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JONES, DONALD EUGENE
QUEER BUT TRUE.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, PH.D., 1979

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QUEER BUT TRUE

A DISSERTATION

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degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

DONALD EUGENE JONES

Norman, Oklahoma

1979

QUEER BUT TRUE

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QUEER BUT TRUE

CHAPTER I

LOOKING AT WHAT WE WOULD SAY: CRITICS AND DEFENDERS

"Of course we would not say that, but I want to know whether it is true!" So goes a complaint against a style of philosophizing, against the appeal to what we would say.[1] With this complaint, philosophers lay a challenge to so-called ordinary-language philosophy, a challenge to "show us the relevance of looking at what we would say." Bertrand Russell, for example, delivers a sweeping rejection of philosophizing by looking at what we would say:

> (Ordinary language philosophy) seems to concern itself not with the world and our relation to it, but only with the different ways in which silly people can say silly things. If this is all that philosophy has to offer, I cannot think that it is a worthy subject of study.[2]

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[1] I use the word "would" neutrally, that is, not meaning to beg the question whether it is the appeal to what we would say, or, perhaps, to what we could say. In Chapter Three I will address the significance of this distinction.

[2] Bertrand Russell, My Philosophical Development (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), page 230.

Other, more recent philosophers echo Russell's challenge. Alan R. White, as an example, speaks not of the world but of what is true, and cautions that it can be a mistake to confuse "what it is true to say with what it is proper to say"; he warns of a confusion between "the impropriety of saying certain things and the possible truth of such things."[3] In a section appropriately entitled "Seeing and Saying We See," Fred I. Dretske cautions that a failure "to distinguish between what one sees . . . and the things we are prepared to say we see. . . can lead to confusion."[4] John R. Searle, unlike Dretske and White, not only cautions against but attacks looking at what we would say; he even diagnoses what he calls a fundamental mistake:

> (It is a mistake to suppose) that the conditions in which it is correct to assert that p are identical with the conditions in which it is the case that p. (In fact) there is no reason at all to suppose that these are identical, since assertion is only one kind of speech act among many.[5]

As if to anticipate these recent cautions and attacks, G. E. Moore, in a 1949 letter to Norman Malcolm, lectures Malcolm on the difference between the impropriety or senselessness of an expression and the possible truth of that expression:

> It is perfectly possible that a person who uses (words)

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[3]Alan R. White, Modal Thinking (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), pages 50 and 172.

[4]Fred I. Dretske, Seeing and Knowing (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), page 37.

[5]John R. Searle, "Assertions and Aberrations," Symposium on J. L. Austin (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), page 218 (emphasis mine).

> senselessly should be using them (in a way such that) what he asserts by so using them should be true.[6]

Moore, then, like Searle, Dretske, White, and Russell, thought that though it may be odd to say something, what was odd might very well be true.

Such an attack captures the heart of many misgivings about so-called ordinary-language philosophy. More than once a meticulous appeal to what we would say has been met by the (restrained) response "So what!" as if to object, "All right, I see that it is a queer thing to say, but I want to know whether it is true!" Listen to Alan R. White as he invokes this "queer but true" objection in an attempt to forestall appealing to what we would say:

> (The sentence) "I believe that (Sam robbed the store), but he did not," though a queer thing to say, is perfectly capable of being quite true.[7]

Sensing the queerness of saying "I believe that Sam robbed the store, but he did not," and anticipating the implication that since the sentence is queer it is not true, White tries to outmaneuver his imagined opposition simply by asserting that even though the sentence is queer, it still might be true. As we shall see, such maneuvers are typical of the attempts of many philosophers either to bypass or to attack ordinary language philosophy. The status of ordinary-language philosophy is at stake. Inviting as it does the "So what?" response,

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[6]Norman Malcolm, Thought and Knowledge (Cornell University Press, 177), page 174.

[7]White, Modal Thinking, page 51 (emphasis mine).

ordinary-language philosophy must confront the objection that encapsulates that response, the "queer-but-true" objection.

But there is more than one "queer-but-true" objection. First, a philosopher might object to ruling out an expression (to the claim that "we would not say that"); second, a philosopher might object to ruling in an expression (to the claim that "we would say this"); and within each of these two objections a philosopher might distinguish further between challenging what we would (not) say, or challenging what we could (not) say. My goal is to classify and explain the many "queer-but-true" objections, and to argue that none of them is completely defensible. I hope also to show that though not completely defensible, the objections are natural and (as I shall argue) welcome moves in the process of treating a philosophical problem. Let me try now to explain the "queer-but-true" objections, by seeing what they are against, namely, the appeal to what we would say.

The Appeal to What We Would Say

This misunderstood terrain needs some landmarks, some examples, of which the locus classicus is, surely, paragraph 246 of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations:

> It can't be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I know that I am in pain . . .
> Other people cannot be said to learn of my sensations only from my behavior,--for I cannot be said to learn of them. I have them.
> The truth is: it makes sense to say about other people

> that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself.[8]

Judging from the number of commentators on this passage, Wittgenstein must have struck a nerve. For some, paragraph 246 looks like an easy target--it is so simple; but for others, it provides the standard for a careful philosophy--it is so deft. To see Wittgenstein's deft stroke, recall the process of treatment in paragraph 246. To begin the treatment, Wittgenstein opens the paragraph by wondering aloud "In what way are my sensations private?" He then imagines what I shall call a Cartesian reply, "Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it." With this reply, the Cartesian is ready for treatment. To prepare the treatment Wittgenstein flatly observes that taken straight-forwardly the Cartesian view is simply wrong, since, "other people very often know when I am in pain." But the treatment process must be working, for that observation draws out the Cartesian opponent: "Yes, but all the same not with the certainty with which I know it myself!" Now, Wittgenstein deftly removes the offending part: "It cannot be said of me at all . . . that I <u>know</u> I am in pain." The prized knowledge of one's own pain, upon which the Cartesian view depends, is found to be at fault.

Notice, though, how the offending part is removed. Wittgenstein does not assert that I do not know I am in pain; instead, he asserts that "It cannot be <u>said</u> (emphasis mine) of

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[8]Ludwig Wittgenstein, <u>Philosophical Investigations</u>, 3rd edition, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), paragraph 246.

me . . . that I know I am in pain." Wittgenstein's appeal to what cannot be said is unmistakeable, for, in the remainder of 246 he continues the appeal: "It can't be said other people cannot be said, I can't be said." This continues until the last sentence of 246, in which Wittgenstein appears to shift, appealing instead to what "it makes no sense to say." For now, I shall postpone discussing the subtle relationship between what it makes no sense to say and what cannot be said.

We have found, then, our first landmark, and so, one version of the so-called appeal to what we would say:
1. The appeal to what cannot be said--to what makes no sense. Though not accurately described as an appeal to what we would say, this first version gives one well-known target for critics of the appeal. This appeal has three distinguishing characteristics: 1) It is negative--"cannot be said, makes no sense"; 2) it explicitly mentions the notion of making sense; 3) it could not be supported simply by a survey of our speaking habits, since it claims more than just what we would not, in fact, say.

But we should not leave 246 in haste, for it contains a different example, one that is accurately described as an appeal to what we would say. Recall the initial view of the Cartesian: "Well, only I can know whether I am in pain; another person can only surmise it." Wittgenstein, as he counters, appeals to what we would, in fact say:

> In one way this is wrong . . . if we are using the word 'to know' as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?), then other people very often know when I am

in pain. (emphasis mine)

This appeal is accurately described as an appeal to what we would say. Wittgenstein, in effect, says that taken straightforwardly it is simply wrong to say that only I can know whether I am in pain, for if we were to listen to people talk we would find that very often they normally would say, "I know he is in pain."[9]

We have, then, our second landmark, and so, a second version of the appeal to what we would say:

2. The appeal to what, in fact, we would normally say.

This differs in at least four ways from the first appeal: 1) It is positive rather than negative; 2) it has no explicit relation to the notion of making sense; 3) it depends more definitely upon simply finding out about the facts (such as, "do people in fact say this?"); and 4) it does not appear to require argument, whereas showing what cannot be said is notorious for the disagreements it spawns.

Of course, Wittgenstein blended the two appeals in a two-staged treatment. As he said, "In one way this is wrong and in another nonsense." To show it was wrong, he appealed to what, in fact, we would normally say; to show it was nonsense, he appealed to what we cannot say--to what

---

[9]One must be careful. Wittgenstein says only that others often know when I am in pain, not that others often would say, "I know he is in pain." I am assuming that I do not distort Wittgenstein. As we shall see later, he commonly "shifts" from what we would say to what is the case. This is sometimes because he argues as if an assertion can be true of a person if we can assert it sensibly of that person--not requiring that the person be able to assert it sensibly of himself.

makes no sense.

But Wittgenstein is not the only philosopher to blend these appeals. They are blended by the practitioners of what has been called the "paradigm case" appeal.[10] We will see, though, that even when philosophers add their own design to paradigm case appeals, their appeals still fall into two classes that parallel Wittgenstein's two landmarks. In one class are appeals by J. L. Austin to the "plain man's" reaction, and by G. E. Moore (as described by Norman Malcolm) to "common sense." In the other class are appeals by Austin and Malcolm to the "contrast" argument, and an appeal by Norman Malcolm (as a criticism of G. E. Moore) to what I shall call a "missing-ingredient" argument. First, let us see Austin and his "plain man."

J.L. Austin values what the "plain man" would say. In one of his lectures in Sense and Sensibilia Austin attacks A. J. Ayer's suggestion that the plain man believes that "when I look at a chair a few yards in front of me in broad daylight, my view is that I have (only) as much certainty as I need and can get that there is a chair and that there is room for doubt and suspicion that I see it."[11] Austin attacks by imagining the reaction of the "plain man:"

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[10]The words "paradigm case" were first used, to my knowledge, by J. O. Urmson in "Some Questions Concerning Validity," Essays In Conceptual Analysis (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), page 120.

[11]J. L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), page 10.

> But in fact the plain man would regard doubt in such a case, not as far-fetched or even refined or somehow unpractical, but as plain nonsense; he would say, quite correctly, "Well, if that's not seeing a real chair then I don't know what is.[12]

Here, Austin appeals to a natural linguistic reaction to a philosophical utterance. Austin thus heightens the opposition between the plain man and the philosopher, by having the plain man react with disbelief.

Such an appeal contrasts with Wittgenstein's two landmarks. First, notice that, in contrast to Wittgenstein, Austin does not say "If we are using the words as they are normally used, then people very often see that this is a real chair." It is not that people commonly could be said to see that this is a real chair, but that when confronted with the philosophical utterance ("There is room for doubt and suspicion that I see this chair") the plain man would react to the philosopher and, only then, in disbelief object "If that's not seeing a real chair then I don't know what is!"

Second, in further contrast to Wittgenstein, the plain man does not explicitly assert but only implies the positive. "This is a case of seeing a real chair." What the plain man proclaims is a conditional: "If that's not a case of x then I don't know what is!" Now, one of the uses of a conditional is to emphasize what you are implying. The plain man thus emphatically announces, but only by implication, that "This is the very type, a paradigm case, of seeing a real

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[12]Ibid (emphasis is mine on "say").

In 1942, in an essay "Moore and Ordinary Language," Norman Malcolm describes Moore's Defense" as an appeal to paradigm cases.[14] Malcolm considers the philosophical statement "We do not know for certain the truth of any material-thing statement." Malcolm then paraphrases Moore's reply: "Both of us know for certain that there are several chairs in this room, and how absurd it would be to suggest that we do not know it, but only believe it, or that it is highly probable but not really certain."[15] Malcolm then attempts to describe Moore's reply:

> Moore is right. What his reply does is to give us a paradigm of absolute certainty . . . it appeals to our language-sense; to make us feel how queer and wrong it would be to say, when we sat in a room seeing and touching chairs, that we believed there were chairs but did not know it for certain, or that it is only highly probable that there were chairs . . . By reminding us of how we ordinarily use the expressions "know for certain" and "highly probable," Moore's reply constitutes a refutation of the philosophical statement that we can never have certain knowledge of material-thing statements. It reminds us that there is an ordinary use of the phrase "know for certain" in which it is applied to empirical statements; and so shows us that Ayer is wrong when he says that "The notion of certainty does not apply to propositions of this kind."[16]

Here, Malcolm's Moore, like Austin's plain man, appeals to a natural linguistic reaction to a philosophical utterance. Moore thus heightens the opposition between our (the plain

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[14]Norman Malcolm, "Moore and Ordinary Language," The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (La Salle: Open Court, 1968), p. 354.

[15]Ibid., page 354.

[16]Ibid., pages 354-355.

man's) ordinary way of speaking and the philosopher's way of speaking, by having the ordinary man react and charge the philosopher with absurdity.

This appeal both contrasts with and is like Wittgenstein's landmarks. First, in contrast to Wittgenstein (but like Austin's plain man), Malcolm's Moore is speaking in reaction to a philosopher's doubt. Hence, Moore is not simply saying that people commonly could be said to know for certain that this is a real chair, but that when confronted with the philosophical utterance ("We do not know for certain the truth of any material-thing statement"), Moore would react to the philosopher and, only then, proclaim that "We do know for certain that this is a real chair!"[17]

Second, like Wittgenstein (but in contrast to Austin's plain man), Malcolm's Moore explicitly asserts the positive affirmation "I do know for certain that this is seeing a real chair." Thus while Austin's plain man appeals only by implication to the paradigm case of seeing a real chair, Malcolm's Moore reminds us of the paradigm by asserting flatly "I know for certain that this is seeing a real chair." He even presents the paradigm to us.

What, then exactly, is a paradigm case? Is it the real chair, seeing the real chair, saying that you see the real chair? It is difficult to answer this question, because the

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[17]Moore accepted this view of what he was doing, for he said in a 1949 letter to Malcolm "Of course (when I said that I know for certain that this is a real chair) I was using (these words) with a purpose--the purpose of disproving a general proposition which many philosophers have made." (Malcolm, Thought and Knowledge, page 174).

question unnaturally forces the words "paradigm case." The question to ask is not what is a paradigm case, but, rather, how does one use a paradigm case appeal?[18] One answer to the question of use is seen in the third version of the appeal to what we would say: the appeal to paradigm cases--as a reaction, without argument--to emphasize both what we would say and what it would be queer or improper to say. How, then, is a paradigm case appeal used? For two purposes: to emphasize what we would say, and to emphasize what it would be queer or improper to say. And when is it used? Only in response to some philosophical utterance.

If we use Malcolm's Moore as a guide, we can see clearly that such an appeal is a mixture of Wittgenstein's landmarks. 1) It is both positive and negative ("we do know for certain we do not merely believe"); 2) it has an explicit relation to the notion of making sense (Ayer violates our language-sense"); 3) it depends upon finding out the facts ("do we in fact say 'I know for certain'?"); and 4) it does not appear to require any accompanying argument, simply observations about how we ordinarily use certain expressions.

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[18]I realize this is controversial, but I want my cards on the table. It is not totally impossible to give a respectable answer to the question of what a paradigm case is; one respectable answer is that a paradigm case is simply an instance of what we would in fact normally (correctly) say--a correct, but not necessarily true, application of the expression in question. But this may seem to exclude Austin's plain man. Even worse, this formulation invites the (in this case) pseudo distinction between the paradigm case of seeing a real chair and the paradigm case of using the words "seeing a real chair." In Chapter Three, I shall discuss the significance, or lack of it, of this "distinction."

I wish by this information to call attention to the lack of argument accompanying this third class of appeals, in contrast to the fourth class of appeals that we will investigate. Austin's plain man and Malcolm's Moore both appealed to what simply was presumed to be true, but was not argued for. In fact, short of taking a survey, some philosophers find it hard to imagine how one could argue for a claim about what we would say. It seems even more difficult to show that something cannot be said--that it makes no sense. One is naturally tempted to ask, "Upon what do you rest your case?"

Well, some paradigm case appeals do give reasons upon which to rest your case. Designed to show what we cannot say--what makes no sense such appeals usually take the form "You cannot say this <u>because</u> . . ." In this class we find appeals by both Malcolm and Austin to the "contrast" argument, and a different appeal by Malcolm (as a criticism of Moore) to what I shall call a "missing ingredient" argument. First, the "contrast" argument.

Malcolm has made famous the hotly debated "contrast" argument, an argument that provides a singularly striking reason for opposing much that passes for insight in philosophy. Malcolm presents his case in a paper in which he attacks C. I Lewis, A. J. Ayer, Bertrand Russell, and any other philosopher who wants to say that no empirical statement can be certain. Malcolm states that contrast argument clearly and simply:

There are words in our language that operate in <u>pairs</u>.

> For example, there is "large" and "small", "hot" and "cold", "fast" and "slow", "probable" and "certain". Suppose that we banished the word "small" from the language, and applied the word "large" to everything, both large and small. It is obvious that if in describing an object to someone you said that it was "large" that would convey no information to him at all about the size of the object. The word "large" would be a useless word. It is essential to the meaning of "large" as it is now used, that large is contrasted with small. If large ceases to be contrasted with small, the word "large" loses its meaning.
>
> Similarly, if "it's probable" or "it's highly probable" were to precede every empirical statement, these expressions would lose their meaning. For it is essential to the meaning of "probable" and "highly probable", that probability is contrasted with certainty. That is why it makes sense to say, "It's highly probable but not quite certain." If the application of "certain" to empirical statements were abolished, the word "probable" would also cease to be applied to them. For it would have become a useless piece of language, a word which conveyed no information.[19]

Malcolm is arguing that a philosopher cannot say that no empirical statement is certain, because if that were true, then the word 'certain' could not have a use (since it would have no contrast). But it does have a use, so the philosopher cannot be right. Furthermore, it would be pointless to adopt the philosopher's way of speaking, for the word 'certain' would be a useless word. In short, this simple argument renders impotent the philosopher's claim. Not only is the philosopher shown to be wrong, if he claims his view to be true, but he is also shown to have no useful recommendation to make to us. It is no wonder that the contrast argument has been so hotly debated.

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[19]Norman Malcolm, "Certainty and Empirical Statements," Mind 51 (1942): pages 27-78.

Thus blended, Wittgenstein's two landmarks provide a tidy response to the philosopher. But notice that Malcolm adds to the charge that something cannot be said; he adds an argument. He does not simply assert that something cannot be said, he gives reasons upon which to rest his case. Not only does he remind us of the normal, correct (paradigm) use of certain terms, but he observes that the paradigm use requires contrast; he argues that without contrast the terms would make no sense.

Two further characteristics of Malcolm's contrast argument place it in relation to the other appeals to what we would say. First, Malcolm reminds us of the paradigm, as if to remind us of what we normally do. Unlike Austin's plain man, Malcolm does not imply the paradigm in an exasperated conditional. Nor does he, like Malcolm's Moore, insist upon the paradigm simply to counter the philosopher's challenge. Instead, echoing Wittgenstein, Malcolm could be paraphrased as saying: "If we are using words as they are normally used, then people would normally say 'It's highly probable but not quite certain'." Malcolm reminds us of what we would, in fact, normally say.

This suggests the second characteristic: Malcolm actually presents the paradigm. He says, "It makes sense to say 'It's highly probable but not quite certain'." In contrast to Austin's plain man, who never really asserts the paradigm but only implies it, Malcolm (in the contrast argument) actually presents the paradigm. Here Malcolm's use of the

contrast argument resembles Malcolm's treatment of Moore--in both cases the paradigms are, in fact, presented.

We have found, then, our fourth landmark, and so, a fourth version of the appeal to what we would say:

4. The appeal to paradigm cases--plus supporting argument--to emphasize both what we would say and what it would be incorrect (a misuse of language) to say.

Such an appeal is thus a mixture of Wittgenstein's two landmarks. 1) It is positive and negative ("probable" and "certain" do operate as pairs--"probable" and "certain" would have no meaning); 2) it has an explicit relation to the notion of making sense ("it makes no sense to say . . .")' 3) it seems to depend upon finding out about the facts ("do words actually operate in pairs?--does it make sense to say . . .?"); and 4) it does require accompanying argument to support the contrast thesis.

To show the features of this landmark, I want to consider two further examples: Austin's use of the contrast argument, and Malcolm's use of a related argument. First, Austin.

Like Malcolm, Austin often uses a version of the contrast argument. His memorable description "trouser word" has become part of the technical language of philosophers. To illustrate Austin's use of the phrase "trouser word" and thereby Austin's use of the contrast argument, let us watch Austin attack A. J. Ayer's use of the expression "directly perceive." Austin picturesquely describes how a philosopher's language can be distorted until it is useless:

> Now of course what brings us up short here is the word 'directly'--a favourite among philosophers, but actually one of the less conspicuous snakes in the linguistic grass. We have here, in fact, a typical case of a word, which already has a very special use, being gradually stretched, without caution or definition or any limit, until it becomes, first perhaps obscurely metaphorical, but ultimately meaningless. One can't abuse ordinary language without paying for it.
>
> It is essential to realize that here the notion of perceiving indirectly wears the trousers--'directly' takes whatever sense it has from the contrast with its opposite.[20]

Austin, like Malcolm, argues that if one stretches a phrase until it has no application, then it has been rendered useless. This applies especially to "trouser" words, words such as 'real' and 'free' that take their sense from the contrast with their opposite.

I classify this as a paradigm-case appeal because ultimately it rests upon observing the paradigmatic use that an expression does in fact have. Notice how Austin develops the appeal. First, he notes that the use of "directly" in "directly perceive" brings us up short. Our sense of something out of line causes us to balk. We are struck that this is not the normal, correct use of the word "directly". Our sense of its paradigmatic use is upset. Second, Austin speaks of the word "directly" as having a special use, a paradigm use--suggesting that that use is violated by "being gradually stretched, without caution or definition or any limit, until it becomes, first perhaps obscurely metaphorical, but ultimately meaningless." This suggests that the word "directly" has an ordinary paradigmatic use, but that that use has been gradually

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[20]Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, page 15.

distorted. Fourth, he confirms this suggestion by saying, "One can't abuse ordinary language without paying for it." For Austin, then, ordinary language contains an ordinary paradigmatic use of the word "directly". Austin appeals to this paradigm by showing how the philosopher has deviated from it.

If Austin had simply pointed out how the philosopher's use deviates from our ordinary use, then we could classify this simply as a sophisticated appeal to what we would say: an attempt to remind us of the ordinary use of "directly", not by just rehearsing it, but also by showing how the philosopher's use gradually deviates from the ordinary use. But Austin does more; he presents an argument. He argues that the word "directly" "takes whatever sense it has from the contrast with its opposite." So the philosopher who uses "directly perceive" must be able to tell us what "indirectly perceive" means; otherwise, "directly perceive" would have no use.

We can see two similarities between Austin's contrast argument and his presentation of the "plain man's" objections. One, in neither case does Austin actually present the paradigm. In the case of the plain man, Austin has him imply the paradigm; similarly, in the case of the contrast argument, Austin only implies the ordinary use of the word "directly"; he never in fact gives an example of it. Two, in both cases the primary reason for speaking was to react or to counter the philosopher's way of speaking: with the plain man, to show

the philosopher doing something that was plainly absurd; with the contrast argument, to show how the philosopher had gone wrong. One could even interpret Austin as providing guidelines for combatting philosophers. The plain man's guideline would be to determine whether the philosopher is implicitly denying something that is obviously the case; the contrast guideline would be to determine whether the philosopher has stretched a word beyond its normal contrast.

We have found, then, another version of our fourth landmark. Austin's "trouser word" version of the contrast argument meets all the criteria. Austin appeals to paradigm cases (to the paradigm use of "directly"); Austin provides supporting arguments (the "trouser word" argument); he tries both to emphasize what we would say (we would use "directly" in contrast to "indirectly") and to emphasize what it would be incorrect, a misuse of language, to say (philosophers misuse "directly" in the phrase "directly perceive").

This "trouser word" version of the contrast argument blends Wittgenstein's two landmarks. 1) It is positive and negative (We would contrast "directly" with "indirectly"--"one can not abuse ordinary language"); 2) It has an explicit relation to the notion of making sense ("'directly' takes what sense it has. . ."); 3) It seems to depend upon finding out about the facts ("do people in fact contrast 'directly' with indirectly'?"); and 4) It does appear to require accompanying argument to support the "trouser" thesis.

Malcolm and Austin, then, not only recite how we would in

fact speak, but they also give reasons for the claim that we cannot talk the way the philosopher recommends. In both cases, Malcolm and Austin used the contrast argument to attack other philosophers. Malcolm continues this attack in a now famous criticism of G. E. Moore. Though the earlier Malcolm had used a paradigm case argument to explain and defend Moore ("Moore is appealing to the paradigm case of absolute certainty"), Malcolm now attacks Moore for presenting a view that, though improved over earlier philosophers, is still not quite correct.

In his attack on Moore, Malcolm accompanies the paradigm case appeal with a new argument, an argument that I shall call the "missing ingredient argument." This agrument has three parts: 1) an enumeration of paradigmatic uses of an expression, 2) a claim about what is an essential ingredient to those paradigms, and 3) a charge that the proposed philosophical use lacks the ingredient essential to the paradigms. The conclusion of this appeal is again about what we cannot say--what makes no sense; it is noticeably buttressed by the "missing-ingredient" argument. I could also call it the "missing context" argument, since the missing ingredient is usually thought to be missing because the philosopher has stripped the expression of its context, with the implication that in its proper context (in paradigmatic instances of the correct application of the expression) the expression is harmless, that is, not philosophically significant. Again, Norman Malcolm is a modern master. This time, rather than

defend Moore, Malcolm subtly attacks Moore's "Defense of Common Sense." Recall that Moore claimed that there were a number of things that he knew, with certainty, to be true. Malcolm asks us to consider one of these cases. Suppose, says Malcolm, that he and Moore are sitting together facing a tree. On Moore's view, it would apparently be correct for him to say to Malcolm, "I know that that (pointing at the tree) is a tree."[21] Malcolm invokes a "missing-ingredient" argument to show that Moore's statement is incorrect. Malcolm says that Moore's statement is a misuse of language. First, Malcolm enumerates the paradigms, that is, several instances in which the sentence "I know that that is a tree" would be correctly used. Then, Malcolm notices the common "ingredients" in each paradigm instance:

> Let us notice some features common to these cases: (1) There is in each case a question at issue and a doubt to be removed. (2) In each case the person who asserts "I know that that's a tree" is able to give a reason for his assertion. (3) In each case there is an investigation which, if it were carried out, would settle the question at issue.[22]

Shortly after showing that "all these features are missing" when Moore says in a philosophical context "I know that that's a tree," Malcolm concludes that Moore's use of the expression "I know" is a misuse, since it is contrary to the ordinary and correct use.

Notice that Malcolm enumerates the paradigm uses, as if

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[21]Norman Malcolm, "Defending Common Sense," Philosophical Review 54 (1949): pages 202-203.

[22]Ibid., page 203.

they were uses that a non-philosopher might easily encounter. Unlike Austin's plain man, Malcolm does not just suggest or imply the paradigm uses, but in fact asserts them. This also contrasts with Austin's "trouser-word" argument in which the paradigm uses were never actually asserted, only implied.

Furthermore, Malcolm asserts the paradigms as if they were uses that did not require for their sense the context of responding to philosophers. Unlike Austin's plain man, Malcolm does not reply in exasperation or with incredulous disbelief, rather, Malcolm simply rehearses some actual uses of the words "I know" and concludes from that rehearsal that the philosopher's use deviates from the ordinary use. This is also unlike Malcolm's Moore, for he too insisted that the philosopher was mistaken; he meant to establish that error by giving some paradigm examples of what we do know for certain. Malcolm, in contrast to Austin and Moore, appeals to the paradigms, not in reaction after the philosopher offers his thesis, but preparatory to the philosopher's assertion. In short, Malcolm's paradigms do not require the philosopher's use for their sense.

The "missing-ingredient" argument provides another clear example of the fourth landmark. There is an appeal to paradigm cases ("these are normal, correct uses of 'I know'"), there is supporting argument ("therefore the philosopher's use must be a misuse, since the essential ingredient is missing"), and there is an emphasis both on what we would say ("We would say 'I know' in this circumstance") and on what would be

incorrect, a misuse of language, to say ("Moore's use of 'I know' is a misuse").

As we shall see later, many other contemporary philosophers employ the "missing ingredient" argument.[23] But, for now, our goal is simply to locate landmarks in the misunderstood terrain of the appeal to what we would say. Malcolm's example stands as a clear landmark. It has the essential ingredients: enumerate paradigms, spot common ingredients in the paradigms, and conclude that the philosophical use is a misuse.

Unlike the earlier paradigm case appeals, the fourth landmark (the contrast arguments and the missing ingredients argument) contains supporting arguments. Those philosophers who wish to attack this version of the appeal must do more than argue about what we would say. Let us turn now to such attacks on the appeal to what we would say.

The "Queer But True" Attacks On The Appeal To What We Would Say

"Of course we would not <u>say</u> that, but I want to know whether it is <u>true</u>!" With this, the philosopher concedes "queerness" but will not surrender "truth." We see, now, the strategy of

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[23]One may wonder why Wittgenstein is not used as a prime example. He does seem to use a missing ingredient agrument at the end of paragraph 246: "The truth is: it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself." Isn't Wittgenstein implying that since saying "I know" requires the ingredient of doubt, and since doubt can never be present in the case of one's own pain, that, therefore, because of the missing ingredient one cannot say "I know I am in pain"? Yes, he is. But (1) the argument is only implied and my goal is to present <u>clear</u> landmarks, and (2) Malcolm is a more frequent target for critics of this version of the appeal to what we would say.

the "queer but true" attacks on the appeal to what we would say: Let the ordinary language philosopher counter with (in Russells' words) "the different ways in which silly people can say silly things," but when he is finished, let him know he has missed the prize; though he put up a good show, he leaves empty-handed. Thus defused ordinary language philosophy is rendered incidental. Again in Russell's words "If this is all that philosophy has to offer, I cannot think it worthy of study."

The status of ordinary language philosophy is at stake. Whether it is worthy of study will depend partly upon whether the queerness of an expression has any bearing on the possible truth of that expression. Those philosophers who deliver the "queer but true" attacks on the appeal to what we would say, rightly sense the prize they are defending: if it could be shown that an assertion's being queer precludes its being true, many assertions of philosophers could not be true.

With so much at stake, it is no surprise that the appeal to what we would say is one of the favorite targets of philosophers. The many attacks divide into groups according to the kind of argument given, according to the kind of target, and according to the underlying philosophy behind the attack. Since they divide most naturally according to the kind of argument given, I will introduce them with such a division. After introducing them, then, in Chapter Two we can explore how the different kinds of attack are partly determined by the underlying philosophy of the attacker and partly by the

kind of target being attacked.

Though Russell conveys the spirit of most attacks, he does not offer serious argument to support his challenge. Accordingly, I shall begin with White who does mount a sophisticated argument that goes to the heart of the appeal to what we would say. A specific version of White's more general argument is given by Dretske in a popular argument that is used, often unwittingly, by the unwary defenders of the appeal to what we would say. Dretske's argument will suggest a general argument that Searle delivers in a sweeping rejection of the significance of the appeal to what we would say. It will remain then, for G.E. Moore, in a letter to Norman Malcolm, to open a new line of attack, one that I will also exploit in Chapter Five in an attempt to state the nature of many philosophical assertions.

White's Attack

White provides a clear example of a "queer but true" attack on the so-called pragmatic paradox, a version of what is called "Moore's paradox." The paradox is that one cannot say, for example, "I believe that Sam robbed the store, but he did not." Because of this paradox some philosophers would conclude that the sentence cannot be true. White does not agree.

> (The sentence) "I believe that (Sam robbed the store), but he did not," though a queer thing to say, is perfectly capable of being quite true.[24]

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[24]White, Modal Thinking, page 51.

White concedes that it would be queer to say, but does not surrender the possibility that it might be true.

But, White does sometimes surrender this possibility. He distinguishes between an expression's being inappropriate or improper and an expression's being illogical. He makes this distinction in a discussion of a typical assertion from the McCarthy Era. During the McCarthy Era it was, of course, not flattering to have Senator McCarthy announce that you were not a communist, since his saying so suggested that your not being one was somehow noteworthy. In the quotation below, White distinguishes being inappropriate from being illogical, and then argues that an inappropriate expression "may have been perfectly true," whereas an illogical expression "could not have been either true or false."

> It may have been inappropriate for Senator McCarthy to announce that Dr. Pusey was not a communist, since there was no reason to suppose he was or that anyone had suggested that he was. But it would have been downright illogical of the Senator to say that Dr. Pusey was no longer (had ceased to be) a communist, if he had never been a communist. 'Dr. Pusey is not a communist' may have been perfectly true, whatever the circumstances; but 'Dr. Pusey is no longer (has ceased to be) a communist' could not have been either true or false, unless Dr. Pusey had once been a communist.[25]

According to White, then, the queerness of an expression would or would not preclude the truth of that expression, depending upon whether the expression was illogical or merely inappropriate.

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[25]Alan R. White, "Mentioning the Unmentionable," Symposium on J. L. Austin (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), page 225 (emphasis mine).

If we combine White's comments about our version of Moore's Paradox with his comments about McCarthy's pronouncement, then we can conclude that White thinks the sentence "I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not" is not illogical but merely inappropriate to say. If White thought it were illogical, he would have surrendered its possible truth.

White's attack on the appeal to what we would say is directed against the philosopher who argues that since it is inappropriate (or improper) to say something that therefore it could not be true. If the philosopher argued that an expression was illogical, then White would agree that it could not be true.

But what about the philosopher who argues not that what is said is itself illogical but that one's saying it is illogical? Can doing something be illogical, for White? We must determine White's answer to this question, since to evaluate the appeal to what we would say we need to know whether it is what one says or one's saying it that is to be appraised.

White unites the two. He argues that (1) it is primarily what we can say that can be illogical, but that (2) our saying it can be illogical if certain conditions are not satisfied. To see these two parts united, let's follow White's discussion of what he calls certain "concepts". White uses the words "makes sense" and "does not make sense" as interchangeable with the words "logical" and "illogical." By this usage, for example, it makes no sense (is illogical) to say that Dr.

Pusey was no longer a communist if he had not previously been one. We can see this dual position in the division of the following quotation from "Mentioning the Unmentionable":

> (1) In no circumstances would it make sense to say, nor would it be true or false, that someone knew the date of the Battle of Waterloo, carefully...The concept of care can never go with the concept of knowledge...Consequently, the very sentence 'He knew carefully the Battle of Waterloo' is meaningless.
>
> (2) On the other hand, in certain circumstances, but not in all, it would not make sense to say (for example) that someone had sobered up, namely, if he had not previously been drunk.[26]

White's two-part position is that (1) what is said is illogical (makes no sense) if there are no circumstances in which it would make sense to say it, and (2) one's saying it is illogical (makes no sense) if certain circumstances are not satisfied. Of course, one's saying something that itself was illogical would presumably count as illogical, as well.

If something is illogical or if saying it would make no sense, then White would hold that its being thus queer (illogical) precludes it from being true. He obviously holds this view of illogical sentences, but also holds it of our saying things that are illogical only in certain circumstances:

> It would not be true to say of a man who had not been drunk and was not now drunk that he had not sobered

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[26]White, Mentioning the Unmentionable," pages 222-223 (emphasis mine).

> up, but it would equally not be true to say that he had sobered up.[27]

Even if saying something (not what is said) is illogical (queer), White would say it cannot be true. Accordingly, White's "queer but true" attack on the appeal to what we would say is limited only to what is not illogical.

Accordingly, to determine whether something is a genuine candidate for being queer but true, one must determine whether it is illogical. There are, broadly speaking, two cases to consider: (1) Is what is said itself illogical? and (2) Is saying it in these circumstances illogical? If one can determine the answer to the first question, then White can tell one how to determine the answer to the second question. White's method is what I shall call "White's Test." White suggests the test in the following quotation:

> This is not, however, to say that the sentence 'He has now sobered up' is meaningless, although the sentence 'He has now sobered up, though he was not drunk before' may be meaningless.[28]

White suggests that if it is illogical to say something (even though what is said may itself not be illogical), then the sentence formed by conjoining what is said with the statement of the unsatisfied circumstance will be illogical. Now, to check whether it is illogical to say something, philosophers can simply inspect a sentence, and avoid the complexities of viewing saying as something that we do.

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[27]Ibid., page 223.

[28]White, "Mentioning the Unmentionable," page 223.

We have found, then, a kind of landmark. Something said can be queer but possibly true, if what is said is itself not illogical and if to say it is not to do something that is illogical. Traditionally, philosophers have concerned themselves with determining whether sentences themselves are illogical, but now we have White's Test to determine whether doing something is illogical, that is, we have a test to determine whether saying something is illogical even if what is said itself is not. If we use the familiar term "presupposition" for a circumstance that must be fulfilled for a sentence to be either true or false, then we can state White's Test:

White's Test: It is illogical to say something if (1) to say it would presuppose the truth of a circumstance, and (2) the conjunction of what is said with the statement of that circumstance is illogical.

Let's try out White's Test on McCarthy's pronouncement that Dr. Pusey is no longer a communist. For Senator McCarthy to say this is to presuppose the circumstance that Dr. Pusey was once a communist. If we conjoin McCarthy's pronouncement with the statement that the circumstance is not satsified, we get the (in White's sense) illogical sentence: "Dr. Pusey is no longer a communist but he never was a communist." Using White's Test, we conclude that it would be illogical to say "Dr. Pusey is no longer a communist." To try to say so would be not only to do something queer but also something that could never be true, since it is illogical. Accordingly, White would not use a queer-but-true attack on McCarthy's pronouncement.

But White does use queer but true attacks on things that are not illogical to say, but that a merely, as White calls them, inappropriate. With one simple challenge, White goes to the heart of the appeal to what we would say:

> (It can be a mistake to confuse) what is true to say with what it is proper to say . . . (for) . . . (there is a confusion between) the inappropriateness of saying certain things . . . and the possible truth of such things.[29]

If saying something is not illogical then even though what is said is queer (inappropriate), White will not surrender the possibility that the assertion might be true. Accordingly, White would attack those philosophers who argue that since an assertion was queer it could not be true.

White's attack seems simple enough. Just determine whether saying something is illogical. If not, then even if it is queer (inappropriate) it is still possible for it to be true. Let's try White's Test on the case mentioned earlier in which when Malcolm and Moore were sitting together facing a tree. Recall that on Moore's view it would be correct for him to say to Malcolm, "I know that that (pointing at the tree) is a tree." Recall also that Malcolm, by appealing to the paradigm cases of saying "I know", argued that Moore's use of "I know" was a misuse, since the "ingredients" essential to properly saying "I know" were "missing."

Now, with White's Test, we can determine whether it is illogical for Moore to say what he does. All we need to do is

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[29]White, Modal Thinking, pages 50 and 172 (emphasis mine on "true" and on "proper").

conjoin the sentence "I know that that's a tree" with the statement that the circumstances are not satisfied. Though it will be cumbersome let's contruct this conjunction.

The circumstances to be satisfied in each paradigm case of saying 'I know' are listed below:

(1) There is in each case a question at issue and a doubt to be removed.
(2) In each case the person who says "I know that that is a tree" is able to give a reason for what he says.
(3) In each case there is an investigation which, if it were carried out, would settle the question at issue.[30]

We want to say that these conditions are not satisfied, so we want to consider the statement of the failure to be satisfied:

Statement that conditions are not satsified: There is no question at issue, no doubt to be removed, no reason for saying this, and no investigation to settle any question.

Changing the word order slightly and condensing somewhat we get one possible version of the desired conjunction:

Desired Conjunction for White's Test: Though there is no question at issue (hence no need for any investigation) and though there is no doubt to be removed nor any reason for me to say so, still I know that that's a tree.

Though we might not know why anyone would ever say this, it certainly does not seem illogical in the way it is illogical to say "He is no longer drunk, but he never was."

But, must we rely on a vague feeling of its not seeming to be illogical? The answer is a clear "No!" For, Fred I. Dretske provides a clear test to determine whether such a conjunction is illogical.

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[30]Malcolm, "Defending Common Sense," page 203.

Fred I. Dretske's Attack: The Shift

In a section appropriately entitled "Seeing Saying We See,"[31] Dretske provides test to determine whether it is illogical to assert something: just "shift" the tense or person of what is said. Dretske illustrates the "shift" on the sentence "I see a bus approaching, but I do not believe a bus is approaching."

> Whereas it is paradoxical to say, 'I see a bus approaching, but I do not believe a bus is approaching'. . . it is quite routine to say, 'I saw a bus, but, at the time, did not know what it was'. or 'He sees the bus but cannot make out what it is.
>
> (Thus) as soon as the tense, or the person, of the report is shifted the possibilities for confusion (about the report's being odd to say and its being true) diminish considerably.[32]

Here we have a simple test to determine whether something is queer but not illogical to say. Just see whether by changing either the tense or the person, one can produce a sentence that could be true. If so, then the original sentence was not illogical to assert.

Let's apply Dretske's test[32] to White's first paradoxical sentence "I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not." To apply the test we must determine whether it is illogical

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[31]Fred I. Dretske, Seeing and Knowing, page 37.

[32]It could be misleading to call this "Dretske's." White uses it as do many other philosophers. I do not mean even to suggest that philosophers got it from Dretske. I give the test "Dretske's name because he is the first to formulate the test, though, of course, other philosophers occasionally use it (in many cases without knowing it)." The real irony is that Wittgenstein uses it. I shall make much more of this in Chapter Two, but for now it may suffice to recall that Wittgenstein's actual words were: "It cannot be said of me that I know that I am in pain."

for me to say now "I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not." We simply "shift" tense to "(Yesterday) I believed that Sam robbed the store, but he did not" or "shift" the person to have someone say of me "Jones believes that Sam robbed the store but Sam did not." Neither "shifted" sentence is illogical in White's sense; that is, it is possible for either new sentence to be true (recall that White's illogical sentences are true in no circumstances). By Dretske's reasoning, since neither of the new sentences is illogical, then the original first-person, present-tense assertion was not illogical, just inappropriate to say. It follows, further, that it could be queer but true to say "I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not."

Now for the crucial determination, can Dretske's "shift" help us to determine whether it is illogical for Moore to say "I know that that's a tree"? Moore's assertion is illogical? If White is correct in his charge that it is not illogical for Moore to do so, then we should be able to shift the tense or person of what Moore says to produce a sentence that could be true.

The conjunctive sentence (somewhat shortened) is: "Though I have no reason to say so, I know that that's a tree." If we shift to past-tense this becomes: "Though I had no reason to say so, I knew that that was a tree." If we shift to third-person it becomes: "Though he has no reason to say so, Jones knows that that's a tree." Since these new sentences could be true, we have a kind of "proof" that White is correct;

what Moore said, though queer to say, could be true.

To many philosophers, A White-style attack together with Dretske's "shift" argument suggests a more general queer but true argument against the appeal to what we would say. A White-style attack establishes that certain sentences are just inappropriate to say, not illogical. Since they are not illogical, nothing precludes their being true. And, with Dretske's "shift" argument one can "prove" that those sentences can be true. Taken together, these two queer but true attacks suggest a general diagnosis for the problem. There is evidently an important distinction between assertability and truth, for even when the conditions or circumstances for asserting something are not satisfied, what is asserted could still be true. John R. Searle develops this diagnosis of the problem in his queer but true attack on the appeal to what we would say.

John R. Searle's Attack: The Assertion Fallacy

Searle seems to have Wittgenstein's number. Listen as he describes Wittgenstein (and Malcolm) at work:

> Linguistic philosophers (Wittgenstein and Malcolm) wish to analyze the meaning of such troublesome concepts as knowledge. . .To do this they look to the use of such expressions as "know". . .The trouble with this method is that in practice it about always amounts to asking when we would make assertions of the form "I know that so and so". . .For example, Wittgenstein points out that under normal conditions, when I have a pain, it would be odd to say "I know that I am in pain."[33]

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[33]John R. Searle, Speech Acts (London, Cambridge University Press, 1970), page 141 (emphasis mine).

Searle seems right. Wittgenstein does talk of how the word 'know' is used, Malcolm does argue that Moore's use of "I know' is a misuse, Malcolm does identify the normal conditions for correctly asserting 'I know,' and Wittgenstein does contend that it makes no sense (is odd?) to say about himself that he knows that he is in pain.

But to accept Searle's description of Wittgenstein and Malcolm at work, seems to be to accept Searle's diagnosis of a general mistake that he thinks Wittgenstein and Malcolm make. In Searle's view, though Wittgenstein and Malcolm have thought they were discovering something about knowledge itself, they might only have discovered conditions for making assertions. For, if you only consider cases of asserting "I know", how can you determine whether your conclusions are about knowledge or about asserting? As Searle puts the charge:

> (IF the philosopher asks) when we would make assertions of the type "I know that so and so". . .then there is no easy way to tell how much their answers to these questions depend on what it is to make assertions and how much is due to the concept (of knowledge) that the philosopher is trying to analyze.[34]

Perhaps Malcolm's ("ingredients") that must be satisfied to assert "I know" were simply conditions that must be satisfied simply to assert anything.

Searle is right that Wittgenstein and Malcolm do not concentrate upon asserting, instead of concentrating on, for example, or questioning or commanding. Questioning, commanding, and asserting are all what Searle calls different kinds

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[34]Ibid.

of "speech acts." So it may be true that Wittgenstein and Malcolm commit what Searle calls the assertion fallacy:

> Assertion Fallacy: The assertion fallacy . . .is the fallacy of confusing the conditions for the performance of the speech act of assertion with the analysis of the meaning of particular words occurring in certain assertions.[35]

Searle's point is that though there are many things we can do with words, only one of them is to assert. And since assertion is "only one kind of speech act among many," it is a mistake to suppose that "the conditions in which it is correct to assert ("I know") are identical with the conditions in which it is the case that (I know)."[36]

How then could Wittgenstein and other philosophers have confused the queerness (or inappropriateness) of an assertion with its possible truth? Searle's general diagnosis is that they confused the conditions for asserting something with the conditions for its truth.

Searle's diagnosis does seem to confirm White's and Dretske's positions that though a sentence can be inappropriate to say it can still be true. But that raises a crucial question: If it is inappropriate to assert something (since the conditions for asserting it are not satisfied) but in spite of that impropriety a philosopher makes the assertion how is one to understand what the philosopher says? For, since conditions for asserting are not satisfied, the words do not have their normal use. Can they still be said to have their normal sense?

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[35]Ibid.

[36]Searle, "Assertions and Aberrations," page 218.

If they don't have their normal sense, what, exactly is it, whose truth philosophers are so reluctant to surrender?

One reply to this question is that the words still have their normal sense, but have a special (philosopher's) use. G. E. Moore develops such a reply in his queer but true attacks on the appeal to what we would say.

Moore's Attack: The Philosopher's Use of Words

If Searle had Wittgenstein's number, Moore has Malcolm's complete dossier. Moore seems clearly to understand both what Malcolm says and what's wrong with it. Recall that Malcolm and Moore were sitting on a bench in front of a tree, when Moore said, "I know that that's a tree." Malcolm challenged that Moore's use of 'I know' was a misuse, since the paradigmatic circumstances for that use were not satisfied.

Moore does not allow Malcolm's challenge to go unanswered. Moore agrees that the words "I know that that's a tree" do not have their ordinary use, since the ordinary circumstances for saying 'I know' are not satisfied. But Moore does not agree that his use is a misuse; he thinks that such a charge is confused, since it collapses the distinction between certain words having no sense and those words being used senselessly. Moore thinks that he used his words senselessly (in that the circumstances were not satisfied), still the words that he used had their normal sense. And Moore tells us with what purpose he was using these words: to attempt to refute other philosophers. If a purpose can count as a use, then, Moore thinks,

his words had a use: the philosopher's use. In a 1949 letter to Malcolm, Moore recalls, clarifies, and appears to defeat Malcolm's challenge. Moore seems almost to be lecturing Malcolm, as he reminds Malcolm of the time together:

> Sitting in my garden two years ago, I pointed or nodded at the young walnut-tree and said "I know that that is a tree." You wanted then, and want now, to say that my use of that expression was a "misuse" and "incorrect"; but the only reason you give for saying so is that I used it under circumstances under which it would not ordinarily be used, e.g., under the circumstances that there neither was at the moment nor had been just previously any doubt whether it was a tree or not. But that I used it under circumstances under which it would not ordinarily be used is no reason for saying I misused it or used it incorrectly, if, though this was so, I was using it in the sense in which it is ordinarily used--was using it to make the assertion which it is ordinarily used to make; and the argument I've just given is an argument designed to show you that I was using it in the ordinary sense, though not under any ordinary circumstances. . .
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> If a person, under circumstances in which everybody could see quite clearly that a certain object was a tree, were to (say) "I know that that's a tree," we might well say that that was a senseless thing for him to do. . .But this is an entirely different thing from saying that the words in question don't, on that occasion "make sense," . . .It is perfectly possible that a person who uses them sense lessly, in the sense that he uses them where no sensible person would use them because under those circumstances, they serve no useful purpose, should be using them in their normal sense, & that what he asserts by so using them should be true. . .
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> Of course in my case, I was using them with a purpose--the purpose of disproving a general proposition which many philosophers have made.[37]

It is a confusion, then, for Malcolm to think that because words don't have their ordinary use they have no use. The

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[37]Norman Malcolm, Thought and Knowledge, page 174 (my division into paragraphs).

philosopher may be able to continue to talk, for his inappropriate ways of speaking may be excepted since he is using his words to reply to other philosophers. Moore, defends a philosopher's use of words.

To the challenge that since the words do not have the normal use (are queer or inappropriate) they could not be true, Moore would reply, "Insofar as they have their normal sense they can still be true." Moore would then attack those philosophers who argue that since an assertion is queer it cannot be true.

Moore's view opens an entire, new line of attack. The possibility now opens up of a philosopher's diverting the appeal to what we would say by simply countering that he is using the words to reply to a philosopher. Perhaps Russell was right that it is not valuable to concern yourself with "the ways in which silly people can say silly things." For, philosophers may be using words in a special, at least, non-ordinary way. If so, then it would seem irrelevant to appeal to what we would normally say, for the only conclusion that one could draw would be that the philosopher was not using words in their ordinary use. But one is tempted to reply, "So what. I want to know whether what the philosopher said could be true!"

The case for "queer but true" seems strong. It seems things can be queer to say, yet still be true; or, so it seems. But this observation prompts many questions: Can significant philosophical assertions be queer but true? If so, what counts

as a clear example? Are there any limits to what philosophers can say to each other? And, if there are limits, will delineating those limits reveal something about the nature of philosophical assertions? Or can we even characterize philosophical assertions by themselves as if they were a separate class?

These questions, and more, seem to need answers. But even to understand the questions, one must understand the queer but true attacks on the appeal to what we would say. For, as I shall argue, if the attacks are successful, a wedge will be driven between assertability and truth, a wedge that permits the very formulation of the question, "Can an assertion be queer but true?" Thus the first task is to clarify and appraise the queer but true attacks.

In the work that follows I shall attempt a defense of the appeal to what we would say. But I shall not argue that the appeal is "correct," whatever that would be to do. Instead, I shall argue that a certain kind of attack on the appeal is mistaken attack. I hope to show that the queer but true attacks on the appeal to what we would say all fail in three ways: (1) they misconstrue the use of the appeal, (2) they misconstrue the conclusion of the appeal, and (3) they give arguments that would not be successful even if they did not misconstrue the use and conclusion of the appeal.

It may appear that a severe limitation is thus imposed upon philosophers, if they must be limited to what we would say. But, it will emerge that (to put it cryptically) though philosophers are limited to what we would say, that is no

limitation.

I shall proceed by taking each main attack in turn, clarifying it, showing that to give it is to misconstrue the use and conclusion of the appeal. Let's turn now to the first queer but true attack that we encountered: White's charge that an inappropriate or queer sentence, if not illogical, might be true.

CHAPTER II

INAPPROPRIATE BUT NOT ILLOGICAL

White charges that even though what a philosopher says may be inappropriate, that does not preclude its being true. For, he argues, if what the philosopher says is not illogical, then even though what he says is inappropriate it might be true.

I shall argue, on the contrary, that White's argument is mistaken; that he is wrong to argue that an inappropriate but not illogical sentence might be true. Of course, White's argument has two parts: (1) some sentences are inappropriate though not illogical, and (2) inappropriate sentences that are not illogical might be true. I intend now[1] to dispute only the second part. I shall argue that even if a sentence is inappropriate, it is a mistake to argue that that sentence if not illogical might be true.

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[1]I say "now" since in Chapter Four I suggest that it is not quite correct to characterize so many sentences as "inappropriate." Furthermore, in Chapter Three I argue that White's use of the word "not illogical" is unjustifiably narrow.

I shall present four main criticisms of those philosophers who give this White-style attack on the appeal to what we would say. First, those White-style opponents of the appeal misunderstood its use: they ignore or fail to see the important initial stages of the appeal, stages that show its use as a reaction or response. Second, the opponents wrongly think that the conclusion of the appeal to what we would say is that something cannot be true: they either misunderstand that the initial stages of the appeal don't deliver this conclusion, or they unjustifiably impose an "excluded middle" option that either a sentence can be true or it cannot be true. Third, the White-style opponents attack that they wrongly believe to be the conclusion of the appeal, and ignore the numerous arguments given in the appeal. Fourth, as a corolary of the above points, the intended beneficiaries of the defeat of the appeal would not in fact profit from its demise, for even if one were to establish that a sentence could be true, it would not follow that it might be true.

To develop these four criticisms we need first to get clear on exactly what kind of appeal a White-style attack is against. After seeing what kind of appeal it is against, we will be in a position to notice in more detail the complex philosophical use of the appeal to what we would say: its important initial stages, its intended conclusion, and its arguments. Only after noticing the complex use, can we understand that to give a White-style attack is to ignore or fail to see the initial stages, to misconstrue the intended conclusion, and to miss the arguments in its favor. Let's examine now what

kind of appeal a White-style attack is against.

What a White-Style Attack is Against

First, notice what a White-style attack is designed, naturally to go against. White says that some sentences might be true, so he must be denying the suggestion that those sentences could not be true. We could say that White appears to be denying that something cannot be true.

Now, who has said that something cannot be true? Well, Wittgenstein, in the first landmark, said that certain things cannot be said--that they make no sense. If you couple Wittgenstein's saying this with White's evident apprehension that what Wittgenstein or perhaps his followers) meant was that if something cannot be said then it cannot be true, then you have White's reason for denying that something cannot be true. In short, White wants to assert that some things can be true.

Now, who else has said that something cannot be true? Well, Malcolm, in the "missing ingredient" argument argues that some things in effect, could not be said, or at least that to attempt to say them would result in a misuse of words. Once again, if we couple Malcolm's saying this with White's apprehension that what Malcolm meant was that if something cannot be said then it cannot be true, then you have White's reason for holding now against Malcolm that something can be true.

Two further appeals to what we would say seem to deliver the conclusion that something cannot be true: the contrast argument and the reaction to Austin's plain man. A White-

style attack fits as a denial of both of these appeals. Recall that the contrast argument resembles the other paradigm case appeal argument, the missing ingredient argument. Just as we saw a White-style attack on the missing ingredient argument, so we will see a corresponding attack on the contrast argument. But though the reaction of Austin's plain man in some ways resembles Moore's reaction to skepticism, it also differs from Moore's reaction. Correspondingly, though we did not see a White-style attack on Moore's reaction, we shall see an attack against the reaction of the plain man.

It now seems clear that White means to counter an appeal to what we would say if the conclusion of that appeal suggests that something cannot be true. White will attack directly by arguing that it can be true. Of course, his attack is relevant only if it was an implication of saying that something could not be said, that it could not be true.

It may also be clear that White's reply does not fit as a denial of the second landmark, that is, as a denial of the remark by Wittgenstein in paragraph 246 that "If we are using the word "to know" as it is normally used. . . then other people very often know when I am in pain." It is no denial of the remark that "Jones is in pain" to charge that "It might be true that Jones is in pain." White denies only what he sees as implying that something cannot be true, and only then, of course, if he thinks that to say it would not be illogical.

We see now what kind of appeal a White-style attack is

against: any appeal that seems to suggest that something cannot be true. To develop our criticism of a White-style attack, we must notice in more detail than in Chapter I the complex philosophical use of those appeals that are taken to suggest that something cannot be true, in particular, the philosophical use of paradigm case appeals. Let's now examine, that use.

The Philosophical Use of Paradigm Case Appeals

There are three main paradigm case appeals: the reaction of Austin's plain man, the missing ingredient argument of Malcolm, and the contrast argument of both Malcolm and Austin. Since our goal is to notice in more detail the complex philosophical use of these appeals, it will be instructive first to review briefly Malcolm's missing ingredient argument, since Malcolm's argument provides a perspicuous model with which to compare other paradigm case arguments. After we review Malcolm's argument we will be in a position to notice the complex philosophical use of another missing ingredient argument by R. M. Hare. It will remain then to examine the use of the contrast argument.

Recall Malcolm's criticism of Moore. Moore had claimed that there were a number of things that he knew, with certainty, to be true. For instance, while sitting with Malcolm on a bench in front of a tree, Moore had said, "I know that that (pointing at the tree) is a tree." Malcolm had argued that Moore's statement was a misuse of language, since three ingredients common to the paradigm use of "I know" were missing

in Moore's use. Recall further the initial stages of Malcolm's missing ingredient argument. Malcolm enumerated the paradigm uses of "I know", spotted the ingredients common to those paradigms, and showed that Moore's use lacked all of those ingredients. These initial steps set up the intended conclusion: that Moore's use is a misuse.

Now why is this the intended conclusion and not, say, that what Moore says "cannot be true?" To understand this, we must notice the use of the initial stages to determine the only conclusion available to Moore. Moore has just four options: (1) He can accept Malcolm's diagnosis of a misuse, and simply retract his statement, (2) He can accept Malcolm's diagnosis of a misuse, but also try to determine why he was (and why other philosophers have been) inclined so to misuse language, (3) He can reply that in saying "I know" he really meant to note that the three ingredients were missing, and (4) He can urge that he is using "I know" in a special (non-ordinary) way and thus bypass the concern that his use was a misuse. Let's discuss these four options. It will then be easy to see why there are no other options, that is, why it is wrong to think that Malcolm has shown that what Moore said "cannot be true."

All four options are, of course, given in reaction or response to Malcolm's criticism of Moore's initial statement. Even though enumerating the paradigm uses of "I know" does not require reaction or response to a philosopher, charging a misuse of language does. After all, something must be said

to be a misuse. The question is then whether Malcolm's diagnosis of a misuse leaves as a possible conclusion that what Moore said "could not be true." To see that it does not, consider the four options outlined above.

The first two options concede without qualification that it was a misuse. Option one simply retracts that misuse of language. Option two uses the misuse of language to reveal something about the nature of what philosophers say. The second two options concede with qualification that it was a misuse. In option three, Moore concedes the misuse but restates what he really meant to say in that misuse: he really meant to call attention to, say, the absence of the ingredient of doubt. Of course, if this is all he meant to do, he chose a very awkward and misleading way to do so. In option four, Moore concedes the misuse but by emphatically characterizing it as an ordinary misuse, Moore sets up the picture of the "possibility" that he was using "I know" with a special non-ordinary use. Of course, as we saw briefly in Chapter I (Pages 35-38), this opens an entire, new line of attack. Moore bypasses the charge that his use of "I know" was a misuse by "conceding" that if he had meant to use it "ordinarily", he would have been misusing it but also suggesting that it was a special philosopher's use of words.

Why is it not an option that Malcolm has shown that what Moore said "could not be true?" Because these four are the only options, and none of them permit that conclusion.

To see this let's determine whether there is room for any other options. First, I shall assume that it is beyond dispute that Moore must at least concede, as in option four, that his use of "I know" is an "ordinary" misuse. Second, I shall assume that no philosopher who retracted his use of "I know" because it was a misuse would still insist that nevertheless what he said could be true. Third, I shall take it to be obvious that neither Moore nor any other philospher would be happy to concede that by saying "I know" he meant to call attention to the missing ingredients. If so, then after seeing the real meaning of his statement he would not continue to insist on saying "I know." More importantly, it would be bizarre for him to insist on saying that it could be true to say "I know" and mean "the three ingredients for saying 'I know' are missing." The only two options that seem compatible with the conclusion that "it cannot be true" are either that it is an "ordinary" misuse but a special (philosophical) use, or that it was simply a misuse but that we are still trying to determine why philosophers say such things. In the latter case, having conceded that it was a misuse, and not knowing why philosophers are even inclined to such misuses, one would not insist that in spite of all this our misuse of language though not understood could be true.

In summary, we are left only with the possible conclusion that when Moore says "I know that that is a tree" he is employing the words "I know" with a special philospher's use, though with an "ordinary" misuse. Since in Chapter V

("The Philosophers Use of Words") I argue that Moore's defense is mistaken, I shall now conclude tentatively that it is wrong to think that Malcolm has shown that what Moore said "cannot be true." Nor does it follow from any possible conclusion of Malcolm's work that what Moore said "cannot be true." Malcolm has shown what he says he has shown, that Moore's use of "I know" is a misuse.

Moore insists on some singular truths in opposition to philosophers who offer universal truths: he insists on "I know that that is a tree" in opposition to "No empirical statement can be certain." The use of a paradigm case appeal is less dramatic against singular statements like Moore's than against universal statements. R. M. Hare demonstrates this more dramatic use when he employs a paradigm-case appeal against the universal lament "Nothing matters." Hare's argument is instructive for in it he carefully details the initial stages of the appeal, so that it is easy to see the intended conclusion. We will see Hare enumerate the paradigms, spot ingredients common to those paradigms, notice the missing ingredients in the sentence "Nothing matters," and conclude that the sentence embodies a kind of misuse of language.

Hare had a young Swiss student visiting him and his family at their home in Oxford. The student, after reading Camus's The Stranger, became distraught because, as he expressed it, "Nothing matters." Hare helped the young man to free himself of his despair. To begin the treatment, to enumerate the paradigms and spot the common ingredients, Hare

involves the young philosopher in his own treatment by asking a question:

> Like Socrates, I thought that the correct way to start my discussion with my Swiss friend was to ask what was the meaning or function of the word 'matters' in our language; what is it to be important?
>
> He very soon agreed that when we say something matters or is important what we are doing, in saying this, is to express concern about something. . .
>
> Having secured my friends agreement on this point, I then pointed out to him something that followed immediately from it. This is that when something matters or does not matter, we want to know whose concern is being expressed or otherwise referred to. If the function of the word 'matters' is to express concern, and if concern is always somebody's concern, we can always ask, when it is said that something matters or does not matter, 'Whose concern?'[2]

The common ingredient is the possibility of asking the question "Whose concern?" Hare now causes the young philosopher to hear what he is saying by getting him to hear that the question "Whose concern?" does not fit with the expression "Nothing matters."

> My friend and I then returned to the remark at the end of Camus's novel, and asked whether we really understood it. 'Nothing matters' is printed on the page. So somebody's unconcern for absolutely everything is presumably being expressed or referred to. But whose? As soon as we ask this question we see that there is something funny not indeed about the remark as made by the character in the novel, in the Context in which he is described as making it (though there is something funny even about that. . .), but about the effect of this remark upon my friend. . .
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> Why, because an imaginary Algerian prisoner expressed unconcern for the world which he was shortly to leave,

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[2]R. M. Hare, Applications of the Moral Concepts (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pages 33-34.

> should my friend, a young Swiss student with the world before him, come to share the same sentiments?[3]

Now that the Swiss student can more clearly hear what he is saying Hare causes him to face up to it, by suggesting that on the face of it it is plainly false that nothing matters to the Swiss student:

> I therefore asked him whether it was true that nothing mattered to him. And of course it was not true. He was not in the position of the prisoner but in the position of most of us; he was concerned not about nothing but about many things.[4]

The young Swiss philosopher is left with two options. Either what he says is not understandable without further explanation, or it is plainly false.

Now suppose the student were to insist, like Moore, that what he was saying has a special philosphical use, though of course it was not understandable in its "ordinary" use. The student would bypass the charge that what he says is false, but could he insist that what he says could be true? Could he reply with White, "Yes, I know that it is inappropriate to say that nothing matters, but it still might be true." Such a reply would ring hollow, for it would ignore or fail to admit to what has already been shown, namely, that the sentence "Nothing matters", as uttered by the Swiss student, is either not understandable or it is plainly false.

Hare offers some reflections on philosophers who would seem to ignore or fail to admit to what has been shown. After

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[3]Ibid., pages 35-36.

[4]Ibid., page 36.

helping the student to free himself of his despair, Hare concludes that philosophers who want to assert that it is true that nothing matters are even being (existentially) hypocritical! This is not the charge of logical inconsistency, but is the charge that a person is pretending to be what he is not, or to feel what he does not feel.

> People who (understanding the words) say that nothing matters are, it can be declared, giving but one example of that hypocrisy or mauvaise foi which Existentialists are so fond of castigating. . . You cannot annihilate values--not values as a whole.[5]

If it is hypocritical (existential "bad faith") for the student to say that nothing matters, then it would seem also to be so for White to insist that it might be true that nothing matters.

Is this a serious charge? Well, I do not intend to explore the question whether the queer but true critics of the appeal to what we would say are (existentially) guilty of "bad faith." But I would like to use this example to emphasize that the use of the missing ingredient argument in response to universal statements is quite different from arguing that something "cannot be true." It is to awaken the philosopher to what he is saying, to cause him to face up to it, and then, only then, if it is necessary to put it this way, to show him that as it stands (on the face of it) what he says is plainly false. Since it would be silly to argue that something that is plainly false could be true,

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[5]Ibid., page 39.

the philosopher who opposes the conclusion of the missing ingredient argument is left with the hollow response "Though it is not understandable it could be true."

To see how hollow is this response, consider, as we did with Malcolm's argument, the four options available to the philosopher: (1) He can concede that "Nothing matters" is not understandable and simply retract his statement, (2) He can concede that "Nothing matters" is not understandable but try to determine why he felt the need to say it, (3) He can reply that in saying "Nothing matters" he really meant to call attention to the missing ingredient, to the inapplicability of the question "Whose concern?", and (4) He can urge that he is using "Nothing matters" in a special (non-"ordinary") way and thus bypass the charge that his use is not understandable.

That there are no other options follows from my assumption that Hare has shown at the very least that the student's use of "Nothing matters" is a misuse and that accordingly it is not understandable as a literal expression of what the words would suggest as they are normally used. The question is, then, whether the words are being used in some special way. Since the same reasons would eliminate the first three options as eliminated them with Moore, I shall not bother to repeat them. Suffice it to say that the only possible option left for the opponent who wants to insist that "Nothing matters" could be true, is that he is using the phrase in a special way. Though I think it is obvious that this reply shows that

the philosopher is either pretending to others or deluding himself, it really requires the results of Chapter V to draw this conclusion. For now, we can at least conclude that there seems to be only one reasonable way to respond to a paradigm-case treatment and honestly demand that the treated sentence could be true.

Missing-ingredient arguments are not the only paradigm-case arguments. Philosophers must also face the simple, direct power of contrast arguments. Although simple and direct, contrast arguments still contain all three ingredients of paradigm case appeals. There is an appeal to what we would say (to the prominence of paradigms), an argument that without contrast there can be no sense, and a conclusion that a sentence cannot be said--that it makes no sense. As we examine the contrast arguments in more detail, we want to remember our goal. We are trying to get in position to see that the initial stages of this kind of paradigm-case argument determine the intended conclusion that something cannot be said, that is, they exclude the conclusion a White-style opponent wrongly opposes. Let's now consider three examples to emphasize the prominence of paradigms, the argument that without contrast there can be no sense, and the conclusion that something cannot be said--that it makes no sense.

First, to emphasize the prominence of paradigms, let's turn to an argument by Antony Flew. In his recent book Crime or Disease?, Flew surveys what he calls the "logical geography" necessary to appraise the contention that "All crime is a

result of mental illness."[6] Flew wants to show the difference between saying "All crime is a result of mental illness" and saying "Consider all crime as if it were a result of mental illness." Flew argues that the former thesis is more prominent, that is, the paradigm upon which the latter thesis is "logically parasitic," To illustrate the prominence of the "is" paradigm, Flew offers the following simple analogy:

> 'It looks to me like a B-52' commits the speaker to less than the categorical and unqualified 'It is a B-52,' the former is both semantically more sophisticated than the latter and logically parasitic upon it. You could not, that is to say, understand what is meant by 'It looks like a B-52' if you did not already know the meaning of 'It is a B-52.'[7]

In general, if Flew is correct, to understand the "looks like" expression one must already understand the more prominent paradigm, the "is" expression. To the philosopher who wants to argue that it is possible for everything to just look like something, and never be something, Flew has a response: that is not possible--the possibility is not even meaningful. Flew could explain how, first, that because of the normal contrast of "illusion" with its "opposite" that the philosopher needs to hear what he is saying. Second that after hearing it the philosopher would have to face up to what he is saying if he means seriously to say something. And third, that it would then be obvious that as it stands (on the face of it) it would be plainly false to say that everything is an illusion. If the philosopher continued to want to say that

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[6]Antony Flew, Crime or Disease? (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pages 1-25.

[7]Flew, page 1.

everything is an illusion, then he would have to do so with the realization that what he wanted to say was not even a meaningful possibility.

Has Flew, then, concluded that it "cannot be true" that everything is an illusion? No! Flew has concluded that no one could know what is meant by the thesis. Now, if no one can know what the thesis means, it would be otiose to argue that what one did not know the meaning of might be true. For to suggest that Flew has concluded that it "cannot be true" would be to suggest that Flew has discovered, by analogy, some fact about B-52's that prohibits its being known that something is a B-52. Yet no such discovery occasioned Flew's comments. Rather, he is arguing about the very intelligibility of what is said.

Second, to emphasize the argument that without contrast there can be no sense, let's turn to a famous argument by Gilbert Ryle.

> In a country where there is a coinage, false coins can be manufactured and passed; and the counterfeiting might be so efficient that an ordinary citizen, unable to tell which were false and which were genuine coins, might become suspicious of the genuiness of any particular coin that he received. But however general his suspicions might be, there remains one proposition that he cannot entertain, the proposition, namely, that it is possible that all coins are counterfeits. For there must be an answer to the question 'Counterfeits of what?'[8]

The term 'counterfeit' gets its meaning from a contrast with its opposite. Thus, since the term is meaningful

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[8]Gilbert Ryle, Dilemmas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pages 94-95.

one cannot even entertain the "possibility" that all coins are counterfeit, for there would be nothing with which to contrast the term.

This is not the conclusion that "it cannot be true" that all coins are counterfeit, for that conclusion would suggest that Ryle has made some discovery about the coins in the country, perhaps he discovered a man who helped to mint some of the originals. But no such discovery is even at issue. Ryle's conclusion is not about what cannot be true but about what cannot even be entertained, let alone, said.

Third, to emphasize the conclusion of a contrast argument, that a sentence cannot be said or that it makes no sense, let's turn to Austin's picturesque description of how the philosopher goes awry when that philosopher ignores contrast. In the "trouser word" argument, Austin has already suggested how the philosopher's language can get so far from its home that there is no longer any question of whether what is said is true. Recall that Austin objects to Ayer's use of the words "directly perceive."

> Now of course what brings us up short here is the word 'directly' a favourite among philosophers, but actually one of the less conspicuous snakes in the linguistic grass. We have here, in fact, a typical case of a word, which already has a very special use, being gradually stretched, without caution or definition or any limit until it becomes, first perhaps obscurely metaphorical, but ultimately meaningless. One can't abuse ordinary language without paying for it.
>
> It is essential to realize that here the notion

> of perceiving <u>indirectly</u> wear the trousers--
> 'directly' takes whatever sense it has from the
> contrast with its opposite.[9]

Austin charges that (1) one is awakened ("brought up short") by Ayer's use of the word "directly," (2) one must face up to this "less conspicious snake in the philosopher's linguisitic grass," and (3) the word "directly" is ultimately meaningless since it takes its sense from the contrast with its opposite, a contrast that Ayer has stripped away. If anyone cared to say so, though there would be no point in saying so, since it is so obvious, one could say that <u>as it stands</u> (on the face of it) what Ayer says is plainly false. And if Ayer wanted to charge that it "could be true" that we never directly perceive tables, he would need to establish the meaning of this special use of words.

When we first discussed the "trouser word" argument in Chapter I, we deduced a "guideline" to appraise philosophers' assertions: determine whether the philosopher has stretched a word beyond its normal contrast. The primary use of this contrast guideline is not to conclude that what the philosopher says cannot be true, for that is an after effect, and normally could better go without saying. The primary use is to awaken the philosopher, to cause him to face up to what he says, and then, if he has not caught on, to show him that, (to put it in words that he would be more likely to understand) <u>as it stands</u> what he says is plainly

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[9]Austin, <u>Sense and Sensibilia</u>, page 15.

false.

We will see that the philosophers who deliver the White-style attack commit one fundamental error: they wrongly think the conclusion they attack is that something cannot be true. Let's now consider a White-style response to a paradigm argument.

The Inappropriate Response to a Paradigm Case Appeal

A White-style queer but true attack centers on the charge that though a sentence may be inappropriate, if it is not illogical it might be true. I shall develop three criticisms and a corollary all pivoting around the central error. First, the White-style opponents misunderstand the use of the appeal as a reaction or a response. Second, the opponents misunderstand the conclusion either because they don't see that the initial stages of the appeal deliver a different conclusion or because they unjustifiably impose an "excluded middle" option that the only alternatives are either that a sentence can be true or it cannot be true. Third, the White-style opponents ignore the arguments in the appeal, attacking instead only its conclusion. Fourth, as a corollary we will see that some opponents do not see that even if they could establish that a sentence could be true, it would not follow that it might be true.

Let's first consider White's own attack on certain philosophers. Recall White's attack on arguments like those of Malcolm or Wittgenstein. Malcolm had charged that Moore's use of "I know" was a misuse. Wittgenstein had charged against

the Cartesian opponent that "It cannot be said that I know I am in pain." To these appeals to what we would say, White counters: "The appropriateness of saying 'I know' must not be confused with its truth."[10] Elsewhere White repeats the challenge:

> (It can be a mistake to confuse) what is true to say with what it is proper to say . . .(for). . . (there is a confusion between) the inappropriateness of saying certain things. . .and the possible truth of such things.[11]

And finally against the analog of Moore's paradox, White counters:

> (The sentence) "I believe that (Sam robbed the store), but he did not," though a queer thing to say, is perfectly capable of being quite true.[12]

White thinks he can counter the appeal to what we would say by insisting that though queer or inappropriate what is said might be true.

These quotations display several areas for criticism. First, White completely ignores the use of the appeal as a reaction or response to other philosophers. He instead attacks what he wrongly takes to be the conclusion of the appeal as if that conclusion were offered outside of any context. Second, by what he offers as a denial, White shows what he takes to be the conclusion of the appeal, namely, that something cannot be true. We have seen already how

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[10] Modal Thinking, page 81

[11] Ibid., pages 50 and 172 (My emphasis on "true and "proper").

[12] Ibid., page 51.

White's denial fits only as a denial that something cannot be true. We have seen also how none of the paradigm-case appeals would even permit this kind of conclusion as an option. Why then does White misconstrue this to be the conclusion?

I think there are two reasons for White's misunderstanding. One reason is that he fails to see or ignores the initial stages of the appeal. Consider, for example, Wittgenstein's two-stage response to the Cartesian in paragraph 246. The Cartesian had claimed that "Only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it." In the first stage of Wittgenstein's reply he tries to get the Cartesian to hear what he is saying and to face up to it, for on the face of it, it is plainly false: "In one way this is wrong. . .if we are using the word 'to know' as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?), then other people very often know when I am in pain." In the second stage, Wittgenstein points out to the Cartesian opponent that what the Cartesian wants to say cannot even be said: "It can't be said of me at all that I know that I am in pain." He even adds the suggestion that it would not even make sense for me to say it about myself. Without further argument, it would be futile for White to reply that though it made no sense to say it could be true, for that would ignore the initial stages.

The second reason for White's misunderstanding of the conclusion is that he unjustifiably imposes an "excluded

middle" option that the only alternatives are either that a sentence either can be true or cannot be true. That White sees these as the only alternatives is shown in two ways. First he insists on the reply "though it is inappropriate it can be true." Unless a sentence is illogical, he never offers, for example, the reply "it is inappropriate so it is neither true nor false." Second, when he interprets his "test" to determine whether a sentence is illogical, he sees as the only alternative either "illogical" or "not illogical." Since he understands this to mean either "cannot be true" or "can be true" and since he misconstrues the conclusion of the paradigm case appeal as "it cannot be true" then he interprets the failure of something to be illogical as that "it can be true."

As I noted White also ignores the arguments offered in support of paradigm-case appeals. White nowhere shows the contrast or missing ingredient arguments to be mistaken; he attacks only what he wrongly believes to be their conclusion. But this is no surprise, since he ignores the initial stages of the appeals, stages which are, in effect, the premises from which the conclusion is deduced. Perhaps White does not see that there are arguments. But this comment may be unfair, since, if his attack on the conclusion had been successful, he would have achieved his goal.

Many philosophers agree with White that an assertion can be queer but true unless that assertion is illogical. Indeed it seems to be the fashion to give a White-style re-

sponse almost as if it were an axiom of contemporary philosophy. Two of the most prominent philosophers who seem not to question this "axiom" are A. J. Ayer and R. M. Hare. Let's consider each of them, in turn, to appreciate the assurance with which this axiom is held.

A. J. Ayer agrees with White's queer but true attack. Ayer senses that, if properly placed, the contrast argument would destroy his brand of skepticism. Accordingly, he fends off a contrast appeal. Ayer's reasoning is worth watching, for though it is slightly different from White's, it is hard to distinguish from White's reasoning. Ayer takes as his foil the well-known contrast argument given by Gilbert Ryle. Ayer delivers the queer but true challenge against Ryle's contrast argument. Recall that Ayer is eager to defend the philosophical view that "No empirical statement can be known to be certain." Taking a statement about "perception", to be an example of an empirical statement, Ayer tries to fend off the contrast argument that just as it is not possible that all coins are counterfeit, so it is not possible that "All perception is illusory."

> The fact that this type of scepticism is so undiscriminating in its scope, that it rains alike on the just and the unjust, has been thought to expose it to an easy refutation. Just as, to use a simile of Ryle's, 'there can be false coins only where there are coins made of the proper material by the proper authorities", so it is argued there can be times when our senses deceive us only if there are times when they do not. A perception is called illusory by contrast with other perceptions which are veridical: therefore to maintain that all perceptions must be illusory would be to deprive the word 'illusory' of its meaning.

This argument is not decisive. It is true that no

> judgements of perception would be specially open to distrust unless some were trustworthy; but this is not a proof that we cannot be mistaken in trusting those that we do. Even granting that it makes no sense to say that all of our perceptions are delusive any one of them still may be. . . From the fact that our rejection of some of them is grounded on our acceptance of others it does not follow that those that we accept are true.[13]

Even though it is queer (makes no sense to say) that all perceptions are delusive (illusory?) still any one of our perceptions may be delusive. Ayer seems to use the queer-but-true attack that we have seen White give.

But there is one slight difference. Ayer does not conclude that all our perceptions may be delusive, he only concludes that anyone of them may be delusive. In one way Ayer is correct and in another way Ayer shows a worse misunderstanding than White's.

Ayer is correct that the contrast argument does not prove that "we cannot be mistaken in trusting those that we do," or that "those we accept are true." But in suggesting that it was the intention to prove such a conclusion, Ayer betrays a misunderstanding of the contrast argument. The contrast argument is not offered as a "proof" that "these coins in my hand are genuine." Rather it is offered in reaction or response to the suggestion that it is possible that all coins are counterfeit. Its conclusion is what Ryle says it is, "that possibility cannot even be entertained." In appealing to paradigm uses of words to set up a paradigm-

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[13]A.J. Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966) pages 37-38 (emphasis mine).

case argument, a philosopher does not "prove" that what he is saying is true.[14] No such question is at issue.

R. M. Hare's misunderstanding is not as great as Ayer's. It may seem ironic that Hare would accept this "axiom" of contemporary philosophy, since Hare himself offered one of our most dramatic paradigm-case arguments. To see Hare's most recent view, consider the following contrast argument: "One cannot say (and hence it cannot be true?) that a fire engine looks red, if one is standing flat in front of it in broad daylight, and one knows it to be red. For, to say that it looks red is to suggest that there is some contrast with its being red or with your not knowing whether it is red. Now, if it is red and you know it is red, then what sense can it make to say 'It looks red'?"

Hare's reply to this argument is unequivocal. He concedes the inappropriateness of saying "It looks red" but does not surrender its possible truth. He even applies White's Test for being illogical, or as Hare says, inconsistent:

> Here, as in so many other places in philosophy, it is very important to distinguish between things which it would be ridiculous, inapposite, inappropriate, or even misleading to say, and things which would be false or imcomprehensible or inconsistent.

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[14]Historically, this misunderstanding has trailed those who offer paradigm case arguments. One well-known version of this misunderstanding is supplied by John Passmore: "Then we are to conclude that there must be 'ghosts' since, again, people know how to use that word correctly?" (Excluded Opposites and Paradigm Cases," Philosophical Reasoning (New York: Basic Books, 1969), page 113.

> It is only when it would be false or incomprehensible or inconsistent to say something that philosophers would be professionally interested.
>
> For example, it has been correctly maintained that, in a normal case, to say of something "It looks red" when one knows it to be red is to speak misleadingly, and that such a remark is inapposite and inappropriate.
>
> But not so much can be argued from this as has been thought. . .For, though misleading and inappropriate, it may be perfectly comprehensible and indeed true to say of a thing which one knows to be red that it looks red.
>
> And while there may not be any point, on most occasions, in saying 'It both looks and is red', it is not inconsistent or incomprehensible.[15]

It could not be said more clearly, nor could it seem more correct. Something might very well be true even though it was inappropriate to assert. Hare even shows that the conjunction of the assertion and the statement that one of its conditions is not satisfied, is not illogical. For, to assert appropriately that it looks red, philosophers would normally suggest that one precondition might be that it not be red. The statement of the unsatisfied condition would be, then, the statement that it is red. If we conjoin "It looks red" with "it is red" we get the not inconsistent (not illogical) assertion "It looks red and is red." Hare obviously agrees with White's queer but true attack that though an assertion may be inappropriate, if it is illogical it might be true.

Hare's reply would fit Flew's B-52 example. For Hare seems to have forgotten the prominence of the paradigm "is"

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[15]R. M. Hare, Freedom and Reason (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pages 58-59 (my divisions and emphasis).

statement. To say of something that it is red would make no sense if one were also to say that it looks red. Hare seems to ignore the initial stages of the appeal that show its use as a reaction or response to other philosophers.

Hare has also fallen into the trap of thinking that if a sentence is not inconsistent (not illogical) then it "could be true." Hare even says "it may be indeed true." In the next chapter I shall consider the faulty inference from "not illogical" to "could be true", but for now I want to emphasize once again the fundamental error of thinking that the conclusion of the appeal is that something could not be true. Hare's reply shows that he makes this error. He probably even draws this conclusion for the same two reasons as White: (1) he forgets the initial stages of the appeal that establish its use as a reaction, and (2) he imposes an excluded middle option. Hare appears to impose the excluded middle option when he interprets the "not inconsistent" as meaning "could be true". Evidently he sees no further option for a sentence.

Finally, notice that Hare has ignored the arguments for the conclusion of the appeal. As with White, this may be because he misses the initial stages, or it may be because he thinks that he can successfully attack what he (wrongly) thinks to be the conclusion. In either case, since his attack on the conclusion fails, he is left with no further attack. The arguments (contrast and missing ingredient) now are left unchallenged.

Ayer and Hare agree with White, and of course many other contemporary philosophers, that though something is queer to say it still might be true. This fashionable attack on the appeal to what we would say at first seems correct. How, after all, could one show that something could not be true, by just examining what we would say? Surely, this is how White, Ayer, and Hare would put the question. But I have argued that these philosophers misconstrue the special philosophical use of the appeal to what we would say. They do not understand that the use is not to establish what cannot be true, but, rather, to get the philosopher who is the target to hear what he is saying, to force him to face up to what he is saying, and to show him that as it stands (on the face of it) it is either plainly false or is trivial.

An Objection and a Corollary

But one may object that I have used in my arguments the very appeal that I am defending. Or, to put it cryptically, is it not true that "It can be true"? However odd, inappropriate, or misconceived it may be to say so, has not White shown that, for example, since it is not illogical to assert that "I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not" that therefore, it can be true that "I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not?" Well, if I may put it this way, "Yes," "No," and "It does not matter anyway."

The "Yes" and "No" answer I shall discuss in Chapter Three when we more carefully examine the two ways of showing that something can be illogical to say. But why does it

not matter? To see why, consider the assertions that are made credible by the queer-but-true attacks on the appeal to what we would say.

If White is correct that some assertions, though inappropriate, can be true, then we want to know which assertions are thereby made credible. Ayer was criticized by Malcolm for the assertion "No empirical statement can be certain." Ayer was again criticized by Austin for the assertion "Such objects as pens and cigarettes are never directly perceived." Wittgenstein's Cartesian opponent was criticized for the assertion "Only I can know whether I am in pain, another person can only surmise it." So, Ayer and Wittgenstein's Cartesian opponent are (among) the indirect beneficiaries of White's attack.

To see more clearly how these are the indirect beneficiaries, consider the case of Wittgenstein's Cartesian opponent. Recall that, in paragraph 246, the Cartesian asserts that "Only I can know whether I am in pain, another person can only surmise it." To this, Wittgenstein replies, in part, "It cannot be said of me at all that I know that I am in pain." If Wittgenstein is stopped from his reply by a White-style attack, then the Cartesian is the beneficiary. For, the only thing stopping the Cartesian is Wittgenstein's insistence that an assumption of the Cartesian is mistaken, namely, that it "can be said" that he knows he is in pain.

White, then, insists on the possible truth of the

assertions made by Wittgenstein's Cartesian opponent and by Ayer. But suppose it could be true that, say, "I know that I am in pain." Would the Cartesians' skepticism be revived? I think the answer to this question is that though the Cartesian (or Ayer) might think so, it really would not be revived. Hence, even if it could be true that I know that I am in pain, it would not matter anyway; skepticism would not have been revived.

To understand this line of reasoning, consider what would revive the skepticism. Showing that there was some good reason to believe[16] that "I know that I am in pain" or that "No empirical statement is certain" would revive it. Unfortunately, White uses words that suggest just that! He says that though it is inappropriate to say, it still might be true.

The word "might" is dangerous because it can suggest more than White has shown. Suppose that we grant that White has shown that an expression is not illogical and that we can then say of that expression that it could be true. From this it does not follow that it might be true. To see this, consider the well-known example of humans getting sick. Since I am human I can (could) get (be) sick, but that does not cause me constantly to worry that I might

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[16]Some philosophers may wish to argue that this assumption, as they say, "begs the question." If so, I should be happy to console myself with the "worry" that though there is no good reason to believe that I am wrong, say, still it "may" be true that I am.

(may) actually be sick. My being human, and hence the possibility for me to get sick does not in any way (since I am not a hypochrondriac) give me any reason to consider that I might be sick, to consider doubting my health. Only if a hypochrondriac's view were the model for skepticism would we accept the argument that since an expression could be true, that therefore it might be true. Skepticism is not revived.

Unfortunately, many philosophers do not accept this argument. They believe that if an expression could be true, that it might be true, though of course they would not express it quite in that way. Ayer, for example, thinks that a skepticism that is even just logically possible is a skepticism to be dealt with.[17] Other philosophers, of course, share that view. It remains to show, then, that the queer but true attacks on the appeal to what we would say do not even deliver logical possibility. For, White's Test to determine which assertions are not illogical does not deliver what he thinks it does. To see that, we must turn to the argument that enables one to determine whether a White conjunctive sentence is not illogical, Dretske's "Shift" argument.

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[17]Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge, pages 38-40.

CHAPTER III

THE SHIFT

Fred I. Dretske provides a test to determine whether something that is said can be true; just "shift" the tense or person of what is said. If what is "shifted" can be true, then the original can be true. Coupled with White's test for not being illogical, this produces a test to determine whether a conjunctive sentence is not illogical: just "shift" the tense or person of the conjunctive sentence. If the "shifted" conjunctive sentence is not illogical, then the original conjunctive sentence is not illogical. If a sentence that is not illogical is a sentence that can be true, then it would follow that the original sentence could be true.

We saw in Chapter II that White's "inappropriate but true" attack depends upon the premise that the sentence can be true (is not illogical). And that, furthermore, because he misconstrues the use of the appeal to what we would say, White wrongly thinks that the main point of the appeal is to show what cannot be true. Nevertheless, let's assume that

is the point of the appeal to what we would say. For we now want to know whether a White-style attack on the appeal delivers what White thinks it does; does it deliver a sentence that is not illogical--a sentence that can be true?

I shall argue that a White-style attack on the appeal to what we would say does not deliver what White thinks it does; it does not deliver a sentence that can be true. Two main difficulties will emerge: One, Dretske's shift does not work, and, two, White's restricted notion of a sentence's being "not illogical" bars him from his desired conclusion. It will remain to show in Chapter IV that Dretske and White fail because they wrongly believe they need to radically divide conditions for assertion from conditions for truth. But this belief will be shown to be built upon a mistake. Hence, there will be no reason to accept a White-style attack on the appeal to what we would say. But first, let's examine Dretske's shift argument.

Exposition of Dretske's Shift

Dretske presents his argument to show that one ought not "to confuse truth implications with utterance implications."[1] Before actually considering the shift itself, let's get clear on what one ought not to confuse. Dretske says that if someone ("S") says that something is the case, then there is a distinction between the following two sorts of implications:

Truth Implications: Q is a truth utterance implication of S's statement if S's statement would not be true unless Q were true.

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[1]Dretske, Seeing and Knowing, page 35.

Utterance Implications: Q is an utterance implication of S's statement if S would not, normally, have made the statement unless Q were true.[2]

In the same passage Dretske adds that this distinction reflects the difference we feel between "what he said implies" and "his saying that implies." To take an example, consider White's saying that "Sam did not rob the store." White's saying that implies that he believes that Sam did not rob the store, although what he said ("Sam did not not rob the store") does not, by itself, imply that White believes that Sam did not rob the store. So, that White believes it is an utterance implication not a truth implication. To further support this distinction, Dretske argues that if, contrary to the utterance implication, White believes that Sam did rob the store, then that would not show that White's statement was false, "it would tend to show, however, that his statement went wrong in other ways (deceitful?)."[3] He now draws the connection with a White-style" inappropriate but true" attack:

> Generally speaking, the failure of an utterance implication to be satisfied earns for the statement such epithets as 'misleading' 'inappropriate', 'besides the point', 'ironic', and 'deceitful'.[4]

That a statement is inappropriate is, then, an utterance implication, not a truth implication. Dretske agrees with White that though a statement might be inappropriate

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., page 36.

[4] Ibid., (emphasis mine).

to say or to utter, still it could be true.

Since it is Dretske's concern to determine which assertions are true, he presents the shift argument to determine whether the queerness of a sentence results from an unsatisfied utterance condition or from an unsatisfied truth condition. If the shifted sentence can be true, then, Dretske will conclude, the queerness of the sentence was not due to an unsatisfied truth condition; the sentence, however inappropriate, can be true.

Dretske illustrates the "shift" on the sentence "I see a bus approaching, but I do not believe a bus is approaching."

> Whereas it is paradoxical to say, 'I see a bus approaching, but I do not believe a bus is approaching'. . .it is quite routine to say, 'I saw a bus, but, at the time did not know what it was', or 'He sees the bus but cannot make out what it is.'
>
> Thus as soon as the tense, or the person, of the report is shifted the possibilities for confusion (about the report's being odd to say and its being true) diminish considerably.[5]

However inappropriate it may be to say "I see a bus approaching but I do not believe a bus is approaching," it still can be true.

If we add White's thesis to Dretske's argument the resulting argument has the following structure:

1. If it can be true of me, then it can be true for me to say[6]

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[5]Ibid., page 37.

[6]I shall occasionally use the odd sounding locution "true (for me) to say" as short for the more cumbersome "if I were to say it, what I would say could be true." The purpose of this is to call attention to the difference missed by those who give the shift argument.

2. It can be true of me, because it is not illogical.
Therefore, it can be true for me to say.

That it can be true of me is shown either by shifting tense and saying it of myself, or by shifting person and having someone else say it of me. White provides the argument for the second premise; he argues with the conjunctive test that it is not illogical to say of me, so it can be true of me. Taking the premises in order let's examine their support.

Criticism of Dretske's Shift

In support of premise 1, that if something can be true of me it can be true for me to say, Dretske gives a double argument. First he gives an excluded middle argument that since it is not false it is true; second, he suggests that since it is true the only thing to keep me from thinking it is not true for me to say is my failure to see that only an utterance condition can block its sense. But that does not preclude its still being true (however inappropriate) to say. We will consider the second of these arguments in Chapter IV. For now, let's examine the first.

Excluded Middle

Dretske presents this argument in many places throughout his book. Consider the following selection. Dretske is attacking Norwood Russell Hanson who argues that it is hard to know "how to regard a man's report that he sees an x if we know him to be ignorant of all x-ish things."[7]

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[7]Dretske, page 37.

Hanson's answer, which Dretske quotes in the same passage, is that we would regard the man's report "precisely as we would regard a four-year old's report that sees a meson shower. . . (to take another example). . .to see an X-ray tube is at least to see that, if it dropped on stone, it would smash."

Dretske replies to Hanson's suggestion by suggesting that the only two options are either that he does see x or he does not see x:

> Does this mean that he does not see that which it would be puzzling for him to say he sees? It would also be puzzling in the same way, if this man said he was standing next to an x. Does this mean the man is not standing next to an x?. . .Certainly X-ray tubes can be seen by four-year olds, and not just well-informed four-year year olds. Why should they not see them? Are they invisible? Does the four-year old see through them?[8]

Dretske believes that one good reason for saying that it is true that a child does see an X-ray tube is that we could not say that he does not see an X-ray tube. And so, by analogy, since when I am in pain we don't want to say that I do not know it, surely we must say that I do know it. And if we don't want to say that the fire engine does not look red, then we must say that it does look red. Just as we would surely not want to say of Moore that he does not know that that's a tree, so we must say that Moore does know that that's a tree.

We saw that this "excluded middle" view led White to choose to say that something can be true, since he did not

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[8]Ibid.

want to allow that it cannot be true. This excluded middle view also appears to lie at the heart of the trouble with queer but true attacks on the appeal to what we would say. It certainly lies at the heart of Dretske's defense of his first premise.

To support the premise that "If it can be true of me, then it can be true for me to say "Dretske argues that it must be true for me to say; for, if it can be true of me, then surely it cannot be false for me to say. How could it be true of me that I know that that's a tree, but false for me to say that I know that that's a tree?

Now what is wrong with this agrument? First recall what the argument is designed to show. It is designed to show that Dretske's first premise is correct (that if something can be true of me then it can be true for me to say). Second, recall what it is designed to oppose. The claim that "<u>It can be true</u> for me to say something" is designed to oppose the (wrongly supposed) conclusion of the appeal to what we would say, that "<u>It cannot be true</u> for me to say something." Third, recall that the sentence "It cannot be true" is misunderstood by White (and now, evidently, Dretske) to mean "It must be false." Fourth, it now follows that in wrongly assuming that the only choices are "it can be true" and "it must be false," Dretske and White, by that assumption exclude the very option that is the real conclusion of the appeal to what we would say; they exclude the option that the truth or falsity of what is said does not even arise, since

the words of the assertion do not apply (are inappropriate).

An imaginary exchange may make this objection clearer. Imagine a skeptic rock-hound who, overcome with his interest and love for his prey, wants to argue that we can never know for certain whether rocks think. By appealing to what we would say, we might try to get the skeptic to hear, and to face up to, what he was suggesting. (We might ask, "How can you bear to take the baby rocks from their mothers?") Now, the skeptic, in trying to classify the treatment that had just been (unsuccessfully) worked upon him, might reply, "All right, so you think that rocks cannot think. If I may be allowed to quote the eminent A. J. Ayer. . ." (I interrupt him). . ."Stop! I did not say that rocks cannot think." He now turns to his friend Dretske: "Jones thinks rocks <u>can</u> think." Frustrated, I reply: "It is neither that they can think nor that they cannot think." Astounded but secretly intrigued, he patronizes me: "I never did understand you Wittgensteinans, anyway." Now, finally, I can agree with him.

Just as it is neither that a rock can think nor that it cannot think, so it is neither that I can know that I am in pain nor that I cannot know that I am in pain; so, also, it is neither that the fire engine does look red, nor that it does not look red; and, so, finally, it is neither that I do know that that's a tree, nor that I do not know that that's a tree. It is unfair to reply to the appeal to what we would say, by excluding by assumption the very conclusion

of the appeal. Dretske's first premise that "If it can be true of me, then it can be true for me to say" stands unsupported.

Narrow Use of "Not Illogical"

What about the second premise, that "It can be true of me because it is not illogical"? I should like to argue that if by "can" White means "not illogical," then if there is no equivocation on the word "can" in premises 1 and 2, White's argument is oversimplified. For it oversimplifies the situation to explain that it is "not illogical" for one to say "I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not." I shall argue, then, that White's narrow notion of what is "not illogical" causes him to oversimplify not just the second premise itself but its role in the argument as a whole.

One must tread carefully here, for the surface is very thin. I do not mean to go into all the depths of what it means or does not mean to be illogical. My sole aim is to present a case that will, I think, show that White's use of "not illogical" is too restricted, and hence oversimplified.

Let me first allow Wittgenstein to present my case. Wittgenstein had just attended a philosophy meeting at which Moore first introduced what is now known as "Moore's Paradox." It is, of course similar enough to the paradox we have been considering that conclusions about Moore's Paradox may apply to the "Sam's robbery" paradox. Wittgenstein, in this 1944

letter to Moore, recalls the paper Moore had read just one day before:

> I should like to tell you how glad I am that you read us a paper yesterday. It seems to me that the most important point was the 'absurdity' of the assertion 'There is a fire in this room and I don't believe there is.' Pointing out that 'absurdity' which is in fact something similar to a contradiction, though it isn't one, is so important that I hope you'll publish your paper. By the way, don't be shccked at my saying it's something 'similar' to a contradiction. . .The assertion has to be ruled out and is ruled out by 'common sense,' just as a contradiction is. And this just shows that logic isn't as simple as logicians think it is. In particular: that contradiction isn't the unique thing people think it is. It isn't the only logically inadmissible form and it is, under certain circumstances, admissible. And to show this seems to me the chief merit of your paper.[9]

Just as it could be said to be "illogical" to assert "There is a fire in this room and I don't believe there is" so it could be argued that it is "illogical" to say "Sam robbed the store but I don't believe it."

Let's consider one such argument. We can use Dretske's distinction between utterance and truth implications to make this point. Consider that to say "Sam robbed the store" is to imply that you believe that Sam robbed the store, and that to say "I don't believe it" is to imply that you do not believe it. If we conjoin the two implications, we have that you're saying "Sam robbed the store but I don't believe it" implies the contradictory conjunction "I believe that Sam robbed the store and I do not believe that Sam robbed the store."[10]

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[9]Garth Hallett, A Companion to Wittgenstein's Investigations (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), page 656.

[10]Stephen E. Toulmin seem to agree. When arguing a similar paradox, he suggests that "to say it is a 'contradiction,' is another question. . .though I think a strong case could be made for calling it one." (Toulmin, "Probability," Essays in Conceptual Analysis, page 167.)

Now we have two arguments to choose between. Dretske tells us that if you shift the sentence, then it is not contradictory. The argument we have just seen tells us that if you say the sentence then you will contradict yourself. How do we choose between these two options? I don't think we need to. We can both agree with Dretske that if you shift the sentence the new shifted sentence is not contradictory and also maintain that if you should say the original sentence you would contradict yourself. But it is clear that if we had to choose, we should not choose Dretske's argument, for it is one more step removed from our concern, the original sentence. It would be to choose to contradict oneself with the "distant assurance" that what you were saying wasn't really contradictory. Dretske's argument must give way.[11]

This can, perhaps, help us to see that to think as White

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[11]Would Wittgenstein agree? I don't think Wittgenstein was even aware of the shift as a form of argument. I think a fair case can be made out that he vacillated between my saying something of myself and someone saying it of me (But there is probably plenty of evidence to the contrary). It is interesting to note that curious possibility that in paragraph 246 he was not even talking about my saying of myself I know I am in pain. As evidence that Wittgenstein stumbled onto the shift very late in his career, and even then did not seem to recognize what he had stumbled over, note the following series of passages from On Certainty: "(From 353) If a forester goes into a wood with his men and says 'This tree has got to be cut down, and this one and this one'---what if he then observes 'I know that that's a tree. . .? But might I not say of the forester 'He knows that that's a tree (my emphasis). . .(From 397) Haven't I gone wrong and isn't Moore perfectly right?. . .And don't I know that there is no stairway in this house going six floors deep into the earth, even though I have never thought about it?. . .(From 400) Here I am inclined to fight windmills, because I cannot yet say the thing I really want to say."

does that Sam's paradox is clearly not "illogical" is to reveal the view that those things are illogical only that are themselves contradictory. This conceals two narrow concerns: (1) the only way to be illogical is to be contradictory, and (2) the only significant philosophical way to be contradictory is for a sentence itself to be contradictory. We have seen the fault of the second concern, how in a shifted sentence it must give way to the notion of contradicting oneself. The first concern is also faulty, as an examination of the use of the word "illogical" would easily show. To the objector who would reply that examining the use of the word "illogical" would be irrelevant to White's concern, that when White uses the word "illogical" he uses it in the sense of a formal contradiction, I should reply that the objector has thereby made my case; White's use is too narrow for the task at hand.

As a final criticism of White's narrow use of "not illogical" I should simply like to point out that White seems to impose an "excluded middle" view of being "not illogical". He seems to hold that there are only two options: either a sentence is illogical or it is not illogical. Now this results primarily from his using the words "not illogical" very narrowly, for he excludes those peculiar (or perhaps common) sentences that could not properly be said either to be illogical or not to be illogical. Now since the main interest in this particular part of philosophy lies in the borderline and fringe areas, it is fair to charge that White employs

an oversimplified notion of being "not illogical". His tools are too crude for the delicate task.

There are then two main difficulties with the "shift" argument when it is coupled with White's Test. First, the conclusion is not required to be true since the initial premise is not shown to be true--it is unsupported. Second, insofar as the second premise may betray a faulty, because forced, notion of what is to count as "not illogical", then . . . either the argument may be an equivocation or it does not deliver what it was designed to deliver, namely that certain sentences though inappropriate could be true.

Nevertheless a stalwart opponent of the appeal to what we would say may insist that this is all for naught. For the "real" explanation of the supposed "illogical" paradox is that we have been confusing the conditions for saying something with the conditions for its truth. It remains to show that that view, also, is fraught with difficulty, since it is built upon a mistake. We turn now to what may appear to be the last attempt to salvage the White-style "inappropriate but true" attack, to Searle's "Assertion Fallacy."

CHAPTER IV

THE ASSERTION FALLACY

John R. Searle drives a wedge between assertion and truth. He argues that it would be a mistake to suppose that "the conditions in which it is correct to assert (I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not) are identical with the conditions in which it is the case that (I believe that Sam robbed the store but he did not)".[1] He argues further that by looking at the conditions under which it would be correct to assert the robbery paradox, we might commit the assertion fallacy:

> Assertion Fallacy: The assertion fallacy. . . is the fallacy of confusing the conditions for the performance of the speech act of assertion with the analysis of the meaning of particular words occurring in certain assertions.[2]

So if we are attempting to understand the concept of belief, we might be mistaken to look (only) at conditions for asserting, say, the robbery paradox.

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[1]John R. Searle, "Assertions and Aberrations," page 218 (my emphasis).

[2]Searle, Speech Acts, page 141.

Relation to Previous Findings

Searle's diagnosis seems to confirm White's and Dretske's positions, however unsupported they may seem, that though a sentence can be inappropriate to assert it can still be true. For, his diagnosis would suggest that since the conditions for assertion could differ from the conditions for truth, then the conditions for asserting the robbery paradox could differ from the conditions for its truth. Though it is queer to say, it could be true.

Now, we have seen this claim before. White argued that a sentence though inappropriate could be true. Dretske argued that an utterance though inappropriate could be true. And Moore argued, in his letter to Malcolm, that though what he said might be, in a way, senseless could be true. We have also seen the misunderstandings that a philosopher may betray when he insists upon these statements. First, the philospher probably misunderstands the proper use of the appeal to what we would say. Second, the philosopher may subscribe to a narrow notion of what is to count as "not illogical." Third, the philosopher may exclude by assumption the very position that (he may not realize) he is arguing against.

But a stalwart critic of the appeal to what we would say may insist that this is all for naught, for the "real" explanation of what seem to be misunderstandings is that the proponents of the appeal to what we would say have been confusing the conditions for saying something with the conditions for its truth. In response to the first supposed misunder-

standing that the use of the appeal has been misunderstood, the critic of the appeal may retort that it is its very use that he criticizes for it causes philosophers to look at what we would assert rather that what might be true. In response to the second alleged misunderstanding the critic may retort that of course there may be interesting conflicts and paradoxes in a logic of assertion but that the logic would be just that, a logic of assertion. And to the third charged misunderstanding, the critic may retort that it is not that he has excluded by assumption the intended conclusion but that he can in fact show that the intended conclusion is mistaken; namely, he can show it the assertion fallacy. We must consider the assertion fallacy.

I shall argue that to charge the proponents of the appeal to what we would say with the assertion fallacy is (1) to misunderstand the appeal, and (2) to be flat wrong, if the charge is to make possible certain queer first-person indicative assertions.

Exposition of Searle's Charge

In his paper "Assertions and Aberrations." Searle charges that such philosophers as Wittgenstein, Austin and Malcolm all think that the meaning of a word is its use, and that they look to the use of certain words (such as "know") in only simple categorical indicative sentences.[3] So we have, for example, Wittgenstein wondering about the

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[3]John Searle, "Assertions and Aberrations", pages 217-218.

use of "to know" in simple sentences such as "I know that I am in pain." Now since according to Searle those philosophers consider primarily assertions and not (say) questions or commands, they might be mistaking a supposed discovery about knowledge a discovery about what it is to make an assertion.

Searle even gives a further diagnosis of this potential mistake. He says the real reason we don't say "I know that I am in pain" is that it is normal that if you are in pain you know it. It is a point, he says, about assertion, not knowledge, that one does not make an assertion about what is standard or normal.[4] We could reword this thesis to say that to make an assertion is to suggest by making it (not in what is asserted) that there is something not standard or normal. This would then be what Dretske called an "utterance implication." According to Dretske, my saying something may have implications that are not identical with the implications of what is said.

We have, then, a simple and seemingly correct explanation for the inappropriateness of Moore's assertion "I know that that's a tree." It is inappropriate because if while sitting on a bench in front of a tree, there is nothing out of the ordinary, nothing non-normal, then there is no reason to make the assertion "I know that that's a tree"-though, and this is the part that we're interested in, it still could be true (since it is true). It seems simple, and it seems correct.

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[4]Ibid., page 212.

Criticisms of Searle's Charge

I shall present three main criticisms of Searle's charge. First, Searle makes the illicit assumption that Wittgenstein (and presumably other philosophers) were "analyzing the meanings of certain words." This assumption shows a misunderstanding of the appeal to what we would say. Second, Searle unjustifiably imposes an excluded middle option in two ways: he makes the now familiar assumption that if something cannot be said it follows that it cannot be true, and he says that "since the possibility of something's being false is not in the offing"[5] then it is true (hence, could be true). Third, Searle's conclusion that certain first person indicative assertions can be true is flat wrong. It seems to rely on a faulty "shift" argument.

Analyzing Meaning?

Was Wittgenstein (and were Austin and Malcolm) "analyzing the meaning of certain words?" Searle's description betrays two familiar misunderstandings of the use of the appeal to what we would say: a failure to appreciate the initial stages, and a related failure to understand the intended conclusion. We have seen the use of the initial stages to get a philosopher to hear what he is saying, to get him to face up to what he is saying, and, in case of universal statements, to get him to hear that what he is trying to say is, on the face of it, plainly false. These procedures are

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[5]Ibid., page 213.

not to analyze the meaning of words but to recall and announce those meanings, to help philosophers get their bearings. Consider again Wittgenstein's treatment of his Cartesian opponent in paragraph 246. Is Wittgenstein analyzing the meaning of "to know" in this paragraph? What a misleading way to put it! Wittgenstein deftly combines the first two stages in an attempt to help the Cartesian see his errors. He gets the Cartesian to hear what he is saying be flatly observing that "other people very often know when I am in pain." And the Cartesian does begin to hear; for he replies to Wittgenstein: "Yes, but all the same not with the certainty with which I know it myself!" Now Wittgenstein forces the Cartesian really to face up to what he is saying, by declaring "It cannot be said of me at all that I know I am in pain." This is not analyzing the meaning of certain words; this is the treatment of an errant Cartesian.

Not only does Searle's assumption demonstrate that he fails to see or ignores the initial stages of the appeal to what we would say, but it also demonstrates that Searle fails to understand the stated conclusion: that something cannot be said. Searle shows this misunderstanding in his desire to combat the conclusion he wrongly thinks Wittgenstein has tried to show. In Searle's he is combatting the conclusion that something cannot be true. But, of course, what Wittgenstein said was that something cannot be said, not that something cannot be true. Well, didn't Wittgenstein really mean "cannot be true?" Clearly he did not! For, given the significance of

this passage and given his repeated use of the expression "cannot be said", it is reasonable to assume that if he meant not "cannot be said" but rather "cannot be true" then he would have written "cannot be true." Now, with some authors and some passages this defense may seem presumptuous, but with Wittgenstein and paragraph 246 this defense is not presumptuous, it is deserved.

Well, if it cannot be said, doesn't it follow that it cannot be true? An affirmative answer to this question would be misleading. It would suggest that if it cannot be true, then it must be false. To see this error, let's consider the second main criticism of Searle's charge, the "excluded middle" criticism.

Excluded Middle

Searle unjustifiably imposes an excluded middle option in two ways: First, he assumes that if something cannot be said then it follows that it cannot be true, and second, he says that "since the possibility of its being false is not in the offing then it is true (hence, could be true)." Let's consider the first of these mistakes.

Earlier we imagined an objector asking the question, "From Wittgenstein's showing that something cannot be said, does it not follow that it cannot be true?" Now, taking the words "cannot be true" to be the contradictory of "can be true," then if something cannot be true, it must be false. But it is not false that I know I am in pain, when I am in pain. We see once again in a dilemma being forced: either a

sentence can be true or it cannot be true. Of course the real conclusion is that it can be neither true nor false that I know I am in pain, when I am in pain. Regardless, it would be absurd to think that it follows that if something cannot be said, that it cannot be true.

The second way Searle imposes an excluded middle option is with this argument: "Since the possibility of its being false is not in the offing then it is true (hence could be true)." The obvious reply to this argument is that perhaps neither possibility was in the offing, neither of its being false nor of its being true. This reply is enough to show that the excluded middle is imposed, but does it matter? What is wrong with imposing the excluded middle view here? The error is that to say that a sentence must either be true or be false, is to exclude by assumption the very option that was at issue. The conclusion of the appeal, as I have argued is not that something cannot be true but that it cannot be said. Furthermore, I have argued that it does not follow from that conclusion that it cannot be true. So, it is exactly this "middle" position that is the conclusion of the appeal. To exclude this position by assumption is to present an unfair attack on the appeal.

Our first conclusion is then, that to charge proponents of the appeal to what we would say with the assertion fallacy is to misunderstand the use of the appeal. Now, we want to confront directly one possible conclusion of the assertion fallacy, the conclusion that certain first-person indicative

assertions could be true. We will see that the primary error in this conclusion seems to result from a faulty "shift" argument.

Searle's Charge and The Shift

Insofar as Searle's charge is designed to make it possible that certain first-person indicative assertions can be true, then Searle's charge is mistaken; for his charge employs a "shift" argument that if something can be true of me, then it can be true (for me to say). I shall argue that it is wrong to argue that certain first-person assertions can be true (to say). To develop this argument let me once again have Wittgenstein present my case first.

Recall Wittgenstein's letter to Moore, the day after Moore had read a paper presenting what is now known as Moore's paradox. In the letter, Wittgenstein tells Moore that the first-person indicative report makes no sense, that it makes no sense to say "There is a fire in this room and I don't believe there is."

> It makes sense to say 'let's suppose: p is the case and I don't believe p is the case,' whereas it makes no sense to assert ⊢ p is the case and I don't believe that p is the case.[6]

Wittgenstein observes that it makes sense to suppose, but not to assert. Now this looks surprisingly like a blocked shift argument: it makes sense to say (or suppose) of me, but it makes no sense (for me) to assert.

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[6]Hallett, Companion, page 656.

On one reading Moore seems to agree. Moore says "We imply by the mere fact of using these sentences that we are using them in accordance with established usage. . . And this which we imply is, of course, the contradictory of what we mean to assert."[7] But this reading of Moore would also suggest that Moore accepts the distinction between utterance and truth implications. Perhaps Moore means to suggest that there is a contradiction between an utterance implication and a truth implication. He confirms this interpretation in another source:

> To say such a thing as 'I went to the pictures last Tuesday, but I don't believe that I did' is a perfectly absurd thing to say, although what is asserted is something which is perfectly possible logically: it is perfectly possible that you did go to the pictures and yet you do not believe that you did.[8]

Moore suggests that though there is a contradiction between an utterance and a truth implication, that does not preclude the "logical possibility" that the sentence is true. In other words, though queer or absurd to say, the sentence could be true.

But which sentence? The shifted sentence or the original sentence? The question is not whether the shifted sentence can be true; the question is whether the original sentence can be true. We have seen that failure of this maneuver in seeing the failure of the Dretske shift. From the

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[7]Ibid., page 657.

[8]P. Schilipp, ed. "Reply to My Critics", The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, New York, page 543.

fact that a shifted sentence can be true to say of me, it does not follow that I can say the original sentence and say something that could be true. The shift argument is faulty, so Wittgenstein's observation that it makes no sense for me to say (and our earlier conclusion that it cannot be said) stands unscathed. It is simply wrong that first-person indicative assertion can be true to say.

Our second main conclusion, then, is that the assertion fallacy rests upon the faulty shift argument, and hence does not deliver its conclusion. We saw earlier in our first main conclusion that Searle's charge of the assertion fallacy betrays a misunderstanding of the use of the appeal to what we would say. We are now in a position to see also that the charge of assertion fallacy provides no ammunition for the queer-but-true opponents of the appeal to what we would say.

A Corollary: Inappropriate, Obvious, or Bubble-Like?

Insofar as Searle's charge is directed against the appeal to what we would say, it does not apply. But we have been avoiding one side of this latest queer but true attack. What about the charge that an assertion is queer, inappropriate, odd, or some other way aberrant? There are two replies.

One reply is that it turns out not to matter how the queerness of assertions is described because, as we have seen, regardless of how they are described, there are problems with the arguments that go with the descriptions. It does not matter that Searle has from time to time described certain

assertions as "too obvious for words," for his arguments that accompany that description are faulty. It does not matter what White, and others, think that some assertions are (merely) "inappropriate," for their arguments are faulty. It would seem irrelevant to dispute the proper way to describe the sayings of philosophers. But this reply misses a more important option for the opponents of the appeal to what we would say. Perhaps what philosophers say is so special--unique perhaps--that any attempt to describe in ordinary language what they say will be doomed to failure. Indeed when attempting such a description Virgil C. Aldrich had to resort to the image of soap-bubbles to characterize what philosophers do:

> John sits at the seminar table and, in the middle of the discussion utters the sentence "I'm here now" as he might blow a soap bubble to float before them for inspection, out of working connections.[9]

This difficulty, then, if fastening on the right word ("obvious", "inappropriate", "bubble-like") betrays a more difficult problem: Is it possible that even though philosophers cannot use words in a normal way, perhaps they use them in a special way? Is there a special philosophical use of words? If so, it would be no surprise that those words cannot (normally) be said, nor would it be a surprise that they couldn't quite (normally) be said to be true.

G. E. Moore in his letter to Malcolm suggests one half of this picture. He suggests that there is a special

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[9]Virgil C. Aldrich, "Too Obvious for Words," page 356.

philosophical use, though he denies the other half by declaring that even with the special philosophical use, what he says can be true. Let's turn now to examine Moore's notion of the philosopher's use of words, for it promises to reveal something about the nature of philosophical assertions.

CHAPTER V

THE PHILOSOPHER'S USE OF WORDS

G. E. Moore argues for a special philosopher's use of words. In response to Malcolm, who suggested that Moore's use was a misuse, Moore argues:

> You were wrong in saying that mine was a misuse. . . In my case I was using them with a purpose--the purpose of disproving a general proposition which many philosophers have made.[1]

In the same letter he makes clear that though he did not use those words in their ordinary use, still he used them even in "a useful way." For though he concedes that some things philosophers say may be queer, in that they are not used in their ordinary way, still he maintains that they might be true because used in a special way.

Moore's position also seems to be more enlightened than those we have encountered earlier. He seems to understand the use of the appeal to what we would say. He seems to concede that, in any ordinary way, what he says has no use. He not only hears what he is saying, he seems to face

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[1]Malcolm, Thought and Knowledge, page 174.

up to it. Nevertheless he does argue that what he says could be true.

It will emerge that Moore almost succeeds at presenting a paradigm case appeal against other philosophers. Because he fails to present this appeal properly, he also fails to support his thesis. But what Moore says may not be entirely mistaken. Indeed, in answer to the central question of this Chapter (Can there be a philosopher's use of words?) I shall be forced to answer: "I don't really know." The arguments given (principally by Malcolm) against Moore are sometimes effective but never conclusive. And, Moore's replies have the same dual quality. Nevertheless, if one had to choose sides, one should choose Malcolm's; for as we shall see, the weight of the arguments is on his side. Perhaps we will at least glimpse some of the ways not to understand what philosophers say. In favor of Moore I shall mention three points: that he opposes skepticism, that his opposition is enlightened, and that he sees that Malcolm's charge of a "misuse" of "I know" is not quite accurate. Against Moore, I shall consider four points: that he misinterprets the missing ingredient criticism, that he seems to equivocate on the word "use", that he asserts the paradigms, and that it is not clear what he is doing when he is "responding to philosophers." But the last is not Moore's fault, for, as I shall suggest, it is not clear what anyone is doing when he is responding to philosophers. To develop these criticisms it will be helpful first to consider Moore's

response to the missing-ingredient argument, and, then Malcolm's recent view of Moore.

Moore's Response To The Missing Ingredient Argument

Recall that Malcolm enumerated a number of conditions that normally accompany the correct employment of the words "I know." It was Malcolm's argument against Moore that when he and Moore were sitting on a bench directly in front of a tree, that since no one of the three conditions was satisfied, it was a misuse of "I know" for Moore to say that "I know that that's a tree."[2] To take one of the ingredients as an example, because the ingredient of "doubt" was missing, there was no doubt to be resolved by Moore's assertion, there was no room for its employment; it was a misuse of words.

Moore did not agree with the conclusion of Malcolm's missing-ingredient argument. In his letter to Malcolm, Moore replied:

> You wanted then, and you want now, to say that my use of "I know that that's a tree" was a "misuse" & "incorrect"; but the only reason you give for saying so is that I used it under circumstances under which it would not ordinarily be used, e.g., under circumstances that there neither was at the moment not had been just previously any doubt whether it was a tree or not. But that I used it under circumstances which it would not ordinarily be used is not reason at all for saying I misused it or used it incorrectly.[3]

Moore does not think that the mere absence of one ingredient (circumstance) for ordinarily saying "I know" his saying

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[2]Malcolm, "Defending Common Sense," page 203.

[3]Malcolm, Thought and Knowledge, page 174.

"I know," for as he said earlier, he was not using it in an ordinary way.

In fact, Moore attacks Malcolm's argument more directly by accusing Malcolm of equivocating on the word "senseless." Moore charges that when Malcolm criticizes Moore for saying something which makes no sense that Malcolm fails to notice a double meaning of the word "senseless".

> It seems to me you have been misled into saying this latter partly at least through having failed to notice an ambiguity in our use of "senseless." If a person, under circumstances in which everybody would see quite clearly that a certain object was a tree, were to keep repeatedly pointing at it and saying "That's a tree" or "I know that's a tree," we might well say that that was a senseless thing for him to say; and even if he said it only once, under such circumstances, we might well say that it was a senseless thing for him to do--meaning, in all these cases, that it was a sort of thing which a sensible person wouldn't do, because, under those circumstances, it would serve no useful purpose to say those words...But this is an entirely different thing from saying that the words in question don't, on that occasion "make sense," if by this is meant something which would follow from the proposition that they were not being used in their ordinary sense.[4]

In Moore's view then, Malcolm mistakes the "senseless" use of certain words with those words lacking any sense. Once again the appeal to what we would say is under attack, for, what Moore is saying amounts to the charge that if a philosopher looks to the ordinary use of certain expressions then he is entitled to draw only conclusions about how those words are ordinarily used. But for Moore, and of course for many other philosophers, that almost goes without saying. Surely, it is commonplace that philosophers do not always use words

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[4]Thought and Knowledge, page 174.

in their ordinary acceptation. "But so what," the challenge comes from Moore, "We want to know whether what those philosophers say is true!" In this response to Malcolm, Moore shows the strengths of his position: he opposes skpeticism, he is enlightened about his own position, and he sees that Malcolm's charge of a "misuse" is not quite right. I shall explore these three strengths later when we turn to criticizing Moore. But first we need to take what insights we can from Malcolm's more recent view of Moore, for this view is considerably more subtle and more flattering to Moore.

Malcolm's Recent View of Moore

Malcolm begins by stating that that Moore was not using words in their ordinary way, that Moore was not talking nonsense, and that Moore was giving a "philosophical" employment to the words "I know."[5] But by conceding these three points, Malcolm invites the question what Moore was doing with the words he was using. Malcolm tries to develop a subtle and, as it turns out, flattering answer: he says that Moore was expressing both philosophical insights and philosophical errors.

Malcolm says that Moore's insight is complex; he says that "Moore's expression of the form "I know. . ." contains several layers or veins of meaning; which is to say there are several different, correct, interpretations of his philo-

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[5]Thought and Knowledge, page 185.

sophical message."[6] In fact, Malcolm thinks there are four such correct interpretations of Moore's message. Let's consider those four; for we shall find that they reveal both the strengths and weakness of Moore's attempted response to what Moore called "the Skeptical Philosophers."

The first so-called correct interpretation is simply to note that Moore was responding to skepticism. Like Austin's plain man, Moore was incredulous that anyone would seriously doubt the things that some philosophers had claimed to doubt. Just as the plain man reacted to the challenge of what we know, so Moore reacted to the same kind of challenge. But unlike the plain man, Moore asserts the paradigm against the skeptic. Whereas the plain man, exasperated, would exclaim (if challenged): "If that's not seeing a chair I don't know what is!", Moore in contrast to the plain man would exclaim: "I do know that that is seeing a chair!"

Now why does Moore think it necessary to assert the paradigm? In the second interpretation Malcolm suggests that one answer is that Moore saw that as the only option. In what Malcolm calls (and what we have called) the "excluded middle" position, Malcolm suggests that Moore saw that the words "I do not know that that's a tree" could not be said, so he saw as his only option to say "I do know that that's a tree." There is support for the position that Moore saw only two options: when responding on another occasion to

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[6]Ibid.

skepticism he proclaimed that he knew that "here is one hand and here is another," while holding out his hands. He added in support of his assertion:

> How absurd it would be to suggest that I did not know it, but only believed it, and that perhaps after all it was not the case! You might as well suggest that I do not know that I am now standing up talking--that perhaps after all I'm not, and that its not quite certain that I am![7]

We shall return to this interpretation of Moore, since, as I shall argue, it is one of Moore's errors, one of his reasons for failing to give correctly the paradigm-case appeal to what we would say.

In the third "correct" interpretation of Moore's insight, Malcolm portrays Moore as expressing, albeit not very explicitly, what Malcolm calls the "introspective" insight. Malcolm suggests that Moore saw an analogy in saying "I know" with saying "I feel ill," and "I feel embarrassed." Malcolm claims that when someone says, for example, "I feel ill" his assertion has three features that Moore wanted to emphasize in saying "I know".

> Now when someone says "I feel ill" or "I feel embarrassed," understands the language, and is being truthful, his utterance has the following three logical features: first, it is not subject to error; second, it is neither supported by nor supportable by any investigation, third, it cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed by any investigations. My suggestion is that when Moore, in critizing skepticism, produced his illustrations of things he knew he was endowing his claims to know those things with these same three logical features.[8]

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[7]G. E. Moore, Philosophical Papers, pages 146-147.

[8]Malcolm, page 189.

Now these three features are striking, since they are so similar to what we saw in Malcolm's missing ingredient argument. In that argument the three features common to our ordinary use of "I know" were that there be a doubt or question at issue, that the person asserting "I know" be able to give a reason for his assertion, and that there be an investigation which, if it were carried out, would settle the question at issue.[9] There being a doubt or question at issue corresponds very roughly with its (not) being subject to error. The points about investigation are the same in both cases. But in the case of "I feel ill" one ingredient is missing that was thought to be essential to "I know. . .", namely that the person be able to give a reason for saying he knew.

Now Moore, in his way, responds to this disanalogy. He provides his own reason for saying "I know." He says he is responding to other philosophers. This need to respond by saying what he does know is the primary reason Moore fails to give a proper paradigm-case appeal. To see this point, consider Malcolm's fourth "correct" interpretaion. Malcolm calls this fourth "correct" interpretation the "richest vein of meaning in Moore's attempt to give examples of things he knows.[10] Malcolm suggests that Moore's "insight" parallels Wittgenstein's view in On Certainty:

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[9] Malcolm, "Defending Common Sense," page 193.

[10] Malcolm, Thought and Knowledge, page 193.

> Wittgenstein's perception was that in the class of empirical propositions there are some propositions that are "unshakeable," that "stand fast," that are "exempt from doubt"; or to state this point differently, those propositions are such that if they did come into doubt one's capacity to make any judgements would be destroyed.[11]

The significance of Moore's asserting "I know that that's a tree" is, then, that not only was he responding to philosophers in such a way as to show that they were wrong, but he also wanted to emphasize what was true; some propositions are exempt from doubt. I do not mean to discuss whether this is a correct interpretation of either Moore or Wittgenstein; that is, of whether Moore's insight is correctly described by the words "is exempt from doubt." But I should like to emphasize that in trying to show so-called skeptical philosophers what was true, Moore has taken a step beyond the appeal to what we would say. To develop this more fully, let's collect the different criticisms we want to make of Moore, and compare them with the points in Moore's favor.

Criticisms of Moore

In Moore's favor are at least three points. First, we have mentioned that Moore opposed skepticism. It is not that the very mention of the word "skepticism" should cause one to rally against the position, but that it is a primary concern of the appeal to what we would say to oppose skepticism. Thus, insofar as Moore opposes skepticism he is of interest to us in our attempt to understand the attacks of

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[11] Ibid.

some skeptical philosophers on the appeal to what we would say. Second, Moore's position is, from the standpoint of the appeal to what we would say, more enlightened than, say, the position of either Ayer or the Cartesian. In particular, Moore saw the use of the appeal to respond or react to philosophers.

The third point in Moore's favor is more difficult to make clear. It is easy to state: Moore saw that Malcolm was not quite accurate in his description of Moore's use of "I know" as being a "misuse". But I do not mean to argue this point here, for how does one determine a misuse? How many ingredients must be missing for it to be a misuse? Or, does a misuse have anything to do with missing ingredients? These questions, and more, would need to be examined in order to make Moore's point that his use of "I know" was not properly described as a misuse. In essence Moore charges that Malcolm misuses the word "misuse." But it is not necessary for us to defend Moore on this point; the further criticism of Moore will not depend on it.

What are the difficulties with Moore's position? There are four principal difficulties: (1) Moore misunderstands the missing ingredient argument; (2) Moore equivocated on the word "use"; (3) Moore wrongly asserts the paradigms and invites the accompanying problems; and (4) it is not clear what Moore is doing when he "responds to philosophers." Let's consider each of these four criticisms. We will then be able to evaluate the success of the philosopher's special

use of words.

Misunderstands Missing Ingredient Argument Moore does not appear to notice that Malcolm, in the missing ingredient argument argued that three ingredients were present in all cases of saying "I know. . ." Malcolm's accusation against Moore was that Moore's use of "I know. . ." had none of the three ingredients. Moore responds that it is not fair to call his use a misuse since it lacked the (single) ingredient of "doubt". Now it is not clear whether Moore thought the other missing ingredients were in fact present, whether he thought they were missing but their absence was either obvious or not noteworthy, or whether he did not see that they were missing. The significance of this point is that it is entirely possible that one ingredient might be missing yet the use not quite be called a misuse. To emphasize the point, let me note that Malcolm has detailed one dozen different uses of "I know. . .," has noted their common ingredients, and has observed that Moore's use of "I know. . ." possesses none of those ingredients.[12] Moore is going to need some strong arguments to support his claim that his use of "I know" is at all legitimate.

Equivocates on "Use"

This criticism is closely related to the point in Moore's favor that Malcolm is not quite right to call Moore's use a "misuse." Since I am not developing this theme,

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[12] Thought and Knowledge, pages 180-185.

let me simply point to the equivocation in an analogy and suggest that Moore's employment of "use" seems to bear the same equivocation. Suppose by analogy, that a carpenter retires because of inability to use his hands anymore (perhaps because of an injury). That carpenter might reasonably say, "I have no use for my tools anymore." He might even offer to give his hammer, say, to a friend, with the comment, "I have no use for my hammer anymore. I'll bring it to you in the morning." Now suppose the night before he is to deliver the hammer to his friend, that since his hammer is out ready to be delivered, he uses it as a paper weight to keep the wind from blowing the stack of newspapers around the basement. It would be a poor joke for him to call his friend and say "I was wrong, I do have a use for my hammer. Sorry. But I shall not be delivering it in the morning." I should like to suggest that when Moore said he had a use for his words, that he was speaking more like the carpenter with the paperweight than like the carpenter with the gift to deliver. Malcolm however was charging Moore with an improper use in the other sense, in the sense of the carpenter with the gift to deliver.

Asserts The Paradigm

Moore seems to feel it is necessary to assert the paradigm against his skeptical opponents. Moore says "I know that that's a tree" in response to those who say he knows no empirical statement to be true. We have seen

many times that the proper use of paradigm case argument is to treat the philosopher wanting to make the assertion, not to respond in kind. Moore responds in kind. Of course there are the familiar reasons for his doing so: he sees as his only options either "I do know" or "I do not know," and he misses the initial stages of the appeal. But I should like to observe, further, that in trying to tell the so called skeptical philosophers what was true, he suggests that it would be correct to retort that what the skeptical philosophers propose cannot be true.

This concedes too much to the skeptical philosopher. It is an error to say to Ayer simply that "It cannot be true that you do not see that table," or that "It cannot be true that you know no empirical propositions with certainty to be true." Just as it would be wrong to object to the Cartesian opponent "It cannot be true that you know that you are in pain." Not only does it concede too much to the skeptical philosopher, it leaves Moore no room to develop his "special use view," for it leaves him no room to develop the thesis that he was using words in this special way to respond to philosophers.

Not Clear What Moore Is Doing It seems so simple and straightforward: "It was using words to respond to philosophers, so you cannot appraise them according to their ordinary use." I have two comments to make on this "simple-straightforward" thesis. One, if Moore means to counter the "philosophical doubt" with some "ordinary" assurance, then

I do not see how he can maintain, without further argument, that he is using his words with a special philosophical employment. But if Moore means to be countering so-called philosophical doubt with a thesis of his own of the lack of philosophical doubt (that he knows that that's a tree), then he escapes this first comment.

Two, since it has not been made clear at all what "philosophical doubt" is simply defined as the doubt that philosophers have, it is a phrase in desperate need of a meaning. As Malcolm observes, "To call a philosophical doubt a doubt is as misleading as to call a rhetorical question a question."[13] If Moore is to make good his thesis that he has a special "philosopher's use"of words, he must first establish some meaning to the phrase. For, against Moore is the very strong thesis that when Moore says "I know that that's a tree" he is not using the words "I know" in any ordinary way. Outside of a philosophy discussion we could conclude that therefore what he purports to do with "I know" is not even properly to be called a use.

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[13]"Defending Common Sense," pages 207-208.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Well, can something be queer but true? We can't say for sure, though it looks doubtful; but we can say that the queer but true attacks are all mistaken. Then are we limited to what we say? The question suggests a picture. Now, why would someone ask whether we were limited to what we can say? What do they think is being excluded? G. E. Moore evidently thought he saw something being excluded. But what did he see? We really don't know. In fact, we could argue that he was himself the victim of a misleading picture. Where, then, are we with this problem? Let's try to get our bearings by briefly rehearsing what has been shown and what has not been shown. Perhaps then we can see where we are, and where to go from here.

The Central Question

We began by noting a complaint against ordinary language philosophy, against the appeal to what we would say: "Of course we would not say that, but I want to know whether it is true!" Numerous philosophers delivered their challenges that an inappropriate, improper, or otherwise queer sentence could be true. The central question then was: "Can an in-

appropriate, improper, or otherwise queer sentence be true?"

The question is significant insofar as it represents a challenge to the appeal to what we would say. In itself, the question is merely interesting, but in the voice of the opponents of the appeal it represents a central complaint against ordinary language philosophy.

Now the proper response to a philosophical complaint is treatment. We have caused the complainant to hear what he says-that it does not fit the initial stages of the appeal to face up to his misconstrual of the conclusion of the appeal, and to see that on the face of it what he charges is simply mistaken. Let's recall what was under attack.

The Appeal To What We Would Say

The target of the queer but true attacks was the complex appeal to what we would say. Two characteristics dominated appeals: (1) They were offered only in reaction or response to a philosopher, and (2) Their conclusions were only about what cannot be said--never about what cannot be true. That the proper use of an appeal is in reaction or response is shown in the initial stages of offering the appeal. That the conclusion is never about what cannot be true is shown both by what the proponents say and by the proper use of the initial stages of the appeal.

The initial stages are crucial. First, they partly determine the kind of appeal, since that is partly determined by the kind of statement being opposed. If a universal statement (All perception is delusive, No empirical statement

is certain), then the initial stages eventually culminate in getting the philosopher to hear that what he says is, on the face of it, plainly false. If the statement is singular (I know that that's a tree), then the initial stages of the appeal culminate in trying to get the philosopher to hear that what he says is, on the face of it, either trivial or not understandable.

The initial stages also combine Wittgenstein's two-staged treatment. First, there is an appeal to what we in fact say; then there is an observation (often with an accompanying argument) about what can't be said (is a misuse, is not understandable, can't be entertained). In the first stage, in the appeal to what we would in fact say, the paradigm is never asserted directly against the philosopher (this was Moore's mistake in saying "I do know" against "You cannot know"); rather it is used to help the philosopher to get his bearings, to hear what he is saying. For to assert directly would be to show a misunderstanding of the nature of the opposing philosopher's statement. Let's now examine those who deliver those different queer but true attacks on this appeal to what we would say.

Joint Appraisal of Queer But True Attacks

We saw four main kinds of queer but true attacks: inappropriate but not illogical (so could be true), the shift, the assertion fallacy, and the philosopher's use of words. All involve one central error: they misconstrue the conclusion of the appeal. Furthermore, all attacks but the

philosopher's use of words involve a misunderstanding of the initial stages of the appeal; Moore, to his credit, seems to hear and face up to what he says.

All attacks also share one central explanation for the errors: they all unjustifiably impose an excluded middle option White, Dretske, Searle, and Moore all impose the forced choice between saying that a sentence can be true and saying that it cannot be true. They did not allow or did not see, the "middle" option, that some sentences might not be correctly characterized either by saying that they can be true or by saying that they cannot be true. The excluded middle view is also imposed in other places in these philosopher's arguments. Indeed, it seems to lie at the heart of the explanation of the queer but true attacks on the appeal to a what we would say.

Survey of What Has Been Shown

The primary result is that the appeal to what we would say has been defended against four main queer but true attacks. It has been shown that all such attacks contain certain errors that neutralize or cancel their force. In general, they either misconstrue the use of the appeal or its conclusion.

A secondary result is that both the queer but true attacks and the appeal have, I hope, been clarified. It should be clear by now what is behind the complaint "queer but true". It should also be somewhat clearer than before considering this topic what a so-called ordinary language philosopher is doing when he appeals to what we would say.

Another secondary result is that one can see the prominence of important issues in philosophy of logic behind three related topics: the queer but true attacks, the defense and criticism of skepticism, and the proper understanding of the appeal to what we would say. To take some examples, first, one can see how a wide or narrow use of "illogical" can govern a philosopher's criticism or defense of skepticism. Second, one can see how separating the modals plays a key role in untangling the web of skepticism. Third, one can see how the use and criticism of the so-called excluded middle lies at the heart of certain philosophical issues. Fourth, one can notice the underlying suggestion that the notion of "meaning" is not to be treated as simply one more item in the check-list of qualifications for being true or false. The notion appears not to be as separate as that would require.

Survey of What Has Not Been Shown

It has not been shown that the appeal to what we would say is "correct." Indeed it is not clear what that would consist in. It has been the goal only to defend the appeal against one sort of attack, by showing that the attack is mistaken in four of its forms.

Furthermore, the possibility of a philosopher's unique use of words has not been excluded. It has only been conducted that for the moment the possibility is not understandable. This suggests a direction for the future: perhaps the theory of a unique use of words provides the only way to understand what philosophers say.

Where Do We Go From Here?

This is not meant to be a presumptuous question. It is only to suggest what would seem to follow from our results. I shall offer four main comments. One, as a means of investigation it would appear that it would be profitable to investigate analogies between philosophy and other areas. For example, many lines of poetry would be met with the response "That's true", but when examined, these lines can be as "queer" as the sayings of some philosophers.

Two, the entire subject of "figures of speech" seems relevant. For, many philosophical assertions seem to resemble such non-literal discourse. This has four immediate advantages. First, the categories and criteria of criticism are already partly developed; second, the results are sure to be enlightening given the prevalence of, say, metaphors (planned and unnoticed) in philosopher's writings; third, many philosophers writings seem to contain clear examples of catechresis; fourth, a notion such as Wittgenstein's "secondary sense"[1] seems to possess one trait of many philosphical assertions: they cannot be expressed in any other way without destroying their meaning. Perhaps this is why we cannot say what philosophers are doing, though they can do it.

Three, the connection between paradigm case appeals and Kripke's rigid designator needs to be explored. For example, does the missing ingredient argument betoken a so-called

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[1] Philosophical Investigations, page 221.

"cluster" theory of meaning? Perhaps that is why Malcolm wrongly thought Moore's use was a misuse.

Four, why couldn't a computer be programmed to produce philosophy? If a computer can be programmed to sort words into proper categories, then it can also be programmed to mix them up in certain ways. If philosophical statements sometimes resemble such mixtures, then couldn't a computer be programmed to print out philosophy? Would we still wonder whether, though queer, what it "said" was true? It does seem to take away a bit of the allure.

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