Referential and Attributive

1. Donnellan's Account of the Distinction

the example: Smith's murderer is insane!
- attributive use
  o not a particular person; rather, whoever it was that murdered Smith
  o if the definite description is true of nothing (i.e., Smith was not murdered), the statement cannot be true
- referential use
  o Jones, a particular man, regardless of whether or not he is actually responsible for the death of Smith
  o statement is true even if Smith was not murdered at all, so long as the man we are supposedly referring to (Jones) is insane.

the theory:
- when speaker S uses definite description "the □" there is some referential entity e about which the following should be true:
  o S will have referred to e whether or not e is, in fact, □
  o S will have said something T/F about e whether or not e is □
  o S will have presupposed/implied that e is □
  o In reporting the speech act, it will be correct to say that S stated something about e and, in so reporting, to use expressions to refer to e other than "the □" or synonyms of it.

the problems:
- near misses - attributive uses that satisfy the above (referential) conditions.
  o does this shatter the distinction?

refining the distinction:
- reference is not the same as denotation
  o "The man who won the Indianapolis 500 drove a turbine-powered car."
  o "The Republican presidential candidate in 1964 will be a conservative."
- in the attributive usage examples, we are not really referring at all
- does this distinction hold water?
2. An Alternative Account

aspects:
- utterances represent objects under some aspect
  - "Smith's murderer" = representation under the aspect of being Smith's murderer; "Jones" = representation under the aspect of being Jones, and so on.
- multiple aspects can apply to the same object
  - when referring, we only pick one aspect with which to represent the object - presumably, the one the hearer is most likely to be able to recognize and understand
- sometimes, we pick the wrong aspect
  - so, when we say "Smith's murderer" referring to Jones, we also mean "Jones, the one accused of the crime, the person now being cross-examined," etc.
- BUT in cases where reference still supposedly works (like the Jones) case, this is because we have some other aspect to fall back on
  - every aspect we fall back on will identify someone of whom we can predicate the relevant properties and then determine truth / falsity
  - eventually, we run out of aspects, and then the statement cannot be true

- primary vs. secondary aspect
  - primary = the aspect under which reference is made
  - secondary = any aspect which the speaker utters in an attempt to secure reference to an object, but which is not itself intended as part of the truth conditions of the statement he is trying to make
  - example: "The man over there with champagne in his glass is happy." now suppose the man actually has water in his glass.
    - primary aspect = "that man over there"
    - secondary aspect = "that man over there with the champagne in his glass"
    - the secondary aspect does not figure in the truth conditions (except insofar as it includes the primary aspect) - so if the man actually has water in his glass, this is of no consequence.
    - the primary aspect DOES figure in the truth conditions - so if there is no man over there, the statement simply cannot be true.

the point:
- all of Donnellan's referential cases are ones where the speaker uses a definite description that expresses a secondary aspect - the cases still refer because there is a primary aspect to fall back on.
- Donnellan's attributive cases are simply one where the definite description expresses a primary aspect, and thus when the aspect fails the statements cannot be true.
3. Some Residual Problems

the "whoever" test:
- the attribute uses naturally take "whoever" (and variants thereof)
  o clearly 'referential' cases can do this also, however
    ▪ "That man over there in the funny hat, whoever he is, is trying to break into our car!"
  o these interrogative pronouns are used to question aspects other than the one expressed in the sentence

the attributive "near misses":
- there is no sharp dividing line between referring under a primary or a secondary aspect.
  o so if Smith is not murdered but assaulted, we could still likely fall back on some other primary aspect: "Smith's assailant" or "the person responsible for what we just observed"

speaker reference and semantic reference:
- this is Kripke's idea:
  o in attributive cases, speaker reference and semantic reference coincide
  o in referential cases, they may coincide but they do not need to; if the speaker is mistaken, the semantic reference may be different from the speaker reference
  o like almost all of Kripke's ideas, this one is quite complex and, Searle argues, needlessly so.

4. One Last Thing: De Re and De Dicto

- some philosophers have argued that the attributive/referential distinction is similar to the de re / de dicto distinction. NB: Searle will only be concerning himself here with the de re / de dicto distinction as it applies to intentional states.

**de re:** literally, "of (the) thing"

**de dicto:** literally, "of (the) word"

think of Hesperus v. Phosphorus, or Clark Kent v. Superman

scenario:
- Ralph sees a guy in a brown hat, and believes him to be a spy. I know the man is B.J. Ortcutt, but Ralph does not. When reporting Ralph's beliefs I can say either:
"About Ortcutt, Ralph believes he is a spy." (de re)
"Ralph believes that the man he saw in the brown hat is a spy." (de dicto)

- Searle says that this is not, in fact, a distinction between different kinds of beliefs, but rather between different ways of reporting beliefs
  - "The man I saw in the brown hat is a spy."
  - "About the man I saw in the brown hat, he is a spy."
    - truth conditions are the same!

- so the de re / de dicto distinction has this in common with the referential / attributive distinction: neither one, as described in the literature, exists!
  - the real distinctions are:
    - primary v. secondary aspects
    - reports of beliefs and speech acts that commit the reporter to the existence of an object referred to v. those that do not
  - we are more likely to make de re reports of secondary aspect references and de dicto reports of primary aspect references
    - note, however, that these are only tendencies