

## Prolegomena

There is a familiar and, to many, very natural maneuver which is of frequent occurrence in conceptual inquiries, whether of a philosophical or of a nonphilosophical character. It proceeds as follows: one begins with the observation that a certain range of expressions  $E$ , in each of which is embedded a subordinate expression  $\alpha$ —let us call this range  $E(\alpha)$ —is such that its members would not be used in application to certain specimen situations, that their use would be odd or inappropriate or even would make no sense; one then suggests that the relevant feature of such situations is that they fail to satisfy some condition  $C$  (which may be negative in character); and one concludes that it is a characteristic of the concept expressed by  $\alpha$ , a feature of the meaning or use of  $\alpha$ , that  $E(\alpha)$  is applicable only if  $C$  is satisfied. Such a conclusion may be associated with one or more of the following more specific claims: that the schema  $E(\alpha)$  logically entails  $C$ , that it implies or presupposes  $C$ , or that  $C$  is an applicability/appropriateness-condition (in a specially explained sense) for  $\alpha$  and that  $\alpha$  is misused unless  $C$  obtains.

Before mentioning suspect examples of this type of maneuver, I would like to make two general remarks. First, if it is any part of one's philosophical concern, as it is of mine, to give an accurate general account of the actual meaning of this or that expression in nontechnical discourse, then one simply cannot afford to abandon this kind of maneuver altogether. So there is an obvious need for a method (which may not, of course, be such as to constitute a clear-cut decision procedure) for distinguishing its legitimate from its illegitimate applications. Second, various persons, including myself, have pointed

to philosophical mistakes which allegedly have arisen from an uncritical application of the maneuver; indeed, the precept that one should be careful not to confuse meaning and use is perhaps on the way toward being as handy a philosophical *vade-mecum* as once was the precept that one should be careful to identify them. Though more sympathetic to the new precept than to the old, I am not concerned to campaign for or against either. My primary aim is rather to determine how any such distinction between meaning and use is to be drawn, and where lie the limits of its philosophical utility. Any serious attempt to achieve this aim will, I think, involve a search for a systematic philosophical theory of language, and I shall be forced to take some torturing steps in that direction. I shall also endeavor to interweave, in the guise of illustrations, some discussions of topics relevant to the question of the relation between the apparatus of formal logic and natural language.

Some of you may regard some of the examples of the maneuver which I am about to mention as being representative of an outdated style of philosophy. I do not think that one should be too quick to write off such a style. In my eyes the most promising line of answer lies in building up a theory which will enable one to distinguish between the case in which an utterance is inappropriate because it is false or fails to be true, or more generally fails to correspond with the world in some favored way, and the case in which it is inappropriate for reasons of a different kind. I see some hope of ordering the linguistic phenomena on these lines. But I do not regard it as certain that such a theory can be worked out, and I think that some of the philosophers in question were skeptical of just this outcome; I think also that sometimes they were unimpressed by the need to attach special importance to such notions as that of truth. So one might, in the end, be faced with the alternatives of either reverting to something like their theoretically unambitious style or giving up hope altogether of systematizing the linguistic phenomena of natural discourse. To me, neither alternative is very attractive.

Now for some suspect examples, many of which are likely to be familiar.

A. (1) An example has achieved some notoriety. Ryle maintained: "In their most ordinary employment 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' are used, with a few minor elasticities, as adjectives applying to actions which ought not to be done. We discuss whether someone's action was voluntary or not only when the action seems to have been his

fault." From this he drew the conclusion that "in ordinary use, then, it is absurd to discuss whether satisfactory, correct or admirable performances are voluntary or involuntary"; and he characterized the application of these adjectives to such performances as an "unwitting extension of the ordinary sense of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary,' on the part of the philosophers."<sup>1</sup>

(2) Malcolm accused Moore of having misused the word "know" when he said that he knew that this was one human hand and that this was another human hand; Malcolm claimed, I think, that an essential part of the concept "know" is the implication that an inquiry is under way.<sup>2</sup> Wittgenstein made a similar protest against the philosopher's application of the word "know" to supposedly paradigmatic situations.

(3) Benjamin remarked: "One could generate a sense of the verb 'remember' such that from the demonstration that one has not forgotten *p*, i.e. that one has produced or performed *p*, it would follow that one remembers *p* . . . Thus one could speak of Englishmen conversing or writing in English as 'remembering' words in the English language; of accountants doing accounts as 'remembering' how to add; and one might murmur as one signs one's name 'I've remembered my name again.' The absurd inappropriateness of these examples, if 'remember' is understood in its usual sense, illustrates the opposition between the two senses."<sup>3</sup> (There is an analogy here with "know": compare the oddity of "The hotel clerk asked me what my name was, and fortunately I knew the answer.")

(4) Further examples are to be found in the area of the philosophy of perception. One is connected with the notion of "seeing . . . as." Wittgenstein observed that one does not see a knife and fork as a knife and fork.<sup>4</sup> The idea behind this remark was not developed in the passage in which it occurred, but presumably the thought was that, if a pair of objects plainly are a knife and fork, then while it *might* be correct to speak of someone as seeing them as something different (perhaps as a leaf and a flower), it would always (except possibly in very special circumstances) be incorrect (false, out of order, devoid of sense) to speak of seeing an *x* as an *x*, or at least of seeing what is plainly an *x* as an *x*. "Seeing . . . as," then, is seemingly

1. *Concept of Mind*, III, 69.

2. Malcolm, "Defending Common Sense," *Philosophical Review*, January 1949.

3. "Remembering," *Mind*, July 1956.

4. In *Philosophical Investigations*.

represented as involving at least some element of some kind of imaginative construction or supplementation.

Another example which occurred to me (as to others before me) is that the old idea that perceiving a material object involves having (sensing) a sense-datum (or sense-data) might be made viable by our rejecting the supposition that sense-datum statements report the properties of entities of a special class, whose existence needs to be demonstrated by some form of the Argument from Illusion, or the identification of which requires a special set of instructions to be provided by a philosopher; and by supposing, instead, that "sense-datum statement" is a class-name for statements of some such form as "x looks (feels, etc.)  $\phi$  to A" or "it looks (feels, etc.) to A as if." I hoped by this means to rehabilitate a form of the view that the notion of perceiving an object is to be analyzed in causal terms. But I had to try to meet an objection, which I found to be frequently raised by those sympathetic to Wittgenstein, to the effect that for many cases of perceiving the required sense-datum statements are not available; for when, for example, I see a plainly red object in ordinary daylight, to say "it looks red to me," far from being, as my theory required, the expression of a truth, would rather be an incorrect use of words. According to such an objection, a feature of the meaning of "x looks  $\phi$  to A" is that such a form of words is correctly used only if *either* it is false that x is  $\phi$ , or there is some doubt (or it has been thought or it might be thought that there is some doubt) whether x is  $\phi$ .

(5) Another crop of examples is related in one way or another to action.

(a) *Trying*. Is it always correct, or only sometimes correct, to speak of a man who has done something as having *eo ipso* tried to do it? Wittgenstein and others adopt the second view. Their suggestion is that if, say, I now perform some totally unspectacular act, like scratching my head or putting my hand into my trouser pocket to get my handkerchief out, it would be inappropriate and incorrect to say that I tried to scratch my head or tried to put my hand into my pocket. It would be similarly inappropriate to speak of me as not having tried to do each of these things. From these considerations there emerges the idea that for "A tried to do x" to be correctly used, it is required either that A should not have done x (should have been

prevented) or that the doing of x was something which presented A with some problems, was a matter of some difficulty. But a little reflection suggests that this condition is too strong. A doctor may tell a patient, whose leg has been damaged, to try to move his toes tomorrow, and the patient may agree to try; but neither is committed to holding that the patient will fail to move his toes or that it will be difficult for him to do so. Moreover, someone else who has not been connected in any way with, or even was not at the time aware of, the damage to the patient's leg may correctly say, at a later date, "On the third day after the injury the patient tried to move his toes (when the plaster was removed), though whether he succeeded I do not know." So to retain plausibility, the suggested condition must be weakened to allow for the appropriateness of "A tried to do x" when the *speaker*, or even someone connected in some way with the speaker, thinks or might think that A was or might have been prevented from doing x, or might have done x only with difficulty. (I am not, of course, maintaining that the meaning of "try" in fact includes such a condition.)

(b) *Carefully*. It seems a plausible suggestion that part of what is required in order that A may be correctly said to have performed some operation (a calculation, the cooking of a meal) carefully is that A should have been receptive to (on alert for) circumstances in which the venture might go astray (fail to reach the desired outcome), and that he should manifest, in such circumstances, a disposition to take steps to maintain the course towards such an outcome. I have heard it maintained by H. L. A. Hart that such a condition as I have sketched is insufficient; that there is a further requirement, namely that the steps taken by the performer should be *reasonable*, individually and collectively. The support for the addition of the supplementary condition lies in the fact (which I shall not dispute) that if, for example, a man driving down a normal road stops at every house entrance to make sure that no dog is about to issue from it at break-neck speed, we should not naturally describe him as "driving carefully," nor would we naturally ascribe carefulness to a bank clerk who counted up the notes he was about to hand to a customer fifteen times. The question is, of course, whether the natural reluctance to apply the adverb "carefully" in such circumstances is to be explained by the suggested meaning-restriction, or by something else, such as a feeling that, though "carefully" could be correctly applied, its application would fail to do justice to the mildly spectacular facts.

(c) Perhaps the most interesting and puzzling examples in this area are those provided by Austin, particularly as he propounded a general thesis in relation to them. The following quotations are extracts from the paragraph headed "No modification without aberration": "When it is stated that X did A, there is a temptation to suppose that given some, indeed, perhaps *an*, expression modifying the verb we shall be entitled to insert either it or its opposite or negation in our statement; that is, we shall be entitled to ask, typically, 'Did X do A My or not My?' (e.g., 'Did X murder Y voluntarily or involuntarily?'), and to answer one or the other. Or as a minimum it is supposed that if X did A there must be at least one modifying expression that we could, justifiably and informatively, insert with the verb. In the great majority of cases of the great majority of verbs ('murder' is perhaps not one of the majority) such suppositions are quite unjustified. The natural economy of language dictates that for the *standard* case covered by any normal verb... (e.g. 'eat,' 'kick,' or 'croquet')... no modifying expression is required or even permissible. Only if we do the action named in some *special* way or circumstances is a modifying expression called for, or even in order... It is bedtime, I am alone, I yawn; but I do not yawn involuntarily (or voluntarily!) nor yet deliberately. To yawn in any such peculiar way is just not to just yawn."<sup>6</sup> The suggested general thesis is then, roughly, that for most action-verbs the admissibility of a modifying expression rests on the action described being a nonstandard case of the kind of action which the verb designates or signifies.

B. Examples involve an area of special interest to me, namely that of expressions which are candidates for being natural analogues to logical constants and which may, or may not, "diverge" in meaning from the related constants (considered as elements in a classical logic, standardly interpreted). It has, for example, been suggested that because it would be incorrect or inappropriate to say "He got into bed and took off his trousers" of a man who first took off his trousers and then got into bed, it is part of the meaning, or part of *one* meaning, of "and" to convey temporal succession. The fact that it would be inappropriate to say "My wife is either in Oxford or in London" when I know perfectly well that she is in Oxford has led to the idea that it is part of the meaning of "or" (or of "either... or") to convey that the speaker is ignorant of the truth-values of the particular dis-

6. "A Plea for Excuses," *Philosophical Papers*, ed. Urnson and Warnock, p. 137.

juncts. Again, Strawson maintained that, while "if p then q" entails " $p \rightarrow q$ ," the reverse entailment does not hold; and he characterized a primary or standard use of "if... then" as follows: "each hypothetical statement made by this use of 'if' is acceptable (true, reasonable) if the antecedent statement, if made or accepted, would in the circumstances be a good ground or reason for accepting the consequent statement; and the making of the hypothetical statement carries the implication either of uncertainty about, or of disbelief in, the fulfillment of both antecedent and consequent."<sup>7</sup>

C. My final group of suspect examples involves a latter-day philosophical taste for representing words, which have formerly, and in some cases naturally, been taken to have, primarily or even exclusively, a descriptive function, as being, rather, pseudo-descriptive devices for the performance of some speech-act, or some member of a range of speech-acts. Noticing that it would, for example, be unnatural to say "It is true that it is raining" when one merely wished to inform someone about the state of the weather or to answer a query on this matter, Strawson once advocated the view (later to be considerably modified) that the function (and therefore presumably the meaning) of the word "true" was to be explained by pointing out that to say "it is true that p" is not just to assert that p but also to endorse, confirm, concede, or agree to its being the case that p.<sup>8</sup> Somewhat analogous theses, though less obviously based on cases of linguistic inappropriateness, have been, at one time or another, advanced with regard to such words as "know" ("To say 'I know' is to give one's word, to give a guarantee") and "good" ("To say that something is 'good' is to recommend it").

So much for the suspect examples of the kind of maneuver which I initially outlined. All or nearly all of them have a particular feature in common, which helps to make them suspect. In nearly every case, the condition C, the presence of which is suggested as being required for the application of a particular word or phrase to be appropriate, is such that most people would, I think, on reflection have a more or less strong inclination to say that to apply the word or phrase in the absence of that condition would be to say something *true* (indeed usually trivially true), however *misleading* it would be to apply the word or phrase thus. This is connected with the point, noted by

7. *Introduction to Logical Theory* III, pt. 2.

8. Strawson, "Truth," *Analysis*, June 1949.

Searle, that in a good many of these examples the suggested condition of applicability is one which would deny a word application to what are naturally regarded as paradigm cases, cases which would be obvious choices if one were explaining the meaning of the word or phrase by illustration.<sup>9</sup> What could be a clearer case of something which looks blue to me than the sky on a clear day? How could it be more certain that my wife is either in Oxford or in London than by its being certain that she is in Oxford? Such considerations as these, when they apply, prompt a desire to find some explanation of the relevant linguistic inappropriateness other than that offered in the examples.

It is not clear, however, with respect to most of the examples, just what explanation is being offered. Let us, for convenience, label a philosopher who takes up one or another of the positions mentioned in my list of suspect examples an "A-philosopher"; let us call the condition which he wishes to treat as involved in the meaning of a particular word (e.g., "remember," "voluntary") a "suspect condition"; and let us call the word in question a "crucial word," and a statement, the expression of which incorporates in an appropriate way a crucial word, a "crucial statement."

It seems to me that an A-philosopher might be occupying one of at least three positions:

- (1) He might be holding that crucial statements entail the relevant suspect conditions (that, for example, to do something carefully entails that the doer's precautionary steps are reasonable, and that if the steps are unreasonable, then it is false that the deed was carefully executed).
- (2) He might be holding that if the suspect condition fails to be true, then a related crucial statement is deprived of a truth-value.
- (3) He might be holding that (a) if the suspect condition is false, the related crucial statement may be false or, alternatively, may lack a truth-value; and (b) if the suspect condition is true, then the related crucial statement will be either true or false.

The logical relationship, in this case, between the crucial statement and the suspect condition will be similar to that which, with some plausibility, may be supposed to hold between a pair of statements of

9. "Assertions and Aberrations," *Contemporary British Philosophy*, ed. Williams and Montefiore.

the form "A omitted to do x" and "A might have been expected to do x." Consider the relationship between:

- (1) "A omitted to turn on the light."
- (2) "A might have been expected to turn on the light."

The following account has some plausibility: If statement (2) is false, then statement (1) will be false if A turned on the light; if he turned on the light, then he certainly did not omit to turn it on, whether he should have turned it on or not. If, however, statement (2) being false, A did not turn on the light, then the truth or falsity of statement (1) is in doubt. Given, however, that statement (2) is true, that A might have been expected to turn on the light, then statement (1) is false or true according as A did, or did not, turn on the light.

A somewhat parallel account might be suggested for the relation between:

- (1') "A tried to turn on the light."
- (2') "It was, or might have been, a matter of some difficulty for A to turn on the light."

Suppose that statement (2') is false; then perhaps statement (1') is false if A just did not turn on the light; but if A did turn on the light, then perhaps statement (1') lacks a truth-value, or has an indefinite truth-value. But given that statement (2') is true, then statement (1') is true if A turned on the light or took (unsuccessful) steps toward that end, and statement (1') is false if A took no such steps. (I am not, of course, suggesting that such an account would be correct, only that it would have some plausibility.)

It is generally pretty difficult to pin an A-philosopher down to one rather than another of these three positions. One of the few cases in which this seems possible is that of Benjamin. Continuing the passage in which he contrasts the supposedly genuine (and certificatory) sense of "remember" with the invented sense, he says that the opposition between the two senses is not "one which permits the crude exposure of its existence by *depriving* that in these examples one remembers one's name or one's language, for such a denial would in each case entail that one had forgotten them. The inappropriateness would lie in bringing up the notion of remembering in its usual sense at all in such connexions." This passage, though perhaps not absolutely conclusive, strongly suggests that Benjamin thought of the genuine sense of the word "remember" as being such that, if the suspect condition

was not fulfilled (if there is no chance that one should have forgotten), then the crucial statement (e.g., "I remember my name") cannot be assigned a truth-value. I think (though I am less sure) that Malcolm took the parallel position with regard to uses of "know" when the related suspect condition is unfulfilled.

But in other cases the situation is much less clear. In Strawson's characterization (in *Introduction to Logical Theory*) of "a primary or standard use of 'if... then,'" it is said that a hypothetical statement is acceptable (true, reasonable) if accepting the antecedent would be a good ground for accepting the consequent; but clearly he did not regard this connection between antecedent and consequent as a *sufficient* condition for the truth (acceptability) of the conditional, since he also held that the truth of the related material conditional was required (since the ordinary conditional was said to *entail* the material conditional). And the truth of the material conditional is not a consequence of the antecedent-consequent connection. So presumably he held that the ordinary conditional was false, given the falsity of the related material conditional; but it is difficult to determine whether he thought that such a conditional as "If I am now in Oxford, it is raining in Australia" (which, read materially, would be true, though the required connection between antecedent and consequent is presumably not present) is false, or is inappropriate (out of order, lacking an assignable truth-value).

Again, Searle attributes to Austin a position which is to be identified with a version of either the second or the third position of the A-philosopher, and there is perhaps some external evidence for interpreting Austin thus. But Austin himself is quite indecisive. He says "I sit in my chair, in the usual way---I am not in a daze or influenced by threats or the like: here it will not do to say either that I sat in it intentionally or that I did not sit in it intentionally, nor yet that I sat in it automatically or from habit or what you will." This sentence can perhaps be interpreted as saying, among other things, that in the described situation no truth-value is assignable to either of the statements "I sat in the chair intentionally" and "I did not sit in the chair intentionally." The quoted sentence is attended by a footnote: "Caution or hedge: of course we can say 'I did not sit in it intentionally' as a way simply of repudiating the suggestion that I sat in it intentionally." The fact that Austin encloses in quotes the first occurrence of "intentionally" perhaps supports the view that he was thinking that the only *true* interpretation of "I did not sit in it intentionally" is one

which denies truth (without attributing falsity) to the result of applying the word "intentionally" to my sitting in the chair. But earlier in the paper there is a plaintive footnote to the sentence "Only remember, it (ordinary language) is the *first* word" (he has just said that it is not the last word). The footnote reads: "And forget, for once and for a while, that other curious question 'Is it true? May we?' Moreover, in apparent pursuance of the plea in the footnote, he consistently avoids the words "true" and "false," using instead such expressions as "it will not do to say," "we could, justifiably and informatively, insert with the verb (a modifying expression)," and "no modifying expression is required or even permissible." I am very much afraid that he was trying to have his cake and eat it; that he was arguing in favor of using various inadmissibilities of application, in respect to adverbs or adverbial phrases such as "voluntarily," "deliberately," and "under constraint," and so forth, as a basis for determining the meaning of these expressions (the boundaries of the concepts which they express), while at the same time endeavoring to put on one side the question whether such applications would be inadmissible because they would be false, because they would lack a truth-value, or for some other reason. It seems to me very doubtful, to say the least, whether this combination of procedures is itself admissible.

Finally I turn to Searle's treatment of the topic with which we are concerned. The following seem to be the salient points.

(1) He addresses himself to only a small part of the range of suspect examples, specifically to the applicability restrictions which were supposed by Wittgenstein and Malcolm to attach to the word "know" by Benjamin to the word "remember," and by Austin to adverbial expressions modifying action verbs. But Searle adds some specimens which have not notably excited the interest of philosophers and which in the end he uses as exemplary cases for the type of solution which he favors for the philosophically interesting examples. One of these is the sentence "The man at the next table is not lighting his cigarette with a 20-dollar bill." The utterance of this sentence, Searle suggests, would not be appropriate in a standard, nonaberrant situation, such as one in which a man in an ordinary restaurant is lighting his cigarette with a match. But there would be no ground for regarding its utterance as inappropriate if it were uttered "in a Texas oilmen's club, where it is a rule that cigarettes are lit with 20-dollar bills, not 10 dollar or 5 dollar bills, much less matches, which are reserved for igniting cash."

(2) He attributes to the A-philosophers whom he considers the view that the relevant crucial statements are, in certain circumstances, neither true nor false. That is, he represents them as holding either position (2), according to which the falsity of the suspect condition is supposed always to deprive a related crucial statement of a truth-value, or position (3), according to which the falsity of the suspect condition is supposed to prevent the crucial statement from being true, though whether it is false or lacks a truth-value depends on the facts.

(3) He supposes that the suspect condition attaching to the application of a crucial word consists (or perhaps would in the end have to be admitted by the A-philosopher to consist) in the real or supposed existence of a chance that the *negation* of the appropriate crucial sentence might be or might have been true, or might be supposed to be true. The A-philosopher will (or will have to) allow that the condition for, say, the applicability of the expression "of his own free will" to some action is that there should be (or there should be supposed to be) in the circumstances some chance of its being *false* to apply this expression to the action.

(4) He maintains that it is in fact a mistake, on the part of the A-philosophers whom he is considering, to have represented such suspect-conditions as being conditions for the applicability of particular words or phrases. The linguistic phenomena are better explained by the supposition that it is in general a condition of the assertibility of a proposition *p* (irrespective of the particular words contained in the expression of the proposition *p*) that there should be a real or supposed chance, in the circumstances, that *p* should be false. Austin's slogan "No modification without aberration" should be amended to "No assertion without assertibility" or "No remark without remark-ability." To apply modifying adverbs in standard situations is to apply them when there is no real or supposed possibility of their application being false and so to apply them in circumstances which ensure that what their application expresses is unremarkable.

(5) Destructively (as regards the A-philosophers' theses) Searle relies on the claim that his own solution of the linguistic phenomena is simpler, more general, and perhaps more plausible than that of his opponents', and also on two arguments which he characterizes as being of a more "knock-down" nature. The first argument is that the negations of crucial statements are false (not neither true nor false), when the suspect conditions are unfulfilled—in which case, of course,

the crucial statements themselves will presumably have to be admitted as true. If I go to a philosophical meeting in the standard or normal way (whatever that is), my doing so would (according to Austin) disqualify my action from being properly a subject for the modifying phrase "of my own free will," and it would be (according to Searle) simply false to say "I didn't go to the meeting of my own free will; I was dragged there." Similarly, to say, in absolutely standard circumstances, "I didn't buy my car voluntarily; I was forced to," "I don't remember my own name," "I don't know whether the thing in front of me is a tree," or "He is now lighting his cigarette with a 20-dollar bill" would in every case be to say something false. Searle's second argument of a knock-down nature against the A-philosopher is that it is possible to find sentences of a somewhat more complex form than the simple sentences so far considered, which contain the crucial words, yet which are clearly appropriate independently of any assumption that a suspect condition obtains. Examples are: "The knowledge of and ability to remember such things as one's name and phone number is one of the foundation stones of modern organized society" and "It is more pleasant to do things of one's own free will than to be forced to do them."

I am, of course, in sympathy with the general character of Searle's method of dealing with the linguistic phenomena which have provided A-philosophers with their material. In particular, I, like Searle, would wish to make the explanation of the linguistic inappropriatenesses, which the A-philosophers have seized on, independent of any appeal to special semantic features of particular words. But I am not entirely happy about the details of his position.

In the first place, I do not find either of his knock-down arguments against the A-philosophers convincing. The first argument derives the truth of a crucial statement (when the suspect condition is unfulfilled) from the alleged falsity of that statement's negation, given the same circumstances. Now it is certainly the case that it would be false to say of the man using a match, "He is now lighting his cigarette with a 20-dollar bill," and so it is true that he is *not* lighting his cigarette with a 20-dollar bill. But so far as I know, no philosopher since the demise of the influence of Bradley has been in the least inclined to deny this. The matter is otherwise with the examples which are relevant to recent philosophy. If I go to a meeting in the normal way, it is certainly false that I was dragged there, and my being dragged there would certainly be incompatible with the *truth* of the statement that

I went of my own free will; if I had been dragged there, it would have been *false* that I went of my own free will. But there is no step from this to the conclusion that since I was *not* dragged there, it is *true* (rather than neither true nor false) that I went of my own free will. My own view is that it is true that I went of my own free will, but that Searle's argument does not prove this; it amounts to no more than a denial of his opponents' position. Again, once we put the statement "I don't remember my own name" into the third person (to avoid the possibly special features of the first person present tense of this verb), the situation seems to be the same; the A-philosopher has already declared himself reluctant to say either "He did remember his name" or "He did not remember his name."

As regards Searle's second argument, the attempt to find cases in which the crucial word is applicable, even though the suspect condition is unfulfilled, is a promising enterprise and can, I think, be carried through successfully. But I do not think that the generalities which I have quoted from Searle achieve this goal. Consider "It is more pleasant to do things of one's own free will than to be forced to do them." In fairness to the A-philosopher, we should perhaps replace this statement by a cumbersome paraphrase: "Acts to which the expression 'done of one's own free will' applies are more pleasant than acts to which 'done because one is forced to' applies." Once we redraft the statement thus, we can see that it is appropriate, and indeed its truth, carry no consequences at all with respect to the nature of the conditions in which the expression "done of one's own free will" does apply to an act (or can be correctly applied to an act). The A-philosopher can continue to take a more restrictive view on this matter than does Searle.

The other example, "The knowledge of and ability to remember such simple things as one's name and phone number," insofar as it relates to the concept of remembering, seems to me to suffer from a different defect. A reference to one's "ability to remember" can be interpreted as a reference to what one *can* remember, and this in turn may be understood as a reference to what is "in one's memory," what one has learned and not forgotten. It is by no means clear that it is remembering in this sense to which the A-philosopher wishes to attach the suspect condition. What Benjamin found inappropriate was a remark such as "I've remembered my name *again*," and the restriction he proposed seems to have been designed for the use of "remember

ber" to refer to a datable occurrence. Insofar as this was so, his thesis seems unaffected by Searle's example.

Before turning to Searle's own thesis, I should like to mention a type of argument which, it seems to me, might be used with some effect against some A-philosophers, though it does not figure in Searle's paper. Imagine the following situation. I visit my bank, and as I am leaving, I see Mrs. Smith go to the counter, write a check, and present it to the clerk. At this point I leave. When I get home, my wife asks me whom I have seen, and I reply, "I saw Mrs. Smith cashing a check at the bank at noon today." Now it would have been, in these circumstances, inappropriate, for obvious reasons, for me to have said "I saw Mrs. Smith *trying* to cash a check at the bank at noon today." However, later in the day I meet Miss Jones, the local know-it-all, who also asks me whom I have seen. I again say "I saw Mrs. Smith cashing a check at the bank at noon today." Miss Jones replies "But she can't have been cashing a check; she knows that she is so overdrawn that the bank will not honor her checks." I do not believe Miss Jones, and we have an argument. In the end I say huffily "Well, I saw her trying to cash a check at the bank at noon today, and I have not the slightest doubt that she succeeded."

From this little narrative two lessons can be derived. (1) To account for the linguistic phenomena, the A-philosopher will have to weaken the suspect condition for the word "try" so that it demands only that the speaker of the sentence "A tried to do x" should think that someone thinks that A might have failed to do x, or found difficulty in x-ing. (2) Once the suspect condition becomes speaker-relative in this way, the A-philosopher runs into another difficulty. For it is very natural to suppose (and counterintuitive to deny) that if I had said to my wife "I saw Mrs. Smith trying to cash a check at noon," which would have been inappropriate and according to the A-philosopher would have lacked a truth-value, I should have made the *same* statement as the one which I later made to Miss Jones, appropriately and so (according to the A-philosopher as well as everyone else) *truly*. So the A-philosopher will either have to deny that the two uses of the sentence would have made the same statement, or will have to maintain that one: and the same statement may have a truth-value at one time and lack a truth-value at another time. Neither alternative is attractive. This objection will apply to *any* suspect-condition which is speaker-relative in this kind of way.

As I have said, I am sympathetic with the general direction of Searle's positive thesis, but unhappy about some of its detail.

(1) Searle of course allows that his condition of assertibility (that there should be, or that it should be supposed that there is, some chance that the asserted proposition is false) is not strictly a necessary condition of assertibility; a necessary condition of assertibility would consist in a disjunction, of which his condition would be one disjunct. But he does not specify the other disjuncts and does not seem to regard them as having application to the current topic; so perhaps I am entitled to ignore them. His condition seems to me to fail to explain some cases which I think he would wish to explain. In particular, what seems to be required for the appropriateness of "x looks  $\phi$  to A" concerns not the possibility that x might not look  $\phi$  to A but the possibility that x might not be  $\phi$ . And what makes "A tried to do x" appropriate is the real or supposed possibility, not that A might not have tried to do x, but that A might not have succeeded in doing x. Moreover, the fact that "look" and "try" are special in this respect is connected with the special character of the inappropriate use of these words. An inappropriate use of "it looks  $\phi$  to me" is inadequate, says too little, whereas an inappropriate utterance of "He is not lighting his cigarette with a 20-dollar bill" is otiose.

(2) There seems to be considerable uncertainty about the status of a condition of assertibility. Sometimes Searle seems to hold that if the assertibility condition is unfulfilled in the case of a particular utterance, that utterance fails to be an assertion; sometimes he seems to hold that, in such a case, it is an assertion which is *out of order*; and sometimes that it is a *pointless* assertion (or remark).

(3) There also seems to be some uncertainty about the precise nature of the speech-act which Searle's condition is supposed to govern. This is said to be the act of assertion. Now, in the ordinary sense of the word, assertion is quite a specific speech-act. To assert is (approximately) to make a claim. If I say that "Heidegger is the greatest living philosopher," I have certainly made an assertion (on the assumption, at least, that I can expect you to take me seriously); but if I draw your attention to the presence of a robin by saying "There is a robin," or tell you that "I have a bad headache," or comment that "The weather is cold for the time of year," it is in the first two cases false and in the third case doubtful whether, properly speaking, I have made an assertion. In this ordinary sense of assertion, fairly clearly there are conditions the fulfillment of which is required if saying something is to

count as making an assertion. But since there are other perfectly respectable speech-acts which may be performed when one utters an indicative sentence, the failure of such an utterance to be an assertion is no ground for regarding the utterance as inappropriate or out of order. If, however, "assert" is to be understood in some more generous and more technical sense, then the question arises how far the introduction of such a sense, with a stipulation that assertion in this sense is to be subject to Searle's condition, would explain the inappropriateness of utterances which fail to satisfy the condition. This difficulty may perhaps be circumvented by taking "asserting" (in its new sense) as another name for remarking, which is a notion in current use; and maybe it would be a desideratum for a speaker that his saying what he says should achieve the status of a remark. But even inappropriate utterances achieve this status; a man who says (inappropriately) "He is not lighting his cigarette with a 20-dollar bill" has made an inappropriate remark.

It seems to me that the only tenable version of Searle's thesis (which is of course a version to which he subscribes) is that an utterance or remark to the effect that p will be inappropriate if it is pointless; that it will be pointless, in many situations, unless there is a real or supposed possibility that it is false that p; and that these facts can be used to account for some of the linguistic phenomena which have stimulated A-philosophers. Indeed, it would be difficult to disagree with this thesis, and much of what I have to say can be looked upon as a development and extension of the idea contained in it. I am nevertheless still somewhat apprehensive lest, in accepting this thesis, I be thought to be committing myself to more than I would want to commit myself to. My impression is that Searle (like Austin) thinks of speech-acts of the illocutionary sort as conventional acts, the nature of which is to be explained by a specification of the constitutive rules which govern each such act, and on which the possibility of performing the act at all depends. An infraction of one of these rules may mean (but need not mean) that an utterance fails to qualify as a specimen of the appropriate type of speech-act; it will at least mean that the utterance is deviant or infelicitous.

Now, while some speech-acts (like promising, swearing, accepting in marriage) may be conventional acts in some such sense as the one just outlined, and while remarking is no doubt a conventional act in some sense (since it involves the use of linguistic devices, which are in some sense conventional), I doubt whether so unpretentious an act as

remarking is a conventional act in the above fairly strong sense. This issue cannot be settled in advance of an examination of the character of speech-acts and of the meaning of the phrase "conventional act." But even if remarking is a conventional act in the favored sense, I would regard as far from certain that any rule to the effect that a remark should not be made if to make it would be pointless, or that a remark should not be made unless (*ceteris paribus*) there is a real or supposed possibility that the proposition it expresses might be false, would be among the rules the exposition of which would be required to explain the nature of remarking. It seems to me more than likely that the nature of a remark could be explained without reference to such matters; the inappropriateness of remarks which failed to satisfy such putative rules might be consequential upon other features which remarks characteristically have, together perhaps with some more general principles governing communication or even rational behavior as such.

Let me gather together the main threads of this somewhat rambling introduction. I have tried to characterize a type of maneuver by which a conclusion is drawn about the meaning of a word or phrase from the inappropriateness of its application in certain sorts of situation, and to suggest that a method is needed for determining when such a maneuver is legitimate and when it is not. I have given various examples of this maneuver which are of some philosophical interest, and which are also suspect (and, in my own view, in most cases illegitimate). I have given an argument which I hope may show that, at least when a suspect condition is speaker-relative in a certain sort of way, it is a mistake to consider this condition to be a condition of applicability for a particular word or phrase, if by "condition of applicability" is meant a condition whose nonfulfillment deprives the application of the crucial word or phrase of a truth-value. I have suggested (in agreement with Searle's general attitude) that inappropriateness connected with the nonfulfillment of such speaker-relative conditions are best explained by reference to certain general principles of discourse or rational behavior. It is my view that most of the A-philosophical theses which I have been considering are best countered by an appeal to such general principles; but it has not been so far my objective to establish this contention. I shall, however, now turn to a direct consideration of such general principles, with a focus on their capacity for generating implications and suggestions rather than on their utility for explaining the specimens of inappropriateness

which have interested A-philosophers; it will be my hope that their utility for this last purpose might emerge as a byproduct of their philosophical utility in other directions. From now on my primary interest will lie in the generation of an outline of a philosophical theory of language; so A-philosophers may be expected to reappear on the philosophical stage only intermittently.