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Table of Contents

1 Standing Before a Sentence

Giving descriptions of the world – of different kinds – is something that most people do every day in their everyday lives. These descriptions are formulated in language. Philosophers take a special interest in the possibilities and even practicalities of such descriptions because they form the basis for the formulation and communication of the knowledge we – people – can possibly have about the world.

The above is indeed self-evident. I, however, write it out here as an example of a basic step in formulating a *philosophical picture* of an aspect of the world. In what follows, I will consider a very rough sketch of how such a picture can be developed, in a way which may seem trivial but which I find troublesome.

Language, or speaking about the world and what it is like, is a matter of using *words* as sounds or as text in communication. Now it is a common view within today's philosophy of language that our descriptions of the world seldom come in single words, but that we instead describe situations with the help of *sentences*. Again, I am now sketching an approach to sentences within a cluster of philosophical perspectives which I in the end, as will become clear, do not share.

Granted that sentences rather than single words are used to describe situations, let us consider the sentence "I saw her duck under the table".[1] A descriptive sentence like this can be said to be grasped immediately in the sense that we can recognize the words in it and we

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[1] I picked up this phrase from David Cockburn who used it as an example during a course given at Åbo Akademi University in 1999.

recognize it or accept it as a correctly formulated sentence. Yet, in this picture, it seems that it is not immediately clear precisely how we are to understand it, because there is ambiguity at play: the "duck" could be understood to mean a bird or it could be taken as a verb describing a bodily movement. However, that is not all: in this perspective of bewilderment, it is not settled who of all people this "I" stands for – that would depend on who the utterer of those words would be in a particular situation. "I", "here", "she/her" are "indexicals", words, the reference of which vary with the context of expression. What, then, about the word "table"? It could in principle be any table, and any kind of table. The word "her" could also be taken either as a genitive, the expression of ownership, or the accusative form of "she", and who the "she" out of so many possible "shes" would be is also open as of yet.

To reduce the ambiguity of the role of the word "duck", we may supply a setting to help us imagine what the descriptive sentence could involve. Suppose I am at a restaurant with my friend and her tame duck, a duck which tends to be lost while looking for something edible around the floors. If another guest at the restaurant had seen it and we had lost sight of the duck, then the guest could say "I saw her duck under the table", "I" referring to the guest, the speaker, and "her" to my friend. "Duck", here, would be a noun, not a verb, and it would refer to my friend's bird. In this case, the sentence works as a description of an event in which a girl who owns a duck has brought it with her to the restaurant. The *sentence* – one might say – would stand for or express the *proposition* "I, the guest, saw the woman's duck under the restaurant table".

A second possibility would be to take the word "duck", to refer to a bodily movement. If we, again, let the setting be a restaurant, it could be many sorts of bending down, for many reasons – bending down to

avoid being hit by a dove which has flown into the restaurant, or avoiding being seen by someone passing by. The questions regarding who the "she" is and who the "I" is all remain.

It seems that the sentence "I saw her duck under the table" is by itself ambiguous and therefore is determinately true or false only as it expresses a particular proposition on a particular occasion. Thus it seems as if we need to complete the sentence in some way in order to know what state of affairs it describes. In other words, to understand the sentence, we need to know what situation should hold for it to be true. To put it in terms common in certain forms of analytical philosophy of language: we need to know its truth conditions.[2] In this case, the truth conditions are not present in the sentence as such, but they depend on the proposition which the sentence expresses, in other words, on what the sentence says on a particular occasion. One might want to say that there is a variation in truth conditions, depending on what the actual proposition which the sentence corresponds to, is. In our present philosophical picture, the sentence as it stands is not enough to settle its function as a determinate description of the world.

When, in this picture, we want to resolve this issue of meaning, we are at risk of understanding the proposition as an entity behind the sentence, which determines its meaning.[3] As I have set up our story

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[2] Truth-conditional theories of meaning will often also assume that to be a linguistic item, its significant parts must be able to refer to the elements of the world. See for instance Davidson, D., "Truth and Meaning", *Synthese* 17 (1967).

[3] What the 'meaning' of a sentence or a linguistic expression is and whether it corresponds to or is merely associated with truth conditions is an issue which has been widely debated. At this point my use of the word 'meaning' is colloquial. Pascal Engel, in "Propositions, Sentences and Statements", *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, p. 787 takes sentences to be strings of words which are "formed according to the syntactic rules of a language". Syntactic rules are rules of combination of words into sentences.

above, on the one hand, we have a sentence which taken by itself would be open to different interpretations, that is, it may turn out to have different contents. On the other hand, we have the proposition behind it, which functions as the bearer of truth and falsity. I introduced these entities as reactions to a worry raised about indeterminacy of meaning in relation to descriptions of the world.

There are, and have been, other models of entities called propositions in circulation in modern philosophy. One of the most frequently discussed ones is related to the picture I drew above, namely the notion of a proposition generally associated with G. E. Moore and some other Cambridge philosophers whose most active years in philosophy occurred during the first half of the 20th century. G. H. von Wright sums up the different uses of the term 'proposition': it is employed to speak about the things to which truth belongs, which is "the *content* of beliefs, judgments, and statements, i.e. [it belongs] to *that which* is believed, judged or stated, and therewith also to that which sentences *say* or *mean* or *express*".[4, 5]

Sentences, also have semantic properties, Engel points out – the words as well as the sentence have meaning. These 'meanings' have been called 'propositions' by philosophers, Engel writes. He adds that philosophers have focused on the semantic properties of indicative sentences, on their truth and falsity. 'Propositions' have in general been tied to truth and falsity.

[4] G. H. von Wright, "Demystifying Propositions", *Truth, Knowledge & Modality*, Philosophical Papers Vol. III, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1984, p. 14.

[5] The need for propositions has been argued for in many different ways. Paul K. Moser writes that what he calls "proposition theorists" have argued that propositions have been taken to be "needed as explainers" in at least three ways: "(i) As the abstract extra-linguistic bearers of truth-value, they are needed to explain, for instance, how there can be truths which are currently undiscovered and are therefore neither stated nor believed. Such truths, it is argued, cannot be identified with statements, inscribed or uttered sentence-tokens, or beliefs, and so must be abstract items such as propositions. (ii) As the abstract objects of the propositional, or intentional, attitudes, propositions are needed to explain how various individuals can believe, desire, or hope

These employments, mentioned by von Wright, are common but not necessarily explicitly formulated views of the proposition which many have found unclear. Von Wright, for one, wants to "demystify" the proposition and in his paper he presents an alternative understanding of this entity.[6] In this allegedly demystified picture of the proposition, only some sentences express propositions, namely so called 'declarative' or 'constative' sentences. These are sentences which yield well-formed sentences when prefixed by "It is true that". According to von Wright, the term 'proposition' in general creates "confusions and pseudo-problems" and can be dispensed with, but even if so, it may nevertheless be useful in philosophy as a "terminological (linguistic) device":[7] for example, one may use the term 'proposition' to say that some propositions expressed by a sentence *s* lack truth value (for example when it comes to orders or permissions, such as 'You must close the window' which can be prefixed by "It is true that" without yielding an ungrammatical sentence).[8]

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for the same thing, even if they do not share the same language. (iii) As the abstract meanings of sentences, propositions are needed to explain how different sentences can be synonymous, even if those sentences occur in different languages." P. K. Moser, "Types, Tokens, and Propositions", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, No. 3 (1984): 361-375.

[6] Cf. von Wright 1984.

[7] von Wright 1984, p. 22. Von Wright writes that he avoids calling propositions "the *reference* of *that*-clauses" or "*meanings* of sentences" because those "locutions are unnecessary and induce us to talk of propositions as of some *entities* with a shadow of existence".

[8] The latter sorts of propositions, which are not used to describe a state of affairs in the world, but to carry out an action, are often discussed under the title 'speech acts' (although of course, descriptive propositions are speech acts too).

1.1 Context as supplement

If we follow the line of reasoning above, there will seem to be good reasons in philosophy to postulate an entity behind sentences or statements. However, at the same time, the proposition introduced as above brings with it further questions. The "proposition" in the picture is the content, which can be represented by a kind of explication of the sentence. The sentence is the linguistic entity which language users encounter. It plays the role of the given in a philosophical description of a potential speaking situation, and it is perceptible or in some sense already available, which the proposition is not. Then the question arises how a speaker or hearer becomes acquainted with, or is able to identify the proposition in a particular case, that is, how does he or she get around or beyond the sentence to its meaning? For the sentence 'I saw her duck under the table' it is not unreasonable to suppose that it could occur in that form in a situation. One way of answering this question is related to von Wright's demystified version of the proposition, in which the proposition is a *reformulation* of the sentence meaning, which includes the contextual factors required, contextual factors which are also available to those involved in the communication. In our case, it is by looking at the context of the speaking situation that we determine whether 'duck' is about a bird or not.

Von Wright distinguishes between "open" and "closed" sentences. When the well-formed, open sentence 'I saw her duck under the table' is "supplemented", in von Wright's terms, with the 'appropriate linguistic supplementation', it becomes closed. Then again, in von Wright's example, the sort of supplementation which I provided would not be quite enough. The "needed determination" he writes, is often "supplied by the context". However, to distinguish between two possible interpretations, I conjured up two imaginable settings above, each of

which could be enough to disambiguate the sentence. In contrast, von Wright is thinking of context in terms of space and time: a "closed sentence" exemplified by him is "It is raining in Paris on 12 November 1980". Von Wright draws a distinction between *individual* and *generic* sentences – 'It is raining' is generic and in itself indeterminate, it has "a variable truth-value". It does not, in von Wright's view, strictly speaking *lack* truth-value. The context which should supplement the sentence to fix the truth-value of the proposition is, however, not at all similar to the *context as situation* which I supplied above.[9] In von Wright's picture, the context *supplements* the sentence to form a graspable whole with a truth value. Let us call this view of the context the *context as supplement*. Notice the difference between the kinds of contextual information supplied: the settings which I conjured up is a local imagined situation as opposed to von Wright's spatial and temporal data which can supposedly be incorporated into the sentence to "close" it.

Like von Wright, W.V.O. Quine is critical of the idea of propositions as special kinds of entities behind the perceptible, physical sentences. He calls these "ghostlike", although not merely for being postulated and unobservable. His worry about propositions is a worry about the consequences of positing "immaterial bearers of truth"[10] but more acutely, such a notion, "a shadow of a sentence" as he calls it, would entail a loss of clarity for the notion of identity which he needs for the behaviorist theoretical framework which he had designed as a tool to

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[9] I will explain this point extensively later, and for now we must manage with this rough formulation. In a perspective from outside language, the indeterminacy will always remain: there will be a wedge between the sentence and its meaning. Only from within language can these two meet.
[10] Quine, W.V.O., "Meaning and Truth" in *Philosophy of Logic,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge MASS 1970, p. 2.

show how epistemology is naturalized.[11] He rejects propositions as "meanings of sentences" as well as propositions as the "things named by sentences"[12] by showing that these ideas give rise to a serious problem of individuation of propositions. If we understand them as immaterial bearers of truth, he says, we can't individuate them, i.e. distinguish one proposition from the other without making use of sentences, the meanings of which were to be settled by positing propositions.

Quine describes propositions as shadowlike or ghostlike because what we can perceive are merely the sentences – the sounds or inscriptions. According to him, the propositions are not tangible in this sense while at work, although it is indeed possible to formulate them explicitly in what he calls "eternal sentences" (like von Wright's "closed sentences", supplemented with details of time and space). Quine's suggested solution is to do away with the proposition altogether and simply stick with sentences (although to be precise, later on he specifies that "what are best seen as true or false are not sentences but events of utterance", i.e. certain kinds of "verbal performances").[13] For Quine, alleged

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[11] The details of Quine's philosophical system fall outside the scope of this investigation. Also other theories which render 'proposition' as philosophically unnecessary have been presented, for instance in Copilowish I. M. & Kaplan A., "Must there be propositions?", Mind 192 (1939): 478-484..

[12] Quine 1970, p. 12, see also Quine, W.V.O., "Propositional Objects", *Crítica: Revista Hispanoamericana de Filosofía* Vol. 2, No. 5 (May, 1968), p. 8.

[13] Quine 1970, p. 13. As he spells out his idea, it leads up to his famous thesis about the indeterminacy of translation, that as long as a hypothesis about the meaning of a linguistic expression matches the observable behavioristic data available, it is to be considered correct (i.e. since, according to Quine, the only evidence allowed is observable features of behavior of the users of the expression). It is difficult to give a short indisputable description of Quine's thesis. In Robyn Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances: The pragmatics of explicit communication*, Oxford: Blackwell 2002, p. 20, the formulation of Quine's thesis is that there is no fact of the matter concerning which hypotheses about the meaning of a linguistic expression are correct. Some hypotheses

context-dependence seems possible to compensate as the specification of propositions by merely supplementing the sentences.

1.2 Indeterminacy of meaning

When I introduced the proposition at the beginning of this chapter I made use of a certain picture of language. I set up the problem in which it was supposed to do work as a problem of grasping the specific meaning of a given linguistic item: I called the sentence "I saw her duck under the table" ambiguous and I set out to suggest how to resolve the ambiguity as a principled problem of language use. Furthermore, I chose a case for which there seemed to be two good interpretations close at hand. Language, in this picture, is of interest for philosophers to investigate as the interface between thought – or perhaps rather, perception – and reality in an epistemological project. Language, in this picture, is a system for communication, a system of signs, the function of which we can pick out and investigate in a detached state, from a perspective where sentences are given as mere strings of words, whose meaning is to be determined. This picture presupposes that we recognize a sentence from its surface and that we can ask what it *may* mean.

Above, I presented the ambiguity as a characteristic of the sentence as a linguistic entity, and I introduced the proposition as a solution to the problem of using the sentences as a description of a situation. Now, in our dealings in and with language, in actual speaking situations, this is not the situation we are in when we stand before a sentence. Ambiguity as it appeared above is a theoretical construction in the sense that in

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will be intuitively contradictory, but they should nevertheless be considered correct as long as they fit the available data.

everyday situations by contrast, if we can't make out what someone means with an utterance, we have means to find out how to understand it.

To recapitulate the contributions to the problem of meaning as I presented it so far, for Quine it seemed as if there are two options – sticking with the sentence or postulating the proposition.[14] He embraces the sentence, which to his mind can take on the task that the proposition (which he rejects) was supposed to be needed for. Von Wright approves of both: the sentence can be expanded and supplemented with temporal and spatial context data to capture the proposition. For von Wright, the term 'proposition' could retain a role to play as an auxiliary term. In contrast to these two, there are so-called contextualist approaches, such as that of Robyn Carston, who proposes what she calls "the semantic underdetermination thesis": the idea that the meaning encoded in the linguistic expressions used (in a stable system of meanings) always underdetermines the proposition expressed.[15] Carston rejects the idea that the sentence should be expanded to resolve this sort of underdetermination (as in von Wright's closed sentences and Quine's eternal sentences) because "pragmatic processes can supply constituents to what is said solely on communicative grounds, without any linguistic pointer".[16] For Carston, the content of a sentence can't gain full expression in merely linguistic

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[14] I draw on Cora Diamond, "Truth before Tarski" in Erich H. Reck, *From Frege to Wittgenstein: Perspectives on Early Analytic Philosophy*, OUP, Oxford 2002, p. 254 (a reference which I owe to Martin Gustafsson): "An instructive contrast here is with Quine's approach. Philosophers who are, as he puts it, 'commendably diffident' about positing nonlinguistic bearers of truth will take the bearers of truth to be sentences regarded simply as linguistic strings. The nonlinguistic proposition and the linguistic string appear as the two principal alternatives."
[15] Carston 2002: p. 19-20.
[16] Carston 2002, p. 23.

constructions no matter how elaborated these are, and therefore the notion of a proposition remains significant as the content which can't be communicated without the non-linguistic context of communication.[17]

There is a recent, Wittgenstein-inspired contribution to the philosophy of language that moves in this same direction of stressing the context: the "radical contextualism" of Charles Travis. Travis, however, opposes the idea of linguistic items as "bearers" of specific "semantics", but nevertheless does not wish to exclude sentences and sentence meaning from the philosophical analysis of language. Instead, to Travis, any sentence is such that it can carry different (truth-conditional) "semantics" depending on the context, across occasions of use. He calls this feature of linguistic items "occasion-sensitivity".[18]

Above, I introduced different approaches to and notions of sentences, proposition and context. My aim is not to investigate the claims of these approaches further, rather it is merely to present them as *contrasting* pictures to a set of pictures which I will investigate in this work. I take it that what the pictures of sentences and propositions of von Wright, Quine, Carston and Travis have in common, despite their profound differences, and what crucially differs from the pictures I will investigate, is that they start out in a state of *detachment* from meaningful language use and the way questions of the use of language arise and make sense in our everyday life with language. In their investigations,

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[17] Carston entertains an idea of propositions as entities, which have a mental existence (after Fodor). Language to Carston is a tool for communication, however, she thinks, an imperfect one.
[18] Charles Travis, *The Uses of Sense*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989, p. 256. It is important to see that "semantics" may be understood in many ways. This is the "thick" notion of semantics, but in the thin notion, there is indeed a context-independent "semantics" too, which contributes to fixing sense (see Travis 1989 p. 3f).

they approach language *from the outside*. This may seem to be a radical and unwarranted claim at this point, but I hope that what I mean will become clearer as I pursue the overall aim of this investigation. I will now present it in short.

In this work, my hypothesis is that that there may be another philosophical perspective on sentences and propositions available. I will investigate a philosophical perspective on language which is very different from the ones described above as a starting point for philosophical inquiry into questions of language. I will call this alternative perspective "the user perspective", and it may be described as a perspective from within language.[19]

In this perspective from within language, the sentences are not normally in need of supplementation for disambiguation since their meaning is given. Context, in the perspective from within language, is an aspect which is internal to the notion of the sentence-proposition.

1.3 Preliminaries of a User Perspective

The user perspective as a perspective from within language may be introduced by the help of three central ideas.

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[19] This notion of a perspective in relation to language and a position in which one stands is suggested clearly in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and elaborated in different ways (especially in negative accounts) in the exegetic literature, for example by Cora Diamond in "Throwing away the Ladder", *Philosophy* 63, No. 243 (1988), p. 11: "Logic will belong to the kind of sign ordinary sentences are, and if that can really be made clear, it will be clear also that in speaking philosophically, we are confusedly trying to station ourselves outside our normal practice of saying how things are, trying to station ourselves 'outside the world, outside logic'." Cf also McDowell on the mistaken view in philosophy trying to look from "sideways on" in "Non-cognitivism and Rule-following" (1981) in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule,* ed. Holtzman & Leich, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Firstly, from a position within language, our starting point would be a "sentence in use", not the sentence as merely an orthographic or phonetic string, more or less closely coupled with the proposition as the hidden content or meaning. It is not a sentence in need of explication or supplementation. This is a thicker notion of a sentence than analytic philosophy of language generally makes use of. The sense of the sentence is presupposed or considered a given or rather, it is a feature of the very sentence: the sense of a linguistic entity is not external, rather the starting point is that sentences in use are familiar and employed in communication, in understanding and thinking. Hence, the question if a particular sentence has meaning, and if so, which meaning, what it means (or, if you like, what proposition it expresses) does not arise except in special cases. As a consequence, some questions of meaning or signification which appear pressing within many strands of the philosophy of language will fall outside the need for explanation.

A second and related idea in this perspective, is the context understood as a situation in which a speaker has something to say, as opposed to the supplements of time and place in von Wright's suggestion and the constituents of what is said in Carston's program. I draw on James Conant's explication of the later Wittgenstein and call this specific notion of context "the context of significant use".[20]

In everyday life, we sometimes do stand before sentences which we don't understand and which demand interpretation. When we do, we may appeal to context, we may appeal to the speaker and demand

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[20] J. Conant: "Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use", *Philosophical Investigations* 21(1998): 222-250.

explanations and specifications. If we don't receive any, we may simply ignore the speaker, or in serious cases, call for help. We are not worried that language as such will break down and we do not appeal to principles concerning the functions of language to correct speakers who have problems making themselves understood. Our philosophical descriptions of language situations of that sort often have a different aim: shedding light on philosophical issues. The notion of 'context' in the approaches from outside of language may be described as a box following language users around. "Context", in such a picture, is understood to be fixed before a situation of use: it is not appealed to as part of the speaking situation. [21] In the perspective which I set out to investigate, the notion of context makes sense in situations in which a question arises about what is said.

Describing the mechanisms of communication, how language works in practice, and the range of strategies available in situations when we do not immediately understand what is said is a valuable task for philosophers of language and theoretical linguists, but such a general scientific task is not part of the perspective from within language. Nevertheless, work done within these disciplines, and the conceptual issues involved in the description of language and its practice, as well as the apparatus devised for this descriptive task, are valuable sources of local support for the investigations of the user perspective. However, in normal situations, standing before a sentence, when language works, questions about the sub-personal mechanisms described by such theories do not arise.

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[21] I owe this picture to Avner Baz at a Research Seminar in Philosophy at Åbo Akademi University in April 2014.

The question then, is what the consequences of this view of meaning and this thicker notion of sentence-proposition are for philosophizing, while standing before a sentence, in the stream of conversation or flow of life. One of the consequences is that this perspective is not compatible with some ways of doing philosophy, such as philosophizing on the premise that sentences are meaningful also out of context. Another is that it may provide different ways to open up or dissolve some philosophical tangles than standard philosophical work.

Indeed, in the perspective from within language, the ambiguity of a sentence is not a *philosophically* pressing general or fundamental issue. Of course, misunderstandings may arise in particular situations, and these may be resolved by pointing out that the hearer took a word to mean something other than it did. This sort of clearing up confusions requires using other words, the meanings of which are not questioned: there is no universal problem of meaning of words in sight. The perspective from within allows for the investigation of the multitude of uses and meanings as it opens up for a linguistic entity to have any number of meanings depending on the context and what the speaker is doing with his or her speaking. Rather than an obstacle to the determination of meaning in descriptive language use, however, the multiplicity of meanings is simply one feature of language. An ambiguous expression is not in itself ambiguous but it is a reflection of the flexibility of the orthographic or phonetic signs and the possibility to misunderstand, which is a feature of communication rather than a problem of the linguistic sign. Hence, ambiguity is not a worry in a perspective from within language. The task is not to explain *how* meaning is possible. Rather, *that* meaning is possible and present is a starting point for the perspective from within language: a sentence in use is a sentence which is understood well enough for the purpose it is supposed to serve. In the perspective from within language, ambiguity or other problems of

meaning-determination are not general problems for sentences, but they are problems of interpretation which can be solved with the help of language.

This standpoint brings with it questions and tangles. It needs to be clarified in general. Furthermore, when contrasted with other perspectives on language in philosophical work, there are differences to other points of departure which the user view prompts me to discover, to explain and describe. In my explorations of this perspective, I do not set out to contribute to the philosophy of language, but to investigate this shift of aspect as a shift of method in philosophy. The shift of method in philosophy is the third central idea of the user perspective as a perspective from within language.

The sentence in use and the context of significant use have parts to play in relation to philosophical clarification: the description of language use enters as the means of conceptual investigation, but also, these investigations of language have a role in philosophical tangles, which are the result of misunderstandings of the workings of language (which is possible in a multitude of ways), misunderstandings which arise or surface in reflections on language. Further, this conception of philosophical problems entails that different philosophical projects and issues will require different reminders of language use and that set philosophical terminologies may cause philosophical confusion.

In this work, I will begin by investigating different aspects of the user perspective, first the discussion of meaning of sentences and nonsense in relation to Wittgenstein's philosophy. Before I go on, let me mention some of that work in philosophy which I take to go in the direction of the user perspective.

1.4 User Perspective: Background

Within contemporary philosophical debates, many suggestions have been made along these lines in particular by philosophers engaging with the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Cora Diamond (2002) gives an example of a perspective of language in which such a suggestion is to be found: Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921). In his remarks 3.11-3.12 he writes that "a *Satz* is a bit of language, a sign in a certain kind of use".[22] The use, as in our 'duck' example, is not open to be determined but it is included in this thicker notion of a sentence-proposition. This employment of a notion of *Satz* which concurs with the sort of change of perspective which I would like to explore, as Diamond suggests, occurs in the tradition of the early Wittgenstein and Frege (although they of course have their similarities and differences[23]).[24]

Sören Stenlund draws a distinction between a "naturalistic" and an "aprioristic" view of language in his *Language and Philosophical Problems*.[25] According to him, the early Wittgenstein's view, along with Frege's, is

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[22] Diamond 2002, p. 254.

[23] Cf Diamond 2002.

[24] von Wright (1984, p. 14) notes that there are translation difficulties involved for a text which carefully observes the sentence-proposition distinction. It does not "offend the ear" to call a *Satz* true or false whereas to say so of a sentence would do so. I take it that the difficulties of translation here (the difficulties which have also surfaced in the translation of Wittgenstein's work into English) are not mere difficulties of translation but that the subsequent discussion in both languages may gain from conceptual clarification. Wittgenstein's notion *Satz,* was translated as 'proposition' in English by Bertrand Russell in the introduction which he wrote for the first version of the *Tractatus* (Russell's first Introduction from around 1918 was not published but an edited version of it appeared in Ogden's translation later). Wittgenstein himself adopted this translation, but there is reason to be careful about these notions when bringing these two traditions together in one discussion as long as the differences and similarities have not been made clear. Peter Geach and Cora Diamond have used 'proposition' also for Fregean and Tractarian *Sätze*.

[25] Stenlund S., *Language and Philosophical Problems,* Routledge, London 1990, p. 71f.

aprioristic: language is conceived as a universal medium and as a calculus at the same time. Language *is* our very understanding, and not something which can be studied by us from the outside. It is not an external phenomenon which it is possible to theorize about, but the frame of our conception of phenomena *overall.*

The early Wittgenstein's suggestion that we should understand a proposition (*Satz*) as a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world indeed suggests a point of view in which the sense is given. Later, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes

> 117. You say to me: "You understand this expression, don't you? Well then—I am using it in the sense you are familiar with."— As if the sense were an atmosphere accompanying the word, which it carried with it into every kind of application.
>
> If, for example, someone says that the sentence "This is here" (saying which he points to an object in front of him) makes sense to him, then he should ask himself in what special circumstances this sentence is actually used. There it does make sense.[26]

In this paragraph, Wittgenstein introduces a different notion of context: the sense of a word or a sentence is not like an atmosphere which is carried with a word as such and into any application or use, but the sentence makes sense in the "special circumstances" in which it is "actually used".

Although the perspective I set out to investigate is inspired by the later Wittgenstein, there is an important difference between Travis' radical

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[26] Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations* 2nd Ed tr. Anscombe, Blackwell, Oxford 1958.

contextualist account and the perspective from within language: from within language, there is no special position from which to spot the different semantics of a linguistic item or its instances. Rather, the occasion, to use Travis' terms, is written into the linguistic item, and hence, the entire issue of meaning-underdetermination, which drives Travis' account, is not in need of philosophical exposition and explanation.[27]

Wittgenstein, in his later work, wrote that "Words only have meaning in the river of thought and life"[28] and thought, to use David Stern's words, "that the significance of a particular utterance is a matter of its location within the stream of conversation, or ordinary use of language".[29] Or to use another formulation by Marie McGinn, Wittgenstein went from presupposing one method in philosophy to envisaging the possibility of many, and his view of language as the object of investigation changed from an idealized language to "the concrete, spatial, and temporal phenomenon of language-in-use".[30]

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[27] Some distinguish between "context-sensitivity" as the view that there are factors beyond the words used in a sentence which its truth-conditions depend on and "occasion-sensitivity" as the Travisian view that truth and falsity or bivalence is not a property of *sentences* themselves but of the instances of them. Cf Davies, Alexander, review of Charles Travis: *Occasion-Sensitivity: Selected Essays* (OUP 2008) in *Disputatio* 31, Vol. IV, 2011. I take Travis to be an example of a recent Wittgenstein-inspired scholar who has promoted the contextual aspect. In his terms, which end up treating these issues in a detached manner after all, an item may "count as having a variety of semantics", and the "occasion" can "fix" the semantics in a variety of ways (Travis 1989: 38). Linguistic items are "speaking-sensitive" in Travis' view.
[28] Wittgenstein, Zettel §174.
[29] David G. Stern: *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1995, p. 188.
[30] McGinn, M., *Elucidating the* Tractatus*: Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy of Logic and Language*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2006, p. 289.

The philosophy of language after the later Wittgenstein is often characterized as focused on pragmatics i.e. aspects of the use of language, as opposed to semantics, which deals with the meanings of the signs of language, or syntax, concerned with the rules of combination of signs.[31] It is often distinguished from truth-conditional theories of meaning which are mainly interested in language use as description of the facts of the world, as opposed to for example speech act theory, in which language is regarded as a tool for action in the world. In the perspective from within language, the distinction between semantics and pragmatics dissolves because the relation between a sentence and its context of use is, to use a term from Wittgenstein, internal.

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The philosophical shift of perspective on the proposition which I wish to investigate in this thesis is connected with a special view of the relation between philosophical work and language. In the much disputed tradition called Ordinary Language Philosophy (OLP), philosophers appeal to ordinary and normal uses of philosophically troublesome words "with the professed aim of alleviating this or that philosophical difficulty or dispelling this or that philosophical confusion".[32] Avner Baz, in his formulation of the idea of OLP, which he tries to defend against misunderstandings, writes that when philosophers in this

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[31] See for instance Conant 1998, p. 239.

[32] Avner Baz, "Geach's 'Refutation' of Austin Revisited", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 40, No 1 (2010), p. 41. Avner Baz calls common but often not explicitly formulated views which ordinary language philosophers – in his case – reacted against "the tradition". He discusses the difference in starting point taken by Ordinary Language Philosophy, which in his view is a movement critical of common ways of discussing issues of language and language use. The views will become clear in the examples I discuss later on.

tradition invoke language use when it comes to philosophically troublesome words, it is not merely about appeals to how words may be used in this or that context, but that what we are looking for is (again) *a context of significant use*.[33] This is another expression of a methodological move with its starting point in "uses of words" to serve in philosophical inquiry, an expression of a view which contains an idea of "use", related to the user perspective which I will explore in this thesis. However, I would take it one step further.

There is a discussion on the relation – the differences and the similarities – between OLP and Wittgenstein's ideals of philosophical method. In one strand of the tradition after Wittgenstein, language plays a special part in philosophizing: descriptions of language use (or elucidations) are used as "objects of comparison" (PI §130-131) rather than as corrections to mistaken views of the "normal uses of words" (a normativity of invoking language use which OLP is often charged with). Oskari Kuusela, in his *The Struggle Against Dogmatism* provides a useful interpretation of Wittgenstein in which he stresses the role of Wittgenstein's remarks on language in the latter's philosophical method:

> …his conceptions of meaning as use and language as a rule-governed practice and his characterization of language as a family-resemblance concept do not constitute philosophical theses about the essence of meaning or language or about the use of the relevant terms […] Wittgenstein's remarks on these concepts can be used to further elucidate and deepen our grasp of his method [of clarification].[34]

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[33] Avner Baz, *When Words Are Called for*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 2012.
[34] Oskari Kuusela, *The Struggle Against Dogmatism: Wittgenstein and the Concept of Philosophy,* Harvard University Press, London 2008, p. 149.

In this picture, the role of language use as a tool for philosophy is both modest and entangled in the conception of what philosophical problems are. In this work, I will apply the idea of descriptions of language use as objects of comparison as a principle to keep me from positing philosophical theses about language.

The aim of these objects of comparison is to be of help in philosophical entanglements, where the philosopher's view of how language works or how a language game works has set the path to the entanglement. These descriptions of language use may be of different kinds: Wittgenstein does not only present limited investigations on, say, how the word or concept 'belief' is used (and not used!). He also develops pictures of language use such as the language game model and the rule model.[35]

These pictures, for example the rule model of meaning, the idea that to use language is to follow rules, are also criticized by Wittgenstein, which shows how the model is not supposed to stand as a philosophical thesis in its own right, a purported true claim of how this aspect of the world should be best understood. Being used as a comparison, the model will help to shed light on some aspects of language use, and is instrumental for becoming clear about the problem at hand. (An example of using this method is Martin Gustafsson's exploration of Wittgenstein's analogy between language and chess in which Gustafsson shows the point at which the analogy breaks down.[36])

The descriptions of language use may be understood as 'reminders' of how we use words which are to help us as philosophers free ourselves

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[35] Cf Kuusela 2008.
[36] Gustafsson Martin, forthcoming, "Wittgenstein, Language, and Chess", *Revue International de Philosophie*. 2015 (I refer to a draft from 2012).

from dogmatic pictures, to let go of our philosophical expectations on language, expectations which language use will not meet.

A note of caution is in place. "A perspective from within language" is a metaphor, and it is less an independent thesis than it is a reaction to a purported perspective form outside of language. Edward H. Minar argues in his article "Feeling at Home in Language" that Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* actively resists a picture of inside and outside, a picture which he in Minar's words "wants to show inapplicable to our relation to language".[37] However, importantly, he writes that what we, as philosophers do, is to try to ask questions outside of our language in use, which is something that Wittgenstein concedes. The attempt to step outside of language while doing philosophical work, an attempt made more or less consciously by philosophers, is sometimes manifested by the idea, either expressed or tacitly presupposed, that there is an outside or interface to language. This is my target of criticism in this work. This investigation – as needs to be stressed now and as we move along – is not an investigation of Wittgenstein's view of the matter but an attempt to formulate an idea inspired by this thinker and to use it, in turn, as an object of comparison.

In order to investigate these suggestions about the user perspective as a perspective from within language, I will take on a philosophical tangle to see the effects of the user perspective on it: the tangle called Moore's paradox, which, broadly put, came to be discussed during the 1940's thanks to G.E. Moore. Moore's paradox, in short, is the complexity concerning an oddity concerning the proposed assertion of a particular proposition. Someone could say about me that "She believes it is

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[37] Minar, Edward, "Feeling at Home in Language", *Synthese* 102 (1995), p. 437.

raining, and it is not raining", and it could be true. However, if I were to assert that "I believe it's raining and it's not raining" it would be odd, although no straightforward contradiction seems to be involved. A preliminary description of this problem could be that the paradoxical feature is that there seems to be some kind of logical obstacle to asserting a proposition which is well-formed and may be true.[38]

The end station for this investigation will be the discussion of the consequences for philosophizing of the user perspective, as well as of the methodological status of descriptions of language and the use of language in philosophy.[39]

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[38] What the paradoxical feature is and what the problem is differs and this is a central theme in chapters 3-5.

[39] Tamara Dobler, in "Two Conceptions of Wittgenstein's Contextualism", *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 7 (2011) does the opposite of what I wish to do in her article on two different versions of contextualism after Wittgenstein in her evaluations of Travis and Conant: her aim is to judge these contributions as theories of language on their degree of throwing light on actual language use, rather than as methodological groundwork.

2 What Context Might Be

> The results of philosophy are in the uncovering of one or
> another piece of plain nonsense and the bumps that the
> understanding has got by running its head up against the limits
> of language. (Wittgenstein *PI* §119.)

<center>***</center>

Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* contains a treatment of G.E. Moore's idea
that there are certain propositions which we know for certain to be true.
In this collection, the following passage is found:

> I know that a sick man is lying here? Nonsense! I am sitting at
> his bedside, I am looking attentively into his face. – So I don't
> know, then, that there is a sick man lying here? Neither the
> question nor the assertion makes sense. Any more than the
> assertion "I am here", which I might yet use at any moment, if
> [a] suitable occasion presented itself …[40]

A discussion of this paragraph is found in James Conant's article
"Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use" (1998), in which he criticizes Marie
McGinn's way of understanding Wittgenstein's claim that it would be
nonsense to say "I know there is a sick man lying there" while sitting at
someone's death bed.[41] Conant's critical discussion is of interest here in
that it aims to clarify differences in view of how meaning is bestowed
upon sentences in a way which connects with philosophical method.

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[40] §10, cited in Conant 1998, Anscombe translation.
[41] Conant 1998.

These issues are central to what I call the perspective from within language.

According to Conant, McGinn analyses the situation in the passage quoted above as follows: Wittgenstein meant that "I know there is a sick man lying there" is a special sort of sentence, the sort of judgment that belongs to the background against which all judging is done; it is a kind of judgment for which there is no room for doubt. McGinn uses an expression by Stanley Cavell to describe that sentence: it is so "flaming obvious" that we can't assert it. This idea, that there are contextual elements of a judgment which can be identified independently is one which comes naturally: we want to say that it is clear what the sentence means and that it presents the situation at hand, "that the person there knows that there is a sick man in the bed".

In Conant's view, instead, the imagined speaker in the paragraph fails to give sense to his sentence, and it is not, as he takes McGinn to see it, the incompatibility of the sentence and the context which is at stake. There are not "certain kinds of judgments" which have properties like being "flaming obvious" and which therefore are incompatible with certain situations. He writes that

> [w]hat we are tempted to call 'the meaning of the sentence' is not a property the sentence already has in abstraction from any possibility of use and which it then carries with it – like an atmosphere accompanying it – into each specific occasion of use. It is, as Wittgenstein keeps saying, *in* the circumstances in which it is 'actually used' that the sentence has sense. […] The problem with a Moore-type utterance of 'I am here' (according to *On Certainty*, §348) is that *the meaning of the words* 'is *not* determined by the situation'; that is to say, it is not clear, when

these words are called upon in this context *what* is being said – if anything.[42]

This disagreement over Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense has been centre stage in many discussions on Wittgenstein's work during the last two decades. The meaning of a sentence, and the way in which meaning is bestowed upon a sentence, is taken to be the key element for the philosophical move of rejecting a particular sentence, or certain sentences, as nonsense. This is a line of philosophizing about language which has methodological import. In this chapter, I will discuss this idea critically.

In the previous chapter, I suggested that in a perspective from within language, some issues which from an external perspective may seem to be in need of investigation and explanation are not so. For example, explanations as to if and how a sentence has meaning – a perceived task of theories of meaning in the philosophy of language – become superfluous. In this chapter, I will investigate the background for one way of excluding some things that one may be tempted to say in philosophy. Arguably, Wittgenstein's way of disregarding certain statements in philosophical discourses as "nonsense" constitutes an example of a philosophical move of excluding certain explanations. For some philosophers working in the tradition of exegesis of and philosophy inspired by Wittgenstein, the conception of nonsense is closely tied to a particular conception of sentence in use and to a philosophical method of attending to the actual uses of words. My aim in the present chapter is to investigate some attempts to describe this cluster of ideas as an instance of philosophizing from within language.

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[42] Conant 1998, p. 241.

I will begin in section 2.1 by introducing a certain take on nonsense defended by Cora Diamond (as a part of the ways of reading Wittgenstein which nowadays are often called the "resolute" or "therapeutic" readings).[43] Drawing on a contribution to this discussion by Lars Hertzberg I will discuss a view of sentences as having their sense in a context of significant use. After that I will discuss the relation between this view of sentences and philosophical method (sections 2.3-2.4). In section 2.5 I present another Wittgenstein-inspired view of the meaning of sentences by Peter Geach, a view which is related to a perspective from within language, but which differs very much from the therapeutic readings of Diamond and Hertzberg.[44] It differs on points

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[43] I follow Stefan Giesewetter "'Meaning and Use' and Wittgenstein's Treatment of Philosophical Problems", *Nordic Wittgenstein Review* 3 No. 1 (2014), p. 72, footnote 2, in taking "therapeutic readings" to mean broadly the readings of James Conant and Cora Diamond. As Giesewetter notes, an early use of the term is found in the introduction to *The New Wittgenstein* (2000) by Alice Crary and its use has become common since.

[44] I use the term 'sentence' for my version of the Wittgenstein-inspired *Satz* in this chapter (as opposed to others who prefer 'proposition'). I follow Hertzberg, who prefers to use the term 'sentence' whereas among others Cora Diamond in "Wittgenstein and What Can Only Be True", *Nordic Wittgenstein Review* 3 No. 2 (2014) prefers 'proposition' for *Satz*. Diamond (2014) writes that it does not matter which word is used (but that for Wittgenstein interpretation, one needs to look at each instance to see if he distinguishes between them there). For instance, in the TLP, Wittgenstein asked "what kind of sign the sentence is" and he thought that a sentence, as opposed to words, is not a "name" (Diamond 1988)). I believe that Hertzberg's use of 'sentence' instead of 'proposition' may be taken as a way to mark out his starting point in the orthographic sentence, and that in this case, he might, as Diamond does, have used the term 'proposition' here. The theme is beyond the scope of this investigation, but one may also discuss whether the choice of words here may be an instance of a difference in tradition of identification, where Diamond belongs to a tradition from Frege and Geach whereas Hertzberg's starting point is in linguistically-minded philosophy, beginning from the later Wittgenstein (closer to Ordinary Language Philosophers than formally-minded Fregeans such as Peter Geach). The reason for my choice is that this way, firstly, I avoid entertaining sentence-proposition distinction (the proposition being the thought behind the sentence, cf Chapter 1) and secondly, I keep the thought open of the linguistic string understood as a 'sentence' in philosophy, which I will discuss later on. (See also note 24 on English translations of *Satz*.

which will turn out to be useful later on in this thesis. I round off with an aside in section 2.6 – an application of the distinction between substantial and austere nonsense to a case of exegesis of Wittgenstein's conception of 'nonsense' in the *Tractatus*. This aside elucidates the difficulty of exegesis of philosophical work, and the role of Frege's context principle for words and sentences in a context which is not a normal context of conversation. The aside aims to shed light on what a perspective from without language might mean in circumstances like these.

Now before going into the discussion, there are complications which need to be acknowledged. First, the material on which I base this chapter consists of certain exegetical discussions of Wittgenstein's work (early and late). A second complication is that the contributions to these exegetic discussions sometimes stand in need of some exegetics of their own. Third, as I have mentioned earlier, I will – as far as possible – avoid taking part in the exegetical discussion itself and instead try to see how these contributions can be used to clarify what it means to adopt a perspective from within language. The details and premises of exegetics as investigations of philosophical discussion will nevertheless require some attention, and I will go into this discussion in the postscript on Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense in the *Tractatus*.

2.1 Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense

"What *is* Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense?" One answer to this question, in line with Conant's above, is the one which Cora Diamond formulates in her discussion of Wittgenstein's and Frege's view of

nonsense in "What Nonsense Might Be".[45] Diamond's text has been extensively debated but her line of reasoning in it has also been applied, for example by Lars Hertzberg in "The Sense Is Where You Find It"[46] and by DZ Phillips in "Propositions, Pictures and Practices".[47]

Diamond distinguishes between what she calls the natural view of nonsense, which she criticizes, and the Frege-Wittgenstein view of nonsense.[48] (In later debates, the natural view of nonsense is also called "the substantial view" as opposed to "the austere view".) Diamond discusses a few examples to make clear the difference between the two views:[49]

(A) "Caesar is a prime number." (This sentence is usually taken to contain a category mistake.)
(B) "Scott kept a runcible at Abbotsford." (This sentence is usually taken to contain a word which lacks meaning.)

According to the natural view, the words (or logical elements) in (A) are combined in an "illegal" way; "Caesar" is a proper name of a person, and in *that* place of the sentence, in combination with "is a prime number" (assuming it has its customary mathematical meaning) there

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[45] Diamond Cora: *"What Nonsense Might Be" in The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy and the Mind,* The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1991.

[46] Hertzberg Lars: *"The Sense Is Where You Find It",* T. McCarthy & S. Stidd (eds.), *Wittgenstein in America,* Clarendon Press, Oxford 2001. I have used the completed version from <http://www.abo.fi/fak/hf/filosofi/~lhertzbe> and refer to it as Hertzberg 2001b.

[47] Phillips DZ 2002: *"Propositions, Pictures and Practices"* in *Ars Disputandi* July 26 2002: <http://www.arsdisputandi.org/publish/articles/000061/index.html>.

[48] Notice the parallel to Stenlund's distinction between naturalistic and aprioristic views of language (Ch. 1).

[49] Diamond 1991, pp. 95-96.

could only be a number word, if the construction as a whole is to make sense. Therefore, the combination is illegitimate. The result of this mistaken combination is a nonsensical sentence. According to the natural view, in the second case (B), one word has no meaning: 'runcible' is not a meaningful word and the lack of meaning here makes the sentence nonsensical. These "facts" about the two case sentences purport to explain why the sentences lack sense.

Contrary to the natural nonsense story, and in line with what Diamond promotes and calls the Wittgenstein-Frege view of nonsense, a word has meaning only in the context of a sentence. This stricture is often referred to as "Frege's context principle".[50] The question is what "Caesar" means in *this* sentence. Psychologically, Diamond writes, we think that "Caesar" must be the same in (A) as in for example the sentence "Caesar crossed the Rubicon". However, (given that the expression "crossed the Rubicon" has not been given some new sense) it can't be this way, she claims. The word 'Caesar' has not been given meaning for the sentence "Caesar crossed the Rubicon", and therefore does not have one. Since words do not have meaning in isolation they

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[50] I have discussed Frege's context principle elsewhere: "Moore's Paradox and the Context Principle", *Language and World. Preproceedings of the 32nd International Wittgenstein Symposium*, ed. Volker A. Munz, Klaus Puhl, Joseph Wang, Kirchberg am Wechsel/Lower Austria 2009. Importantly, there is a historical complication connected to what I with Diamond and Hertzberg call "Frege's context principle". In the tradition to which Diamond and Hertzberg belong, the Frege who figures may be in part a misunderstanding by Wittgenstein. The context principle is not strictly speaking held or central to Frege himself in any related philosophical circumstance. Frege's interest is in the philosophy of mathematics and his thinking on methodological rules for this work is not easily transferrable to the discussions of philosophical method related to language in the more general sense which is the topic of my work. Cf. Tappendem Jamie: "Metatheory and Mathematical Practice in Frege", *Philosophical Topics* 25 (2) 1997: pp. 213-264.

cannot be combined in the wrong way, resulting in a nonsensical sentence.

Diamond's use of Frege's context principle may be described as a critique of the received view on this issue, which concerns the combination of words into sentences and often, in contemporary philosophy of language, goes by the name 'compositionality' (here understood in its broadest sense).[51] Commonly, the principle of compositionality is understood to be that the meaning of a complex expression is determined by its (already identified) structure and the pre-established meanings of its constituents.[52]

On the Wittgenstein-Frege view, a sentence is not nonsense because of some meaning that the words in a sentence already have, or consequently, because of the fact that some rules for the combination of logical elements (such as putting a proper name in the place of a verb) are violated. Only when a sentence makes sense, can it be viewed as a combination of logical elements, as having "a structure". This is what a nonsensical sentence lacks. In a nonsensical sentence, no parts are to be discerned, and the "sentence" has no logical structure. There is only one way to produce nonsense, according to Diamond, and therefore the two example sentences are, after all, nonsense in the same way.

> Anything that is nonsense is so merely because some
> determination of sense has not been made.[53]

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[51] A discussion of compositionality related to mine is found in Baz 2012, p. 14.
[52] "Compositionality", by Zoltán Gendler Szabó, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2012, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/compositionality/ (accessed July 4, 2014). See also Gustafsson (2000) on the role of rules for meaningful language.
[53] Diamond 1991, p. 106.

One could rephrase Diamond's view a bit: there is no recipe for making nonsense. Thinking that one can set a "diagnosis" of nonsense by showing that a sentence is a combination of elements from categories which cannot be combined, presupposes that one can discern a structure in it and, hence, that in a sense one does understand the sentence. In that case, the sentence is taken to have the sort of unity which it was supposed *not* to have due to its nonsensicality. It would be taken to 'say' something or to have been given some sense – and hence it is not completely nonsensical after all. That would be paradoxical: a nonsensical sentence with sense. Logically speaking, nonsense – the opposite of what makes sense – is not "sentences which lack sense". What lacks sense is not a sentence or a proposition or the like.

Furthermore, Diamond distinguishes between our *psychological* and our *logical* reasons for ascribing a certain meaning to a particular word: 'Caesar' does not necessarily stand for a Roman emperor in every single case where that word occurs, logically speaking, but psychologically, when we encounter that word devoid of context we may be inclined to think about a certain historical figure.[54]

She presents three quotations from Wittgenstein, which she claims to be "illustrating his view". She writes about them that

> I should claim that the view of nonsense expressed in those three quotations is one that was consistently held to by Wittgenstein throughout his writings, from the period before the Tractatus was written and onwards.[55]

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[54] This idea is expounded in Hertzberg 2001.
[55] Diamond 1991, p. 107.

I will quote these at length not because I wish to enter into discussion of the interpretation of Wittgenstein's work, but in order to show more in detail how Diamond arrives at the conception of nonsense which I will discuss further. The first of the three quotations is from *Philosophical Investigations*, §500:

> When a sentence is called senseless it is not as it were its sense that is senseless. But a combination of words is being excluded from the language, withdrawn from circulation.

The second is from *Philosophical Grammar* (p. 130):

> How strange that one should be able to say that such and such a state of affairs is inconceivable! If we regard thought as essentially an accompaniment going with an expression, the words in the statement that specify the inconceivable state of affairs must be unaccompanied. So what sort of sense is it to have? Unless it says these words are senseless. But it isn't as it were their sense that is senseless; they are excluded from our language like some arbitrary noise, and the reason for their *explicit* exclusion can only be that *we are tempted* to confuse them with a sentence of our language.

And the third is from a lecture in 1935 (Notes by Margaret Macdonald on lectures on 'personal experience' Michaelmas 1935):

> Though it is nonsense to say "I feel his pain," this is different from inserting into an English sentence a meaningless word, say "abracadabra" … and from saying a string of nonsense words. Every word in this sentence is English, and we shall be inclined to say that the sentence has a meaning. The sentence with the nonsense word or the string of nonsense words can be discarded from our language, but if we discard from our language "I feel Smith's toothache!" that is quite different. The second seems nonsense, we are tempted to say, because of some truth about the nature of things or the nature of the world. We have discovered in some way that pains and personality do not fit

together in such a way that I can feel his pain. The task will be to show that there is in fact no difference between these two cases of nonsense, though there is a psychological distinction in that we are inclined to say the one and be puzzled by it and not the other. We constantly hover between regarding it as sense and nonsense, and hence the trouble arises.

Diamond denies the conception that words carry their meanings in themselves, that the sense of sentences are built up from independently meaningful words, and hence are to be understood as combinations of words with their already determined meanings.

It is important to see that Diamond does not mean that sentences are primary in the sense that instead of the words, it is the sentences that carry this special property called 'meaning' or 'sense'. What her suggestion about nonsense entails, instead, is that 'sentence' and 'sense' are internally connected. This is also an idea which is articulated in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: a sentence has sense, per definition, and it is used, that is, "it is a *Satzzeichen* in its projective relation to the world".

Lars Hertzberg, in his "The Sense Is Where You Find It" (2001), both criticizes and elaborates Diamond's discussion. His formulation of Diamond's description of the natural view of nonsense is that in the case (A), the sentence has too much meaning, and in the second (B), it has too little. Only as situated in a sentence do words have logical properties and hence, it is not possible to reach the conclusion that one sentence has too much sense. It is not conceivable that the word would have those properties apart from its figuring in the sentence.

> I should like to express Cora Diamond's point by means of a metaphor: the sentential context, as it were, pushes out any

meaning of a word that would make the sentence incongruous, and the sentence homes in on any meaning, if available, that would make sense of it.[56]

2.2 Sentences, sense, and context of use

Hertzberg (2001) sets out to investigate invocations of the difference between sense and nonsense in philosophy. He concludes that it is not clear that Wittgenstein's view of nonsense in his later work, *Philosophical Investigations*, is best put in the terms Diamond suggests. On his way to this conclusion, he develops Diamond's point to see how it may apply to sentences. Diamond's point is about words in the context of a sentence. Hertzberg's is about sentences and their contexts of use.

He writes that Diamond claims that in (A), "Caesar is a prime number", a problem is that we suppose that the word "Caesar" is used in the same way as in (C), "Caesar crossed the Rubicon". Now strictly speaking, Hertzberg points out, taking the context principle seriously, it is not clear what it would be to extract the word with its meaning from that sentence and transfer it to the case (A). Diamond, he writes, then takes for granted that the "sentence *is* a way of picking out a determinate use of the word 'Caesar', although there seems to be no reason to suppose that it is."[57]

One can ask whether a *sentence*, taken by itself, has sense. Hertzberg suggests an illustration. Suppose that "Caesar" is his son's pet turtle. It would not make sense to the boy if he were asked "Did you know that Caesar crossed the Rubicon?" – a question which presupposes that

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[56] Hertzberg 2001b, p. 2.
[57] Hertzberg 2001b, p. 3.

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"Caesar" must always refer to the same thing. "Caesar is a prime number" may be an understandable expression by someone about to place a bet in a race, where Caesar is one of the pet turtles about to do the running. "Prime number" is not always used as an expression in arithmetic – in other words, logically speaking, it does not in a necessary way belong to a certain "category".

> The point is that a sentence considered by itself may seem to carry a determinate sense, yet in a given context may turn out to carry a different sense, or the sense may be lost. Or a sequence of words that looks as if it did not make sense by itself might turn out to make sense, etc.[58]

"Caesar crossed the Rubicon" may, taken in isolation, be seen as a historical statement, but it need not be so. In its context of use, it may be, as Hertzberg's suggests, used for instance as a code in the dealings of a *Mafioso*.

The sentence is not to be considered as a cluster or concatenation of words and the sense of a sentence is not the composite of the meanings of the words in it. Furthermore, a sentence does not carry its sense with it. Hertzberg's formulation goes: "we cannot speak of the logical properties of a sentence in isolation, but only as it is uttered by a speaker in a context".[59]

Hertzberg suspects that Diamond would not agree with his suggestion, but would instead introduce the distinction between sentence and proposition, or "the perceptible sentence" and the "sentence-as-

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[58] Hertzberg 2001b, p. 4.
[59] Hertzberg 2001b, p. 5.

expressing-a-particular-thought".[60] In this picture, "Caesar crossed the Rubicon" when used to express that the mafia boss "Caesar" skipped the plan to rob a bank (called "the Rubicon plan"), and some other use of that sentence would be taken to be two different thoughts expressed, although the words happen to look the same.

Hertzberg's point is that it is not possible to determine in advance which factors would be relevant to establish sense: it depends on what it is that someone has to say and under what circumstances.

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[60] Hertzberg 2001b, p. 5. Martin Gustafsson in *Entangled Sense: An Inquiry into the Philosophical Significance of Meaning and Rules*, Uppsala University, Uppsala 2000, claims that Hertzberg's alleged disagreement with Diamond is not as radical as Hertzberg thinks. It is not quite clear where the two authors part but the above presentation is my own conception of the disagreement. One thing to note is that the disagreement ends up in debates within the philosophy of language (not method), for example when Gustafsson (2000, p. 71) suggests that Diamond considers "sentences as already used and understood in a particular way" and that her point is about the "conceptual interplay between the meaningful parts of a proposition with a certain sense", whereas Hertzberg does not wish to debate the functions on that level, but rather to show that this argument does not lead to a clear conception of the context principle. This is a tension rather than a disagreement between Diamond and Hertzberg, the source of which may be their different starting points. Hertzberg, in his discussion, needs to keep the question of sense open (that is his conclusion) and uses 'sentence' not precisely as the special notion of *Satz*, which Diamond does. Diamond wants to exclude the in-between space in which there is a question of sense, the not-yet determined perspective, because her aim is to discuss the special notion of *Satz* and its workings, whereas Hertzberg wants to take the next step in the discussion: disarm it and replace it with an everyday notion. Now standing before a sentence-like string of signs (*Satzzeichen*, as in the *Tractatus*), we have a piece of language – or potential language – open for interpretation. This situation is different from the philosophical question whether there is sense once and for all, or whether what we call 'sentence' shall denote a sign or a symbol. Not only is this tension about terms but also about what the philosophical task in relation to language is or should be. Where there is disagreement, it is as much about the role of signs (as contrasted with symbols), or the surface grammar, as about the perspective of the philosopher. Diamond uses the context principle to exclude signs from having philosophical import, whereas Hertzberg stresses that they cannot be easily excluded because excluding them is excluding an aspect of the live speaker's perspective. The necessity of including the live speaker's perspective prevents a straight-forward application of the context principle.

> What we respond to in the course of a conversation, it might be said, is the particular utterance in its particular context, our understanding of the utterance and our understanding of the context being mutually dependent.[61]

There is no vicious circle here, he adds, since understanding a sentence is not about (and need not be theorized in terms of) proving anything.[62] Thus, in Hertzberg's picture, the context of the sentence should not be understood as an enlargement of the range of factors taken into consideration when the sense of a sentence is established, because that would require that the sentence sense be portable, an assumption which would go against the context principle.

Diamond and Hertzberg exclude the general question of asking whether and how a sentence has sense, since it is not taken to "have sense" in any general way.[63] This is one way of making room for a perspective from within language: showing how the sense of a sentence is not given before a situation of use. It provides a guide to method: logical properties of sentences are available for philosophical treatment only when in use: as uttered by a speaker in a context. Hertzberg's

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[61] Hertzberg 2001b, p. 6.

[62] Hertzberg, by rejecting the analogy between proof and settling the sense of an utterance, distances himself from a great part of the contemporary philosophy of language in which speakers and listeners are taken to pose a theory of meaning as to any uttered sentence to be confirmed or rejected. One example is Donald Davidson's discussions of a theory of meaning, for example in "Truth and Meaning", *Synthese* 17 (1967).

[63] This of course does not exclude the possibility of particular, concrete cases where the question of the sense of a sentence arises, as with technical terms: "What is a boson?" or "What does he mean when he says 'Causality is a drag'"? Diamond and Hertzberg are discussing the general issue of meaning. Such a particular and concrete question will be answered within language: one will invoke what the interrogator knows already and one will use those familiar words to answer the question for that interrogator. The success criteria of the explanation will be whether the interrogator is content with the answer.

investigation shows that not only does he take the view from within language, where pieces of language are at the hands of competent speakers – there is no gap between these two – but also, he places the sentences in situations in which conversation takes place, not in situations where the question as to whether this is or could be the case remains open.

To recount, the discussion between Diamond and Hertzberg introduces some central features for a user perspective. First, it rejects compositionality (in a weak sense of the term) through the application of Frege's context principle, but secondly, it introduces the role of context for the meanings of sentences and problematizes the idea of sentences as independent meaningful entities. Thirdly, it puts the philosopher in a position where someone has something to say, in a situation in which or about which questions about that can be asked, rather than treating sentences in a context-free philosophical environment. To rephrase: one might say that the discussion treats something considered as said as stripped of the veil of meaning ignorance, a veil which in a perspective from outside of language serves as an often implicit presupposition.

2.3 Nonsense and method

I began this chapter with the question of nonsense and sense as a question of method in philosophy. Let us return to Conant's discussion of Wittgenstein's views of certain sentences which supposedly are nonsense.

In their readings of *On Certainty*, Conant claimed, some philosophers understand Wittgenstein to mean that sentences such as "I know there is a sick man lying there" are nonsensical because they don't fit the

context they are uttered in. According to Conant, some philosophers (such as Peter Geach, cf section 2.5 and standard readers of Wittgenstein), will invoke a distinction between 'saying' and 'asserting' to make this difference clear. Those philosophers will claim that Wittgenstein objects to the idea that the 'something' which is nonsense is "the kind of thing that can be asserted *here*".[64] They will not read him as reacting against the idea that there is something wrong with the intelligibility of that which is said, but as rejecting the attempt to "assert 'it' on such an unsuitable occasion".[65] One development of this line of thinking, which Conant calls the "incompatibility account" is to claim the following: saying that "I know there is a sick man lying there" when one sits next to that man, has an element in it which is obvious and not in need of expression. "Knowing" this sort of thing is part of the background against which all judgments (which the words express) are formed and is therefore is not to be asserted in this particular sort of context. In such a picture, some types of propositions are taken to be *special types of judgments* which are immune to doubt. The incompatibility is between a *Satz* and the context of use: they clash.[66]

Rather than arguing that such sentences are used in the wrong context and therefore cannot do work there, Conant's Wittgenstein claims that the problem is that no context has been specified. The problem is not that sentences go against the rules for their own use (such as the rule that we do not assert completely obvious things, those things which form the background of our doings). Rather, Conant claims that Wittgenstein points out that it is unclear what using the sentence would be because the sentences are not *in any determinate context*, and hence it is

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[64] Conant 1998, p. 223.
[65] Conant 1998, p. 223.
[66] Conant 1998, p. 223.

unclear what work the sentences are supposed to do. Therefore, we can't judge them as illegitimate or legitimate – we do not know what to do with "them". Although the words feel familiar, the meaning of these sentences is simply not "fixed" (to use Stefan Giesewetter's term) because a context which would "fix the meaning" is lacking.[67] Diamond's critique of the idea of nonsense as arising from illegitimate combinations is one version of what Giesewetter calls a critique of "the atmosphere conception of meaning". Allegedly, the atmosphere conception of meaning (supposedly usually unwittingly entertained) keeps philosophers from attending to the "actual uses of words".

Conant writes that in a standard account of Wittgenstein's work, philosophers would feel inclined to explain what this incompatibility consists in, that is, how precisely it is the case that a nonsensical construction is combined of elements which do not fit, and why.[68] That would be giving explanations which Conant considers superfluous but also based on a false picture of the *Satz*.

> But in order to have much of anything to say about this, one is bound to understand a *Satz* to be more than a mere form of words. One thus either self-consciously or unwittingly takes *Satz* to be a proposition – that is, the expression of a thought, so that the incompatibility in question is taken to be an incompatibility between the nature of something said and the nature of the context in which it is said.[69]

According to some therapeutic readers (whom I let Diamond and Conant represent), Wittgenstein gave the advice to attend to the actual

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[67] I am drawing on Stefan Giesewetter's description of the situation in Giesewetter 2014.
[68] Conant 1998 p. 223.
[69] Conant 1998 p. 223.

use of words, or the everyday uses, a piece of advice which is to be understood as a method for solving philosophical problems. More specifically in this view, philosophical tangles arise because of misunderstandings of or simplified views of how concepts work or words are actually used. Philosophers should ask whether the words which appear in the formulation of a problem would actually be used in this way in everyday language.

Now this "actual use" is a complicated matter. It is not the case that there is one "actual use" to be settled for each word or sentence, which philosophers should "attend to" in order to dispel the cramp in thinking at hand. Nor is there a set of "actual uses" in contrast to a mistaken presupposed use to point to. This idea, that there would be only one correct use, one meaning of a word, or that there would be a few or many set meanings to which one could show to someone entangled in a meaning-induced philosophical problem and in this way resolve the issue, is well described as a normative account of language use. This account of language use is normative because it brings with it the possibility to point out some uses as wrong in some chronic sense. In contrast to this normative picture of the workings of language there are descriptive views of language, views of the sort that therapeutic readers see Wittgenstein as embracing. How this descriptive view and "actual use" plays out in them is a question which I return to several times later on in this work. At this point, I will discuss it only preliminarily.

The example given above – describing "I know there is a sick man lying there" as lacking a clear context – is a way of short-circuiting a

discussion.[70] One may ask if this is a good example of a philosophical tangle after all and how the methodological import of it is brought out. Stefan Giesewetter, in his 2014 paper, discusses the common thought that one form of therapy applicable to philosophical tangles is looking at "the actual use of a word". Giesewetter criticizes this idea on the grounds that if someone is at a point of being willing to consider the actual uses of words, he or she is not, or can't be, in the grip of the atmosphere conception of meaning anymore. In other words, the reminder to look for the actual uses of words will not be what frees him from the misconception: what frees him is not any particular reminder of "actual use".[71]

Giesewetter's point is that grammatical reminders on the word 'meaning' do not have a privileged role in freeing people from philosophical confusion. If the atmosphere conception of meaning was the chief instrument in causing confusion, then that would presuppose that all philosophical problems are concerned with 'meaning'.[72] This is

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[70] I write that this sentence lacks a "clear context", however, recall that Hertzberg's non-vicious circularity earlier on in this chapter treats "having a context" as an all-or-nothing affair.

[71] Giesewetter 2014, pp. 83-84.

[72] We may elaborate this point a little further: in Chapter 1, I suggested that the perspective from within language is characterized by three mutually dependent elements: the sentence-in-use, the context of significant use and, thirdly, the shift in method. Giesewetter discusses a version of the first element and its relation to the third in Wittgenstein. His conclusion is that it is not clear how a principle of method, the point being "asking for actual uses of words" will help someone out of his or her philosophical confusion or the grip of the problematic picture (the atmosphere conception of meaning). The reading of Wittgenstein on this point often contrasted with the therapeutic reading presented earlier on in this chapter as Diamond's (and Conant's), according to which problems of meaning arise when we have not given a word meaning, is Hacker's view, in which dissolving philosophical problems "involves the diagnosis of cases where the rules for the use of expressions of our language have been *violated*" (in Giesewetter's formulation, Giesewetter 2014, p. 73). The task in dissolving philosophical confusions is not showing that a string of words deviates from

not the case, Giesewetter writes, but rather, the problems are local. So in our example case from *On Certainty*, "I know there is a sick man lying there", the required reminders of actual use may concern for example the concepts of "knowing" and "being present".[73]

Giesewetter's point about how philosophical confusions are not resolved by the help of standard methods but require case-specific reminders is in agreement with Hertzberg's point about the problem of sense of sentences: it is not possible to determine in advance which factors are relevant for establishing sense and therefore, there is a measure of openness in meaning which general theories of language meaning will not be able to answer.[74] Hence, general theories of meaning will not be able to resolve issues of interpretation: there is no method which can provide closure on the issue of meaning beforehand.

The conception of philosophical tangles which these remarks presuppose is that the reminders given are responses to the particular issue, and that the reminders of actual use have a role to play when there is a specific question at hand.

Giesewetter's conclusion has further consequences. We may formulate a point of method in a general way like this: "remarks on language and how language is used ('grammatical remarks') have a role in dissolving

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established ways of using the words at hand: as Diamond's and Hertzberg's discussion showed, that would involve the idea that words would carry their meaning with them (the atmosphere conception of meaning, as Giesewetter 2014, p. 76 puts it).
[73] Giesewetter 2014, pp. 85-86.
[74] I am not suggesting that case-specific reminders always work either, for example depending on philosophers' conceptions of the role and function of philosophical terminology (see the case of Searle in Chapter 4). This idea of localized conceptions of philosophical problems will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

philosophical problems". However, the insight on 'meaning' is not global and there is no set of truths of facts about language which will solve all philosophical issues. This means that the idea that even if problems of philosophy are considered to be problems of language or meaning, it does not follow that a philosophy of language or a theory of meaning is sufficient, or even needed, as the basis of philosophical method.[75]

Before we can go on with this important realization, we need to see whether we have presupposed general theses about meaning in our description of a perspective from within language so far.

2.4 Are Diamond and Hertzberg doing philosophy of language?

In my presentation of Diamond's and Hertzberg's discussion, I took it to be a description of one version of a perspective from within language, in which some questions are excluded. I presented this reasoning as having methodological import in its capacity to exclude questions as philosophically pressing. This is in line with Diamond's idea in her discussion of Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense, in which she cited his *Philosophical Investigations* (§500): "When a sentence is called senseless it is not as it were its sense that is senseless. But a combination of words is being excluded from the language, withdrawn from circulation."

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[75] By a 'philosophy of language' I mean a *general* account of among other things how meaning is bestowed upon sentences, an account which is expected to bear validity beyond the cases from which it was distilled, not any local remarks on how specific words or sentences might occur in a conversation. I discuss this issue further in Chapter 5. An important issue is the applicability (if there is one) of such theories on philosophical language use (an issue which depends on whether, and in what sense, if any, philosophical language use is taken to differ from ordinary, everyday language use), which I will discuss in connection with Moore's paradox in Chapter 5.

Furthermore she quoted Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Grammar*, that "the reason for their explicit exclusion can only be that we are tempted to confuse them with a sentence of our language" (full quote on p. 33).

Diamond's and Hertzberg's discussion has consequences for the way we use common philosophical vocabulary as we go on philosophizing: the "sentence" having "sense", as I understood Diamond's discussion, is supposed to apply to sentences in philosophy, for which the nonsense claim is used.[76] Simultaneously there is, at least seemingly, a feature in the discussion by Diamond and Hertzberg which makes the discussion resemble one in the philosophy of language: the example sentences relate to ordinary situations, rather than philosophical claims ("my son's pet turtle", "a mafioso", "Scott kept a runcible"). Also, some of the claims put forward resemble attempts to express empirical facts about language ("a word has meaning only in the context of a sentence", "what we respond to in the course of a conversation is the particular utterance" etc.).

There appears to be a bridging of two discussions here; the first one having to do with general and substantial issues on language use: How does language in general work? How do statements, sayings, assertions, language use work, how is sense bestowed upon dead signs to make them come alive in conversations? The other discussion concerns philosophical method in terms of how our philosophical statements – as statements, too – work: what role do or can they play, and which sorts of statements do work, and how? The issue here is of course what bearing the descriptions of the functions of language (in the first

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[76] Cf Conant 1998.

discussion) has on philosophical descriptions, language as set up to do philosophical work (in the second discussion).

There is reason to dwell a little bit longer on the difference between the kind of question about meaning which I attributed to the philosophy of language and the methodological role which Diamond's and Hertzberg's remarks can be taken to play. Although the way in which Hertzberg describes the functioning of context for sense *resembles* tasks set for philosophers of language of explaining how words and sentences have meaning or specific meanings, there are important differences between Hertzberg's view and common aspirations within the philosophy of language. One difference is that Hertzberg does not set out to explain or list the necessary or sufficient conditions for how sense is bestowed upon an imagined particular sentence. Instead, one may say, by entering the discussion and by way of examples he demonstrates how sense and context are internally connected. The consequence of this reasoning is a change in the understanding of our (more or less) philosophical terms 'sentence' and 'sense' and 'context'.

Another difference between Hertzberg's treatment and one from the outside of language is that the point that we cannot know beforehand, before a situation of communication, which factors will be relevant for establishing – or rather understanding, getting, seeing – the sense is not only a way for Hertzberg to distance himself from the idea of context as supplement (cf. Chapter 1)), but the non-vicious circularity between the sense of a sentence and its context is an alternative in which the question of sense does not become a pressing philosophical issue. When questions of meaning do arise, a particular interpretation is usually available, and if not, it is not a threat to sense in any general way. This is a rejection of the question we began with in Chapter 1, a proposed situation of indeterminacy of sense.

By stressing the ordinary circumstances as opposed to the artificially constructed thought experiments in terms of which philosophers tend to carry out their investigations, Hertzberg's insistence that sentential signs do not carry meanings in themselves excludes the sort of discussion that a perspective from outside of language requires, as does his insistence that the context gives the meaning of a sentence and the other way around – that one cannot supply all the factors which will determine what a sentence means before its context of use. The context, for Hertzberg, is nothing 'potential' but it is particular, and the examination is turned upside down: first having had its starting point at the sentence in isolation, then proceeding to the context, it now instead turns to the context and sentence simultaneously, stressing their being entangled. In other words, the starting point for Hertzberg's investigation is no longer an abstract notion, but instead a situation populated with speakers having something to say. The question is no longer what someone *might* say using these signs, but perhaps rather what these 'signs' are, if – or perhaps rather 'when' – used like this. This is a starting point in the perspective from within language.

Diamond's and Hertzberg's debate can nevertheless also be understood as a contribution to the discussion of theories of meaning in the sense that their discussion exemplifies a sort of criticism of the view of sentences in which they are taken to be composite in a strong sense, consisting of elements which carry their sense with them independently of their being put to use. So too, it is a reminder that it is not sentences as such that carry sense into a context. These reminders belong within a view of philosophy in which a philosophical result or achievement can't be understood as a set of propositions which make sense independently of context. In the discussion among many of those philosophers who study and make use of the later Wittgenstein's thought, the view of the

aim of philosophy which is rejected here is philosophy as proposing theses. The alternative presented is often called "a therapeutic" view of philosophy, or a non-dogmatic view of philosophy (as Oskari Kuusela calls it, as mentioned in Chapter 1 and to be revisited). Even if no explicated theory of meaning is needed as a foundation when questions of philosophy are understood as local (not investigated as steps on the way to general theoretical or factual theses) and in need of particular reminders about case-specific language use, the question of the sentence or proposition, of how it has sense or lacks sense and how it is best described plays a fundamental role in this cluster of questions about the role, aims and method of philosophy which the therapeutic philosophers are discussing.

2.5 Logically recognizable employment

So far, I have discussed some therapeutic readings of Wittgenstein as suggesting ways to philosophize from within language. Now there are other discussions which are inspired by the notion of *Satz* in Frege and Wittgenstein but which draw up a very different picture of sentences in use. I will now take a look at one such alternative suggestion by Peter Geach.

In a previous section, I mentioned that Diamond distinguishes between our *psychological* and our *logical* reasons for ascribing a certain meaning to a particular word. I gave the example (from Hertzberg 2001) that logically speaking, 'Caesar' does not necessarily stand for a Roman emperor in every single case where that word occurs. Psychologically, however, we may be inclined to think about a certain historical figure when we encounter that word devoid of context. This distinction between 'psychological' and 'logical' characteristics is often attributed to Frege.

The distinction between the psychological and the logical plays a crucial role for the user perspective which I set out to investigate. In Chapter 1, I set out to make the distance between the linguistic sign or what I there called the sentence, in contrast to the proposition, and the sense of it as sizeable as possible. Now here, the opposite is the case. We need to see in what sense this can be called "using logic" to recognize the situation and how the particular utterance works therein. Taking 'logic' to be, in Hertzberg's words, "what we respond to in a conversation" is a radical move and a big step beyond the idea of 'logic' which for example Peter Geach entertains, and which I will discuss in the section that follows.

Hertzberg wrote that what we respond to in the course of a conversation is the particular utterance in its particular context, and that these two are mutually dependent.[77] (One may say that just like 'sentence', 'utterance' can be made out to have more or less 'semantic content' as a philosophical term.) For Peter Geach, however, it is possible to distinguish between the grammatical function of statements and what he calls "their logical employment".[78] 'Statement' is a grammatical term, on a par with for example questions and commands. Geach claims that understanding the *grammatical* workings of statements does not also include understanding the different *logical roles* which statements play. In this way, he introduces two different frameworks of

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[77] Lars Hertzberg, "Attending to the Actual Sayings of Things", in *Language and World. Part One. Essays on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein,* Publications of the Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society – New Series Vol. 14 (2010). V. Munz, K. Puhl, J. Wang (Eds.):. Heusenstamm: ontos verlag. *http://wittgensteinrepository.org/agora-ontos/article/view/2171/2389* (accessed Aug. 4, 2014)

[78] Peter Geach, "Kinds of Statement", *Intention and Intentionality*: *Essays in Honour of G.E.M. Anscombe,* Cora Diamond and Jenny Teichman, eds., The Harvester Press, Brighton 1979.

approaching expressions in language, frameworks which sometimes cross and sometimes overlap.

Having picked out the 'statement' as a grammatical category, Geach writes that many grammatical statements, i.e. "statements" in the linguistic-grammatical sense, play the role of "asserted propositions". (Here, "propositions" are "sentence-propositions" and while discussing Geach, I will follow him in using the word "proposition" here instead of my preferred "sentence".[79]) A proposition, he writes, is "a bit of language in a certain logically recognizable employment".[80] This view of the proposition, he continues, was not new with Frege and his special ontology of shared 'thoughts' (*Gedanken*), but long before that, propositions – or the predecessors of propositions as Geach sees them – "were described as expressing complete thoughts, and accordingly being the bearers of truth and falsehood".[81]

For Geach, furthermore, "recognizing repeated occurrences of the same proposition is not merely mechanical".[82] This note can be read as the inclusion of a listener engaged in a shared communication situation, and could be understood as the suggestion of a user perspective. Cora Diamond discusses Geach's text in her essay "Truth Before Tarski"[83] and presents one important point he makes like this:

> So, although he is not using the word "proposition" to mean
> something nonlinguistic like a Fregean thought, he equally does

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[79] See note 42.
[80] Geach 1979, p. 221.
[81] Geach 1979, p. 221.
[82] Geach 1979, p. 221.
[83] Diamond 2002, pp. 252. Martin Gustafsson brought Diamond's comment to my attention.

not mean by it something that can be identified simply by our eyes or ears, without our use of logic.

In other words, propositions are not *merely* identified phonologically or orthographically. Then again, they are *also* strings of words. As Geach writes: "the identity of a proposition is not the identity of a string of words".[84] He illustrates this point: 'Socrates was bald' occurs in (A) 'Socrates, who taught Plato, was bald', but not in (B) 'A philosopher whose teacher was Socrates was bald'.

According to Geach, then, one element of the proposition corresponds to Frege's *Gedanken*, and the proposition then is similar to *Sätze*.[85] Geach makes a further important claim: he writes that an 'asserted proposition' may occur in one place asserted and in another unasserted, "without changing its sense or losing its truth-value". He gives an illustration, that…

> …in the German sentences 'Die Erde ist rund' and 'Wenn die Erde rund ist, so ist die Erde rund', we have three occurrences of the same proposition, once asserted, twice unasserted, and the changes of word-order required by German idiom do not go against its identity".[86]

To repeat, then, in a grammatical sense, these unasserted instances are not 'statements', in the guise of asserted propositions (a common

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[84] Geach 1979, p. 221.
[85] Diamond 2002, p. 254, comments that Geach doesn't say that the "use in question" of the word 'proposition' (or *Satz*) is "also found in Frege and Wittgenstein". However Geach indeed mentions that the idea that the proposition expresses a complete thought was not new with Frege. (In the tradition of the early Wittgenstein and Frege, although they of course have their similarities and differences, there is an employment of a notion of *Satz* which differs in many respects from the notion of a proposition developed by Moore and which was, at least for a while, adapted by Russell.)
[86] Geach 1979, p. 222.

appearance of statements), since they are "recognizable in non-assertive occurrences".[87] This is the distinction between the orthographic sentence and a proposition. "Even when we have not one and the same string of words, very often we can pick out one and the same proposition; in particular, we can often do this when the proposition occurs now asserted, now unasserted".[88]

Geach calls the principle "that a proposition can occur now asserted, now unasserted, without losing its identity or truth-value" which he introduces "the Frege point".[89] He notes that the Frege point is "not a thesis, or a conclusion derivable from premises, but an attainable insight; what is opposed to it is not a contrary arguable thesis, but merely one or other muddle that needs to be cleared up".[90]

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We have two themes before us, both crucial to the perspective from within language as presented earlier on in this chapter. One question is how we should understand logic in "the use of logic" to recognize the identity of a proposition, but also what the import of the Frege point is here, the principle that 'asserted propositions' have unasserted counterparts. There is on the one hand a very different view of 'logic' and the 'use of logic' in the paper by Geach from the one presented in Hertzberg's work. Also, the 'use' of a *Satz* does not play the same central role as it does for the therapeutic readers.

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[87] Geach 1979, p. 222.
[88] Geach 1979, p. 222.
[89] Geach 1979, p. 223.
[90] Geach 1979, p. 223.

One of Geach's aims in his 1979 paper is to criticize speech act theory for misunderstanding the role of normal language use. The early Wittgenstein's conception of *Satz* was that it is *a sentence sign in its projective use*. The question becomes whether the sentence sign has an independent life or not and if so, what kind of life it has and by what means it may be investigated. It seems to me that Geach, with his "Frege point", gives the sign an independent life, however only partly, and hence departs from Wittgenstein's conception of the *Satz* in the *Tractatus*. Geach assumes that we can identify the proposition also when it is not projected, and in this way, the linguistic strings do have logical import for Geach and are not empty shells. Geach's "Frege point" is a normative point of method in philosophy which includes some discussions and excludes others. Geach places the philosopher within language, with his requirement for us to use logic for the identification of a sign, however, with his Frege point he moves one step away, and leaves instances of language use, or proposed language use, open for scrutiny without the sort of context of significant use which therapeutic readers demand.

One further consequence of Geach's Frege point of method is that, as Baz puts it, Geach takes a proposition to be a form of words in which something is "propounded, put forward for consideration",[91] but then we must also acknowledge (the therapeutic reminder) that "some utterances of strings of words with an indicative form may fail to put anything forward for consideration, and therefore may fail to be utterances of propositions in Geach's sense".[92]

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[91] Baz 2012, p. 63. Baz cites Geach 1965, p. 449.
[92] Baz 2012, p. 63.

Diamond's and Hertzberg's discussion of the perspective from within language gives quite a different picture: issues about the sense of a sentence, in Hertzberg's sense, arise only when there is a situation in which someone has something to say. In Hertzberg's view they are also not mechanically recognized, but rather, they are humanly so. Logic comes in only afterwards, as a tool of analysis, it is so to say "after the fact". However for Geach, logic plays a role in the identification – it has a say about meaning or non-meaning: it is "before the fact". In this way, it is not a starting point within language, but only halfway so.

In his "Attending to the Actual Sayings of Things" (2010)[93], Hertzberg discusses different understandings of meaning as a matter of use and claims that there is a very important distinction – related to Frege's context principle, he claims – between

> the questions which arise when someone has actually made an utterance by which she means (or is taken to mean) what she says, and those that may arise when a speaker is simply imagined to be saying something, or says something without meaning it (as in a play or in a grammatical exercise).[94]

Hertzberg writes that philosophers often are not fully attentive to this distinction. With regard to the first question, he argues, there would be someone who can be held to something, whereas with regard to the second, there is no such question. He gives an example: he asks a student, Stella, to go and check if a classroom is empty. She returns and says that it is. Now suppose that he goes there and there are no chairs or tables at all there – in a sense, her report would have been correct. Or, if she reports that it is empty and it turns out that there were a few

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[93] Hertzberg 2010.
[94] Hertzberg 2010, p. 129.

students sitting there, Hertzberg, and we, see that she has misunderstood her task. What this shows is not that she would have used the word 'empty' in the wrong way, but rather that how the word can be used depends on the activity in which the report is understood.

Recall Hertzberg's discussion of the sense of a sentence and how it is connected with the context in which a speaker has something to say. In his 2010 paper, he uses it to draw a distinction between what the issue is for philosophy and for empirical work:

> If semantics is what dictionary definitions describe, and if questions of logic are questions about what a speaker can be held to, then what I have been saying is that there are no logical connections between logic and semantics. And furthermore: it is really only with regard to the individual case that questions of logic can be raised. Semantics, in a sense, belongs to the realm of psychology: it consists in practical advice, based on observations of others' usage or on one's own sense of meaning. (We should note that there are two different senses in which questions of meaning can be (mis)taken for psychological questions. On the one hand, there is what I believe Frege had in mind: the idea that meaning consists in one's associating an expression with some idea or image; what I have been talking about, on the other hand, are generalizations about linguistic behaviour.)[95]

He goes on to say that there is no generality in logic; that if there is generality, it is on the level of psychology.[96] He understands generality in language here as concerned with structures of linguistic behavior. This is a radical break with what Hertzberg calls "the received view of logic" as concerned with the general structure of language and rationality. This is an important difference between Hertzberg and Geach: the possibility

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[95] Hertzberg 2010, p. 133.
[96] Hertzberg 2010, p. 133.

of recognizing the proposition "by the help of logic" presupposes that logic is available in some sense beforehand. This is the function of logic which Hertzberg denies: logic is there when sense is, not in some way before the fact. (We will return to the role of logic in later chapters.)

As mentioned, with his "Frege point", Geach places himself at a distance from the distinction between questions about what one can be held to in an actual speaking situation and about imagined sayings. Geach believes in logic as a general structure or as a set of rules which can be revealed as holding for normal language. Logically speaking, Hertzberg claimed, nothing forces us to understand "Caesar" as a Roman emperor.[97] However, for Geach, releasing the sign from the symbol in this radical manner is not imaginable, and his Frege point is a way of including more in logic (keeping it as a task for philosophy), and releasing less to psychology (expunging it to the empirical sciences).

Geach, although approaching a perspective from within language, stays outside of it.

2.6 An application: Nonsense in the Tractatus

My presentation above of a possible philosophical perspective from within language took its starting point in the discussion about nonsense in Wittgenstein's work. This disagreement in interpretation presented by Diamond and also as characterized by Conant is useful for shedding light on the perspective from within language as it brings out issues of method revolving around the sentence in context of significant use as contrasted with sentences as carrying their sense with them. Therapeutic

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[97] Herzberg 2001b, p. 5.

readers claim that the role of nonsense is crucial for Wittgenstein's method, and also, that the realization of the austere conception of nonsense and its consequences is crucial for reading his work.[98] This is a kind of circularity: a principle for reading a work should be unveiled within that work.

Although the elements of the debate which I have presented and discussed so far have been used to shed light on the perspective from within language as a starting point for philosophical work, I feel that the exegetic debate about Wittgenstein's work as a source for material for a perspective from within language requires a little bit more attention before I close this chapter.

The tension between what Conant calls standard readings (with natural nonsense)[99] and resolute readings (with the austere conception of nonsense) of Wittgenstein's work is a manifestation of the difficulty of coming to interpretative agreement. In this section, I will discuss the terms of possible interpretative agreement by taking Wittgenstein's conception(s) of nonsense in a specific text as an example of an attempt to wrap up the disagreement. Although I stated earlier that exegetics of Wittgenstein's work is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will, in this section enter a discussion of that kind.

Although the theme for this specific item of discussion is interpretation of Wittgenstein, the point of this section will not be one about

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[98] Wittgenstein's notes on method are often by-passed by interpreters who see them as conflicting with other interesting parts of his thinking. Gustafsson uses Dummett as an example of such a reader – see his discussion for a useful overview of this issue in Martin Gustafsson, "Nonsense and Philosophical Method", in S. Pihlström (ed.): *Wittgenstein and the Method of Philosophy*, *Acta Philosophica Fennica* 80 (2006): 11-34.
[99] See Conant 2004, p. 168f.

interpretation(s). In the end, the point will regard philosophical rigor and be a suggestion as to the role of Wittgenstein interpretation for the perspective from within language as sketched by therapeutic readers.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

I began this chapter by introducing Cora Diamond's reading of Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense in her "What Nonsense Might Be". I quoted her view that the austere view of nonsense was held by Frege and by Wittgenstein, early and late. Now the austere view of nonsense, an aspect of one idea of a sentence-in-use, plays a central role for Diamond and Conant in their readings of Wittgenstein. This idea is used by them as a sort of principle for reading.[100]

In her essay "What Nonsense Might Be", Diamond took Wittgenstein to hold the view of nonsense she herself promotes. However, Lars Hertzberg criticized Diamond's claim that Wittgenstein took that view in his later work, the *Philosophical Investigations*. In what follows, I will not consider Wittgenstein's views in his later work, but address the question whether the view of nonsense proposed by Diamond to have been held by Wittgenstein in the *TLP*.

I will try to find evidence for and against ascribing this conception of nonsense *in an idealized (or simplified) form* to the author of the *Tractatus* by taking a look at Wittgenstein's "actual use" of the word "nonsense"

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[100] Conant, James: "Mild Mono-Wittgensteinianism" in *Wittgenstein and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Cora Diamond*, ed. Alice Crary MIT Press, Cambridge MASS 2007.

(*Unsinn* and *unsinnig*) and related terms in the book.[101] In the concluding section, I return to discuss whether this approach does justice to Diamond's interpretative claim, and I will find her not guilty of entertaining the sort of reading which this simplified idealization represents.

A preliminary survey of Wittgenstein's use of words here shows that he is not consistent in his own use if one expects his formulations to literally respect the point that words do not carry meaning with them. This finding could be taken to suggest that he may not have had a coherent conception of nonsense at all. Instead of concluding that Diamond's interpretation is unfounded, I will conclude that the method of approaching the work in the sections to follow, which I call "cherry-picking", is not viable as a method of interpretation. "Cherry-picking", the style of reading and arguing about Wittgenstein's work in which paragraphs are cited as evidence without regard to their context, is problematic and it is a case of taking an outside view of language.[102] However, it sheds light on certain presuppositions in reading which are important to see.

Diamond made a few suggestions about nonsense which, in idealized form, may be summarized in three points:
(I) A word does not bring its category into any context whatsoever. Therefore there is no 'positive' nonsense, i.e. something being nonsense on account of the meanings that the terms contained in it already have.

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[101] Looking for textual evidence is my starting point and not a commitment to text-immanent exegetics on my part. Contextual factors may also play a role in asking what Wittgenstein's conceptions were.

[102] "Cherry-picking" suggests that only the best berries are picked but I am not taking a stand on how "good" the single paragraphs are. I am suggesting that they need to be viewed as parts of the entire harvest, the whole of the ripened crop.

(II) There is only plain nonsense. Nonsense cannot be understood. If there seem to be other kinds of nonsense, then this is only due to a psychological temptation.

(III) In nonsense, there is no structure to be discerned.

According to the *Tractatus,* a *Satz* (usually translated as 'proposition') has sense (*Sinn*), and is bipolar: it is either true or false. So called "*Scheinsätze*", or pseudo-propositions, are nonsensical, and they are neither true nor false. The word "pseudo-proposition" can be taken as shorthand for a proposition-like entity, which is no proposition because it lacks sense ("*Scheinsätze*", *TLP* 4.1272, 5.354, 5.535). A proposition-like entity, in my reading, is a sequence of sounds which we are tempted to take as a proposition; perhaps something like "Caesar is a prime number" in contrast to "jsd ffdjiniobglfdsk".[103] To call such an entity an "expression" would not be a good choice of word, because it is not expressed by anyone if it is not a proposition. Nevertheless, we are tempted to take something as a proposition due to the situation we are in, the looks of the sequence of 'marks' or sounds.

In the *TLP*, Wittgenstein uses the word "*Unsinn*" or "*unsinnig*" (nonsense/nonsensical) altogether 22 times (preface, 3.24, 4.003, 4.124, 4.1272, 4.461, 5.473, 5.5303, 5.5351, 5.5422, 5.5571, 6.51, 6.54. "*Sinnlos*" is used four times: 4.461, 5.312, 5.1362, and 5.5351 (in this last remark, he distinguishes between '*unsinn*' and '*sinnlos*'). Many paragraphs support Diamond's view. In 5.473, Wittgenstein gives an example of a nonsensical sentence: "Socrates is identical", and explains that there is no property called "identical". "The proposition is *unsinnig* because we

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[103] Propositions of logic and mathematics are special cases. In 6.2 and 6.21 Wittgenstein writes that mathematical propositions are pseudo-propositions and do not express thoughts.

have not made some arbitrary determination, not because the symbol in itself is impermissible. In a certain sense we cannot make mistakes in logic." 5.4732: "We cannot give a sign the wrong sense."

5.47321, on Occam's rule, is interesting. Unnecessary elements in a symbolism "mean nothing" and signs which serve no purpose are logically *bedeutungslos* (not "*unsinnig*"). A frequently quoted remark in the debate on nonsense is 5.4733[104]:

> Frege says that any legitimately constructed proposition must have a sense. And I say that any possible proposition is legitimately constructed, and if it has no sense, that can only be because we have failed to give a meaning to some of its constituent parts.
>
> (Even if we think that we have done so.)
>
> Thus the reason why 'Socrates is identical' says nothing is that we have not given any adjectival meaning to the word 'identical'. For when it appears as a sign for identity, it symbolizes in an entirely different way – the signifying relation is a different one – therefore the symbols also are entirely different in the two cases; the two symbols have only one sign in common, and that is an accident.[105]

The paragraphs above support the idea that nonsense is a lack of meaning; that one has failed to give meaning. Also, Wittgenstein writes that we cannot give a sign the wrong sense. The thought that the sign may symbolize in many ways also supports Diamond's comments on her example with the word "Caesar", and "is a prime number".

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[104] Cf for example Conant 2004.
[105] 5.4733 Wittgenstein 1921, English translation Pears & McGuinness 1961.

However, in the first part of this paragraph a tension looms up: "if [the legitimately constructed proposition] has no sense, this can only be because we have not given meaning to any of its constituent parts". If so, is it then possible to choose not to give meaning [*Bedeutung*] to a proposition? Can a proposition be without sense and still be called a proposition? And, more acutely, if it is without sense, does it have parts?

To conclude intermediately, there is indeed some support of the idealized description of Diamond's view in the *TLP*. Now let us look at the paragraphs containing words for nonsense which seem to go against it.

2.6.1 Counter-evidence

At times, Wittgenstein allows for the possibility of using words so to say in the wrong way. He uses terms like "pseudo-concepts like object" and writes that when this word is used as a real concept word "nonsensical pseudo-propositions" arise. Expressions such as "1 is a number" ("and the like") are nonsensical. Also, it is nonsensical to say "There is only one 1" (4.1272). Wittgenstein seems to think that concept words are only ever used as concept words – i.e. he accepts that there can be a form of 'category mistake' which produces nonsense. That formal terms can only be used as formal terms also entails that they actually do take their category with them into whatever context, and produce nonsense by being used in the wrong way. To Wittgenstein, hence, words of logic can be toxic to sentences. That goes against Diamond's view in its idealized form.

One paragraph which seems to offer both support of Diamond's view and against it is 4.1272. Let me quote it at length before discussing its relevant features:

4.1272 Thus the variable name 'x' is the proper sign for the pseudo-concept object.

Wherever the word 'object' ('thing', etc.) is correctly used, it is expressed in conceptual notation by a variable name.

For example, in the proposition, 'There are 2 objects which', it is expressed by '(Ex,y) ... '.

Wherever it is used in a different way, that is as a proper concept-word, nonsensical pseudo-propositions are the result.

So one cannot say, for example, 'There are objects', as one might say, 'There are books'. And it is just as impossible to say, 'There are 100 objects', or, 'There are № objects'.

And it is nonsensical to speak of the total number of objects.

The same applies to the words 'complex', 'fact', 'function', 'number', etc.

They all signify formal concepts, and are represented in conceptual notation by variables, not by functions or classes (as Frege and Russell believed).

'1 is a number', 'There is only one zero', and all similar expressions are nonsensical.

(It is just as nonsensical to say, 'There is only one 1', as it would be to say, '2 +2 at 3 o'clock equals 4'.)

In this paragraph, Wittgenstein passes over from "one cannot say" and "it is just as impossible to say" to "nonsensical" when he talks about expressions like ""There are 100 objects" and "1 is a number". Furthermore, he writes that "all similar expressions are nonsensical" (in the second to last subparagraph) and in doing that seems not to respect Diamond's version of Frege's context principle, but contrary to it to

want to rule out both expressions and certain words beforehand. His phrase "nonsensical pseudo-propositions arise" sounds as if there were after all a recipe for making nonsense, some way to produce pseudo-propositions, by combining words or signs of the wrong kind. The paragraph is part of an argument to show that it is a mistake to try to express that which is already apparent in or internal to the symbolism. Something to be said *about* a concept script need not be said in it, since it is obvious from the sign for it (i.e. from "1" it is clear that it is a number). This would also, according to the idealized Diamondianism, be illegitimate.

In this case, within the discussion of formal concepts and formal properties, Wittgenstein's use of "nonsensical" can also be read as "superfluous" at times.

Furthermore, there are "unstable" remarks in the *TLP*. For instance 5.473 pulls both in Diamond's direction and in the direction of a substantial conception; on the one hand it states that the sentence is nonsensical because "wir eine willkürliche Bestimmung nicht getroffen haben": it rhymes well with what Diamond claims. Then the same remark also states that the *Satz* 'Socrates is identical' means nothing because ("heißt darum nichts") there is not property called 'identical': i.e. Wittgenstein also gives the reason why the *Satz* is nonsensical, although as mentioned earlier, a *Satz* supposedly cannot be nonsensical – it would then be a *Scheinsatz*. In 5.5352 Wittgenstein hints that Russell's formalization of "There are no things" is not a proposition. This may be taken to show that Wittgenstein's concept *Satz* is unstable. His use of it is not clear-cut and does not always match his outright claims about the proposition.

It would not be reason enough to ascribe a "conception of nonsense" to Wittgenstein, simply because he once writes "Es ist schon darum Unsinn..." (5.5351). Does he not mean that it is simply unnecessary or even stupid (colloquially)? In this case, the *Unsinnigkeit* may amount to no more than a plain rejection, and if so, it would be another kind of talk, a non-technical talk of nonsense, which maybe should not be ignored.[106] Wittgenstein is not merely building up an independent system but he is arguing with other philosophers (or mathematicians) and sometimes takes a stand on their work and their tendencies by calling it nonsense (as in "Bullshit!").

An examination of the instances of the use of the words *Unsinn*, *unsinnig* and *sinnlos* and terms connected with them (such as *Satz*) reveals many other internal tensions in Wittgenstein's use of words than the few examples presented above show. The question now is what the consequences of these tensions are for our readings of the *TLP*.

2.6.2 A conception of nonsense at all?

At this point, it is clear that the matter is much more complex than I made it seem at the outset. Looking at the "textual evidence" (understood in the narrow sense), it seems that Wittgenstein does not entertain only the conception of nonsense that Diamond claims. Nor does he clearly entertain some other competing consistent conception. What then are we, as interpreters, warranted in saying about Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense, and of the *Satz*, in the *TLP*, at all?

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[106] The Pears-McGuinness translation of this remark harbors inconsistencies; *Unsinn* and *unsinnig* are translated into both "meaningless" and "senseless".

My method here was "negative cherry-picking": I specifically picked out paragraphs which go against a conception that has been ascribed to Wittgenstein. This is a common, although certainly not unproblematic, way to treat Wittgenstein's texts.

Wittgenstein is not consistent in his use of the words '*sinnlos*', '*unsinnig*' in relation to for example "*nichts sagen*" (contrast 5.5303 to 5.473) either in the *TLP* or in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Apart from "*nichts sagen*" (5.5303, 4.733) in the *TLP*, there are related expressions like "*nicht entsprechen*" (4.063), "*heißt nichts*" (4.73), "*keinen Gedanken ausdrücken*" (6.21) as well as "*bedeutungslos*" and "*keinen Sinn haben*". Another example of unstable use of words is that "*Unsinn*" and "*unsinnig*" are not always used in a technical or specialized philosophical way – but are sometimes outright rejections of a possible claim on the subject under discussion in the particular context, such as when "*Unsinn*" is used to say that something is pointless (5.351). The fact that the use is unstable shows that when these words are used it is not always the expression of "a conception".

Even if these inconsistencies are only "verbal", they present us with a genuine difficulty in determining whether a point of interpretation of the work is correct or not, because these words are – in a sense – all there is to interpret. However, even if I could show that there is an apparent lack of consistency on some account, it does not mean that I have proven that there is a genuine, deep inconsistency, a mistake in thought. In other words, Wittgenstein could have meant one thing and nevertheless failed to express it completely clearly, or he could have been careless. That there are counterexamples or residues – paragraphs unaccounted for on some reading – then, does not suffice to conclude either that Wittgenstein had no definite views of what nonsense is or should be, or that the reading proposed is simply to be dismissed. Now,

the difficulties do not end here: even if there are inconsistencies "only verbally", that could nevertheless be taken to show that readings of the *TLP* in which every single remark is explicitly or implicitly expected to be systematic, or readings in which single remarks are made to carry a heavy interpretative weight, are fundamentally problematic as "readings" of Wittgenstein.

2.6.3 How should these inconsistencies be dealt with?

One way to respond to these inconsistencies would be to do some "positive cherry-picking" and simply ignore all the inconsistencies and leave them out of one's account. This would lead to a one-sided interpretation. Another way to deal with them would be to try to "file down the faults" by for example arguing that other parts of the work are more important or that Wittgenstein did not mean that anyway. Instead of taking any one of these approaches, I think one should go a little "psychological" or "philological" here.

Even the remotest possibility that Wittgenstein's ideas are still under development would weaken the idea that he, in the *TLP*, is entertaining "a conception of nonsense". This would mean that we may have to accept that he is not as deliberate on this point as many a reader has thought. Indeed, had Wittgenstein been completely systematic, he could have looked through the work to straighten out the remaining "verbal inconsistencies" and the range of words used for similar ideas; had he been structured and deliberate, had it been important.

Now does the expectation of consistency, and the lack of it, imply an interpretative inclination on my part? Inconsistencies could play into the hands of a resolute reader: they could be taken to support the idea that Wittgenstein did not care much about consistency because it was all to

be rejected, recognized as nonsense in the end. In this light, the inconsistencies would be seeming and not genuine tensions. A traditional reader, in turn, could benefit from inconsistencies, perhaps they allow for more "support" in favor of positive theses. A psychological take on the slips would not be bad either – whatever remark does not fit into the doctrine could be explained away as that, as a slip.

Instead of trying to pull in either direction, I will take another route: The inconsistencies in the *Tractatus* show that when it comes to nonsense, Wittgenstein is not deliberate in the way that many interpretative discussions presuppose. If the word "nonsense" does not only have a technical use, but is used by Wittgenstein in the *TLP* with the variation of meaning it has in everyday circumstances, as "drivel", "poppycock", "pointless" and what not, then what would look like an inconsistency to an avid interpreter, looking for the ultimate conception, is not really a genuine inconsistency – rather it shows that we are trying to find a deliberate pattern where there does not have to be one.[107] Our flinching at these "inconsistencies" reveals our expectations. The text itself reveals that even if we may treat the *TLP* as a rigorous work and Wittgenstein as a rigorous thinker, this rigor does not mean "complete consistency in choice of words". I am not suggesting that Wittgenstein is *not* a rigorous thinker, but that the kind of rigor which turns out to be

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[107] Juliet Floyd takes a route which avoids cherry-picking: that Wittgenstein's use of the word 'nonsense' (as well as 'formal' and 'show') is like punctuation marks: "question markers, not categorizations, flagging *particular* points at which misunderstandings of the logic of our language (our *Sprachlogik*) emerge, and they neither invoke nor presuppose a *general* frame of meaning, much less a doctrine about which concepts *must* have formal uses and which may not.", pp. 180-181, "Wittgenstein and the Inexpressible" in *Wittgenstein and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Cora Diamond*, ed. Alice Crary, The MIT Press, Cambridge MA 2007.

expected *in the case that I have drawn here* cannot carry interpretative weight. I am trying to make a point by taking a methodological – or if you like, a metaphilosophical – route. I have concluded that the expectation of rigor may play the role not of a hypothesis about the *TLP* but of an implicit assumption – an expectation – which underlies a cherry-picking style debate.

In the face of the fact that cherry-picking does not resolve the tension between resolute and traditional readings, it is less obvious what it means to rely on the principle of charity, which in ordinary cases is to try, as much as one can, to find the text consistent and plausible. Furthermore, in interpreting a text one is not allowed to improve the text to make it fit where it does not. Therefore, we are only to try to make sense of it as it is, and we are not allowed to just disregard what does not fit in.

The above considerations have led me to believe that some interpretative emphasis could be moved away from what one could call "Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense in the *TLP*". Where one might want to look for it, there may only be splinters of a range of uses; technical nonsense, something like category mistakes, rejections (as in everyday language). The craving for coherent "conceptions" in Wittgenstein's work is not always a successful application of the principle of charity, but may reveal expectations of the work which may be out of contact with a potentially human writer. In the case of nonsense, both traditional readings and resolute readings[108] will end up sweeping dissenting remarks under the carpet.

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[108] A few examples of "resolute" contributions which are subject to these difficulties are Warren Goldfarb (forthcoming), "Das Überwinden" draft 2003, <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic513308.files/Uberwinden.pdf> (accessed

Some of the interpretative debate on Wittgenstein's *TLP* revolves around the themes that are crucial for the philosophers involved in the interpretation. It seems that the problems with cherry-picking and the use of single remarks in arguing for an interpretation support this suggestion. Should philosophers then not attempt to interpret Wittgenstein or other philosophical works at all? The conclusion need not be quietism. Regardless of these problems of interpretation, nothing should stop anyone from doing philosophy inspired by Wittgenstein's work. A recommendation of caution, however, is in place: philosophy inspired by Wittgenstein's work should not be confused with interpretation. Instead of attempting to argue for a final solution to the interpretative dilemma, a suggestion by the resolute readers may show a way out: the result of an investigation is not always a conclusion in the form of a thesis. It may be that one instead has learnt from the journey. This may lead in the direction of 'a therapeutic view of philosophy'.

This conclusion, I take it, points in a direction where seemingly small interpretative moves are not philosophically innocent, and provides me with – as I take it – an argument against certain kinds of dogmatism or belief in an end solution to interpretative disagreement. At the same time, it becomes apparent that the differences in interpretation depend on issues beyond textual evidence.[109]

Feb. 2, 2015), James Conant "Wittgenstein's Later Criticism of the Tractatus" in Alois Pichler & Simo Säätelä (eds.) *Wittgenstein, The Philosopher and His Works* 2nd, Ontos Verlag, Heusenstamm 2007, and James Conant "Why Worry About the Tractatus?", in Barry Stocker (ed.) *Post-Analytic Tractatus*, Ashgate Aldershot 2004..
[109] See for example Conant 1998.

Now we need to return to the idealization of the austere conception of nonsense, which I claimed I performed for reasons of operationalization. Diamond claimed, as I cited her, that the austere view of nonsense was held by Wittgenstein from the beginning to the end. However, it was not this narrow view she had in mind, but what can be called "a connection to his method". This point has been clearly argued by Martin Gustafsson in "Nonsense and philosophical method",[110] where he shows that an austere conception of nonsense is instrumental in explicating the role of the agreement of the confused person as a methodological requirement in dissolving philosophical confusion, and the sort of clarity Wittgenstein aimed at with his philosophizing. These are themes which I have discussed with the help of Giesewetter earlier on in this chapter, and which I will return to later on in this thesis. In her 2014 paper "Wittgenstein and What Can Only Be True"[111], Cora Diamond rejects the idea that in the TLP, there is a view according to which there are senseful propositions and "the rest is nonsense": "If one does not attend to the point, it may seem that there is an easy line of argument that will show that the sorts of proposition at issue here are nonsensical." She draws three conclusions about the way the TLP speaks about *Sätze*: 1. The reader should attend to the specific cases or issues discussed in the TLP, and the important thing is not the word "*Satz*" itself. There are different uses of which one is when he uses "*Satz*" for "anything looking like a proposition" 2. The status of anything which appears to be a proposition is left unsettled in the TLP. 3. "The superficial form of a propositional construction tells us nothing

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[110] Gustafsson 2006.
[111] Diamond, Cora, "Wittgenstein and What Can Only Be True", *Nordic Wittgenstein Review* 3, No.2 (2014). I do not draw further on the discussion of the TLP for the perspective from within language since it (like Diamond's discussion) draws on an analogy of language and mathematical expressions which may complicate instead of elucidating matters.

about what its use is, if indeed it has any use." In other words, Diamond is by no means guilty of the sort of reading that our simplified idealization represented. That sort of reading would presuppose the idea that one could tell, in Diamond's words (2014) from the superficial appearance of a proposition-like structure what its form is, and what, if anything, it is about.

Having said that, we may conclude that the presentation of a suggested perspective from within language in this chapter, as inspired by therapeutic readings of Wittgenstein, does not merely depend on those specific word-meanings in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* which I drew out.

2.7 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have engaged with a part of the interpretative debate on Wittgenstein in order to shed light on a position from within language.

First, I discussed the austere view of nonsense as a way to exclude certain philosophical questions regarding the sense of sentences. I introduced Cora Diamond's discussion of Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense as the natural or austere view of nonsense. I drew on her and Lars Hertzberg's use of Frege's context principle to expand the reasoning from words in the context of a sentence to sentences in their contexts of use, which is a central tenet for a position from within language.

Second, I discussed the idea of excluding a sentence as nonsense on the grounds of its incompatibility with a given context, an idea which goes against the austere view of nonsense and which uses a picture of

'context' which is quite different from the "context of significant use" which is central to a perspective from within language.

Third, I presented and discussed the idea of attending to the actual use of sentences as a method of philosophy, and drew the conclusion with Giesewetter that grammatical reminders of "actual use" as a method of dissolving philosophical problems need not take the form of fact-like statements about meaning as in a philosophy of language, but the suggestion to look for the actual use of words could be a tool or a advice to attend to the use of those concepts which play a role in the problem at hand. This picture contains a local conception of philosophical problems, one which I treated superficially here but which I will return to later on in this work.

It is yet not entirely clear how the criticism of the atmosphere conception of meaning as a principle of method is to be applied. Rather, it should be understood as a reminder among many other possible ones. Nevertheless, a fruitful perspective from within language should include openness to what is said in the course of a conversation: from a perspective from within, knowing before a situation of use which factors will be relevant in fixing meaning is not possible.

Fourth, I discussed whether the therapeutic readers with which I engaged in the chapter are doing philosophy of language after all, and concluded that their reminders are philosophical tools, not elements of a theory of meaning.

Fifth, I introduced an alternative perspective from within language as formulated by Peter Geach, with propositions identified through their logically recognizable employment. I concluded that Geach's view, in which logic is a framework used to identify propositions in the sense of

Sätze, is not entirely a perspective from within language. Geach does not enter a perspective within language entirely, as he remains within, in Hertzberg's distinction, imagined sayings instead of actual speaking situations.

Last, I once again approached the interpretative discussion on nonsense. I idealized a picture of austere nonsense and tried to find matching evidence (in a very narrow sense) for this conception in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. I suggested that Wittgenstein in his *TLP* does not only propagate a robust conception of nonsense, but that he also uses the word colloquially or in unstable ways. The outcome of this discussion was that even if there are difficulties of interpretation at this specific point, the perspective from within language does not hang on it. Rather, I suggested that some interpretative emphasis can be moved away from Wittgenstein' conception of nonsense, but that the lesson to be learnt relates to philosophical expectations of rigor and issues of method, which I will return to later (in relation to the "local conception" of philosophical problems). Also, I criticized this idealization as too simplified a view of the aim of therapeutic readings, which keep Wittgenstein's method and the teachings one can draw from those at the forefront.

In the next few chapters, I will take a look at Moore's paradox, a problem which has a "sentence" as its focus, and which – as I will try to show – hinges on certain views of language and the task of philosophy. Moore's paradox, I will argue in the end, also hinges on a failure to appreciate the point made by Diamond and Hertzberg, that the sense of the sentence is more unclear than many philosophical analyses acknowledge, since its main fault, if there is one, is that it lacks a context of significant use.

3 A Wasp's Nest: Moore and Moore's Paradox

Around 1944, G. E. Moore had noted that there is something peculiar about sentences like 'I believe it is raining, and it is not raining', and he called that peculiarity "an absurdity". According to Moore, on the one hand, there is nothing wrong with saying something of the sort, but on the other hand, it would be absurd to say it "in an assertive way". "It is paradoxical, that it should be absurd to say them", he wrote about such sentences.[112] It would be possible for someone else to intelligibly assert the same thing about me, but I cannot myself express this thought, this same proposition, as Moore puts it.[113]

It may be true that I believe it is raining, but that it is in fact not raining – and someone could assert that fact about me without there being anything 'absurd' about it: 'She believes it is raining and it is not raining'. However, it seems that I can't assert that about myself: 'I believe it is raining, but it isn't'. The paradoxical feature also appears when this sentence is contrasted with the same sentence in the past tense – the assertion seems impossible in the first person present tense even if the corresponding third person and past tense versions of the sentence are perfectly in order, as in; 'I believed it was raining but it wasn't'. The philosophically stunning feature is that there seems to be some kind of logical obstacle to saying something which might very well be the case.

In this chapter and the ones that follow, I will introduce the paradox at length.[114] There is a special difficulty here, I will argue, which is that not

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[112] Moore, *Selected Writings*, Routledge, London 1993, p. 208.
[113] Moore 1993, p. 209.
[114] A note on the different contexts in which the paradox is discussed today is in place. Since Moore and Wittgenstein, Moore's paradox has been discussed in connection

with many different themes in philosophy. There is a vast diversity of philosophical projects and perceived tasks related to the issues at the center of Moore's paradox. For instance, Mitchell S. Green and John N. Williams, in their 2007 anthology (Green, M. & Williams, J. N.: *Moore's Paradox: New Essays on Belief, Rationality and the First Person*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2007), effectively present the current contexts of debate for Moore's paradox. According to their overview, there are 18 different approaches and contexts for the paradox to be distinguished in the literature. The paradox connects with many areas of philosophy, and with important disagreements – explicit and implicit – within contemporary analytic philosophy. It will become apparent that a philosopher's view of the paradox is entrenched in his or her view of what philosophy should do and the philosophical project at hand. In some of the cases on Green's and Williams' list it could even be disputed whether the debates are about Moore's paradox. On the other hand, there are more contexts of debate for Moore's paradox than the ones Green and Williams mention. Below, I list a few of these other contexts, to give a feel of the diversity of the interest.

One of the discussions of Moore's paradox after Moore and Wittgenstein is to be found in Mats Furberg's dissertation (1963, p. 232) on J. L. Austin's philosophy. Furberg enters the debate on Moore's paradox via a discussion of "force-showing devices" in language. A different point of entrance is taken by John F. M. Hunter (1991), who ends up in the debate on Moore's paradox through Wittgenstein's work. For him, the discussion of the paradox forms a part of an exegetic work on Wittgenstein.

Some debaters are interested in the philosophy of language and stumble upon problems as they are in the process of classifying linguistic phenomena. Searle's work (1969) may be taken to belong to this category – Moore's paradox is mentioned in the process of creating a theory of language in which the phenomena of language are classified and ordered. Martinich (1980) applies Grice's theory of conversational maxims to a number of philosophical paradoxes, among them Moore's paradox. The aim of his paper, the context of debate, is the alleged demonstration of the success of Grice's work in solving philosophical riddles in an easy way. The early discussion note by J. N. Williams (1979, pp. 141-142), in which he points out that there are two types of paradoxical sentence, the omissive ("It is raining, and I don't believe it") and the commissive ("I believe it is raining and it is not raining") may be taken to belong to the category of texts intended to quickly correct misunderstandings in philosophy.

Elizabeth Wolgast (1977) discusses Moore's paradox as a 'paradox of knowledge' in her work by that very title. The psychologist Bernard W. Kobes (1995) takes Moore's paradox to be a question of what kinds of thoughts are possible and he asks whether Moore-paradoxical thoughts are so – and thus joins those debaters who distinguish between the possibility of Moore-paradoxical beliefs or thoughts and asserting them (i.e. suggesting a divide between thought and speech). Martin Gustafsson's discussion (2000) focuses on problems of the philosophy of language, on the roles of rules and meaning, and Moore's paradox serves as an example to show how one may make a diagnosis of a philosophical confusion. Moore's paradox, to Gustafsson, "is a case where confusion arises because we entangle ourselves in our

only do philosophers not agree on how to solve the paradox, but also, there is disagreement among debaters as to wherein the paradoxical feature of Moore's paradox resides. I will claim that this difficulty is largely dependent on the view of language from the outside, and will use this picture as a diagnostic tool.

In this and the next chapter, I will try to untangle the paradox by examining some of the attempts to solve it. I will try to place these attempts at a solution in a wider perspective, and show how they are related to certain implicit views of the way language works and what role in philosophy explanations or descriptions of language use have. My conclusion will be that the paradoxical feature depends entirely on certain views of language and the method of philosophy. The paradox is a natural consequence of them, and the problem, if there is one, is the idea that we could decide beforehand, in a philosophical context, which

own habits of speech" (Gustafsson 2000, p. 41). His discussion places itself in the philosophy of language in a tradition after Wittgenstein, just like the contributions by Norman Malcolm (1991, 1995) and Peter Winch (2001).

The focus on consciousness in relation to belief was the frame for the debate on the paradox through the 1990s, but the most recent movements within the discussion of the paradox are concerned with "rationality". Green & Williams, in their 2007 anthology, classify approaches to Moore's paradox in terms of rationality and irrationality, theoretical and practical. According to debaters in this frame of discussion, irrationality, of course, should be avoided – it is to break the norms which are constitutive of rationality (such as, when it comes to theoretical rationality, "prohibitions against forming beliefs on insufficient evidence and against drawing inferences that are either deductively invalid or inductively weak" Green & Williams 2007, p. 9). "Rationality" in this view is a normative concept and describing it is describing a set of rules of conduct in thinking and talking. This is a common view of the aims of philosophical work and an alternative conception which I claim is better suited for tangles like Moore's will be introduced.

This above list of philosophical contexts in which Moore's paradox is discussed, from Furberg (1963) to Green & Williams (2007), displays the diversity of philosophical projects and lines of inquiry with which the paradox connects. In this chapter, I, like Martin Gustafsson (2000), deal with Moore's paradox as an example of philosophical confusion in relation to philosophical method.

sentences are meaningful or may be so. Then, in the end, my conclusion will be that a perspective from within language will fare differently with this conundrum.

In other words, Moore's paradox has two roles in this work: first, the treatment of it displays the different views of the task or tasks of philosophical work and of philosophy, but also, it works as a rallying point for philosophical misunderstandings in relation to language, sentences, and language use.

I will go about it this way: I will begin by introducing the paradox at length. I will take care to do justice to its historical context, because I believe that the roots of the tangle are illuminating for understanding the issues at stake, recognizing them being a prerequisite for judging what is needed for a solution to the paradox and for doing justice to the great distance between the proposed solutions which I will present and discuss. In my discussion of Moore's and other early discussions of the paradox, I will pick up the themes which I take to be central to the paradox.

I will then discuss some of the solutions which have been proposed to the paradox, and I will be particularly observant when it comes to the imagined workings of a possible solution. I believe that none of the solutions so far solve the paradox and I will in the end try to show how one can come to terms with the paradox – and my suggestion will be very different from the suggested solutions. All the while, the notion 'proposition' (sometimes 'sentence', here not carefully distinguished) is present as one of the key triggers of the paradox.

In his *The Concept 'Horse' Paradox and Wittgensteinian Conceptual Investigations*, Kelly Dean Jolley sets out to investigate the concept 'horse'

paradox.[115] The paradox – which Jolley claims is not really a paradox – relates to Frege's distinction between "concept" and "object". Some expressions, it seems, which should signify concepts, such as 'the concept *horse*' seem to signify objects. Jolley starts out with what he calls an "objective" perspective of the paradox, a mode of investigation in which the paradox is considered independent, in the sense that it is something there to observe. As his work progresses, he turns to a "subjective" mode, taking the thought seriously that the philosopher needs to be entangled him- or herself to have a certain problem: he moves from an outside perspective to an inside perspective. During this investigation, I will, like Jolley with his paradox, think some of the proposed solutions through. I try to show how the outside perspective attempts at solutions break down and move towards what the reader will in the end recognize as the point drawn from Diamond's and Hertzberg's discussion. This point marks a shift in the perspective on the paradox but also a shift in the view of the method of philosophy.

Another remark on my way of going about is in place here. Paradoxes and philosophical questions are often taken to stand by themselves. No historical or general context for a philosophical problem is seen as required for reaching its core difficulty. For example de Almeida (2007) presents the fact that the paradox has "consequences" for epistemology as a discovery.[116] In this view the paradox has a sort of independent status in philosophy. My starting point is the opposite: a philosophical tangle is dependent on the implicit or explicit views in relation to which

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[115] Kelly Dean Jolley, *Concept "Horse" Paradox and Wittgensteinian Conceptual Investigations: A prolegomenon to* Philosophical Investigations, Ashgate, Aldershot 2007, p. 3.
[116] Claudio de Almeida in Green and Williams, eds. 2007, p. 53, attempts to show that the Moorean Absurdity has "far-reaching consequences for epistemology". See also the short historical overview in the same anthology.

it appears. Philosophical tangles do not arise and live in isolation from the general philosophical understanding of the issues to which it relates. Therefore, a presentation of the discourse in which a problem originally arose may be used to shed light on some implicit premises at work.[117]

3.1. Moore's paradox – early days

In Elizabeth Hankins Wolgast's formulation, Moore's paradox consists in the fact that although it may be true, for instance, that a person went to the cinema last Tuesday, and does not believe so – he or she cannot assert that.[118] Someone may very well believe that it is raining without this being the case. What seems to stand in need of an explanation is that what is not odd at all in the third person does not work in the same way as soon as "I" is exchanged for "he" or "she".

To reach the paradoxical feature, we must not only pay attention to the superficial grammatical structure of the immediate sentence, but remember that the paradoxical feature reaches down to its use, to the assertibility of certain thoughts or possible states of affairs. In other words, again, the interesting thing about Moore's paradox is that there seems to be a logical obstacle to my asserting a Moorean sentence, and taking the surface grammar (to use a Wittgensteinian term) of the sentence to be the key problematic feature would pass the depth of that question by.

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[117] An exemplary work in this genre on the roots of the tangles perceived by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus* is Thomas Rickett's "Pictures, logic, and the limits of sense in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*" in Hans D. Sluga & David G. Stern (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, pp. 59-99.

[118] Wolgast, E. *Paradoxes of Knowledge*; Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY 1977, p. 90. Many have pointed out (Williams 1979, Gombay 1988 etc.) that Moore uses two different sentences, 'I believe that p and not p' and 'I do not believe that p and p'. I will return to this.

What is this logical obstacle? Which sentences are truly Moorean sentences, and what kind of feature is this "Mooreanity" of a sentence? This issue will be at the focus of the discussion.

The early textual sources on the paradox are scarce. Moore gave a paper on the problem at the Cambridge Moral Sciences Club on October 26st, 1944.[119] The only published direct discussion of the matter by Moore himself is an incomplete manuscript on the matter, which was published in the posthumous *Selected Writings* (ed. Thomas Baldwin 1993). I will present and discuss this paper more in detail in a bit, but first I will present some prerequisites for the paradox which were present in

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[119] The manuscript of the paper read to the Club was never prepared for print. Baldwin (in Moore 1993), prepared the manuscript from the University Library, Cambridge, for print in Moore 1993. The original title of the manuscript was "Certainty", but Baldwin changed it because there is another essay by Moore, also called "Certainty" from 1941, which was published in *Philosophical Papers*, Allen & Unwin, London 1959. The essay was delivered as the Howinson lecture at the University of California in 1941, according to Moore in the preface to *Philosophical Papers*, which he wrote a month before his death in October 1958. In the 1959 paper entitled "Certainty", the Moorean sentence is not explicitly discussed, nor mentioned, however, some of the issues debated there do relate to Moore's paradox. One such issue is that Moore discusses assertions for which "the circumstances make it obvious" that it would be absurd to doubt them. For example, if I am in full possession of my senses it would be absurd of me to say that I think I don't have any clothes on in a situation where everyone can see that I do. "For me now, it would be absurd to say that I thought that I wasn't naked, because by saying this I should imply that I didn't know that I wasn't whereas you can all see that I'm in a position to know that I am not."[119] Being naked is one of the seven "test cases" which Moore devises to try to determine whether one could say that none of us ever knows for certain anything external to his own mind, or whether all of us constantly do.[119] He doubts that it is possible to decide between the two alternatives and sets out to discuss skeptical arguments. All in all, the paper is a discussion of skepticism about the senses, and in the end, Moore disputes the thought that immediate sensory experiences could be dreams. Those features of the paper which are relevant to Moore's paradox are his discussion of the relation between what I know of myself and 'facts' which may be true, and how these must relate or cannot relate to each other. Moore claimed in the preface to *Philosophical Papers* that the paper contains bad mistakes and hence, it should not be taken as his last word.

Moore's earlier work.[120] According to Baldwin, Moore had taken up the question many times in lecture courses in Cambridge during the 1930s. In the 1944 manuscript, Moore refers to a discussion with "W." in the Club that same autumn, and according to Baldwin, this published manuscript is most likely the reply to a presentation by Wittgenstein, which followed Moore's first talk.[121] The presentation is mentioned in the letter (M.42), which Wittgenstein wrote to Moore (dated by Moore to October 1944), in which Wittgenstein is excited about the "absurdity" of the assertion "There is a fire in this room and I don't believe there is".[122]

As von Wright does in his note in connection with Wittgenstein's letter to Moore,[123] Joachim Schulte remarks that the problem of Moore's paradox was actually already present in Moore's *Ethics* from 1912. He also points out that an early discussion of the issue is found in Austin's *Philosophical Papers*, in "The Meaning of a Word", a paper which was presented to the Moral Sciences Club in 1940.[124] Austin discusses sentences similar to Moore's and refers to "the new kind of implication, discovered by G. E. Moore". This reference shows that Moore had

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[120] Moore 1993, p. 207. A note about Moore's way of working. Most of the time he did not edit and reuse his lectures but started anew, remembering by heart some of the insights he had achieved the year before. His work and his views hence could change considerably but also constantly evolved. This as a reminder that we should not expect his late writings to conform to the early ones although some issues may remain similar throughout. Cf. Moore, G. E., "An Autobiography" in *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, P. A. Schilpp (ed.), The Library of Living Philosophers, Tudor, New York 1952 (1942).
[121] Moore 1993, Baldwin's notes on p. 212.
[122] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore,* von Wright, ed. (2nd Ed) Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1977, the date given in von Wright's note to a letter to Moore, p. 178.
[123] Wittgenstein 1977, p. 178.
[124] J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1961, Schulte, Joachim, *Experience and Expression*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1993, footnote 2 on p. 136.

discussed the matter explicitly before 1944. Moore himself touches upon the paradox in "A Reply to My Critics" in the Schilpp volume as well as in the essay "Russell's Theory of Descriptions" from 1944.[125]

In *Ethics*, Moore writes about assertion, that

> …if I say 'A is B', and mean what I say, what I mean is always merely that A is B; but those words of mine will always also express either the fact that I think that A is B, or the fact that I know it to be so; and even where I do not mean what I say, my words may be said to imply either that I think that A is B or that I know it, since they will commonly lead people to suppose that one or other of these two things is the case.[126]

The words I use will always express something about my relation to them, according to Moore. The idea that my words both carry their meaning in themselves but also imply something about my relation to them opens up for the tension in the Moorean sentence. Von Wright rightly refers to this distinction between 'meaning' and 'implication', what someone means by an assertion and what is expressed or implied by the words in it as a necessary element of Moore's paradox.[127]

According to von Wright, it was Wittgenstein who named the problem "Moore's paradox". Indeed, the two most influential early debaters of

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[125] "A Reply to My Critics" in *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, P. A. Schilpp (ed.), The Library of Living Philosophers, Tudor, New York 1942. In this volume, there is also a paper by Morris Lazerowitz called "Moore's Paradox" but this is a completely different discussion. "Russell's Theory of Descriptions", originally published in 1944 in *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, P. A. Schilpp (ed.), The Library of Living Philosophers, George Banta, Menasha, WI 1946.
[126] Moore, G. E.: *Ethics* [1912], Oxford University Press; London 1955, p. 78.
[127] Wittgenstein 1977, von Wright's note on p. 178.

the problem were Moore and Wittgenstein. Since their times, many others have joined "the debate", which nevertheless cannot be characterized as a unified discussion. Wittgenstein discussed issues related to it in many of his writings, including his correspondence. One of the more extensive treatments of the paradox is to be found in section IIx of the *Philosophical Investigations*, another is found in *On Certainty* (which is based on the remarks also published in *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, sections 8-12), and a third discussion is found in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* I (470-504). In his correspondence with Moore, Wittgenstein repeatedly emphasized that this was a discovery, as in the letter from October 1944, the day after Moore's presentation at the Moral Sciences Club: "In a word it seems to me that you've made a discovery, and that you should publish it".[128] In the letter, Wittgenstein writes that the assertion has to be ruled out and that it is ruled out by common sense, just as contradictions are, and that it "shows that logic isn't as simple as logicians think it is. In particular: that logic isn't the unique thing people think it is". (The aims and scope of logic is a theme which I will leave for now and discuss later.) Furthermore, in a remark from 1948 which has been published in *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein characterizes the situation around Moore's Paradox as a philosophical wasps' nest.

> Moore hat mit seinem Paradox in ein philosophisches Wespennest gestochen; und wenn die Wespen nicht gehörig aufgeflogen sind, so ist es nur, weil sie zu träg waren.[129]

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[128] Wittgenstein 1977, p. 177.

[129] Wittgenstein, L: *Vermischte Bemerkungen / Culture and Value*, G. H. von Wright & H. Nyman (red.), Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1980 (1977), Dec 10 1948. The *Culture and Value* translation is not exact: "… stirred up a philosophical wasps' nest with his paradox, and if the wasps did not duly fly out, it was because they were too listless". Revised edition (1998). "Moore poked into a philosophical wasp nest with his paradox; & if the

Moore pierced a philosophical wasps' nest and if the wasps did not duly fly out, it was because they were too lethargic.[130] The nest was the analytical philosophy at that time and the philosophers swarmed around the same issues. Moore had, in Wittgenstein's view, hit a central and sensitive point, which should make the philosophers change their course. I can't say whether Wittgenstein thought of a specific issue, but I believe that he thought that there was a host of issues at stake, some of which will be treated later on in this text.

In his last years, between 1949 and 1951, Wittgenstein returned to the issue. Many of the remarks from this period are parallel to those in *Philosophical Investigations*, for example the remark that I stand to my own words differently than to those of others, and that I do not observe myself. The discussion moves on to concern aspect-shifts and certainty and the thought that 'the inner is hidden'. The overlap is not surprising in light of the fact that Wittgenstein's way of working was re-working and reassembling his own earlier remarks.[131]

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wasps did not duly fly out, that's only because they were too listless." This remark allows for further interpretation but it is beyond the point here.

[130] The understanding of the metaphor as a characterization of the analytical philosophers of the day has been pointed out to med by Lars Hertzberg in a discussion October 17, 2008. There are further elements which can be discussed in this metaphor but that exegetic discussion is beyond the scope of this investigation. Some authors merely take the remark as evidence that Wittgenstein thought the paradox "so extraordinarily explosive and illuminating" (Severin Schroeder "Moore's Paradox and First Person Authority", *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 71 (2006): 161-174 or of "great philosophical importance" (Winch 2001).

[131] A detailed reworking would be enlightening but this exegetic issue lies outside of the scope of this investigation. Wittgenstein's way of working is described in von Wright's overview of Wittgenstein's *Nachlaß*: "Wittgenstein's *Nachlaß*" in *Wittgenstein*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1986, pp. 47-51, and in Alois Pichler, *Untersuchungen zu Wittgensteins Nachlaß*, *Skriftserie fra Wittgensteinakrivet vd Universitetet i Bergen 8,* Bergen 1994, p. 23f.

Already in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* from 1921, paragraphs 5.541 and 5.542, Wittgenstein touches upon a related issue in his discussion of the formalization of a sentence like 'A believes that p is the case'. He there criticizes Moore and Frege and "modern epistemology" for falsely conceiving of sentences like these as the sentence *p* standing in a relation to an object *A*.[132] The themes connected with Moore's paradox for Wittgenstein are related not only to philosophy of mind, but also to logic and epistemology.[133]

To recount, Moore's early themes concerned one's relation to one's own words in making an assertion (in the paper "Certainty") and one's own possible relation to the facts at hand. Some things – such as openly evident facts – it would be absurd to go against in one's own claims. A related theme, that a person's words will also imply something about his or her propositional attitude (to use a more recent term), i.e. his or her relation to what he or she says, appears in *Ethics*. This special form of implication is Moore's key to his own suggested solution of the paradox and in the following sections, I will discuss Moore's manuscript on the paradox in detail and evaluate his suggested solution. Wittgenstein, Moore's discussion partner, saw more potential themes in the tangle than Moore himself.

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[132] Wittgenstein, L.: *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, part 2, p. 9-12 (MS169 in the Bergen Electronic Edition).

[133] Wittgenstein's remarks are often direct reactions to discussions with Moore, for example the contrast between the a supposition and an assertion (*Bemerkungen über die Philosophie der Psychologie / Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* I, G. E. M. Anscombe & G. H. von Wright (red.), Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1980, §486)) and the stationworker which Moore discusses in Moore 1959.

3.2 Moore's solution to the paradox

The most commonly discussed text by Moore on the problem, probably the substratum for discussion in the Moral Sciences Club, was the text from 1944 which was published with the title "Moore's Paradox" in the volume edited by Baldwin in 1993.[134] The paradoxical feature, Moore points out in this text, lies in the fact that it would be absurd to use a Moore-type sentence as an assertion.

> …[I]t's perfectly absurd or nonsensical to say such things as 'I don't believe it's raining, but as a matter of fact it is'… But I want it noted that there is nothing nonsensical about merely saying those words. I've just said them; but I've not said anything nonsensical.[135]

The words, or the sentence, are in order, but the application of the phrase as an assertion is not.[136] It is possible to just say the words, utter them, without a problem, but when one tries to assert them, or really mean what one says, it all becomes nonsensical. There is to Moore, hence, a meaning of the words which exists independently of the application (such as assertion) of the phrase in question. To paraphrase: the language system is in order, but there are problems with plugging in to it.

Moore discusses the connection of the two parts of the sentence: one may say to someone else that one believes it is not raining and then whisper aside to another that it is in fact raining, but in this case, that person would be lying. Also, one may change one's mind mid-sentence,

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[134] Moore 1993, p. 207.
[135] Moore 1993, p. 207.
[136] Another way of phrasing this distinction has been "the utterance – assertion distinction".

that is, one may realize that it is actually raining. Moore emphasizes that the examples which he presents are not of this kind; they are not cases in which one lies or in which one changes one's mind.[137] (I will later question the idea that there could be 'Moorean' cases at all, and in this light, Moore's exclusion of cases in which one changes one's mind is problematic, but let us now first follow Moore to the end of his argument.)

According to Moore, it is paradoxical that it should be absurd to assert a Moorean sentence for two reasons. First, because "as a rule", if it is not absurd to say "It was raining", it is not absurd to say "it is raining", and

> as a rule, if it's not absurd for another person to say assertively a sentence expressing a given proposition to me or to a third person, it isn't absurd for me to say assertively a sentence expressing the same proposition.[138]

Moore's idea is that in general, a given proposition should be assertible by any person. It is possible to present a straight-forward counterexample to this idea: we accept that it would be absurd to claim "I am sleeping" even if we could say "He is sleeping" (an opposite rule to the one Moore suggests).[139] Indeed Moore's formulation of the paradox hence builds on an expected form of regularity in language and the possibility of exceptions to it. I will return to this issue later. Moore's suggestion raises another question: what we may understand by "a given proposition"?

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[137] Moore 1944, pp. 208-9.
[138] Moore 1944, p. 209.
[139] This counterexample has been suggested to me by Lars Hertzberg.

He writes that this first point "is connected with another way of putting the paradox, which seems to me the fundamental one". The second point then, according to him, is that if someone said about me that which now I supposedly cannot express about myself, "these words of his express the same proposition as I might express by saying at the same time 'I don't believe it's raining, but as a matter of fact it is'".[140] What is "meant" by your words and my words here is the same, and both sentences can be true at the same time.

> It is a paradox that it should be perfectly absurd to *utter assertively words* of which the *meaning* is something which may quite well be true – is not a contradiction.[141]

Moore proposes a solution, which he nevertheless does not seem quite content with himself. This solution is that there is an opposition or a contradiction between what I imply by uttering assertively the words 'it's raining' and what is implied by my uttering the same words at the same time, even though there is no difference in what is *meant* by the sentence. Moore writes that by saying 'It is raining', one implies that one also *believes* that it is raining.

When one says 'I do not believe it is raining, but it is in fact raining', one has asserted that it is raining, which *implies* that one believes that it is raining. At the same time, however, one has said that one believes that it is not raining. What is implied by my saying it is contradicted by something I said.

Now what does this kind of implication amount to? According to Moore, the implication "follows from the following empirical fact: *viz.*

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[140] Moore 1944, p. 209.
[141] Moore 1944, p. 209.

that in the immense majority of cases in which a person says a thing assertively, he does *believe* the proposition which his words express."[142] This is the formulation of a sort of statistical view of belief in relation to one's words – if the great majority of people do it in this way, then this is how it has to be taken and therefore one can come to be in conflict with one's own words. In this case, it seems that Moore is not distinguishing between two kinds of meaning: the meaning that comes to be statistically or by convention and that which a specific speaker (utterer's meaning) intends to convey, even though they could be kept apart. Hence, in Moore's suggested solution to the paradox, the two "kinds" of meaning are in conflict with each other.[143] One problem here is that this statistical view of one's relation to one's words keeps us from distinguishing between a situation in which a speaker may take responsibility for what he or she says and situations in which a speaker does not take responsibility. In Moore's picture of implication of belief, in saying one thing, another thing will be inferred whether we want it or not. In principle, this strips the speaker of responsibility for what he or she implies by his or her words. A more common criticism of Moore in the secondary literature is that this implication would be valid regardless of whether the speaker believes in what he says, but that the empirical fact that most people do so can't cause this non-empirical fact. Then the absurdity would be comparable to that of the report of a flying pig, as Thomas Baldwin puts it.[144]

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[142] Moore 1944, p. 210.
[143] Grice, P., "Meaning", *Philosophical Review* 66 (1957) draws a distinction between natural and non-natural meaning which may be useful in this circumstance. Later on he also distinguishes between what a speaker says and what he implicates. This distinction is related to Moore's but a further discussion of it is beyond the scope of this thesis.
[144] Thomas Baldwin, *G.E. Moore*, Routledge 1999, p. 228.

Moore also claims that he does not see that "there is any sense in which you can be said to be using language improperly by saying something assertively when you don't believe it. When you are lying, it doesn't follow that you are using language improperly."[145] I believe here, that by "lying", he does not mean "deceiving" but simply something like "saying things which happen to be untrue" (as in doing it unwittingly). Moore's idea of "using language improperly" of course presupposes that there is a certain way of using it properly, perhaps an idea of a pre-established system of rules which guarantees proper language use, a system which is independent of the way it is connected with people trying to make sense, to their ways of using the system. This idea stands in stark contrast to Hertzberg's picture of how the meaning of a particular sentence relates to the context which gives it its meaning.

Nevertheless, Moore sees a gap in his solution, and, as it seems, is not comfortable with the problem he is discussing. At the end of his manuscript, he discloses that he is not quite convinced that his implication actually explains why it is absurd to assert a Moorean sentence and he concludes by somewhat loosely referring to a remark by Wittgenstein that a similar situation would arise if one said 'Possibly it isn't raining, but as a matter of fact it is'.[146]

In short, Moore's solution was that we cannot assert "a given proposition" even if it has sense and may be true, because by asserting something, we *imply* that we believe what we say, although we do not say that, and in this way, *a kind of* contradiction is produced. The suggested implication as a solution is one of the weightier problems in Moore's

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[145] Moore 1993, p. 211.

[146] Moore 1993, p. 211. One must keep in mind that the paper referred to here is an incomplete manuscript and not hold Moore liable for unfinished details.

discussion of the paradox. There are others, which I will also discuss below. One of them is the idea of a "given proposition". Another issue is the idea of "something like a contradiction". These two issues relate closely to the discussion of Diamond and Hertzberg in the last chapter and this contrast needs to be spelled out (as is done in Chapter 5).

Moore writes that the solution is that there is no contradiction between the two things I said, but between what I implied and something I said, and concluded that *that* is why it is absurd for me to say it.[147] That is, the sentence as such is not faulty, since if it were, the contradiction should be obvious – hence, Moore imagines that whether a sentence is in order or not can be read off from its surface. This is the idea of a string of signs carrying their meaning with them, what Elizabeth Wolgast calls 'the package theory of meaning'[148]. I will discuss this suggestion in the next section when I draw on Wolgast's discussion of Moore's solution and connect Wolgast's criticism to the perspective from within language.

The solution to this paradox, must, according to Moore, deal with the issue in the paradox, which is that the *assertion* of a sentence such as 'I believe it is raining, and it is not raining' would be absurd and what is to be explained is why that is so.

3.3 A special kind of implication

Moore's solution involves the introduction of a relation of implication between a proposition and the way it is used (as an assertion). Moore is not unaware of the fact that this "implication" is of a special kind, but

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[147] Moore 1944, p. 210.
[148] Wolgast 1977, p. 94.

he sees no obstacles to introducing it as a solution.[149] As I claimed in the last section, underlying this type of implication is a "statistical" view of meaning, which is problematic.

J. L. Austin, for instance, comments on Moore's solution to the paradox and the suggested special relation of implication between a proposition and its use:

> My saying that 'the cat is on the mat' implies that I believe it is, in a sense of 'implies' just noticed by G. E. Moore. We cannot say 'the cat is on the mat but I do not believe it is'. (This is actually not the ordinary use of 'implies': 'implies' is really weaker: as when we say 'He implied that I did not know it' or 'You implied you knew it (as distinct from believing it)'.) [150]

Austin's observation about implication is correct; this is certainly not our ordinary use of the word. It does not strike Austin, either, as a problem to use the word in this special sense, to introduce a special kind of implication which, had not a similar idea been suggested by Moore in *Ethics* (1912), could be taken as an *ad hoc*-solution with no validity beyond the context of the particular paradox. Austin does not see this "technical" kind of implication as problematic, but simply finds it interesting and therefore includes it in his list of ways in which a statement implies the truth of certain other statements.

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[149] Moore 1946, p. 181. His use of the word must be taken to be deliberate, because later on, in the Schilpp volume on the philosophy of Bertrand Russell, Moore notes that *Russell*'s use of the word "imply" is ambiguous and deviates from everyday use. In *Principia Mathematica*, Russell and Whitehead defined what they called "material implication" and Moore claims that Russell is not using that sense of "implication" in his theory of descriptions.

[150] Austin, J. L, *How To Do Things with Words*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1962, p. 48.

Now let me bring in Elizabeth Wolgast as a discussant from a perspective from within language. Wolgast calls Moore's notion of implication 'implying by saying' and according to her, it raises a number of questions.[151] She asks "How does the notion of implication that a speaker believes something issue from his saying something, but not from the thing he says?" and cites Moore's reply, that we have learnt by experience, that "in the immense majority of cases a man who makes such an assertion as this does believe or know what he asserts".[152] Wolgast's counterargument is that a person may know that people usually, statistically speaking, drive on the right-hand side of the road, but a man who knows this, does not "imply" that he will do that too by taking his car out. She goes on:

> And if he doesn't, you would not call it absurd of him to drive on the left. Depending on where he is, it may be unconventional, eccentric, dangerous, but not absurd.[153]

Wolgast's critique of Moore's special kind of implication is that according to it, I imply that I believe it is raining if I take out my raincoat. Wolgast argues that I do not "imply" anything by doing that. Moore is concerned with the relation between our words and us as speakers. A better example would perhaps be that someone who is very scared may try to calm his companions down by repeating "It's not dangerous, it's not dangerous" or insisting "I'm not scared". In a sense here, the "meaning of the words in themselves" is the opposite of that, which is said and believed by the speaker. In this case, there's a conflict between what the speaker says or what his words imply (that he isn't

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[151] Wolgast 1977, p. 91.
[152] Moore 1942, pp. 542-543 ("A Reply to My Critics" in Schilpp, ed.: *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore.*)
[153] Wolgast 1977, pp. 91-92.

scared) and the conclusions that can be drawn from his saying it (that he is scared). However, Moore's line of argument here is not enough, because instead of giving a good reason why this special implication is in force, his statistical suggestion of what we know about speakers by experience drives in a wedge between the speaker and his or her own words. The wedge hinders even the speaker him- or herself from actually committing to what he or she is trying to say because it is always possible that he or she did not mean it after all.

Ordinarily, to imply is to hint at something, to suggest something intentionally, without explicitly stating it to others. I may for example say that I am growing tired and by this imply that I want to go home soon. If someone were to offer me caffeine pills to make me feel less tired, I would decline by saying that I am about to leave. I do not then *imply* that I am growing tired – I *can* say it.

This is not what is often called "logical implication". One thing follows from another or one can, from one statement, fact or proposition, conclude or infer that something else must also be the case. If my car has been stolen, it is possible to conclude that there are thieves in the world. From the fact that I speak one can conclude that I am not mute, not that I *believe* one thing or the other, as in Moore's 'implying-by-saying'.

3.4 "A given proposition" and the package theory

According to Wolgast, Moore simply fails to explain the incoherence of the Moorean sentence, the incoherence being that on the one hand it might be true, and we are inclined to say that it must be meaningful to say that I went to the pictures last Tuesday and that I do not believe that I did, but on the other hand we do not want to call it just absurd, but

meaningless, to say it.[154] She also points out that Moore's solution rests on a certain notion of truth-telling and that in a statistical view of meaning, truth-telling too becomes a mere question of custom or convention. (I will return to the role of truth-telling later on.) According to Wolgast, a completely different account of the 'absurdity' of Moore's example has to be given – it can only be explained by giving "an account of such sentences very different from Moore's".[155] Wolgast goes on to try to show that this is not how sentences like these are usually used and that Moore's solution misses the mark. Her treatment of the paradox is framed in a larger debate on knowledge concepts, and she shows how Moore's paradox depends on certain misrepresentations of how language works.[156] For now, let us settle for Wolgast's critique of Moore's suggested solution and return to discuss Wolgast's suggested alternative treatment in Chapter 5.

It is important to Moore that the *proposition* expressed in the first and the third person is the same. Sentences can be ruled out or accepted independently of the situation in which they are used, by looking at the form of words which may as such be in order, regardless of what we, as speakers, try to do with them. Whether a sentence is correct, acceptable, and potentially true in this picture – let us call it *the formalist picture* – is usually claimed to depend on the formation rules, the rules for the ways in which we are allowed to compose sentences from words. This conception of language is revealed to be held by Moore by his wish to stress that the Moorean sentence is alright, but that the problem is only *asserting* it – the sentence has meaning as such and possible sentences can be accepted or rejected before they are taken into consideration in a

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[154] Wolgast 1977, p. 92.
[155] Wolgast 1977, p. 92.
[156] Wolgast 1977, p. 102.

situation of use. This is what Wolgast calls "the package theory of meaning". The package theory of meaning is problematic, and calls for further discussion.

In von Wright's formulation, Moore presupposes that the words and expressions, the sense of which interest philosophers, have a fixed meaning, which is given in normal language usage.[157] Philosophers in their analyses are to look for the "composition" of this meaning, its properties, in detail, von Wright writes. He draws an analogy with chemical analysis: it shows that water consists of oxygen and nitrogen in certain proportions, but what water is, is something that people knew long before this analysis was carried out.[158]

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[157] von Wright 1993, p. 199, in the Swedish original: "Moore synes förutsätta, att de ord och uttryck, vilkas mening intressera filosoferna, äga en bestämd och för envar fattbar betydelse i normalt språkbruk. Betydelsen är liksom *given* med språkbruket, det vi söka är betydelsens 'sammansättning', dess närmare bestämningar." According to G. H. von Wright, Moore belonged to the "linguistic" strand of analytic philosophy, as opposed to the "semantic strand" of Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and later Tarski, Carnap and Quine, which may be seen as a successor of logical empirism. In von Wright's view, Moore is one of the most important agents in modern analytic philosophy due to his interest in meaning and analysis as opposed to truth and proof in the semantic strand. Von Wright calls Moore's method conceptual-logical, and writes that it proceeds through a process of definition: the analysandum, the problematic expression, may be defined by a set of more simple expressions (*analysans*) from ordinary everyday language. What Moore calls "logical analysis" comes in many shapes, but according to von Wright, 1993, p. 165, Moore emphasizes that logical analysis is not the analysis of language but of concepts and definitions.

[158] According to von Wright (1993, p. 199), the idea that words have meanings which are *given* with ordinary language use, and that the philosopher may find it and elaborate it, is indeed an ontological or existential presupposition, which may be criticized. It is not necessarily the case, according to von Wright, that the philosophical difficulty consists in the fact that we are unaware of the correct analysis of the meanings of an expression, but perhaps the problem is "that there *is* no such meaning, no core to bring out from language use through analysis" (my translation). Von Wright's worry about the package theory of meaning is that the package may turn out to be empty. This gives him reason to be suspicious of ordinary language. I find that both reasonable and unwarranted: what we need to do is be aware of our use there and then

This is the package theory of meaning of declarative sentences, which is the idea that a sentence carries its meaning within it, like a package ready to post (related to the view of sentences criticized in the previous chapter, called the atmosphere conception of meaning). When we learn to understand a sentence, we learn to know when to send the package and when not to send it. The meaning of the sentence "is detached from us", the speakers and language users.[159] Learning a language, according to a package theory, is learning when certain things are true and said and associating or correlating sentences with situations according to certain rules.

If sentences carry their meanings in them, contradictions work as diagnostic tools for distinguishing between good and bad language use, or rather – meaningful and not meaningful language use. However, if one also understands language as a calculus, that is, as a rule-directed practice, contradictions will be a threat to the system since rules which are contradicted within the system will not work as rules. Wolgast picks out the package theory of meaning as one prerequisite for the tangles of Moore's paradox, but she takes a step further and claims that a conception in which language use is rule-governed in the same way as a game is, may also effectively lay the groundwork for the paradox.[160] Indeed, Moore's description of the paradoxical feature included the expectation of a rule according to which if you can assert the

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– the problems arise when we, as philosophers, try to generalize and theorize our specific uses.

[159] Wolgast 1977, p. 95.

[160] Wolgast 1977, p. 102. Wolgast is thinking about Wittgenstein's comparisons between learning a calculus and learning language. This is misrepresenting the learning of language, according to Wolgast, because it is not understanding language as a means of telling someone something. Cf. pp. 102-105.

proposition about me, I should be able to assert it too. In this picture, meanings come automatically (in Geach's formulation referred to in the previous chapter: they are mechanical). This drives a wedge between speakers and their taking responsibility for their claims, to really *mean* what one says and to ultimately be the judges of what passed in a linguistic exchange. This is one version of an outside view of language, and the package theory of meaning is a formulation of the picture of sense which Frege's context principle as described in the last chapter set out to defeat.

In this light, the problem with Moore's solution can be described as not residing in his argument as such, but in the picture of language which it presupposes.

3.5 Concluding words

Moore's paradox as a philosophical problem crucially depends on the view of language and its workings in relation to the task and methods of philosophy. Moore's philosophy contains poignant tensions between the interest in ordinary expressions and concepts and formal ones, a tension which is still at work in the different reactions to questions of language within contemporary philosophy.

In this chapter I have described the discussion at the time when the roots of the paradox were formed, and I have used the work of Elizabeth Wolgast to draw out and criticize two main roots, both of which are aspects of a perspective from outside of language: the special kind of implication and the package theory of meaning.

The solution to Moore's paradox in the picture drawn by Moore consisted in the search for a contradiction, a contradiction which he

found between the special implication of saying things, and the meaning of the sentence as such. This search for a contradiction as the ticket to exclusion of a problematic sentence or proposition is a prevailing way of trying to solve the paradox. In the following chapter, I will discuss the problem as conceived by philosophers concerned with finding the contradiction in the use of language in terms of theories of speech acts.

As Kelly Dean Jolley (2007) describes his treatment of the "concept 'horse' paradox": he does not "foreclose straight away with the paradox, because there is no straight way with the paradox".[161] He takes it that he needs to handle the respondent's experience of the paradox (the respondent being the philosopher who is troubled by the paradox) and that that is dealing with it and showing how one keeps it from arising. This is the way I will deal with Moore's paradox in this and the following chapters, and as I go along, my methods will evolve.[162]

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[161] Jolley 2007, p. 4.
[162] This was also my approach in my Master's Thesis *Moores paradoxala paradox* Åbo Akademi University 2003.

4 Moore's Paradox and the Pragmatics of Language

In the last chapter, we saw that Moore's solution to the paradox, as he perceived it, aimed at finding a contradiction, and that the contradiction was located between the proposition expressed and what was implied by asserting the proposition. Moore's solution can well be described as pertaining to the pragmatic features of language use. Apart from Moore's, many other solutions along these lines have been presented since the paradox was first introduced.

In this chapter, I will discuss one of these pragmatic solutions, and I will claim that this sort of solution also fails to account fully for the paradoxical feature of Moore's paradox.[163] Like Moore's proposed solution, these pragmatic answers try to show that the problematic feature of the paradox is that *asserting* the sentence will involve a contradiction, not that the sentence as such (whatever that may be) involves a contradiction. The contradiction in a pragmatic solution is due to the application of the sentence, and it is not a feature of the semantics or syntax of the sentence itself. However, my discussion will also suggest that these three theoretical levels of language, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, cannot be clearly distinguished in philosophical practice.

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[163] There is another use of the term "pragmatic paradox" to be found in the literature, in which the propositions they express are necessarily false-when-believed (Chan, Timothy, "Moore's Paradox is not just another pragmatic paradox", *Synthese* 173, No. 3 (2010): 211-229, DOI: 10.1007/s11229-008-9403-x). In contrast to this definition, I use "pragmatic" here to refer to the pragmatics of language (as explained below).

I will contrast these solutions with a sort of solution according to which there is a hidden contradiction within the sentence itself, i.e. solutions aiming to exclude the linguistic item (in a wide sense) as faulty. I will call the latter *formalist* solutions. Formalist solutions are characterized by the idea that whether sentences are in order – or not – depends on their underlying logical form.

The pragmatics of language as it features in the discussion of Moore's Paradox is relevant to the main theme of this work, the possibility of a perspective from within language in which the notion of a "sentence in use" plays a central role. What is meant by "the pragmatics" of language is debated, a debate much of which falls outside of the scope of my interest here. My aim is not to contribute to the philosophy of language by arriving at a theory of meaning, rather, it is to explore what it is to adopt a perspective from within language. Pragmatics, as I will use the word here, is standardly contrasted with semantics, in terms of a distinction between semantic content, in Kent Bach's words the information "which is carried by linguistic items themselves"[164] in abstraction from particular circumstances of use, and pragmatic features, which relate to the employment of linguistic items. In Bach's words, pragmatics is concerned with "the information that is generated by, or at least made relevant by, acts of using language".[165] Thus, it focuses on a feature which could be called 'use'. As we shall see, however, this pragmatic notion of 'use' is significantly different from the 'use' which I take to be central to a perspective from within language.

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[164] Kent Bach, "Speech Acts and Pragmatics", *Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Language,* ed. Devitt & Hanley, 2003, p. 148.
[165] Bach 2003, p. 148.

I will begin by discussing a pre-pragmatic solution to the paradox, as presented by J. L. Austin. Then I will present John S. Searle's solution to the paradox as a typical example of a pragmatic solution, in which the problem does not lie in the Moorean sentence but in the application of it, a fact that purportedly can be shown by making use of a pragmatic theoretical framework. After that I will introduce what I call the usability argument as a reminder of the role that formal structures play in the philosophical life of Moorean sentences. I will present and discuss some presuppositions about language and sentences that are found in the suggested pragmatic solution, which is a reformulation of the issue, but one which doesn't solve the paradox. I will use Norman Malcolm's critique of Searle's take on Moore's Paradox and Don S. Levi's discussion of Searle's critique of Austin to shed light on the divide between their views of philosophy and on the role and accepted methods of philosophizing on language. These differences exemplify the tension between the user perspective approaches and pragmatic approaches. This field of tension lays bare a deep disagreement on the role of theorizing and terminology in philosophy which is enlightening for our exploration of a perspective from within language.

4.4 A pre-pragmatic solution

J. L. Austin's radical and new thought in his lectures in the 1950s, which were eventually published in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) was that, unlike what earlier philosophers had thought, language has many other functions beside providing true or false descriptions of the world. According to Austin, there are also utterances which are used to perform actions (such as "I hereby name you Sam") and which have other ways of being faulty than being false. They may be *infelicitous*, unfortunately chosen. As Mats Furberg notes, Austin's goal was to investigate in which situations utterances are "in order", that is, when an

utterance "performs its normal job faultlessly".[166] The normal job and the faults vary from utterance-type to utterance-type.

Austin took ordinary language use to be the starting point for the philosophy of language, as opposed to the special logically perfect language which for example some of the logical positivists wanted to create. In this way, he opened up for the view that ordinary language may serve well enough to describe itself without a formal notation. Austin thought that philosophy may give a structured and ordered description of language, and in this description, speech acts play one part.

According to Furberg, there are both differences and similarities between Austin's and Moore's views. Moore "believes in concepts and propositions", something which Austin does not. This, according to Furberg, makes Moore pay insufficient attention to the particular situation in which an utterance is issued. This, he writes, is due to the fact that for Moore, a proposition is after all a logical construct and his aim as a philosopher is to analyze these utterances, which are true or false, into smaller units. (For Furberg, the problems which this view of propositions gives rise to direct philosophers away from logical constructs and towards everyday language use.) Austin instead tries to classify utterances according to their ways of being in order.[167]

In the article "The Meaning of a Word", Austin discusses things one cannot say and touches upon Moorean sentences:

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[166] Furberg 1963 p. 41.
[167] Furberg 1963, p. 43.

> Now the reason why I cannot say 'The cat is on the mat and I do not believe it' is not that it offends against syntactics in the sense of being in some way 'self-contradictory'. What prevents my saying it, is rather some semantic convention (implicit, of course), about the way we use words in situations. What precisely is the account to be given in this case we need not ask. Let us rather notice one significant feature of it.[168]

The "significant feature", Austin claims, is that (a) '*p* and I believe it' is trivial in some way and (b) '*p* and I do not believe it' is nonsensical in some way, whereas a third sentence, (c) '*p* and *I might not have* believed it' "makes perfectly good sense".[169] That which keeps us from saying that "*p* implies 'I believe that *p*'" in the ordinary sense of 'implies' is that even if (b) 'p and I do not believe it' is absurd in some way, (c) 'p and *I might not have* believed it' is not absurd at all. In ordinary cases of implication the two would go hand in hand. If the one were absurd, the other would be too, in the same way as 'triangles are figures and triangles have no shape' and 'triangles are figures and triangles might have had no shape' are both equally absurd. In Austin's view, Moore has discovered a new function in language, this special implication which needs special mention in his classification. Austin devises a test for these different kinds of implication: according to him, the sentence (c) ('might not Q') may be used as a test as to whether *p* "implies" in the *ordinary* sense or in the special sense of 'implies'.[170]

In Austin's words, what keeps us from saying 'The cat is on the mat and I don't believe it' is *an implicit semantic convention*. What exactly does that mean? He claims that the Moorean sentence does not violate against

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[168] Austin 1961, p. 32.
[169] Austin 1961, p. 32.
[170] I have discussed this notion of implication further in my discussion of Moore's solution in Chapter 3.

"*syntactics*" by being self-contradictory in some sense. Now the solution to Moore's paradox cannot be that the sentence violates "the semantic convention […] about how we use words *in situations*" because, as I will argue, one of the key features of a Moorean sentence is that *no situation has been given*. As soon as a situation or a context is introduced, the Moore-paradoxical feature of the Moorean sentence disappears. This fact, which I will introduce later on in this chapter as "the usability argument" is crucial for my later discussion of the paradox and I will return to it in Chapter 5 in which I discuss this special notion of context of use which I introduced in Chapter 2. In a "context of significant use", the sentence is internally related to the context and the identity of the sentence cannot be identified independently of this context, nor can the context be identified independently of the "sentence-in-use". In a perspective in which the relation between the sentence and the context is external, the context appears as a container into which the sentence fits or doesn't fit. When the relation is external, the sentence can be identified independently of its context, and then the question whether the sentence makes sense in *this* (container-like) context is feasible. In a context of significant use, as a contrast, the question of the meaning of the sentence has no logical space, and taking the usability argument seriously, the answer to the question "What stops us from saying 'The cat is on the mat and I don't believe it'?" will become "You *can* say that". This, however, does not seem to be a sufficient answer to Moore's confusion if we hold on to an external perspective. That is why the paradoxical feature simply slips out of Austin's reach when he tries to grab it.

I will now proceed to another treatment of Moore's paradox, by John R. Searle, who supposedly developed Austin's work further. By first giving an overview of Searle's theory of speech acts, I hope to do justice to my description of the sort of task which he sets himself as a philosopher of

language. This picture will also serve as the contrast later when I discuss the differences between Searle's and Norman Malcolm's view of the task and tools of philosophical work as the contrast in the perception of philosophical terminology between perspectives from the outside and inside of language.

Searle's theory of language and speech acts is valuable for my investigation of the perspective from within language since he is explicit about many of his theoretical assumptions and hence provides material for discussion on many different aspects of the perspective from within language. Searle provides a particularly lucid example of an attitude from without language.

4.4.1 Illocutionary acts as philosophically illuminating

In his influential book *Speech Acts*, Searle develops Austin's thoughts on illocutionary acts. Illocutionary acts are acts performed in uttering a sentence (such as asserting, declaring, etc.) as contrasted with the locutionary act, the act of saying something, and the perlocutionary act, the act by which one's saying something brings something about (i.e. has certain external effects). According to Searle, "[t]he philosophy of language is the attempt to give philosophically illuminating descriptions of certain general features of language, such as reference, truth, meaning, and necessity".[171] This is done by offering characterizations and explanations of a speaker's use of elements of a language. A speaker's use of these elements, so Searle's hypothesis goes, "is underlain by certain rules". Searle sets out in his work to give linguistic

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[171] Searle 1969, p. 4.

characterizations and then explain the data in these "by formulating the underlying rules".[172] The hypothesis, he writes, is that speaking a language is performing speech acts, such as giving commands, making statements, asking questions etc., but also referring, predicating. Furthermore, these acts are made possible and performed "in accordance with certain rules for the use of linguistic elements".[173] This is a reformulation of Austin's thought that in speaking, we follow "implicit semantic conventions".

> The unit of communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act. To take the token as a message is to take it as a produced or issued token.[174]

The "production or issuance of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act", Searle continues. Taking something to belong to "the class of linguistic communication" requires *assuming* it to be produced with certain kinds of intentions – the mark or noise must be produced through a certain kind of intentional behavior. Searle gives an illustration: it would be possible to communicate by rearranging furniture in certain ways, and the attitude I would have to such an arrangement of furniture would be different from "the attitude I have, say, to the arrangement of furniture in this room, even though in both cases I might regard the arrangement as resulting from intentional behavior".[175] Speech is a subcategory of action and Searle's system of

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[172] Searle 1969, p. 15. Searle emphasizes on p. 16 that his procedure is not circular, since he is using his hypothesis that language is rule-governed intentional behavior, to explain the possibility of these linguistic characterizations.
[173] Searle 1969, p. 16.
[174] Searle 1969 p. 16.
[175] Searle 1969 p. 17.

explanation does not take it to be subjective to either speaker or listener – for something to belong to the class of linguistic communication, is for it to be produced with some specific intention or taken to be so.

The study of meanings of sentences is entangled with the study of performances of speech acts, Searle writes. It is a part of the notion of a speech act "that there is a possible sentence (or sentences) the utterance of which in a certain context would in virtue of its (or their) meaning constitute a performance of that speech act". Searle distinguishes between two different approaches in the philosophy of language, which he claims are complementary, not competing, although commonly taken to be so. "[H]istorically they have been associated with inconsistent views about meaning."[176] According to Searle, the question which is typical for the one (including, according to Searle, Jerrold Katz and the early Wittgenstein): "How do the meanings of the elements of a sentence determine the meaning of the whole sentence?" and the question which is typical for the other (for example Austin and the later Wittgenstein, according to Searle): "What are the different kinds of speech acts speakers perform when they utter expressions?" are necessarily related: "for every possible speech act there is a possible sentence or set of sentences the literal utterance of which in a particular context would constitute a performance of that speech act".[177] According to Searle, then, there is a set of possible speech acts, and for each act in this set, there is a set of sentences which when uttered constitute that speech act. Which speech act is in question in a certain context then depends on the sentence and its characteristics – which are part of it as such. In this sense, speech act theory is merely an extension

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[176] Searle 1969 p. 18.
[177] Searle 1969 p. 19.

of the by now quite traditional view of language as a set of possible sentences.

4.4.2 The principle of expressibility

Searle introduces what he calls "the principle of expressibility". According to this principle, everything I mean is in principle possible for me to say. Possible practical problems may be that I do not know the language – say Spanish – well enough, or that I cannot find the words. Nevertheless, in a case like that, it is possible for me to learn the language or for the language to expand, were it that the suitable expression or set of expressions for what I mean was not already part of that language. In cases when I do not say exactly what I mean, it is always possible for me to do so, he writes.

Searle emphasizes that the principle of expressibility does not imply that it is always possible to find a way to express oneself which guarantees that all the effects one wishes to produce are produced (emotions, poetic effects, beliefs). Also, he emphasizes that not all that can be said can be understood by others; and in this way, he claims, he explicitly keeps the possibility of a private language open.[178]

According to Searle, the consequences of the principle of expressibility are that it enables him to account for important features of Frege's theory of sense and reference. Also, cases where "the speaker does not say exactly what he means" – non-literalness, vagueness, ambiguity, incompleteness – are not "theoretically essential" to linguistic communication. Above all, Searle writes, the principle of expressibility

[178] Searle 1969 p. 20.

enables us to equate rules for performing speech acts with rules for uttering certain linguistic elements, since "for any possible speech act, there is a possible linguistic element the meaning of which (given the context of the utterance) is sufficient to determine that its literal utterance is a performance of precisely that speech act".[179]

If the speech act is the basic unit of communication and it is in principle possible to express anything one means, then

> …there are a series of analytic connections between the notions of speech acts, what the speaker means, what the sentence (or other linguistic element) uttered means, what the speaker intends, what the hearer understands and what the rules governing the linguistic elements are.[180]

Searle's principle of expressibility is tied to the possible speech act – and the starting point of an investigation into speech acts, into language, is that there is something to be said, that someone means something. It is given from the start that one knows what one means – this is in Searle's terminology the intention one has. In this sense, the concept of a speech act, intention and meaning are connected. Whether these relationships hold is not in need of examination, they are so to say given with the theory.

A speech act may typically consist of certain 'elements', not to be understood as necessary but useful in an analysis: (a) the uttering of words, sentences [utterance acts], (b) referring and predicating [propositional acts], (c) stating, questioning, commanding, promising

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[179] Searle 1969 p. 21.
[180] Searle 1969 p. 21.

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etc. [illocutionary acts].[181] Propositional acts are in a sense carried out within a proposition or a sentence – they are, for example, referring and predicating, "slices of illocutionary acts".[182] These are different than illocutionary acts (wholes) such as promising. Predication is not a separate act although it is also an abstraction (it is an abstraction just like moving the knight is an abstraction from playing chess – it is a separate act but it only counts as moving the knight in the context of playing chess).[183]

Searle investigates the act of promising and shows that from the analysis of this act, there are lessons to be learned for more general application. He draws up a schema for some central types of illocutionary acts (request, assert/state/affirm, question, thank, advise, warn, greet, congratulate).[184]

The speakers of a language are "engaging in a rule-governed form of behavior" and the regularities in this behavior coincide – the rules of language "account for the regularities in exactly the same way as in a game of football, and without the rules there seems no accounting for the regularities".[185] These rules are formulations of what must obtain for a speech act to be carried out – they are conditions which must be fulfilled, conditions having to do with "sincerity", the kind of propositional content, preparatory conditions (such as that the speaker is in the correct relation to the hearer), essential conditions (what is demanded for an act to count as exactly that and not another act; for

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[181] Searle 1969 pp. 23-24.
[182] Searle 1969 p. 123.
[183] Searle 1969 p. 123.
[184] Searle 1969 p. 66-67.
[185] Searle 1969 p. 53.

example a question counts as an attempt to elicit the said information from the hearer).

In *Speech Acts*, Searle proposes that his theory provides a solution to Moore's paradox. In the chapter that follows I will present Searle's solution and some criticism of it.

4.4.3 The sincerity condition as a solution to the paradox

Searle proposes a set of *conditions* for describing different illocutionary acts, conditions for successful language use. One of these conditions is the sincerity condition, which is of relevance in capturing those speech acts which involve the expression of a psychological state. According to Searle,

> Wherever there is a psychological state specified in the sincerity condition, the performance of the act counts as an expression of that psychological state. This law holds whether the act is sincere or insincere, that is whether the speaker actually has the specified psychological state or not. Thus to assert, affirm, state (that p) counts as an expression of belief (that p).[186]

He continues in a footnote:

> This law, incidentally, provides the solution to Moore's paradox: the paradox that I cannot assert both that p and that I do not believe p, even though the proposition that p is not inconsistent with the proposition that I do not believe p.

Searle argues that the speech act of affirming, stating, or asserting (that *p*) is connected with certain rules. The rules are not regulative but

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[186] Searle 1969 p. 65.

constitutive.[187] When someone performs an assertive, propositional or affirmative speech act, the performance of it (to use Searle's word) "counts" as an expression of a psychological state of belief regardless of whether the state which the sincerity condition (the rule) presupposes prevails or not, i.e. regardless of whether the speaker actually holds that belief. Searle writes that "a proposition is to be sharply distinguished from an assertion or statement of it" because the same proposition is present in for instance "Sam smokes habitually" as well as in "Would that Sam smoked habitually" and "If Sam smokes habitually, he will not live long", but it is only asserted in the first of these.[188] He points out that he does not say that sentences express propositions, because sentences cannot perform acts of that or any other kind, but that "in the utterance of the sentence, the speaker expresses a proposition".[189]

Moore's paradox, according to Searle, is one instance of a large class of cases, and the oddity, which in this case is connected with assertion, is parallel, he writes, to "I promise to do A but I do not intend to do A" and "I apologize for doing A but I am not sorry that I did A".[190] "It is a general feature of any speech act that has a sincerity condition that the performance of that speech act is an expression of the psychological state specified in that sincerity condition. Thus, every promise is an expression of an intention, every order is an expression of a wish and desire… every assertion is an expression of belief."[191] "The explanation in every case is that one cannot, in consistency, express a psychological

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[187] Searle 1969 p. 33.
[188] Searle 1969, p. 29.
[189] Searle 1969 p. 29.
[190] Searle 1991, "Response: Perception and the Satisfactions of Intentionality" in Lepore, E. and van Gulick. R.: *John Searle and His Critics*, Blackwell, Oxford 1991, p. 187.
[191] Searle 1991, p. 187.

state, and simultaneously deny the existence of the psychological state expressed."[192]

Searle's solution to Moore's paradox is that the utterance of the first part of the sentence – the assertion p – "counts as" the expression of belief (being the psychological state which is specified in the sincerity condition for assertion), a belief which is then denied in the second part of the sentence. In an important sense, which will become clear later, Searle's solution is pointing out the presence of a contradiction at a theoretical level.

It is of central importance for my further discussion to note that Searle's solution depends on assumed uses of the two parts of the Moorean sentence. On the one hand, the sentence is taken to contain two identifiable parts, and on the other, these parts are assumed to function in specific ways which give rise to a sort of contradiction. In the following chapters I will discuss these assumptions more in depth.

4.5 Critique of "expression" of belief as a mental state

Norman Malcolm enters into a discussion with Searle on Moore's Paradox in *John Searle and His Critics*.[193] In this work, Malcolm directs a set of criticisms against Searle's solution. One of his claims is that Searle's taking belief to be a mental state is a mistake. Searle takes the performance of a speech act to "count" as the expression of a mental state, and contrary to this view, Malcolm argues that only *sometimes* are we talking about ourselves (our mental states) when we say things like "I

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[192] Searle 1991, p. 187.
[193] Malcolm 1991 "I believe that p", in Lepore, E. and van Gulick. R.: *John Searle and His Critics*, Blackwell, Oxford 1991.

believe *p*". As a typical example of how we use 'believe', Malcolm tells a story in which someone who is indoors and about to go out, and peers through the window – it is dark outside – and says "I believe it's raining". It would seem a philosophical joke to retort to this "I don't want to know about *your mental state*, but about the weather!" It would be misunderstanding a tentative or hesitant assertion about the weather for the expression of a mental state. In other words, Malcolm claims, the philosophical view that belief is always a mental state is wrong.[194]

Searle writes that "If I make the statement that *p*, I express a belief that *p*" and claims that this holds in general, that any person making a statement at any time is expressing a mental state. Malcolm replies that this view is "extravagant". Sometimes it is true, he admits, that I express belief that *p* by making the statement *p*, but it depends on the circumstances whether it is so. "My neighbors are constantly spying on me" could be the expression of the mental state of paranoia, but it could also, Malcolm claims, "be an objective, well-verified, observation". The claim here is that if it were better described as a well-verified observation, it is wrong to describe it as "the expression of a mental state".

Furthermore, Malcolm directs critique against Searle's proclaimed solution to Moore's paradox regarding his concept of "expression" by claiming that "Searle has run afoul of the ordinary use of 'express' and 'expression'".[195] Malcolm gives a counter-example, that Paul slamming the door would be an "expression of rage" if Paul was enraged, but if he wasn't, then it can't be correct to describe it as an "expression" of rage.

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[194] Malcolm 1991, p. 160.
[195] Malcolm 1991, p. 163.

On Searle's account, it *would* be self-contradictory to say a Moorean sentence, Malcolm claims – even though Searle calls it only "logically odd".[196] Malcolm's critique of Searle's notion of 'expression' rests on how he takes Searle's "counts as" when Searle writes that "a statement that *p counts as* the expression of the belief that *p*" – this statement is a general one, and Searle takes himself as merely expressing a rule of language use. One central feature of Malcolm's argument consists in trying to show that Searle uses words in a special theoretical way. I understand Malcolm's critical view of this special theoretical use of words and his reference to the "circumstances" as the expression of a wish to philosophize from within language. I will discuss this issue further later on in this chapter and in Chapter 5.

Searle's response to Malcolm's point of criticism concerning the notion of 'expression' in the same volume is to claim that Malcolm takes it to be incoherent to say that "John expressed the belief that p, but he did not, in fact, believe that p; he was lying" and to this Searle retorts that "I do not find anything at all incoherent or even odd about this, it seems to me perfectly consistent logically and acceptable linguistically".[197] According to Searle, Malcolm confuses "John expressed *the* belief that p" with "John expressed *his* belief that p". The former does not commit John to the belief, but the latter does, Searle claims, and "it is, in general, possible to express a belief without having that belief, and there is a very simple proof of this fact: the verb phrase 'express the belief' has a performative occurrence." He exemplifies it by saying that a speaker who says "I hereby express the belief that p" is expressing the belief that

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[196] Malcolm 1991, p. 162.
[197] Searle 1991, p. 187.

p, and claims that "this fact is logically independent of whether or not the speaker actually has the belief that he expresses".[198]

Malcolm's objection concerning belief as a mental state does not reach Searle. Searle seems to treat the terms used in his theory and hence in his description of a speaking situation as neutral and given, when Malcolm objects to precisely that kind of theoretical use of words by trying to show that Searle's general claims are problematic. The relation between the expression by someone and this someone holding a belief is internal in the sense that to describe the situation by saying "he is expressing the belief that p" would include that that "he" holds that belief. Searle's reply to Malcolm misses the point: if there is no-one to hold a belief (as in "the belief that" contrasted with John's own belief), in many cases it would not be possible to understand in what sense this is a 'belief' at all. It is unclear what it would mean to claim, as Searle, "that it is in general possible to *express* a belief without having that belief" (my italics).[199] Malcolm is not willing to accept this sort of general philosophical claim about belief and about assertion, claims which are not outright empirical claims, but statements of parts of a theory with possibly limited generality, the basis of which Malcolm criticizes because of the narrow conception of belief displayed. The conception of belief as a mental state is a theoretical construct rather than a description of the concept of belief as it unfolds in everyday life with language. For instance, if you assert that "That's a house" and we can see that it is an iceberg, we may say until we have corrected you that you *believe* that it is a house. However, while you are claiming it, if we would express our doubts about it, you may claim that you *know* that it

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[198] Searle 1991, p. 188.
[199] Searle 1991, p. 188.

is a house, depending on how certain you feel about it. The response by Searle, the attempt to give an example of a "belief" no-one has held: "The belief that triangles have seventeen sides has never been held by anyone" does not counter Malcolm's critique. He claims that this too is perfectly fine "both linguistically and logically", but here, "linguistically" means according to his model of language as speech acts.

To rephrase my suggestions above about how this disagreement should be understood (a disagreement, as I take it, centrally between a philosophical perspective from inside and outside of language), Malcolm's critique of Searle's use of "expression" and the special use of "believe" (not only the mistake of treating belief merely as a state of mind) can be supplemented by a critique of his use of "theory". Searle does not realize that his statement that "A statement that *p counts* as an expression of the belief that *p*" (my emphasis) is not empirical (hypothetical) or theoretical but rather a stipulation of use of these terms. Malcolm's critique, i.e. his objection to Searle's philosophical views of "expression", and "belief" is that they are wrongheaded and not how the words in the Moorean sentence are actually used. These philosophical views of belief and expression do not allow for the generality which Searle's theoretical use should allow for. Malcolm's refusal to accept the philosophical views of these concepts has to do with the gap between the views of what philosophy should do between him and Searle and their views of language and language use, which I will discuss in the sections that follow. It is also a disagreement about the role of philosophical terminology: Searle is describing a model of communication, of the conditions which must be fulfilled for a speaker to be able to communicate a content to a listener, and Malcolm is criticizing the way the terms of description are supposed to work. I will approach this difference in philosophical method and ideal in a different way later on in this chapter.

4.5.1 Solutions and philosophical premises

The disagreement between Searle and Malcolm over Moore's paradox also has consequences for what they each will be prepared to count as a solution, and this issue in turn depends on the roles they allow philosophers' theoretical apparatuses. Malcolm writes that

> When there is a philosophical dispute as to whether some sentence, S, is a meaningful sentence, philosophers frequently resort to what can be *supposed*, or *conceived*, or *imagined*. They say things as, "It is *conceivable* that S should be the case, therefore S is a meaningful sentence"; or "The supposition that S is a possible supposition, therefore it makes sense to assert S". An important thing we can learn from a study of Moore's paradox, is that this reasoning is not correct. For it is conceivable that it is raining and I don't believe it is. But if I were to declare, "It's raining and I don't believe it is", I would be making a nonsensical utterance. My sentence would not just be "strange" or "absurd" but really unintelligible.[200]

Malcolm points out that Moore's paradox shows that it is problematic to hold that what is conceivably the case (or a supposition) must be possible to assert. He moves on to criticize Searle for not realizing that what one wants to say with a Moorean sentence is *unintelligible*. This suggestion, I believe, points in the direction we must go in order to become clear about the tangle. However, the suggestion needs to be developed and adjusted. I will present it in brief but will take it up for scrutiny in Chapter 5, in connection with what I called the user perspective on Moore's paradox.

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[200] Malcolm 1991, p. 164.

The unintelligibility of a Moorean sentence, Malcolm wrote, has to do with "the way in which the first-person present indicative of the verb 'to believe' is *actually* used".[201] According to Malcolm, the solution to Moore's paradox consists in the senselessness of a contradiction. This is because "I believe p" is sometimes a cautious or hesitant assertion of p However, Malcolm demonstrates by contrast that this is not the case with "I believed that p" or "Suppose I believe that p"; they are not used to assert p at all, he writes. The assertion that p in combination with the fact that "I believe that p" (and its negation) is commonly used as an assertion gives rise to a contradiction. As mentioned, this contradiction is the explanation of the absurdity. "It was greatly to Moore's credit", Malcolm wrote, that he perceived this craziness, something which one will not, if one thinks that in saying "I believe that p" one is talking merely about oneself, because then the two conjunctive sentences will create no problem.

Searle, in his reply to Malcolm's criticism[202] in the same volume, begins by pointing out that Malcolm's "form of philosophical analysis" is one which "tries to solve philosophical problems by examining the 'use' of words". This sort of analysis was, according to Searle "influential in the 1950s", but "discredited by the mid-sixties". He says it is "severely limited" and that the method does not work in dealing with problems concerning belief. With Malcolm, and contrary to the reservations expressed by Searle, I hope to have shown by the end of this book, that forms of philosophical analysis characteristic of Ordinary Language Philosophy (what I take Searle to refer to as Linguistic philosophy), can

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[201] Malcolm 1991, p. 164.
[202] Searle 1991, pp. 185-188.

be enlightening for untangling philosophical confusions.[203] (I will return to discuss the differences between Searle's view of language and the tasks of philosophy and the perspective from within language which has points of contact with the sort of philosophy Searle is skeptical about.)

Searle agrees with Malcolm that if you ask me "Where is George Bush today?" and I reply "I believe he is in Washington", I am talking about Bush and not about my inner states. However, he claims that Malcolm sees this as a *result*, not as *a part of the problem* of the *nature* of belief, the way Searle does, because "…it does not tell us what a belief is, it does not tell us, e.g. what fact about me makes it *true* for me or anyone else to say of me that I believe that p." Searle continues "[this fact, that we are talking about Bush, not our inner state] is puzzling because it is not obvious how we square it with a whole lot of other facts we already know about the word 'belief' and about belief". Searle expresses a deep disagreement with Malcolm here. One way to label this disagreement is to say that Searle sees it as the aim of philosophical work to provide a general theory for concepts such as belief under which all phenomena must be encompassed. Malcolm takes Moore's paradox to be a manifestation of the fact that we had too simple a view of the phenomenon of belief.

Seeing this deep disagreement is the most important result for the present investigation. However, in this discussion between Malcolm and Searle, other alleged 'facts' which Searle wants to square with his theory have surfaced. These are issues of disagreement which could be discussed further in order to shed light on the difference between

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[203] Searle 1991, p. 185. This sort of philosophy should not be confused with the linguistic philosophy of Jerrold Katz, which is the application of linguistics to philosophical issues.

Malcolm and Searle, but which I now only mention for completeness sake. The 'facts' are the following:

(1) We have beliefs which have never been and will never be expressed. This 'fact' is put forward by Searle as a counterargument to Malcolm. However, Malcolm's philosophical interest is not concerned with "linguistic expressions" which is a presupposition of presenting this 'fact' as a response.

(2) The fact that we are not talking about our mental states only when we use the word "believe" is only a small part of the theory of belief – it is only "a small class of occurrences which are like this". Searle claims that "believe" must have the "same meaning" in "I believe" as in "you believe", and the same in "If I believe p, then I believe that q" as in "I believe that p", "otherwise *modus ponens* would be invalid". Searle demands an answer to what the relation between these meanings are, and claims that Malcolm does not provide one. Searle is right that Moore's paradox poses a problem for formalism, but he is not prepared to face it at the formalist end. Rather than treating the use of words in the schema *modus ponens* as a special technical use, he takes that use to set the rule. Searle, it seems, would be prepared to correct or at least alter our ordinary ways of speaking: his technical apparatus for the description of speech acts is the model to which the philosophical descriptions of language use should adhere. Although he describes the rules formulated in his theory of speech acts as constitutive rather than regulative, there is a normative bend to them. This is a further aspect of the difference between Malcolm, who tries to do philosophy from within language, and Searle, whose perspective is from a point of view beyond both speaker and hearer, outside of a context-of-use. Assertions as treated by Searle take place in a philosophical lab, not in an everyday life.

Malcolm's reaction was aimed only at the absurdity of Moore's paradox, and therefore Searle's demand for a general account of the relation between the different meanings of 'belief' is not in place – Malcolm doesn't hold the burden of proof here. The aim of philosophy need not be to create a general theory to cover all instances of belief. That idea in itself is very problematic – it presupposes that we recognize beliefs when we look for them, but also that we need to look for all instances in order to know what they are (in an empirical investigation). This is a circular demand on a theory of language which is common in pragmatic strands of analytic philosophy. I will return to the delicate question of formalization and what can be meant by "the same meaning" in circumstances like these.

(3) A third issue which Searle wants to square with his theory is what Malcolm pointed out, that there are many uses of "belief". Sometimes it is a hesitant assertion (about the world) to say "I believe that p", and sometimes it is telling someone about one's inner state.[204] Searle resists, and claims that this does not give us a complete analysis, that pointing out other uses is actually irrelevant. He claims that we need to say why the statement that I believe p is sometimes a hesitant assertion that p, and (as in Moore's paradox) why one cannot conjoin the report that I believe that p with the assertion that not p.[205]

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[204] There is a similarity to the discussion about the "transparency of belief", the idea that when one makes self-ascriptions of belief one is looking outwards toward the world, and must attend to the way things are. So if I need to say what I believe about the weather and whether it is raining or not, I see through my belief to the affairs that the belief is about. See for instance Brie Gertler: "Self-Knowledge and the Transparency of Belief" in A. Hatzimoysis, ed., *Self-Knowledge*, OUP, Oxford 2011, pp. 125-45.
[205] Searle 1991 p. 187.

To sum up, Malcolm and Searle disagree as to what "same meaning" means and what role such a term is to have, they disagree as to the aim of philosophy; giving general theories of words or not, they disagree as to what an analysis of belief would have to amount to. They disagree on what "use" can be and what role it should have in a philosophical context. Searle takes claims about 'use' to be empirical, generalized hypotheses in linguistics and therefore subject to weaknesses like the problem of induction, that we cannot be certain that one use will work next time although it has worked so far. To Malcolm, attending to the actual use of words is an analytical tool which should also be applied to the terms of our theoretical descriptions.

Let us return to the first point of criticism which I took Malcom to direct at Searle, and which I take to be central for our purposes of investigating a philosophical perspective from within language in contrast to from outside of language, that Searle has run afoul in using expressions like "expression", and how this running afoul relates to his philosophizing from outside of language. Part of Searle's explanation of Moore's paradox is the "fact" that the assertion of p counts as an expression of the belief that p no matter whether the speaker intends that or not. Now the important point here was that rather than a discovered 'fact', what Searle presents is a principle. Should it be generally valid, it will follow that I will at times be taken to express 'something' which I maybe do not intend. Indeed this is possible and it often happens, but the question is what role this sort of principle should have in the theorizing of language use? When we ordinarily do things that could be described as "expressing things which we do not intend" these are often cases of misunderstanding, i.e. we are trying to express something else, or cases in which we are intentionally fooling our listeners. How these cases should be correctly described can be up for

discussion, and the question how the '*p*' is identified is at stake. For instance when the class bully tells his classmate "What a nice hair-do" it may be a compliment or mockery, but in some descriptions it will be correct for the classmate to say "He said that my hair looked silly". In other words, by knowing what the speaker meant, we find out "what was expressed" (what *p* is), not the other way around. Instead here, Searle presupposes that the meaning of *p* is given with the sentence, with its words and syntax. Searle's statement of the "fact" is not meant to be a description of what actually happens in a hearer and a speaker and is therefore not an empirical fact. Rather, again, it is a theoretical description of what he takes to necessarily be a part of a speech act. Similarly, "expression" and "sincerity" are not used in an ordinary way either, but are in this case part of a philosophical terminology. The question which arises is whether this is a suitable terminology, whether it succeeds or not in explaining what it sets out to explain or whether it creates more problems than it solves. Malcolm's deep criticism is that this sort of terminology may have undesirable consequences and that it is not clear how undesirable consequences of theoretical statements are to be taken. That this terminology does not succeed in explaining what it sets out to explain will be Oswald Hanfling's conclusion as well as mine in the following section.

Furthermore, this pragmatic solution to Moore's paradox becomes circular in the sense that the proposed analysis can get off the ground only on the assumption that we are able to understand the Moorean sentence in the first place. Taking in a point made in Chapter 2, unless we know what (and that!) the sentence means – we cannot check whether it fulfills the criteria – and what the sentence means is *that* which we *don't* know. Searle's theory does not provide an explanation of what it purports to explain: why the sentence cannot be communicated, why it is, as Malcolm stresses *unintelligible*. Searle's theorized picture of

communicative success stays outside of language as it takes the sentence meaning for granted.

In the following two sections, I will present two further points of criticism of Searle's theoretical assumptions by two thinkers which I take to defend a perspective from within language: a critique of a specific idea of language as a rule-governed activity by Hanfling and Don Levi's discussion of the role in philosophizing of conditions of assertion.

4.5.2 Language as a rule-governed activity

In his 1980 article "Does Language Need Rules?" Oswald Hanfling discusses Searle's idea of conditions or rules which direct and ground our use of language – the idea that a proper understanding of language can only be achieved if it is viewed as a rule-governed activity. According to Hanfling, there is a difference between grammatical rules and "language rules" or "meaning rules" in the philosophical sense, rules which are taken to be fundamental aspects of language and which go beyond grammar. Searle compares learning language to learning chess without ever having the rules formulated. Nevertheless he sticks to the idea that there would be such a thing as explicitly giving the rules – something that he is concerned with in *Speech Acts*. According to Hanfling, this is a false analogy. When it comes to learning language, there is no such thing as a set of rules which may be invoked, because giving the rules cannot be just a matter of supplying synonyms or examples. The rules one could invoke would be grammatical rules, which are handy in learning a second language, but which cannot play the same role in learning a first language, because using them would require that one already knew the language and hence, these rules are not constitutive but rather advisory. In his article, Hanfling discusses the

extent to which Wittgenstein's analogy with a game works in a description of how language works and points out some limitations to it. He takes color words as an example. What, he asks, would it be to give the rule for calling something 'green'? It will not do to claim that "it is green" is the rule for calling something green – this means that one would have to know how the word is used correctly already and this gives rise to a circularity which would render it impossible to teach someone to use the word. In other words, the rule needs to be external in the sense that it can be used to justify and explain what one does with the rule without presupposing that the task for which it exists is already fulfilled.

Hanfling writes that there is an aspect of language in which speakers know in which contexts some things are appropriate to say and that this aspect is to some extent covered by the idea of speech-act rules. Nevertheless, there is no need to call the "considerations with bearing on when it is appropriate to say something" *rules*, according to Hanfling – instead, sometimes I have a *reason* to assert something. There is no reason to postulate sets of rules preventing me from doing it in the cases when I do not. "To add that there is a rule against it would distort rather than clarify the situation", according to Hanfling.[206] The rule he has in mind is Searle's "assertibility condition". Calling this "a rule" is distorting the situation because it gives the impression – too strongly – that language is a game, it confuses *reasons* for saying things with rules, something that is the case in a game but not in language use. The rules of a game may instruct me when it is my turn to make a move, but in linguistic practices it may be my turn to speak when I have something to

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[206] Hanfling, Oswald, "Does Language Need Rules?", *Philosophical Quarterly* 1980, p. 198.

say – the turns are not decided beforehand and I cannot invoke rules on when to speak and when *not* to speak to someone in a normal conversation – I may have a million and one possible reasons not to say a certain thing, depending on the situation.

4.5.3 De re, not de dicto – Searle on the "use theory"

Searle provides a sort of explanation of his standpoint when he argues that Austin, among other philosophers, commits the Assertion Fallacy, 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".[207] The problem here, according to Searle, is that what he calls "linguistic philosophers" want to "analyze the meanings of traditionally troublesome concepts", such as "know", "remember", "free", "voluntary" etc. by looking at the *use* of them. Don S. Levi (2004) discusses this charge and writes that it should be taken seriously, because it is an "inside job": Searle takes Austin to be one of the major influences on his thought and nevertheless directs this kind of serious criticism at him.[208]

In Searle's own words, he defends philosophizing "*de re* rather than *de dicto*", by which he means that philosophical analysis concerns not the expressions of language, but what is actually the case. It is not about what is *said*, that is, what someone says about herself or about what could be said about someone. Philosophy is about the way things are, not about the ways we speak.[209] In Chapter 6 of *Speech Acts*, he criticizes

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[207] Searle 1969, p. 141.
[208] Don S. Levi, "Ebersole's Philosophical Treasure Hunt", *Philosophy* 79 (2004).
[209] It seems that Searle stresses the difference between *de re* and *de dicto* too much – drawing a line between the two is problematic, and I am not aware of any philosopher in need of this correction.

what he calls "the use theory" as the origin of these fallacies. According to him, the use theory (the heyday of which was in the 1960s) is the work of certain linguistic philosophers, the slogan for whom was "Meaning Is Use".[210] 'Use', to these philosophers, he writes, is merely the illocutionary force of the uttering of sentences.[211] According to Searle, the discovery of these linguistic philosophers was that the 'use' of certain sentences is different from mere description of a state of affairs, such as evaluation, assessment, rating, judgment. The use theory however, can "provide us with certain data, i.e. raw material for philosophical analysis", for example, the observation that in uttering a sentence, one is characteristically giving information, praising something or the like. However, Searle continues, "it does not provide us with the tools" for a systematic analysis.[212] In Searle's view, the linguistic philosophers think that one can analyze a concept like "knowledge" by looking at how people use the word "know", and they confuse the meaning of words with the use of words. (For example, he claims they would ask "What does 'good' mean?" and then look for all the places where the word 'good' is used.)

Searle's charge against Austin is that he notices that it would be "odd to *say*, in certain circumstances, "I bought my car voluntarily" and that he claims that certain conditions, it seems, are necessary conditions for the application of certain concepts, in this case "voluntarily". According to Searle, this is to tacitly assume that the conditions for successfully making an assertion form part of an analysis of the concept of free will. Furthermore he claims that this assumption is false.

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[210] He is referring to the slogan purportedly coming from Wittgenstein, and which has been seriously misunderstood, see Giesewetter 2014.
[211] Searle 1969, p. 148.
[212] Searle 1969, p. 149.

Levi provides a response to Searle through a discussion of an example about doing something intentionally. If Amy is given a surprise party, and Levi asks her before where she will be at the time of the party, he may be accused of betraying the secret intentionally. If she were to become suspicious because of his question, others would perhaps not accept his claim that he did not remember that the party is at that time. If, again, there is no party, there would be no reason for him to explain his behavior, there "would be nothing to help us understand saying that I asked her about that date intentionally". Searle would insist, Levi writes, that I had done it intentionally, or in Searle's terminology, "the conditions for the assertibility of the proposition that I did it intentionally should not be confused with the conditions for its truth".[213]

Searle's argument is that if it is not assertible that Levi revealed the secret intentionally, then the *denial* that it was done intentionally must be assertible. The conditions for assertibility are created just by Levi's *saying* that he did not do it intentionally, because the denial is so "untoward or questionable". The denial is false, and hence, what is not assertible – that Levi did it intentionally – must be true.

Levi's argument against Searle's system is that "instead of supplying the details of the case where the denial is made, he assumes that it must be possible to do so". Levi illustrates the tension.

> …suppose I ask Brenda what she is doing next Friday night. Fred overhears me, and questions why I asked her about it, and I tell him that I did not do it intentionally. No doubt he would be taken aback; what is the 'it' that I did not do intentionally? If

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[213] Levi 2004, p. 311.

he knew of other plans, then I may want to excuse my behaviour by saying that I had forgotten about them. Searle wants to say that what I said was false, when the problem is that it is unclear what I could be saying.[214]

If Fred asked what Levi meant, he might just answer that he was joking, by making it seem that there was a secret, and this would not be revealing the secret intentionally either – it would simply be joking. "But, if I am not joking, and there is nothing for me to excuse or explain away, then there is nothing for me to be doing intentionally or unintentionally."[215] Levi here shows how doing something "intentionally" is being pushed out by the circumstances.

Searle's argument raises the issue whether he can devise a proposition which, presumably, reaches out to the world in some way as an assertion or a claim, as Levi formulates it, "without imagining it actually being said". Searle thinks that he knows what the proposition actually says and therefore it is no problem for him to take it as – or compare it to – an assertion.

There are serious difficulties in trying to talk about "the propositional content" of what is said in this case. Ebersole, Levi writes, tries to show what the problems are with the philosophical perspective, and that they arise when we forget that we theorize and philosophize outside "the stream of life".[216]

Searle is committing what Ebersole calls "the fallacy of philosophical mediation". This is "the classroom and blackboard fallacy", which is the

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[214] Levi 2004, p. 313.
[215] Levi 2004, p. 313.
[216] Levi 2004, p. 314.

"assumption that the special conditions for asking a question can miraculously be produced by writing an interrogative sentence on the blackboard", only the mediation fallacy does without the chalk, classroom or blackboard.[217] Levi's charge is related to the charge which Malcolm presented: that Searle resorts to a mistaken presupposition: in discussing whether a sentence S is meaningful, one assumes that since what the sentence S supposes could be the case, the sentence S must be meaningful.

> When there is a philosophical dispute as to whether some sentence, S, is a meaningful sentence, philosophers frequently resort to what can be *supposed*, or *conceived*, or *imagined*. They say things as, "It is *conceivable* that S should be the case, therefore S is a meaningful sentence"; or "The supposition that S is a possible supposition, therefore it makes sense to assert S". An important thing we can learn from a study of Moore's paradox, is that this reasoning is not correct.[218]

In Levi's interpretation of Ebersole's philosophy, language is by and for people in the stream of life, and Ebersole's point is that problems arise when we try to say things from outside that stream.[219] Trying to correct our everyday talk when we say that the sun rises and sets by replacing our phrasing with astronomical terms and facts would be to "fail to take into account where we are when we try to make the correction". This failure, Levi continues, is "encouraged by the suggestion that somehow we have to choose between what science teaches us and what we say from our perspective as people who live 'on the face of the earth'".[220] This, precisely, is Searle's problem: his terminology (or what is given by

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[217] Levi 2004, p. 306.
[218] Malcolm 1991, p. 164.
[219] Levi 2004, p. 308.
[220] Levi 2004, p. 307.

the theory) is taken to have priority over the language of the stream of life.

Searle's charge that "use theory" philosophers are trying to solve philosophical problems by looking at how words are used is misguided. On the one hand, drawing the line between *de re* and *de dicto* is notoriously difficult and not a distinction which can be generalized. On the other hand, his own solution to Moore's paradox rests on an assumption of how the meaning of a word can be determined which lets the face of it be enough. This is a clear way of disregarding the *de re* aspects of our life in language.

4.6 A preliminary conclusion

The assertion of a sentence in a pragmatic view of language is a gulf away from the kind of context of use in a philosophy which Austin, Malcolm, Hanfling and Levi try to engage in by taking a perspective from within language. For Searle, whom I gave the role of exemplifying a pragmatic philosopher of language, the pragmatics of language is not the 'use' as from a user perspective – rather it is a presupposition in a theoretical framework, the terms of which are not subject to the same sort of scrutiny as language use in the flow of life.

4.7 Formalist solutions: sentence schema and logical form

So far, I have presented three different but related attempts to solve Moore's paradox, and claimed that none of them gets at the roots of the paradox. In my presentation of Malcolm's criticism of Searle, Malcolm claimed that Searle's solution – that one cannot express a psychological state and also deny its existence – would render the Moorean sentence

an outright contradiction even if Searle himself claims that it is not so.[221] What Searle's theory gives us is a reformulation in terms of his theoretical framework, but not a solution to the paradox.[222]

Malcolm himself denied the generality of Searle's theorized concept of belief. However, he wrote that indeed 'I believe that *p*' is sometimes actually used as a cautious or hesitant assertion that *p*, and in a case like that, expressing the Moorean sentence would be expressing a contradiction.

Searle's solution was to find fault in the communicability of the sentence, the idea that it could be used to communicate something.[223] In this framework, the problem was not taken to reside in the sentence itself. However, I pointed out (at the end of section 4.4.2) that the starting point of the analysis was yet in the sentence understood as a linguistic string: the two parts of the sentence had pragmatic entailments (if I may use this expression) which interfered with each other.

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[221] Malcolm 1991, p. 162.

[222] I here draw on Pär Segerdahl, *Language Use: A Philosophical Investigation into the Basic Notions of Pragmatics*, Macmillan*,* Houndmills, London 1996, p. 157f, who describes Searle's treatment of the paradox as a reformulation.

[223] Searle is correctly described as a "theorist of communication-intention", speaker's meaning, i.e about what speakers intend to communicate in uttering particular linguistic tokens by Alexander Miller (1998) in *Philosophy of Language*, London: Routledge. He writes that the notion of 'sentence-meaning' is explained (in part) in terms of speaker's meaning, p. 223. He contrasts these philosophers with "Frege and others" which he calls "truth-conditional theorists", who want to explain language first and speech later, whereas the communication-intention theorists want the order to be the reverse. It falls outside of the scope of this thesis to discuss the problems in this sort of division, however I cite Miller here to show that this sort of division figures in descriptions of the field of the philosophy of language today.

Others have argued that there is a non-pragmatic contradiction inherent in the Moorean sentences itself.[224] One way to pursue such a strategy is to broaden the concept of a contradiction to include cases like "Mmm! Yorkshire pudding! I hate it!" as D. Goldstick does in his 1967 paper.[225] Another strategy would be to argue that a proper logical analysis would reveal a straight-forward formal contradiction. An important point here is that even if the Moorean sentence does not contain an *overt* contradiction the idea is that an analysis can be performed which locates this hidden contradiction and brings it to the surface. As Anthony S. Gillies puts it: "It turns out that Moorean propositions, when looked at through the lens of an appropriate semantic theory, are inconsistent after all."[226] In this light, Moore's paradox presents a tension between logical theory and semantic theory – language goes on and seems to work while it "should be" impossible, a fact which was not after all visible on the surface of the sentence.

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[224] As a side note, it's a fundamental although often not explicitly debated idea in much philosophical work on Moore's paradox that finding a contradiction would put an end to Moore's absurdity. Exposing contradictions are standardly a means to short-circuit problematic constructions, displaying contradictoriness is a philosophical move made to explain why sentences containing these constructions cannot be used.
Contradictions are often taken to somehow pertain to the rules which set the structure of language (semantic or syntactic issues) and rules for its use (as in Moore's solution and in Searle's solution) and the role of contradictions in philosophical work is closely tied to the theoretical underpinnings taken for granted by the philosopher. There is more to say about the role of contradictions, and I will return to it in Chapter 5. The point is this: if the problem in Moore's paradox is a formal problem of the Moorean sentence, which does not display its contradictoriness on the surface, there is a proposition or a thought underneath which contains the contradiction (or indeed another problem of logical syntax) and in this way we have two levels of language, one of which is more important than the other since it is the end point of an analysis.
[225] Goldstick, D: "On Moore's Paradox", *Mind* 76 (1967): 275-277.
[226] Gillies, Anthony S.: "A New Solution to Moore's Paradox", *Philosophical Studies* 3 (2001): 237-252.

I call the idea that the fault in Moore's paradox is to be found in the sentence itself *a formalist solution*, since the analysis of the sentence must pertain to its syntactic or underlying formal structure rather than the pragmatic issues concerned with its application (as in Searle's attempt).

One of the premises in Moore's own presentation of the paradox is that there is a proposition about me, which I myself cannot assert, but which is nonetheless *true*. The expectation as to how a sentence should work on which the premise is based, I called – in Wolgast's terms – the package view of meaning. Moore saw a contradiction not within the sentence itself, but between what was said and what was implied by saying, by uttering the sentence. In other words, his attempted solution was not a formalist one.

The tricky situation is that facing Moore's paradox, it seems that we are standing before the sentence "I believe it is raining and it is not raining" (alternatively "It is raining and I don't believe it") and that we know that it is "absurd" or "logically odd" to assert it although – as we presumably also know – there is nothing wrong with the sentence *as such*. One way of finding a contradiction here without going into pragmatics would be to show that the proposition expressed by the sentence is better formulated as "It is raining (I believe) and it is not raining", i.e. to show how the words "I believe" do not contribute to the logical structure of the sentence in the sense that it contributes to what the formalist may call the force rather than the content of the sentence. However, this sort of reformulation of what is said does not do justice to the problem but rather bypasses it. Recall that Moore, as part of his very description of the problem, maintained that what could be true and said *about* me could not be said *by* me, so in one sense the proposition was perfectly in order. The complicated matter here is that the "same proposition" in third person tense or in first person past tense is fine, although it is not fine in

first person present tense. (As opposed to Gillies' conclusion cited above, this is a *premise* of the problem.)

This presupposition of Moore's paradox, that the proposition which can be true about me and the expression of it by me have an interface or a structure in common, can be formulated as a *schema*: 'A believes it is raining and it is not raining'. This schema captures the proposition which I can't express but which somehow it is expected that I should be able to express about myself. For a formalist, the schema presents the superficial structure, and the aim is to find and formulate the underlying structure in which the fault which causes the paradoxical situation should be visible. Again: this depersonalized schema is the formulation of a presupposition in Moore's version of the paradox, a unification of the unproblematic sentence 'He believes it is raining and it is not raining' with the problematic sentence 'I believe it is raining and it is not raining', which belongs to the core of the formulation of the problem (and hence another version of the schema could be one with undetermined tempus). To be clear: my central claim is not that some philosophers are explicit believers in this schema (although some are), but the schema is a formulation of a presupposition underlying Moore's paradox without which the paradox doesn't arise.

Hence, if we presuppose that in the schema above 'A' may be replaced with any of the personal pronouns or the name of a person, and that meaning will be preserved, we will face Moore's paradox. Seen in this light, Moore's paradox presents a challenge to some common basic assumptions of formalization and to some ideas of the generality of the logical form of a sentence. Confidence in this sort of schema as being ok as such generates the paradox and were it not for the idea formulated in this schema, it would not arise. What we need to clear ourselves of the paradox is to undermine this confidence along with the general

conception of language which supports it. (A similar point can be made with the help of a schema uniting past and present tense.)

Now a few further distinctions need to be made. Standing before the Moorean sentence, we have the linguistic string, the surface grammar of which we suppose is in order. We have the presupposition that the third person cousin shares crucial features with the Moorean sentence, as formulated in the "schema". In addition, we have the proposition which may be true, that I may believe that it is raining although it isn't. In Chapter 1 I presented a picture in which the proposition was postulated in order to explain the meaning of a sentence – of different sentences having the same meaning. In the discussions about the Moorean sentence, the proposition is also represented by a sentence, however those elements which are taken in for analysis belong to the sentence as a linguistic string: they are words and aspects of syntax.

Those who suggest solutions along formalist lines, in which the fault lies within the sentence, try to find a new way to formalize the Moorean sentence so as to try to display the assumed contradiction explicitly, or alternatively, to explain away what looks like a problem, namely that the sentence, which is *formally* (structurally) in order, does not feel right. The problem is the assumption that if the formal criteria of a well-formed sentence are fulfilled, the sentence should be meaningful and hence assertible. This is the relation that does not hold in the case of Moore's paradox. (See Searle's "expressibility principle" in section 4.4.2: this is the reversed criterion.)

Now it is important at this point to remember that considerations on the logical structure of sentences run deep in philosophy, and that there is more than one possible conception of the relation between logic and language. The picture of this relation which philosophers hold is bound

up with their views of philosophical work which involves asking questions about the sense of sentences. For example, according to the view which the early Wittgenstein held for some time at least, which we may call "the constitutive view of logic", logic is the hidden structure in language, a structure which guarantees sentences success meaningwise and in communication in general. "Against the laws of logic" (an impossibility, according to Wittgenstein in the *TLP*) would mean "nonsensical". This view of logic entails that this structure or framework may be unveiled or explicated, and that it underlies our language and plays a part whenever something is said and understood.[227]

Other philosophers keep 'logic' as merely an idealization and take it that ordinary language, everyday language or natural language does not necessarily follow these strict and perfect rules. Perhaps we are sloppy in our everyday dealings with each other, and this makes our communication less effective, but the structure is there to guarantee our successful communication, and as long as what we say is approximately correct, it will work. If a sentence does not work, a mistake has been made; a rule has been violated. Formalizations are expressions or explications of this set of rules.[228]

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[227] The debate about the relation between the early and the later Wittgenstein's work has been framed in terms of this difference (McGinn 2006 & 2010, Kuusela 2008). Never did Wittgenstein view logic as an ideal that ordinary language approximated but fell short of. The early Wittgenstein mistook the model itself for the actual structure of language and the world. Later, he turned to investigate language-in-use for the sake of clarifying philosophical problems. For Moore's paradox, the source of confusion and the solution concern language use.

[228] As an extension of this kind of formalist perspective, one may note that to those who subscribe to this view of logic, the problem in Moore's paradox would be that the Moorean sentence does not let itself be explicated with the tools available, i.e. the fault does not appear when approached in this way. For Moore's paradox to appear to be a problem at all in this perspective, there must be a discrepancy between ordinary language (surface talk) and the hidden structure. The hidden structure has absolute

'Formalist', 'form', and 'logical form', as mentioned, appear in the literature with different meanings and different methodological roles in philosophizing. One who discusses different views in formalization is Sören Stenlund, in his *Language and Philosophical Problems*, who calls the constitutive view of logic (which he ascribes Frege and the early Wittgenstein) an "aprioristic picture". According to him, Frege and the early Wittgenstein did not present theories of language in the sense of the "naturalistic theories of language" which Quine and Davidson put forward. In a naturalistic view of language, language is considered to be a system "out there", the parts and workings of which can be described by the help of philosophical tools, whereas an in an aprioristic view of language it is an aspect of our very perception of the world. He writes that these different approaches to language manifest important differences in what is understood as "formalization". To Frege and the early Wittgenstein, formalization was about explicating the essential features of a sentence and as they went along, they were developing notations or tools for the explication of sentences (the early Wittgenstein however to a lesser extent than Frege). As a contrast, Stenlund writes,

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relevance and when unveiled can work as a corrective to ordinary language. (This view may be called the ideal language view and it has a revisionist rather than a descriptive aim, see one description of it in Tove Österman, *Rationality and Cultural Understanding*, Uppsala University 2007, pp. 15-16.) Furthermore, there is a given order which sentences must adhere to, and if they do not, they cannot be acceptable or "in order", they are not able to "mean" anything at all, they are not able to carry meaning. Vice versa, if they do follow the order, they are, or should be, meaningful. A Moorean sentence conforms to this order but cannot "mean" in the way that it is, in this view, expected to. A formalist stance of this sort will tend to explain away or bypass instead of elucidate the Moorean conundrum.

> To give the 'logical form' of a sentence according to Davidson is simply to find that paraphrase or formalization of the sentence which renders the theory as formally coherent as possible *by means of a pre-established technique for* paraphrase (usually the predicate calculus).[229]

In Stenlund's view, Davidson would presumably not claim that the predicate calculus (as an example of a tool of formalization) was meant to "capture a 'hidden meaning'". Hence, in Davidson's theory, "the 'logical form' of a sentence signifies an *imposed* (not 'uncovered') formal structure, while in the *a priori* theories of Frege, Husserl and the early Wittgenstein, it [the logical form as explicated] was intended to signify the features of the sentence which are essential to the content it expresses." Stenlund continues:

> An imposed formal structure of propositions determined by a pre-established technique for paraphrase or formalization is instead what is taken to be the fundamental feature of expressions in the 'meaning specifications' of these naturalistic theories of meaning. Formal reconstruction replaces the articulation of essential features of given notions.[230]

Moore's paradox presents a challenge to the aprioristic theories of meaning in the sense that it seems that essential features of the paradox cannot be formalized. However, it is a challenge to naturalistic theories of meaning too, to those theories which distinguish between the "pre-established technique for paraphrase" (or perhaps "terminology") and that to which it is to be applied: it does not allow itself to be treated with the help of the "technique" and in naturalist approaches, new problems

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[229] Stenlund 1990 p. 62.
[230] Stenlund 1990 p. 63. See also Stenlund 1994, p. 370, where he stresses that the conceptually important properties of a language can't be brought out in a formalization which conceives the surface of language (as a system of expressions) as the basic aspect, but that forms of use of expressions is more basic.

appear. This tension in what can be taken to be unveiled as the "logical form" of the Moorean sentence will turn out to be useful for a dissolution of Moore's paradox and I will discuss it in the next chapter (and I have hinted at Hertzberg's alternative view in a perspective from within language in Chapter 2).[231]

The pragmatist approach as exemplified by Searle at least to some extent shares the thought that there may be a set of theoretical tools to be applied to a sentence like the Moorean one. (This was the picture developed with support from Malcolm.) This idea of a logical form in naturalistic theories of language presupposes an idea of absolute relevance of a conceptual apparatus, a theoretical toolbox, a view which is shared by the pragmatist view although the tools are different. In Searle's theory as applied to Moore's Paradox, the theoretical tools (such as the terms in which he formulated rules such as "Assertions express beliefs") were imposed on language. On this point then, the difference between formalist solutions and pragmatist solutions are much smaller than they seemed at the outset.

The way out for a pragmatic solution was to show where communication goes wrong or is short-circuited, not where the sentence itself is faulty. The situation in which the Moorean problem resides was thus expanded, or in other words; the theoretical framework which,

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[231] A recent use of the idea of logical form is found in: Allwood, Andersson & Dahl: *Logic in Linguistics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1977, p. 19. The kind of reminders of the limitation of formal tools are also given by those who often use these tools themselves, for example the point of Saul Kripke's "Identity and Necessity" in *Identity and Individuation*, edited by M. K. Munitz, New York University Press, New York 1971, is that the analytical tools that are used can be the problematic parts in a philosophical tangle (in this case pertaining to the identity thesis and the thesis that mental states are merely physical states).

according to the pragmatists, can be mobilized to explain and therefore solve the problem of the Moorean sentence is more extensive than Moore's own, but the outcome was, as I tried to show, that the original problem remained.

The pragmatic discussion nevertheless turns against the formalist stance for example in that it takes a few more variables into account and therefore so to say has a less restrictive politics of the philosophy of language. In many respects, the pragmatic stance shares the starting point with the formalist stance – it takes for granted that there is an *explanation* of the absurdity, and in that it presupposes an independent sentence to be communicated which is also in order. The meaning of the sentence (as a linguistic string) is taken for granted. The difference between the two lies in where the problem is located – whether the sentence breaks some logical rules or rather fails to satisfy certain communication-technical demands.

4.7.1 The usability argument

So far, our discussion of Moore's paradox has been concerned with different attempts to present arguments or faults in connection with the attempt to use the sentence "I believe it is raining and it is not raining" in an assertive way. These attempts have been aiming at short-circuiting the sentence, prohibiting it by giving reasons why it does not work.

Now contrary to these attempts, it seems possible to come up with unproblematic uses of sentences, which fulfill all of the formal criteria for Moorean sentences, or in other words, which in all relevant details (as defined implicitly or explicitly by formalists and pragmatists concerning Moore's paradox) are similar to the Moorean sentence in that the schema is the same. A sentence which in this sense is similar to

the Moorean sentences is one which can be schematically expressed as 'I believe that p and not p'. An example of a situation in which the schema could be used is at a restaurant, when I explain to my company why I keep feeling behind the back of my chair with my hand: "I believe I brought my handbag here, but I didn't". Let me call this argument 'the usability argument'. According to the usability argument, there are legitimate uses of a sentence of essentially the same structure as the Moorean sentence; a sentence which instantiates the allegedly problematic schema. This may sound like a trivial reminder, but it is one which exposes certain common implicit premises in the treatment of this paradox. The usability argument is relevant to the formal approach to Moore's paradox in two ways: it is an objection to the thought that the solution to the paradox could be to show that a formal contradiction is involved – that would either render contradictions not excluded from use (in any automatic way) or call into question the conception of a contradiction as a formal notion (p & $-p$).[232] Secondly, it is a reminder that the context in which a sentence is used is not irrelevant to whether the sentence (taken as a given string of words) is in order or not. A formal contradiction is traditionally taken to warrant us in taking a form of sentence out of circulation indefinitely.[233]

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[232] Wittgenstein wrote to Moore suggesting that this is the role of the paradox: that there is "something like a contradiction, although it isn't one", and also, that "this shows logic isn't as simple as logicians think it is" Wittgenstein 1977, p. 177. See my discussion in Chapter 3.

[233] Wittgenstein discusses the contradiction: "When a contradiction appears, we say: 'I didn't mean it like that'. The civil status of a contradiction, or its status in civil life: there is the philosophical problem", *PI* §125. Also, *PI* § 500: "When a sentence is called senseless, it is not as it were its sense that is senseless. But a combination of words is being excluded from the language, withdrawn from circulation." See also *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* II §290.

As Wolgast points out, contradictions play a role in philosophy which should and could be scrutinized. There is a tendency to give logical concepts such as 'contradiction' a strong metaphysical role or a *prima facie* position in the investigation of philosophical problems related to language. The fact that questions about the role of contradictions arise in connection with Moore's paradox shows that the problem reaches deeper than many formally oriented philosophers may expect. It is also an indication that perhaps the prima facie role of the contradiction within much of current philosophy cannot be taken for granted (as has been suggested by among others Wittgenstein).[234]

In illustration of the usability argument, I provided an example of a situation in which a Moorean sentence was not "absurd" to assert or "logically odd". This argument is the mobilization of the conception of context of use which I presented as central to the perspective from within language in Chapter 2. The argument brings in the context of significant use and shows that the seemingly logically odd sentence is no longer so in a context of significant use.

We had a hidden premise all along: that either "I believe" carries logically significant meaning or that it can be shown not to be only a matter of force rather than content. Furthermore we thought that we were clear about how to find out whether it does or does not, without looking at a context of significant use.

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[234] Lars Hertzberg shows how the contradiction as a formal feature, taken as a diagnostic tool for a proposition that does not work is problematic in the same way as taking any sentence to carry its meaning in isolation. It should rather be taken to be a special kind of uselessness. Hertzberg, "On Excluding Contradictions from Our Language", in *Wittgenstein and the Method of Philosophy*, ed. Sami Pihlström, Acta Philosophica Fennica 80, Societas Philosophica Fennica, Helsinki 2006.

4.8 Longing for a solution

On the one hand, there is something about the Moorean sentence which is disturbing, but on the other hand it is not a formal contradiction. According to a traditional conception it is held that a contradiction is present when two statements or propositions cannot both be true due to their form.[235] It is a common view, although not always explicitly pronounced, that contradiction is the cardinal error of thought and language. In the light of this reasoning, a seeming or real problem of language use (a problem which might appear *in* the use of language) will be *explained* by the discovery of a contradiction.

This line of thinking presupposes that language, to be usable and comprehensible at all, has "a logic" in terms of a hidden, given structure. According to this picture, language is a system which works owing to this logic. Language is constituted by its logical structure and without it, words could not make sentences, and language would be a shapeless mishmash of random sounds. There are two ways to understand this picture: on the one hand, in a descriptivist view of the logic of language, the existence of logic shows itself in the fact that our talk is not a shapeless mishmash of random sounds (an aprioristic picture). On the other hand, in a revisionist view, the rules of logic play a normative role, and we should follow them to avoid our language becoming a mishmash. When our explanation of Moore's paradox points out a contradiction it is a way of inhibiting the attempt to say something

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[235] "If the logical product of the two statements [in a Moorean sentence] is false, then it is – in contrast with the sentence 'My club has won the match and my club has not won the match' – contingently false and not necessarily so, that is, it is not false because of the form of the statement". J. Schulte, "Moore's Paradox: Belief, Supposition, Assertion" i *Experience and Expression: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1993, p. 137.

which on the theoretical assumptions we have of how language works is against the rules.

The philosophers for whom the best path to a solution of the paradox involves finding a formal contradiction may be inspired by what according to Wittgenstein was Bertrand Russell's most important discovery within philosophy, namely that the logical form of a sentence is not always overt or visible, in von Wright's words "that the *grammatical form* of a proposition is not always a correct expression of the *logical form* of what is claimed to be the case by the proposition".[236] An analysis will display the logical form. The fact that the Moorean sentence does not contain an overt contradiction may be taken to raise the question whether 'contradiction' is or should be taken to be a purely formal concept. Wittgenstein debated it in the aforementioned letter to Moore, as does Wolgast:

> […] Moore's paradox raises questions about the notion of 'contradictoriness', and how central a particular form – '*p* and ~*p*' – is to this notion. The concepts of contradiction and consistency play large roles in philosophical reasoning, yet these roles are by no means as simple as we often think […][237]

Philosophers who try to solve Moore's paradox by showing that a contradiction is included are perhaps not sensitive to that complexity, which Wolgast points to.[238] According to them, if a sentence could be shown to contain a formal contradiction, it would mean that it could

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[236] My translation of "att en sats *grammatikaliska form* inte alltid är ett riktigt uttryck för det av satsen uttryckta saklägets *logiska form*", G. H. von Wright, *Logik, filosofi och språk*, Nya Doxa, Nora 1993 (1957). Also Wittgenstein *TLP* §4.0031.
[237] Wolgast 1977, p. 120.
[238] Wittgenstein writes too, that contradictions are not as simple as logicians think they are, Wittgenstein 1977.

never be used; it would be faulty by default and therefore excluded – indefinitely – from the list of candidates for meaningful expression.

4.9 Concluding remarks

Searle's view is the standard view of a sentence in that he takes the sentence not to be defined by what it is used to do or say in a certain situation but presupposes that it is a unit which one can identify on the basis of the surface structure of it. This makes his solution to the Moorean tangle miss its target.

Not only is his view of sentences problematic, but he takes it to be a task of philosophy to give the actual structure of a linguistic act. A gulf arises between this explanatory terminology and everyday language use. In this chapter, I used Levi's discussion of philosophizing in the flow of life as an illustration of this problem.

Searle's picture of expressing propositions is not a picture of 'significant use', but rather a theoretical use. The 'use' of the words in the sentence is restricted to the use as determined by the theoretical framework, as is seen from his problematic use of 'expression' of belief, which Malcolm attacks. Searle's perspective is a theoretical outside perspective as contrasted with a perspective from within language.

It is fair to conclude, before going on to discuss other views of 'use' and 'context', that Moore's paradox and the problems of the proposition bring to the fore questions about the method and aim of philosophy, and more general philosophical worries about language.

I have argued that the paradoxical feature depends on the problematic presupposition of a schema, and that both formalist and pragmatist

solutions rely on this idea of a given logical structure, which guarantees the communicability, usefulness, order, sense, service of a sentence. Both of these take a perspective from outside of language in different ways, which the usability argument challenges by bringing in a different idea of context, context of significant use. In the next chapter, I will explore Moore's paradox in relation to this very different idea of context.

5 The Moorean Sentence in a User Perspective

Avrum Stroll presents a categorization of work on Moore's paradox in which 'use' plays a crucial role. He writes that

> ...writers on the paradox have fallen into two categories: those who claim that Moore's sentence (...) is a paradox but are not sure why it is; and those who think, as I do, that its appearance as paradoxical is apparent only, and that when the assumptions underlying the remark are clarified it can be seen not to have a significant use, let alone to be paradoxical.[239]

Either there is paradox, or it is apparent. I agree with Stroll that the assumptions underlying the remark need to be clarified, and that we need to take seriously the possibility that since the means to establish paradoxality are lacking it may turn out to be apparent. What that would mean and how that could be the case will be one central theme of this chapter. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, Searle seemed by no means unsure of why the Moorean sentence was paradoxical. His purported solution was rather deemed to be a reformulation of the problem. I invited Malcolm as a discussant from a perspective from within language and as their discussion unfolded, the divide between these two philosophers turned out to be deep.

Stroll suggests a sort of non-solution to Moore's paradox of the kind that Malcolm aimed at: foreclosing on the paradox before the fact i.e. finding a way to view the tangle in which the paradoxality does not appear.

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[239] Stroll, Avrum. "Moore's paradox revisited", in *Wittgenstein Key Concepts*, ed. K. D. Jolley, Acumen, Durham 2010, p. 117.

In my discussion of Moore's paradox in the last two chapters, I tried to show that the presuppositions of philosophers who approach the paradox from a perspective from outside of language and try to solve the paradox hinder their success in clearing themselves from it. I have pointed out tensions as the unwanted consequences or implicit problematic presuppositions which their solutions included. One point I made was that attempting to locate a contradiction seems not to be a way to solve the paradox. Rather, that contradiction-seeking approach forces in explanations, which revolve around a hope concerning the power or function of contradictions in philosophy and in sentence construction, a hope which can't be met due to the way precisely contradictions (or something like them) appear here. This starting point was common to the three types of solution I have scrutinized so far: Moore's solution with a special kind of implication, the formalist approach focusing on the sentence itself, and the pragmatic approach, which found the fault in the application of the sentence, or the conditions for successful communication of the sentence.

I have concluded that the proposed solutions differ in their view of the aim and method of philosophy, views which play central roles in the conceptions of what a solution could be. Furthermore, I concluded that a further discussion of those differences and possibilities is needed. In philosophical work on Moore's paradox, there is a host of discussions which fall outside of the range aiming to present a solution. These are discussions which in the treatment of Moore's paradox focus on sentences in their 'use', that is, sentences in context. My own suggested treatment, in this chapter, belongs to the latter category. In this perspective, the question as to whether there is a fault to be found is not considered established, at least not on the basis of the information provided as the grounds for paradox.

In Chapter 2, I presented the Wittgensteinian idea as formulated by Hertzberg, that only sentences-in-use can be said to have definite sense. In other words, sentences only have definite sense in their contexts of significant use, and what the relevant context is depends on what the speaker had to say. This is a circularity, but not a vicious circularity. It constitutes a fundamental shift of perspective on the question what sentences are.[240] Furthermore the "context of actual use" is far removed from what could be called contexts as supplement. However, contexts as supplement can also have a role in philosophical work, as I hope will become clear in this chapter.

This user perspective when applied to Moore's paradox gives rise to a shift in what – if anything – is to be understood as the problem. The pragmatic view fails to do justice to the view from inside language, the perspective of a competent speaker having something to say.

In Chapter 1 I cited Wittgenstein, "Words only have meaning in the river of thought and life"[241] and David Stern's description of Wittgenstein's standpoint: "the significance of a particular utterance is a matter of its location within the stream of conversation, or ordinary use of language".[242] This idea of 'use' is very different from the pragmatic idea of the 'application' of a sentence. In this chapter, I will enter into dialogue with some Wittgensteinian discussions of Moore's paradox in order to attain a clearer picture of what this difference in the view of meaning, sentences and use amounts to in the case of a philosophical

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[240] Importantly, not all philosophers inspired by the later Wittgenstein have internalized this shift of perspective.
[241] Wittgenstein, *Zettel* 1967, §174.
[242] Stern 1995, p. 188.

problematic like Moore's paradox. It will turn out that on this point, there are variations in view also within discussions on the issue inspired by Wittgenstein.

5.1 A Wittgensteinian view?

Although I draw on Wittgensteinian philosophers, my intention is not to look for Wittgenstein's own presumptive solutions to Moore's paradox with the aim of producing a coherent picture of his solution.[243] What I will do, however, is to discuss a few suggestions about Moore's paradox, which have been presented by philosophers who take "the user perspective" seriously. As it will turn out, the user perspective is in an important sense not an alternative to the proposed solutions to Moore's paradox which I have criticized in earlier chapters. Instead, to use a Wittgensteinian term, it is a dissolution, but it also provides a different perspective on the cluster of difficulties which are often called Moore's Paradox.

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[243] Wittgenstein's treatment of Moore's paradox is to be found in *Philosophical Investigations* IIx and *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* I (pp. 470-504), *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology* II (8-12). For an exegetic overview, see Schulte 1993. For further discussions of the interpretation of Wittgenstein's specific observations on issues related to Moore's paradox, see Stroll 2010 and Malcolm 1995. Wittgensteinian philosophers such as Elizabeth Wolgast, Norman Malcolm, Peter Winch, Martin Gustafsson and others have discussed Moore's Paradox. Authors on Moore's paradox after Wittgenstein have different approaches and aims with their writings. The exegetical attempts at the theme often try to clarify Wittgenstein's remarks on issues related to Moore's paradox. Some try to find Wittgenstein's final word on the problem (Heal 1994) whereas others try to unify the discussions and perhaps even to unify them into a consistent account (Schulte 1993). Others again use Wittgenstein's remarks as inspiration for their own thinking (Malcolm 1995). I will not take an exegetics approach here. Rather, I will use the suggestions of these philosophers not as secondary literature but as independent contributions on Moore's paradox.

The post-Wittgensteinian philosophers who discuss Moore's paradox from a user perspective often keep certain themes at the fore, some of which I will present in this chapter: the idea of the ways we actually speak in particular when it comes to the first and the third person, and the ways in which belief enters conversations and how assertions are made in concrete contexts, as well as how beliefs and assertions relate to each other (which are aspects of the grammar of belief). Some suggestions along these lines have already been presented in my discussion of Malcolm's criticism of Searle. Some of the themes discussed by the Wittgensteinian philosophers are also themes discussed by Wittgenstein himself, and they engage with Wittgenstein to various degrees. Some approaches are independent and draw mainly on the idea of method as looking at actual use.

The very starting point for the pragmatic approaches was the realization that there is "oddity" connected to the use of the Moorean sentence, and the work done on the paradox was aimed to explain why this is the case, often coupled with a more or less implicit claim of generality of the theoretical apparatus used. Contrary to this starting point, however, I have presented the reminder that it is possible to use a sentence of the very schema that characterizes the Moorean one. I have called this reminder "the usability argument". The usability argument is not intended as a flat counterargument to other approaches. I wish to dwell on the usability argument for the reason that I believe that there are insights, with far-reaching consequences, to be gained from it. The usability argument deflates the idea of a certain *form* of a sentence – "the schema" – as its defining feature and in this way shows that this is not the logically central feature to be explained. (Later on in this chapter, I will discuss the consequences of the deflation of this idea further.)

One point which user perspective philosophers bring in is that the reason why there may seem to be an absolute obstacle to using a Moorean sentence is that the picture of language and the way it works which underlies the formulation of the problem is oversimplified. We expect to be able to read off from the surface of a sentence whether it – indefinitely – can be used or not. This expectation is contrasted with another feature of the user perspective: that it is not of its concern to create a theory or a politics of language use in any restrictive or regulative sense.[244] In this sense, the user perspective differs radically from the pragmatic but also formalist approaches to Moore's paradox: the treatment of philosophical problems does not end in a theory nor are they treated by reference to or application of theories or imposed structures. (However, it is not a necessary part of the user perspective to refrain from exploring the relevant uses of language, and what "exploring relevant uses of language" may be will be discussed later on in this chapter.) Rather than providing an alternative theoretical framework for the solution of the paradox, the user perspective is a method or a cluster of methods for coming to terms with philosophical confusions.

I have already discussed one part of Moore's formulation of the paradox; the thought that the Moorean sentence (the schema) is acceptable as such, that it is possible to judge whether such a schema could be used. That the 'same proposition' can be true about me although not asserted *by* me was part of the initial problem. This was Moore's reason to assume that the schema should be in order.

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[244] This point relates to the language-police charge often made against Ordinary language philosophers, sometimes warranted, but not always so, a charge which sometimes begins in a misunderstanding of the role of the reminders of language use in philosophizing.

The other part of the conundrum is the premise that it would yet be absurd to assert that schema as manifested in the Moorean sentence. The problem is that we would like to accept this schema as such, and we need to show ourselves a way out: how it would be possible for us to rid ourselves of this tendency to take the Moorean sentence seriously.

This way out would need to close in from two fronts: it needs to deal with the origin of the false expectations, but also with the idea that the sentence is in order. For the latter, the user perspective as I presented it in earlier chapters offers the point that since the sentence lacks context, it can't be judged as being in order or not in order. I will discuss this issue further later on. For the former, the responses which deal with aspects of the sentence schema should lighten the grip of the false expectations. (I quoted Searle accusing what he called the "use theory" of discussing *de dicto* rather than *de re*, of talking about merely the use of words. This issue, whether the use of *words,* or what there would be instead, is central to the user perspective will be countered later on in this chapter.)

I divide the themes in responses to Moore's paradox by Wittgensteinian philosophers (figuring here as prospective providers of a perspective from within language) into two classes. First, issues relating to the differences between the first and the third person position; responses which investigate the use and practice of talking in these two different positions and based on the investigations try to show that there is nothing 'surprising' here. Rather, the point of these responses is that when we expect the sentence to work, we are expecting language to be symmetrical for different personae in a way which it is not by necessity, and consequently our reason to suppose that it should be is weakened.

Second, and at points overlapping with the above, some philosophers focus on the concept of belief. The Moorean sentence, in this mode of explanation, is an illegitimate combination of two parts, one of which contains the word 'believe', and the concept of belief, when it comes to *this* use, is misrepresented in the presentation of Moore's paradox. Wolgast, as I presented her discussion in Chapter 3, adopts this line of reasoning when she claims that one of the problems in Moore's paradox is that belief and assertion are not related in the way that they are expected to be by Moore and others who end up in paradox. Malcolm takes a similar stance to Wolgast's when he writes that this particular combination gives rise to an outright contradiction.

Now there is a third theme to be found among the Wittgenstein-inspired responses to Moore's paradox. Gustafsson (2000) suggests a road in between. He defends the sentence as such but aims to exclude the faulty use. He writes that nothing can make out a conjunction of the two parts suggested; that the schema would not arise under any normal circumstances. He considers the usability argument, that one may perfectly well use a sentence of that schema, but replaces the idea of a 'schema' with a conception of 'normal use'. The part of his discussion which is of interest here concerns the idea of a schema and is bound up with a theme which Wittgenstein also related to Moore's Paradox: the idea of a formal description of language use and its relation to meaning, and the role of contradictions in our language and in philosophy. My discussion of this third theme will end up questioning the very idea of a schema. Gustafsson's suggestion that there is nothing such as a conjunction of the two parts provides the clue here.

First, let us discuss the grammar of belief, and then first and third person differences and tensions and how this thinking affects our conundrum.

5.2 The grammar of belief

5.2.1 Assertions express beliefs

In Chapter 3, I brought in Elizabeth Wolgast's discussion of Moore as one response from a perspective from within language. She writes that assertions express beliefs, that "the most fundamental *expression* of belief is a simple assertion", '*p*' (which Wolgast denotes 'A'). By "most fundamental" she means that it is logically prior when it comes to understanding what is said: if we did not understand the use of A, we could not logically speaking understand the use of B (which stands for 'I believe that *p*'). It is in this way that '*p*' is connected with 'I believe that *p*'. That assertions express beliefs is characteristic of the *de facto* normal use of assertions, Wolgast claims. She adds that to say something that one does not believe is not merely "saying something", i.e. neutral, but it is "speaking misleadingly".

According to Wolgast, the fact that to say something that one does not believe is speaking misleadingly does not exclude the possibility of other uses for sentences like "There was frost in the night" in which belief is not expressed. For example, the sentence may appear in a poem. "But their most usual and typical and important use is to tell something to someone, and in this use they express beliefs…" she claims.[245] She goes on to say that the concept 'expression of belief' may be auxiliary in shedding light on the relation between lying and 'correct use'. The feature that sentences such as 'The cat has been fed' usually express belief …" allows us to misrepresent our beliefs, that is, to lie. It would

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[245] Wolgast 1977, p. 104.

be a misuse, on the other hand, to use the sentence as if it expressed *no belief at all*, for this would show a misunderstanding about its role."[246]

According to Wolgast, an investigation of the concept 'the expression of belief' of the kind displayed above may sort out some of the confusion created by the Moorean sentence. She claims that the expression of belief does not center around the use of the word 'believe' but that the basic or "most genuine" example of expression of belief is a situation in which the word is not used at all. (Notice that this point could work as a response to Searle's *de dicto* charge since this Wolgast does not characterize belief based on what is said but on what is the case. Cf section 4.5.3.) That is where the uses of the two parts of the Moorean sentence cross.

> I have argued that the practice of expressing beliefs is much wider than the use of 'I believe' and the function of that phrase is in consequence a specialized one. Its function is to signal the expression of a weak belief; stronger forms of belief expression have no signal.[247]

Wolgast argues that the most fundamental expression of belief takes the form of an outright assertion. However, in the philosophical literature, beliefs have often been taken to be best accounted for by the examination of cases in which 'I believe that p' is uttered, that is, cases when a signal or linguistic marker is used to point to a belief. In these stories, belief has been sketched as an intentional state, something which only I myself am in contact with, something private.[248]

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[246] Wolgast 1977, p. 105.
[247] Wolgast 1977, p. 113.
[248] Searle's attempted solution to Moore's paradox contained this element, however in his solution, assertions always express beliefs, due to the sincerity condition which characterizes assertion. See Malcolm's critique in Chapter 4.

Wolgast's suggestion that expressing beliefs goes beyond the use of the word 'believe' finds some support in the literature. Robert Brandom (1994), in his overview of the phenomenon of belief[249] calls them "implicit expressions of belief". He writes that our talk of beliefs involves both first person *expressions* of belief, as in 'I believe that *p*', and *ascriptions* of beliefs to others, 'John believes that *p*'. He also writes that if we are to give "a theory of belief", it needs to accommodate a list of "facts about these two aspects of belief talk". Brandom suggests (among other things) that "Explicit expressions of belief (like third person ascriptions of beliefs) exhibit a pattern of truth values across different situations that is different from that of implicit expressions of belief". Therefore, we must admit that *not-p* and "I believe that *p*" might both be true, as well as that *not-p* and "John believes that *p*" might be true.

There is an important difference between Brandom's viewpoint and the user perspective. His aim is to provide a comprehensive overview by making use of a technical apparatus (which includes truth values). In contrast, the aim of the reminders of language use given from the user perspective is not to make general claims, but merely to lead the way out of the spell of paradox or other confusion. The observations on belief, so far, such as Wolgast's reminder that beliefs are often expressed in

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[249] Robert Brandom, "Expressing and Attributing Beliefs", *Mind* 54 (1994): 905-912. Brandom uses "truth functions" and "commitment" as factors in his four-step overview of the different "facts" about expression and ascription of belief which he says would have to be accommodated by a "theory of belief". Brandon maintains that in spite of the distinction between first person expressions of belief and third person ascriptions, there must be "some univocal sense of "belief that *p*" at play in both sorts of belief statement. For in an important sense, John and I say the same thing when I assert "I believe that *p*," and he asserts "Brandom believes that *p*." Both are entailed by the claim that everyone believes that *p* and both entail the claim that someone believes that *p*."

outright assertions, or Malcolm's reminder that expressions of belief are not always about our inner states suffice for that. Those remarks which for example Wolgast and Malcolm have made about aspects of belief in the discussion of Moore's paradox are not meant to show that belief is in some way undefined or indeterminate, but they are a positive response to the usability argument: expressions and ascriptions of belief may indeed be used in more than one way. Likewise, Brandom's list of "facts" shows that there is diversity at play here (as pointed out by Malcolm in his argument against Searle). This diversity explains the fact which the usability argument points out, that a sentence of the schema can be used at times without problem, a fact which if recognized loosens up the perceived hard core of the Moorean sentence.

A post-Wittgensteinian way of expressing this point is that "the grammar of belief" is not as simple as one might expect, if one thinks that words carry in them specific and definite meanings. To conclude: there is a range of uses of the concept of belief, or rather belief-related utterances, in which the word does not figure, or in which the word figures but has more than one definite function. The idea that the expression of belief is always a mental state, the presence of which is reported by saying "I believe it is raining", an idea which Malcolm criticized Searle for entertaining, is a presupposition which will make the Moorean paradox arise.

What we have then, is a response to a specific confusion in which reminders of grammar displace Moorean sentences as exceptions or specialized uses.

5.2.2 The expectation of grammatical symmetry

The descriptions of the grammar for the two sentences 'I believe that *p*' and '*p*' as an assertion, which the philosophers interested in the user perspective have provided, are supposed to show why we should reject the Moorean sentence. The descriptions often play the role of reminders of the asymmetry of certain language games.

In this analysis, the reminders of the expectation of symmetry – an expectation which surfaces in our philosophizing about Moore's paradox – are justified by the fact in so far as we are able to let go of the expectation that the sentence is in order, we are also able to let go of the idea that it is possible to give a general *explanation* of why the Moorean sentence seems reasonable although it is not. What these reminders aim to do is dispel the confusion so to say before as opposed to after the fact. By contrast, using Searle's solution to the paradox would be to reject it after its appearance with reference to Searle's theoretical apparatus, rather than to prevent an imagined speaker from forming the sentence.

At this point, Frege's distinction between the psychological and the logical may be of help. Diamond's and Hertzberg's version of the stricture provides us with a tool to handle a confusion:[250] The Moorean sentence seems generally feasible to us because of our psychological inclination – the fact that we know sentences similar to it (for example the schema used in the third person, "He believes it is raining but it is not") which we also often make use of. To alleviate this psychological

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[250] Hertzberg 2001, p. 91ff.

inclination I will render some more of the reminders of actual or possible uses which have been presented.

A sentence of the Moorean schema is not weird or absurd in any way, as long as it does not appear in first person present tense. The question is *why* language displays such asymmetry when it comes to the verb 'to believe' as opposed to for example 'to run'. Calling it an "asymmetry" here, not just a "feature" shows that symmetry, regularity, is what is expected.

Norman Malcolm finds this problem at the roots of the paradox, that one thinks that the Moorean sentence *must* be intelligible because it is intelligible in the past tense and in the third person.[251] In other words, one expects or hopes for a regularity or symmetry of the meaning of a sentence between different tenses or persons. That is, the meaningfulness of the sentence is expected to be preserved from one tense to the other (he calls it "the argument from past tense"[252]). There is a measure of friction to accepting that this regularity is lacking and to giving up the attempts of finding an explanation of it. Malcolm refers, as an explanation, to Wittgenstein's reflections that one often, when one says "I believe *p*", means "*p*" although hesitantly, with reservation.[253] To say that one sentence means approximately the same as another sentence is to claim that people react in approximately the same way to them, and if someone did not understand what was said, one could use

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[251] Malcolm, Norman: *Wittgensteinian Themes*, ed. G. H. von Wright, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY 1995, p. 196ff.
[252] Malcolm 1995, p. 198.
[253] This thought is sometimes ascribed as a discovery to J. O. Urmson, "Parenthetical Verbs", *Mind* 61 (1952): 481-496.

the other sentence instead of repeating the first one.[254] In Wittgenstein's words in *RPP* 1, §504: "And *that* is why 'I believe *p*' can be equivalent to the assertion of '*p*'". Malcolm points out that "I believe that *p*" can also be used to assert "*p*" with emphasis. Thus Wolgast's categorical statement that stronger forms of expression of belief, assertions that is, do not require any signal, may be adjusted with Malcolm's reminder. On the one hand, then, an assertion counts as an expression of belief that *p*, but on the other hand, in "I believe that *p*", the "signal" may be used as an amplification of an assertion – when the latter is called into question.

However, what distinguishes 'I believe that *p*' and 'I believed that *p*' is not only the tense – the expression in the past tense is never an assertion that *p*.[255] Through contrasts, Malcolm shows how 'believe' is used in other ways too, to further establish that the expectation of symmetry is not always warranted.

The point is that there is a relation between '*p*' and 'I believe that *p*', which in some contexts of use can be a sort of equivalence, which in turn provides an imagined logical relation between the two parts of the sentence. Malcolm discusses Wittgenstein's reflection on the relation between a supposition and an assertion when it comes to the expression 'I believe that *p*'. This relation shows why a philosopher would think that the combination of words which forms a Moorean sentence is intelligible.[256]

> Another thing that Wittgenstein's remark may suggest is that this difference between the assertion and the corresponding

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[254] Wittgenstein: *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* I, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe & G. H. von Wright, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1980, §477.
[255] Malcolm 1995, p. 198.
[256] Malcolm 1995, p. 196.

supposition could be called 'paradoxical', not because there is anything logically dubious about it, but because it is *surprising*: it goes against our expectations. For in other cases the relation between an assertion and the corresponding supposition is that what is asserted and what is supposed is *the same*.[257]

This "surprise" is again a reminder of our expectation of symmetry. There is room for speculation as to whether there could be another supposition, which would 'match' the assertion 'I believe it is raining' better. Malcolm asks "What *other* assertion would be the corresponding one? There is no answer. We must simply *accept* this peculiar feature of the logical grammar of 'I believe'."[258] The same is true of past tense – there is no construction which would seem less unmatched to 'I believe' in the past tense, which would also be an assertion that '*p*'.

Another reminder of the expectation of symmetry in the grammar of different verbs is presented by Peter Winch. He writes that one may take the use of the verb 'to believe' to be *irregular* if one compares it to 'to walk' for example. Winch takes an important further step:

> But it would be a mistake to regard the irregularity as a sort of *ambiguity*, in the sense that "believe" is taken to mean something quite different when it is used in the first person from what it means in the third. Our use of the verb has a unity about it, in the sense that what we mean when we use it in the first person is *interdependent* with what we mean when we use it in the third person.[259]

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[257] Malcolm 1995, p. 199.

[258] Malcolm 1995, p. 199.

[259] P. Winch, "The Expression of Belief" i *Wittgenstein in America*, McCarthy & Stidd (ed.), Clarendon Press, Oxford 2001, p. 204.

In other words, the method of giving reminders of the use of the words contained in the Moorean sentence can provide not only relief from taking it at face value by dissolving the expectations behind the perceived face value but also shed light on the reason why the construction seems viable: the unity in the use of a verb.

Wittgenstein, Wolgast, Malcolm, and Winch have shown that the grammar of different expressions does not always follow analogous patterns, as in this case with 'to believe' and other expressions: expressions do not always work the way in which general theories which philosophers and other theoreticians of language set up will make us expect them to. There is an expectation of symmetry at play which is not met, and being baffled by that is being baffled by the Moorean sentence.

5.3 The relation between the first and the third person

Winch, in the quote above, emphasizes the relation between the first and the third person. Traditionally, first person is taken to be primary to third person: the labels for the I-expression and the expression he/she: *first* and *third* person are an obvious reminder of this. By contrast, when it comes to language acquisition and use, he suggests that third person may be primary to first person. It is clear that first and third person uses are not independent of each other – aspect shifts in the uses of 'I believe' and the transition to 'he believes' can be taken to be evidence of this fact. In relation to Moore's paradox it might seem natural to disregard this connection, but as we recall, the riddle was presented as the problem that it might very well be true that I went to the cinema last Tuesday, although I do not myself believe that I did, and others can say this about me, but I cannot do that myself. That the Moorean sentence

169

is not problematic in the third person is a starting point for the conundrum, in other words: this fact was part of the story from the outset. The uses of 'believe' in the first and the third person sometimes cross, sometimes fit, and they feed off each other. Note that Winch moves on to talking about the meanings of the word 'believe' and the 'uses' as something established.

The relation between the first and the third person is thus central to the setup of Moore's paradox: the paradoxical feature arises because I cannot myself assert the same as others can assert about me. This phenomenon has been called *counterprivacy* by A. Gombay[260] – what others may think or mean about me, which I myself cannot think. Moore's problem was that he thought that he caught a glimpse of a logical obstacle here: it would be 'absurd' to assert that 'I believe it is raining but it is not raining' whereas 'He believes it is raining but it is not raining' seems perfectly in order.

Earlier on in this chapter, it has been suggested that a mistaken view of the relation between the first and the third person is one of the main chords of the tangle at hand: a mistaken view of this relation will generate and support the idea of a schema. In this section, I will investigate the argument that when it comes to belief, there are relevant features of the relation between the first and the third person which are not merely psychological but also logical in character. The relation between the first and the third person is crucial for the usability argument. Here, *de re* and *de dicto* are fused in an insoluble alloy: the

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[260] A. Gombay, "Some Paradoxes of Counterprivacy", *Philosophy* 63, No. 244 (Apr., 1988), pp. 191-210.

grammatical irregularities presented above are reflections of the way we live and the way we relate to ourselves and each other.

It is not only when we are to relate to a Moorean sentence in contrast to another sentence that the alleged asymmetry between the first and the third person becomes important. The relation between the sentence in the third and first person corresponds to the relation between the sentence in the present and past tense. The fact that we are inclined to see the Moorean sentence as good, and feel the need to explain why it does not behave in the way it 'should', hinges on another fact: that we have taken the surface form – the schema – seriously. The schema is the common denominator for the Moorean sentence and these other sentences, the superficial similarity which makes us expect further agreement (symmetry). It doesn't represent any underlying reality, independent of our descriptions, but is merely a way to present things in a perspicuous way. Our image of the general relation between the first and the third person has consequences for how we treat the Moorean sentence as such, i.e. for the conflict which we are inclined to observe when we perceive the Moorean sentence as consisting of two parts. Our understanding of this relation has consequences for which diagnosis we will give. Therefore, we need to take a closer look at the deep grammar of the relation between the first and the third person than we did above.

> When you say "Suppose I believe…." you are presupposing the whole grammar of the word "to believe", the ordinary use, of which you are master. […] You would not know at all what you were supposing here (i.e. what, for example, would follow from

such a supposition), if you were not already familiar with the use of "believe".[261]

Winch quotes this passage from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (part IIx) and writes that Wittgenstein wants to show that the uses in the first and the third person are related or connected, that they stand in a relation of mutual dependence to each other.[262] The point of the paragraph quoted above is that in order to be able to discuss an example of this kind – understand what would be supposed – we must already know the use of the word 'believe'. For instance, we often judge that someone believes so and so from observing him, from looking at what the person does. We can infer about someone that he believes that it is going to rain – that is why he is walking around in his wellingtons.[263]

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[261] "In den Worten 'Angenommen, ich glaube…' setzt du schon die ganze Grammatik des Wortes 'glauben' voraus, den gewöhnlichen Gebrauch, den du beherrschst. [...] – Du wüsstest gar nicht, was du hier annimmst (d.h., was z.B. aus so einer Annahme folgt), wenn dir nicht schon die Verwendung von 'glauben' geläufig wäre." Wittgenstein p. 517 II.x. *Philosophische Untersuchungen* Band I, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt 1999. English translation from *Philosophical Investigations,* Blackwell, Oxford 2001 (3rd Ed). Wittgenstein also discusses the paradox in relation to suppositions: "Moore's paradox may be expressed like *this*: "I believe *p*" says roughly the same thing as |— *p*" but "Suppose I believe that *p*" does not say roughly the same as "Suppose *p*"." (PI II x).

[262] Moore also connects belief with sense impressions: for example "Suppose that…", and the comparison of belief to sense impressions. G. E. Moore: "Beliefs and Propositions" in *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, George Allen &Unwin, London 1953, p. 253: "Well, suppose that somebody somewhere were believing now that some one of us *is* now hearing the noise of a brass-band. As I say, I suppose it is not at all likely that anybody anywhere is actually making this mistake at the present moment with regard to anyone. But it is a sort of mistake which we do quite often make. We often make mistakes which consist in supposing that some other person is at a given moment experiencing sense-data, which he is *not* in fact experiencing at that moment."

[263] One of the themes Wittgenstein also takes up is the relation between the first and the third person. There is a difference, when it comes to belief (and other "psychological concepts"), between the first and the third person. I do not normally observe my own behaviour to find out if I believe something – it would be a deviant use of the word "observe" to describe how I deal with my own beliefs and impressions. Wittgenstein connects this with the fact that I am not surprised by my

Others can take it that I believe something when I myself simply assert it. Besides, if we ourselves would express that we *believe* it in addition to our simple assertion, this saying that one believes something may function as giving additional assurance, which would be a natural response in a case where someone has cast doubt on our assertion. When I say "Suppose I believe…" and thereby ask someone to imagine that *I believe* (first person) something, it will be as in the case with the wellingtons – the image of me, believing that it rains, will follow the pattern of the third person. In that image, I may be by the window, looking out, worried. (See a related discussion at the end of Section 4.5 on what Don S. Levi called the "fallacy of philosophical mediation".) Peter Winch discusses this feature of belief in terms of 'aspect shifts'.[264] Expressions of belief have an aspect shift feature, which means that sometimes these expressions are talk about ourselves, and at other times they are about that which we are talking about.

Malcolm writes that Moore's paradox (that it would be absurd to assert the sentence) only arises in the first person but *not* when the expression

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own actions, I do not normally listen to my own words and learn about myself in this way. Certainly, this is a clue to the dissolution of the paradox: if it were not the case that there is a difference between our relation to our own beliefs and impressions, and to others', the contrast between the first and the third person would have no place in the description of the paradox – and the paradox would not arise. When it comes to others, Wittgenstein suggests, belief seems to be a kind of disposition (it seems so in that I may *observe* that others believe what they do) but our own beliefs do not work like this.

[264] Winch (2001) takes seriously the fact that in the *PI*, the section about aspect shifts follows directly on the section on Moore's paradox. Wittgenstein (PI IIx) discusses the paradox in relation to aspect shifts, that sometimes when someone expresses beliefs, we take their words to be about the thing he or she is expressing beliefs about, and other times, they are about his or her experiences.

"I believe that p" arises from "self-observation and recollection".[265] In those cases, it is as if I had observed myself. Malcolm's thought here can be taken as a deepening of the usability argument. It can be taken as a reminder that the Moorean schema does *not* generate a Moorean sentence (a problematic one) in those cases: one could say that when I explain to my companions at the restaurant why I keep feeling with my hand behind my chair, that 'I keep believing that I have my purse with me, and I don't have my purse with me', I speak in the way others talk about me, I observe myself and explain my behavior, but in a case like that, "believe" does not mean the same thing as in the problematic sentence. I am not *expressing* my belief but *ascribing* it to myself. (I would not say "I probably have my purse with me".) As a matter of fact, this is one of the many different ways in which I can talk about myself. We do sometimes – I now mention this as a note about a contrast to an alleged normal use – talk in a way which could be described as talking about ourselves as if we were someone else, or as if we saw ourselves from the outside.[266]

Another philosopher who has thought about the relation we have to our own mental states in contrast to the relation we have to those of others in relation to Moore's paradox is David Finkelstein. He takes departure

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[265] Malcolm 1995, p. 206. Wittgenstein also suggests that if one could say "I seem to believe" then it would also be possible to assert "I believe it is raining and I don't believe it". That would be like "two people speaking out of my mouth". (PI IIx)

[266] Wittgenstein writes that the grammar of "I believe" is peculiar (or rather "very different from *I write*" (RPPI472)), that we expect it to have all the forms of "to eat" although it does not (LWPP 10) "It *cannot* have the continuation in the first person as the verb "to eat". The continuation, that is the grammatical forms which would follow, would be "I seem to believe". Wittgenstein compares a belief with a picture (and a photograph) and claims that if a belief was something like a sense-impression, it would be possible to trust or distrust one's own belief (RPPI482). However, this is not the way we usually relate to our own beliefs: we do not discover them – we have them.

in the point that Moore's paradox doesn't hold for self-ascriptions of non-conscious beliefs, and writes that "it indicates that our statements about the world and our self-ascriptions of conscious belief hang together in a particular way".[267] He shows that there is a certain kind of *rupture* in the way a person's beliefs and his self-ascriptions of beliefs ordinarily hang together. He introduces this idea by pointing out that although there seems to be "nothing wrong with saying 'I *unconsciously* believe that *p*, and it is not the case that *p*' ... there does seem to be something wrong with saying that 'I unconsciously believe that *p*, and it *is* the case that *p*'".[268] This is a sort of inversion of Moore's paradox, and he calls it "Eroom's paradox". According to Finkelstein, the problem in Eroom's paradox is that for mental states to be unconscious, the subject lacks the ability to express them by simply self-ascribing them. When we talk about other people's mental states, we *describe* them, we do not express them, and when it comes to our own unconscious states and we ascribe them to ourselves, description rather than expression is also what we are engaged in. Furthermore, when it comes to first person authority regarding our own mental states, for conscious ones we do not need any evidence in support of the ascriptions of them, whereas when it comes to unconscious ones, evidence plays a role.[269]

I do not wish to generalize the reminder that we sometimes talk about ourselves as if we were someone else, or as if we saw ourselves from the outside. This is merely intended as a remedy for the psychological tendency to take sentences and words to carry their meanings with them into any context of use. These explanations of how we normally use

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[267] D. Finkelstein, "On the Distinction Between Conscious and Unconscious States of Mind", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 36 (1999): 79-100, p. 83.
[268] Finkelstein 1999, p. 83.
[269] Finkelstein 1999, p. 93.

words and how we use them at other times are merely reminders. The problem that we tend to take the Moorean sentence as something that we are able to give an analysis of once and for all without considering it in a particular use is neither resolved nor inhibited by these reminders. In other words, attempts to exclude the Moorean sentence by finding faults by contrasting other sentences with it or short-circuiting it, is not getting at its source – it will not keep it from arising and those attempts (depending on their generality claims) may also presuppose the package theory of meaning.

The formulations of the reminders of language use are at times unfortunate in that they resemble general theses about the use of specific words although they are not intended to function as such general claims. In this way one may suspect that Malcolm tends to understand 'use' as a set of possible language games connected to a phrase. This is not a solution but an extension of the problem, since the language games and the reminders of ordinary use are still a version of the nimbus thinking of linguistic 'signs', that which I, quoting Giesewetter, called the atmosphere conception of meaning in Chapter 2 and which Wolgast called the package theory of meaning (cf Chapter 3). In these pictures, signs carry their meanings with them like a cloud (cf. Chapter 4).

In the discussion I presented above, Malcolm refers to Wittgenstein's "explanation" of why the sentences 'It is raining' and 'I believe it is raining' can mean approximately the same, namely that there is a decisive *logical* difference between first and third person when it comes to belief: we can come to know that someone believes this-and-that by observing him, and there is room for the use of evidence. In contrast, he claims, we do not determine what we ourselves believe by observing ourselves. In other words, evidence plays no role here. In Malcolm's

words: "The grammar of the word 'believe' reflects a striking feature of human life, namely, that there is an attentive observation which we direct on other people, and not on ourselves.[270] I took this to be a possible deepening of the usability argument, which was that we sometimes do so too: we sometimes do direct attentive observation on ourselves.

Sometimes we do talk about ourselves as if we saw ourselves from the outside; we explain our behavior to others, as in the case with the purse. We learn things about ourselves through others – remember for example how children learn first person pronouns, children who call themselves by their first names instead of 'I', or say things like "I'm beginning to look tired", peeking out after being sought after: "Here I was!" (not "Here I am!"). We learn things about others through ourselves too, and through our own reactions. This is what Winch is concerned with when he writes that we must

> …refrain from trying to understand the nature of the anomaly presented by "p and I don't believe that p" in terms of what 'states of affairs' its component sentences report, but rather in terms of 'language games' into which reporting and expressing what one believes enter; or, in the phraseology I have already quoted, in terms of "the natural behavior towards human beings" of which our language "is but an auxiliary and extension".[271]

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[270] Malcolm 1995, p. 206. I do not wish to suggest a sort of "direct" as opposed to "indirect" access picture of our mental lives as opposed to our relation to others' mental lives, but merely point out that the expectation that we should relate to everything (even our own intentions and impressions) as others do is not philosophically innocent.

[271] Winch 2001, p. 206. He quotes Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*.

The important insight which Winch brings out here is that it is not only by looking at possible situations where the word 'believe' is uttered that we learn what belief is, but that there are practices which come first, circumstances in which these ways of speaking do their work. (In Chapter 4, I related Searle's criticism of the "use theory" that it is philosophizing *de dicto*, not *de re*. The above together form a counterargument which shows that these two levels of philosophizing cannot be distinguished in the way Searle seems to imagine.) Although I find Winch's insight that practices come first correct and highly important, I would like to respond to it with the reminder that the possible situations in which the word 'believe' is uttered could be different. Like this: embroidery around a phrase ('I believe'), an attempt to include it into a sentence, proposition or phrase (call it what you like!), a unit which would, presumably, carry the language game to which it belongs with it, will not do to settle its sense in advance of an actual situation of use. That would be yet an example of a quasi-empirical view of language games, of context as a box following the sentence along, a version of the context as supplement, where the starting point of philosophizing is not yet, but perhaps half-way, towards a perspective from within language.

We may cast light on these forms of behavior, these forms of life, through a discussion of Moore's paradox. Moore's paradox in turn reflects the mistaken thought that we should be able to say anything about ourselves which others could say about us. That, however, is not the only problem.

Acknowledging the difference between my talk about me and about others does not rid us of the Moorean sentence altogether. However, this is how these reminders may come to do some philosophical work: a simplified picture of the relation between first and third person plays a

role in generating the *schema* which supposedly underlies what I have called the Moorean sentence. However, the suggestions about this relation which Malcolm and Winch find in parts of Wittgenstein's treatment of Moore's paradox, although correct, are not enough to rid us of the tangle: the problem is not merely the surprise at an irregularity between me and you and those who talk about our beliefs. They resolve parts of the problem but they do not keep it from arising.

Before I go on to discuss what I take to be the crucial feature of Moore's paradox, that the Moorean sentence lacks context, I will discuss one further enlightening Wittgensteinian point made in relation to Moore's paradox, the idea that nothing can count as a conjunction of the two parts in the Moorean sentence.

5.4 The non-conjunction

Martin Gustafsson, in his *Entangled Sense* (2000), discusses Moore's paradox as an example of setting a diagnosis of philosophical confusion. He discusses Thomas Baldwin's application of Paul Grice's speech act analysis, in which "communication" or a sort of transfer of information is placed in focus. Gustafsson describes Baldwin's explanation of the 'absurdity' like this:

> Baldwin's idea is that, in asserting 'It is raining in Stockholm and I do not believe that it is raining in Stockholm', I intend my audience to form two conflicting beliefs. By the first half of my utterance, I intend to inform my audience that it is raining in Stockholm; and, supposedly, this requires that I intend them to believe that *I believe that it is raining in Stockholm*. By the second half, however, I assert the opposite, thereby intending my audience to believe that *I do not believe that it is raining in Stockholm*. If the hearers are to regard me as making an assertion, I must

intend them to form these two contradictory beliefs; and therein lies the absurdity of my utterance.[272]

Baldwin's answer to the riddle is that the fault is that the speaker intends to make the hearers form two contradictory beliefs. The merit for our purposes is that Baldwin in Gustafsson's rendering in one sense takes the perspective of the speaker seriously. However, the contradiction is the proposed solution and it appears in what this imaginary speaker intends. This is a pragmatic solution and it shares the problem with Searle's that we must imagine the speaker to have one thought too many, namely that the speaker first tries to assert it and then, as it doesn't work, turns out to be unable to assert it after all. Gustafsson rightly replies that the problem in a solution of this kind is that one makes a distinction between "the act of assertion" and "the asserted proposition itself".[273]

Further, he entertains – which is the point which is of interest here – that 'and', as what makes the sentence into a conjunction of two sentences, does not "work" when one observes how the two parts are normally used. He writes that "Moore's paradox arises, because we, as it were, 'cross' two different rules of usage. On the *one* hand, there is a rule which captures what a conjunction is."[274] (He refers to the truth value definition of a logical conjunction.) On the other hand, he writes, there is "our established way of using sentences like 'I do not believe that it is raining in Stockholm'" and a characteristic part of this usage is that *nothing can be understood as a conjunction of the two parts*. The conjunct sentence does not "constitute an instance of this established way of

[272] Gustafsson 2000, p. 42.
[273] Gustafsson 2000, p. 42.
[274] Gustafsson 2000, p. 44.

talking", and the absurdity does not require an explanation in terms of a tacit implication, but it is simply "a reflection of our being at home in this way of using language".[275]

> Thus the solution to the paradox does not consist in an elaborate theory of implication, but just in the recognition of these two different forms of use; the realisation that our confusion arises because we insist on trying to play two incompatible games at the same time.[276]

That nothing can count as a conjunction of the two parts is a kind of explanation as to why the sentence does not "work", but it comes in terms of the realization of our expectation of how pieces of language should behave. Gustafsson widens the scope of meaning to not one way but 'established ways of talking' and hence rests his case on a notion of normal use, which excludes the contradictory sentence.

At the same time, Gustafsson is well aware of the point of the usability argument, that it is perfectly possible to use sentences which fit the schema in the first person. He gives examples of sentences of the Moorean schema, sentences which could be thought to have a use. He writes that they are not paradoxical in the same way as Moore-paradoxical sentences, since the paradoxical feature depends on the use of 'I don't believe that *p*' for which the sentence *does not have a conjunction* '*p* and I do not believe that *p*'. Now looking back at the perspective from within language as described in Chapter 2, this would be an infelicitous formulation. Sentences do not 'have' conjunctions because that would presuppose that the surface grammar sufficed to pick them out, identify them, determine their meaning (to use a variety of terms

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[275] Gustafsson 2000, p. 44.
[276] Gustafsson 2000, s. 45.

from different parts of analytical philosophy). Although formulated as a part of a solution, this is an interesting formulation of the problematic feature of the Moorean sentence. (To forebode an argument to come, the sentences which are unproblematic are not Moorean, furthermore they are not "not paradoxical in the same way", rather they are just *not* paradoxical.)

Gustafsson formulates this interesting problematic expectation in terms of there being "an exaggerated confidence in the applicability of truth-functional connectives" at play:

> Thus, Moore's paradox is interesting because it constitutes a sort of focal point where three important kinds of philosophical misunderstanding converge: (i) an exaggerated confidence in the applicability of truth-functional connectives; (ii) the assimilation of first person and third person perspectives; and, (iii) the tendency to think of everything 'mental' as self-contained states on a par with hunger and migraine.[277]

Before going on to discuss this suggestion further, a word on the solution-dissolution issue is in place. Gustafsson's overarching diagnosis of Moore's paradox is that it is a philosophical problem which arises as three different philosophical misunderstandings meet. In Hertzberg's and Diamond's spirit one could ask whether it is the case that *by* giving a diagnosis, Gustafsson in some sense adheres to the "natural view of nonsense", and the associated idea of sentences having sense due to their structure (the words in them and rules for grammatical formation). I believe that this is not the case, since Gustafsson clearly does not adhere to a more or less natural conception of nonsense. If it were connected with that sort of conception of sentences, Gustafsson's

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[277] Gustafsson 2000, s. 46.

solution again might turn out to be a reformulation rather than a solution. Be that as it may, his diagnosis can be taken to be a clarification: an insight which may rid us of the temptation to enter the paradox is that it originates in our deeply held presuppositions on certain philosophical matters. A non-conjunction solution to Moore's paradox would also be susceptible to the criticism directed at the package theory and the atmosphere conception of meaning.

Let us take a closer look at this feature of a non-conjunction solution. In Chapter 1, I discussed the view of nonsense which Cora Diamond ascribed to Wittgenstein and Frege. According to this view of nonsense, also defended by Lars Hertzberg, any explanation would be superfluous in this situation. Diamond claimed that a sentence can only be nonsense in one way and that a diagnosis or explanation of how it is the case that a sentence is nonsensical would be the expression of a "the natural view of nonsense" (which she criticizes).[278] According to the natural view of nonsense, a sentence is nonsense because a word in it has the wrong meaning, i.e. it cannot be combined in a suggested way in a given sentence form. In the sentence, the word becomes unusable and the sentence becomes nonsense because of the faultiness of the word. The central point is that something is nonsense because an ascription of meaning has *not* been made, that nothing is nonsense because of an ascription of meaning which *has* been made. In this view, a word cannot have the wrong meaning, it can only *lack* meaning.[279] Hertzberg developed this line of thought and discussed the meaning of a *sentence* in relation to its context.[280] According to him (as we saw in Chapter 2), one may also be skeptical as to whether it is possible to ask about a sentence

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[278] Diamond 1991.
[279] Diamond 1991, p. 106.
[280] Hertzberg 2001.

in isolation whether it has meaning or not.[281] A non-conjunction solution, excluding this combination with the help of a contradiction, would presuppose that the meaning of the parts of the sentences is clear, and were it to succeed, it would have reached closure and *shown* that a prospective combination here would be nonsensical. In Gustafsson's formulation the conflict is between "incompatible language games". This goes against Hertzberg's views on this point, because this idea of incompatible language games requires that it is possible to keep these apart, know how they differ in meaning before a situation of use, and hence, it requires the possibility of identifying a structure regardless of actual use.

Another version of this objection to a non-conjunction solution to the paradox could be to claim, with Malcolm[282] that we are surprised by a sentence of this kind, but that the reason that we are surprised, but yet are able to let go of the idea that the sentence is meaningful is not the result of *reasoning* on the logical conjunction, that is, of an argument. Gustafsson's formulation is that we do not realize that we are trying to play two incompatible games at once, but it could perhaps be rephrased: we do not realize that we're not playing. Let me repeat myself: pointing out that there is no such thing as a conjunction of the two parts requires that we are able to distinguish between the parts before an actual situation in which we would use a sentence of that kind: it requires that we can establish the incompatibility of the two language games. The Moorean mistake is made when the sentence is taken seriously in the first place, when we let the sentence take hold: at that moment we are supposing that there is explaining to do, that sentence-like units devoid

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[281] Hertzberg 2001, p. 92.
[282] Malcolm 1995, 196ff.

of context must work. Instead, the suggestion of a sentence should be put to rest before we take this to be a potential language game: there is nothing about a 'language game' to realize.

5.5 Grammar and logical grammar

I have talked about 'the grammar of belief', a description of which Wolgast and Malcolm have given as a remedy to the Moorean sentence. Now what is the difference between grammar in the grammarian's sense, and logical grammar in the sense intended by Wittgenstein and some followers of his? In the use of the verb 'believe', there is nothing irregular to grammar in this ordinary sense. The differences between the first person and third person use of 'believe' presented above would perhaps be described as *pragmatic* differences by the linguist. In relation to traditional grammar, in order to incorporate the differences in use, the concept of grammar must be considerably extended; the discussion goes beyond the rules of combination of words into a sentence. Moore's paradox, however, is also a challenge to traditional grammar, if grammatical correctness is taken to induce meaning. Wittgenstein made a distinction, which may be of use here, between deep grammar and surface grammar in *Philosophical Investigations*, §664:

> In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar'
> from 'depth grammar'. What immediately impresses itself upon
> us about the use of a word is the way it is used in the
> construction of the sentence [*Satzbau*], the part of its use — one
> might say — that can be taken in by the ear. — And now
> compare the depth grammar, say of the word "to mean", with
> what its surface grammar would lead us to suspect. No wonder
> we find it difficult to know our way about [*sich auszukennen*].[283]

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[283] Wittgenstein 2001 (1953).

(Traditional grammar research does take wider snapshots than an analysis of simple sentences into its components, but this is not the kind of 'grammar' I am interested in here.)[284] If someone makes a grammatical mistake in the sense of surface grammar, we can correct it if we like – we already understand what was meant. Nevertheless, for deep grammar, this can't be supposed – we are already lacking in understanding. In this case, we already stand before a tangle, and we are looking for the ingredients which are necessary for producing the problem. One of these may be the expectation that all verbs work the same way, and that individuals in the face of language use and expression are one kind of *thing*. That is, that what *can* be said and what *is* said do not vary according to who it was that asserted something, and what that was (cf the criticism of Searle in Ch. 4). When we stand before a tangle, or to use our metaphor, are within a confusion, this is where the reminders have a role to play.

5.6 Variations in a user perspective

Although we should understand reminders as in place within a confusion, sometimes their formulations at least seemingly invite critical responses. This is the case with Wolgast's formulation of the problem with the Moorean sentence – that the combination of parts which do not fit together gives rise to a monster – since it contains elements of a

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[284] The aim here is not to engage in criticism of the work of grammarians. With the help of a collection of examples of – a few or all – uses of a certain word, extensive mappings of evidence for these uses, one may also find unexpected uses, which one had not thought would be accepted by speakers of a particular language, seeming irregularities which are widely used. The perspective of a grammarian and the aim of the mapping are quite different from those of the philosopher. An alternative way to put this point is that philosophical grammarians and linguistic grammarians study different objects: sentences-as-used and sentences, as was suggested to me by Lars Hertzberg.

light version of the natural view of nonsense (which was criticized in chapter 2). She points out that the union is grammatical, presumably as opposed to logical, or psychological as opposed to logical:

> Moore's absurd proposition is a monster made of familiar parts, a creature formed by grammatical union. Such monsters are not uncommon, one might add, in the regions of philosophy.[285]

The question whether and how this diagnosis resolves Moore's paradox should be discussed a little further. For one thing, the burden of proof for the reality of a monster, or rather, ghost, of this kind, lies with the one who claims that it exists, and the arguments for its existence have been hard to find. However, so far in this chapter, I have presented Wittgensteinian philosophers' descriptions of the background for the expectations of language use, which are not at all out of the blue. However, awkward questions in philosophy are not resolved by being silent about them, so the role of the suggestions about grammar which are part of these descriptions of the background for expactations on language use stand in need of further clarification. Although I have already presented some reservations about the accounts of Gustafsson and Wolgast, I believe that it is important to see that they are set in the position where they must try to argue, to show where it goes wrong. Threfore, their attempts at reformulating the problem should not be taken to be generally valid statements of matters of fact (theses, in a Wittgensteinian dialect) but as pointing the way out of the paradoxical situation for themselves and others in the grip of the problem. The monster, one could say, should disappear as soon as one realizes that it is a mere brainchild.

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[285] Wolgast 1977, p. 119.

An analogy might help here. The hunter may raise his rifle if he thinks he might hear or see a pheasant in the bush, but when he sees that it was just a sparrow, or the wind, he lowers it again. Were he not a hunter he would not have the weapon, nor would he have the pattern of reaction – and he would not be out there looking in the first place. Some philosophers are out there looking but they do not realize that the bush is empty, and shoot. They may conclude that the pheasant got away, but not that there wasn't one. In a user perspective, the bush is observed to be empty before any shots are fired, but that doesn't mean that there is no hunting going on. Philosophers are language users too, they can be more or less attentive to their own tools, and they can perceive their tasks very differently.

The user perspective provides us with reminders of how familiar phrases are used in our dealings with each other. These reminders may demonstrate that some of the expectations we have concerning the way language works are not warranted, in this case, when it comes to belief but also to first and third person talk. Here, the reminders are explications of uses which parts of sentences like the Moorean sentence could have. The function of these reminders or descriptions of language games is to show why the Moorean sentence, seen as a combination of two parts, does not come about, and also to show why one is inclined to think that it does.

5.6.1 The constitution of the Moorean sentence

The conclusion of the last section was that there seems to be no such thing as a Moorean sentence. Now what is this Moorean sentence, really, if there is anything like it at all? In Chapter 4, I introduced a schema for the presupposition that the Moorean sentence 'I believe that p and not-p' has something in common with the proposition which it

supposedly should but can't be used to assert. In these discussions, one defining feature of a Moorean sentence was that it would be absurd to assert it. I have pointed out that a sentence which can be formalized as 'I believe that *p* and not-*p*' can be asserted without any absurdity, for instance in circumstances in which I talk about myself in the way that I talk about others. I called this reminder the usability argument.

Winch mentions the situation when politicians "change hats" and it is nothing pathological in holding different perspectives at the same time or in Wittgenstein's terms, "two people speaking out of my mouth": "people may hold certain offices in the name of which they speak".[286] Martin Gustafsson's example is a situation in which his brother, a dishonest car dealer, is on the phone with a potential customer and tells him that "The Ford is in excellent shape" and then in an aside to Martin says that "And I don't believe it is in excellent shape".[287] My own example was that I explain why I keep feeling with my arm behind my chair: "I believe I have my purse with me but I don't". What role may the usability argument play in the investigation of Moore's paradox? Is it shallow to point out that it seems that a sentence or its surface structure may sometimes but not always have a function? The usability argument does no more than remind us of this fact about the guise of a sentence – that it is a mistake to suppose that the schema or guise is all that matters in meaning and use, for whether a sentence may be used or not, can have meaning or not.

The usability argument shows that it is not the *form* of the sentence, the schema that 'excludes the possibility of meaning'. This takes the air out

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[286] Winch 2001, p. 208.
[287] Martin Gustafsson in an e-mail to Lars Hertzberg 1.4.2002.

of the idea of a Moorean sentence as a sentence which by virtue of its structure can't be used. We have to content ourselves with what is left of what we called a Moorean sentence: a sentence which seems to have a form which *seems* to make it absurd to assert. A Moorean sentence becomes a mere shell, of which we do not know what the content could be – that is, it is difficult even to call it a "shell".

The usability argument is a counterexample to the view of meaning according to which there are surface structures (or schemas) about which we can determine in advance whether they are acceptable or not, which are valid or in order before an actual attempt at a use, regardless of context. This view lies at the foundations for those who are looking for a contradiction to terminate the Moorean sentence. To them, the contradiction would be the crack that conclusively determines whether the form is broken or unusable. An extension of this view would be to say that there are rules which determine which types of words are allowed in certain types of structures. This view of language is what I want to argue against from the perspective from within language by claiming that a sentence has a form only as it is seen in use, that only in the light of its context does a sentence have meaning (see Ch. 2). One could perhaps rephrase it into a question and an answer: "What distinguishes a Moorean sentence (which by definition lacks use) from a sentence of the same surface form, which has a use?" The best answer would be "The former lacks form."

Now what is the difference here between this "lack of use" and contradictoriness? Contradiction is not the only 'form" that does not fit in with our ways of speaking, even if some philosophers are inclined to think so. Wittgenstein's calling the role of contradictions in philosophy "civic" in *Philosophical Investigations* §125 is enlightening:

It is not the business of philosophy to resolve a contradiction by means of a mathematical or logico-mathematical discovery, but to render surveyable the state of mathematics that troubles us – the state of affairs *before* the contradiction is resolved. (And in doing this one is not sidestepping a difficulty.)

Here the fundamental fact is that we lay down rules, a technique, for playing a game, and that then, when we follow the rules, things don't turn out as we had assumed. So that we are, as it were, entangled in our own rules.

This entanglement in our rules is what we want to understand, that is: to survey.

It throws light on our concept of meaning something. For in those cases, things turn out otherwise than we had meant, foreseen. That is just what we say when, for example, a contradiction appears: "That's not the way I meant it."

The civic status of a contradiction, or its status in civic life — that is the philosophical problem.[288]

When we philosophize about language, we tend to suppose that all possible combinations of familiar words, which resemble other frequently used combinations, must work. As a matter of fact, these are all the reasons we have to suppose that there is such a thing as a Moorean sentence.[289]

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[288] Wittgenstein 2009, §125.

[289] Diamond 2014, p. 22 suggests some principles to take into consideration in reading the TLP. In one of them, she draws up the relation between the superficial form of a propositional construction and its logical form and the role these two can play in philosophy in a way which I want to draw on here: "The superficial form of a propositional construction tells us nothing about what its use is, if indeed it has any use. It does not enable us to see in the propositional sign a tie to a would-be assertion of some sort. There is no route from the superficial form of a propositional construction to a diagnosis of nonsensicality. If we imagine that we see 'what the proposition is trying to say', we are taking its superficial form as a guide to the form of

Gustafsson suggested that there is no such thing as the conjunction between the two parts which purportedly forms the Moorean sentence. This may be taken as attributing to the "parts" of this "sentence" a structure, even if it lacks context. To show why the two parts cannot be combined requires one to take the sentence to have at least a kind of structure (two parts with an 'and' in between), and the attempt to show why the two parts cannot be combined is set off by the wish to show *why* the sentence is nonsense. The problem here is that it is not possible to reach the conclusion that a sentence is nonsensical; it is not a *conclusion*, something that may result from reasoning or arguments. Taking it seriously along with Frege (according to Hertzberg) that we cannot talk about the logical properties of a sentence which is cut off from its use (the context principle), no explanation needs or can be given here. (My reservation here is limited: on closer inspection, Gustafsson's explanation turns out not to be an explanation in the problematic sense because his diagnosis is pointing out a lack, not a point of contradiction or self-refutation which would presuppose a structure.)

In the Moorean case, the sentence is not immediately rejected as nonsense by philosophers, even if they ought to be able to do that. To say that something is nonsense is not to assert a conclusion, but rather to express the overcoming of confusion. We are examining a sentence detached from its context, a sentence which seems absurd. The only way

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something that (as we think) would have to be outside the limits of sense; but the confusion here lies in a misunderstanding of what it is for something that looks like a proposition to have this or that 'form'. When Wittgenstein says of a bit of language: 'That can't be said', that implies that it has nothing but its superficial form, i.e., that there is nothing to it; it dissolves."

for this absurdity to be visible is through the contrast with other sentences, sentences which we could immediately imagine a use or a context for. It is after all not the *form* of the sentence or its words, put in the order they are, which determines the meaning of the sentence. If this is taken to be an acceptable starting-point, identification by surface grammar, nothing excludes the possibility that "it" could be used to say something else in another context – in this general sense, from this general point of view, the sentence becomes arbitrary in relation to its sense. In a perspective from within language, use goes before form. We easily slip into the thought that rules and logic are something built into or internal to the sentence, but they are instead secondary to use – in Hertzberg's words: we cannot talk about the logical properties of a sentence in isolation, but only as it is uttered by a speaker in a context.[290]

Winch wrote that the annoying feature of Moore's paradox is that it gives the impression that there is a logical obstacle to saying something that could be the case. He made the point that anomalies in logic (as a hidden, perfect structure) do not have to lead to our trying to rid ourselves of logic altogether, but logic can play the role of an object of comparison.

The idea that logic comes before sense is mistaken. Winch describes it as "a certain conception of logic as an existing ideal structure to which language is ultimately answerable". He goes on:

> Wittgenstein's mature thinking rejects this conception: if we do indeed have a use for a certain expression, then it is, *logically* speaking, perfectly in order.[291]

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[290] Hertzberg 2001, p. 93.
[291] Winch 2001, p. 207.

In other words, there is no such thing as the Moorean sentence (as the *problematic* sentence) with a certain form. Or to put it another way: If the "form" which we have called "the form of a Moorean sentence" is not a given form it is open as to which sentences we could call Moorean (or which "forms" the Moorean sentences could have). In support of this idea we may note that the sentence 'I believe it is raining and it is raining' is just as absurd to assert as the sentence which I have discussed in this chapter. (Austin also notes this possibility but he takes it to be in some way trivial, not absurd.) As the usability argument shows, this "trivial" sentence could just as well be used in a context which would render it meaningful. Hence, if we want to keep the idea of Moorean sentences (as independently identifiable) in circulation, these would need to be characterized as "sentences which we tend to accept beforehand outside of any context, but about which it turns out that we do not know how to handle them".

Hertzberg's point about the circularity between the sense of a sentence and the context of significant use shows another interesting feature of the Moorean schema (which I mentioned in passing in Chapter 3). As soon as I make up a situation in which the schema is used, it is no longer Moorean. That is, the absurdity of the schema which according to the setup would show up in the first person does not appear when a context of significant use is presented (and this is what the usability argument rests on).

In Chapter 2 I criticized the idea of context as a container which a (possible) sentence carries around with it. In that picture, the starting point is a sentence and the meaning as use is coming up with possible contexts in which the sentence in question makes sense. In Chapter 2, I also introduced the idea as presented by some therapeutic readers of

Wittgenstein, of a sentence as having sense in a context of significant use as providing an alternative vantage point.

However, the sort of use pictured as context as a container is not philosophically superfluous. It can play a role in a user perspective in the reminders of language use, such as earlier on in this chapter, in which this sort of possible use was put to work to dispel the simplified pictures of language which were the cause of the confusions. In contrast, in a full-blown user perspective, when a sentence in a context of significant use is what is under discussion, the Moorean feature, the absurdity, does not come into view at all: there are no questions to be asked about why one cannot say this and that. Both the picture of a sentence as a surface sign and the sentence as a thought which demands possibility of expression have been dissolved.

5.7 The difficulty of explanation

You cannot *explain* how the word 'believe' is used in the same way as you can explain how 'walk' is used. This could be the point of the paragraph in *Philosophical Investigations* in which Wittgenstein claims that saying "suppose that I believe" presupposes the whole grammar of belief. It is when one attempts to explain the use of a word in a certain way that the paradoxical feature comes into play. The way philosophers take on questions of language creates the problem. Our way of philosophizing displays our view of what an analysis of a sentence can be, and this may lead us into even more serious confusion.

The Moorean sentence comes forward as a problem. It seems that either the seemingly meaningful sentence should be revealed to be a chimera, or then good and robust reasons to exclude it must be given. To some philosophers the problem is to be solved i.e. the reasons for the

problematic feature should be made to fit into our picture of the world, and of how language works, or all sentences of this form should be prohibited. The predicament is that on the one hand, we feel that we can see that the sentence (judging from its surface) could be used, and on the other hand, we cannot use it and hence feel that it cannot possibly mean anything. To explain the sentence in terms of theoretical frameworks or by introducing a technical form of implication will not solve Moore's paradox. This is what I have aimed to show.

5.8 Concluding words

As a consequence of his reasoning in *Ethics*, Moore ends up with the paradox that a person may deserve strong moral condemnation for choosing an action which is in fact right. According to Wolgast, Moore did not see any reason not to accept this paradox. She draws an analogy: a man should say what he believes even if it should be false; and a man may be scolded for lying even if what he says is true:

> It will be my purpose to show, that our beliefs are so intimately connected with our assertions that this 'paradox' is instead a thoroughly natural and suitable consequence.[292]

I, on the other hand, have tried to take the paradox not as a conclusion or a suitable consequence, but as a starting point, because what it demands that we be perplexed about – that we cannot say something in the first person tense which we can say in the third person – is not a mystery once we have been reminded of how we (sometimes) talk, of our expectations, of our practices, of what we are like. Wolgast's view is that the important thing about a discussion of Moore's paradox lies in the basic questions for a philosophy about knowledge and belief which

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[292] Wolgast 1977, p. 97.

it raises. As I have shown, the questions it raises are also deeply concerned with philosophical method.

Wittgenstein saw that philosophy need not be generalizing and that it should be non-dogmatic, that it can do without theses and theories.[293] Creating a theory of language is in a sense a positive endeavor which may involve making generalizations and propounding theses. I do not wish to turn against all such projects, but take it that Wittgenstein's lesson is that dogmatism will generate new problems. This is the framework for my discussion: I investigate problems generated through dogmatic views of the sentence (and its varieties) and my aim in this discussion has been to criticize the terminologies by bringing out their dogmatic elements and the consequences of their application in philosophical work.

In the introduction to this chapter, I quoted Avrum Stroll, who characterized himself as one who thinks about the Moorean sentence, saying that "once the assumptions underlying the remark are clarified it can be seen not to have a significant use, let alone to be paradoxical".[294] My own discussion has not been able to bring me to this conclusion. Rather, I have tried to show that in some constellations, with some premises, a paradoxical situation arises, but the reason why it does so is not because of a general feature of the Moorean sentence.

What I have tried to do in my discussions of Moore's paradox is not only to contrast the suggested solutions with the perspective from within language as I presented it in Chapter 1, but also to bring out and

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[293] I draw on Kuusela 2008.
[294] Stroll 2010, p. 117.

take seriously the unarticulated assumptions which the philosopher's perspective of the problem includes. That which we are puzzled by requires our participation. When it comes to Moore's paradox, the neglect of the idea of contexts of significant use is central to the tangle, but also within a perspective from within language, different contexts albeit limited ones must be presupposed in order to discuss the elements of the Moorean sentence and their relatives.

6 Conclusion: Metaphor, Maps, Instruments

In Chapter 1, I started in a perspective from outside language: I set up a problem around the linguistic string "I saw her duck under the table" and posed the question how the meaning of certain sentences (as linguistic strings) can be established. I introduced a set of philosophical pictures as a reply to the question, pictures in which "propositions" or "context" as supplements of sentences were to help settle the meaning of the linguistic string. I introduced these pictures as having in common a distanced perspective to the sentence, and to serve as a *contrast* to the user perspective as a perspective from within language. I presented the user perspective by the help of three central ideas: a sentence in use, the context of significant use and a shift in method and suggested that the distanced position from which indeterminacy of meaning is glossed as a philosophically problematic issue becomes superfluous in a perspective from within language.

In Chapter 2, I introduced the idea of excluding certain questions or utterances in philosophy as nonsense by presenting the notion of sentences in use entertained by some therapeutic readers of Wittgenstein. I joined in their criticism of the atmosphere conception of meaning and presented the idea of non-vicious circularity between the sense of a sentence in use and a context of significant use, and the principle that the logical properties of a sentence depend on the use it is put to. These measures, I claimed, shift the starting point for the philosophical investigation to a situation where someone has something to say. I discussed the role that investigations into language use may have in dissolving philosophical problems and the relation between this activity and the activity of doing philosophy of language. I concluded that Diamond's and Hertzberg's emphasis on the ordinary and the

insistence on context in use exclude certain questions which will seem pressing within a perspective from outside of language. As a contrast, I briefly presented another take on sentence-propositions inspired by the early Wittgenstein and Frege, that of Peter Geach, and I concluded that it differs significantly from the therapeutic picture on several accounts.

I ended the chapter with a note on the role of exegesis of Wittgenstein's work on the notion of 'nonsense' for a therapeutic view of philosophy.

In Chapter 3, I introduced Moore's paradox, as it first appeared in the work of G. E. Moore, as a way of taking the origins of the tangle and the themes involved seriously. I investigated some attempts to solve it and some of the implicit premises of the proposed solutions. Moore's solution included a tension – a sort of contradiction – between what one says and what asserting something implies. I showed (with the help of Wolgast) how some fundamental elements of the paradox, "the package theory of meaning", the idea that sentences carry their meanings in them, were present in Moore's thinking.

In Chapter 4, I discussed pragmatic solutions to Moore's paradox, above all that of J. S. Searle. These solutions find the fault of the paradox not in the sentence itself but in its application, in the communication of it, which is an idea of the "use" of a sentence very different from the one associated with the "context of significant use" which I took to be an element of a perspective from within language. I contrasted this kind of solution with what I called formalist solutions, which take the problem to be a hidden contradiction within the sentence itself. I concluded that the problems in connection with solving Moore's paradox in a pragmatic perspective are connected with the view of the role and powers of terminology or a theoretical framework in philosophizing.

With support from Malcolm and Levi, I tried to show how, as a contrast, a perspective from within language would fare differently.

I introduced what I called the usability argument to show how the tension or perceived problematic feature, i.e. the root of the paradox, depends on a view of sentences in which the context of significant use is not taken seriously. I elucidated the tendency to give logical concepts such as contradictoriness a *prima facie* role in investigating philosophical problems.

In Chapter 5, I presented what I called the user perspective on Moore's paradox. I introduced the user perspective not as an alternative solution, but as a vehicle to a shift in view of what the problem is in Moore's paradox. In order to resolve the expectation on language use which gives rise to the paradoxical feature, taking my starting point in the work of a range of post-Wittgensteinian philosophers, I discussed the grammar of belief, the Moorean sentence considered as a non-conjunction, and the expectation of grammatical symmetry.

In the end the discussion revolved around the paradoxical feature and how it can be generated and degenerated in terms of use, meaning, structure, and contradictoriness, and why a sentence of this kind is not rejected by a philosopher before it is perceived as requiring explanation. I tried to show how the idea of context of significant use may play a central role in dispelling the confusion.

Taken together, the past chapters constitute an exploration of a philosophical perspective from within language by application to Moore's paradox and its roots, as a cluster of philosophically challenging ideas.

In this concluding chapter I will reflect on some ideas of method which have guided my work. These reflections will be mere sketches intended to help the reader make sense of the role of the parts in the whole of this investigation.

6.1 The perspective metaphor

Let me begin with a few notes on the refrain of this work: the idea of a perspective from within language as contrasted with a perspective from outside language. In Chapter 1 I put down a note of caution: this is a metaphor, and a reaction to a purported perspective from outside of language rather than an independent thesis. The perspective from outside language as it appears in this book consists of premises of philosophizing on aspects of language, more or less explicit ones, which in some way function as contrasts to the sentence in use and the context of significant use.

In section 1.4, I cited Edward Minar, who in his discussion on Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* wrote that Wittgenstein resisted a picture of an inside and an outside to language, and wanted to show it "inapplicable to our relation to language".[295] However, Minar writes that Wittgenstein concedes that as philosophers, we keep trying to ask questions outside of our language in use.

According to Minar, the picture of inside and outside which Wittgenstein resists requires an investigation of what it is to ask questions (or speak) "outside a particular language game" (Minar refers to PI §47). We should not think, Minar warns us, that "the suggestion

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[295] Minar 1995, p. 437.

that philosophers try to occupy an external perspective, to 'stand outside our practices', can serve as an adequate explanation of philosophical confusion, as opposed to a description that would demand elaboration in each particular case".[296] In each case, we may want to know why "the philosopher has come to operate outside of a particular language-game".[297] In the case of Moore's paradox, I have tried to show why it would seem tempting to treat the paradox, the sentence and the other elements of the tangle as they have been treated.

Minar is worried that in plainly charging philosophers of the attempt to occupy an external perspective, we risk "representing things as if there is something that we either can or ought not to do", and that the "stepping" outside involves a picture of inside and outside as "places, as distinct wholes", because it invites the idea that "our location in language remains a kind of *confinement*".[298] One difficulty is the attempt to try to apply a judgment to language as a whole. This, applying the metaphor to language as a whole, I have not tried to do. I have applied the location metaphor to parts of philosophical discourse in which there have been tensions or tangles. Rather than use the inside/outside metaphor as a tool of exclusion (see the nonsense discussion in Chapter 2 for an analogical piece of reasoning), I have attempted to apply it as an object of comparison, as a diagnostic tool.

In my exploration of the perspective from inside language in relation to Moore's paradox, I found it useful. Exploring the perspective from within language, I found that it indeed had sizeable consequences for the philosophical issues I treated. In my treatment of Moore's paradox,

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[296] Minar 1995, p. 437.
[297] Minar 1995, p. 437.
[298] Minar 1995, p. 438.

the set of issues which at first appeared settled and central to the paradox turned out to vary with the different perspectives, but also, the perspective from within shed light on the cluster of expectations which lead up to the paradox.

However, I have not argued consistently *for* the perspective from within language. Thus it may seem that the question what I have achieved in this investigation nevertheless remains open. I would like to suggest a direction in which to look for courage to mitigate this demand for results by once more presenting a stretch of exegetic discussion on the later Wittgenstein, and in this case about his view of philosophical problems and the work on them as grammatical investigations.

6.2 Observations on language as methods of gaining overview

I have referred to fruitful tensions in Wittgenstein scholarship time and again in this work. One such discussion concerns what Wittgenstein's methods are about and what one gains by taking on a "Wittgensteinian elucidatory view of philosophy", to pick up a descriptive term common in the literature.[299] Beth von Savickey (2014) discusses the issue as a case between herself and Peter Hacker, in terms of how Wittgenstein's view that the aim of philosophizing is to reach an *übersichtliche Darstellung*, a perspicuous presentation (PI 122), or in Hacker's translation, a "surveyable representation" is to be understood. According to Hacker, Wittgenstein does not manage to make clear what this amounts to, and Savickey believes that Hacker does not see what Wittgenstein's talk

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[299] There are many other takes on Wittgenstein's view of philosophy, "a therapeutic view", "criss-cross philosophy", "anti-thetical philosophy", "non-dogmatic philosophy" etc.

about perspicuous presentation is about because of expectations entertained by himself, such as that the aim of a philosophical investigation must be to make some sort of "map". Philosophy would amount to a sort of 'conceptual geography'. Contra Hacker, Savickey points out that Wittgenstein reminds his readers that maps will create problems, and that he nowhere claims that the philosopher's task is to make maps. Instead she emphasizes that we, according to Wittgenstein, keep walking until we find our way about (as he writes in PI 123, a philosophical problem has the form "I do not know my way about"), that Wittgenstein in the preface to PI characterizes his philosophical remarks as "sketches of landscapes made in the course of long and involved journeyings".[300]

These two ways to characterize the aim of philosophical work differ profoundly. One aims at an overview which has bearing for others too, whereas the usefulness of landscape sketches for others is open.

Before I go on to ask, if I, in my investigation, could have achieved something like "a conceptual map", I need to think about the multiplicity of what we call "maps". For instance, in Chapter 5 on the user perspective on Moore's paradox, I gave many examples of language use related to the concept of belief and its relatives. What would it mean to unite these reminders into a "surveyable representation"?

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[300] Savickey 2014, p. 103. Wittgenstein's remarks in the PI which seem to say something about method can be understood as elucidatory remarks, they can be, as Gisela Bengtsson puts it, "figurative modes of expression, a perspective and a helpful way of looking at something which is difficult to understand and survey". Bengtsson 2008, p. 240.

The map analogy may help us part of the way, but finding the points where it breaks down may be even more enlightening. There are many kinds of maps, and their way of functioning as well as the way they look depend on the purposes for which they have been created.

Think about the atlases for motorists, collections of maps for people who travel by car or motorcycle. Those maps fit the landscape at relevant points: they comprise the roads and places to fill up the tank, and perhaps the tourist attractions which the makers of the map expect many users to find interesting. These maps also diverge from reality: roads classified as main roads take up proportionally much more space on the map than they do in real life. The graphics of the map can give rise to expectations which cause surprises: main roads in some places may turn out to be narrow and curvy, not multiple lane highways. These sorts of maps mainly picture a geographic feature, the roads. When we consult the map we take the fact that roads are moved, that new roads are built, into consideration – for instance we avoid relying on old maps on trips to new countries. The car atlases have general features but they are made for specific kinds of users, those travelling by car.

Other maps again are maps we draw for even more particular purposes: to show someone the way. These maps will contain landmarks, places which we know that the person we are helping will notice when they are on the way. Or they will be furnished with places which we have visited together before. In this way, they are made with the specific perspective of the user in mind, starting at a place he or she knows.

Maps are seldom complete descriptions of reality. However, landscape sketches too, can play a number of roles: they can be created for remembering a beautiful place, to show it to someone else, as a sort of

souvenir. Making the sketch may be a way of experiencing the place more in full.

Conceptual maps, however, are expected to have some sort of generality.

6.3 Instruments for particular purposes

Savickey also discusses this second strand of Hacker's reading of Wittgenstein, namely the normativity of philosophical maps. Supposedly, the maps philosophers make will help others find their way around, "around the seas of language and to avoid becoming stranded on the reefs of grammar".[301]

Savickey brings the contrasts between Hacker and Wittgenstein together in this way:

> While Hacker *contrasts* description with explanation, Wittgenstein reminds us that there are many different kinds of description (PI 24). He characterizes descriptions as instruments for particular purposes (PI 291). Further, Hacker equates philosophy with the description of *actual* language-usage, while Wittgenstein writes that "philosophy is not a description of language-usage, and yet one can learn it by constantly attending to all the expressions of life in the language" (LWPP I 121). In other words, for Hacker, the central preoccupation of the *Investigations* is the nature of language (Baker and Hacker 2009b: 43). While for Wittgenstein, it is life (i.e. all the expressions of life in the language).[302]

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[301] Hacker, P.M.S, *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning* Vol. I, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 2009, p. 334.
[302] Savickey 2014, p.111.

We can understand our descriptions of language use in philosophy as "instruments for particular purposes". (Although Savickey's exegetical discussions of Wittgenstein's conception of method are not easily transferred to other investigations such as mine and these discussions in the abstract risk being too vague to judge properly, I find these terms enlightening for what I have taken my task to be.) My investigation is responsive, and consists of a range of investigations of aspects of Moore's paradox, of different philosophical projects and claims. As an overarching note, however, the challenge was to give descriptions of our language use to dissolve the paradoxical feature – for a purpose, not further.

If we take seriously that philosophy does not aim at posing general theses, then the problems which philosophers address can be addressed in many different ways and the methods or arguments used cannot be expected to have general validity or be used with this aim. What sort of therapy (if we allow ourselves to use this term here) is needed depends on the sort of confusion there is but also the reasons and background of the here self-acclaimed therapist.

This idea which resists the idea of general philosophical results finds support with Ed Minar who writes that on Wittgenstein's conception, the philosophical requirements on the case at hand are internal.[303]

> To summarize: On Wittgenstein's conception of his procedures, there is no need to justify the philosophical appeal of the ordinary, nor is there any question of "legislating" usage on the basis of preexisting standards. Where philosophical demands on language clash with ordinary use, the question is whether requirements internal to the position at hand conflict with the

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[303] Minar 1995, p. 436.

sense of what one wants to, or has to, say in using one's words in order to support the position – in other words, the requirements are internal.[304]

Hence, if I apply, more or less successfully, Wittgensteinian procedure in Minar's formulation in my present philosophical project, I would not need to try to legislate, i.e. to determine once and for all when it is correct to use 'believe' or the alleged expressions which in combination make out the Moorean sentence.

Neither would I need to argue for my appeals to the ordinary in my discussion of the tangle. Moore's paradox is well described as a case in which "philosophical demands on language clash with ordinary use" and by tracing back the steps needed to be taken to end up in paradox, or seeming paradox, what I have done is to re-evaluate what we as philosophers may have wanted to, had the urge to say and what we really need to say here. What I have hoped to show is that the wishes to make some of the claims that lead to the mooreparadoxical situation build on philosophical assumptions which can be scrutinized. In my words, I "psychologized" the issue, and it was a way to try to abandon the perspective from the outside and to bring out the demands and premises that are in force within the philosophical problematic.

But also, there were points at which I felt that I did gain an overview. When, at one point in my investigations (in Chapter 4), I concluded that the projects of pragmatic philosophers (exemplified by Searle) and post-Wittgensteinians like Malcolm differ in a profound way, I realized that these philosophers' projects differ to the extent that it is difficult to say

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[304] Minar 1995, p. 437.

that they ever visited the same place. This realization, again, might as well be a conclusion as a starting point for an investigation.

That is a result achieved by investigating differences in perspective of philosophers, standing before a sentence.

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<center>***</center>

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Åbo, Finland
August 16, 2015
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Svensk sammanfattning

Denna avhandling undersöker en filosofisk position inifrån språket med utgångspunkt i ett satsbegrepp som inspirerats av Ludwig Wittgenstein, där sats och kontext betraktas som internt förbundna och där den verkliga användningen av en sats är central för dess mening.

Moores paradox fungerar som testfall. Denna kända filosofiska frågeställning har diskuterats sedan 40-talet och kretsar kring hävdandet av satsen "Jag tror att det regnar och det regnar inte". Problemet är att det vore märkligt för en talare att hävda satsen om sig själv, att det verkar finnas ett logiskt hinder för att hävda en sats även om den är välformad, kunde vara sann och inte på ett entydigt sätt innehåller en kontradiktion.

I kapitel 1 introduceras en kontrast mellan två olika satsbegrepp i filosofin: å ena sidan satsen som sedd utifrån, där frågan om dess mening i ett sammanhang är öppen, där kontexten betraktas som en extern meningsbestämmande faktor. Å andra sidan presenteras den ovannämnda synen på satsen som meningsfull genom att den förekommer i ett användningssammanhang. Sammanhanget och satsen som meningsfull förhåller sig internt eller cirkulärt till varandra: den ena förutsätter den andra och vice versa. Denna satsuppfattning utvecklas i kapitel 2 främst med stöd av Cora Diamonds och Lars Hertzbergs arbete och sammanhänger med en filosofisyn som återfinnes i litteraturen bland Wittgensteininspirerade filosofer präglade av en s.k. terapeutisk uppfattning av filosofiska problem och deras behandling.

Moores paradox behandlas i kapitel 3-5. Där granskas några lösningsförslag (bl.a. av G.E. Moore, J. L. Austin, J. Searle) och deras förutsättningar. Dessa lösningsförsök kontrasteras med ett användarperspektiv där språkets användning i meningsfulla sammanhang förväntas spela en central roll i behandlingen av paradoxen. Författaren visar hur uppfattningen om filosofisk terminologi och dess möjligheter, men också den intellektuella kontext inom vilken en filosof betraktar paradoxen, är avgörande för vilka mått som betraktas som lämpliga för att lösa den. Istället för att en alternativ lösning föreslår författaren ge paradoxen behandling genom att granska de grundvillkor som leder till att den uppstår. Här intar satsbegreppet en central roll.

Avhandlingen är författad inom traditionen efter den senare Wittgenstein men går i dialog med filosofiskt arbete som ligger utanför traditionen. Författaren medlar mellan, sammanför och särskiljer temata som behandlats på ett sätt inom traditionen och på andra sätt utanför den. Avhandlingens huvudsakliga bidrag är till metafilosofin genom dess fokus på filosofins metod.

a Sentence

ctive from within language

Yrsa Neuman

STANDING
BEFORE
A SENTENCE

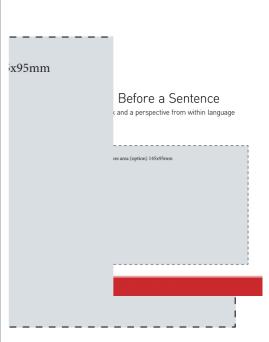Moore's paradox and a perspective from within language

Ludwig Wittgenstein once wrote to G.E. Moore that he had stirred up a philosophical wasps' nest with his paradox, associated with the sentence "I believe it's raining and it's not raining". The problem is that it would be odd for a speaker to assert this thought about herself, although it could be true about her, and although the sentence is well-formed and not contradictory.

Making use of the notion of a sentence having sense in a context of significant use (inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein), the author explores the responses of some of the "wasps" who responded to the paradox, and the background of their reactions.

The contribution of this work is meta-philosophical in being concerned with philosophical method. Its point of departure is in the therapeutic strand of the tradition after the later Wittgenstein.

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Before a Sentence

x and a perspective from within language

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Yrsa Neuman

Standing Before
a Sentence