Philosophy 133  
February 5, 2008  
Paper #1 Topics  
Due Tuesday, February 19 in class.  
Write a 3-4 page paper on one of the following questions.

1. Austin originally distinguished between performative and constative utterances. What was the distinction supposed to be? He later abandoned the distinction. Why? Do we still have a use for the notion of a performative in light of Austin’s arguments?

2. Searle criticizes Grice’s analysis of meaning. Briefly, state his objections and assess the strengths and weaknesses of Grice’s and Searle’s accounts.

3. The hypothesis that it is raining is consistent with the hypothesis that I do not believe that it is raining. All the same, it seems there is some kind of inconsistency in saying “It is raining but I do not believe that it is raining.” Furthermore, this inconsistency is pervasive in other kinds of speech acts. For example, I cannot consistently say, “I promise to come but I don’t intend to come”. What is Searle’s resolution of this paradox, and do you think it succeeds? (By the way, this is called “Moore’s paradox” and there is lots written about it which you can consult if you wish.)

4. Discuss the features that Searle uses to create his taxonomy of illocutionary acts: illocutionary point, direction of fit and psychological state. Do these features provide sufficient criteria to establish that a taxonomy of speech acts cannot exceed five types of illocutionary acts? Why or why not?