Performance and Performatives

Graham Ley

It is the objective of this article to suggest some possible affinities of the theory propounded by Austin a generation ago with unresolved dilemmas about the performer, in the specific form of the actor in the European tradition of conventional theatre. My starting point for this investigation arose in discussions with the English theatre director John Barton, who is engaged on a theatrical project within the scope of Greek myth, on the passage from story-telling to enactment. What soon emerges in this particular line of inquiry is the disturbing cultural innovation of the actor, a presupposition of almost all critical writing on the European theatre, but conceptually a distinct addition to the active performers of the indigenous chorus (dramatic, pre-dramatic, or non-dramatic), and to the performative capacities of the narrative rhapsode of epic poetry. The objective should be to establish a possible conceptual framework for the individuation of this figure, which would also help to define and to locate the particularities of an emergent theatrical *drama* within the complexities and differentials of performance.

The methodology of this article is, then, an attempt to associate some earlier investigations I conducted into the meaning of the Greek words for "act" (*hypokrinesthai*) and "actor" (*hypokrites*) with some of the implications of Austin's theory of 'performatives', that broad band of statements which appear to be "doing things with words." Initially, my objective will be (in section I) to extricate Austin's theory from its applied use in criticism, and restore it to a state in which its primary relation to a concept of 'performance' is once again apparent. I shall then (in section II) sketch in the conclusions I myself reached about the semantic function of the Greek word for actor. In section III I shall adduce further arguments, which suggest the potential relevance of Austin's insights to some central concerns of contemporary performance theory. My own conclusions are set forward briefly in sections IV and V, as initial propositions to which others with more resolute spirits may return to reconstruct, deny, or deconstruct as they choose.

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I

The scope of Sandy Petrey's useful study *Speech Acts and Literary Theory* conveniently raises the problem of the relationship between the philosopher J.L.Austin's concept of 'performatives' and performance theory.[1] "Performing the Performative"—the theoretical equivalent of *Begin the Beguine*?—was the title of a central chapter of Petrey's book, and this was undoubtedly because, as Petrey declared, in the recent development of "practical criticism with a speech-act orientation, pride of place is held by drama" [86]. This development stemmed from the leading works of Austin and Searle, and the concentration on drama in the eighties embraced major works from Elam, Rivers, and Felman, on the Elizabethans, on Golden Age Spanish dramatists, and on the comedy of Molière respectively.[2] Petrey's assessment of that writing also gave considerable weight to the exacting analysis of Stanley Fish, in his definitive essay on Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*.[3]

My own intention is not to contest Petrey's decisive conclusions in favor of speech-act criticism, nor to duplicate his useful summary of those leading texts, but to question the limitations so far placed on speech-act criticism, and propose an hypothetical extension into a theory of the performer. The central problem for me lies exactly in this contrast between criticism and theory, which Petrey's book highlights so well. As Petrey observed in his opening chapters, the concept of "illocutionary utterances" was introduced by Austin in the William James Lectures of 1955 as a component of linguistic theory. In many respects Austin's approach shows similar concerns to the later work of Wittgenstein, and subsequent writers have seen no difficulty in linking Austin, Wittgenstein, and Searle. By contrast, what Petrey was supporting was the validity of speech-act criticism, which he saw as potentially co-extensive with literature, and which he was at pains to defend from the apparently playful subversions of deconstruction. For Petrey, this validity is drawn from the profoundly social tenets of the central perceptions of speech-act theory, which provide a confirmation "that *all* kinds of language make tangible the network of relationships and agreements in which humans and their signs are embedded" (89). Like many critics seeking a refuge from the statutory uncertainties of deconstruction, Petrey found the guarantee of a social referent of some kind far too attractive to sacrifice to what he determined as a dominant critical tendency.

Yet, the dramatic criticism which Petrey defined as "speech-act criticism" has, in fact, little to do with performance, despite the title of his chapter. It is, however, accurately defined as criticism because it is effectively a collection of perceptions applied to dramatic dialogue, whether in Marlowe, Shakespeare, Calderon, or Molière. Specifically, in relation to speech-act theory, this kind of criticism identifies occasions of "illocutionary utterances", or "performatives" in a script, and by reference either to their frequency (of different varieties),

recurrence (of one dominant variety), or explicit significance in the action of a play constructs what might easily be regarded as a form of dramatic (i.e. textual) criticism. The speech-act itself—"I pray", "I request you", "I do beseech you" (in *Coriolanus*), what Austin described as *doing* things with words—is given priority in the text, and so, by extension, on the stage. Petrey's synthesis of the work of Elam, Rivers, and Fish finds its most succinct expression in a quotation from Rivers: the contention, as Petrey chose to describe it, that "the theater of Golden Age Spain, like that of Elizabethan England, provided a socio-linguistic laboratory within which to test old and new ideas about the authority of speech acts."[4] To this important conjunction of renaissance conventions, Petrey would undoubtedly add the classical theatre of France, as examined in the study by Shoshana Felman.

The classic speech act, as identified by Austin and others after him, is "I will" in the marriage ceremony, where no action is performed, but one takes place.[5] This "utterance" is not constative, because it describes nothing, but performative, because it is clearly understood to achieve something. That understanding is communal, and proceeds from what might be termed communal or social conventions. In this respect, few would be willing to contest Petrey's suggestive grouping (following Rivers) of what we might easily consider the major European Renaissance *dramatic* conventions in a demonstrable concern for the *social* conventions, which themselves include the very possibility of theatre. Petrey was almost certainly right in pointing to a common characteristic of Renaissance theatre, which takes different forms but without which it would be hard to conceive of a Renaissance play. Anyone with a reasonable inclination might care to test this contention by taking Austin's hundred or more performatives listed in his concluding lecture and applying them (and variants) to, for example, the opening act of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. As one form of dramatic analysis, speech-act criticism seems likely to justify its existence simply by calling attention to the operation and to its importance in the texts, at least within one major period.

But, it is still disappointing for the larger ambitions of performance theory that the notion of "performance" in this kind of criticism is largely subsumed in the concept of the "performative" itself. There is just the hint of a helpful tautology here, a kind of complacency that relies on the coinage of a theoretical term in another context (that of the philosophy of language, to accept for once Searle's insistence on that term) to achieve a critical self-sufficiency which is incontestable. A more skeptical view might ask, in the light of these apparent revelations, what more we can actually claim to know about performance, namely the art or nature of representation or acting? Does the criticism lead to significant theoretical insights into this art? Or, is it essentially derivative, reliant on a theory about language for what amount to no more than perceptions of an indicative nature—pointing to, or marking the written text, if you like?

II

For what I have to say from this point forward, I must refer to an argument I first presented in a classical journal of philology.[6] In that study I was concerned with the ancient Greek theatre and, more particularly, with the nature and original function of the actor in the theatre at Athens. In composing my hypotheses on the original function of the (Athenian) actor, I took stock of a debate over the original meaning of the Greek word *hypokrites* (which came to mean "actor"), which had been waged with polemical force by classicists in the nineteenth century. The division of opinion lay squarely between an initial meaning of "interpreter" and one of "answerer," and in the postwar period the argument had been resumed by Albin Lesky and Gerald Else. Much of the evidence for the meaning of the noun lay in the antecedent use of the verb *hypokrinesthai*, which is found in the far earlier epic poems of Homer. My own approach to the problem was to investigate the wider deployment of this verb in the *Histories* of Herodotus, who was a contemporary of the tragedians Sophocles and Euripides.

My conclusion from a survey of usage and context in the *Histories* was that there was strong additional support from this source for the idea of "answering," but that this evidence pointed to some characteristics of meaning that could not be ignored. I analyzed these under two headings: that of the nature of the action (represented by the verb), and that of the quality of the agent. Under the first heading, it was clear that the verb designated a final and decisive "response" to a proposal or question which, for the historian, often entailed historic and/or fatal results. The action designated by the verb would then take its place in a relatively formal sequence, leading to significant results: to express this concisely, for *hypokrinesthai* "speaking" is "doing," and a "response" is an "action." These conclusions were made all the more substantial by looking at the agents involved as subjects of the verb. In summary: "The action signified by *hypokrinesthai* is only appropriate to those who have a particular status, and only on occasions of great moment" (16). Kings, tyrants, representatives of communities, notably ambassadors, the prophetic oracle at Delphi, heads of families, and—in one striking instance—a woman offered the choice of redeeming one of her brother, husband, or children from a penalty of death. Choice of the word "moment" was careful: the impetus of history is falling on these individuals, and speaking, as represented by this term, becomes a final, decisive, significant action.

My immediate concern in this examination of just one word was, at the time, to make the closest possible approach to a vital moment in theatrical history—the introduction of the actor—which was otherwise obscured by a lack of evidence. As I had no theoretical intentions, I did not pursue my analysis beyond the conclusion that this verb was used to *describe* what the first individual

performer did, which was (almost inevitably) to "respond," in mask and so in character, to the chorus. As Else had previously suggested, this activity could be readily demonstrated in the earlier surviving plays of Aeschylus, those which substantially depended on the use of just two individual performers.[7] Historically, there is little doubt that the first individual performer was the playwright/ composer, who trained the chorus, and was officially known by that term (*didaskalos* = trainer/teacher). My own conclusion was that *hypokrinesthai* was initially used to describe the activity of the playwright as *performer*, and that the nominal term *hypokrites* was only required once an additional performer was added. This term then became "the definitive title of a professional class," and it and the verb very quickly established themselves in the technical meaning "actor" and "act," with direct reference to the theatrical competitions at Athens.

Conceived as they had been firmly within the exclusive tradition of classical philology, my original investigations had failed to take account of the context afforded by Austin's (and Searle's) work on performatives, or—more strictly, in Austin's revised terminology—"illocutionary acts." To anyone familiar with Austin's theories in *How To Do Things With Words*, there could have been no doubt about the acute resemblance between my formulations and his conclusions about one significant aspect of (the English) language. Fortunately, what my state of blindness had secured was an independent and relatively detailed exploration of the incidence of an undoubted "performative" in its context, one which the absence of any spoken *parole* from the ancient *langue* had firmly fixed in the historical narrative of Herodotus.

III

Austin himself was extremely tentative about the relation between speech and writing or, more precisely, between the social convention (which he saw as attached to living speech) and any representations of that convention which might occur in what he clearly regarded as the secondary, or "parasitic," contexts of written discourse. This particular dilemma was turned on him (and on Searle as his successor) by Jacques Derrida, who read his hesitation as a striking example of the unjustifiable priority afforded to speech over writing in western philosophical thought.[8] The case against Austin has also been argued, less flamboyantly but to great effect, by Mary Louise Pratt and Stanley Fish. In a study largely devoted to the novel, Pratt attempted to break down the distinction between "ordinary language" and "poetic language," dissolving all discourse into the theoretical frame of the creation of possible worlds:

> Non-fictional narrative accounts are world-creating in the same
> sense as are works of literature and, say, accounts of dreams.

> After all, the actual world is a member of the set of all possible
> worlds.[9]

For Pratt, what Austin regards as an apparently unproblematic "reality" which
guarantees speech-acts their conventional validity is far more accurately
understood as one distinct creation amongst many: "The real lesson speech-act
theory has to offer is that *literature is context, too*, not the absence of one . . . ."

The analysis of *Coriolanus* as a speech-act play by Stanley Fish was also
accompanied by a closely related attack on what Fish regards as "the myth of
ordinary language." Both Pratt and Fish share what might be called a standard
post-structuralist skepticism about the referentiality of language to a "real" world,
and would, as a consequence, be more inclined to relate speech-act theory to
Wittgenstein's formula of "language games." With similar effect to the critique
advanced by Derrida, this approach simply abolishes the privileges afforded to one
kind of discourse over others:

> One might object that this has the consequence of making all
> discourse fictional: but it would be just as accurate to say that it
> makes all discourse serious, and it would be better still to say
> that it puts all discourse on a par.[10]

And with specific relation to the issue of theatrical discourse, Fish later returned
to the argument with further firm assertions of parity:

> If by 'stage utterances' one understands utterances whose
> illocutionary force must be inferred or constructed, then all
> utterances are stage utterances, and one cannot mark them off
> from utterances that are 'serious.'[11]

Austin found it difficult to follow traces of the social into representative
discourses for the very reason that he found describing the conventions of his own
society—revealed in the necessities of spoken social activity (e.g. the marriage
ceremony)—almost an embarrassment, if not done wittily, to an educated man.[12]
There is no effective distinction between "performatives" or "illocutionary
utterances" in socially engaged speech and in other forms of discourse, provided
one is willing to acknowledge the presence of society in all forms of language.
Furthermore, the "social convention" to which Austin refers, and which appears
to be a corollary of performatives, can be described and tabulated in detail, with
the conclusion that the presence of a performative in any discourse must be seen
as simultaneously an allusion to the existence of the specific social context which
"orders" its appearance. This is as true of mockery and ridicule, and of pretense

or deceit, as it is of any other instance which Austin would have described as "parasitic."

Explicit in the notion of "performatives" is that of performance, and although it is clear that the meaning of "accomplish" was paramount for Austin in choosing the term ("doing" things with words), being both heard and seen in doing them cannot logically in the great majority of cases be far secondary in importance.[13] This inviting observational possibility has been the motive force behind what I have described in the first part of this essay as speech-act criticism, effectively summarized by Petrey and capable of greater amplification. But, in addition to the contributions to a textual criticism, there has been a number of related speculations within performance theory. One of the most striking was that by the phenomenologist Bert States.[14] In his argument for what he determined as the "three phenomenal modes" of theatrical performance (specifically *acting*), States was firm about his "idea of theatre as an act of speech" (360), which he reiterated, with more force, at his conclusion:

> My intention here is not to offer a complete phenomenology of his [the actor's] art but to treat it as an act of speech—a discourse, one might say, on *our* behavior—that can be broken down into the pronominal triad that is the basis of all speech (375).

Within this hypothesis, he had offered his tripartite division under the schema:

I (actor)	= Self-expressive mode
You (audience)	= Collaborative mode
He (character)	= Representational mode (360).

States was plainly aware that this was a phenomenology, not a statement of disjoined categories—"It is precisely our ability to integrate them [the three modes] that lends the unique depth and texture to the theatre experience" (370)—but it is his strong sense of a social context for this highly "performative" notion of performance that I wish to isolate:

> The advantage of thinking about the actor in such terms is not that we learn anything new about him, but that we have a better basis for seeing how his performance awakens our interest, not only as individuals 'sitting at a play' but as members of a social species that 'commissions' the actor to enact plays about our various concerns and addictions (375).

This quite fundamental perception has also affected gender studies within performance, notably those by Sue-Ellen Case and Judith Butler.[15]   Case approached the problems of ancient Athenian theatrical presentation from the standpoint that, given the absence of women performers, any *presentation* of female characters was a *representation*, which should not be seen as some form of neutral or merely reflective *mimesis*. Her prime assertion again draws attention to a highly specific social context for performance:

> The Athenian theatre practice created a political and aesthetic
> arena for ritualised and codified gender behaviour, linking it to
> core privileges and restrictions (322).

This thesis finds confirmation in the more directly performative and phenomenological analysis of gender by Butler, who describes a social necessity that might be seen to underlie Case's formulation cited above: "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed" (527). The implications for theory are expanded decisively in the following paragraph:

> As a consequence, gender cannot be understood as a *role* which
> either expresses or disguises an interior 'self,' whether that
> 'self' is conceived as sexed or not. As performance which is
> performative, gender is an 'act,' broadly construed, which
> constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority
> (528).

The implications of these studies move away from any specific textual criticism towards the possibilities for theory, notably a theory which helps to define the act of representation itself.   Prominent among those possibilities is States's idea of the audience as a "social species that 'commissions' the actor," which is clearly a development of the reader-response proposals of phenomenology.[16]   For Case, it was the general term of "Athenian theatre practice" which provided the "arena" for representation, while Butler extended the argument on gender to cover the full concept of "performance" itself.   These conclusions seem to me to be compatible, and can be brought together in conjunction with my own approach, which centers on the Athenian actor.

Simon Goldhill, in the republication and revision of an important article during the eighties, insisted on the undeniably ideological characteristics of the major Athenian dramatic festival, the City or Great Dionysia.[17] For Goldhill, the centrality of performance in the democratic constitution of Athens must be a guide to our reception of texts; and Tobin Nellhaus, drawing on the work of Havelock,

Else, and Ong, offered a further dimension to this insistence by citing tragedy securely in the historic transition from an oral to a written culture.[18] Nellhaus drew attention to what was, for tragic performance and the elaboration/creation of what we term drama, a crucial point of contact:

> The combination of chorus and actor marked in a symbolic form the concurrence of (and transition between) the collectivist oral culture and the individualising manuscript culture (63).

The authorial qualities of the tragic script, in its prescribed originality and individuality in competition, must also be combined with an acknowledgment that the "writer," as trainer of the chorus, was the first "actor" in the combination to which Nellhaus referred. But the weakness in Nellhaus's argument is that he takes the existence, or probability, of the *actor* for granted, as an agent upon whom this historic function (of the text) can be inscribed.

The present state of studies provides us with the central concept of a "commission" to perform, proceeding from the audience and the community (States, Goldhill); with the certainty of the performative quality of representation clarified by gender (Case, Butler); and with the historic context of orality into textuality (Havelock, Ong, Nellhaus). But the introduction of the actor underscores a primary dilemma: the "why?" and the "what?" of the invention of the individual performer remain the black hole of theory.

IV

My own proposition would determine the creation of the first individual performer as the embodiment of the performative, of the "illocutionary utterance" that gave rise to drama. That this "entry of the actor" took place at one moment in the transition from orality to textuality is quite clear, as is the existence of an historic commission from the audience to proceed to representation.[19] The pre-existence of masks in the worship of Dionysus was also decisive, in that its contingency provided a suitable material means for embodiment, and for the rapid development to a plurality of representations in one form (called drama). But the historic moment for the requirement of the performative to be performed remains a particularity, which the existing components of theory can do no more than locate.[20] It may, however, be possible to define that location with a little more accuracy.

The emphasis that States brings to bear on the actor is of some significance in historical theory, because the *actor* is, for Greek antiquity, to be distinguished from the performance and the *performer* of the Greek chorus. A recently discovered fragment of Greek text has been attributed with some confidence to the composer Stesichorus (whose name means "chorus-establisher"),

and the general belief is that the text is part of a choral song.[21] The existing fragments present a sung narrative of the departure from Thebes of Polynices, one of the two sons of Oedipus, which contains direct discourse from the mother of the young men. This discourse is substantially a prophecy, and there are clear indications that another "speaker" was Tiresias, himself a prophet inspired by Apollo. The major fragment of the song also reveals that the direct discourse, as is the case in Homeric epic, is framed by a concluding identification of the speaker in the past tense.

What can be determined decisively about this fragment is that it is a form of sung narrative, and in that respect it bears a very close resemblance to some of the choral songs in Aeschylus, which contain similarly framed representations of direct discourses.[22] If the fragment is rightly attributed to Stesichorus, then it points clearly to the tradition of choral performances in the Greek west (southern Italy and Sicily) and to a period at least one generation, and probably more, before the emergence of drama at Athens in the years following 534 BC. What is striking here is the prominence of prophecy as the occasion for quoted speech, or framed direct discourse, although recent research (as the research on *hypokrinesthai*) has pointed to the existence and recurrent significance of performatives in the far earlier, framed direct discourses of Homeric epic.[23]

The distinction I wish to draw here is between the pre-existence of performative characteristics (e.g. a report of an "illocutionary utterance," namely a prophecy) in a narrative form, and the actual embodiment of performatives in performance and in the individual actor. The Athenian tragic moment is decisive in its insistence that the "response" itself—the "illocutionary utterance"—should be of the essence of the drama which is commissioned. There is, in this process, a polarization which arises from the nature and status of the tragic chorus itself. The tragic chorus, unlike the disembodied narrative agents of Stesichorus, is characterized by mask, and the surviving plays demonstrate that this "character" is regularly fixed in extreme agitation in crisis. This exact determination of status in the Athenian tragic chorus creates precise conditions for the performative by embodying an urgent requirement for speech as action, which will itself solicit the embodiment of an individual performer: the actor, the *hypokrites*, whose existence is to respond decisively to demand, a demand which is formulated by the dramatic insistence of the tragic chorus.

The degree to which "performing the performative" is the closest definition of the Athenian actor in this localized moment of his creation can be demonstrated in the subsequent typology of non-tragic choral performance, which divides into archaic and innovative. The choral composers Simonides and Bacchylides were both closely associated with Athens in the period of the development of tragedy, but were not involved in tragic composition. In one striking fragment of Simonides's otherwise mutilated choral work, the framed

narrative that survives contains a prayer from Danae to Zeus for her salvation, in which the immediacy of her fears for herself and her child are exploited for what has been traditionally called pathos, but which has been recently redefined more accurately by Patricia Rosenmeyer as the language of isolation.[24] This isolation determines a sharp distinction from tragedy, and from the dynamics of response:

> The text crackles with the constant tension of attempts at communication . . . Messages are sent out into the void, and the intended audience [*namely Zeus*] never responds, in word or action, within the confines of the fragment (25).

By contrast, one of the surviving songs of Bacchylides takes the form of a sung exchange between a king of Athens (Aegeus) and a chorus, whose agitation and excitement express themselves in questions which repeatedly demand a response from the king.[25] Both songs may possibly be dithyrambs, the performances by a circular chorus of fifty that accompanied dramatic representations at Athens. But, the theatrical influence of "performing the performative" drives Bacchylides's composition towards an explicit mimicry of the actor, in his essentially responsive relation with the chorus. This is signally absent from Simonides, in whose conservatively framed narrative the continuity of non-dramatic choral composition inherited from Stesichorus remains untransformed.

V

The identification of the "response" as the vehicle for "performing the performative" at Athens is the direct result of a pressing need for generic description. The act of naming the unknown (in *hypokrinesthai* and *hypokrites*) seizes on the term that can effectively stand as an index of the whole spectrum of performative possibilities, and the accent is placed on what became for the Greeks in later aesthetic theory the primary intellectual sense of hearing in contrast to sight.[26]

I do not want, at the present time, to extend the argument into the Renaissance, where the existing scope of criticism has adequately recorded the overwhelming role of performatives in constituting the text. To cite one obvious example, the immense influence on Elizabethan drama of legal hypothesis and antagonism stemming from the Inns of Court would seem to offer adequate grounds for an advance from the critical observation of performatives to theory.[27] But, there seems to be no reason to stop short of noting here that the "*Quem quaeritis?*" trope has long been recognized as a responsive system, and as the probable nucleus of the later dramatic representation that we find in the *Cycles*. The absence of the mask from Christian liturgical worship would seem to have been one factor in the relatively slow development of the latent performativity of

this responsive system. But, it is unequivocally as embodied performatives, of a remarkably narrow and uniquely authoritative range, that we find the actor in the much later established texts from the *Cycles*, such as—to isolate an arbitrary triptych—*The Creation*, *The Crucifixion*, and *The Last Judgement*.[28]

The absence of the chorus, in addition to the mask, from the origins of medieval drama overrides the particularity of the Greek moment in suggesting the absolute recurrence of a requirement to perform the performative: one which might help us to achieve a definition of the European actor in at least two crucial moments of his (re)creation. That this definition may also extend far beyond the readjustments achieved at the Renaissance could be apparent in the choice of Brecht to harness his two most ambitious scripts to the performative modes of recanting (*The Life of Galileo*) and judging (*The Caucasian Chalk Circle*). Both of these are exemplary texts in relocating the actor with performative circumstances in what—for Brecht—was undoubtedly an historic "commission," undertaken through the particularity of his own, materialist, performance theory.

In summary, my contention is that Austin's theory of the relationship of speech to action offers strong possibilities for an explanation of the creation of the actor as a function of the formation (and reformation) of European drama. One final conclusion to this sequence of argument could be awkward for some contemporary tendencies in performance theory, and that is that the European actor, in diverse contingencies, is a function of the social demand for the dramatic script as a text, as an 'interweaving' of performative discourses.

Notes

1. Sandy Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990).

2. J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*. 2nd ed. By J.O. Urmson and M. Sbisà (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975); J.R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969). Austin's lectures were delivered in 1955. For speech-act criticism at work, see Keir Elam, *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse: Language Games in the Comedies* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984); Elias Rivers, ed., *Things Done with Words: Speech Acts in Hispanic Drama* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 1986); Shoshana Felman, *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*, trans. C. Porter (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1983).

3. Stanley Fish, "How to Do Things with Austin and Searle: Speech-Act Theory and Literary Criticism," in *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980).

4. Elias Rivers, *Quixotic Scriptures: Essays on the Textuality of Spanish Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983) 87. Rivers further defined theatrical texts at this point as "sequences of illocutionary speech acts."

5. Austin curiously represented what was, for him, the exemplary performative repeatedly as "I do," a mistake which is noted in the edition of his lectures (5, n. 2) as one he eventually recognized.

6. "*Hypokrinesthai* in Homer and Herodotus, and the Function of the Athenian Actor," *Philologus* 127.1 (1983): 13-29.

7. Gerald Else, "Hypokrites," *Wiener Studien* 77 (1958): 75-107. A summary of his conclusions on the early Athenian theatre can be found in *The Origin and Early Form of Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1965).

8. A good summary of the argument between Derrida and Searle is in Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Macmillan, 1989) 108-14. Derrida's *Signature, Event, Context* is available in the collection edited by Penelope Kamuf, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York and London: Columbia UP, 1991) 80-111. Of his observations, the following is perhaps the most pertinent in this context: "For, finally, is not what Austin excludes as anomalous, 'non-serious,' that is *citation* (on the state, in a poem, or in a soliloquy), the determined modification of a general citationality—or rather, a general iterability—without which there would not even be a 'successful' performative?" (103).

9. *Toward a Speech-Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977) 95.

10. Fish 242-43.

11. "With the Compliments of the Author: Reflections on Austin and Derrida," in *Doing What Comes Naturally* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1989) 49.

12. This awkwardness was picked up by Mary Louise Pratt, with her perception that any linguistic theory is predicated on an "ideal speaker" who would have specific social assumptions: "For speech-act theory, we could project an Oxford cricket player, or maybe a Boy Scout . . . ," in "The Ideology of Speech-Act Theory," *Centrum* 1.1 (1981): 5.

13. One obvious exception is the signature (Austin 60-62), which provided Derrida with his ironic conclusion in *Signature, Event, Context.*

14. Bert States, "The Actor's Presence: Three Phenomenal Modes," *Theatre Journal* 35.3 (1983): 359-75.

15. Sue-Ellen Case, "Classic Drag: the Greek Creation of Female Parts," *Theatre Journal* 37.3 (1985): 317-27. Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988): 519-31.

16. States took his approach further in "Part Two: the Actor" of his *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theatre* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1985).

17. "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology," in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in its Social Context*, ed. J.J. Winkler and F.I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990) 97-129.

18. "Literacy, Tyranny, and the Invention of Greek Tragedy," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 3.2 (1989): 53-67, with reference to Eric Havelock, *The Literate Revolution and Its Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981) and W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Methuen, 1982). Considerations of performance in Greek culture now far exceed the problematics of the Athenian theatre. As an introduction, see the essays collected in *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposium*, ed. Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1990), and the studies by Anne Burnett and Richard Martin below.

19. This transition is by no means and at no moment an absolute change of condition, for Greek society as the paradigm of a general rule. But the evolution of textuality is undoubtedly a marked feature of the historical period of Hellenic antiquity. A more skeptical view than those of Havelock or Ong is offered by W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989).

20. I find it important to emphasize, by my choice of the term "particularity," that we should not expect to find a total explanation for the emergence of the actor *in any one instance*. This would then be confounded by the fact of recurrence *in different circumstances*, which we find at least in the (European) medieval period, to which I turn briefly below.

21. Text, translation, and an extensive commentary are provided by Anne Burnett, "Jocasta in the West: the Lille Stesichorus," *Classical Antiquity* 7.2 (1988): 107-54. Burnett relates the work to the traditions of choral performance in the western Greek world (Sicily and southern Italy), in a detailed discussion of the greatest possible significance for historians of European performance.

22. Perhaps the most striking parallels occur in the extensive entry-song of the chorus in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, where the choral narrative includes quoted "speech" from the prophet Calchas (a prophecy and an averting prayer) and the war-leader Agamemnon. The influence of Stesichorus, who composed an *Oresteia*, on Aeschylus has always been accepted, but has been difficult to substantiate.

23. Richard Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the* Iliad (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1989).

24. "Simonides' Danae Fragment Reconsidered," *Arethusa* 24.1 (1991): 5-29. Her study includes a translation of the fragment.

25. For a translation and commentary, see Anne Burnett, *The Art of Bacchylides* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985) 114-23.

26. This is implicit in Aristotle's devaluation of "visual effect" (*opsis*), or "spectacle" as it has often been translated, in the *Poetics*.

27. I am thinking particularly here of *Gorboduc*, whose authorship (Sackville and Norton, both scholars of the Temple), performance circumstances, and thematics would seem to repay a close analysis of this kind. The "commission" that sustains this script (the Inner Temple, and later the Court itself at Whitehall) is symptomatic of the development of English Renaissance drama.

28. "I will/I shall" are, for example, the classic performatives of the act of creation.