A NATURALISTIC GROUNDWORK

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(ii)

C O N T E N T S

S U M M A R Y

CHAPTER I: The aim of this thesis is to present a groundwork

for a naturalistic theory of ethics. An indica-

tion is given for what would count as a naturalis-

tic theory. A naturalistic theory is distinguished

from a descriptivist theory : the former but not

the latter must be an objectivist theory of

morality. Two major forms of naturalism are

distinguished: a 'definist' theory and an 'account'

theory. The former is concerned with the meaning

of words and the latter is concerned with property

identity.

CHAPTER II: Restricting our attention to definist theories we

distinguish three formulations of naturalism. Of

particular interest is a formulation presented by

Warnock which supposedly is consistent with the

'independence'-thesis. We distinguish between an

I/M theory and an N/M theory and argue that a

naturalist must at least present an I/M theory.

It is then argued that either Warnock's theory is

consistent with the 'independence'-thesis and does

not satisfy the criterion for an adequate naturalistic

theory, or it is not consistent with the 'independence'-

thesis and is indistinguishable from traditional

definist theories.

CHAPTER III: Naturalism is supposedly misconcieved because it attempts to bridge the fact/value gap. It is arguable that any such gap exists. As is pointed out, the arguments which attempt to show that there is a fact/value gap seem to presuppose that gap or at least require some prior means of distinguishing between fact and value. I attempt to show that the implicit 'prior means' in modern meta-ethical theory involves an appeal to a false empiricist epistemology and theory of meaning.

CHAPTER IV: A counter-example is presented to Hume's Law (no 'ought' from an 'is'). An explication and defence of Searle's attempt to derive an 'ought' from an 'is' is given. However, it is argued that even if Searle's derivation goes through this does not show that morality is objective. That is, Searle's derivation may show that descriptivism is true but it has not shown that naturalism is true.

CHAPTER V: One of the principal arguments, the Argument from Motivation, that is addressed against naturalism is considered. Two major formulations of this argument are distinguished. Of the psychological argument it is argued that a) its premises are dubious, b) in its most plausible version it is invalid, and c) that even if it were valid it would

not show that a definist theory is false. Of

the meta-linguistic argument it is argued that

a) its premises are dubious, and b) that even

if the argument were sound this would not show

that an account theory is false.

CHAPTER VI: The second of the principal arguments, the Open

Question Argument, that is addressed against

naturalism is considered. It is argued that this

argument seen as an argument about the meaning of

words either begs the question or at best pushes

the dispute back a step without doing anything

to settle the issue. But even if the argument

showed that definist theories are false this would

not show that account theories are false because

there are contingent property identity statements.

Whether an account theory is a plausible theory is

then considered. It is argued that account theories

are plausible but their establishment depends on

the making of vast generalizations about human

beings and their predicament.

S T A T E M E N T

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

LANNING//SOWDEN.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this thesis is to provide a groundwork
for the presentation of a naturalistic theory of ethics. What
I mean by a 'naturalistic theory' will, I hope, become clearer
in this and later chapters of the thesis. For the nonce we may
say this much: a naturalistic theory would maintain that moral
statements or judgements may be tested and confirmed in the way
that scientific statements or judgements can. Of course, to
make this statement more clear and more helpful we must deter-
mine, even if only somewhat roughly, what we mean by 'tested
and confirmed' and more particularly how we envisage scientific
statements being confirmed and tested. Roughly we could say
that scientific statements are confirmed, that is they are said
to be true, when certain objectively determinable facts are said
to hold in the world. Thus a naturalist will maintain that moral
statements are true or false, or at least certain statements which
entail moral statements are true or false, depending on whether
certain objectively determinable facts hold in the world. But it
may seem that moral values, or values in general, are <u>not</u> part of
the structure of the world: that is, when I say something is good,
I am not predicating of that thing that it has a certain objectively
determinable property like when I say something is yellow. Rather
my statement that something is good is essentially an expression
of some psychological state of mine. For example, when I say that

something is good I am essentially saying that I _approve_ of that thing or that I would choose it. A common reply for the naturalist is that it is mistaken to suppose that moral statements are essentially expressions of the speaker's approval etc. Although, as we shall see (Chapters IV and V), in order to advance a naturalistic theory we need not deny that moral statements necessarily have a certain function. In addition we should note that the naturalist in claiming that morality is objective is not committed, as is the axiologist or the intuitionist or the Platonist, to positing values as part of the (possibly transcendent) world. He is not committed to positing as part of his ontology non-natural or super-natural properties in addition to natural properties[1]. This indeed must count as part of the motivating force for advancing a naturalistic theory as opposed to a straight out objectivist theory. Why is the naturalist not committed to positing any properties other than natural properties in his ontology? To facilitate an answer to this question we will mention the two major forms of naturalism and here we will only do so briefly as further explication will take place in later chapters (cf., especially Chapter IV). The naturalist claims that moral statements are

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1. Although it is true that he _may_ be committed to positing more into his ontology than is, for example, the physicalist. Commonly cited examples of naturalistic properties are the prevention of pain and the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Now it is part of the physicalist program to reduce talk of pain (or even to eliminate it) to talk of certain brain states or whatever. And it _may_ be necessary for the success of the naturalist program that his putative naturalistic (i.e. objectively determinable) properties be reduced to physicalist properties; for only physicalist properties are, it might be claimed, genuinely part of the fabric of the world.

objective because the word 'good' (or some other evaluative term) is definable as 'F' (some naturalistic term) or that the property good is identical to the property F. What is a naturalistic term and what is a naturalistic property? For the purposes of this essay we will say that a naturalistic term is a term which refers to some property which is objectively determinable, ie., some property which is a 'part of the fabric of the world'. Hence the naturalist is no more committed to non-natural properties or to the existence of value as part of the world than is the materialist committed to the existence of pain as a non-physical property when he defines 'pain' as 'G' or asserts that pain is identical to G (where G is a property from the set of physicalist properties).

When I talk of 'naturalism' I am distinguishing this from 'descriptivism'. Descriptivism I take to be a thesis which is quite simply and purely a linguistic thesis. It is a thesis which maintains that evaluative statements are, or are entailed by, descriptive statements. Although there is no clear and easily drawn distinction to be made in practice between descriptive statements and evaluative ones it is nonetheless generally held to be the case that some distinction can at least be drawn in principle. Descriptivism is best characterised by the thesis with which it is in opposition: descriptivism is opposed to the view that moral statements have a certain meaning determined by their function so that they cannot be derived from descriptive statements which do not have a that function. Now we should note

that for a descriptivist theory to be advanced it is not necessary
that a descriptivist deny that moral statements have a certain
function, because, as we shall see in Chapter IV, a descriptivist
may admit that moral statements are used to commend (or whatever)
but deny that this implies that moral statements cannot be derived
from descriptive ones. Although, to be sure, it is dubious that
moral statements necessarily have that function (cf., Chapter V).
Furthermore, as we will argue in Chapter IV, a descriptivist theory
may be correct but nonetheless it may remain an open question as
to whether morality is objective. Consequently, as we have defined
a naturalistic theory as one that if it were true then morality is
objective and yet the truth of descriptivism is not sufficient for
the objectivity of morality, then descriptivism must be distin-
guished from naturalism. A quite general argument for this conclu-
sion can be presented as follows. If we show a statement to be
descriptive, ie., that a statement has a certain type of meaning,
this does not entail that the statement is objective. For example,
let us suppose, with Berkeley, that it is true that there are no
physical things that exist independently of minds, that all that
exists are sense-experiences. We do, of course, have sentences
like 'This is a pen' but such sentences should not lead us to
suppose that there _are_ pens, it is just that we have (misleadingly)
a mode of _describing_ our sense-experiences which employs the refer-
ring term for the supposedly existing object which we take the
sense-experience to be an experience of. Even so a statement
like 'This is a pen' would be _descriptive_, it describes an
experience of the mind, but clearly it would not be _objective_, it
would not say that the world is thus and so but only that our mind

has had such and such an experience and we could have that experience irrespective of how the world was. That is, statements about material objects are, for a subjective idealist, descriptive, but they are not objective.[2]

However, we should not suppose that much of the argument of recent times in meta-ethics which has centred around descriptivism is totally irrelevant to the presentation of a naturalistic theory. And this is for two reasons. Firstly, many of those who have attempted to defend or attack descriptivism have actually had naturalism in mind. Secondly, the truth or falsity of descriptivism is particularly relevant for a certain form of naturalism, what I will call a 'definist theory of naturalism'. This is a theory which maintains that the word 'good' is definable as 'F'. Now if 'good' is definable naturalistically it must at least be definable descriptively. That is to say, although it may be true that if a statement is descriptive it does not follow that it is naturalistic (ie., that it is objective) it must be the case that if a statement is naturalistic then it is descriptive. Hence if we are to show that 'good' is definable naturalistically then we must at least be able to show that it is descriptive because it is a necessary condition of a statement

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2. cf. Berkeley G., Principles of Human Knowledge, sections 1-7, and Mackie J.L., Ethics, Penguin, 1977, page 23.

being naturalistic that it be descriptive.[3]   However, this statement requires some qualification.   I do not wish to deny that a statement which describes some fact in the world (ie., a naturalistic statement) is not also capable of performing a certain function, say, of being prescriptive.   And a descriptive statement is often characterised as one which does not have the function of an evaluation, and the typical function of an evaluation is to prescribe.   Therefore we might conclude that a naturalistic statement is not necessarily descriptive.   However, as it seems to me to be obviously the case that a naturalistic statement describes some feature of the world then it must be incorrect to characterise a descriptive statement as one which does not have the function of prescribing.   Indeed it is possible to argue for this conclusion quite independently and we will consider an argument to this effect in Chapter V.

Having roughly set our bearings I now wish to consider two points in greater detail.   Firstly, we will attempt to examine more closely what will count as a naturalistic theory by examining various statements of naturalism (Chapter II), and secondly, I will delineate what I believe to be the foundation for the alleged fact/value gap which supposedly makes a naturalistic theory impossible (Chapter III).

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3.   There are, however, some difficult cases; eg., presumbably counterfactuals and causal/statistical correlative statements are in our sense naturalistic, but it is not clear that they are descriptive.   What, afterall, does the statement 'There is no significant correlation between apple eating and lung cancer' describe?   Cf. Monro D.H., _Empiricism and Ethics_, Cambridge University Press, 1967, pages 18-19, and Franklin R.L., 'Recent Work in Ethical Naturalism', _American Philosophical Quarterly Monograph_, no.7, page 76.

Before proceeding, however, I should note that the aim of this thesis is only to provide a groundwork for a naturalistic theory of ethics. We will not attempt to give some content to the dummy term 'F' or attempt to state what _is_ the property _F_. This would be to go outside the scope of this thesis. However, as examples of the filling out of 'F' I would offer, 'pleasure', 'prevention of harm', 'performance of function', and 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number': the reader if he so desires may choose that content which he finds the most plausible.

CHAPTER II

THREE THEORIES OF NATURALISM

We have already distinguished, but only briefly, between
two major forms of naturalism: that which maintains that 'good'
is definable as 'F' and that which maintains that good is iden-
tical to F. The first I have labelled a 'definist theory of
naturalism' and the second I will call an 'account theory of
naturalism'. At this juncture I will not be concerned to dis-
cuss an account theory.

I will only discuss three formulations of naturalism even
though there are a number of other formulations. But I don't
think that a discussion of these other formulations would prove
particularly helpful. Now as I have said naturalism is a theory
which attempts to show that moral statements are objectively
determinable. The problem here is that while there might be a
presumption in favour of the view that morality is objective,
given that our ordinary discourse and our ordinary thinking
about moral problems seems to presuppose that morality is
objective, it seems to be difficult to justify that presumption.
Afterall it is not immediately obvious that 'X is good' is
objectively determinable, how would we go about testing and
confirming such a statement? In reply a naturalist says:

(I)   'E' is definable as 'F'.

(II)   'E' is entailed by 'F'.

(III) 'F' is (the expression of) the

necessarily relevant criteria for 'E'.

(Where 'E' is some evaluative (moral) statement or term and 'F'

is some naturalistic statement or term.)

Given the way that 'entails' is commonly used in ethical

theory it would be reasonable to say that (II) collapses into

(I). For example, Hare remarks, "A sentence P entails a sentence

Q if and only if the fact that a person assents to P but dissents

from Q is sufficient criterion for saying that he has misunder-

stood one or other of the sentences."[1] It would not, I think,

be too barbarous a rendition of Hare's view to maintain that

given the sense of 'entails' employed in ethical theory then (II)

would be true if and only if (I) were true.[2] Whether or not this

sense of 'entails' is plausible is something I will not attempt

to determine. But what I will attempt to determine is whether

(III) -- which I take to be a reasonable rendition of Warnock's

thesis as found in his Contemporary Moral Philosophy[3] -- likewise

collapses into (I), or is it a significantly different and new

version of naturalism.

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1. Hare R.M., The Language of Morals, Oxford University Press,
   1964, page 25.

2. This may not be strictly correct. No doubt it would be
   admitted that if 'E' is definable as 'F' then 'E' is
   entailed by 'F'. But it may be denied that if 'E' is
   entailed by 'F' then 'E' is definable as 'F' because, for
   'E' to be entailed by 'F', it is only necessary that 'E'
   be a part of the meaning of 'F'. But I think few of the
   protagonists in meta-ethical theory would deny that if 'E',
   in its full evaluative sense, is entailed by 'F', then 'E',
   in its full evaluative sense, is definable as 'F'.

3. MacMillan, 1970, page 52 ff and especially page 68.

At the outset I think it is important to distinguish two theories which are to be found in Warnock's explication of (III): I will call one the N/M theory (for the 'non-moral/moral' theory) and the other the I/M theory (for the 'immoral/moral' theory).[4] An N/M theory attempts to delineate the moral from the amoral: what entitles us to claim that a judgement, principle, code, etc., is a moral one as opposed to a non-moral one? An I/M theory attempts to delineate the moral and immoral; what entitles us to claim that something is moral as opposed to immoral? An N/M theory is not concerned with whether we are entitled and on what grounds we are entitled to claim that something is good or some-thing is bad, it is only concerned with whether any such statement can be counted as a moral statement as opposed to a statement of etiquette, law, and so on. On the other hand an I/M thesis is concerned with whether we are entitled and on what grounds we are entitled to claim that something is good, etc. Now I take it that (II), for example, is intended as an I/M thesis. That is, it maintains that there are in principle certain naturalistic statements which entail statements like 'X is morally good' or 'X is morally bad' and the concern here is not simply whether we

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4. An exposition of this distinction is to be found in W.K. Frankena's, 'The Concept of Morality', The Definition of Morality, Wallace G. and Walker A.D.M., (ed.), Methuen, 1970, pages 146-173; cf., especially page 147 for the distinction and pages 158 and 164 for an indication of the relationship between an N/M theory and an I/M theory.

can insert the word 'moral' in these statements, but whether
we can insert the words 'good' and 'bad'. Now as it will be
my concern to argue that (III) collapses into (I) it is of
paramount importance that (III) be interpreted as an I/M thesis.

It would appear that Warnock at least begins his argument
as an argument for an N/M thesis. He asks a question which he
believes to be a very fundamental one and which has received
"far less attention than it deserves", viz., "What distin-
guishes a moral view from views of other kinds?"[5] He then con-
siders four replies and maintains that the mark of morality is
its general topic: "what makes a view a _moral_ view is ... its
content, what it is about, the range or type of considerations
on which it is founded."[6] Warnock maintains "that one who pro-
fesses to be making a moral judgement _must_ at least profess that
what is in issue is the good or harm, well-being or otherwise, of
human beings".[7] Now it might appear that by so specifying the
content of morality Warnock's N/M thesis collapses into an I/M
thesis for what will count as a moral view (as opposed to a non-
moral view) is a view which is not immoral. Warnock attempts to
parry this objection. He denies that so specifying the content of
morality would preclude us from regarding as moral codes certain
codes which are barbarous and benighted by arguing that for a

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5. Op.cit., page 52.

6. Ibid, page 54.

7. Ibid, page 57.

code to be a moral one it must be that it is <u>supposed</u> to take
cognizance of human interest.[8] Whether Warnock's reply suffi-
ciently answers the objection will not concern me here. But
Warnock's later argument seems to be at best ambiguous between
whether it is an argument for an N/M thesis or an I/M thesis
-- how do we take the claim that what we regard "as morally
wrong is somehow damaging, and what (we) regard as morally right
is somehow beneficial"[9]? At times he appears to be quite clearly
presenting an I/M thesis; for example, he presents the case of
someone "who holds, while conceding the facts, that, for instance,
it would not be morally wrong for me to induce in my children
addiction to heroin"; any person who argued thus "shows either
that he has not really followed the argument, or that he does not
know what 'morally wrong' means"[10]? But surely it is not just
that the person does not understand the word 'moral' but that he
does not understand the word 'wrong'. Surely it is not simply
that the facts determine that an action is properly the subject
of <u>moral</u> evaluation but that the facts determine that an action
be described as '(morally) wrong'. In fact this brings me to the
general argument I would address against taking (III) as an N/M
thesis.

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8.   <u>Ibid</u>, page 58.
9.   <u>Ibid</u>, page 57.
10. <u>Ibid</u>, page 70.

(III) cannot simply be an N/M thesis for such a thesis would not satisfy the criterion for an adequate ethical theory -- a criterion subscribed to by Warnock, namely, "that moral arguments might in principle be demonstrative, logically cogent"[11]. (I admit that it may be true that Warnock is presenting both an N/M thesis and an I/M thesis; or that an N/M thesis such as Warnock's collapses into an I/M thesis; or that in order to present an I/M thesis we must first have satisfactorily established an N/M thesis; all this may be true but my point here is that Warnock must at least be presenting an I/M thesis). It is because Hare's prescriptivism does not allow for 'demonstrative, logically cogent' moral argument that Warnock argues thus against Hare:

> (Hare's) doctrine does not allow for genuine
> argument ... my giving 'reasons' for my
> expressed prescriptions consists, on (Hare's)
> view, essentially of my referring to and
> relying on further prescriptions of my own:
> what are reasons for me, are, for you, not only
> not necessarily good reasons, but possibly not
> reasons at all.[12]

But equally an N/M thesis does not establish demonstrative and logically cogent moral argument: an N/M thesis can only tell us whether a view is moral or non-moral, not whether we are entitled to hold it or not, not whether the reasons given for it are reasons. Genuine moral argument would only be possible if we

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11. Ibid, page 69
12. Ibid, page 46.

had a correct I/M thesis. Consider two conflicting moral views: in such a situation at most an N/M thesis can establish that either one or the other or both are moral views as opposed to non-moral views. But both views might be moral views and yet still conflict, ie., one person might claim 'X is good' and the other 'X is bad' and both these views may be moral views. An N/M thesis cannot resolve this conflict -- it cannot show which view is correct and which view is wrong. At most an N/M thesis sets the stage, as it were, in that if the views are to conflict then they must both be moral views. Hence as the criterion for an adequate ethical theory is that it demonstrate the possibility of genuine argument in morality then a naturalistic theory which was simply an N/M theory would not be an adequate ethical theory. Therefore, (III) cannot simply be an I/M theory.

But even if it is granted that Warnock is attempting to present a theory such that questions like 'Is X good?' are the subject of demonstrative debate it is by no means clear that (III) collapses into (I). And this is because in his explication of (III) Warnock affirms his allegiance to the 'independence'-thesis. By the 'independence'-thesis it is meant that no-one is logically obliged to accept any given feature as a criterion

of merit.[13] The 'independence'-thesis is supposedly contained
in the claim of the anti-naturalist that the naturalist commits
the 'naturalistic fallacy', viz., that "facts of certain kinds
about the world ... might in principle <u>entail</u> a particular moral
judgement".[14] And this is not just the point that we can dis-
tinguish between description and evaluation, which no doubt we
can, but that description and evaluation are in some important
sense <u>independent.</u> In what sense independent? Independent in
the sense that given any description then any evaluation might
be accepted or rejected without logical <u>inconsistency</u>:

> Evaluation of any kind ... implies the
> acceptance of, and must be done in the
> light of, certain standards, rules,
> principles, or criteria of judgment.
> ... Now no one, it is suggested, is ever
> <u>logically</u> obliged to accept any given
> feature <u>as</u> a standard or criterion, or
> any general proposition <u>as</u> a rule or
> principle of judgment.[15]

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13. <u>Ibid</u>, page 65.

> I am taking this statement to be read as, given that we are
> making an evaluation then in making that evaluation we are
> not logically obliged to adopt any given feature as a criterion
> of merit. That is, if would not be logically inconsistent to
> adopt certain features rather than other "<u>as</u> standards for
> favourable or unfavourable judgement" (ibid, page 65). .For
> example, in making the evaluative judgement that 'This is a
> good apple' I may without logical inconsistency adopt any
> feature whatsoever <u>as</u> a criterion for the goodness of this
> apple. I am <u>not</u> taking this statement to be read as, we are
> not logically obliged to adopt a given feature as a criterion
> of merit <u>because</u> we are not logically obliged to make evalua-
> tive judgements. This would simply be a more general version
> of what I later call the 'undisputed'-thesis and, as I point
> out, the 'undisputed'-thesis must be distinguished from the
> 'independence'-thesis. And from the context I surmise that
> Warnock is here explicating the 'independence'-thesis: certainly,
> it is <u>that</u> thesis and not the 'undisputed'-thesis which is the
> central doctrine of anti-naturalist theory.

14. <u>Ibid</u>, page 61.

15. <u>Ibid</u>, page 65.

Now if we are indeed to take (III) as being consistent with
the 'independence'-thesis then as (II) is inconsistent with the
'independence'-thesis (in fact (II) explicitly denies the
'independence'-thesis) it cannot be that (III) is reducible to
(I). (III) read as a theory which is consistent with the
'independence'-thesis would be a significantly different and new
version of naturalism: it would be a theory whose truth or falsity
would depend not at all on whether we could or could not estab-
lish the existence of the so-called 'naturalistic fallacy'.
(III) does not assert, indeed it explicitly denies that evaluative
statements are entailed by certain naturalistic statements or, in
other words, that evaluative statements are definable naturalistically.

But one might wonder if (III) is to be seen as consistent
with the 'independence'-thesis how it is that (III) would estab-
lish that in principle moral argument is demonstrative and
logically cogent. Warnock's reply is that while it may be true
that there is no _logical_ limit to the features that may count as
a criterion of merit this is not to say that just anything _might_
feature as a criterion of merit.[16] That is, if there is no
logical limit to the features that may count as a criterion of
merit it does not follow that there is not _some_ limit. There _are_
limits, if not logical ones, which arise because to adopt some
feature as a criterion of merit is to '_imply_' some preference
for what has that feature. And while there may be no _logical_

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16. _Ibid_, pages 66-67

limit to what people may want there are, nonetheless, limits to "what a person may understandably ... want".[17] Apparently these considerations even more obviously hold in the case of moral evaluation.

It would be of some benefit to have a somewhat closer look at these (non-logical) limits to the features which may count as a criterion of merit. The limits Warnock envisages arise because, a) to adopt some feature as a criterion of merit is to "imply, in some way appropriate to the particular context, some preference for what has that feature"[18], and b) while there is no logical limit to what a person may want there is a limit to "what a person may understandably ... want". The limit imposed by a) seems to be the result of 'contextual implication'[19] which is certainly not (and most certainly it cannot be for Warnock) entailment. 'Contextual implication' can be explicated thus: it is not logically inconsistent (it would not be self-contradictory) for me to assert that the cat is on the mat and at the same time believe that it is not. Whereas if P entails

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17. _Ibid_, page 66.

18. _Ibid_, page 66.

19. This is a difficult notion and I do not attempt anything like a full explication of it here. However, the notion has been employed previously in ethical theory; cf., especially P.H. Nowell-Smith's, _Ethics_, Pelican, 1969, page 80 ff, and his 'Contextual Implication and Ethical Theory', _Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,_ Supp. Vol., 1962, pages 1-18.

Q then it would be contradictory to assert P and deny Q. And
yet there is something odd about my asserting that the cat is
on the mat and at the same time not believing it. This oddness
is quite accurately captured by an ordinary sense of 'implies'
with which we are all familiar: we do wish to maintain that my
saying the cat is on the mat _implies_ that I believe it is.[20]
As regards the limit imposed by b) Warnock explicitly main-
tains that this is not a logical limit, and, indeed it does
appear to be true that it would not be logically inconsistent
to have or express any want.[21] But it would also appear to be
true that we do not understand some wants because we do not
understand the _people_ who hold or express such wants.

(III) when explicated as a theory which affirms the truth
of the 'independence'-thesis we will term (III)*. It should be
clear that the charge of committing the 'naturalistic fallacy'
is misplaced against (III)* as (III)* does not maintain that an
entailment relation exists between certain facts and certain
moral judgements. And as (III)* denies (II) it should be clear
that (III)* is quite a distinct theory from (I).

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20. cf., Austin, J.L., _How to do Things with Words_, Oxford
     University Press, 2nd edition, 1975, pages 47-52.

21. There are some problematic cases which need not concern
     us here.

However I will argue that there are good reasons for rejecting (III)* as an interpretation of (III) if (III) is intended as a naturalistic theory of ethics. Firstly, if (III)* is put forward as a naturalistic theory then it appears to miss the boat -- it does not achieve what a naturalist would wish to achieve in ethical theory. Secondly, (III)* is consistent with an anti-naturalist theory -- indeed it is a partial statement of a paradigm case of an anti-naturalist theory. And thirdly, there is evidence to suggest that Warnock actually holds another theory which is in conflict with (III)*.

It will be recalled that Warnock objected to Hare's theory because it did not allow for demonstrative and logically cogent argument. Hare's theory was supposedly a theory which in the final analysis only required that a view be consistently applied. But any view could be consistently applied because there were no reasons for a view which must hold for all parties to the dispute: any reason could be given for a view without logical impropriety. But it would seem that (III)* also does not provide us with a theory that posits demonstrative and logically cogent argument in morality. If to have genuine argument in morality requires not only that a view be applied consistently but that certain reasons must count as reasons on pain of logical inconsistency, then it is difficult to see how this is possible if there is no logical limit to the reasons that may be given for a moral judgement. Certainly, to adopt some feature as a criterion of merit may be to imply some preference for what has

that feature, but to have no such preference is not logically inconsistent although it may be contextually odd. Certainly, and perhaps more importantly, there may be a limit to what we may want imposed by 'understandability', in the sense of oddness, bizarrerie. But it is surely one thing to convict something of not being understandable because we find certain people odd and bizarre, and another to convict it of logical impropriety: people cannot want that which is logically unattainable (although they may want that which is logically unattainable when they are not aware that it is) but quite a few people have odd and bizarre wants -- some, but not all, are inmates of psychiatric institutions. It is true that (III)* does maintain that there is more to moral argument than merely ensuring that ones views are consistently applied, but as we shall see it is a moot point whether (III)* is an improvement on Hare's anti-naturalist theory in this regard.

I remarked that (III)* was consistent with an anti-naturalist theory. This is clear once we recognise that Hare's theory is not one that maintains that morality is simply a matter of prescriptivity and universalizability. Rather it is a theory which posits a relation between certain facts and particular moral judgements and in a fashion not dissimilar from (III)*.

Hare argues that in making a moral judgement we made a decision of principle and that is a decision we must make. If someone asks for the justification of a certain principle we

eventually reach the point where "we can only ask him to make up his own mind which way he ought to live; for in the end everything rests on such a decision of principle."[22] It is this aspect of Hare's theory which Warnock takes exception to for its failure to establish that in principle moral argument may be logically cogent: in the end what moral views I hold will be up to me, I must decide on the principles that are to govern the way I ought to live. But for Hare moral argument amounts to more than this. Hare maintains that if someone does not accept the principle upon which our moral decision is based then "let him accept some other, and try to live by it. The sting is in the last clause."[23] The point is we do not just universalize our moral judgements and our moral judgements are not simply prescriptive: our moral judgements do not take place in vacuo nor are they judgements made by agents without desires, wants, and interests. Rather

> the duties which we acknowledge towards
> people ... are acknolwedged because we
> say 'There, but for my good fortune, go
> I. That man is like me in important
> respects; in particular, the same things
> as cause me to suffer cause him to suffer'.[24]

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22. The Language of Morals, page 69.

23. Ibid, page 69 (my emphasis)

24. Freedom and Reason, Oxford University Press, 1965, page 222 (my emphasis).

Hence Hare remarks there are certain principles "which will remain acceptable unless human nature and the state of the world undergo a most fundamental change".[25] So certain facts *are* relevant to the moral judgements we make -- they do forge some limit to the principles we may adopt. But what *sort* of limit?

It would appear that Hare does not envisage that the limit is a *logical* one. Firstly, Hare denies that anything he has said requires that an *entailment* relation exists between our wants, interests, etc., and the moral judgements we make: his argument "does not involve any sort of deduction of a moral judgement ... from a factual statement about people's inclinations, interests, &c. ..... It is not a question of a factual statement about a person's inclinations being inconsistent with a moral judgement."[26] Rather the relation "is not unlike that between a belief that the cat is on the mat, and an inability to accept the proposition that the cat is not on the mat."[27] Secondly, Hare does not believe that there is any logical limit to what we may want or desire. He considers the case of a person who expresses an eccentric want and notes that in such a case "we can, indeed, get as far as accusing him of having eccentric

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25. *The Language of Morals*, page 72.
26. *Freedom and Reason*, page 108.
27. *Ibid*, page 109.

desires"[28] but we cannot get as far as accusing him of being logically inconsistent: "logic does not prevent me wanting to be put in a gas chamber if a Jew."[29] And Hare goes on, "It is, indeed, in the logical possibility of wanting anything ... that the 'freedom' which is alluded to in my title (Freedom and Reason) essentially consistes."[30]

I conclude therefore the Hare would be in substantial agreement with (III)*: (III)* is certainly not inconsistent with his theory. But Hare must argue that (III)*, as much as his own theory, does not provide us with the possibility of demonstrative and logically cogent argument in morality, at least in the sense that (III)* does not show that certain reasons or criteria must (logically) be adopted by one who claims to have presented a correct moral judgement. Certain judgements will be odd and given the nature of the world and ourselves very rare -- but this does not amount to showing that such views are logically incoherent. Now Warnock wishes to claim that there can be logically cogent argument in morality. If he means by this only that we can show certain views to be odd and rare then he is not, except trivially and terminologically, in disagreement with Hare. On the other hand, if he means that a person who does not

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28. Ibid, page 110.
29. Ibid, page 110.
30. Ibid, page 110.

adopt certain criteria as criteria of moral merit can be shown to be guilty of logical inconsistency, then (III)* does not provide him with such a thesis. I think it is important to note this point. One of the primary points in contention between the naturalist and an anti-naturalist like Hare is whether we can show that the 'fanatic' -- the person of eccentric desires (the person who if he, were a Jew would want to be put in a gas chamber) -- is guilty of logical inconsistency. A naturalist believes that we can whereas Hare argues that in the final analysis we cannot. And as (III)* cannot show 'fanaticism' is logically incoherent then (III)* will not suffice as a naturalistic theory of ethics.

I mentioned previously that there is textual evidence to suppose that Warnock in fact holds another thesis which we'll term (III)**. (III) interpreted as (III)** would maintain that there is a logical limit to the features that may figure as a criterion of merit, ie., an entailment relation exists between certain facts and particular moral judgements. If we recall that 'entailment' was explicated in terms of meaning equivalence then several of Warnock's statements are significant. I have already mentioned Warnock's example of the person who while admitting the facts does not agree that it would be wrong for me to induce heroin addiction in my children: such a person according to Warnock does not know what 'morally wrong' means. He also states that there are "considerations of good or harm to people which ... figure analytically in setting moral

standards and moral principles".[31] Furthermore, ignoring

essentialist interpretations of necessity, I cannot see what

would be the force of the word 'necessity' in (III) other than

that it signifies an analytic relation holds between certain

factual criteria and our moral judgements.

But, despite Warnock's apparent protestations to the

contrary, (III)** is inconsistent with the 'independence'-thesis.

Warnock recognizes this tension and argues:

> if we say, as we have in effect just done,
> that certain features must necessarily be
> accepted as criteria of _moral_ merit, we
> can and must go on at once to concede that
> no one, of course, is obliged by logic to
> engage in moral judgment or debate.[32]

But here, I think, Warnock has equated the 'independence'-thesis

with a quite different thesis, what we'll call the 'undisputed'-

thesis. We can set these theses out as follows :

'Independence'-thesis;

> affirmation -- 'one is _not_ logically
> obliged to accept any given feature
> as a criterion of merit',
>
> denial -- 'one _is_ logically obliged
> to accept a given feature as a
> criterion of merit'.

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31. Op.cit., page 71 (my emphasis)

32. Ibid, page 68.

'Undisputed'-thesis;

> affirmation -- 'one is not logically
> obliged to engage in moral judgement
> or debate',
>
> denial -- 'one is logically obliged
> to engage in moral judgement or debate'.

I call the latter thesis the 'undisputed'-thesis because to my
knowledge this thesis has not been in dispute between Hare and
Warnock. It is certainly not the thesis in dispute in the con-
text of the present argument: we are concerned with whether
Warnock's thesis is consistent with the 'independence'-thesis and
not with whether it is consistent with the 'undisputed'-thesis.
And clearly the 'undisputed'-thesis must be distinguished from
the 'independence'-thesis. The 'independence'-thesis makes a
statement about the relationship that holds between the criterion
and the evaluation -- to affirm the 'independence'-thesis is to
maintain that there is no logical limit to the criteria we may
adopt as criteria of merit. Whereas the 'undisputed'-thesis makes
a statement about the evaluator and whether or not he must
(logically) make moral judgements. Although I will only be
concerned to show that one could deny the 'independence'-thesis
and yet affirm the 'undisputed'-thesis nothing appears to follow
for the 'undisputed'-thesis from the affirmation or denial of the
'independence'-thesis.

One could deny the 'independence'-thesis, ie., we could
maintain that 'one is logically obliged to accept a given

feature as a criterion of merit', and yet accept the 'undisputed'-thesis, ie., 'one is not logically obliged to engage in moral judgement or debate' because it would be consistent to maintain that we are logically obliged to accept a given feature as a criterion of merit, if we are prepared, which of course we may not, to engage in moral judgement or debate. In other words if it is true that there is a logical limit to the features that may count as criteria of merit it does not follow (logically) that people will make judgements about (moral) merit.

Now anyone who advanced (III)** must deny the 'independence'-thesis and yet they might quite rightly accept the 'undisputed'-thesis. However, it would be a mistake to identify an acceptance of the 'undisputed'-thesis with an acceptance of the 'independence'-thesis. It is only by means of this mistaken identification that we could claim that (III)** is consistent with the 'independence'-thesis. I would argue that Warnock is guilty of this misidentification: in fact, he accepts the 'undisputed'-thesis and denies the 'independence'-thesis.[33]

I will now briefly consider two arguments that might be advanced in order to rebut the claim that Warnock in fact denies the 'independence'-thesis. Firstly, it might be replied that

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33. He says, in fact, "That there are, as it were, necessary criteria of moral value does not imply that anyone, let alone everyone, necessarily evaluates things with reference to those criteria; it is only that we must do so if we are prepared, as we may not be, to consider the question 'from the moral point of view'." Ibid, page 68.

Warnock only denies the 'independence'-thesis as regards an N/M theory and not as regards an I/M theory. That is to say, his claim is only that one is logically obliged to accept a given feature as a criterion of merit if one's view is to be classified as moral as opposed to non-moral but not that one is logically obliged to accept a given feature as a criterion of merit if one's view is to be classified as moral as opposed to immoral. But I have argued that Warnock's thesis must be interpreted, at least, as an I/M theory and, indeed, that there is evidence to suggest that he is presenting such a thesis. Secondly, it might be replied that Warnock only affirms the 'independence'-thesis as regards evaluation in general and denies the 'independence'-thesis as regards moral evaluation: Warnock's comments on page 68 of Contemporary Moral Philosophy would certainly suggest such a reply. Thus Warnock would affirm 'one is not logically obliged to accept any given feature as a criterion of merit' and also 'one is logically obliged to accept a given feature as a criterion of moral merit'. But surely to adopt a certain feature as a criterion of moral merit is to adopt it as a criterion of merit. The apparent contradiction is only resolved if we modify the formulation of the 'independence'-thesis to read 'one is not, always, logically obliged to accept any given feature as a criterion of merit'. While I accept this point in so far as it shows that (III)** is not inconsistent with the 'independence'-thesis as thus defined it now becomes clear that any claim to the effect that (III)** is consistent with the 'independence'-thesis has no bearing on my claim that (III)** is reducible to (I).

For (III)** does assert that there is a logical limit to the features that we may adopt as criteria of moral merit, and hence that an entailment relation exists between certain naturalistic statements and our moral judgements, and therefore that moral statements are definable naturalistically. The 'independence'-thesis understood as a thesis which does not concern morality is quite irrelevant to my argument. Of course, it remains an open question whether indeed the 'independence'-thesis is irrelevant as regards moral evaluation for it has been maintained that there is some unbridgeable gap between evaluation (of which moral evaluation is a sub-class) and description such that moral statements cannot be defined naturalistically. We will examine the foundation for this claim in the next chapter of this thesis. All I wish to conclude here is that, ignoring account theories of naturalism, (III) is not a significantly different and new form of naturalism and that the central thesis of naturalism is (I).

CHAPTER III

EMPIRICISM, FACT, and VALUE

The reply of the anti-naturalist to the naturalist who
maintain that 'good' is definable as 'F' is that the naturalist
in attempting such a definition has committed what has become
known as the 'naturalistic fallacy'. There have been a number
of ways attempted to show _what_ is involved in committing the
naturalistic fallacy and that indeed that such a fallacy exists.
Two of the more popular methods will be examined in this thesis
and I will argue that both are unsuccessful. At this juncture
I wish to examine what I believe to be the basis of the alleged
fact/value gap which generates the naturalistic fallacy.

In his book, _Empiricism and Ethics_, Monro remarks:

> We know how to justify the empirical assertions
> that are the starting-point of reasoning about
> matters of fact. We justify these by reference
> to observation, the evidence of the senses.
> Moral propositions cannot be verified by the
> evidence of the senses ... the meaning of an
> empirical assertion is always something that
> can be observed: all empirical assertions can
> always be reduced, without remainder, to some
> observation statement, or set of observation
> statements.[1]

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1.   Cambridge University Press, 1967, pages 11-12.

Therefore, as the meaning of a factual statement is 'always something that can be observed', whereas the meaning of a moral statement is not, then it will follow that moral statements are not definable in factual terms. As Monro maintains:

> That is the way in which the contrast
> between questions of fact and questions
> of value may be said to generate the
> traditional problems of moral philosophy.[2]

We should note that there are two claims involved in the remarks made by Monro. Firstly, there is an epistemological claim, viz., that factual, but not moral statements, can be known to be true by the evidence of the senses. Secondly, there is a claim about meaning, viz., that the meaning of a factual statement, but not a moral statement, is always something that may be observed. However, these two claims are, for the empiricist, not independent. If a statement is to be verified or known to be true then we must know the meaning of the statement (although, of course, it does not follow if we know the meaning of the statement then we know that the statement is true). Consequently, if, as the empiricist would have it, questions of fact are settleable by experience, then if we are to know or verify a certain statement, eg., 'This is red', then the meaning of 'red' must be given by experience. (Because it is necessary that we know

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2. Ibid, page 11.

the meaning of 'red' if we are to know or verify 'This is red'.)
The theory of knowledge and the theory of meaning are here
opposite sides of the same empiricist coin.

Now I think Monro is correct in claiming that there is an
implicit empirist epistemology underlying the alleged fact/
value gap (at least in modern meta-ethical theory). And it is
interesting to note in this regard two points made by Hare (a
supporter of the putative fact/value gap). Of the verifica-
tionist theory of meaning Hare remarks, "this is a very promis-
ing account of one of the ways in which a certain class of
sentences (the typical indicatives) have meaning"[3] and of the
sentence 'A is right' Hare says, "It is not a statement verifi-
able by observation"[4]. Furthermore, in The Language of Morals[5]
Hare goes on to consider in some detail the comparison that has
often been made between 'good' and "typical simple property words
like 'red'".

Hare maintains that it is characteristic of words like
'red' that we can explain their meaning in a certain way, and,
following Wittgenstein he maintains that in this way we can
investigate the logical character of words. Now the point to

3.   The Language of Morals, page 8.
4.   Ibid, page 6.
5.   Ibid, Chapter 6.

be noted is that in this sort of enterprise, as Hare himself

notes, we are interested not simply in how we might in fact

get the meaning wrong during any learning process, but we are

interested in all the logically possible mistakes. As Hare

says, "what mistakes anyone actually makes or avoids is

irrelevant". Assuming that a learner of the English language

knows no English then according to Hare:

> If we had to explain the meaning of the
> word 'red' to such a person, we might
> proceed as follows: we might take him
> to see pillar-boxes, tomatoes, underground
> trains, etc., and say, as we showed him
> each object, 'That is red'.[6]

And we might also show him things which were like the previous

objects in certain respects but unlike them in not being red.

Supposedly in this way the learner would become conversant with

the meaning of the word 'red'. A little further into the chapter

Hare writes:

> you explain the meaning of 'red' ... by
> getting the learner to have certain
> experiences and telling him that the word
> 'red' is properly applied to the objects
> of them.[7]

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6. Ibid, page 95.

7. Ibid, page 106.

This should not lead us to suppose that the meaning of 'red' is something which is private. According to Hare the meaning of 'red' is normally something which is public and commonly accepted such that when I use the word 'red' someone hearing me use that expression will find (unless I am an eccentric) that other people use it in the same way.[8]

Similar ideas are expressed by Hare in Freedom and Reason[9]. There Hare asks, "What is it for a term to have descriptive meaning?". According to Hare meaning is or involves the use of an expression according to rules and the kind of rule will determine the kind of meaning. By a rule he does not mean very simple and general rules which could be formulated in words but rather a consistency of practice which is the condition of intelligibility. Well, what kind of rules are relevant to descriptive meaning? Once again it appears to be those rules which are learnt ostensively. In fact the notion of ostensive definition is invoked to account for the universalizability of descriptive terms: the determination of the relevant respects of similarity of the objects to which the descriptive terms applies are supposed to be, in the final analysis, explicable by ostensive explanation.

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8. Ibid, page 114. This statement presages Hare's point that the meaning of 'red' (and, indeed, any word which has a meaning) is rule-governed. For if it is, then by the very notion of a rule, the meaning will be public and commonly accepted: there will be a consistency of practice — other people will use the word in the same way that I do — and a consistency of practice is the condition of a word's intelligibility.

9. Chapter 2, expecially pages 7-15.

Similarly, in his article 'Descriptivism', Hare says of the descriptive term ∅ that we could "teach someone to recognise the ∅ taste by lining up samples of the liquids tasting ∅ and others having different tastes, and getting him to taste them, telling him in each case whether the sample tasted ∅ or not".[10]

Hare does not believe that all words follow this sort of meaning rule. For example, 'this', 'Quaxo' (a proper name), 'it', and so on do not because they refer to or name rather than describe.[11] The interesting question is whether 'good' follows this sort of (descriptive) meaning rule.

It is interesting at this point to compare the views of Ayer in his paper 'Basic Propositions'[12] with the views of Hare just delineated. A few points of comparison will suffice. Both writers are concerned to discover when we could be mistaken in

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10. Reprinted in, Essays on the Moral Concepts, Macmillan, 1972, page 58.

11. The Language of Morals, page 95 and Freedom and Reason, page 9.

12. In his Philosophical Essays, London, 1954, page 105 ff. I intend this observation to be no more than a brief historical remark which is germane especially in the light of Hare's claim that the verificationist theory of meaning was a promising account of indicative meaning.

the use of a simple descriptive term and they are both con-
cerned to point out that they are aware that they must distin-
guish between describing and naming and both regard that what
they have said is a correct account of the former. Ayer and
Hare subscribe to the view that descriptive terms are universal-
izable and that the descriptive term is correlated with an actual
situation or experience by means of a meaning rule which is learnt
ostensively.   And for both writers to learn this meaning rule is
to learn the meaning of the term.

Now that the meaning of a term can be taught ostensively
seems to be offered by Hare as a sufficient condition of its
being descriptive. For he says that if we could explain the
meaning of 'good' simply by getting a person to have certain
experiences and then telling him that the word 'good' is properly
applied to them (or to the objects of them) then "this would make
'good' just like 'red'".[13]   The obvious question then is whether
a word such as 'good' can or cannot have its meaning explained
in this way. Hare offers an argument which he believes shows
that it cannot.

In The Language of Morals[14] Hare considers the distinction
that has often been made between 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental'
goodness; this distinction is drawn as part of some naturalist

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13.   The Language of Morals, page 106.

14.   page 98 ff.

programs. And, according to Hare, it is by means of this dis-
tinction that we are supposed to see that goodness is a common
ostensible property.

For the sake of argument Hare assumes that 'good' means
in its instrumental use 'conducive to the end that it is used
for'. Now can we teach this phrase (the purported synonym for
'good') ostensively? It would seem not for the various 'per-
formances' of different things which we call 'the ends for which
the objects are used' have little in common: the performance of
a watch, an auger, a screwdriver, etc., which we may call 'the
ends for which the objects are used' have nothing in common
despite this common designation.

Furthermore Hare notes that there are some 'functional'
words, eg., 'auger', which to understand the meaning of these
words we must understand their ends: to understand the meaning
of 'auger' we must know that it is an instrument for boring holes.
Thus Hare concludes we cannot even teach the end of something in
particular. ostensively For consider, what would be involved in teaching
someone the purpose of, for example, an auger? Now we might try
to teach this person ostensively, say, by showing him people
boring holes with augers. But, as Hare notes, this may not prove
successful because :

> If he thought they were just trying to
> exercise their wrists, we should not be

able by this demonstration to explain
to him what an auger is for.[15]

So Hare's argument against 'good' being ostensively
definable is as follows. Let us allow that 'good' means, at
least in its instrumental use, 'conducive to the end that it is
used for'. But even if 'good' could be thus defined the definiens
is not explicable by ostention. And this is so even in the case
of some particular object. Therefore, Hare concludes, <u>even if</u>
'good' means 'conducive to the end that it is used for' it is not
a term like 'red', a typical, simple, descriptive term that is
ostensively definable.

* * * * * * * * * * *

I wish to criticize (in a way similar to how Hare has
criticized his opponents over 'ends') the empiricist view that
we could come to understand the meaning of a term, even a simple
property word like 'red' by means of ostensive definition. One
could not come to understand the expression 'red' just simply
through someone pointing to an expanse of redness while saying
'This is red' unless much else were understood first. For
example, in this learning process the learner must know that we
are talking and not simply uttering noises, that we were describ-
ing and not doing the multifarious other things that we may do

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15. <u>Ibid</u>, page 101.

with language, that we were describing the _colour_ of the expanse
and not its shape, area, and so on. Hence the notion of a
descriptive meaning rule as explicated by Hare is a far too
simple-minded notion and _no_ term simply gets its meaning in that
way.

The point here is that the understanding of a simple property
word cannot be derived simply from having a number of experiences
from which the idea of, for example, 'red' is abstracted. For an
experience to be one _of_ red it is necessary that the learner
should already know what it is for something to be red: ie., the
person must have the concept of 'red'. Now I am not denying that
we need experiences in order to come to know what it is for some-
thing to be red because to know what it is for something to be red
is not only to know how 'red' fits in with our concepts of colour,
it is also to know what things count as red. Up to a point, but
only up to a point, the idealist rationalist is correct in
claiming that knowledge of things is conceptually mediated know-
ledge as any knowledge presupposes a system of concepts.

It will be recalled that the notion of unversalizability
was explicated in terms of the relation of similarity which in
turn was to be explained ostensively. Now as I have briefly
mentioned this analysis will not suffice unless it is presupposed
that the learner already knows the relevant respects in which
the objects are supposed to be similar. For example, take Hare's
red tomato and red pillar-box: in this case the relation of

similarity, S, will hold between the red tomato and the red

pillar-box but the red tomato will <u>also</u> have S to a green tomato.

Thus it is not possible to characterize the relevant respects by

pointing to a thing called 'red' and saying that 'red' applies

to anything that has S to that thing.

Now it might be thought that I have done Hare an injustice

because surely the situation could be improved upon if, with

Hare, we ostensively explain over a larger number of objects.

But once again it is clear that this will not suffice for S

could still hold over a red tomato, a red pillar-box, an under-

ground train, and a purple kite for all of these objects fall

under the terms 'solid', 'extended', 'shaped', etc..

And it does not seem that this difficulty for Hare is even

soluble in principle for no matter how many examples we use it

does not appear that we can delimit S in this way. Consider

Wittgenstein's example of developing a number series:[16] we

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16. Cf., for example, <u>Philosophical Investigations</u>, Blackwell,
     3rd edition, 1976, Part 1, # 185-190. Also Kant argues:

> If understanding in general is to be viewed as
> the faculty of rules, judgement will be the
> faculty of subsuming under rules; that is of
> distinguishing whether something does or does
> not stand under a given rule (<u>casus datae legis</u>).
> General logic contains, and can contain, no rules
> for judgment .... If it sought to give general
> instructions how we are to subsume under these rules,
> that is, to distinguish whether something does or does
> not come under them, that could only be by means of
> another rule. This in turn, for the very reason that
> it is a rule, again demands guidance from judgment ...
> judgment is a perculiar talent which can be practised
> only .... It is the specific quality of so-called
> mother-wit.

<u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>, trans. by N. Kemp-Smith, Macmillan,
page 177.

develop the series 1, 2, 3 ... etc. up to, say, 3001 and we instruct someone to 'go on in the same way'. Now in practice no doubt he would continue 3002, 3003, etc., but we are in agreement with Hare that what the person <u>actually</u> does is irrelevant; we are interested in what 'mistakes' it is logically possible for him to make. Our pupil might go on 1, 2, 3, ... 3001, 1,2, 3, ... 3001 or even 2, 3, 4, ... 3002. And if he did this we would have no right to say that he did not continue <u>as we started</u> although obviously he has not gone on <u>as we would have gone on</u>. For if we understand that to continue a series is to generate numbers according to a principle then what he has done is to continue a series. That he has made a mistake is because he has not continued according to the principle (rule) that we were using, but there is nothing 'out there', as it were, which determines that one rule or the other must (logically) be adopted. We can also make the point without recourse to the example of a number series. Let us suppose that I instruct someone to place before me something which is the same as this object (a cup) which is on my desk. He might then place before me a pen because the rule that he has adopted for what will count as the same as the object I pointed to is that the object is blue coloured or even that it is on my desk. He might even fail to place before me a cup from another room <u>because</u> that object is from another room. And the possibility that he will not adopt the rule I adopted is always open no matter how many objects I show him.

I conclude therefore that there is something seriously
wrong with Hare's attempt to distinguish fact from value by
saying that the factual is that which is simply confirmed by the
evidence of the senses and that the meaning of a factual state-
ment is given by experience whereas neither this epistemological
nor meaning claim is true of value. Of course there may be other
ways of marking the fact/value gap, and we will examine these, but
I will argue that these other means are unsuccessful. In parti-
cular I will point out, as has MacIntyre, that there is an
ambiguity on Hare's whole enterprise. As MacIntyre argues:

> When Hare characterizes evaluation and
> prescription, is he in fact defining
> these terms in such a way as to protect
> his thesis against possible counter-
> examples? If we produce an example of
> 'ought' which does not entail a first-
> person imperative, or an example of
> 'good' in which the criteria are not a
> matter of choice, will Hare be able to
> reply that these are simply nonprescrip-
> tive and nonevaluative uses of 'ought'
> and 'good'? Hare certainly recognizes
> that there are some nonprescriptive and
> nonevaluative uses. But if he has simply
> legislated so that evaluation and prescrip-
> tion shall be what he says they are, why
> should we assent to his legislation? If
> he is not legislating, then we must have
> the class of evaluative and prescriptive
> expressions delimitted for us independently

<u>of Hare's characterization, in a way that
Hare himself never delimits it.</u>[17]

Now where I disagree with MacIntyre is in his statement that

Hare never delimits the evaluative independently of the central

tenets of his prescriptivist theory. He <u>does</u> provide an indepen-

dent characterization as I have argued above, but this charac-

terization is highly suspect.

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17. MacIntyre, A., <u>A Short History of Ethics</u>, Routledge and
     Kegan Paul, 1966, pages 262-263 (my emphasis); and cf.,
     Mary Warnock's remark that there is a danger in the central
     prescriptivist claim that evaluative statements entail an
     imperative.

> Either the inference rule just stated will turn
> out to be tautological, since no use of 'good' will
> be counted as fully prescriptive unless the
> inference is possible; or, if more uses of
> 'good' are to count as prescriptive, then the
> inference will simply not be possible. That is
> to say, as so often happens with philosophical
> principles, there is the danger that the principle
> will turn out to be either uninteresting, because
> tautological, or false. I do not think that Hare
> means to restrict very severely the uses of 'good'
> which would count as evaluative in the proper
> sense, or prescriptive; and therefore I think
> that his claim that one must always be able to
> infer an imperative from any such use is simply
> mistaken.

<u>Ethics Since 1900</u>, Oxford University Press, 2nd edition,
1966, page 90.
Of course, the problem involves not just what will count
as an <u>evaluative</u> expression, but also as to what will
count as a <u>descriptive</u> expression. As Philippa Foot
remarks, anti-naturalist programs seemed to have proceeded
by assuming that the notion of description was quite clear,
when in fact "A word or sentence seems to be called
'descriptive' on account of the fact that it is <u>not</u>
emotive, does <u>not</u> commend, does <u>not</u> entail an imperative,
and so on according to the theory involved." ('Moral
Arguments', <u>Mind</u>, volume 67, 1958.)

Furthermore this classical empiricist view of how language relates to the world seems incapable of accounting for quite a large part of apparently fact stating discourse, namely, those statements which involve reference to some 'institution' -- what Searle has termed 'institutional' facts.[18] These are facts which presuppose the existence of some human institution. Thus a football game certainly involves a certain set of physical movements and so on but to specify just those physical movements is not to specify the event _as_ a football game. The existence of institutional facts presents a special problem for Hare (and other anti-naturalists) because according to Searle some institutional facts have constitutive rules which involve obligations, commitments, and so on. Therefore from a factual statement (one which reports some institutional fact) we should be able to derive some evaluative statement. We will examine if this is indeed possible in the next chapter.

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18. _Speech Acts_, Cambridge University Press, 1969, pages 50-53. Our discussion would suggest that there are in some sense no 'brute' facts and therefore that the classical empiricist view cannot account for _any_ part of our fact stating discourse.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTIVISM : DERIVING 'OUGHT' FROM 'IS'

An observation which Hume believed "wou'd subvert all vulgar systems of morality"[1] was that a proposition joined by an 'ought' or 'ought not' could not be deduced from propositions joined by an 'is'. An imperceptible change from an 'is' to an 'ought' was, according to Hume, of the last consequence: "For as this ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd". The point here[2] seems to be that an 'ought' expresses an entirely different relation to an 'is', ie., that 'ought' and 'is' have different meanings, and that as a valid deductive inference can only be drawn where the conclusion 'contains' the premises, then an 'ought' conclusion cannot be drawn from a set of 'is' premises. This observation of Hume's has hardened into a dictum and has become known as Hume's Law. Its

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1.   A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, page 470.

2.   Although this is certainly debatable. But my interest here is less in Humean exegesis than in how his comments have been construed and used by later meta-ethicists. A collection of papers discussing Hume's observation are to be found in Hudson, W.D. (ed.), The Is/Ought Question, Macmillan, 1969.

influence is still to be found in modern meta-ethical theory.

For example, Hare has affirmed the following rule:

> No imperative conclusion can be validly
> drawn from a set of premises which does not
> contain at least one imperative.[3]

And in this 'logical' rule is supposedly "to be found the basis
of Hume's celebrated observation on the impossibility of deduc-
ing an 'ought'-proposition from a series of 'is'-propositions".
Furthermore, Hare's rule is supposedly "confirmed by an appeal
to general logical considerations. For it is now generally
regarded as true by definition that (to speak roughly at first)
nothing can appear in the conclusion of a valid deductive
inference which is not, from their very meaning, implicit in
the conjunction of the premises."[4]

Now Hume's Law, as it stands, seems to be clearly wrong if
we take it as a mere grammatical thesis. For from the statement
that "Doing X _is_ wrong" it surely follows that "One _ought_ not to
do X" given some appropriate rendering of 'wrong' and 'ought'.

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3. _The Language of Morals_, pages 28-29, and cf. _Freedom and_
   Reason, page 108. The relevance of this rule to our current
   discussion is immediately apparent if we realize that 'ought'-
   propositions are, according to Hare, imperatives.

4. _The Language of Morals_, page 32, and cf. the previous
   explication of the notion of 'entails'.

But champions of Hume's Law regard such an objection as
irrelevant because apparently there is, so to speak, a con-
cealed 'ought' in the predicate 'wrong', and therefore "Doing
X is wrong" is not an 'is' proposition in the intended sense.
For the sake of clarity maybe we should reformulate Hume's Law
as that from the conjunction of a set of descriptive or factual
statements (which typically contain an 'is') we cannot deductively
infer an evaluative conclusion (a typical evaluative conclusion
would contain an 'ought'). Of course, even this statement of
Hume's Law is not all that clear because it is not readily apparent
just what are the criteria for counting a statement as descrip-
tive and what are the criteria for counting it as evaluative;
obviously what will not do as a criterion for counting a state-
ment as evaluative, for example, is that it is a statement which
cannot be deduced from a set of descriptive premises for this
would be to beg the question against vulgar systems of morality.
However, in the main, we will attempt to use the terms 'descrip-
tive' and 'evaluative' at a pre-theoretical level, ie., in the
discussion that follows we will employ statements which are agreed
by both supporters and detractors of Hume's Law to be descriptive
or evaluative, irrespective of the theoretical reasons that may
be given for so calling them.

The argument _for_ Hume's Law has, I think, in recent times,
taken two forms. One is that an evaluative statement (if
sincerely affirmed) must guide action, whereas a descriptive or
factual statement does not. This putative fact is then coupled
with the speech act thesis that the illocutionary force of an

utterance is to be counted as part of the meaning of the word

or morpheme which is a constitutent part of that utterance.

Add to this the particular doctrine on inference we have quoted

from Hare previously, and one arrives at the conclusion that no

evaluative statement can be deduced from a set of descriptive

statements. But, as I will argue in a later chapter, this

argument, which I term "the Argument from Motivation", is singu-

larly unsuccessful. The second form of argument for Hume's Law

can be put as follows. The criteria for the application of an

evaluative term (sometimes called the evaluative term's descrip-

tive meaning) are essentially matters of choice; thus for any

evaluative term E while it may be applied according to the

descriptive criteria a, b, c it is always (logically) possible

for someone to admit that something is a, b, c and yet deny that

it is E. Therefore, we cannot determine that X is E from the

premises "Whatever is a, b, c is E" and "X is a, b, c" because

it is always possible for someone to deny "Whatever is a, b, c

is E". The point here is not so much that to derive an evaluative

conclusion from a set of descriptive premises would involve one

in an invalid argument, but that it is always possible to deny

the requisite major premise. It is up to the evaluator to <u>decide</u>

that whatever is a, b, c is E; this is to decide on a <u>principle</u>

of evaluation, or, as in the case of moral evaluation, to decide

on a moral principle. Thus says Hare, "The gravest error ... of

the type of theory which I am criticizing (naturalism) is that

it leaves out of reasoning about our conduct a factor which is

the very essence of morals. This factor is decision."[5] Support

for the claim that it is logically possible to deny that "What-

ever is a, b, c is E" is drawn from the fact that if it were not

logically possible to deny such a statement then there should be

some formulation of "Whatever is a, b, c is E" which is analytic.

But that there is any statement of that form which _is_ analytic

is supposedly shown false by the Open Question Argument or some

reformulation of it.[6] But as I argue in a later chapter the

Open Question Argument is also unsuccessful.

But in this chapter I do not wish to directly attack the

arguments _for_ Hume's Law. Rather I will attempt to present

counter-examples to it. That is, I will attempt to show that we

can derive an evaluative conclusion from a set of descriptive

premises by way of actual example. The particular derivation

we will consider is John Searle's and I will argue that his

derivation is successful despite the recent criticism it has

received.

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5.   _Ibid_, pages 54-55

6.   For a reformulation cf. _ibid_, Chapter 5. In this reformula-
     tion the basis of The Open Question Argument is to be found
     in the Argument from Motivation. As Hare remarks:

     > It seems to me that Moore's argument was not merely
     > plausible; it rests, albeit insecurely upon a secure
     > foundation; there is indeed something about the way
     > in which, and the purposes for which, we use the word
     > 'good' which makes it impossible to hold the sort of
     > position which Moore was attacking (ie. naturalism).
     > _The Language of Morals_, pages 83-84.

Searle's derivation first appeared in an article entitled "How to derive 'ought' from 'is'"[7] and appears slightly modified in his book Speech Acts.[8] An important point to note is that Searle maintains that the alleged descriptive/evaluative dich-tomy is the result of a misidentification of two distinctions:

(1) between two types of illocutionary forces, the
     descriptive and evaluative,   and

(2) between that which is objectively decidable as true
     or false and that which is not, but is rather a
     matter of opinion.

It has been assumed that an utterance which has the illocution-ary force of an evaluation cannot (or its constituent sentence cannot) be entailed by factual premises.[9] But, Searle, by way of actual example, attempts to show that an evaluative conclusion can be deduced from a set of factual premises.

Before examining the derivation of an 'ought' from an 'is' I will briefly consider a related argument which successfully derives a 'valid' from an 'is', despite this derivation's alleged impossibility according to some anti-naturalists. The

7. Reprinted in Foot, P., Theories of Ethics, Oxford University
    Press, 1967, pages 101-114.

8. Pages 175-198.

9. Ibid, page 187.

reasons for examining the 'is'/'valid' derivation are three-
fold. Firstly, because 'ought' seems to hold such a mesmeric
force for some philosophers I hope that by the presentation of
an incontrovertible example of the derivation of an evaluative
statement from a set of descriptive statements that the subse-
quent derivation of an 'ought' from an 'is' will be that much
more palatable. Secondly, the 'is'/'valid' derivation nicely
illustrates the misidentification that has taken place with the
two distinctions mentioned earlier. Thirdly, I propose to use
the 'is'/'valid' derivation as a suitably parallel argument to
the 'is'/'ought' derivation in order to rebut and also to high-
light certain objections to the 'is'/'ought' derivation. I
should add that the 'is'/'valid' derivation is in no way essen-
tial to the 'is'/'ought' derivation, it is just that I believe
it will prove helpful.

J.O. Urmson has said:

> I take it that once stated it is obvious
> that 'valid' is an evaluative expression.
> To speak of a good argument is in most
> contexts equivalent to speaking of a valid
> argument, for example, it would be ridicu-
> lous if, when asked to produce an argument
> to support a position which I had taken up,
> I were to enquire whether valid or invalid
> arguments would be preferred. It seems

that any detailed argument on this
point would be otiose.[10]

Certainly, whether or not further argument would be otiose,

Urmson would find quite a few people who are in agreement with

him. For example, Barker, in an attempt to show that the prob-

lem of induction is a pseudo-problem, argues that there is an

analytic relation, via probability, between induction and

rationality. But as Barker points out:

> In saying that a conclusion is probable
> one is not merely describing it: also
> an essential part of what one is doing
> is taking one's stand in favour of
> believing it.[11]

And Salmon has agreed (although he disagrees with Barker that

the problem of induction is a pseudo-problem), "that terms like

'probable' and 'rational' sometimes function as terms of cognitive

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10. 'Some Questions Concerning Validity', reprinted in
    The Justification of Induction, (ed.) Swinburne, R.,
    Oxford University Press, 1974, page 79. For an argu-
    ment against treating 'valid' as an evaluative expression
    cf. Max Black's 'Paradigm Cases and Evaluative Words',
    Dialectica, 1973, pages 262-272, especially pages 266-267.
    I should add that Urmson is aware that not in all contexts
    does 'valid' indicate preferability or satisfactoriness.
    'Valid' is a specialized evaluative term; "it is used
    only to evaluate arguments and then only from a certain
    point of view - an invalid argument might indeed be pre-
    ferable for the persuasion of stupid people, and as a
    valid argument may have false premises, validity never can
    involve total satisfactoriness. But ... when the context
    is clear we often use 'valid' and 'good' indifferently."
    Ibid, page 80.

11. "Is There a Problem of Induction?" in Swinburne, op.cit.,
    page 60.

appraisal. They are used to commend beliefs, assertions, propositions, etc. .... To say, in some contexts, that a conclusion is probable is (at least in part) to recommend its acceptance."[12] So, I think there would be general agreement with Urmson when he claims that to call a deductive or inductive argument valid "is at least in part to evaluate or appraise it. Similarly, to call an argument invalid is to condemn or reject it."[13] Now where, I think, Salmon, for example, would be in disagreement with Urmson is in Urmson's contention that a statement which asserts that an argument is valid is, a) not equivalent in meaning to a set of statements which are simply descriptive or classificatory, nor b) is it entailed by them, because a statement which asserts that an argument is valid is evaluative.[14] Rather, as Salmon puts it, "When a conclusion

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12. "Rejoinder to Barker and Kyburg" in Swinburne, op.cit., page 67. Salmon does not disagree with Barker drawing an analogy between moral (or aesthetic) evaluation and cognitive evaluation, his main disagreement is that the drawing of such an analogy is damaging to his view that there is a problem of justifying induction. (Ibid, page 68) We will have cause to return to Salmon's argument later in this chapter.

13. Ibid, page 79.

14. Ibid, pages 79-80. And cf. Urmson's, 'On Grading', reprinted in Logic and Language, 2nd series, (ed.) Flew, A.G.N. Blackwell, 1953. pages 159-186.

satisfies certain descriptive (logical) characteristics we
commend it cognitively."[15]

We will examine Urmson's claims with regard to deductive
arguments. Therefore, we may take the above claims a) and
b) to be a[1]) that the expression "valid deductive argument"
is not definable in purely descriptive terms, and b[1]) that
there is not a set of descriptive statements about a deductive
argument which entails that that argument is valid. Now Searle
in commenting on Urmson's paper, quite rightly in my opinion,
maintains that both these claims of Urmson's are false.[16] He
proceeds to supply a definition of the expression "valid
deductive argument" (in that sense of 'definition' where a
definition provides a logical equivalence):

> X is a valid deductive argument $=_{df}$ X
> is a deductive argument and the premises
> of X entail the conclusion of X.

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15. <u>Op.cit.</u>, page 67.   Salmon does not believe that he can
     adequately show what the descriptive characteristics of
     an argument are which would entail that it is a <u>valid</u>
     inductive argument, ie. that the argument is a good
     argument, because he is not sure that we can show that
     inductive argument is good argument. However, he main-
     tains that a "justification of induction must ... hinge
     upon a relation between induction and frequency of truth-
     preservation or success". (<u>Ibid</u>, page 66.) Thus the
     problem of setting out those set of characteristics which
     would entail that an inductive argument was valid is not
     a fact/value problem, but the notorious problem of vindi-
     cating our basic logic notions.

16. <u>Speech Acts</u>, page 133.

And similarly, Searle provides a description of a deductive
argument which entails that it is a valid deductive argument:

> X is a deductive argument in which the
> premises entail the conclusion.

It might be replied that in fact the _definiens_ and descrip-
tion are here really evaluative because 'entails' is an evaluative
term - 'entails' is the only even remotely plausible candidate for
the appellation 'evaluative'. To be sure such an objection seems
to me to be a clutching at straws to save a theory. But in any
case, as Searle notes, we could readily supply quite a number of
other descriptions that would entail "X is a valid deductive
argument". Alternatively we could offer definitions of 'entails'
where the definiens are descriptive, possibly something along the
lines of the _descriptive_ definition offered by Hare.[17] Admittedly
it may be difficult to supply such a definition which is entirely
satisfactory, just as it may be difficult to supply a description
of deductive argument that would entail "X is a valid deductive
argument". But surely these are problems that concern the
general difficulty of explicating our basic logical notions and
do not arise because of some fact/value gap. Furthermore, if

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17. cf., _The Language of Morals_, page 25, and Hare's notion
    of a deductive inference (ie. an inference where the
    premises entail the conclusion) as being "analytic in
    character", _ibid_, page 32.

'entails' were an evaluative term then presumably the state-
ment that "no evaluative statement is entailed by a set of
descriptive statements" is itself evaluative and it seems hardly
credible that this statement is presented other than as some
sort of fact.

A common assumption of anti-naturalists has been that if a
certain term, eg., 'good' or 'valid', characteristically had a
certain illocutionary force (eg., of commendation) then it would not
be possible for that term to be defined in terms which did not
have that illocutionary force nor would it be possible for terms
which did not have that illocutionary force to entail a statement
which in its typical (or primary) uses did have such an illocu-
tionary force. Pretty clearly these claims will only hold if it
is true that,

(1) entailment is to be explicated in terms of meaning

    sharing or equivalence, and

(2) the illocutionary force of a speech act is to count

    as part of the meaning of the statement used in the

    speech act.

(It would also have to be argued that the illocutionary force of
an utterance determines the meaning not of a sentence but of a
word or morpheme — we will ignore this complication.)[18] Let us

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18. cf., Alston, William P., 'Meaning and Use', in The Theory
     of Meaning, (ed.) Parkinson, G.H.R., Oxford University
     Press, 1968, and Hare's appendix to 'Meaning and Speech
     Acts' in Practical Inferences, Macmillan, 1971, pages 94-99.

grant the first point, but if (1) is true and we have success-
fully defined the evaluative term 'valid' descriptively, and we
can provide a description of a deductive argument which would
entail that it is valid, then it must be the case that (2) is
false. Searle argues that in fact (2) is false - he calls it
the speech-act fallacy - "The speech-act fallacy is thus one
of the props supporting the naturalistic fallacy fallacy".[19]
The speech-act fallacy can be put in general terms by noting
that Austin's[20] classification of locutionary, illocutionary,
and perlocutionary acts presupposes the distinction between
language and speech. The locutionary act is a (possibly
abstract) entity of language - the uttering of a certain sentence
with a certain sense and reference; the illocutionary act (and
the perlocutionary act) belong to speech - the former is what
we do in uttering words and the latter is the causal consequences
of those utterances. Now the speech-act fallacy consists in our
identifying the illocutionary force of an utterance (which is a
function of speech) with word meaning (which is a function of
language). Determining whether Searle is right in talking of
the speech-act fallacy would take us too far afield but if we
have successfully defined a term in terms which do not have the
illocutionary force of the definiedum then we have an at least
prima facie case against a speech-act theory of meaning.

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19. Speech Acts, page 140.

20. How to do Things with Words, especially pages 98-132.

Let us now turn to Searle's derivation of an 'ought'-statement from and 'is'-statement. We may put the derivation as follows —

1. Jones uttered the words "I hereby promise to pay you, Smith, five dollars."

1a. Under certain conditions C anyone who utters the words (sentence) "I hereby promise to pay you, Smith, five dollars" promises to pay Smith five dollars.

1b. Conditions C obtain.

2. Jones promised to pay Smith five dollars. (From 1, 1a and 1b: reading C for conditions, U for utterance, P for promise, the argument is of the form if C then (if U then P), and C and U, then P.)

2a. All promises are acts of placing oneself under (undertaking) an obligation to do the thing promised.

3. Jones placed himself under (undertook) an obligation to pay Smith five dollars. (From 2 and 2a by _modus ponens_: reading puO for place under an obligation we have, if P then puO, and P, then puO.)

3a. Other things are equal.

3b. All those who place themselves under an obligation are, other things being equal, under an obligation.

4. Jones is under an obligation to pay Smith five dollars. (From 3, 3a and 3b: reading E for other things are

equal, uO for under an obligation we have, if E
then (if puO then uO), and E and puO, then uO.)

4a. Other things are equal.

4b. All those who are under an obligation ought, other
     things being equal, to do what they are under an
     obligation to do.

5.   Jones ought to pay Smith five dollars. (From 4, 4a
     and 4b: reading O for ought we have, if E then (if
     uO then O), and E and uO, then O.)

The premises subscripted a and b are what Searle calls the
additional statements required to make the relationships between
1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 ones of entailment. According to Searle these
additional statements simply consist of "empirical assumptions,
tautologies, and descriptions of word usage".[21] Whether indeed
these additional statements do make the relationships between
the major premises ones of entailment is a moot point, but never-
theless it is true that the relationships will not be simply
"accidental or completely contingent" and we will have "derived
(in as strict a sense of 'derive' as natural languages will
admit of) an 'ought', from and 'is'".[22] As we will see this is
in a large part due to the defeasible character of the concepts
of a promise or an obligation.

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21. Speech Acts, page 181.

22. Ibid, pages 177 and 181.

It is important to be aware of the basic manoeuvre being employed by Searle. He aims to show that we can start with some 'brute' fact to the effect that a man uttered certain words; then he invokes the institution of promising such that we derive an 'institutional' fact; but this institutional fact has certain 'constitutive' rules such that we can arrive at evaluative conclusion.

Some explanation then of what Searle has in mind by a 'brute' fact and an 'institutional' fact is in order. The distinction here is basically that found in Anscombe's "On Brute Facts":[23] sometimes the description or report of an action or event presupposes an institution - other descriptions (according to Searle at any rate) do not. Institutional facts, we might say, only exist within our institutions, ie., a system of constitutive rules. A constitutive rule not only regulates behaviour, it creates or defines new behaviour. On the other hand a regulative rule regulates antecedently existing behaviour. Thus it could be said that the rules of chess not only regulate behaviour but actually define a new form of behaviour - the game of chess - which is constituted by the rules of chess. On the other hand, the rules of etiquette regulate the antecedently existing (to the rules of etiquette) behaviour of eating. There are problems with this analysis. Firstly, the notion of a rule,

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23. _Analysis_, 1957-58, page 69 ff.

or more particularly, rule governed behaviour is not as clear
as may be desired. It is notoriously difficult to supply a
set of necessary and sufficient conditions for a piece of
behaviour to be rule governed. For example, Fann has suggested
that behaviour is rule governed if, and only if, it exhibits
regularity and that it is possible to say of that behaviour
that it is mistaken.[24] But a wicket-keeper regularly keeps
close to the wicket when a slow bowler is bowling and keeps
back from the wicket when a fast bowler is bowling; and we
would say that a wicket-keeper who did not do this was mistaken.
But surely we would not say that the wicket-keeper is here either
following a rule or acting in accordance with a rule; rather we
have a piece of goal oriented behaviour and given the way the
world is if we wish to achieve that goal then we will behave
regularly and we may be mistaken in our behaviour if we do not
behave in that regular pattern. Secondly, it is not clear what,
if any, distinction can be drawn between constitutive rules and
regulative rules. Are there any rules which simply regulate
antecedently existing behaviour? For example, do the rules of
etiquette simply regulate the pre-existing behaviour of eating
or do they create and define a new form of behaviour, viz.,
well-mannered eating? Anticipating such an objection Searle
argues:

> There is a trivial sense in which the
> creation of any rule creates the possibility
> of new forms of behaviour, namely, behaviour

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24. *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy*, Blackwell, 1969,
    pages 75-79.

done as in accordance with the rule.
That is not the sense in which my remark is
intended. What I mean can perhaps be best
put in the formal mode. Where the rule is
purely regulative, behaviour which is in
accordance with the rule could be given
the same description or specification (the
same answer to the question 'What did he
do?') whether or not the rule existed,
provided the description or specification
makes no explicit reference to the rule.[25]

On the other hand, if the behaviour is constitutive rule governed
then -

behaviour which is in accordance with the
rule can receive specifications or descrip-
tions which it could not receive if the rule
or rules did not exist.[26]

Succinctly put we may express the distinction Searle has in
mind by the following pair of necessary conditions for regulative
and constitutive rule governed behaviour:

(I)   If behaviour described or specified as 'A'
      is regulative rule governed then the behaviour
      A is describable as 'A' in the case where the
      regulative rule which regulates behaviour A
      did not exist.

(II) If behaviour described or specified as 'B'
      is constitutive rule governed then behaviour
      B is not describable as 'B' in the case where
      the constitutive rule which constitutes
      behaviour B did not exist.

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25.   Speech Acts, page 35.

26.   Ibid, page 35.   .../64

Put in terms of examples we might say that if a piece of behaviour described as "Not eating before the hostess at dinner" is regulative rule governed then not eating before the hostess at dinner is describable as "Not eating before the hostess at dinner" in the case where the regulative rule that regulates not eating before the hostess at dinner did not exist. (The regulative rule in this instance would be "Never eat before the hostess at dinner".) On the other hand if a piece of behaviour described as "Moving king out of check" is constitutive rule governed then moving king out of check is not describable as "Moving king out of check" in the case where the constitutive rule which constitutes moving king out of check did not exist. (The constitutive rule in this instance would be "Always move king out of check".) We should note that (II) is not claiming that if a constitutive rule like "Always move king out of check" did not exist then there would be no such behaviour as moving a piece of wood across a chequered board, ie., it is not denied that just because there is no appropriate constitutive rule that someone could not make just those physical movements which we, in possession of the appropriate constitutive rule, describe as "Moving king out of check".[27] For the purposes of this chapter we can put further consideration of these issues to one side as the criticism of Searle's derivation of an 'ought' from an 'is' has not in the main centred

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27. c.f., *ibid*, pages 35-36

around his employment of the notion of a rule and of the dis-
tinction between a constitutive and a regulative rule. Further-
more, I think we have a workable understanding of what it is
for behaviour to be rule governed and a workable understanding
of the distinction between constitutive and regulative rules.

Returning to our discussion of 'brute' and 'institutional'
facts: certain facts are 'brute' relative to others; the fact
that I move certain wooden pieces on a chequered board is brute
relative to the institutional fact that I have checkmated you.
As Anscombe puts it:

> As compared with supplying me with a quarter
> of potatoes we might call carting a quarter
> of potatoes to my house and leaving them there
> a 'brute fact'. But as compared with the fact
> that I owe the grocer such-and-such a sum of
> money, that he supplied me with a quarter of
> potatoes is itself a brute fact. In relation
> to many descriptions of events or states of
> affairs which are asserted to hold, we can
> ask what the 'brute facts' were: and this
> will mean the facts which held, and in virtue
> of which, in a proper context, such-and-such
> a description is true or false, and which are
> more 'brute' than the alleged fact answering
> to that description.[28]

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28. Op.cit., page 71 (my emphasis)

It is important to note that certain 'brute facts' amount to certain institutional facts only in a proper context; "not any action of taking a lot of potatoes to my house and leaving them there would be <u>supplying</u> me with them."[29] Similarly not every utterance of the words 'I promise' is the act of making a promise; it is so only in a proper context. Thus Searle inserts after premise 1 the premise 1a. What are the sorts of conditions under the rubric 'conditions C'? Or what context is a 'proper context' for the uttering of the words 'I promise' to be the act of promising? As examples of the sorts of conditions Searle offers: "that the speaker is in the presence of the hearer Smith, they are both conscious, both speakers of English, speaking seriously ..."[30] and so on. As Searle remarks it may be difficult to supply these conditions and it may be difficult to decide marginal cases. But, nonetheless, they are conditions which to determine whether they held would, in an ordinary sense, be empirical enterprise. In fact Anscombe maintains that there could never be an exhaustive description of <u>all</u> the circumstances "which theoretically could impair the description of an action of leaving a quarter of potatoes in my house as 'supplying me with a quarter of potatoes'".[31] To utter the words 'I promise' as a promise is to invoke the constitutive rule of promising and we

29. <u>Ibid</u>, pages 70-71.

30. <u>Speech Acts</u>, page 178.

31. <u>Op.cit</u>., page 71.

can "never fully specify a rule".[32] Now if this is the case
then it would be difficult to claim that the relationship
between 1 and 2 is one of entailment, although to be sure it
would not simply be "an accidental or completely contingent
relation".

Premise 1b is simply the empirical assumption that the
conditions referred to in 1a obtain. Thus from premises 1, 1a
and 1b we have premise 2.

Premise 2a Searle describes as a "tautological (analytic)"
premise, because promising is, by definition, an act of placing
oneself under an obligation.[33] Thus we can conclude from 2 and
2a that 3 _Jones_ placed himself under an obligation. And with 3
(as Searle notes[34]) we have already arrived at an evaluative
conclusion as presumably 'obligation' is an 'evaluative' word.

The remaining premises that may require some discussion at
this juncture are the tautologies 3b and 4b, and the _ceteris_
paribus clauses 3a and 4a. The tautologies: if you place
yourself under an obligation then you are under an obligation,
other things being equal. It is not denied that when you place

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32. cf. Wittgenstein, L., _Philosophical Investigations_, Part 1,
      # 185-190.
33. _Speech Acts_, page 178.
34. _Ibid_, page 179, footnote.

yourself under an obligation all manner of things may inter-
vene such that you are no longer under an obligation, hence the
ceteris paribus rider. Similarly, if you are under an obliga-
tion then you ought to do what you are under an obligation to
do, other things being equal. Once again it is not denied that
when you are under an obligation all manner of things may inter-
vene such that you ought not to do what you are obliged to do,
hence the ceteris paribus rider. Premises 3a and 4a simply
state that the ceteris paribus riders of 3b and 4b are satisfied
and hence we may exclude the possibility in 4 that the obligation
is void (eg., Smith has said "I release you from your obligation")
and the possibility in 5 that Jones ought not to keep his promise
(eg., Jones' obligation to pay Smith five dollars is over-ridden
by his obligation to his starving children).

Criticism of Searle's argument has in the main been that
he has, if 5 is to be taken as genuinely evaluative, smuggled
in an evaluative premise somewhere. There are two places that
this evaluative premise is seen to reside; firstly, in the ceteris
paribus clauses, and secondly, in the use of the word 'promise'.

The ceteris paribus caluses are designed to exclude a reason
to the effect that in the move from 3 to 4 although Jones has
placed himself under an obligation he is not now under an
obligation, and, in the move from 4 to 5, although Jones is under
an obligation he ought not to keep it. We have previously given

examples of the sorts of reasons involved here. Now if there
were such reasons then in getting from 3 to 4 and from 4 to 5
we would have to make an evaluation, and Searle certainly does
not want this if he is to get to 5 via only descriptive premises.
The function of the _ceteris_ _paribus_ clauses as Searle sees it is
not that for them to be satisfied we must establish some universal negative proposition to the effect "that no reason could
ever be given by anyone for supposing the agent is not under an
obligation or ought not to keep the promise.... It is sufficient
to satisfy the condition that no reason to the contrary can in
fact be given."[35] It is of the very essence of the notions of
a promise and an obligation - their defeasibility - that their
application is always open to objection and indeed that the
objections are heterogeneous. Hence Searle remarks, "It is
always an open possibility that we may have to make an evaluation in order to derive 'he ought' from 'he promised', for we
may have to evaluate a counterargument. But an evaluation is
not logically necessary in every case, for there may as a
matter of fact be no counter-arguments."[36]

However, James and Judith Thomson[37] have made the point
that 4a can be interpreted in two ways: a 'weak' interpretation
in which 4a asserts "we, who are considering Jones' case, see no

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35. "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'", page 105, (my emphasis)
36. _Ibid_, page 105, (my emphasis)
37. "How Not to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is', in Hudson, W.D., (ed)
     The Is/Ought Question.

reason or know of no reason why he ought not or need not pay",
and a 'strong' interpretation in which 4a asserts that there is
no reason or at least no conclusive reason why he ought not or
need not pay. On the 'weak' interpretation while 4a may be
descriptive it does not with 4b entail 5 as there could be some
reason why Jones ought not to pay which we do not know about.
On the 'strong' interpretation while 4a with 4 b does entail
5, 4a is evaluative. Similarly, McClellan and Komisar[38] maintain
that the ceteris paribus clauses are either statements of fact or
they are evaluative. Either they mean that someone at this
moment cannot, in fact, offer a reason — "for our mouths are
stuffed with very hot mashed potatoes" — in which case it would
be absurd to suppose that whether Jones ought to pay up "depends
on what we happen to be eating, the condition of our memory, or
anything else affecting what reasons 'we are actually prepared
to give'." Or they mean (where C is a voiding condition) that
"the situation contains no condition C properly relevant to an
'ought'-judgement, or ... that there is such a C but that it
lacks sufficient force to avoid this particular obligation",
in which case they would appear to be evaluative.

Anticipating such an objection, Searle, in his earlier
version of the derivation, suggests that he could include the
ceteris paribus clauses in the conclusion 5 which would then

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38. "On Deriving 'Ought' from 'Is'", in Hudson, W.D. ibid.

read:

5'. Other things being equal, Jones ought to pay Smith
     five dollars.

And then it would be immaterial if this ceteris paribus clause
was evaluative as he would have deduced the evaluative conclusion
5' without recourse to any evaluative premises. Admittedly this
may not sit well with Searle's contention that he has derived a
categorical and not a hypothetical 'ought' from a set of descrip-
tive premises.[39] Of course, 5' is still an evaluative conclu-
sion and it is a moral (as opposed to a prudential) conclusion.
But supporters of Hume's Law, eg., Hare,[40] have admitted that
we can derive a hypothetical evaluative conclusion from a set of
descriptive premises and, consequently, maybe we should give them
the benefit of the doubt on 5'. However, one objection to 5'
which I do not find compelling is that presented by the
Thomsons: either 5' is entailed by 4 but it is not evaluative,
or it is evaluative but it is not entailed by 4. Their argu-
ment runs as follows: either, if 5' is a conditional with 4a
as its antecedent under the weak interpretation then 5' is not

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39. "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'", op.cit., page 106.
     However, as the Thompsons point out it is not clear that
     5' is a hypothetical in the intended sense, cf. "How Not
     to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'", op.cit., page 165.

40. The Language of Morals, pages 34-36.

entailed by 4, or, if 5' is a conditional with 4a as its antecedent under the <u>strong</u> interpretation then 5' is not evaluative, rather it "is analytic — if the Law of Excluded Middle is — and therefore not evaluative."[41] But it does not seem to me that 5' with 4a as its antecedent under the strong interpretation is an instance of the Law of Excluded Middle. If we recall that the strong interpretation of 4a was "there is no reason or no conclusive reason" then for 5' to be an instance of the Law of Excluded Middle 5' must be read as "Either there is no conclusive reason why Jones ought not to pay Smith five dollars or there is a conclusive reason why Jones ought not to pay Smith five dollars". But 5' does not say anything of the sort; rather, it may be read as "Either there is a conclusive reason why Jones ought not to pay Smith five dollars or Jones ought to pay Smith five dollars". That is 5' is not an instance (as the Thomsons would have it) of $P \lor \sim P$ but rather $P \lor Q$.[42]

But whether or not Searle is right in making the shift from 5 to 5' is somewhat immaterial because I believe that such a shift is quite unnecessary. We can rebut the objections to the <u>ceteris paribus</u> clauses without making recourse to 5'.

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41.   "How Not to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'", <u>op.cit.</u>, page 165.
42.   cf., Hancock, Roger N., <u>Twentieth Century Ethics</u>, Columbia University Press, 1974, page 216.

Objections to Searle's derivation of an 'ought' from an 'is' which are directed against the _ceteris paribus_ clauses are, quite simply, irrelevant. We may take 3a and 4a to be _assumptions_ employed by the general argument such that we exclude the possibility in 4 that the obligation is void and the possibility in 5 that Jones has conflicting obligations. In asserting 3a and 4a we are not necessarily making the evaluative judgement that there _are_ no conditions which would void the obligation or that there _are_ no obligations which would conflict with Jones' obligation to pay Smith five dollars, we are simply making that assumption. And this is a reasonable assumption to make because it is not logically necessary that there be these voiding conditions or these conflicting obligations, ie., it is _possible_ for there to be the case where there are no voiding conditions and where Jones does not have any conflicting obligations. Of course, it is equally possible that the obverse is true, but this is irrelevant _for the purposes of the current argument_, ie., an argument which attempts to derive an evaluative conclusion from a set of descriptive premises. 3a and 4a attempt to exclude this possibility, for the purposes of the current argument, and surely it is not the anti-naturalist's argument that we cannot derive an 'ought' from and 'is' _because_ there is the problem of conflicting obligations. The problem of conflicting obligations is a quite separate problem from the problem of the alleged fact/value gap, and 4a by assuming that there is no such conflict simply insists on this point. That is to say, we might preface Searle's general argument with some

question to the effect that assuming that for some obligation
there are no conditions which make it void and no obligations
with which it is in conflict can we derive an evaluative con-
clusion from a set of descriptive premises? Searle believes that
he can answer this question in the affirmative and he believes
that his derivation of an 'ought' from an 'is' justifies that
affirmative answer. Now it may be true that this derivation will
not go through in the <u>possible</u> case where the abovementioned
assumptions do not hold. But <u>that</u> possibility is quite
irrelevant to the current argument because the realisation of
that possibility is a distinct problem from the problem of
deriving an 'ought' from an 'is'.

Searle makes essentially the same point, but more graphi-
cally, by reformulating his argument such that we assume a
situation where it is impossible that the obligation is void
and we reformulate the conclusion of the argument such that it
is irrelevant that Jones has obligations in conflict with his
obligation to pay Smith five dollars. In this reformulation
Searle dispenses with the <u>ceteris paribus</u> premises altogether.
He then alters the premise 3b to read:

> 3b* All those who place themselves under
>   an obligation are (at the time when
>   they so place themselves) under an
>   obligation.[43]

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43. <u>Speech Acts</u>, page 179.

(Such a move is also going to require that for formal neatness we preface premises 1-5 with 'at time t'). Now Searle regards 3b* as a tautology which surely it is given that one cannot have succeeded in placing oneself under an obligation if at no time was one under an obligation. This is not to deny that all manner of things may occur subsequently which may make the obligation void, but the point still remains that at the time one places oneself under an obligation one is under an obligation.

Analogous to the tautology of 3b* we have:

> 4b*   All those who are under an obligation
>   ought, as regards that obligation, to
>   do what they are under an obligation
>   to do.[44]

(The premise 4b* replaces the original premise 4b.)   Once again it is not denied that there may be obligations which outweigh the obligation which one has undertaken.   But this is not to say that the original obligation has been qualified or that it does not exist :   there must be an obligation in the first place to be outweighed.   As Searle argues:

> I may be in a conflict as to which of two
> conflicting obligations I ought to carry
> out, which of the two I should perform and
> which I should breach.   I may be justified
> in not doing what I ought to do as regards
> a particular obligation.   My breach may even

44.   Ibid, pages 180-181.

be excused, sanctioned, or even encouraged.
To all this the fact that I ought to do what
I have undertaken an obligation to do is
logically anterior.[45]

Searle now suggests that we read 5 as:

> 5*   As regards his obligation to pay Smith
> five dollars, Jones ought to pay Smith
> five dollars.[46]

Now 5* would appear to be a categorical 'ought', in that sense of
'categorical' employed in ethical theory. It does not say that
Jones ought to pay up if he wants such and such, or even if other
things are equal, rather it says that Jones ought, as regards his
obligation, to pay up.

Finally we may note that with 3 we have, before we have
had to employ any of the _ceteris_ _paribus_ clauses, arrived at
an evaluative conclusion because presumably to say that Jones
placed himself under an obligation to pay Smith five dollars
is an evaluative statement - presumably 'obligation' is an
evaluative word. Maybe we should not be surprised that we can
drive an 'obligation' from an 'is', or at least that the objec-
tions of the Thomsons and McClellan and Komisar will have no
effect against such a derivation. After all it will be true
that someone has _placed_ themselves under an obligation whether

45. _Ibid_,   page 180, footnote.

46. _Ibid_,   page 181

or not the obligation is <u>now</u> void, or whether or not there are obligations which are in conflict with the obligation he has placed himself under. This observation, and the arguments I have presented above, may give us cause to think that if we are to mount a serious objection to Searle's derivation our objection must focus on the move from 1 to 3, and indeed this is the basic thrust of the objections I shall consider below.

Hare, in his criticism of Searle's derivation, concentrates his attention on the "relations between (1a) and (2a)" and he believes that "the argument will be simplified" if we combine 1a and 2a thus:

> 1a* Under certain conditions C anyone who
>   utters the words (sentence) 'I hereby
>   promise to pay you, Smith, five dollars'
>   places himself under (undertakes) an
>   obligation to pay Smith five dollars.[47]

Hare then argues that 1a* is evaluative. What are Hare's arguments for claiming that 1a* is evaluative? Well, one 'argument' of Hare's which I think will certainly not do is his statement that "(1a*) is neither a synthetic statement nor a synthetic prescription about how English is, or is or ought to be, spoken. <u>Just because it has the consequences which Searle claims for it, it must be more than this.</u>"[48] But this is surely

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47. 'The Promising Game', in Foot, P., <u>op.cit.</u>, page 117

48. <u>Ibid</u>, pages 118—119

to beg the question against Searle. Allowing for the moment that 1a* <u>does</u> have certain consequences, for example, that it may prescribe how people should <u>act</u> or that it enables us to conclude 'he ought' from 'he promised', and allowing for the moment that Searle would claim that 1a* is descriptive, Hare cannot argue that 1a* really is evaluative simply because it has those consequences. This is the very point at issue. Searle's argument is that from a descriptive statement we may derive an evaluative conclusion, or to put the point another way, descriptive statements (or at least some of them) have certain consequences (for example, those statements themselves or those statements entail statements which guide action). To simply reply to this argument that these descriptive statements are not <u>really</u> descriptive but evaluative <u>because</u> they have those consequences is to beg the question.[49]

But in any case I do not think it is necessary that Searle deny that 1a* is evaluative, in fact I believe he would maintain that 1a* is evaluative is just the point of his argument. Searle has put the following objection to his own argument:

> as soon as we literally and unreservedly
> use the word 'promise', an evaluative
> element enters in ...

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49. cf., my earlier comments in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, and cf., Searle's "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'", <u>op.cit.</u>, page 107.

To which Searle replies:

> In a way, you are here stating my argument
> as if it were an objection against me. When
> we do use a word literally and unreservedly
> we are indeed committing ourselves to the
> logical properties of that word. In the
> case of a promise, when we assert 'He made a
> promise' we commit ourselves to the proposi-
> tion that he undertook an obligation.[50]

In other words 1a* is indeed an evaluative statement, but it is
not a premise of Searle's argument, it is not the conjunction
of 1a and 2a, rather it is the logical consequence of the con-
junction of 1a and 2a. And Searle would not deny that from the
conjunction of 1a and 2a we may derive an evaluative statement;
that is precisely his point. Using the abbreviations we
employed in stated Searle's derivation we have:

A)   The conjunction of 1a and 2a;
$$C \supset (U \supset P) \quad . \quad P \supset puO$$

B)   1a*;
$$C \supset (U \supset puO)$$

Now Searle does not want to deny A) and he would admit
that B) is evaluative. But he would deny that B) is logi-
cally equivalent to A) for then he would not have derived an

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50. Speech Acts, page 194.

evaluative statement from a set of descriptive statements.
But he would admit that B) is the logical consequence of
a) for then he would have derived an evaluative statement from
a set of descriptive statements. And it is obvious that B)
is not the logical equivalence of A) although it is the
logical consequence of A). Of course, it may turn out that A)
is also evaluative, but what will not do as an argument for A's)
being evaluative is that B) is evaluative.[51]

However, the above argument, especially the objection that
"as soon as we use the word 'promise' unreservedly and literally,
an evaluative element enters in", may suggest to us an objection
which I think is the most serious that Searle's derivation must
face. And certainly Hare's later argument suggests such an
objection. Flew has pointed out that there is a "necessary and
decisive" distinction to be drawn between using the word 'promise'
as a detached reporter of verbal usage and using that word as
an engaged participant in the language of which that word forms
a part.[52] When one switches from the use of the word as a
detached reporter to the use of the word as an engaged partici-
pant "there comes exactly that commitment to the incapsulated
values which alone warrants us to draw the normative conclusions."[53]
Hence Flew does not disagree with Searle's statement that "when

51.   Hancock, op.cit., pages 214-215, argues similarly.

52.   "On Not Deriving 'Ought' from 'Is'", in Hudson, op.cit.,
      page 141.

53.   Ibid, page 141.

we assert 'He made a promise' we commit ourselves to the proposition that he undertook an obligation". But, Flew would argue, this commitment only holds if we are using the word 'promise' as an engaged participant but **not** if we are using the word as a detached reporter. At most what will follow if we are using the word as a detached reporter is "Jones undertook what a certain group of language users call an obligation" which, of course, is not to say that Jones **is** under an obligation.

There are three ways that we may proceed to argue here only one of which is of merit. And even this argument does not show that Searle was unsuccessful in what he was attempting to do, although it does show that Searle's derivation and the general context within which that derivation takes place is somewhat removed from the central and most important problem of moral philosophy.

Firstly, we may argue that if we put the premises of Searle's derivation in _oratio_ _obliqua_ then Searle's derivation is invalid: we will not be able to derive the conclusion 5 or 5* but something like

> 5** According to a certain group of language
> users Jones ought to pay Smith five dollars.

But this objection is misconceived and I think Searle counters

it by pointing out of course we can rewrite the premises of Searle's argument in oratio obliqua and thereby make the derivation invalid, but this does not show that the argument which uses premises which are not in oratio obliqua is invalid. If the fact that we can rewrite the premises of Searle's argument in oratio obliqua shows that Searle's argument is invalid then we can show any valid argument to be invalid; eg., with the premises from which we can validly draw the conclusion "X is a valid deductive argument" we can generate an invalid argument by rewriting the premises in oratio obliqua, but, surely, this does not show that the original argument was invalid.[54]

Secondly, and by way of reply to the above argument, it may be said that we have failed to see the true significance of the distinction between the engaged participant and the detached reporter. And the true significance is this: it is only if we take Searle's use of the word 'promise' to be in oratio obliqua that Searle can correctly claim that he has derived an evaluative statement from a set of descriptive statements because it is only when the word 'promise' is used in oratio obliqua that its use is descriptive. But I think that this objection too is misconceived. Searle would not deny that the premises of his argument when put in oratio obliqua are descriptive and he would not deny that when the premises

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54. Speech Acts, pages 196-197.

are taken in a literal and unreserved sense that "there comes
exactly that commitment to the incapsulated values which alone
warrants us to draw the normative conclusions". But what he
would deny is that the premises of his argument when taken in
a literal and unreserved sense are any the less descriptive for
that.[55] As Hudson[56] points out the distinction between the
engaged participant and the detached reporter use of words is
not the distinction between fact and value. Surely the state-
ment that "Jones promised to pay Smith five dollars" is a
factual statement: the statement "Jones uttered the words 'I
promise to pay you, Smith, five dollars'" is either true or
false — this is not a matter of opinion or decision — and there-
fore so too must be the statement "Jones promised to pay Smith
five dollars" (whether we take this in _oratio obliqua_ or not).
Similarly, the statement "The grocer carted a quarter of
potatoes to my house and left them there" is either true or

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55. Alternatively, as Searle argues:

> If you like then, we have shown that 'promise' is an
> evaluative word since we have shown that the notion
> of promising is logically tied to the evaluative
> notion of obligation, but since it is also purely
> 'descriptive' (because it is a matter of objective
> fact whether or not someone made a promise), we
> have really shown that the whole distinction needs
> to be re-examined.

Speech Acts, page 187. As Searle also points out we are
emphasizing the conflation of the two non-coincident dis-
tinctions mentioned earlier, viz., the distinction between
two types of illocutionary force and the distinction between
that which is objectively decidable as true or false.

56. "The Is-Ought Controversy", in Hudson, _op.cit._, page 170

false and so is the statement that "The grocer supplied me with a quarter of potatoes" (whether we take this in _oratio obliqua_ or not). Maybe statements like "he promised" are a different type of factual statement to other statements, and Searle would admit this for he distinguishes between institutional facts and 'brute' facts, but this will not salvage the anti-naturalists' case. Their thesis has been that _no_ descriptive statement may entail an evaluative statement. And it will not do to point out that as soon as we literally and unreservedly use certain descriptive statements an evaluative element enters in and therefore such statements are not _really_ descriptive. It is precisely Searle's point that there are certain descriptive statements that incapsulate values which enable us to draw normative conclusions. (Maybe such statements are to be distinguished from other descriptive statements but, as previously, this will not salvage the anti-naturalists' case.)

Finally, we may argue that the distinction Flew has drawn is really meant to mark a distinction between, as it were, speaking within an institution and speaking from outside it. And that in making this distinction we are drawing attention to the fact that we may describe the facts within the institution and thereby commit ourselves to the logical consequences of such a description or we may describe the same facts from outside the institution and thereby not commit ourselves to the logical consequences of the description made within the institution. And the point here is not just that we _can_ talk from

outside the institution as well as from within it, but that this is a <u>decision we must make depending on whether we accept the institution or not</u>, in particular depending on whether we decide to accept the logical consequences of a description made within the institution. That is to say, while speaking within the institution of promising, for example, we may be committed to certain evaluative conclusions, for example, that Jones ought to pay Smith five dollars, we may also speak from outside the institution of promising and ask whether there <u>ought</u> to be such an institution. As Mackie argues:

> There are other institutions, with associated
> speech acts, that have the same logical form
> as promising. Children use the word 'Bags'
> as part of a well-defined institution. Who-
> ever first says 'Bags I the chocolate cake'
> thereby purports to have an exclusive right
> to the chocolate cake. So we can construct
> an argument like Searle's, leading from
> 'John first said "Bags ..."' by way of 'John
> bagged ...' to 'John has a right to ...'
> But here it is even more obviously an open
> question whether we are to endorse the
> institution or not.[57]

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57. <u>Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong</u>, Penguin, 1977, page 71.

Now Searle has distinguished between descriptions made within and from the outside of the institution:

> There are two radically different ways of
> taking the phrase 'commit oneself to
> (accept) the institution of promising'.
> In one way it means something like (a)
> 'undertake to use the word 'promise' in
> accordance with its literal meaning, which
> literal meaning is determined by the internal
> constitutive rules of the institution'. A
> quite different way to take the phrase is
> to take it as meaning (b) 'endorse the
> institution as a good or acceptable
> institution'. ... Sense (b) of commit-
> ment really is a matter of opinion (at
> least as far as the present discussion is
> concerned) but there is nothing subjective
> about the statements involving commitments
> in the sense of interpretation (a).[58]

I think Searle's statement in parenthesis should be empha-
sized. Searle has only intended his derivation as a derivation
within the institution of promising and the purpose of his
derivation is to show the falsity of what he calls "the classical
theory of 'evaluative' statements" which maintains that "descrip-
tive statements cannot entail evaluative statements". Here I
think Searle has succeeded. But Searle admits that he has not

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58. Speech Acts, pages 194-195.

shown that there ought to be the institution of, for example, promising. Hence it is difficult to formulate the speaking within and speaking outside distinction as an objection to Searle's argument, a point which Mackie appears to concede:

> Nevertheless, the popular formulation of
> the law (Hume's Law) is misleading. From
> sets of 'is'-statements which are purely
> factual, which conceal no value terms, we
> can derive not only hypothetically imperative
> 'ought'-statements but also moral ones.
> Admittedly we do so only by speaking within
> some institution, but this can itself be a
> part of ordinary language.[59]

The intent of Searle's derivation was to show that this so-called popular formulation of Hume's Law was, at best, misleading. He states his own "tentative conclusions" thus:

1. The classical picture fails to account for institutional facts.

2. Institutional facts exist within systems of constitutive rules.

3. Some systems of constitutive rules involve obligations, commitments, and responsibilities.

4. Within some of those systems we can derive 'ought's' from 'is's' ...[60]

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59. Op.cit., page 72.
60. Speech Acts, page 186.

To repeat, I think that Searle has achieved what he set out to achieve. But the question remains 'Just how important is this achievement for moral philosophy more generally?'. I am afraid that the answer must be 'Not very much'. This is less a reflection on Searle's argument and more a reflection on the context within which Searle's argument takes place; the 'ordinary language' approach to moral philosophy. To show as Searle has done that we may derive an 'ought' from and 'is' within our ordinary language which has imbedded in it certain institutions goes a very little way (if that) to answering the central problem in meta-ethical theory: is morality subjective or objective? For, as Searle admits, it still remains an open question whether we ought or ought not to endorse those institutions. Similarly, we have, so to speak, the institution of inductive reasoning, and given that institution it will be true or false whether this particular argument is an inductive argument. But still we may question whether we ought to have the institution of inductive reasoning, whether, that is, inductive reasoning is justified. And it may be, as Barker points out,[61] that the notion of induction is deeply imbedded in our ordinary language and, indeed, that the very words with which we wish to discuss the problem of induction are "permeated by a commitment to the practice of induction, a practice which shapes our entire form of life." But as Salmon argues[62] this

61. Op. cit., pages 60-61

62. Op.cit., pages 68-70

should not lead us to suppose that those who seek a <u>vindication</u> for induction are simply making 'inarticulate cries'. Similarly, it may be the case that <u>given</u> the institution of promising it may be true or false whether John promised. Nevertheless, we may still ask whether there ought to be the institution of promising, even if that institution "shapes our entire form of life".

What is at issue with Searle's derivation is, I think, two ways in which we may say that a statement is true. There are those statements which describe what we have called an 'institutional' fact. Now these statements may be said to be true or false but only in relation to the existence of a certain institution. But it seems to be open to us (at least, for all that Searle has said) to question whether that institution ought to exist and this seems to be a matter of opinion or decision. On the other hand, certain statements describe (or purport to describe) how the world is, and they are said to be true when certain objectively determinable facts hold in the world. But it does <u>not</u> seem to be open to us to <u>decide</u> how the world is. How the world is seems to be quite independent of us.

However, I hesitate to say that Searle's argument goes absolutely no way to supplying an answer to the question of whether morality is subjective or objective. For we may be able to supplement Searle's argument with an argument to show that some institutions are good institutions and that whether they

are good or not is a matter of objective fact. One way to show
that such matters are matters of objective fact would be to
advance a naturalistic theory of goodness and in the following
chapters we will consider whether such a theory is in principle
a plausible theory. It may appear strange that I am here
advocating that Searle's argument needs supplementation with a
naturalistic theory of moral value when Searle saw his deriva-
tion of an 'ought' from an 'is' as an exposure of what he calls
'the naturalistic fallacy fallacy'. But we should realise that
a naturalistic theory is not simply a linguistic theory, ie.,
it is not simply the theory that we may derive in ordinary
language an 'ought' from and 'is', but it is the theory that
morality is objective, that moral statements are, in principle,
objectively determinable, and Searle's argument has not estab-
lished this. What Searle's argument has established, if only
to a somewhat limited extent, is the truth of a descriptivist
theory. But, as I pointed out in Chapter I, we must distinguish
between a descriptivist theory and a naturalist theory of
morality: a descriptivist theory may be correct, ie., it may
be true that certain descriptive statements (eg., those which
describe 'institutional' facts) entail certain evaluative state-
ments, but not all descriptive statements are naturalistic (ie.,
objectively determinable).

CHAPTER V

THE ARGUMENT FROM MOTIVATION

The argument from motivation has figured as one of the central arguments addressed against cognitivism, and, in particular, against naturalism. (I will mainly consider the argument as an argument against naturalism, although most of what I have to say is relevant to cognitivism more generally if my comments are suitably emended.) However, there are two major formulations of the argument which should be distinguished: while the premises of the arguments are the same their conclusions are distinct. We will call one argument, 'the psychological argument', and the other, 'the meta-linguistic argument'. Of particular interest will be the psychological argument which I take to be the argument presented by Hume: this is an argument which attempts to show that there are distinct psychological states or acts (whether mental or physical will be immaterial for our purposes) that are distinguished by the motivational influence they have on our actions. I will argue —

(a) that the psychological argument must be put in a
     modal form and is invalid, and

(b)   that even if the argument were valid this would not

show that naturalism is false given a certain <u>common</u>

interpretation of what constitutes a naturalistic

theory.

The meta-linguistic argument I take to be the reinterpretation

of Hume by more recent theorists in meta-ethics, for example,

R.M. Hare.   This argument attempts to show that certain

sentences (or rather certain sentences when used as moral judge-

ments or reason judgements) are distinct in their meaning.

Against this argument I will argue –

(a)   that it is unsound because at least one of its premises

is false (which, of course, is a criticism that applies

equally to the psychological argument as its premises

are identical to the premises of the meta-linguistic

argument),   and

(b)   that even if we grant the soundness of the argument

this does not show that naturalism is false given a

certain <u>plausible</u> interpretation of what constitutes a

naturalistic theory.

* * * * * * * * * *

Hume's argument may be succinctly put as follows:[1]   it makes

the claim that moral judgements are not reason judgements because

reason judgements never have any motivational influence on our

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1.   Cf., <u>A Treatise of Human Nature</u>,   ed.,   Selby-Bigge,
      pages 457, 462.

actions whereas moral judgements do have a motivational influence.
As it stands the argument seems to rest on Leibniz's Law, but
the conclusion intended for the argument seems to amount to
more than just the claim that as a matter of contingent fact any
moral judgement is distinct from any reason judgement;   rather,
it seems to be the claim that to confuse a moral judgement with
a reason judgement would involve one in some sort of conceptual
confusion, or, to put the point more neutrally, that a moral
judgement cannot be a reason judgement.

It would be as well to ask before proceeding further, what
is it that we mean here by the term 'judgement'? In particular,
what is it that we are claiming does (or does not) have a moti-
vational influence on our actions? Frank Snare in a recent
paper makes the point that "'judgement' is here not being used
to refer to the propositions or claims which can be the content
of belief but rather to the beliefs themselves": we are contrast-
ing the motivational influence of "two kinds of psychological
states".[2] Now Snare might mean by this, and this would certainly
be a common way to construe the term 'judgement' in meta-ethical
theory, that what is posited as having (or not having) a motiva-
tional influence is not simply a proposition or sentence S, but

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2.   'The Argument from Motivation', Mind, Vol.84, 1975,
      pages 1-9.
      I have relied heavily on Snare's paper for this chapter.
      Snare provides some excellent criticism of the premises
      of the argument from motivation. However, he only seems
      to consider the argument in its psychological form when
      it seems clear that some of the authors to whom he attri-
      butes the argument, for example, Stevenson, were intent
      on advancing a meta-linguistic version of the argument.

rather the affirming of S, or the assenting to S, or the sub-
scribing to S, and so on. What we might term, with due caution,
a 'propositional attitude'. Thus Hume's argument could be
rendered as follows: a moral judgement (the affirming of a
certain sentence) has a motivational influence and a reason
judgement (the affirming of a certain sentence) does not have a
motivational influence and, therefore, moral judgements and
reason judgements are distinct psychological states.

A similar argument is presented by Hare, although we should
note immediately that when Hare declares that a moral judgement
is not a reason judgement he does not mean that they are distinct
psychological states, but rather that their contents are distinct,
or, as we might put it, a moral sentence is not identical in
meaning to a reason sentence.[3] Hare[4] distinguishes between the
'phrastic' and 'neustic'. The 'neustic' performs one of the
functions of the Frege-Russell assertion sign, viz., the signi-
fying of the use or affirmation of a sentence, and the 'phrastic'

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3. Although echoes of Hume's psychological argument remain
    in Hare's statement of the argument: cf., Freedom and
    Reason, pages 70-71.

4. The Language of Morals, pages 18-20. And cf., 'Meaning
    and Speech Acts' in Practical Inferences, Macmillan, 1971,
    pages 90-93: in this paper Hare introduces the notion of
    a 'tropic', the mood indicator, but there is no need for
    us to introduce this notion to our discussion.

appears to be that which is asserted or affirmed, _viz_., a

sentence or, more accurately, a sentence of a certain mood -

(the relevant moods here being the indicative and imperative

mood). Corresponding to such a sign of affirmation is, for

Hare, a sign for agreement or assent for use by a hearer.

Now this supposedly provides us with -

> A clue to the essential difference between
> statements [ie., indicatives] and commands
> [ie., imperatives]; _it lies in what is_
> _involved in assenting to them_; and what is
> involved in assenting to them is ... closely
> allied to what is involved in affirming them
> in the first place.[5]

What is involved here is that "we assent to a second-person

command addressed to ourselves ... if and only if we do or resolve

to do what the speaker has told us to do"[6]. And similarly with

first person commands, except affirmation and assent, are

identical. But such is not the case with assenting to or affirm-

ing a statement: this does _not_ involve doing or resolving to do

something, but merely, as Hare puts it, _believing_ something.

Thus we may characterise the difference between indicatives and

imperatives as follows: to assent to or affirm the sentence S,

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5. _The Language of Morals_, page 19, (my emphasis and my
   inclusion in square brackets)

6. _Ibid_, pages 19-20.

where S is in the indicative mood, does _not_ have a motivational
influence on our actions; but where S is in the imperative mood,
assenting to or affirming S _does_ have a motivational influence.

However, this characterisation of the essential difference
between indicatives and imperatives requires some modification.
According to Hare assenting to or affirming an imperative
necessarily has a motivational influence - "It is a tautology to
say that we cannot sincerely assent to a command addressed to
ourselves, and _at the same time_ not perform it".[7] But while
assenting to or affirming an indicative sentence _may_ have a
motivational influence, it does _not necessarily_ have a motiva-
tional influence. That an indicative has a motivational
influence is dependent on the contingent fact that we have a
certain want or desire:

> For example, if I say 'The train is just
> about to depart', this may guide a person
> who wants to catch the train to take his
> seat.[8]

That is to say, if I assent to or affirm an imperative sentence,
for example, 'Let me do X', then necessarily I do or resolve to
do X. But if I assent to or affirm any indicative sentence there
is no such implication.

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7. _Freedom and Reason_, page 79.

8. _The Language of Morals_, page 163.

If we recall that for Hare a moral judgement either is or
entails an imperative then we see the putative difference
between moral judgements and judgements of fact: a moral judge-
ment necessarily has a motivational influence on our actions but
a factual judgement does not, and thus a moral judgement is not
a factual judgement. As Hare argues, ."If we admit ... that it is
part of the function of a moral judgement to prescribe or guide
choices ... then it is clear ... that no moral judgement can be
pure statement of fact".[9]

Now this argument of Hare's is in all essential respects
just that argument we have attributed to Hume. Of course, there
are two important differences that have come to light in our
explication of Hare's argument; firstly, his concern is not
to show that moral judgements and reason judgements are distinct
psychological states, but rather to maintain that the logic (sic)
of a moral judgement is distinct from that of a reason judgement;
and secondly, his argument is quite clearly cast in a modal form.
But as we shall see, even the psychological version of the argu-
ment from motivation must be cast in a modal form if it is to
have even the semblance of cogency.

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9. Ibid, page 29, and cf., Freedom and Reason, pages 68-69.

The non-modalized form of the argument from motivation may be rendered succinctly thus:.

(I')   (1)   No Reason judgements have a motivational influence on our actions.

         (2)   All Moral judgements have a motivational influence on our actions.

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         (3)   Moral judgements are not Reason judgements.

Obviously we need not question the argument's validity. However, we might question the truth of the argument's premises. And the difficulty here is that it does not appear that we can settle the truth of (1), for example, until such time as we leave settled the truth of the conceptual claim in (3). For example, as Snare has pointed out:

> If contrary to (3), moral judgements are just
> a species of reason judgement, then the factual
> observation in (2) that moral judgements have a
> motivational influence would serve to show that
> (1) is false.[10]

If, however, (1) involved a claim of logical necessity, then the truth of the factual observation in (2) could not serve to show that (1) is false, since then it <u>must</u> be the case that reason judgements do not have a motivational influence on our actions.

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10.   <u>Op.cit.</u>,   page 3.

Thus Snare says, "if we had a non-empirical argument of some sort for (1) we would be in a quite different position".

Taking cognizance of the distinct modal propositions generated by the qualifiers 'necessarily not' and 'not necessarily' - the strong and the weak modal propositions respectively - we can record the following premises, (using 'R-J' for 'reason judgement', 'M-J' for 'moral judgement' and 'MIA' for 'motivational influence on our actions' to avoid the vagaries of English grammar):

> (1a) All R-J's are necessarily not MIA.
> (1b) Not all R-J's are necessarily MIA.

And for premise (2)

> (2a) All M-J's are as a matter of fact MIA.
> (2b) All M-J's are necessarily MIA.

The argument from motivation might use the following combinations of the above premises: (1a) with (2b), (1a) with (2a) and (1b) with (2b). An argument which employed the premises (1b) with (2a) would not suffice to get the conclusion desired; such an argument would only show that as a matter of fact moral judgements are not reason judgements.

Now I would like to comment briefly on the argument which uses the two strong modal claims, (1a) with (2b). This is especially important in the light of my later argument. While

an argument which employed the two strong modal claims would be valid, it is a highly problematic argument. For the argument is such that whatever reason we have for claiming that one premise is true seems to provide us with sufficient reason for believing the other is false.

For example, let us suppose that we believe that (1a) is true, and we counter the argument that surely it is _possible_ for a reason judgement (let us say, a belief about a matter of fact) to have a motivational influence by saying that a reason judgement _alone_ (ie., without an appropriate desire or pro-attitude) necessarily does not have a motivational influence. Well, under this interpretation let us suppose that (1a) is true. But let us also suppose that we reject the conclusion of the argument — what follows, and is what follows acceptable? If we believe that (1a) is true, and that moral judgements are reason judgements, then it follows that a moral judgement (let us say, a belief that such and such is good) _alone_ does not have a motivational influence — we would require in addition to the belief that such and such is good the desire to choose that which we judge to be good. And that does not seem obviously false; certainly it is a claim which in maintaining so much less than (2b) is that much more readily defensible. Now, of course, the supporter of the argument from motivation might attempt to provide some defence of (2b), but what will not do as a defence is the claim that moral judgements are not reason judgements, for that would be to beg the question against the naturalist. And, with an eye to what has been written in defence of (2b), it is difficult to

imagine just what might be adduced in support of (2b) other than
the (at least, implicit) assumption that moral judgements are
not reason judgements.

On the other hand, let us suppose we believe (2b) to be true
and we understand this to be the claim that moral judgements
alone necessarily have a motivational influence. But if we
believe that to be the case, and that moral judgements are reason
judgements then it follows that some reason judgements alone have
a motivational influence. But is the conclusion that some reason
judgements alone have a motivational influence acceptable? Now
it is the conventional wisdom that a belief alone may not bring
about an action. However, there are two ways that we may take
that conventional view. The first is that just as a matter of
fact reason judgements alone do not have a motivational influence,
and the second is that it is necessary that reason judgements
alone do not have a motivational influence. The first inter-
pretation of the conventional view is, of course, consistent with
a rejection of (1a): it may be true that reason judgements alone
de facto do not have a motivational influence, but false that
they necessarily do not. But, also, this first interpretation of
the conventional view would, if true, show that it is false that
some reason judgements alone have a motivational influence. So
the important question for our purposes is whether this view is
correct? To maintain that this view is false it is not necessary
that we attempt to argue that all reason judgements alone have a
motivational influence, but only that some of them do. Indeed,

all that follows from the acceptance of (2b) and that moral judgements are reason judgements is that some reason judgements have a motivational influence. Let us ask is it plausible to suppose that some reason judgements alone have a motivational influence? Consider the following case of a prima facie reason judgement: I believe that this car is about to run me down so I step back onto the footpath; was there any desire or pro-attitude present, in addition to my belief, that brought about my action? We might say, despite apparent evidence to the contrary, that I must have had such a desire or pro-attitude. But in saying that we seem to be saying that it is necessary that reason judgements alone do not have a motivational influence; ie., we are affirming the truth of the second interpretation of the conventional view. But now, how do we decide the truth of such a priori claims without invoking the truth of our analysis of the springs of human action, or, as so often seems to be the case in discussions of the argument from motivation, without invoking the truth of our meta-ethical theory?[11]

Let us now turn to a discussion of the arguments which employ the premises (1a) with (2a) and (1b) with (2b). Consider first the argument which employs the premises (1a) and (2a). As Snare has pointed out:

> In fact we can even get by with a weakened
> form of (2a) to the effect that it is always

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11. Cf., Snare, ibid, who argues similarly at pages 4-6.

possible for a moral judgement to have a
motivational influence even if none of
them in fact do.[12]

Thus we arrive at the following form of the modal argument:

(I)   (1a) All R-J's are necessarily not MIA

         (2a) Not all M-J's are necessarily not MIA

         _____

         (3)   M-J's are not R-J's.

We have already given some reason to suppose that (1a) is
highly problematic. But that (1a) is problematic might suggest
to us that we reject (1a) in favour of (1b). However, having
done that we must adopt premise (2b) as nothing short of (2b)
would suffice to get the conclusion desired. Thus we have:

(II)   (1b) Not all R-J's are necessarily MIA.

         (2b) All M-J's are necessarily MIA.

         _____

         (3)   M-J's are not R-J's.

We have already given some reason to suppose that (2b) is
highly problematic. Certainly, it is a reasonably common move of
those who have attacked the argument from motivation to maintain
that it is possible for a moral judgement not to have a motiva-
tional influence.[13] Indeed, Snare in commenting on both arguments

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12. Ibid, page 3.

13. For example, Philippa Foot, 'Moral Beliefs' in Theories of
     Ethics, ed., P. Foot, Oxford University Press, 1967,
     page 96.

(I) and (II) maintains that the arguments are unsuccessful because of the problematic nature of the strong modal claim that each of them employs (ie., premises (1a) and (2b)). But I would argue that there is something more seriously wrong with arguments (I) and (II) than merely that the premises are dubious; they are invalid.

This is so because it is highly doubtful that Leibniz's Law holds over modal predicates: that is, the following open sentence is not valid:

$$(x)\ (y)\quad \left[(x=y) \supset (L\phi x \supset L\phi y)\right]$$

As is often claimed, modal contexts are referentially opaque. Thus, while the head of cabinet is necessarily the Prime Minister, it does not follow that the leader of the Liberal Party is necessarily the Prime Minister, even though in fact the leader of the Liberal Party is the head of cabinet. I suppose that this is one of those things that keep Labor Party hopes alive.

To put the point generally and in a way that more closely parallels argument (I): it does not follow from the premises

A's are necessarily ϕ

B's are not necessarily ϕ

that B's are not A's; thus it does not hold that if heads of cabinet are necessarily Prime Ministers, and leaders of the Liberal Party are not necessarily Prime Ministers, then leaders of the Liberal Party are not heads of cabinet. Clearly then argument (I)

does not establish that moral judgements are not reason judge-
ments. And by parity of reasoning argument (II) does not estab-
lish that moral judgements are not reason judgements.[14]

But let us suppose that the arguments are valid; that is
to say, let us suppose that either arguments (I) or (II) (or
both) show that moral judgements and reason judgements are
distinct psychological states. Does the argument, even so,
prove that naturalism is false? A certain common conception
of what constitutes a naturalistic theory is that it is a theory
which maintains that some ethical term, eg., 'good' is
definable as 'F' (some naturalistic term). Now it may be true
that to affirm, believe, etc., some such sentence as 'This is
good' is a distinct psychological state or act from the affirm-
ing of 'This is F': but from _this_ fact it would not follow that
'good' and 'F' (or the sentences, 'This is good' and 'This is F')
are not synonymous, _unless_ one adopted the implausible theory
that two sentences are non-synonymous if they are the content
of distinct psychological states.

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14. It might be replied that I have failed to distinguish between
de dicto and _de re_ necessity and that I have treated the
premises of the argument from motivation as claims of _de dicto_
necessity, when, in fact, they should be treated as _de re_:
there are genuine properties such as Lϕ such that what we
have called Leibniz's Law _does_ hold in modal contexts. To
answer this objection fully would require that we make an
excursion into the troubled waters of quantified modal
logic. However, I will simply state that in fact I believe
all necessity can be classified as _de re_ but that _de re_
necessity does not imply the existence of such peculiar
modalized properties as Lϕ in addition to the property ϕ.
This is a position that has been argued for by Alan R. White
in his _Modal Thinking_, Blackwell, 1975, Chapter 11, especially
page 177.

However, as we have noted, the argument is subject to an important variation labelled earlier, 'the meta-linguistic argument', which is the argument from the same premises we have considered, but to a different conclusion. We have thus far criticized the argument as one which attempts to show that no moral judgement is identical with a reason judgement (in the sense specified). It is now time to consider the argument as one which attempts to show that the linguistic expression of a moral judgement is not identical in meaning to the linguistic expression of a reason judgement.

Pretty clearly such a treatment of the argument requires some particular theory of meaning: I would suggest some speech-act theory where the illocutionary force (perhaps the perlocutionary force?) of assenting to or affirming S is to be counted as part of the meaning of S or determines its type of meaning.[15] While I believe such a theory faces considerable problems, I do not intend here to embark on a criticism of that sort.[16] Rather I will claim that the argument from motivation is unsuccessful in showing that moral sentences and reason sentences are not

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15. Certainly Hare holds such a theory; cf., 'Meaning and Speech Acts' and appendix thereto, and 'Austin's Distinction between Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts' in Practical Inferences.

16. Cf., Chapter IV.

identical in meaning, on the grounds that the premises of the
argument are highly dubious. (For the purposes of the counter
argument we will restrict our attention to argument (II)).

I do not wish to deny that morality has something to do
with conduct: I only wish to deny that this is a matter of
necessity. I will claim that while (2b) is false it is nonethe-
less true that moral judgements as a matter of fact have a
motivational influence. Thus I will not be denying the apparent
fact that there is something odd about believing or affirming
some such sentence as 'I ought to do X' and yet not doing or
resolving to do X: such a situation would only be, as we might
put it, factually odd and not logically odd. Now what precise
explication we should give for the link between our moral judge-
ments and our actions is not altogether clear, but, plausibly,
it may only be that as a matter of fact most people most of the
time have an interest in or pro-attitude towards that which they
judge to be good or what they ought to do. In any case, all
that is required to reject (2b) and accept that there is some
connection between morality and conduct is to show that it is
possible for a moral judgement not to have a motivational
influence even though, in fact, it is very rarely the case that
a moral judgement does not have a motivational influence. I
would claim that I may affirm or subscribe to some sentence
like, 'I ought to perform my filial duties' (prima facie a moral
judgement) and yet not do or resolve to do what I affirm I ought
to do. Hare's reply to such a claim would seem to be that my
affirmation of the sentence, 'I ought to perform my filial duties'

where such an affirmation does not have a motivational influence
is not an instance of a moral judgement. Rather, it is an
'inverted commas' use of 'ought', in effect, it is an instance
of a reason judgement. But it is difficult to see what is being
adduced for the truth of this reply other than the truth of
Hare's meta-ethical theory. This is a particularly conspicuous
problem for Hare as it turns out to be merely a matter of defini-
tion that a moral judgement necessarily has a motivational
influence: and why should a naturalist accept that definition?[17]

But let us suppose that the meta-linguistic argument is
sound; does it show that naturalism is false? Certainly, if
we take naturalism to be that theory we have explicated previously,
ie., the theory that moral sentences are definable as reason
sentences, then naturalism is false. We have called such
theories 'definist theories'. But is this the only plausible
conception of what constitutes a naturalistic theory that has
been, or may be, advanced in ethical theory? This is a difficult
question to answer; for one thing, those who have so regularly
attacked naturalism have not set out at all precisely just what
theory it is that they claim is false. However, if we turn to
Moore, for example, and his celebrated attack upon naturalism,
the so-called Open Question Argument,[18] then by implication, at
least, it would seem that he conceived of naturalism as a theory
which maintained that the property goodness is identical to the

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17. The Language of Morals, page 164, and cf. my concluding
    remarks in Chapter III.

18. Principia Ethica, Cambridge University Press, 1903,
    Chapter 1, especially pages 15-16.

property F (some naturalistic property). Or, in other words,

that the terms 'good' and 'F' refer to one and the same

property. We have called such theories 'account theories'.

Now it is by no means obviously the case that if we show a

definist theory of naturalism to be false, that we have

shown an account theory to be false. Such would be the case

only if it were true that two terms refer to one and the same

property only if the terms are synonymous. But there has been

much debate in recent times, particularly in discussions of

materialism, whether this criterion of synonymy is necessary

for property identity.[19] In the next chapter we will look a

little more closely at Moore's conception of naturalism and

his argument against naturalism. We will also examine the

plausibility of an account theory.

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We may conclude that the argument from motivation provides

no bar to the presentation of a naturalistic theory. In its

psychological form the argument is invalid and in any case will

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19. For example, cf., J.J.C. Smart, 'Sensations and Brain
    Processes' in The Mind/Brain Identity Theory, ed. C.V.
    Borst, Macmillan, 1970, pages 58, 63; Max Deutscher,
    'Mental and Physical Properties', in The Identity Theory
    of Mind, ed. C.F. Presley, University of Queensland
    Press; G.A. Malinas, 'Physical Properties', Philosophia,
    vol.3, No.1, 1973, pages 17-31.

not prove a definist theory of naturalism false. In its
meta-linguistic form the argument has dubious premises
(a criticism that applies equally to the psychological
argument) and in any case will not prove that an account
theory of naturalism is false.

CHAPTER VI

THE OPEN QUESTION ARGUMENT AND PROPERTY IDENTITY

Moore's argument against naturalism, the so-called Open Question Argument, may be viewed in two, although not totally unrelated, ways. Firstly, there is the way that it has normally been discussed, namely, as an argument that solely concerns itself with the meaning of words: is the word 'good' identical in meaning to 'F' (some naturalistic term)? Secondly, we may discuss the Open Question Argument in a way that more closely parallels Moore's treatment of the argument, namely, as an argument about property identity: is the property goodness identical to the property F, or, in other words, do the terms 'good' and 'F' refer to one and the same property? Now the two questions that we have here raised are not necessarily unrelated. For if it were the case that two terms refer to one and the same property if and only if the terms are synonymous then clearly a negative answer to the first question will entail a negative answer to the second. But the distinction we have drawn between the two ways that the Open Question Argument may be viewed is, nonetheless, important. Not only does it raise the question of what Moore intended to prove with the Open Question Argument, but it also raises the more important and general question that even if we have shown that

'good' does not mean 'F' does this show that naturalism is false? For surely, quite plausibly, we could regard naturalism not as a 'definist' theory, ie., as a theory which maintains that 'good' is definable as 'F', but as a theory which maintains that the property goodness is identical to the property F, what we've called an 'account' theory. We are drawing a distinction here between theories of naturalism which, to some extent, parallels Mackie's[1] distinction between two sorts of second order moral question, viz., the 'linguistic' (what is the meaning of 'good'?) and the 'ontological' or 'factual' (what is the nature and status of goodness?). And I think it should be clear that to show definist theories of naturalism to be false will not be to show that account theories are false unless it is true that for two terms to refer to the one and the same property the terms must be synonymous.

Our discussion of Moore's Open Question Argument will be divided into two sections. The first will concern itself with the question of whether the Open Question Argument successfully shows that 'good' is not identical in meaning to 'F'; I will argue that it does not. In the second section I will argue that even if the Open Question Argument (or some such similar

1. *Ethics*, Penguin, 1977, pages 19-20. We are drawing a distinction which possibly Nakhnikian also had in mind when he argues that Moore has successfully shown that "elucidatory analysis, in the 'linguistic' manner, will not yield a naturalistic definition of 'good'. But so far we have no reason to despair of giving a naturalistic account of goodness". 'On the Naturalistic Fallacy' in *Studies in the Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, (ed.) Klemke, E.D., Quadrangle Books, 1969, pages 67-68.

argument) has shown that 'good' is not identical in meaning to 'F' this does not show that the terms 'good' and 'F' do not refer to the one and the same property; that is to say, even if the Open Question Argument has shown definist theories of naturalism to be false this does not show that account theories of naturalism are false.

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Moore's Open Question Argument can be put succinctly as follows.[2] Where 'F' is some naturalistic expression, if naturalism were true then questions of the form 'Are F's good?' would be equivalent to 'Are 'F's F?' (because 'good' just means 'F' according to a definist naturalistic theory). But to ask 'Are F's good?' is not the same as asking 'Are F's F?', because the former, but not the latter, is a significant question. That is, the former, but not the latter, is the open question. Therefore, naturalism is false.

In an excellent discussion of the Open Question Argument, Roger Hancock[3] paraphrases Moore's argument in the form of the following reductio:

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2. Cf., Principia Ethica, Chapter 1, especially pages 15-16.

3. 'The Refutation of Naturalism in Moore and Hare', The Journal of Philosophy, 1969, pages 326-334, and cf., his Twenteith Century Ethics, pages 28-32.

(1) If naturalism is true, then some sentence of
     the form 'Whatever is F is good' is analytic,
     where 'F' is replaceable by a non-ethical
     (what we have called, 'naturalistic') expression.

(2) If ethical sentences of the form 'Whatever
     is F is good' are analytic, then we cannot
     significantly ask, 'Are F's good?'.

(3) But we can significantly ask 'Are F's good?'

(4) Therefore, no sentence of the form 'Whatever
     is F is good' is analytic, and hence natural-
     ism is false.

As Hancock notes, the argument is valid but difficulties arise
when we consider the notion of 'significance' which is clearly
integral to the argument. Hancock then proceeds to rule out
several trivial interpretations of the notion and suggests that
what must be meant by saying that we can significantly ask 'Are
F's good?' is that it is not contradictory to deny such sentences.
But this is only another way of saying that sentences of the
form 'Whatever is F is good' are not analytic. Now if in main-
taining that we can significantly ask 'Are F's good?' (the
contention of premise (3)) we mean simply that sentences like
'Whatever is F is good' are not analytic, we are, in affirming
(3), simply denying the truth of the consequent of (1), and so
the argument begs the question against naturalism. As Hancock
remarks:

        The hedonist, for example, will surely have
        no trouble with Moore's argument; having

defined 'good' as 'pleasant' and holding
that 'Whatever is pleasant is good' is
analytic, he will simply reply that in
point of fact it is self-contradictory
to say that something is pleasant and yet
not good. Moore would have no answer;
at the very most his argument only pushes
the dispute back a step, without doing
anything to settle it.[4]

(The emphasis that I have given to Hancock's last comment should
be noted as it will be important in our latter discussion.)

But one might feel that anti-naturalists have employed the
Open Question Argument in not quite this question begging
fashion. That is to say, they have believed that there are
independent grounds for affirming (3) such that one can affirm
(3) without simply assuming naturalism false. What might these
independent grounds be? While it is true that Moore himself
did not regard the Open Question Argument as a linguistic test
and that there is textual support in Principia Ethica for
Hancock's contention that Moore employs the Open Question
Argument in the question begging fashion we have just explicated,
it is equally true that philosophers after Moore have treated
the argument as some sort of test of proposed naturalistic
definitions against our ordinary linguistic intuitions. Maybe
even for Moore the plausibility of the argument rested, albeit
unconsciously, on such a view.

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4.   Ibid, page 329.

Frank Snare,[5] in commenting on Hancock's paper, makes this very point. By making recourse to Ryle's distinction between 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-that'[6] Snare maintains that we can know some such proposition as 'Are F's good?' is an open question without assuming the truth of a meta-ethic to the effect that 'good' does not mean 'F'; that is, we can affirm (3) without assuming that naturalism is false. Says Snare:

> The speaker of English knows how to use
> the word but it doesn't follow that he
> knows certain propositions which mention
> the word 'good' are true or even that he
> is aware of any such propositional claims.[7]

Now Snare wisely notes that he does not wish to make any spectacular claims for this test, but one might wonder just how much one _can_ claim for it, especially in the light of Brandt's well-known distinction between overt and covert synonymy.[8] The basic thrust of Brandt's distinction I take to be that we cannot fully trust our linguistic intuitions. For Brandt, of terms that are overtly synonymous it is

> true that the person, for whose usage they
> are overtly synonymous, thinks after the
> briefest reflection (if the question is

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5.   'The Open Question as a Linguistic Test', _Ratio_, 1975 pages 122-129.

6.   Ryle, G., _The Concept of Mind_, Penguin, 1973, pages 26-60.

7.   _Op.cit._, page 126

8.   _Ethical Theory_, Prentice-Hall, 1959, pages 163-166.

put to him) that the two terms are merely
different verbal devices for saying the
same thing; he recognizes them intuitively
as alternate, freely interchangeable expres-
sions .... This is not true if two terms
are only covertly synonymous.[9]

And Brandt contends that naturalistic definitions of 'good' cannot
plausibly be said to be overtly synonymous, but "the only serious
question is whether any naturalistic definition really qualifies
as being covertly synonymous with some ethical term".[10]

I do not believe that Brandt has adequately explicated the
notion of covert synonymy and the same can be said for the
definition that I offer below. But this is immaterial to the
major thrust of my argument which only requires that we have
some immediately plausible device that shows that the Open
Question Argument does not of itself prove naturalism false,
but at best 'pushes the dispute back a step' — in this case
back to questions of synonymy, which pretty clearly the Open
Question Argument itself will not be able to settle. We may
adopt this plausible device:

Two terms P and Q are covertly synonymous
= $_{df}$ A question of the form 'Is P Q?'
appears open yet P and Q are synonymous.

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9. Ibid, page 163.

10. Ibid, page 164.

(We might say that according to our 'knowing-how' knowledge when we use the terms P and Q in some such question as 'Is P Q?' the question appears open, but that according to our 'knowing-that' knowledge, say according to some meta-ethical theory, P and Q are synonymous.)

In the course of his argument against the Open Question Argument Brandt makes two points.[11] Firstly, two terms might be synonymous and yet a question of the form 'Is P Q?' might not appear closed to a competent speaker of English, because the terms P and Q are covertly synonymous. Secondly, two terms might _not_ be synonymous and yet a question of the form 'Is P Q?' appear closed. Pretty clearly the second point does not rely on the distinction between overt and covert synonymy (it seems to rely on the correlative distinction between overt and covert _non-synonymy_) and in any case is of little interest as regards the Open Question Argument. At most this point would show that we cannot claim that it follows if we have an apparently _closed_ question of the form 'Is P Q?' (ie., the question is _non-significant_) then the terms P and Q are synonymous. But in order to affirm (3) and draw the conclusion (4) of the Open Question Argument we need not claim that a _closed_ question of the form 'Is P Q?' is a _sufficient_ condition of synonymy. All (3) claims is that a question of the form 'Are F's good?' is a

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11. _Ibid_, page 165

significant question, ie., that it is an _open_ question, from which it follows that 'F' and 'good' are _not_ synonymous. That is to say, the Open Question Argument only requires that an _open_ question of the form 'Is P Q?' is a sufficient condition of non-synonymy.

Now it is against the contention that an _open_ question is a sufficient condition of non-synonymy that Brandt's claim that naturalistic definitions of 'good' provide a _definiens_ which is only covertly synonymous with the _definiendum_ is relevant. For Brandt's claim is in effect this: we formulate a question of the form 'Is P Q?' to _test_ against our linguistic intuitions whether indeed P is synonymous with Q; and if the question 'Is P Q?' is _not_ closed then we conclude that P and Q are _not_ synonymous; but we might (in effect) be mistaken in our claim that 'Is P Q?' is not closed because the terms P and Q really _are_ (covertly) synonymous - the question only appears to be not closed.

However, Kai Neilsen[12] has argued that Moore's argument is still effective, even if we grant that terms may be covertly synonymous. The thrust of his argument seems to be contained in the following passage:

> Yet the open-question argument ... remains
> effective if it justifiably makes the
> following negative points: (1) only if

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12. 'Covert and Overt Synonymity : Brandt and Moore and the "Naturalistic Fallacy"', _Philosophical Studies,_ 1974, pages 51-56.

our question is not <u>actually</u> an open
question can it be the case that the
expressions have the same meaning, and
(2) only if we have <u>grounds</u> for believ-
ing the question to be a closed one ...
can we have <u>grounds</u> for asserting that
the expressions in question have the
same meaning. Moore could then go on to
assert that for any of the naturalistic
definitions offered we have no <u>grounds</u>
for believing that a question so formed
by the use of them is a closed question.
All such questions seem, even after care-
ful examination, to be open questions.
Since this is so, we have good, though
not absolutely conclusive, grounds for
rejecting them as adequate definitions
of good.[13]

But it does not seem to me that this will do as a defence
for the Open Question Argument. Let us consider the first point
which Neilsen thinks the argument <u>justifiably</u> makes. This point
states that a closed question of the form 'Is P Q?' is a
necessary condition of synonymy; ie., an open question is a
sufficient condition of non-synonymy. Now it does not seem to me
that <u>Brandt</u> has denied that a closed question of the form 'Is P Q?'
is a necessary condition of synonymy; indeed, given that by a
closed question we simply mean that it is a question formed

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13. <u>Ibid</u>, page 53, (first two emphases mine)

from a proposition that it is not self-contradictory to deny,
then it must be the case that a closed question is a necessary
condition of synonymy. But Brandt's point is that a question
of the form 'Is PQ?' might appear (to competent speakers of
English) not to be closed, when in fact it is, because the
relevant terms are covertly sysnonymous (this is just a statement
of the definition of covert synonymy and a closed question). Now
if the Open Question Argument could justifiably show that a
question of the form 'Is P Q?' is actually not a closed ques-
tion, and not just that it appears not to be closed, then, of
course, it must follow that naturalism is false. But the very
point of Brandt's notion of covert synonymy is that the Open
Question Argument cannot justifiably assert that a question of
the form 'Are F's good?' is not actually closed, although it
might appear that it is not closed, but from this we cannot
conclude that the expressions 'F' and 'good' are not synonymous
given the notion of covert synonymy.

Neilsen's second point seems to be this: if we have no
grounds for believing a question of the form 'Is P Q?' is closed
then we have no grounds for asserting that expressions P and Q
are synonymous, and that as regards 'good' and 'F' we have no
grounds for believing that a question of the form 'Are F's good?'
is closed and therefore we have no grounds for asserting that 'F'
and 'good' are synonymous. However, I think that a naturalist
(who was advancing a definist theory such that 'good' and 'F'
are only covertly synonymous) would readily accept if we have no

grounds for believing a question of the form 'Are F's good?'
is (actually) closed, then we have no grounds for asserting
that 'F' and 'good' are synonymous. But such a naturalist
would go on to say that equally, if we have no grounds for
believing that a question of the form 'Are F's good?' is not
closed, we have to that extent no grounds for asserting that
'F' and 'good' are not synonymous (given that 'F' and 'good'
are covertly synonymous). I suppose it might be replied that
surely we do have some grounds for believing that a question
of the form 'Are F's good?' is not (actually) closed, viz.,
it appears not to be closed to ordinary speakers of English.
But the whole point of introducing the plausible notion of
covert synonymy is to deny that when a question of the form
'Are F's good?' appears not to be closed that this provides
grounds for believing that it is not closed. What seems to
be implicit in Neilsen's argument is that the only grounds one
could have for asserting that 'F' and 'good' are synonymous is
that the question 'Are F's good?' appears closed; but by the
very definition of covert synonymy the naturalist will, of
course, deny this. Still one might ask what grounds does the
naturalist have for claiming that 'good' and 'F' are synony-
mous (after-all, if the terms are only covertly synonymous
then they will not be obviously synonymous). We should imme-
diately note that once again we have reached a stage where the
Open Question Argument has only succeeded in pushing the dispute
back a step; the argument has not succeeded in showing that

naturalism is false but we find ourselves having to consider
whether indeed a naturalist does have grounds for claiming
that 'F' and 'good' are synonymous. That is, we must turn
to the works of various naturalists to discover if they do
indeed provide sufficient grounds for believing that 'good'
is (covertly) synonymous with 'F'. The Open Question Argument
is <u>not</u> an argument which provides us with the grounds for
believing such theories to be mistaken in advance of a careful
examination of those theories.

Thus I would maintain that the Open Question Argument has
not shown that naturalism is false: it either begs the question
or at best merely pushes the dispute back a step without doing
anything to settle the issue.

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Thus far we have discussed Moore's Open Question Argument
as if his only concern was to show that 'good' was not identical
in meaning to 'F'. But while I think it is true that this was
at least part of his concern it was not his only concern. Moore
did not simply view the naturalist fallacy as a fallacy of
attempting to define 'good' naturalistically, but as a fallacy
of misidentifying the property <u>good</u> with some naturalistic
property. Thus Moore says in the summary of his argument:

'Good', then, denotes one unique object
of thought among innumerable others; but
this object has very commonly been identi-
fied with some other - a fallacy which may
be called 'the naturalistic fallacy'.[14]

And in the body of his work he remarks that he is not concerned

with "verbal questions" about 'good', but rather his

business is solely with the object or
idea, which I hold, rightly or wrongly,
that the word is generally used to stand
for. What I want to discover is the
nature of that object or idea ...[15]

It would seem that in Principia Ethica when Moore asks for a

definition he is interested in a real definition, ie., a

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14. Op.cit., page xiii. There are two facets of Moore's
    argument, both implicit in this quotation, that we will
    ignore: 1) his contention that 'good' denotes a simple
    object, and 2) that 'good' denotes an object of thought,
    ie., a non-existent universal. Herbert Hochberg,
    'Moore's Ontology and Nonnatural Properties', in Studies
    in the Philosophy of G.E. Moore, (ed) Klemke, E.D.,
    Quadrangle Books, 1969, pages 95-127, has argued that
    Moore's distinction between natural and non-natural
    properties stems from an ontology Moore held at the
    time of writing Principia Ethica. Non-natural properties
    are construed by Moore as non-existent universals (although,
    as they are entities, they have being) while natural pro-
    perties are existent, substantial parts of particular
    objects.

15. Principia Ethica, page 6.

definition where the _definiendum_ is an object or idea, rather than a _nominal_ definition where the _definiendum_ is a word, in this case the word 'good'.[16] This concern of Moore's with the property goodness and whether or not it is identical with some naturalistic property can be found throughout Moore's text and I will not attempt any further to establish that concern: whether this was Moore's concern or not, it is, in any case, an interesting question in its own right.[17]

Now the Open Question Argument seems pretty clearly an attempt to show that propositions of the form, 'Whatever is F is good' are not analytic, ie., that 'good' and 'F' are not synonymous. Let us suppose that the Open Question Argument (or some such similar argument) has successfully shown that propositions of the form 'Whatever is F is good' are not analytic; does this show, as Moore evidently believed it did, that 'F' and 'good' do not refer to the same property? Or as we might put it, even if the Open Question Argument has shown that definist theories of naturalism are false, does this show

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16. cf., _ibid_, page 8.

17. The interpretation of Moore that I am giving here has also been given by, for example, H.J. Paton, 'The Alleged Independence of Goodness', in (ed) Schlipp, P.A., _The Philosophy of G.E. Moore_, Library of Living Philosophers, 1952, especially page 133.

that account theories are false? To maintain that in showing
a definist theory to be false we have shown that an account
theory is false we must assume that it is not possible for
there to be contingent property identity statements.

By a contingent property identity. statement we will mean
a statement which is true, where the terms flanking the identity
sign are non-synonymous or are not logically equivalent, and
where the terms refer to or express properties. We will not
discuss the view of Kripke,[18] et. al., that _all_ statements of
identity are, if true and if the terms flanking the identity
sign are 'rigid designators', necessary. Finally, we will assume,
as we must if we are to take problems of property identity
seriously, that we should be realists, in some sense, about
properties.

The denial that there are contingent property identity
statements may be appropriately called 'the traditional view'.
Now the traditional view _seems_ to be readily controverted by a
consideration of examples of property identity statements like
the following:

(1) The colour property common to ripe tomatoes
     = the colour property common to pillar boxes.

(2) The property John is thinking about = the
     property Peter is thinking about.

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18. 'Identity and Necessity', in (ed) Munitz, M.K., _Identity
     and Individuation_, New York University Press, 1971. pages 135-164.

(3) Yellow = the emission of light waves of
      such and such a wavelength.

The above statements are true (or we may at least assume that
they are true) and they are contingent. They are contingent
in at least three possibly related senses of that word: the
terms flanking the identity sign are non-synonymous; we can
readily imagine the statements to be false; and we establish
their truth not simply by an examination of the meaning of the
terms flanking the identity sign - we engage in some sort of
empirical exercise.

However, to regard (1) - (3) as counter-instances to the
traditional view might be to misconstrue the traditional view.
Quine, for example who has stated the traditional view, has also
argued that synonymy or logical equivalence of singular terms as
a requirement of identity of reference is too strong: where 'A'
is any singular term

$$(ix) \quad (x = A.p) \ = \ A$$

is true just when 'p' is true (and 'p' is contingent), and yet
clearly the left hand side is not logically equivalent to the
right hand side.[19] So if we allow that there are __singular__
terms which refer to properties and that the __singular__ terms
which refer to properties behave in a logically similar way to

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19.   'Reference and Modality', in From a __Logical Point of View__,
      2nd edition, Harper and Row, 1961, pages 152-153

other singular terms, then there will be contingent property

identity statements (viz., those identity statements where

the terms flanking the identity sign are singular terms).

But Quine has also argued that

> What is ... required for sameness of
> attributes is synonymy, in some sense,
> of the open sentences which determine
> those attributes.[20]

Or, as we might put it, reading 'property' for 'attribute' and

'predicate' for 'open sentence', the criterion for property

identity is predicate synonymy: ie., two predicates express the

same property if and only if they are synonymous. Thus (1) - (3)

will not be counter-instances to the traditional view: state-

ments (1) - (3) are identity statements where the terms flank-

ing the identity sign are (complex) singular terms.

> But this argument, as G.A. Malinas has pointed out,

> assumes that predicates which determine
> properties and singular terms used as
> property designators are logically
> independent.[21]

Are we justified in making this assumption? There are two ways

that we may proceed to argue here. Firstly, we may note with

Malinas that the names of properties are typically formed by

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20. Philosophy of Logic, Prentice Hall, 1970, page 67.

21. 'Physical Properties', Philosophia, 1973, page 19.

nominalizations of the predicates which express the properties referred to by the names. Secondly, and not unrelatedly, we may note that we may form predicates by the 'predicatization' of the names or singular terms which refer to the properties expressed by the predicates. Thus we might say, from any predicate 'P' we may form, given the nominalization operator $\underline{n}$, the name for the property expressed by 'P', '$\underline{n}$(P)'. And for any name (of a property) 'N' we may form, given the predicatization operator $\underline{p}$, the predicate for the property named by 'N', '$\underline{p}$(N)'. For example, from the predicate 'is red' we may form the name 'redness' or 'being red' which names the property expressed by 'is red'. And, for example, from the name 'The colour property common to ripe tomatoes' we may form the predicate 'has the colour property common to ripe tomatoes' which expresses the property named by 'The colour property common to ripe tomatoes'.[22]

Let us turn to our first line of argument. Now while I am not sure of the significance that Malinas places on his grammatical point, one thing I think his discussion makes clear

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22. This last example may not be strictly correct insofar as it could be maintained that the predicate 'has the colour property common to ripe tomatoes' does not express the same property named by 'The colour property common to ripe tomatoes'. The predicate expresses a relational property whereas the name does not. I acknowledge this point but it does not affect my later argument as we shall see.

is one of the forms a counter-example to the traditional view

must take. According to the traditional view, where 'P' and 'P^1'

are non-synonymous predicates, then '$\underline{n}(P) \neq \underline{n}(P^1)$'. Thus a counter-

example to the traditional view would be of the form '$\underline{n}(P) =$

$\underline{n}(P^1)$'. Is it possible to present counter-examples of this

form to the traditional view? Consider the two predicates, 'has

the colour property common to ripe tomatoes' and 'has the colour

property common to pillar boxes' — these predicates are not

synonymous. Furthermore,

(I) $\underline{n}$ (has the colour property common to ripe tomatoes) =

         $\underline{n}$ (has the colour property common to pillar boxes)

is true (although only contingently true). (I) should not be

confused with statements like,

(II) $\underline{n}$ (is red) = $\underline{n}$ (has the colour property common to

         ripe tomatoes)

which are, arguably, false because '$\underline{n}$ (is red)' refers to an

intrinsic property whereas '$\underline{n}$ (has the colour property common

to ripe tomatoes)' refers to a relational property. In (I)

both the left-hand and right-hand side refer to relational

properties. (I) should not be confused with statements like,

(III) $\underline{n}$ (is red) = $\underline{n}$ (is the colour property common to

         ripe tomatoes)

which are, arguably, false because the contained predicates differ

in extension and hence do not, on any view, ascribe the same

property. The extension of 'is red' contains red <u>particulars</u>,

whereas 'is the colour property common to ripe tomatoes'

contains a <u>property</u>. But in (I) the extension of both predi-

cates contain <u>particulars</u>.[23]

We may now turn to our second line of argument which

employed the notion that from the name of a property 'N' we

may form the predicate '$\underline{p}(N)$'. Now we have previously argued

that we may have contingent property identity statements where

the terms flanking the identity sign are singular terms. Let

'M' and 'N' be singular terms which refer to properties and

which are non-synonymous such that the statement 'M=N' is true.

Now if 'M' and 'N' refer to the same property then presumably

the predicates '$\underline{p}(M)$' and '$\underline{p}(N)$' also express the same property

(if not the property named by 'M' and 'N'). But if, <u>ex hypothesi</u>

'M' and 'N' are not synonymous then so too are '$\underline{p}(M)$' and '$\underline{p}(N)$'.

For example:

(2)   The property John is thinking about = the property

          Peter is thinking about

we will assume is true. And as we have seen the traditional

view does not deny that identity statements where the terms

flanking the identity sign are (complex) singular terms are

contingent. Now from the name 'The property John is thinking

about' we may form the predicate 'has the property John is

thinking about' which expresses the property referred to by

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23. My discussion of a possible counter-example to the traditional
    view on the form '$\underline{n}(P)=\underline{n}(P')$' benefits from my reading of an
    unpublished paper by Frank Jackson, 'On Property Identity'.

the name. And similarly with the right-hand side of (2). Even
if the predicates do not express the properties referred to by
their respective names they surely express the same property.[24]

Although we have only touched the surface of the problems
that surround questions of property identity I think we have
sufficient reason to believe that there may be contingent pro-
perty identity statements and hence that even if the Open
Question Argument (or some such similar argument) has shown a
definist theory of naturalism false this does not show that an
account theory is false. The question that remains, of course,
is whether an account theory is plausible in the sense that, how
would we go about establishing a contingent identity between the
property good and some naturalistic property F?

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24. A similar argument has been presented by Chris Mortenson
in his Doctoral Thesis, Mental Predicates, University of
Adelaide, 1976. I should note that I am aware of an import-
and objection raised by Jackson which may be raised against
both of these attempts to show that the traditional view can
be compromised by counter-example. Firstly, consider example
(I). If (I) is true then it is difficult to explain how in
a world devoid of tomatoes an object might (de re) have the
colour property common to pillar boxes but could not have
the colour property common to ripe tomatoes. Secondly,
consider our second line of argument. While 'M=N' may be
contingently true it is not clear that '$\underline{p}(M)$' and '$\underline{p}(N)$'
describe the same property. For once again, in a possible
world it may be the case that an object has the property
John is thinking about but cannot have the property Peter
is thinking about. To fully answer this objection would
take us too far afield into an explication of a view of
properties and, in particular, their conditions for identity
which would be consistent with a contingency theory of pro-
perty identity.

In a way the question we have just posed is not the question I will answer: I do not intend to supply a complete and detailed account of how we would go about establishing a contingent identity between good and F, and I certainly will not provide the requisite criteria that would enable us to claim that we have correctly established such an identity; others have attempted to do so although their discussions do not take place within the context of ethical theory.[25] Rather, I wish to focus on one particular issue which I believe is the most important issue for the account theorist. And the issue is that if we are to claim that good is identical to F then we must have some means of establishing that good is identical to F which does not involve the claim that 'good' is identical in meaning to 'F' and which does not assume that F is identical to good in order to establish that identity.

At first glance this might seem not too much of a problem for the account theorist; he might point out that to establish the truth of the statement 'Good = F' is parallel to establishing the truth of the statement 'Yellowness = the emission of lightwaves at such and such a wavelength'. That is to say, we would establish the former in much the same empirical fashion as we would establish the latter. But as Gauthier has pointed

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25. Cf., Putman, H., 'On Properties', in Essays on Honor of Carl G. Hempel, (ed.) Rescher, N., Reidel, Achinstein, P, 'The Identity of Properties', American Philosophical Quarterly, 1974. pages 257-275.

out, to apply the techniques appropriate to the establishment
of the identity between a colour and some physical state of
affairs to the establishment of an identity between good and F
requires that we "first know what things are good, just as we
first know what things are coloured ... But how do we know
what things are good?"[26].

What will not do here is to assume that there is some
natural property F which is identical to good (so that those
things which are good are just those things which are F).
Of course, one might use this assumption as a hypothesis but
not as the only grounds for claiming that good is identical to
F. That is to say, we might hypothesise that F is identical to
good and then proceed to test that hypothesis, but in order to
test that hypothesis we must first be sure that we have correctly
identified the property goodness.

Well, might we not plausibly maintain that we identify
certain objects or events as instantiations of goodness in much
the same way as we identify instantiations of yellowness? Our
first reaction might be to say that surely this is not the case:
for we can just see what things are yellow, whereas we cannot
just see what things are good.[27] But I am not sure about this.

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26. 'Moore's Naturalistic Fallacy' Gauthier, D.P., page 320.
     in American Philosophical Quarterly, 1967.
27. Cf., Chapter III.

In an ordinary, perhaps loose, sense of 'see' it does seem to
me that we just see what things are good. Would we not agree
with the ordinarily acceptable statement that 'I see that this
is a good typewriter' or agree that we very often settle whether
this is a good typewriter by having a look at it. Or, to take
admitted examples of 'evaluative terms', don't we just see that
this car is damaged or that this water is clean?[28] It might be
replied that it is true that we may speak in such a way but
that there is an essential difference here between seeing that
this is an instance of yellow and (say) that this car is damaged.
In the case of yellow we, as it were, directly perceive that
this is an instance of yellow and that no judgemental factor
enters into the enterprise. But this is surely mistaken: when
I say that I see the professor at his desk (a descriptive or
factual statement if ever there was one) do I _see_ (in the amended
sense) a professor sitting at his desk, or do I see a human
organism sitting behind a wooden construction, or do I see such
and such a shape of such and such a colour positioned thus and
so in relation to another shape of another colour? We may be
reminded here of Wittgenstein's discussion of two senses of 'see';
we may _see_ an object or event and we may "_interpret_ it, and _see_ it
as we _interpret_ it".[29] Of course, this is not to deny that in

28. Cf., Hare, R.M., _The Language of Morals_, pages 138 and 139.
     Hare also believes that 'dangerous' is an evaluative expres-
     sion, and so too, apparently, are 'likely' and 'probable'
     as in 'It is likely or probable that P', _ibid_, page 60.
     cf., Chapter IV.

29. _Philosophical Investigations_, page 193[e].

one sense what I 'see' is just a pattern of light on my retina, but as Hanson has so elegantly put it "There is more to seeing than meets the eyeball".[30] It is now a common place to argue that there are no pure observations, or, to put the point linguistically, that there are no pure observation statements. All observations are 'theory laden'. Thus if we imagine Tycho and Kepler watching the dawn they will both have the same 'raw experience' but Tycho will see the sun rising and Kepler will see the horizon dipping relative to the fixed sun. Wittgenstein's point may be expressed by saying that all observations are 'conceptually mediated':[31] according to Wittgenstein when we see an object as something, we must first have mastered the concept of what we are seeing it as, and this requires that we have mastered the practice or technique of applying the concept. Imagine then that I am at a dinner where one of the guests calls the host an idiot and buffoon and thereby offends the host. I see the action of the guest as a rude action, but someone else, say a young child does not. And yet we have both experienced the same 'raw experience'; I see a rude action but the child, who has not mastered the concept of rudeness, does not. For the child to have observed what I observed required that the child had mastered the concept of rudeness. Now it should be emphasized that I am not claiming that in making an observation we have a raw experience upon which we place a certain interpretation and

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30. <u>Patterns of Discovery</u>, Cambridge University Press, 1969, page 7

31. Cf. chapter III.

thereby conclude that I see such-and-such. This is an artifi-
cial and misleading abstraction. When I see the professor at
his desk I do not conclude that I see the professor at his
desk. Rather I have a certain kind of experience, I observe
that the professor is at his desk. I do not, as the word
'interpretation' might suggest, form an hypothesis and test
this against my 'raw feels' and thereby conclude that the
professor is at his desk.

All this might be agreed but still it might be thought
that there is some difference between yellowness and goodness
such that we could not (as we might for yellowness) establish a
contingent identity for goodness. For example, Harman has
agreed that when you see a group of hoodlums pour petrol over
a cat and ignite it you do not need to conclude that their action
is wrong, you do not have to figure anything out, you can see
that their action is wrong.[32] Furthermore, he agrees that what
you see depends to some extent on your conceptual knowledge: to
really see the hoodlums pouring petrol over the cat and setting
it alight you must know what a hoodlum is, what flesh and blood
animals are, what life is, and so on. Harman agrees that "There
are no pure observations. Observations are always 'theory
laden'. ... Observation depends on theory because perception
involves forming a belief as a fairly direct result of observing

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32. The Nature of Morality, Oxford University Press, 1977,
    page 4. This should be contrasted with the view of Hare
    and others that we arrive at our moral conclusions by way
    of syllogism.

something; you can form a belief only if you understand the relevant concepts and a concept is what is in virtue of its role in some theory or system of beliefs."[33] However, argues Harman,

> observation plays a role in science that
> it does not seem to play on ethics. The
> difference is that you need to make assump-
> tions about certain physical facts to explain
> the occurrence of the observations ... but
> you do not seem to need to make assumptions
> about any moral facts to explain the occur-
> rence of ... moral observations ... In the
> moral case, it would seem that you need only
> make assumptions about the psychology or
> moral sensibility of the person making the
> moral observation.[34]

But this will not do as an argument against an account theorist. I do not wish to deny that to explain the occurrence of certain observations in science assumptions must be made about certain physical facts, and that no such assumptions have to be made to explain moral observations. However, I do believe that this distinction does not show the impossibility of an account theory. Consider a parallel case. To explain the occurrence of such observations as 'He is in pain' we do not have to assume that the person about whom the observation is

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33. _Ibid_, pages 4-5.

34. _Ibid_, page 6.

made is in a certain brain state. Indeed it is very unlikely

that we (although possibly neurophysiologists will do so in

the future) make such observations on the grounds that someone

is in a certain brainstate. It may only be that to explain

the occurrence of pain observations we must assume that the

criterion of someone being in pain is that they exhibit certain

behaviour. This would not be to say that pain is behaviour of

a certain sort nor that the word 'pain' means 'behaviour of a

certain sort': a person may be in pain and yet notevince that

behaviour and a person may evince that behaviour and not be in

pain. Nevertheless it may be correct that the criterion of pain

is certain behaviour.[35] But, all the same, it will remain an

open question whether pain is a certain brainstate irrespective

of what assumptions we make in order to explain the occurrence

of pain observations.[36] Similarly in order to explain the

occurrence of moral observations like 'X is good' it may not be

necessary to assume that X has a certain physical (or naturalis-

tic) property. Indeed, it may be very unlikely that we (although

possibly account theorists will do so in the future) make such

observations on the grounds that X has a certain naturalistic

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35. Cf., Wittgenstein, L., The Blue and Brown Books, Blackwell,
     2nd edition, 1969, pages 24-25, For an account of
     Wittgenstein's notion of a criterion different to mine
     see Alloritton, R., 'On Wittgenstein's Use of the Term
     "Criterion"', in (ed.) Pitcher, G., Wittgenstein,
     Macmillan, 1966, pages 231-250. For a view closer to
     mine cf., Hamlyn D., The Theory of Knowledge, 1970,
     pages 69-71.

36. I do not mean to imply that this is Wittgenstein's view.
     But it does seem to me that we may concern ourselves on
     the one hand with how it is that we use a word, and on the
     other with what the object is that the word refers to. In
     fact it is the essential point of this chapter.

property. It may only be that to _explain_ the occurrence of
moral observations we must assume that the person making such
an observation has a certain psychological 'set'. But it will
remain an open question whether goodness is a certain naturalis-
tic property irrespective of what assumptions we make in order
to explain the occurrence of moral observations.

However, we are closer to an objection to the plausibility
of an account theory and it is an objection which may underlie
Harman's argument. Surely, when a scientist observes a proton
passing through a cloud chamber we assume that there really was,
'out there', a proton passing through the cloud chamber. But
when someone observes that X is good do we assume that there
really is, 'out there', the property goodness which X has?
Surely not. But if this is Harman's objection then I think he
is guilty of regarding as the only plausible cognitivist theory
a straight out objectivist theory. For reasons of ontological
parsimony we might find it difficult to admit that in addition
to a set of naturalistic properties there are also, 'out there',
properties like the non-naturalistic property goodness. Similarly
for various reasons, we may not wish to admit as a non-physicalist
property the property pain into our ontology. Consequently we
may agree that when someone observes that X is good or that Y is
in pain we do not assume that there are the properties goodness
or pain over and above naturalistic or physicalist properties;
although we would deny that there _is not_ something out there which

is identical to goodness or pain, or to which goodness and pain are somehow reducible.[37]

Finally it may be objected that it would be impossible to establish a contingent identity for goodness because there is much disagreement in our moral judgements. Obviously there are also disagreements in our factual jugements, but, it may be claimed, disagreement in morality is of a far more fundamental kind. There are four replies that I think are available to us here:

(1) there is no fundamental disagreement in morality;

(2) the difference in disagreement between morality and science is contingent and is not a function of the nature of morality;

(3) that there is no corresponding difference between morality and science as regards strict logical proof, and

(4) that the disagreements in our moral judgements are a function of our inadequate knowledge of ourselves and the world.

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37. Although I have used a mind/brain identity theory to illuminate my argument we could take any physicalist program as an analogue.

Some authors[38] have argued that there is no fundamental

moral disagreement. If by this claim it is simply meant that

there is in fact no disagreement between people as to the

actual moral judgements they make, then this claim seems to be

pretty clearly false. However, there is a rendering of this

claim which makes it far more plausible and we will consider

this rendition when we come to examine point (4). But certainly

one might be struck when reading Hume, or, as examples of

authors in the early part of this century, Moore and Prichard,[39]

that these writers seemed to take it for granted that there was

general agreement in morality. Now one might interpret this

situation by saying that these otherwise percipient philosophers

were simply blind to the moral diagreement that surrounded them,

or we could take it that they accurately reflected a fairly

widespread agreement in morality at least as regards the social

milieu within which they moved. This prompts the second point I

have listed above.[40]

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38. Cf., for example, Asch, S., 'A Critique of the Psychology of
     Cultural Relativism', in (ed.) Brandt, R.B., _Values and
     Obligation_, Harcourt, 1961, especially page 483. For general
     discussion which concludes that there is _some_ ultimate ethical
     disagreement cf., Brandt, R.B., _Ethical Theory_, Prentice-Hall,
     1959, pages 92-104.

39. 'Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?', _Mind_, 1912,
     especially pages 29-30.

40. The argument that follows owes much to an argument made by
     J.J. Kupperman, _Ethical Knowledge_, George Allen and Urwin,
     1970, pages 57-60.

Imagine the case where Jones claims that he sees an elephant on the other side of this room. We cannot see the elephant. There is a disagreement between us and Jones on this point. Now let us further imagine that the disagreement cannot be explained in a number of obvious ways: eg., Jones is not drunk, he is not under hypnosis, and so on. Of course Jones may be mentally deranged but his only sympton of insanity is this seeing of an elephant on the other side of the room. How might we go about getting Jones to agree with us.[2] We might bring in other people, all of whom say that there is no elephant there. But even if the criterion of objectivity is intersubjective agreement (which I doubt) it does not follow that if everyone agrees that such-and-such is the case that such-and-such is the case. Suppose that we all go to where the putative elephant is and do not feel an elephant; Jones, however, still claims to feel the elephant. We might photograph the area where Jones says the elephant is standing and produce a blank print to show Jones; but Jones claims to see an elephant on what the rest of us regard as a blank. And so on.[41] There is no logical absurdity in supposing that a situation like that with Jones and the elephant may arise. Indeed it would seem that such situations

41. Cf., Hampshire, S., 'Fallacies in Moral Philosophy', Mind, 1949, footnote, page 476, where he says:

> The word 'fact', here as always is treacherous, involving the old confusion between the actual situation and the description of it; the situation is given, but not 'the facts of the situation'; to state the facts is to analyse and interpret the situation.

have arisen: consider the case of those who claim that there
are poltergeists. It does not appear inconceivable that there
should be a whole world full of Jones. Thus it would appear
that there is agreement on scientific data is contingent.

Conversely, it is contingent that there is much moral dis-
agreement. One could imagine a world composed of people with
quite considerable agreement in their moral judgements, say, a
society of evangelical Baptists in a world of plenty. Once
again there does not appear to be any logical absurdity in such
an idea.

The third point that I mentioned can also be illustrated by
Jones and the elephant. There is no deductive logical proof
which can prove that Jones is wrong. Any such proof would have
to involve premises which were simply derivable from experience,
but as we have argued there are no such premises. There are no
pure observation statements, there is no judgementally free appeal
to the facts.[42]

Let us now consider our fourth point which was that the
disagreements in our moral judgements are a function of our
inadequate knowledge of ourselves and the world. In making this
point I do not deny that the actual moral judgements that people
make quite often appear to be contrary; eg., the Eskimos think

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42. Cf., footnote 41 above.

it right, in general, to kill the old whereas the Romans seemed
to consider the killing of the old, especially ones mother or
father, as the most heinous of crimes.[43]   But there are two
points to be noted. Firstly, there seems to be quite widespread
(although not total - but the same holds for questions of fact)
agreement on quite general matters. For example, very few
groups of people, indeed, if any, think that it is right to kill
an adult member of their group who is healthy, who has committed
no crime and whose death would not benefit the general welfare
of the group. Marriage within the immediate family or sexual
intercourse with members of the immediate family is not approved
by any society. What these armchair anthropological considera-
tions might suggest is that the criteria for the picking out of
an instance of goodness are very general and complex. The second
point to make is that it is not clear just how much the disagree-
ments that arise are a function of the conditions that people
find themselves in, or, at least, the conditions that people
suppose themselves to be in. For example, maybe the Eskimos
see the killing of ones mother or father as the merciful cutting
short of a life of pain, hunger and misery, the ridding of a
life that threatens the very welfare of the group. And possibly
the aged themselves, in the vast majority of cases, desire that
their life should be ended, seeing their death in the light that
the young see it. On the other hand, maybe the Romans saw the
act of parricide within the context of an affluent and non-
migratory society where the aged could, in general, be adequately

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43. In the comparison of moral judgements across cultures the
     problem of translation also arises, but we will ignore this
     problem.

and confortably supported. The aged did not desire to be
killed and people in general saw the act of parricide as simply
an attempt to acquire the property of the aged. Likewise when
I read Colin Turnball's account of the Ik of Uganda[44] I was
at first struck by the disparity between their moral judgements
and mine. But at the conclusion of the book, and after some
reflection, I thought that if I were an Ik in their situation
I think the moral judgements I would make would be substantially
similar to theirs.[45] But these are complex matters and any
conclusive answer would require, as Warnock puts it:

> that one is driven to look to features
> of people and of their circumstances that
> are themselves pretty universal and unapt
> to change. Thus one seems to be led,

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44. The Mountain People, Picador, 1974. For an account of
    a people with whom we would be in substantial moral
    agreement and whose physical and social condition is
    quite distinct from that of the Ik, cf., Turnball's,
    The Forest People, Picador, 1976.

45. For the sort of point I have raised cf., Brandt, R.B.,
    Ethical Theory, pages 92-104, and Ewing, A.C., The
    Definition of Good, as reprinted in (eds) Edwards, P.,
    and Pap, A., A Modern Introduction to Philosophy,
    Free Press, 3rd edition, 1973, pages 314-317.

perhaps to one's own astonishment, to the
formulation, in a style that may seem
positively archaic, of vast generalizations
about humans and the human predicament — to
what may look alarmingly like a kind of arm-
chair anthropology. One is led to deal, as
philosophers feel professionally uneasy in
doing, in empirical assertions, and even in
bald, first-order judgements of value.[46]

But while ⫪ am under no illusions that I have conclusively
shown that an account theory is correct, I hope that I have
sufficiently shown that an account theory is at least a plausible
theory; that it is a theory worth persevering with. I also
trust that I have made clear that the plausibility of an account
theory rests on at least two things:

(a) a theory of knowledge, and

(b) certain contingent facts.

I do not think that an account theory is logically impossible.
And whether we can actually formulate such a theory seems to
depend on whether we will actually take the plunge and engage in
those 'vast generalizations about humans and the human predica-
ment' which have proved so unpopular in recent times.

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46. The Object of Morality, Methuen, 1971, page IX.

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