to speak axiologically.

But Searle said '*immorally* sponging off the host' (my emphasis) and that, it is true, does not seem to follow. In other words, Austin is clearly speaking pathologically and axiologically as a gardener would be if he were to speak of the parasites (such as greenfly) that were on his roses. But even if all parasites are in general bad, it does not follow that they are immoral: one would not ordinarily say that a greenfly were immoral for helping destroy roses although one might say that some toady were immoral for trying to get one to buy him drinks all the time.[51]

When Derrida comes to deal with Searle's criticism here, he seems to avoid tackling the issue directly. He says that the objection "is practically redundant with regard to the first" [Ltd, 240 (96)]. In other words, Searle's criticism in [4] is not significantly different to [3]. Derrida claims that "I have already answered this objection [i.e. [4]] in principle". But this is not so. Showing that the relevant distinction is axiological is

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50 Here one *may* detect an allusion to Hamlet's "thousand natural shocks / that flesh is heir to" [*Hamlet* 3.1.61-2]. Consider whether this might be a citation and thus perhaps a slip on Austin's part.

51 In Greek *parasitos* means someone who eats at another's table [see COD].

not sufficient to show that it is ethical. He goes on however to point out that one does not have to write something in the line of 'moralizing pamphlets' in order for what one says to be 'ethical-political'. This may be true, but one still needs to know how something that is not written in a clearly moralizing style 'demanding the exclusion of wicked parasites' is nevertheless ethical-political. Derrida states his conviction:

> I am convinced that speech act theory is fundamentally and in its most fecund, most rigorous, and most interesting aspects ... a theory of right or law, of convention, of political ethics or of politics as ethics. *It describes (in the best Kantian tradition, as Austin acknowledges at one point) the pure conditions of an ethical-political discourse insofar as this discourse involves the relation of intentionality to conventionality or to rules.* What I wanted to emphasize above, however, in this regard was simply the following: this 'theory' is compelled to reproduce, to reduplicate in itself the law of its object or its object as law; it must submit to the norm it purports to analyze. Hence, both its *fundamental, intrinsic moralism* and its irreducible empiricism [Ltd, 240 (97); my emphasis].

Many points are made here: that Austin's theory is political, ethical and empirical. The second sentence claims that discourse which relates the intentionality of an utterance to rules or conventions is described by Speech Act Theory in so far as that theory gives the pure conditions of an ethical-political discourse. In other words, Austin gives the conditions of discourse in so far as discourse is ethical or political. Then Derrida goes on to make quite a different claim: he says that Speech Act Theory itself submits to the norms that it analyzes. In other words, Austin in writing his theory is guided in what he says by certain norms which his theory uncovers. This is said to account for its 'fundamental, intrinsic moralism' which suggests that it is intrinsically evaluative and, because he also speaks of 'irreducible empiricism', intrinsically descriptive.

In *HDTW* Austin is thus, this argument goes, not only describing speech acts (or constatives and performatives) as he finds them. He is not just being descriptive (i.e. describing pure conditions of ethical-political discourse) but is endorsing some uses of language and perhaps castigating others (i.e. the theory is fundamentally and intrinsically moralistic). The rules or conventions he comes up with are not mere empirical generaliz-

ations but prescriptive rules for the proper use of language. The rules are morally and politically prescriptive.

I have already argued that, although Austin used the term 'parasitic' axiologically he did not (necessarily) use it ethically. Now I shall examine more generally whether Austin's whole project in *HDTW* is empirical and axiological, and further whether, if it is generally axiological, it is axiological in either an ethical or political sense. If this latter can be shown, then one may have to allow that Austin uses the term 'parasitic' ethically and perhaps politically. I shall endorse the first part of Derrida's claim (that Austin exposes the pure conditions of ethical-political discourse); but in general reject the second part (that there is any moralism involved) — in particular, I shall show that the normal/-parasitic distinction is not a moralistic or political one.

The most clearly isolated conventions or rules of *HDTW* are probably those that constitute Austin's list of necessary conditions of performatives (given in Lecture II):

(A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,

(A.2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

(B.1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and

(B.2) completely.

(Γ.1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in or so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further

(Γ.2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently [*HDTW*, 14f].

Here one could construe (A.2) as somehow political (construing this word broadly to connote what has to do with civic life). In order formally to

open a parliament one must be either the president (or monarch) of the state in question or their duly appointed representative. Some speech acts thus have conditions that may be termed 'political'. In order to name a ship, to take another example, one cannot simply be some passer-by who has taken a notion into his head that he would like to do that. One must be someone in whom the relevant authority has been invested by those whose ship it is or, if it is a state-owned ship, by those who have been appointed, by those who have the legitimate authority to appoint them, to name the ship. Thus naming a ship has this condition that may be broadly termed 'political'.[52] Similarly with convicting and acquitting in courts of law. There are countless other examples that could be considered.

The condition may also be ethical in the sense that one is not an appropriate person to say 'I will' in response to a judge's or priest's question, at a marriage ceremony, as to whether one takes the woman in question to be one's lawfully wedded wife unless one is a single or divorced man. To attempt to marry otherwise is to commit bigamy which is immoral (it might be termed 'an affront to public morals') and illegal.[53] And of course morality and law are considered to be related by judges (in so far as judges, in applying the law, often use 'public morality' as one of their guides) and by the public as well. Since matters of law are political (to the extent that the legislators who draft them are political agents), one can say that the issue is broadly a political one too.

The Γ conditions may also be construed as ethical. To promise to do something one must have the intention to do it otherwise one's promise will be defective in the sense that it will be insincere. Promising constitutes the undertaking of a certain moral obligation merely by uttering the relevant words in a certain context. One cannot, according to Austin, perform those speech acts and say later that one did not actually promise.

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[52] It is interesting in this regard that the example of an infelicitous naming of a ship that Austin gives is of someone who rushes forward during the ceremony, grabs the champagne bottle, breaks it against the ship, and says 'I name this ship the *Generalissimo Stalin*', and then kicks away the chocks [see Chapter Two, §1].

[53] At least in our largely judaeo-christian-atheist Western society.

Austin's example of Hippolytus, who pointed out that although his words were those of a promise his heart at the time was not 'in it', bears this out. He was both wrong and immoral in trying to suggest this, asserts Austin.[54] "Accuracy and morality alike are on the side of the plain saying that *our word is our bond*" [*HDTW*, 10]. Thus there *is* an ethical-political aspect to Austin's Speech Act Theory.[55]

It is not clear though to which of Austin's very few references to Kant Derrida is appealing in parenthesis in the long quotation under discussion. No such view seems to be expressed anywhere in *HDTW*, PC or *PP*. Nevertheless one can say that Austin's analyses expose "the pure conditions of an ethical-political discourse insofar as this discourse involves the relation of intentionality to conventionality or to rules". 'Pure' for Kant means without admixture of anything empirical.[56] Pure conditions would be analytic or synthetic *a priori*.[57] That is, they would be conditions that could be known to be true independently of all experience. Thus one would have to say that such conditions expressed the very idea of a speech act (or performative utterance in Lecture II). Austin's conditions, which I have just quoted, could be accepted in this light whether or not they were conceived of by him in this manner. They state the very general necessary conditions of speech acts.

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[54] Searle, with his distinction between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate, would deny this. One is only promising if one means what one says in saying 'I promise'. From Austin's point of view Searle would thus be immoral. In this respect, he is no different to Hippolytus. Of course, Searle might say that one ought not say 'I promise' unless one means to promise or unless one makes it clear that one is not really promising.

[55] In the light of this, it is hard to see the force or point of Henry Staten's criticism of Derrida when he quotes this passage from Austin, viz. "It is important to keep in mind the ethical underpinnings of Austin's project because what seems most questionable about Derrida's critique of Austin is precisely that it seems to evade the plain moral force of the plain saying that Austin cites" — Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 114.

[56] See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B3 & B25.

[57] See Kant, *op. cit.*, B364-6.

In the quotation from Derrida under consideration, he suggests that Austin is moralizing. This is not the same as showing that there are ethical-political conditions for performatives or speech acts. And he suggests that Austin's theory "must submit to the norm it purports to analyze". There are two questions to be asked here: first, is Derrida suggesting that Austin is putting forward some specific moral and political world-view in his work? And secondly, how can his theory be said to be compelled to submit to such moral and political norms?

It is clear from the discussion of Hippolytus that Austin endorses both the theoretical accuracy and the ethical force of the judgement that one undertakes an obligation by giving one's word. This is a clear case of moralism. Austin is expressing a concrete moral judgement. But, although he gives many examples of cases that are of interest ethically, there are few cases as clear as this where he is actually endorsing the moral view in question although he may well hold it. He discusses baptizing and the conditions under which it is clear that someone has been baptized; and he discusses cases where it is not so clear that a baptism has taken place. But despite making many points about the conventions of baptism and the performatives involved, it is not clear whether Austin endorses this institution. He might as easily have given the initiation rites for a coven of satanists and the performatives involved there, although one might guess that he would not endorse the practices of such an institution and might even have recommended their being outlawed (politically).

One way to decide whether Austin's theory endorses a certain world-view is to ask whether his theory can allow for changes in institutions, most notably political institutions. Does it in this sense submit to the norm it purports to analyze? Could his theory allow for revolution? What may happen in a political revolution is that the old order and its institutions are replaced by new ones. For instance, if there were to have been a Marxist revolution in Austin's Britain, then Parliament would have been broken up by force (i.e. prevented from sitting, its communication system disrupted by the confiscation of files and the disruption of the civil service, etc.) and a Dictatorship of the Proletariat established. Would that (supposedly) interim form of government be denied legitimacy by

Speech Act Theory? That is, would the orders, for instance, of this putative institution necessarily be infelicitous, its not being the appropriate group of persons to issue political orders?

The answer to this question is probably 'No'. If there were some theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat that established how it worked as an institution, and if there were no other political institution (Parliament having been 'dismantled'), then surely there would be an institutional frame of reference in whose terms those performatives or speech acts would be felicitous? If the Dictatorship ordered the closing of churches, then one could say (if there were provision for doing this in the theory of the Dictatorship) that such an act were felicitous. It would be pointless to object that only Parliament could do that because there would be no parliament.

All that would be needed for the new institution to make happy performative utterances or speech acts would be stipulated procedures laid down in the theory of the organization.[58] To take an analogy: if I invent a new game, then, providing I lay out certain rules that others can have an opportunity to consult, I can make certain judgments about various states of play in the game, even in the very first game, and no one can rightly say that those judgments, refereeing decisions for instance, are infelicitous, because a system has been worked out in terms of which they make sense and those participating in the game are aware that there are such rules which they could consult (either by reading them, or, if they are not written, by asking someone who knows them).

If there can be new institutions that can determine their own rules, then they can determine rules for the making of certain utterances also. And if they can do that, then there can be criteria by virtue of which certain utterances in certain situations would be either felicitous or not. There is no reason why Austin should deny this. If not, then his theory does not necessarily commit him to any political system. That being the case, there is no reason to say that Speech Act Theory "must submit to the norm it purports to analyze". Given that Austin's theory does

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58 This theory need not of course be *written* down.

expose ethical-political conditions of speech acts but in general is not moralistic and does not defend the political institutions of the time as against all others, one can say that his theory's being ethical-political does not necessarily mean that his exclusion of the parasite is an ethical or political matter. Since Austin did not go on to develop his theory to account for parasitic discourse, one cannot say what ethical-political conditions he might discover in it. One can certainly imagine ethical-political conditions that he might have given. For instance, conditions (A.1) and (A.2) could be modified to account for the conventions governing non-serious utterances such as are made in fictions and by actors in plays. There is no reason to believe however that Austin would have taken some morally disapproving stance towards writing fiction or acting in plays. There is no suggestion that the making of parasitic utterances is immoral or that those who make them are hostile to society and ought to be excluded in the manner in which Plato advocated the exclusion of artists from his Republic.[59]

Part of this criticism (i.e. [4]), to return to it, is that Derrida misunderstood what ordinary language was opposed to. Supposedly he thought that it was opposed to literary language, which is wrong, rather than technical and formal languages, which is correct. Derrida rejects this criticism. He says that he did not make this mistake. In *Sec* he only said that ordinary language was '*marked*' by the exclusion of parasitism, not that it excluded parasitism. This may simply mean it is a noticeable feature (or 'mark') of ordinary language that it is divided into two domains, the serious, literal and normal, on the one hand, and the parasitic, on the other. But the question then would be what parasitism is *excluded* from. The claim makes more sense as interpreted by Searle than it does as explained by Derrida.[60]

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[59] Thus Derrida's talk of language-police [see Ltd, 243 (100) (quoted above)] in this connection is not apt.

[60] However it is uses of terminology like this that leads to Searle's endorsement of Michel Foucault's peevish remarks which he quotes: "Michel Foucault once characterized Derrida's prose style to me as '*obscurantisme terroriste*'. The text is written so obscurely that you can't

In sum, Searle is right in saying that Austin did not intend any kind of ethical force to his exclusion of the parasite. But he is wrong to pass it off as merely logical and not axiological at all. Derrida's argument that Austin's exclusion of the parasite was part of the ethical-political project that he, Derrida, wrongly takes Speech Act Theory to be, is unconvincing.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I showed that Derrida successfully defended his critique of Austin's normal/parasitic (and happy/unhappy) distinction against Searle mainly by showing how Searle misunderstood many of Derrida's arguments, specifically those concerning iterability and citationality. I showed however that Searle's speech act theory stands up to the type of critique Derrida applied to Austin mainly because Searle does not subscribe to the Classical theory of writing in so far as he does not think of writing as logically dependent on speech.

I showed too that although Derrida's explanation of the normal/-parasitic distinction in terms of citationality is equal in explanatory power to the Searlean explanation in terms of vertical rules and horizontal conventions, Searle's view encompasses Derrida's since it can account for citationality by means of its rules and conventions. With his distinction between literal sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning, Searle can account for the possibility of performing more than one illocutionary act with one utterance act, and the possibility of speaking seriously or literally *and* non-seriously or non-literally at the same time. I rejected Derrida's view that Searle's speech act theory falls foul of its own distinction between normal speech acts and parasites by virtue of his admission that his rules of speech acts are rules of idealized speech acts.

Searle recognizes literal ambiguity of sentences but, whereas for Derrida polysemy is irreducible and the possibility of parasitism and

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figure out exactly what the thesis is (hence '*obscurantisme*') and then when one criticizes it, the author says, '*Vous m'avez mal compris; vous êtes idiot*' (hence '*terroriste*')" [WTUD, 77]. Derrida reacts very strongly to this in his 'Afterword'.

unhappiness is permanent and structural, for Searle not all utterances are polysemic and, although he realises that all utterances are logically possibly parasitic and that some are actually both normal and parasitic, he shows that this fact about utterances does not make it impossible to distinguish between normal illocutions and parasites.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

By way of concluding this dissertation I shall summarise what I have shown. My purpose was to examine how Speech Act Theory distinguished between normal, serious or literal, speech acts and speech acts that were somehow parasitic on them. I examined Derrida's fundamental criticisms of the distinction as made in Austin's speech act theory and showed them to be successful. I next examined Searle's defence of Austin against Derrida and explained why it was a failure. But I showed that, in spite of this, Searlean speech act theory can be defended against the type of criticism brought to bear by Derrida.

I explained what it was about Searle's speech act theory that was so significantly different to Austin's such that only Searle's theory was defensible — the intentional criterion of parasitism and the distinction between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate. What makes fictional utterances non-serious, for example, is simply the author's intention to suspend the rules of reference. There are an undetermined number of ways of communicating this to readers. What makes metaphorical utterances metaphorical is the writer's intention to use a speech act to convey meanings over and above the literal meanings of the speech act in question. Again there are an undetermined number of ways of indicating that an utterance is metaphorical and an undetermined number of principles of metaphor. In other words, both in the case of non-serious discourse and of non-literal discourse the parasitic aspect of the act was determined by the writer's intentions which could be communicated to readers by various means. For instance, Arthur Conan Doyle conveyed that his Sherlock Holmes novels were fictions by using the first-person narrative form. By having Dr. Watson as the narrator the author indicated that the writer of the novel (as indicated by the title page) and the narrator were different. This showed the reader that the novel was a

fiction. In the case of the use of metaphors, Emily Dickinson conveyed that her utterances were metaphorical by seeing to it that, taken literally, they were nonsensical. The reader, employing the principle of charity, inferred that they were therefore used metaphorically.

Searle pointed out though that the means of communicating the parasitic status of the work in question might not work; readers might not realize that a work of fiction was actually a fiction, or a metaphorical utterance, actually metaphorical. And if they did discover that the work had a metaphorical meaning they might not hit on the right meaning or meanings. The fact that the writer's intention should thus be difficult to get at, he rightly pointed out, was no problem for his theory. Thus what Derrida called the death of the writer inscribed in the mark was no problem for Searle. His theory allowed that a text might be intelligible otherwise than intended by its author. And he allowed that this might happen whether the utterance in question were spoken or in writing. Thus in a significant sense he did not subscribe to the Classical theory of writing.

I showed that much of Derrida's critical work relied upon showing that a theorist subscribed to this theory. Searle only subscribed to it in part. He considered writing to be dependent on speech as a contingent matter of the development of history. But he denied that there was any logical dependence and his theory does not rely on such a distinction to any significant extent. The only part it plays is in his view that in instances where the context of speech may be implicit the context of writing may have to be explicit. In other words, speakers can rely on their hearers to be aware of features of their context which writers cannot rely on their hearers to be aware of. This view is not relevant in assessing his account of parasitism.

I argued that the fact that a literal sentence may be ambiguous (or polysemic) does not affect the distinction between literal sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning. A sentence meaning or an utterance meaning may be polysemic. The writer however may not be aware that his sentence is polysemic; he may thus only intend one interpretation of it. In this case what he intends is an utterance meaning; he

does not intend the literal meaning of the sentence although he may believe that he does. What he takes to be the literal meaning of the sentence is really only part of it. So his utterance meaning is the same as one of the meanings of the polysemic sentence. I explained this by means of Derrida's example of some of Nietzsche's remarks which are literally interpretable in a proto-fascist manner although Nietzsche might not have been aware of such a meaning in what he said. Derrida rightly characterized this as a failure of his attention. He thus highlighted the problem of authors' controlling the dissemination of meanings of what they say.

Texts have, Derrida says, a determinable range of oscillation. They sustain, in other words, a range of interpretations all of which are literal interpretations of the text. He demonstrated this in the case of Plato's *Phaedrus* where he showed that the text has certain meanings which Plato may not have been aware of. It is not clear how much of what can be read in that work was intended by Plato. This is effectively demonstrated by Derrida's showing how difficult it is to discover such potential meanings in a text. They are sufficiently hard to get at to make it unclear whether it is the reader's ingenuity that discovers them there in spite of their not having been intended or whether they were actually intended.

This is the way of reading texts exemplified by Deconstruction. It is not, as Derrida points out against Searle and others, a view which sees meanings as being indeterminate. It rather asserts that texts have a range of interpretations which are determinable in contexts that are also determinable. The writer who wishes them to say one univocal thing will be frustrated because he cannot control their dissemination and may not be aware of it. Thus when he writes something intending to convey some meaning, that meaning will only be one interpretation of the text in question. He cannot make his meaning fully and exclusively present in the text. Derrida explained this as due to iteration. The text is determined in its meaning not by the author alone but by how it is interpreted throughout the linguistic community in question (e.g. that of English-speakers). This means that he cannot make his intended meaning the only meaning that will be interpreted there. The text will be interpretable in the absence of his intention; in other words, the text will be possibly inter-

pretable by some person without the meaning that the writer intended being one of the possible interpretations of it that this person discovers there.

I showed that Searle's theory can accommodate such discoveries on Derrida's part. For Searle a text may be interpretable in many different ways. He allows for the literal ambiguity of sentences; and he admits that the literal meaning of an utterance may differ with time given that what he calls the Network and the Background change. He also allows that a writer can make a text represent many other meanings besides its literal meaning(s). I used his example of Nabokov's assertion at the opening of *Ada* which was also intended to be read in the context of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* as a contradiction of a position made there. The utterance thus functioned in two contexts. It was also intended to be a humorous remark at Tolstoy's expense or a parody of him. Thus it could be read in another context as displaying a mocking or supercilious attitude towards Tolstoy or the tragic view of life which he expresses in that novel.

Thus Searle's theory with its distinction between literal sentence meaning and speaker's utterance meaning, and its distinction between the intention to represent and the intention to communicate, is a mechanism for making a distinction between normal and parasitic uses of language.

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