John Searle has something to do with the fact that I was born in Berkeley, California.

My parents studied Speech Act Theory as undergraduates at Tel Aviv University. Searle was a major reason why they left Israel in 1975 to start graduate school at Berkeley. Searle became my father's dissertation adviser, and ten years later I was born.

Searle's work was a central part of the intellectual life that my father, Ami Kronfeld, shared with me. That John Searle had by then become a household name was literally true in my household. One of Searle's favorite examples, the indirect speech act "Can you pass the salt" was mentioned just about as much as it was used around the dinner table. I later understood that one of the remarkable things about speech act theory is that the analysis does not interfere with the functioning of the phenomena you are trying to analyze. I'll pass you the salt even once I understand that your request is masquerading as a question about my abilities. Similarly, marriages are not being annulled because the parties involved suddenly realize that their union hangs on a performative utterance. Still, outside of a university setting, there is often a fear that an analytic explanation runs the risk of breaking the spell of what it's trying to explain. The magic dissipates once we understand how something actually works. And indeed, this does give magicians something to worry about -- the success of the magic act depends on the unavailability of explanation. There may even be a few other domains where the magician's theory of knowledge makes sense. For instance, as a jazz musician, I worry (perhaps irrationally) that excessive training in harmony might sometimes undo the pleasure of hearing. Yet I think Searle shows beautifully that philosophy can live side by side with the ordinary and extraordinary states of affairs that it describes, rather than canceling out or neutralizing them.

Last year, which was three years after my father died, Searle asked me to TA for Philosophy 133, his course on the philosophy of mind. Later that night when I was sharing the good news with my mom, I discovered that this was the very same course that my father had TA'd for Searle when he was a graduate student in the late 70s and early 80s. Of all the things my father and I have in common, this is perhaps the most uncanny. It's tough to face the fact that my father and I would share this experience unbeknownst to him. I think Searle would call this sharing without mutual belief...

Thirty years separate my dad's experience from mine; and clearly a lot has changed. But going through my his collection of cassette tapes I found several recorded lectures from Philosophy 133, September 1981. What strikes me when I listen to these recordings of Searle-- besides the fact that I recognize a lot of the jokes -- is a profound --even an eerie-- sense of historical and intellectual continuity; a sense of an internally coherent world view unfurling over time.

Searle's work will always remain a point of contact between my father and me. And by saying this I mean to emphasize (a personal point, which is) not only the extraordinary mark Searle has left on my family history, but also a certain feature of his work that makes such contact possible at all. Searle's later work (on social reality, for example) is to such a great extent in dialogue with his earlier work in the philosophy of language, that if I had the power to go back and meet my dad when he was my age studying Speech Act Theory at Tel Aviv University, he and I would be comparing notes on different aspects of a single philosophical system, rather than a set of disparate explanations.

I want to say something here about Searle's philosophical style and its influence on his students. Perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of Searle's work is what one book reviewer calls "an extreme effort and capacity to express himself with clarity." We may not always
agree with Searle, but we are rarely in doubt about what he means.

When I was a TA last semester I was amazed by the pace at which Searle's students seemed to internalize the commitment to verbal clarity that he was modeling for them on a daily basis. And Searle is self-conscious in this approach. He writes the following aside, for example, in his introduction to the book *Intentionality*: "Where questions of style and exposition are concerned I try to follow a simple maxim: If you can't say it clearly you don't understand it yourself." Here Searle actually reveals an interesting symmetry between style and philosophical content. What the maxim suggests, once we massage it into contrapositive form, is that if you do understand it yourself, you are capable of saying it clearly. There's actually a non-trivial claim at work here about the adequacy of language -- the adequacy of language for the communication of thought. This maxim looks to me to be a very close relative of Searle's Principle of Expressibility, according to which "whatever can be meant can be said."

To take this one step further, it seems to me that Searle's manner of teaching and writing is not only consistent with his philosophical convictions, but also exemplifies what might even be termed an ethics of style. The idea is that we should make language work for us rather than against us, where the "us" in question is inclusive, rather than exclusive. Whenever friends confronted me with doubts about the practical applications of my philosophy degree, I would tell them that I'm using philosophy to sharpen my bullshit detector. (Now that I've graduated I feel entitled to use technical terms.) Searle's bullshit detector is top of the line, and let me just list a few of the dangerous things from which a finely tuned BS detector can protect us: false premises, fallacies, hidden assumptions, tacit consent, equivocation and most of all, texts in which obfuscation acts as an end in itself. As we know, most abhorrent of all to Searle is academic language whose style performs or acts out the impossibility of referring successfully.

If there's one thing that Searle has hammered into his students it is the distinction between the expression and the thing expressed. You might say that in Searle's work, style is important precisely because it gets out of the way. Now as someone who's interested in literature and music, I certainly don't wish for style always to get out of the way. But when it comes to studying philosophy, there is a tremendous amount to be learned from Searle's way of foregrounding the ideas themselves. Most of us get around in the world by adopting different stylistic registers for different communicative purposes. Not so with Searle, it seems to me. Students who pick up a copy of one of John's books can expect to find there the very same voice that they heard in the lecture hall, in seminar, in the lounge, or on the ski slopes if they ever found him there. Most academics simply don't write books about philosophy the same way they talk to their mechanic, or conversely, they don't talk to their mechanic the same way they write books about philosophy. But it seems to me that Searle has no trouble at all maintaining total personal and philosophical authenticity and continuity at all times. And one result is that his intended addressees, whether imagined or actual, are always multiple and various. By being simultaneously -- and I think this simultaneity is important -- one of the world's most readable philosophers and one of the toughest intellectual critics around, Searle has redefined for his students what a life of the mind is really about.

In a biographical portion of a 2001 interview, Searle gives us a taste of his views on his own education and, by extension, the education of others. Here is what he said: "So, I did get two things at Oxford: 1) a sheer respect for the facts, and 2) a certain amount of self-confidence, that I could actually do this subject. And those are things that I try to give my students. A sense that 'you can do this.' Its something that's done by a lot of famous people, but you do it anyway. And secondly, when you do it you better respect the facts." Note that on this view it's the facts that act as authority figures, not the famous people. As he points out in *Mind and Language & Society,*
with an implicit nod to his old faithful notion, direction of fit: We are answerable to the facts. The facts are not answerable to us.

As a student of literature, I have to admit I didn't think I had much interest in facts per se. Maybe it's because I came to Cal in the wake of poststructuralism, for which the so-called limits of representation call into question any discursive practice that places "the facts" at its center. I was surprised, therefore, to find that Searle had very interesting things to say about the limits of representation precisely because of his commitment to realism.

Searle summarizes his view on representation in an early article that explores the way representation works in the Velazquez painting "Las Meninas." He writes: "All forms of intentionality are under an aspect or aspects of the things represented. Nothing is ever represented tout court, but only under some aspect or other." I might add that for every aspect of an object that a representation sheds light on, there are many more aspects on which the representation remains silent. Some of those aspects left out of the foreground may even be irretrievably lost. But far from exposing a failure or shortcoming of visual representation, I think Searle's analysis illustrates instead that this "limit" of representation may actually be a condition of possibility for the artistic.

It should come as no surprise, then, that for Searle, it's similarly not a lamentable limit of representation that each representation is attached to a point of view. For him, the perspectival nature of representation is not itself cause for an epistemic crisis. Rather, point of view is precisely the kind of apparatus designed to bring us into contact with things that aren't themselves points of view. Furthermore, as Searle observes, because it is an intrinsic feature of consciousness, point of view itself is also a remarkable fact about things as they are.

I don't know why, but of all the things I learned from Searle, this makes me the most cheerful.

In closing, I would like to thank Prof. Searle and Prof. Wallace for inviting me to participate in the celebration here today. There are a lot of famous people in the room, but you do it anyway.