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Wittgenstein on the grammar of knowledge-claims.

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WITTGENSTEIN ON THE GRAMMAR OF KNOWLEDGE-CLAIMS

by

Branko Bilcar

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the Department of Philosophy in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1982
ABSTRACT

WITTGENSTEIN ON THE
GRAMMAR OF KNOWLEDGE-CLAIMS

by
Branko Bilcar

This thesis is a systematic exposition of a region of Wittgenstein's thought covered primarily in his On Certainty, i.e., the grammar of knowledge-claims. As G.E. Moore's philosophy of common sense served as a major impetus behind Wittgenstein's investigations into this area, his conception of knowledge is covered, too. The skeptic's position, of major concern to both Wittgenstein and Moore, is represented by Hume's thought.

There are three chapters in this thesis. The first, "Wittgenstein's Concept of Grammar," aims at clarifying Wittgenstein's view of philosophical problems. Since the source of philosophical problems is seen as one of misunderstandings about the way language operates, I begin with a discussion of how language in fact operates. Next, I discuss Wittgenstein's view of the cause of philosophical problems, i.e., surface grammar, which is contrasted with depth grammar. The last part of this chapter deals with some of the methods and techniques Wittgenstein proposed for investigating grammar.

Chapter two, "Wittgenstein and Moore on Knowledge and Skepticism," as the title suggests, deals with Wittgenstein's
and Moore's discussion of knowledge and skepticism. I begin with a discussion of Moore's use of "I know" in his *Defence of Common Sense* and *Proof of the External World*, which is followed by an examination of what Wittgenstein had to say about "I know" and his criticisms of Moore. An account of Hume's skepticism is given, and Moore's and Wittgenstein's criticisms are engaged against it. Moore's criticisms are shown to fail, while Wittgenstein's criticisms are shown to succeed.

Chapter three, "Wittgenstein on Moore's Truisms," examines Wittgenstein's views on the function of Moore's propositions in our lives and looks at certain locutions Wittgenstein suggests as substitutes for some of the philosophical uses of "I know." A grammatical investigation of these suggested locutions is conducted and compared with the grammar of "I know." I attempt to show that when certain philosophical uses of "I know" are replaced with these suggested locutions, the problems which arise from the philosopher's misuse of "I know" disappear.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Dates of composition follow each abbreviation. See bibliography for other information.

BB 1933-1935 The Blue and Brown Books*
CV 1914-1950 Culture and Value*
LC 1938 1942-1946 Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*
OC 1949-1951 On Certainty**
PG 1932-1934 Philosophical Grammar**
PI 1934-1949 Philosophical Investigations Part I*, Part II**
RFM 1937-1944 Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*
RPP II 1947-1948 Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. II**
TLP 1918 Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus**
Z 1929-1948 Zettel**

*Reference indicated by page number.

**Reference indicated by section number.
INTRODUCTION

Socrates: Well... do you fancy it is a small matter to discover the nature of knowledge? Is it not one of the hardest questions?

Theaetetus: One of the hardest, I should say.

Theaetetus' pronouncement that discovering the nature of knowledge is one of the hardest questions was not idiosyncratic. Each new generation of philosophers would echo his words. Indeed, the single most popular (and puzzling) problem in the history of philosophy has been the problem of what constitutes knowledge as opposed to mere (true) belief. Along with a few other select problems, the problem of knowledge has had the distinction of being one of philosophy's master-problems, some saying it is the problem of philosophy.

Philosophers' attempts at solving the problem of knowledge are innumerable. None, however, has succeeded in formulating an answer to the satisfaction of the skeptic. In the history of the tug-of-war between skeptics and non-skeptics, skepticism has always had the edge; and after Hume joined its ranks, some say, it enjoyed ultimate conquest. Indeed, within the constraints of the particular way in which philosophers (skeptics and non-skeptics alike) have viewed the problem of knowledge,
skeptics seem to have put non-skeptics over a barrel. It would take a new, radical way of viewing this and other philosophical problems before the philosophical mind would win its emancipation from the stranglehold. Philosophical problems have placed on it. Wittgenstein's view of philosophical problems is such a view.

"The philosopher," Wittgenstein says, "is not a citizen of any community of ideas. That's what makes him into a philosopher" (Z, 455). If that is what makes one (who is, of course, otherwise disposed) a philosopher, then Wittgenstein was a philosopher of the highest order. As one who was highly original and deeply probing, and who resolutely disallowed himself to be influenced by others (see CV, p. 1), Wittgenstein refused to view philosophical problems in the dead-end ways in which they had been traditionally viewed. This resolve, together with an unrelenting lifelong dedication to philosophical matters, blossomed into a way of viewing philosophical problems unlike they had ever been viewed before.

In this thesis, I examine knowledge-claims from a Wittgensteinian point of view. My first chapter, "Wittgenstein's Concept of Grammar," has as its primary purpose the clarification of Wittgenstein's view of philosophical problems. Since the source of philosophical problems is seen as one of misunderstandings about the way language operates, I begin with a discussion of how
language in fact operates. Next, I discuss Wittgenstein's view of the cause of philosophical problems, i.e., surface grammar, which is contrasted with depth grammar. The last part of this chapter deals with some of the techniques Wittgenstein proposed for investigating grammar.

Chapter two, "Wittgenstein and Moore on Knowledge and Skepticism," as the title suggests, deals with Wittgenstein's and Moore's discussion of knowledge and skepticism. Wittgenstein examines the philosophical problem of knowledge by focussing in on propositions of the type: "I know..." It is his contention that philosophers have misused the locution "I know," and to show an instance of this he looks at the way it is used by G.E. Moore in his Proof of the External World and Defence of Common Sense. In this connection, this chapter gives an account of Moore's use of "I know" in the above-mentioned works, what Wittgenstein had to say about "I know," and Wittgenstein's criticisms of Moore.

Both Wittgenstein and Moore found skepticism defective: Moore thought it self-contradictory, while Wittgenstein thought it incoherent. In this connection, I give an account of Hume's skepticism, and engage Moore's and Wittgenstein's criticisms against it. Moore's criticisms are shown to fail, while Wittgenstein's are shown to succeed.

The third, and final, chapter, "Wittgenstein on
Moore's Truisms," begins with an examination of Wittgenstein's views on the function of Moore's propositions in our lives. Here I show that Moore's propositions are not claims and that they have a different, special function in our lives. Having shown that Moore's propositions are wrongly prefixed with "I know" in chapter two, and having stated their function in our lives here, I move on to an examination of certain locutions Wittgenstein suggests as substitutes for Moore's use of "I know." A grammatical investigation of these suggested locutions is conducted and compared with the grammar of "I know." I attempt to show that when certain philosophical uses of "I know" are replaced with these suggested locutions, the problems which arise from the philosopher's misuse of "I know" disappear.
CHAPTER I

WITTGENSTEIN'S CONCEPT OF GRAMMAR

And Grammar is the dance of living form. --Elizabeth Sewell

A first reading of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, and especially the first encounter with the concept of grammar, can leave someone puzzled. It becomes, or at least should become, quite obvious that in Wittgenstein's works the concept of grammar is something different from what we usually understand by the term.¹

Nowhere in his writings does Wittgenstein provide us with a precise definition of what "grammar" in his sense of the term) means. A coherent picture of what Wittgenstein meant by "grammar" and what role it plays in his writings begins to emerge when all the various things he says about it (and with it) are pieced together -- much the same way that a picture in children's drawing books begins to emerge when all the points of a drawing-to-be are connected with lines. In this chapter we shall attempt to piece together Wittgenstein's picture of grammar.

In the *Philosophical Grammar*, Wittgenstein says that "grammar is the accounting books of language (which)
must show the actual transactions of language" (PG, 44), and that "grammar describes the use of words in the language" (PG, 23). In addition to the grammar (or grammatical description) of words (also discussed at BB, p. 24; PI, p. 18n; PI, 187, 257; RPPI, 494), Wittgenstein speaks of the grammar of expressions (BB, pp. 20, 109; PI, 660), of phrases (BB, p. 70), and of propositions and sentences (BB, pp. 51, 53; PI, 353). Thus, to speak of the grammar of e.g., a word is to give a description of that word's use. Before we look at what such a description involves, let us consider what is meant by 'use.'

There are two senses of the word 'use' and when Wittgenstein says that "grammar describes the use of words in the language," he intends the inclusion of both of these senses under the rubric of 'use.' The two senses of the word 'use' might be distinguished under the headings of 'utility' and 'applicability.'

When Wittgenstein speaks of the use of a word or proposition in the 'utility' sense of the word, he refers to what it is used for, the jobs it does, the human purposes it serves. In this connection we find him speaking of the 'purpose' (PI, 6, 8), 'role' (PI, 30, 50, 156, 182, 557), and 'functions' (PI, 11, 27, 340, 559) of words, and asking what words are 'used for' (PI, 96, 363). The 'utility' sense of 'use' is also conveyed in other things Wittgenstein says. For example,
he says that language and its concepts are instruments (PI, 569; RPP I, 586; BB, pp. 67-68), and that "words are deeds" (PG, 131; PI, 546), compares words with tools (PI, 11, 14-15, 23, 41-42, 53, 360; BB, p. 67), and speaks of 'operating with words' (PI, 1). Let us briefly illustrate this point with a not-so-obvious example. Thus, those of us who drive automobiles come across (a certain use of) the word "stop" several times a day; that is, we encounter stop-signs several times a day. The word 'stop' we might say, is here used by a community and its citizens as an instrument which functions as a command for the purpose of ordering traffic.

Whereas the utility sense of 'use' refers to what a word is used for, the applicability sense of 'use' refers to how a word is (or can be) used (when it is used to serve some human purpose). That is, the applicability sense of 'use' refers to the more or less specific manner(s) in which a word is or can be used, the company a word keeps and can keep, the functions it avails and can avail itself to. This point too can be illustrated with an example. Thus, person A is writing a term paper on the policies of governments towards nations which they have recently defeated in war. He limits his investigation to cases where the war was fought on the soil of the defeated country. Upon examining the relevant texts, he discovers that the policy adopted by many governments
whose country has recently won such a war involved helping the defeated country in its reconstruction efforts. Wondering how he might best label this policy, he asks person B whether he should call it a policy of restitution or a policy of retribution. Person B answers that he is not sure and that he might be able to help person A if he were given more information about the policy and the circumstances under which it was adopted. Person A explains that in each case where the policy was adopted, the winning country was trying to woo the defeated country away from allying itself with the winning country's powerful, political archenemy. In each case, were the defeated country to ally itself with the winning country's archenemy, the result would have been a great geo-political and military imbalance favouring the archenemy. Having closely studied the wording of each instance of the policy in question, he finds that in all cases the winning countries had made a point of helping the defeated countries before they sought help from the winning countries' archenemies -- a situation which would have obliged the defeated countries into allying themselves with the winning countries' archenemies. That, person A suggests, is basically what was involved in the adoption of this policy in every case. Person B now briefly considers what person A has just told him and suggests that the policy be labelled a policy of
retribution. That is, person B, if he were to adopt our terminology, would say that the word 'retribution' is applicable to the policy described.

(Let us continue with this example, for it will help shed some light on other matters pertaining to the applicability sense of 'use'.)

Person A, being one who is interested not only in learning about the foreign policy of governments, but about the use of words, too, asks person B why he chose the word 'retribution.' Person B explains that the words 'restitution' and 'retribution' have different applications or uses. "'Restitution'," he says, "is used where one party compensates another party for some kind of wrong-doing it may have effected against it, whereas 'retribution' is used where one party rewards or punishes another party for a good or bad action. In the case of the policy you (person A) have described -- where the winning countries were rewarding the defeated countries with reconstruction aid for not allying themselves with the winning countries' archenemies -- the word 'retribution' applies." Person B, being the thorough type and wanting to make sure that person A clearly understands the difference in the application of these two words, continues: "The policy you've described would incorrectly be called a 'policy of restitution' because it was not adopted in response to (a perceived)
wrong-doing -- and the word 'restitution' applies where a party wants to (or is ordered to) make amends to another party to whom (it is perceived) it has wronged. It would, for example, be correct to call a policy a 'policy of restitution' where country X, at war with country Y, accidentally bombs a city in a neutral country Z, and drafts a policy to make up for the accidental (so-perceived) wrong-doing." Person A, having learned the difference in the applicability of the two terms, and trusting person B's wisdom on such matters, goes back to writing his term paper.

In this example we saw person B specify the application of two words whose application person A was unsure of. He did so by, first, providing a definition of the two words involved; secondly, showing how one of the two words applies to the policy described by person A; thirdly, providing an example of how the other word might be used. In other words, he gave person A instruction in the use of the two words by stating and making clear the rules for their use or application (BB, p. 12). He made it clear that, as a rule, the word 'restitution' is used where a (perceived) wrong-doing is involved, the word 'retribution' where some kind of compensation (but no wrong-doing) is involved.
Some Remarks on the Relation Between Utility and Applicability

Our distinction between the two senses of 'use' may lead to confusion and the misrepresentation of Wittgenstein's thought. Some comments on their relation are, therefore, in order. What follows will prevent confusion which may arise from that distinction, and also shed some light on Wittgenstein's views on grammar.

Someone may see our talk of rules, use, utility, applicability, etc., as unnecessary and, perhaps, even mystifying. Instead of putting the matter before us in those terms, one may simply want to say that we know the meaning(s) of a word and are thereby able to use it in sentences and in situations. Indeed, there is a sense in which we do have to know the meaning of a word before we use it, and we do speak of "knowing (or learning) the meaning of a word." But by "knowing (or learning) the meaning of a word" we understand nothing more nor less than "knowing (or learning) how a word is or could be used," knowing, that is, the types of functions a word lends itself to (BB, p. 69). Words do not have independent meanings which, as it were, get applied, for, as Wittgenstein suggests, "... every sign by itself seems dead (and) in use it is alive" (PI, 432; see PI, 454; BB pp. 4-5; PG, 65, 100), and, "Only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning" (RPP II, 504; see RPP II, 687; Z, 173; OC, 229). Let us take a closer look at this matter.
Our emphasis on the applicability sense of 'use' seems to suggest that words have meanings independent of their use and that these meanings get applied in use. For instance, in our example, it would appear that the words 'restitution' and 'retribution' have meanings and that person B showed person A where and how these meanings were to be applied. And, as we have noted, there is something right about this way of putting the matter; but it must be seen in the right light, and we should ask where these words got their meaning. Were the meanings of words created on the seventh day of creation and our knowledge of words' meanings thereafter congenitally transmitted from one generation to the next? Surely this cannot be true! Well, then, where did words get their meanings? For the later (though not earlier) Wittgenstein, words get their meaning (or applicability) from their utility (RPP I, 266; BB, pp. 27-28). That is, when a word is regularly utilized in a particular manner, it comes to have a more or less specific application, or, we might say, it is 'as a rule' used in such and such ways. If the words 'restitution' and 'retribution' were in the future regularly utilized in a different manner and their present used dropped, or if they were presently utilized differently in some other (English-speaking, or better, English-word-using) culture, they would have different meanings. This is
Wittgenstein's point in the following passage:

Isn't the question "Have these words meaning?" similar to "Is that a tool?" asked as one produces, say, a hammer? I say "Yes, it is a hammer." But what if the thing that any of us would take for a hammer were somewhere else a missile, for example, or a conductor's baton? . . . (OC, 351; see PI, p. 147n).

Just as that thing is for us a hammer because it is used to hammer (and not e.g. to conduct an orchestra), so, too, this word has this meaning because it is utilized in this way.

The foregoing must not be understood as a strict circumscription of the use of various words, phrases, propositions, etc., for, as Wittgenstein suggests, "language is not defined for us as an arrangement fulfilling a definite purpose . . ." (Z, 322). There are two important reasons for this: (1) the many and various uses of particular words, phrases, etc., do not admit of themselves strict circumscription, and (2) such circumscription would not allow for new uses of words, etc. Let us look at these points in the stated order.

While it is true that many words, phrases, etc., do have strictly circumscribed applications -- "restitution" and "retribution" are, I think, such words -- most do not. Let us illustrate this point by looking at a phrase used in our example, i.e., 'policy of . . ." One may want to say that it is a descriptive phrase used to label or title a body of information which is about a course of
action or a directive. When '...' is filled in with the right word(s), and the completed phrase is utilized to describe such a body of information, the phrase performs it office properly. And it is true that the phrase 'policy of ...' has just such as use -- we saw it being used that way in our example. But is this the only way that 'policy of ...' is (or might be) used? Suppose a person C -- to continue with our example -- walked in on person A and person B's discussion and, after hearing person A's description of the policy he was wondering how to label, he enthusiastically exclaims that "it should be called a 'policy of policies.'"

Would he have been understood by persons A and B to be attempting an answer -- albeit a zany one -- to person A's question as to which word best applies to the policy described? Perhaps. Perhaps, because if person A or person B were unfamiliar (say, because they were from another culture) with how person C was using the phrase 'policy of ...', they might well understand him to be attempting an answer to person A's question. But if they understood person C correctly, that is, if they understood him to be saying the equivalent of something like, "Hey, that's a good policy!", then they have understood a use of the phrase 'policy of ...' which is not labelling a body of information. Still other uses like, for example, 'policy of the people,' further
prevent the strict circumscription of the phrase 'policy of . . .' As Wittgenstein points out: "We are unable to clearly circumscribe the concepts we use; not because we don't know their real definition, but because there is no real 'definition' to them" (BB, p. 25). All that we can and should try to do is describe the many and various uses of any-one word or phrase.

Strict circumscription of words, phrases, etc., would also disallow new uses. That is, if this word or phrase were strictly circumscribed for use this way, then by virtue of such circumscription, new uses would be disallowed. The game of chess, for example, is like this: the things that we are allowed to do with any one piece are strictly circumscribed, and we are not allowed to vary its uses. If in the middle of a game of chess I start using my rook in the way that the knight is used, my opponent will tell me that such move is not allowed. Now, it is clear that our language-use is not like chess, at least not in this respect. We can (and do) apply words in new ways even though they may have customary, well-established, though different, uses. Indeed, we just saw two and mentioned a third application of the phrase 'policy of . . .' where it is safe to assume that the label-of-a-body-of-information type use is the older and the 'policy of policies' type use the newer of the two uses. Both are widely utilized,
equally legitimate, and specific applications of the same phrase. Whereas in chess the strictly circumscribed uses of the chess pieces is strongly enforced and/or adhered to, and new used of chess pieces is not allowed, the application of words, though for the most part adhered to, is not so circumscribed as to disallow new uses.

On the other hand, it is clear that we cannot use 'policy of . . . (say, 'water') to get someone to bring us a glass of water. So, although not strictly circumscribed, there are (it seems) certain limitations as to how 'policy of . . .' might be used. But do we really want to say this? That is, do we want to lay down certain preconditions for the application of words? Are such preconditions ever laid down? Are the ways we use (and can use) certain words and phrases decided and thereafter enforced as the pieces in chess are? The answer to all of these questions is, of course, no. For, just as it is for us inconceivable that "Would you policy of water for me?" could one day have a use, one may have once thought it inconceivable that 'policy of policies' could have a use. Thus, instead of saying that 'policy of water' cannot be used as a request or command for a glass of water, we might say that it does not have such a use for us, and that such a use of 'policy of . . . ' would also be unlikely to catch on in the future.
It is unlikely that 'Would you policy of water for me?' would become another way of asking someone for a glass of water, not merely because we already have ways of doing that, but because the phrase 'policy of ...' has applications so different from that one that it would have to undergo tremendous (and probably unnatural) modification before it came to have such applicability. Such a "use" of 'policy of ...' would have to (if natural) be the result of a long series of transformations in the utility of 'policy of ...'.

But, now, recognizing the difference between the above-mentioned uses of 'policy of policies' and 'policy of restitution,' someone may ask why when in that case the new use of 'policy of ...' caught on, it would be unlikely to catch on in this case. Here, the kind and degree of difference between the established and (proposed) new use is of crucial importance. Wittgenstein's discussion of family-resemblances is instructive on this point (PI, 67). A new use will catch on when it has some resemblance to the established use. In this case 'policy of policies' has a greater resemblance to the 'policy of retribution' type of use than 'Would you policy of water for me?' does. With it, like the established use, the word 'policy' is still a noun, and in both cases (what is called) a policy is involved. There is nothing of (what is called) a policy involved.
in 'Would you policy of water for me.' As Wittgenstein points out: "You can vary a concept, but then you might change it beyond all recognition" (RPP II, 691). We might say that 'policy of policies' is like using a volleyball in a basketball game, while 'Would you policy of water for me?' is like trying to use a volleyball as a piece in a game of table chess. Asking someone to play basketball with a volleyball is justifiable. A volleyball is light enough, bouncy enough, and it fits through a basketball rim; in short, it lends itself to that game. That it does not lend itself for use as a piece in a chess game is obvious. True, it could be put into a mold and pressed into a chess piece, but then it would be a chess piece. But as a volleyball it does not lend itself for use as a piece in a chess game. The same is true of words. The reason that 'policy of policies' caught on, and 'Would you policy of water for me?' is unlikely to, is that 'policy of . . .' lends itself (it "being what it is") to the former type of use, and not to the proposed latter type of use.

Grammar and Language-games

In our discussion of the circumscription of words, etc., we said that person C's use of 'policy of . . .', i.e., 'policy of policies,' may have been understood
correctly by persons A and B. Either one or both of them may have misunderstood him to be attempting an answer to person A's question as to how the policy he described should be labelled, whereas he was making a point about (what he believed to be) the quality of the policy. Let us now ask what one of them is understanding if he understood person C correctly, and the other not understanding if he "understood him incorrectly." Wittgenstein would say that the one who understood person C correctly was familiar with a certain language-game which the one who misunderstood him was not familiar with (BB, pp. 183-84; PG, 104). But this answer will satisfy no one who does not know what language-games are, so let us make this matter clear.

The term 'language-game' is, of course, metaphorical; it is meant to draw our attention to certain features of language by comparing it to games. The following are features of language which Wittgenstein points our "are more or less akin to what in ordinary language we call games" (BB, p. 81):

1) Just as any one game (e.g. chess, ring-a-ring-a-roses, mind-games, etc.) is not part of and does not presuppose (awkward as it may sound) 'the' game, so, too, those things which we call language are not to be regarded "as incomplete parts of (the) language, but as languages complete in themselves, as complete systems of human communication"
20

(81).

2) Just as there is no one thing common to everything that we call a game, so, too, there is no one thing that is common to all that we call language. (See PI, 65-67).

3) Just as in games, training, skills, the mastery of technique, and the ability to apply rules, may in varying degrees be involved, so, too, these things may in varying degrees be involved in language. (See PI, 5, 53, 150).

4) Just as games are part of an activity and of our lives, generally, so, too, "the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (PI, 23; see PI, 7).

5) Just as there is no reason for (and, therefore, no need to justify) games, even though someone may play a game for a reason, so, too, there is no reason for (and, therefore, no need to justify) language, even though we may use language for a reason. (See RPP II, 632; OC, 474; PI, 466 ff).

In our discussion on the two senses of 'use,' we have already remarked on points (1), (2), (3). Here we shall be primarily concerned with (4); it will enable us to understand what we said might be Wittgenstein's answer to the question with which this section was opened, and place our discussion of use in the wider context of human activity.

One of the most important insights of Wittgenstein's later writings is that language is not a mere system of notation -- its essence is neither to picture reality.
nor to denote facts but is an integral part of our activities, or of a form of life (PI, 7, 23). The connection between words, etc., and activity is emphasized by Wittgenstein; our acquisition of language is seen as an activity where we are trained in the (linguistic and non-linguistic) practices of our culture (PI, 5-9, 208; BB, 12, 77), he says that language-games are based on the extensions of primitive pre-linguistic behavior (RPP I, 151, 916; see PI, 244), that "our language-game is behavior" (Z, 545), and that 'language is characterized by linguistic activities' (PG, 140).

Once said, this insight seems to be nothing more than a platitude, for, indeed, when we reflect on the matter, it becomes altogether clear that language is, in fact, part of our activities. But of what consequence is it, and what bearing does it have? There are two important points to be made here on the connection between language and activity: (1) that language-use as such is part of our activities, and the related point (2) that the particular uses of words, etc., are understood in the light of the activities which they are a part of. Let us look at (1) first.

This point is really very simple. It states the rather obvious fact that when we use language, we do so in the midst of one or another activity. Indeed, the whole idea of utility apart from activity is unintelligible,
for utility is itself an activity -- the "using of something." But we do not use words just like that; we use them purposively, to get this or that done, in the process of our activities. Use, utility and applicability, the activity which they are a part of, all of these things hang together, are aspects of an indissoluble, organic whole in our actual linguistic transactions. Just as I use a hammer (applicability) to nail boards together (utility) in the process of building a house (activity), so it is with language -- they are all involved, and none can be considered in isolation. 11

Moving on to (2) and the question with which we opened this section, let us note first of all that words alone do not always tell us how they are to be understood (2, 144); for, as we have seen, they could have been understood in either or two -- and we could easily imagine more -- ways in our example. As Wittgenstein says: "A multitude of familiar paths lead off from these words in every direction" (PI, 534). The question which we should ask, then, might be put this way: "How do we know which path is being taken if and when words alone cannot tell us that?"

There are many things which, in conjunction with the utterance of words (which themselves might be understood in many ways), indicate what path their speaker is walking. There are what Wittgenstein calls 'characteristic
accompaniments' (PI, p. 219; see Z, 97): the situation in which the words are spoken (PI, 591-92; see PI, 584, p. 204), the non-linguistic aspect of the speaker's behavior (PI, 591-92), which may include things like the emphasis he places on the words (PI, 534), his gestures, tone of voice, etc. (PI, 219; BB; p. 103). Other factors which may be involved here include a knowledge or acquaintance with the character of the speaker, the way he is prone to react in certain situations, the beliefs he holds, his sense of humour, etc.¹³ Let us relate this to our example.

Thus, when person C said "it should be called a 'policy of policies'," some or all of these characteristics may have accompanied his words. Let us imagine these to be some of the facts in the matter: persons A, B, and C are all teaching assistants in the Political Science Department at the University of Windsor. They are all interested in the study of foreign policy and international affairs, but have respectful disagreements about how foreign policy should be conducted. Person B believes that there should be an international, non-political judicial body with the power to legislate and enforce international laws of conduct between countries. He firmly believes that this is the only way that mankind can put an end to war, and he considers anything less than this to be "a primitive attitude which has prevented man from advancing himself to the degree to which he has advanced the gadgetry of his destruction." Person C,
on the other hand, sees person B's ideas as naive and "idealistic," and sees himself and his own way of thinking on these matters as "sensibly pragmatic." He believes that sweeping changes in the world are unrealistic and even impossible, and that, although man is unlikely to change the fact of conflicts in the world, the carefully thought-out policies of our alliance ("the good side") can help limit war in the world, and prevent it from ever happening here. Person A is a Chinese Vietnamese who, having had a taste of the reality of war and living under a regime whose policies might be described as far more oppressive than the policies which persons A and B were accustomed to living under, keeps mostly to himself about such matters. He appreciates the sincerity and ingenuity of the other two, but in addition to his struggle with the English language, he usually sidelines himself from what he sees as idle, inconsequential, theoretical talk. He knows little about person A and B's views on international politics, and does not really care to know more. Persons C and B are keenly aware of the kind of bad blood that can arise from having political arguments, and therefore make each of their views known to the other in a class setting, or with indirect nuances which are, like the whole of their relationship, conducted from a respectable distance. Now, the situation which we have described above is no different; it was another instance of the
overall rapport between the two. As in other such situations between them, the subtle shades in person C's behavior indicated his adherence to the terms of their relationship. For example, when he said "it should be called 'a policy of policies'," the words came from him in a soft, slow voice with an inflected emphasis placed on 'policy of policies'; he had a rather held-back smile on his face, his eyes slightly squinted, etc. It is against the background of all of these things that person B understood what person C meant when he said "it should be called 'a policy of policies.'"

But suppose, now, that person A, because of his detachment from the politico-mind-games of persons B and C, and because of his lack of familiarity with the English language and this culture, misunderstood person C to be attempting an answer to his question. Suppose, further, that he missed none of the aspects of person C's behavior as described above -- they were all, as it were, "taken in by his senses." And despite this, he misunderstood person C. We might say that person A did not understand something basic in person C's behavior, something against which the words and characteristic accompaniments of person C's communique were understood by person B. That "something" is what Wittgenstein calls a 'form of life.' Let us explain.

The references to 'form of life' are few in
Wittgenstein's writings, but, as Norman Malcolm suggests, "one could hardly place too much stress on the importance of (it) in Wittgenstein's thought."\textsuperscript{14} Forms of life (which are sometimes referred to as 'facts of living') are, for Wittgenstein, the fundamental ways in which the people of a given culture act. Punishing certain actions, establishing states of affairs thus and so, giving orders, rendering accounts, describing colours, taking an interest in others' feelings, are listed by Wittgenstein as various forms of life (RPP I, 630; see PI, 23; cf. PI, p. 226). A form of life, as a basic way in which we act, is "something which lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal" (OC, 359), "it is there -- like our life" (OC, 559). As such, "what has to be accepted, the given, is -- so one could say -- forms of life" (PI, p. 226; see RPP I, 630). (We shall come back to these last points in detail in a later chapter.)

The connection between language-use (i.e., the use of words, phrases and sentences; in short, signs and symbols) and our forms of life is basic to understanding Wittgenstein's views on language. Language-use, the speaking of language, he says, is part of our activities or forms of life (PI, 23). It is in light of our activities, our forms of life, that, in addition to the rules of usage, there is a constancy and regularity in our language-use (PI, 240-42). Indeed, it is because we
share common forms of life that there can be rules of usage. For example, it is one of our forms of life that we judge that to red. It is because our judgements so agree that the language with which we express them is something which we can, and as a result do, agree upon. Without shared forms of life we could not agree on our use of language (PI, 241; see RPP I, 131, 151).

But, now, not all forms of life common to one culture may be common to another, or they may not always "show themselves" in the same way. That is, in another culture where subtle nuance-behavior is a form of life, it may never manifest itself as it did in our example, i.e., as an off-beat interjection which plays on a word of phrase, in our case, on the phrase 'policy of ...'. With respect to our example, then, person A -- remember he is a Chinese Vietnamese who is new to our culture -- may come from a culture in which subtle nuance-behavior is not a form of life, or where such a form of life would never be played out in the manner in which it was played out by persons C and B. Either one of these ways of looking at the matter provides us with an explanation of why person A misunderstood what person C meant when he said "it should be called 'a policy of policies.'" In this connection, Wittgenstein writes:

... whether a word of the language of our tribe is rightly translated into a word of the English language depends upon the role this word plays in the whole life of the tribe; the occasions on which
it is used, the expression of emotion by which it is generally accompanied, the ideas which it generally awakens or which prompt its saying, etc., etc. (BB, p. 103)

We also say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not understand the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them. (PI, p. 223).

What belongs to a language game is a whole culture. In describing musical taste you have to describe whether children give concerts, whether woman do or whether men only give them, etc., etc. (LC, p. 8).

Wittgenstein's point in these passages is this: the meaning (that is, the common understanding of the use) of words, phrases, expression, etc., can be understood in the light of the overall role they play in the lives of the culture in which they are uttered; that is, in light of their forms of life. We must understand how the use of certain words mesh with their lives (PG, 29). Person A's (mis)understanding person C's comment as an answer to the question he placed to person B (i.e., "How might this policy best be labelled?") indicates how those words in that situation mesh with his life, i.e., as an answer to his question. Person A's misunderstanding reflects his non-participation in either one of person B and C's forms of life or in one of the ways such a form of life might be played out.
We have seen that the meaning of words, phrases, etc., is their use. Now we can add that meaning is use against the background of shared forms of life. Knowing merely the use of a word does not mean that we understand it or understand what role it plays in the lives of people who use it. Wittgenstein:

Wouldn't it be possible for me to know the use of the word and yet follow it without understanding? (As, in a sense, we follow the singing of birds.) So isn't it something else that constitutes understanding -- the feeling "in one's own breast," the living experience of the expression? -- They must mesh with my own life.

Well, language does connect up with my own life. And what is called "language" is something made up of heterogeneous elements and the way it meshed with life is infinitely various. (FG, 29)

Wittgenstein was later to express this matter by saying that "only in the stream of life and thought do words have meaning" (RPP II, 504).

To a question long left hanging (i.e., the question of what a grammatical description involves), we can now say that a grammatical description involves a description of the life of a word; it involves an account of its utility, the rules of its use, and the forms of life which its use is a part of. We shall come back to this matter in the next section.

Surface and Depth Grammar

A central theme in all of Wittgenstein's writings is that philosophical problems arise from our misunder-
standing of the 'working of language' (See TLP, 4.003; PI, 122). These misunderstandings are the result of a superficial understanding of language, or better, an understanding of language which does not go beyond the superficial aspects of language. In order to overcome misunderstandings (and thereby (dis)solve philosophical problems), Wittgenstein urged investigation into the deeper aspects of language. In the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, he maintained that the superficial aspects (or 'apparent logical form') of a proposition disguise the thought it expresses, resulting in confusion and misunderstanding (4.002, 4.0031, Preface). He suggests that these confusions and misunderstandings could be eliminated by probing into 'the logic of our language' and uncloaking the thought's (real) logical form (TLP, 4.002; 4.0031, 4.112).

In the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein, still interested in clearing up misunderstandings and confusions which are seen as resulting from our superficial understanding of language, takes a significantly different view. Instead of investigating the logical form of propositions for the purposes of clarifying 'the logic of our language,' Wittgenstein is now interested in investigating the depth grammar of words, phrases, sentences, propositions, etc., for the purposes of clarifying their uses (PI, 11; PG p. 204). Let us look at the detail of this matter.
In the only place where Wittgenstein discusses the distinction between surface and depth grammar by that name, he says:

In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar.' What immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of a word is the way it is used in the construction of the sentence, the part of its use -- one might say -- that can be taken in by the ear. ---- And now compare the depth grammar, say of the word "to mean," with what its surface grammar would lead you to suspect. No wonder we find it difficult to know our way about (PI, 664).

Thus, 'surface grammar' refers to the aspects of the use of a word which are most obvious and striking. Most of what school children understand by the word 'grammar' is captured by the term 'surface grammar.' We might say that when the words "meaning," "table," "ear," "thought," "bully," "automobile," are all used in the same syntactical way, they share the same surface grammar -- they are all nouns. But this is not to say that Wittgenstein equates 'surface grammar' with what one would find in the 'grammar section' of a secretary's manual. Wittgenstein has no interest in parts-of-speech grammar as such, but only as it may contribute to this or that muddle of thought. We shall come back to this matter shortly.

'Depth grammar,' on the other hand, refers to aspects of a word's use which involve the diversity and multiplicity of sentences and situations in which it is used. To speak of the 'depth grammar' of a word, then,
is to give an account or description of the job it does, the circumstances (or context) in which it does it, the activities or forms of life which accompany it, and with which other words it does it. In short, it involves the description of the language-game(s) in which any one word is used. In this connection, getting clear on the depth grammar of a word may (in and to the extent that it is helpful) involve, for example, an account of how one learns the use of a certain word, that is, becomes a participant in a language-game.

It is important to point out that the depth grammar of a word can be properly understood only when it is gleaned from a consideration of all of the above-mentioned points. Wittgenstein says that the function of a word "can easily be seen if we look at the role this word plays in our usage of language, but is obscured when instead of looking at the whole language-game, we only look at the contexts, the phrases of the language in which it is used" (BB, p. 108). In this connection, consider the following passage:

Now suppose I sit in my room and hope that N.N. will come and bring me some money, and suppose that one minute of this state could be isolated, cut out of its context; would what happened in it then not be hope? -- Think, for example, of the words which you perhaps utter in this space of time. They are no longer part of this language. And in different surroundings the institution of money doesn't exist either. A coronation is the picture of pomp and dignity. Cut one minute of this proceeding out of its surround-
ings: the crown is being placed on the head of the king in his coronation robes. -- But in different surroundings gold is the cheapest of metals, its gleam is thought vulgar. There the fabric of the robes is thought cheap to produce. A crown is a parody of a respectable hat. And so on. (PI, 584).

Wittgenstein's point here is that just as the pomp and dignity, the significance, of the placing of the crown on the king's head cannot be properly understood in isolation, that, neither can the use(s) of words. Just as that single event can, in different surroundings, be seen as something cheap and even demeaning (rather than as something dignified -- as it is usually seen), so, too, a word in various syntactical and situational surroundings can be understood differently. (We shall examine this matter in detail when dealing with sense and context in the next chapter.) Thus, looking at a word without taking its surroundings into consideration does not tell us much about its use. If we are to understand the depth grammar or use of a word, we have to look a little further -- at the whole of the language-game in which it occurs.

Surface grammar is, according to Wittgenstein, the major source of our misunderstandings and confusions. It exerts a kind of hold on us, feeding us certain impressions about our concepts, steering us in the direction of asking certain non-questions and dealing with phantom-problems (see PG, 9). This point is made quite clear in the following passage:
People say again and again that philosophy doesn't really progress, that we are still occupied with the same philosophical problems as were the Greeks. But the people who say this don't understand why it has to be so. It is because our language has remained the same and keeps seducing us into asking the same questions. As long as there continues to be a verb 'to be' that looks as if it functions in the same way as 'to eat' and 'to drink', as long as we still have the adjectives 'identical', 'true', 'false', 'possible', as long as we continue to talk of a river of time, of an expanse of space, etc., etc., people will keep stumbling over the same puzzling difficulties and find themselves staring at something which no explanation seems capable of clearing up (CV, p. 15).

This is all fine, but none of it will make much sense nor be convincing unless we relate it to one or another example. Thus, let us look at an example which Wittgenstein himself addressed and rightly considered a paradigm philosophical problem (PG, 140), i.e., the problem of the nature of time.

The problem of the nature of time, as old as philosophy itself, arises from the question "What is time?" When this question is unsatisfactorily answered, when the whole of our concept of time, that is, our uses of the word 'time' are not captured in such an answer, it becomes a problem, and we continue in our search of what time is. We tend to think that we have overlooked something in our investigation, or that something is hidden from us, and we think that some day, someone, somewhere will come up with an answer the question of what time is.

According to Wittgenstein, the problem of the nat-
ure of time is really a problem about the use of the word 'time.' He says: ". . . it is the grammar of the word 'time' which puzzles us" (BB, p. 26). To make sense, this point has to be understood in a wider context. It might be clarified as follows: the concept 'time' is one of our (multiple-use) concepts in that we use it (in all the many ways it is used). It is -- don't let this mislead you -- and is "what it is" in that it is used (and used as it is used); that is, it is part of that form of life. "What it is" is marked by its use(s). That is, it is a family-concept which is differentiated from other (family-) concepts in that it is utilized in various regular and related ways. The character, life and sustenance of the concept of time, as well as its freak offspring, the so-called problem of the nature of time, are functions of the fact that we use the concept 'time,' that it is a concept we employ in our daily lives. Thus, a question about the concept of time is a question about this or that use of the word 'time.'

Now, the word 'time,' as we use it, often shares the same surface grammar with other words, with thing-words, which has the effect of leaving us with the impression that time is a sort of thing. For instance, the following pairing of sentences show the common surface grammar of the word 'time' and thing-words:

In my country that was considered immoral.

In this election, the proletariat is on Trudeau's side.
What time it is?
Which car is it?

time
Your parcel has arrived.
time
We have a great apartment in Paris.

Time-as-a-thing surface grammar also finds its expression in the hands of poets:

Milton: "Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy course."

T.S. Eliot: "Friendship should be more than biting time can sever."

Shakespeare: "There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered."

Yeats: "The innocent and the beautiful have no enemy but time."

In the above examples we see uses of the word 'time' which, on a surface grammar level, make time look like a sort of thing. But, let us expand our analysis and look at the important (and interesting) question of the genesis of the so-called problem of the nature of time.

A couple of hundred years before Plato defined "this image we call time" as "a moving image of eternity" (Timaeus, 37d), time (Chronos) appears as a personification in the mythical cosmogonies of his ancestors: Chronos is the father of the mightiest of the Greek divinities, i.e. Zeus. We are told that "Chronos played an important part in Pherecydes' theogony . . . , and 'Time' is a surprisingly sophisticated cosmogonical concept for the sixth century B.C." In the time which separates the
simple Greek myths (religious stories) and the crude Pherecydian theogony from the more sophisticated philosophical speculation of Plato and Aristotle, 'time,' now in the hands of the Milesians, Pythagoreans, and Eleatics, gradually loses the suggestion of personification. What remains, however, for Plato and Aristotle, and, indeed, the history of philosophy, is the question of what (if not a god) time is.

It is important to realize that before there was ever a question and philosophical problem of the nature of time, it was part of an ancient people's grand religious story. And before it became a personification in their religious story, chronos was, no doubt, a concept used by the ancients in their day-to-day activities. The personification of time, in itself as harmless as the poetic uses of "time" cited above, may well have set the stage for Plato and Aristotle's question, "What is time?" We know from his writings that Plato was interested in dispelling many of the cosmogonical and theogonical ideas which, he believed, had a negative influence on the lives of his fellow Hellenics. The polity, he thought, suffered because of its citizens' beliefs in erroneous doctrines, of which e.g. fatalism was not least damaging. As a result, he set out to get his fellow citizens to think for themselves (to engage in dialectic), and he also set forth his own doctrines, one among many being his cosmon-
gonical story -- he says it is a "likely story" -- in the
Timaeus. His main concern was political, but he thought
that establishing an order in the polity involved knowing
the polity's place in the universe (Cosmos). Settling
political questions involved settling questions of a higher
order, metaphysical questions, and one among many of those
questions was that of the nature of time. The rest is
history.

Now, in the above examples we have seen that
ordinary, everyday, as well as poetic, ancient and modern,
uses of the word 'time' share "a prima facie analogous
grammar" (BB, p. 7) with thing-words. Like the words
'parcel' 'apartment,' and 'proletariat,' the word 'time'
(as it is used in the sentences in which it was paired
with those words) would, on a surface grammar level, seem
to be the name of a thing or substance. If one is not
on guard "against the fascination which forms of expression
exert on us" (BB, p. 27) and unwittingly takes time to be
a kind of substance, the stage is set for the question,
"What is time?" And herein lies the root of many philo-
sophical problems: "We are up against one of the greatest
sources of philosophical bewilderment: a substantive makes
us look for a thing that corresponds to it" (BB, p.1).
The surface analogy between "time" and thing-words like
'parcel,' 'apartment,' etc., seduces us (as it did Plato
and others before us) into asking questions like "What
is time?" (GV, p. 15; see PI, 93). In such a question, Wittgenstein -- for reasons we shall understand fully in the next chapter -- would say, the word 'time' is being taken out of the language-games which are its natural home (PI, 116), and being placed in a language-game (i.e., that of questioning what a thing is) "its appearance (surface grammar) make it seem to belong to" (PG, 81). The only hitch is that the question "What is time?" is one without any use (or utility), and what on a superficial level seemed to make for a good home for the word 'time,' will from a Wittgensteinian point of view show itself as a mirage. Philosophers before Wittgenstein, however, have managed to overlook these points, leaving them with what has been perceived as a gripping problem. The word 'time' being a noun, a substantive, creates the impression that it names something, just like the substantives 'parcel,' and 'apartment' do. But, unlike a parcel or an apartment (things which one sees, touches, gets in the mail or sleeps and listens to one's stereo in, and whose "nature" is, therefore, seen as unproblematic), one does not hear, see, touch, etc., time, and its "nature" is seen by the philosopher as problematic. It is seen as something which warrants investigation, but unlike investigation into "other phenomena," this investigation is, as Aristotle would say, theoretical (metaphysical) rather than practical (empirical).
Since, for Wittgenstein, the problem here is not one of determining the nature of things, and philosophical problems are seen as confusions about the use of words, philosophical investigation is neither metaphysical nor empirical, but grammatical. "Philosophy, as we use the word," he says, "is a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert on us" (BB, p. 27). And again: "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (PI, 109). Let us now, then, see what a grammatical investigation is and what it involves:

Grammatical Investigation

In the above section we discussed Wittgenstein's diagnosis of the cause of philosophical problems. In this section we shall discuss Wittgenstein's methods for effecting a cure to those problems. The scope of this section shall be limited to the methods and techniques which we shall employ in our investigation of knowledge-claims in the following chapter.

Let us note, first of all, that grammatical investigation gets its purpose from philosophical problems, its raison d'etre being that of clearing up philosophical problems. The underlying form of life of the language of grammatical investigation, and, indeed, the Form of life underlying Wittgenstein's authorship as such, is
one of clearing up philosophical problems, of liberation from philosophical puzzlement. Without philosophical problems and the perplexity they bring with them, there would be no grammatical investigation, or, at least, Wittgenstein's remarks on these matters would be useless.

We have noted in the previous section that philosophical problems are essentially the result of our being misled by surface grammar. We said there that surface grammar feeds us certain impressions about our concepts; for example, the surface grammar of some uses of the word 'time'; as is the case with other substantives, make it look like the name of a thing. Now, according to Wittgenstein, the reason that surface grammar can have that effect on us is that we do not have a clear view of our use of words (PI, 122; see PI, 5), even though in our daily linguistic transactions they may be "extremely familiar to us" (PI, 156). That is, even though we use words effectively and unproblematically in our daily lives, often times we do not clearly perceive their overall roles, in our lives -- "their application is not presented to us clearly" (PI, 11), and "we remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games" (PI, p. 224). Grammatical investigation aims at countering the lack of perspicuity we have about our use of language by providing us with a survey of the role certain words, phrases, etc., (actually) have in our lives.
It would make us conscious of the diversity of our everyday language-games, and, generally, furnish us with a clear conception of the use of whichever word happens to be troubling us.

Such a surview, Wittgenstein believed, would bring with it the complete dissolution of philosophical problems. "... the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed complete clarity. But this simply means that philosophical problems should completely disappear" (PI, 133). Since most (if not all) philosophical problems are seen as stemming from confusions about the use of words, as "nothing but a house of cards," and grammatical investigation is aimed at "clearing up the ground on which they stand," philosophical problems would be reduced to "bits of stone and rubble" (PI, 118). But this does not mean that the dissolution of philosophical problems would come with one grand sweep; for, as Wittgenstein points out, the philosopher treats a question (PI, 225), uncovers one or another piece of plain nonsense (PI, 119), and, generally, solves problems, "not a single problem" (PI, 133). Wittgenstein's own practice in dealing with major philosophical matters and theses -- e.g., skepticism, idealism, solipsism, private language semantics, to mention but a few -- involved his returning again and again to the same and different, but always specific, problems with them, on each occasion chipping away at their foundation.
"The scrutiny of the grammar of a word," Wittgenstein explains,

weaken[s] the position of certain fixed standards of our expression which have prevented us from seeing facts with unbiased eyes. Our investigation tries to remove this bias, which forces us to think that facts must conform to certain pictures embedded in our language (BB, p. 43).

The types of pictures which form the basis of philosophical bias, we have noted, arise from surface grammar. But surface grammar is not always misleading, nor are such pictures always wrong. For example, the surface grammar of the words 'apartment' and 'parcel' (as they were used in the above examples) is not misleading, for they, unlike "time," are, in fact, the names of things. Surface grammar is misleading only when, contrary to the various uses of a word, it suggests that a word must function in a certain way; for example, the picture that there must be something that "time" names, or that there must be something that "understand" names, etc. (see BB, p. 42). Such pictures reveal certain assumptions about the use of words, assumptions which, on a surface grammar level, the uses themselves suggest to the picture-bearer. The picture that there must be something which "time" names reveals an assumption about the use of the word 'time'; i.e., that it, like some other substantives (e.g. 'apartment'), is a name. But, such a picture is quickly shattered by pointing out one important grammatical difference.
between the words 'time' and 'apartment', i.e., that the latter is ostensibly defined, while the former is not so defined. (We shall see precisely what this difference consists in when we come to our discussion of criteria.) It is by pointing out such grammatical differences, by getting a view of how words function and what role they have in our lives, that we "weaken the position of fixed standards of expression" and the pictures they foster.

Just as there is no one single philosophical problem, but many different, specific problems, "there is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies" (PI, 133)." Not only is there not a method, a unique method, but there is, generally speaking, not better or worse, right or wrong, adequate or inadequate, method of investigation. A method's appropriateness and value are weighed in terms of its effectiveness, and, just as one antibiotic will work better than another at eliminating various injurious organisms from the body, the effectiveness of any one method will vary from one problem to the next.

There is, however, one general feature common to all methods of grammatical investigation, i.e., that of looking at "concrete cases" (BB, pp. 19-20), by which Wittgenstein means, examples of the actual uses of particular words, phrases, etc. Concrete cases are needed because "one cannot guess how a word functions. One has
to *look at its use and learn from that* (PI, 340; see PG, 34). The particular word one looks at will, of course, be determined by the problem one is examining; if one is troubled by the philosophical problem of the 'nature of time' (space, knowledge, etc.), one looks at (the actual, everyday) uses of the word 'time' ('space' 'knowledge,' etc.). If, as we've said, philosophical problems are arise because we do not have a survey of how words actually function, then the only thing to do for someone who suffers from philosophical puzzlement is to give him examples, cases -- lots of them and as varied as possible (BB, pp. 19-20; see also PI, 133). Such examples, which are only a preliminary for understanding how a word is used, provide one with the material which, when investigated, will produce just such an understanding, giving one a survey of how a word actually functions in our lives.

Once we have a representative sample of the word, phrase, or expression we are interested in, the next step of a grammatical investigation will involve an exploration of its depth grammar. That is, at this stage of a grammatical investigation we look at the distinctive features of e.g. a word: at how and where it is used (utility), what kinds of specific uses it has and is able to lend itself to (applicability), the forms of life it is and can be a part of. In short, we get a detailed overview
of how e.g. a word functions in our lives by closely and carefully scrutinizing the language-games in which it occurs. To do this Wittgenstein provides us with certain methods and techniques, some of which we shall be looking at presently.

Criteria

One of the most controversial topics in Wittgensteinian scholarship at the present time centers around Wittgenstein's use of the words 'criteria' and 'criterion.' There are sharp disagreements on the question of how Wittgenstein uses these words. Some commentators believe that there is only one sense in which Wittgenstein uses them, while others believe that there is more than one sense. Although it seems quite clear to me that there are at least two such senses, we shall for our purposes deal with only one sense -- the one pertinent to grammatical investigation. Let us, then, start with a look at some of the passages where Wittgenstein discusses criteria:

... to explain my criterion for another person's having toothache is to give a grammatical explanation about the word "toothache" and, in this sense, an explanation concerning the meaning of the word "toothache." (BB, p. 24).

The man who says "only my pain is real," doesn't mean to say that he has found out by common criteria -- the criteria, i.e., which give our words their common meanings -- that the others who said they had pains were cheating. But what he rebels against is the use of this expression in connection with these
criteria. That is, he objects to using this word in the particular way in which it is commonly used (BB, p. 57).

The fluctuation in grammar between criteria and symptoms makes it look as if there were nothing at all but symptoms. We say, for example: "Experience teaches that there is rain when the barometer falls, but it also teaches that there is rain when we have certain sensations of wet and cold, or such-and-such visual impressions." In defense of this one says that these sense-impressions can deceive us. But here one fails to reflect that the fact that the false appearance is precisely one of rain is founded on a definition (PI, 354).

We might start unpacking the concept of criteria by contrasting it with what Wittgenstein calls symptoms. In the section of the *Philosophical Investigations* which comes just before the one quoted above, Wittgenstein says that an answer to the question of whether and how a proposition can be verified "is a contribution to the grammar of the proposition" (PI, 353). Now, the implicit proposition dealt with in PI 354 is "It is raining." In verifying this proposition one may cite the fact that the barometer is falling, that it is thundering, or that they feel a certain "telling" sensation in one of their limbs, as evidence for the proposition that it is raining. Such evidence, which may be brought forth in the verification of the proposition "It is raining," Wittgenstein calls symptoms: "I call 'symptom' a phenomenon of which experience has taught us that it coincided, in some way or other, with the . . . criterion" (BB, p. 25). Standing in the middle of a downpour, seeing a great number of
water droplets falling from the sky, on the other hand, is a criterion for the use of the proposition "It is raining." What distinguishes symptoms from criteria is that the former are taught us by experience and need not be (necessarily) true, while the latter are "founded on definition," and are, therefore, necessarily true. Saying "It is raining" means "a great number of water droplets are falling from the sky" -- the relationship between these two propositions, unlike either of them and any of the symptomatic propositions stated above, is tautological (BB, p. 25).

An investigation into the criteria for the use of a proposition is not limited to an investigation of whether and how one might verify it. Indeed, some propositions do not admit of verification. Rather, investigating criteria, more generally, involves looking at "what is understood" by such and such a word or proposition when it is used. For example, part of what is understood -- and which usually goes without saying in casual non-philosophical discourse -- by the word 'dream' when someone is giving us an account of their dream is that when they were dreaming, they were asleep. This is, for example, what Norman Malcolm is driving at when in his famous book *Dreaming* he says: "There is a use of the word 'dream' and it is the basic sense of the word, in which a person cannot dream unless he is asleep."

If one person related his last night's dream about getting attacked by a vicious puma, and
another person asked him to pull up his shirt so that he
could see the scratch marks, we would have to conclude
that he, unlike other English-speaking persons, does not
understand the word 'dream.' Similarly, if one person sees
water droplets falling from cloudy skies and another person
sees and accepts what is happening as fact, but questions
whether it is raining, we would say that he does not
understand the proposition "It is raining." And again,
the philosopher who says "Only my pain is real," but does
not intend with those words to mean that he alone is really
in pain while others are merely pretending, he uses this
expression in a way which is contrary to how it is com-
monly used or understood. Anthony Kenny expressed the
relationship between a criterion and that for which it is
a criterion as follows: "X is not a criterion for Y if
someone could learn the meaning of "Y" without having
grasped the connection between X and Y."28 Conversely,
we might say, X is a criterion of Y when if one has learned
the meaning of Y, one necessarily understands the connec-
tion between it and X.

Investigating criteria helps us understand how
"as a rule" a word (e.g., "dream"), phrase (e.g., earlier
on, "the policy of restitution"), or proposition (e.g.,
"It is raining") is or may be used. By providing us with
a view of 'what is understood' by the use of any one word,
phrase, etc., we come to see how it functions in our lives,
what kind of application it has in our lives (PI, 11).

**Substitutivity**

A simple and efficient, yet highly effective, method of grammatical investigation is that of (what I shall call) substitutivity. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein says that "some (misunderstandings) can be removed by substituting one form of expression for another," adding that "this may be called an 'analysis' of our forms of expression, for the process is sometimes like one of taking a thing apart" (PI, 90). In the *Philosophical Grammar*, he says that "what releases the (philosophically confused) questioner from his problem is a particular alteration of his method of expression" (PG, 141), and then follows it up with this useful analogy:

> I could imagine an organ whose stops were to be operated by keys distributed among the keys of the manual which looked exactly like them. There might then arise a philosophical problem: "How are silent notes possible?" And the problem would be solved by someone having the idea of replacing the key-stops by stops which had no similarity with the note-keys (ibid).

This method is especially useful in combating our craving for generality. Like the organ Wittgenstein describes above where the note-keys and the stop-keys seem to have the same function (because keys are involved), we are inclined to think that various uses of the same word have to have the same function (because the same word is involved). Because the organist is under the
impression that all keys, note-keys and stop-keys, are supposed to produce musical notes, when he depresses a stop-key and does not hear a musical note, he is puzzled and expresses his puzzlement with the question "How are silent notes possible?" The philosopher runs up against the same type of puzzlement when, assuming that there is something common to all uses of any one word, he seeks out essential definitions. When he finds nothing common to all uses of a particular word, he wonders and is puzzled about the "meaning" of the word in question. Wittgenstein suggests that we can help the organist overcome his problem by substituting for the trouble-causing stop-keys stops that have no similarity to the other keys. Likewise, for the philosopher who is puzzled about the meaning of a word or phrase (which has different uses), we substitute some of the uses of the words or phrases he is interested in with synonymous expressions. (An expression here is, of course, synonymous with another expression when it has the same utility as that expression.)

The employment of this method helps us see the role of word, by providing us with a clear view of the many ways in which it is utilized.

In addition to the employment of the above techniques, some general observations about the use(s) of an expression may prove helpful in getting a survey of its grammar. For instance, noting the forms of life that
underlie the use of an expression will help us better understand its grammar. Here we simply look and take note of the types of activities that the use of certain words accompany. Noting the contexts and characteristic accompaniments of the use of certain expressions may prove helpful, too. We shall, in fact, make such observations (and elucidate their significance) in the following chapter.
CHAPTER II

WITTGENSTEIN AND MOORE ON KNOWLEDGE AND SKEPTICISM

Having discussed Wittgenstein's conception of grammar, grammatical investigation, and the nature of philosophical problems in the last chapter, we shall in this chapter turn to and apply those insights and techniques to a specific philosophical problem: The problem of what one can be said to know. Wittgenstein examines this problem by analyzing the language of knowledge-claims. He does so by focusing on propositions of the type: "I know . . ." It is his contention that philosophers have misunderstood the grammar of the locution "I know," and to show an instance of this he looks at the way it is used by G.E. Moore in his Proof of the External World and Defence of Common Sense. In this connection, we shall give an account of Moore's use of "I know" in the above-mentioned works, what Wittgenstein had to say about "I know," Moore and Wittgenstein's responses to skepticism, and Wittgenstein's criticisms of Moore. The principle source for our discussion shall be Wittgenstein's On Certainty. It is there that many of the topics that we will by systematically dealing with are scattered throughout the text in his usual form of remarks.
Moore's Use of "I know"

In DCS, Moore attempts to defend the thesis that there are certain propositions which we all "know, with certainty, to be true" (PP, p. 35). In the process of his defence, he pauses only briefly to consider his usage or the meaning of a word or proposition. With the word "true" he says that his usage is the ordinary usage (PP, p. 35-36); and with propositions like, e.g., "The earth has existed for many years past," he says "... I have assumed that there is some meaning which is the ordinary or popular meaning" (PP, p. 36). In neither case does Moore show, describe, or explain in which sense his usage or meaning of those propositions which he enumerates is ordinary. Indeed, as he says, he "assumes" the ordinary meaning -- whatever that means! Now, with respect to the locution "I know," he does not say anything about the way he uses it or about its meaning; all that we can say here is that he does seem to use it in a particular way, which we shall try to make explicit.

The way in which Moore uses the locution "I know" in both of the works under consideration here is unclear. In this connection, consider the following passages, the first from DCS:

If, for instance, I do know that the earth has existed for many years before I was born, I certainly only know this because I have known other things in the past which were evidence for it. And I certainly do not know exactly what that evidence was. Yet all this seems to me to be no good reason for doubting that I know it. We are all,
propositions he enumerates, he is fulfilling what he believes to be a logical requirement of knowledge; that is, for him, knowledge logically entails evidence; as he puts it: "... we know that we must have had evidence for them."

But our claiming to know does not involve the provision of specific evidence; we can say that we know the propositions Moore enumerates without saying what the evidence for them is. Thus, with Moore's use of "I know" (as it is exemplified in the above passages), our claiming to know does not involve our showing (or being able to show) how we know, and he even makes mention of this point.

As there isn't anything else in the works under consideration here which would suggest anything to the contrary, it remains, then, that, for Moore, one's saying "I know" involves the exclusion of doubt, and that one can claim to know those things which are accepted by common sense as being true when doubting them would be absurd.

Examples of the Use of "I know"

Let us now compile a list of examples of some uses of "I know." These examples can serve as the basis for our investigation of its grammar.

1. In a jazz band that prides itself on innovation and improvisation, the pianist turns to the rhythm-guitarist, and says, "You know you could have hit a C-minor-seventh there instead of an E-flat-major." The guitarist replies,
propositions he enumerates, he is fulfilling what he believes to be a logical requirement of knowledge; that is, for him, knowledge logically entails evidence; as he puts it: "... we know that we must have had evidence for them." But our claiming to know does not involve the provision of specific evidence: we can say that we know the propositions Moore enumerates without saying what the evidence for them is. Thus, with Moore's use of "I know" (as it is exemplified in the above passages), our claiming to know does not involve our showing (or being able to show) how we know, and he even makes mention of this point.

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1. In a jazz band that prides itself on innovation and improvisation, the pianist turns to the rhythm-guitarist, and says, "You know you could have hit a C-minor-seventh there instead of an E-flat-major." The guitarist replies,
"Oh yes, I know . . . I have a thorough background in harmonic theory."

2. A sports commentator asks the challenging boxer if he will win the upcoming bout with the W.B.A. champion in his division. Boxer: "I know I will."

3. A student is asked by a professor about one of his friends, "Do you know why Paul has stopped coming to classes in the last month?" The student answers, "As far as I know, he has taken a job."

4. The members of a band after playing a few songs and getting virtually no response from the audience, deliberate on what they should play next. Suddenly one of them says, "I know, let's do . . . ."

5. Judge at a murder trial: "Are you sure that this man shot so-and-so?" Witness: "I know he did; I was there and saw it happen."

6. Two employees are discussing a supervisor whom they've both worked under at different times in the past. Employee A: "You just don't know what to expect from him; he's so damn moody." Employee B: "I know."

7. A runs into an old friend, B, whom he has not seen for a couple of years. In the meantime, A has been told of B's rapidly deteriorating eyesight, and asks him, "How is your vision?" B, pointing his finger at a tree, answers, "It's bad and getting worse, but, still, I know that's a tree."
8. The Federal Minister of Finance is handed an account ledger which he asked one of his aids to prepare for him so that he could justify an expenditure to the Opposition which has been hounding him. In the past such ledgers have been inaccurate, and have therefore caused the Government much embarrassment during question period in the House of Commons. On this occasion the conscientious aide says, "Here's what you wanted. I know it's accurate this time; I've checked it at least a dozen times."

9. A flight attendant on board a malfunctioning airplane explains to the passengers that the problem with the aircraft is not very serious and that nobody should panic because a safe landing was being planned at the nearest airport. The airplane lands safely, and one passenger turns to another and asks, "Where, my good man, do you suppose you are now?" The other passenger answers, "I know I am in England. Unless it is identical to some other, that control tower over there is the Heathrow International Airport control tower."

10. A group of people who see each other at the bus stop each morning are on this morning huddled under a store canopy in order to keep from getting wet in a sudden downpour. Although none of them has ever spoken with any of the others, their having huddled together brought with it the need in some to say something to the others. There is mention of the unpredictability of the rain and of the
bus. Suddenly one of them, looking up from the front page of his wilted newspaper, says, "Would you look at that; they have discovered a fifth sub-atomic particle." This remark spawns other remarks: One of them, unaware of the humour in his remarks, says, "I don't believe anything that I can't see;" another says, "You're kidding," while the rest enter into a dispute over the matter. Finally, one of them, speaking with the voice of authority, says, "I know it isn't true -- I'm a physicist at the National Institute of Physical Sciences, and if it were true, I'd be the first to know about it."

11. A couple of philosophy students discussing a point of ethics: "I don't know what to believe when it comes to matters of ethical importance, but it seems to me that a person who lives his life according to certain unbending principles which he has freely chosen for himself, lives a richer and generally more fulfilling life than one who blindly accepts the norms and mores of his society." "I not only believe that, but I know it to be true, at least, in my life."

12. A nagging wife to her lazy husband who is slowly getting ready for work: "Hurry up; you have to be at work in ten minutes!" Angry husband: "I know when I have to be at work! So stop hounding me about it."

13. Two people discussing the existence of Christ: "Your belief that Jesus Christ lives or ever lived is really
a primitive superstition which has no scientific basis.

"You're right about there being no scientific basis, but still, I know my redeemer liveth."

14. A couple of friends are walking down Carnegie Street in London, England. They approach a small group of people who are huddled together in a circle, all of them attentively listening to some kind of sportscast on the radio which is situated in the center of the group. Finally the two tourist friends come close enough to the group to make out that they are listening to the broadcast of a soccer game. Recognizing the fact that Englishmen are very fond of soccer, and that getting together to listen to the broadcast of soccer games is typical of Londoners, one of them turns to the other and excitedly says, "Now I know that I am in England!"

15. A patient in a hospital asks his doctor, "Are you certain it's a brain tumor." Doctor: "I know it is; we've closely examined the X-rays and CAT scans taken of your head, and there can be no doubt that you have a brain tumor."

The Grammar of "I know"

What, then, do the above examples tell us about the grammar of "I know"? Can we gather that there is a universal, determinate meaning of "I know" which is in some sense "present" in all of the above examples? Let us examine these questions in detail.
If we look at how "I know" is used in the above examples, we find that it has many different and irreducible meanings: in example 2, it is used to express strong confidence; in example 1, it is used to express guarded confidence with an assurance; in example 6, it is used to express unqualified agreement; in example 10, it is used to express authority on a particular subject-matter; in example 13, it is used to express deep religious faith; while example 1, it is used to express an ability to apply harmonic theory. Now, unless one is prepared to try to reduce agreement (e.g. 6), confidence (e.g. 2), authority on particular subject-matters (e.g. 10), religious faith (e.g. 13) any one to the other, then the admission must be made that "I know" does not have a determinate or univocal meaning for all cases, but many different and irreducible meanings. And here we want to say that our uses of "I know," like many other such locutions, words, and phrases in our language, are as varied as the language-games in which their uses arise.

Furthermore, there is another (and I think better, that is, more direct) way of showing that "I know" has many, irreducible meanings; i.e., by employing the method of substitutivity. Indeed, we find that there are cases where statements of the type "I know . . ." can be replaced with statements in which "I know" does not appear, and in which the reformulated proposition is synonymous with the
original proposition. For instance, we find that in example 12 of our list of examples, the angry husband, instead of saying "I know . . .," could have said, "I don't have to be reminded . . .". In example 14, the enthusiastic tourist could have said "Only in England could one see . . .!"

Again, in example 7, the person with bad eyesight could have said "I see . . ." instead of "I know . . .".

Now, when we compare these reformulated propositions we find that they are not synonymous one with the other. This becomes apparent when we try to substitute the reformulated proposition of example 12, i.e., "I don't have to be reminded . . .," with what the doctor in example 15 said when he was asked by a patient about his diagnosis, i.e., "I know it is . . .". Such a substitution would render the doctor's response strange and incoherent; in fact, the patient might start wondering if the doctor was capable of discerning his identity from that of one of his colleagues who may have helped him in the diagnosis, and to whom the substituted remark could make sense in a certain language-game. And here if our analysis would have shown that the reformulated propositions were in fact synonymous with one another, then, and only then, could one make a case for the notion that "I know" has a meaning which is unvarying and involved in each of its uses. But since our analysis has shown the contrary to be true, we can only conclude that "I know" has many, different meanings.
What, then, can we say about the grammar of "I know" when there are so many uses of it? Is it the case that we can speak only of the grammar of each of its uses, or is there still something central to any use of "I know"? It is clear from our analysis that we cannot categorically say, as Wittgenstein seems to, that:

One says "I know" when one is ready to give compelling grounds. "I know" relates to the possibility of demonstrating the truth (OC, 243).

Indeed, in example 12, for instance, if the nagging wife were to follow her husband's remark with, "What grounds have you for saying that you know when you have to be at work?," or again, in example 14, if the other tourist had followed his friend's remark with something like, "Yes, I too know that we are in England, but I would like for you to give me more compelling grounds that you know we are," then there would be a snag in the dialogue between the two parties in both cases. In both examples 12 and 14, "I know" is used meaningfully; that is, we all understood what those who said "I know" meant when they said it. And, furthermore, we understood that those uses of "I know" are such that the provision of grounds does not apply to them, and we would not ask, nor be inclined to ask, for grounds when their uses arose -- except perhaps as a joke. And the reason why we understand that the provision of grounds is not part of the grammar of these uses of "I know," is that we understand these uses of "I know"; that is, we
know enough of the English language to understand that they are different from, and not to be confused with, other uses of "I know" where the provision of grounds is part of the grammar. When I say that I speak English, I am saying that I am able to communicate with other English-speaking people, and my communication with them is possible because we, all of us who speak the English language, do so according to certain conventions and rules which constitute our grammatical repertoire (see PI, 199, 241, 355).

Let us now turn to those uses of "I know" where the provision of grounds is part of the grammar, and see, if we can, what is involved in it. In doing so, let's see what is meant by the term "grounds" when, for example, someone says something like, "What grounds have you for saying that you know that John F. Kennedy was not fatally shot by Lee Harvey Oswald?"

First, with respect to the term "grounds": When one speaks of grounds in connection with a knowledge-claim, he refers to the fulfillment of certain criteria through the provision of certain types of information which aim at satisfactorily answering the question, "How do you know . . .?" (Were it not so obvious, a survey of examples, like in our analysis of "I know," would, I think, show that the word "grounds" is used in ordinary discourse as we've said.) And the question "How do you know . . .?" relates to the question "Do you know . . .?" or to the
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statement "I doubt that you know . . ." or "I doubt that what you say you know is, in fact, the case." With this use of "I know," then, doubt is relevant, and grounds are (or can be) brought forward so as to eliminate doubt on a particular matter. Thus, the grammar of this use of "I know" is such that one may doubt the truth of the claim which "I know" prefixes, and once the proper kinds of grounds are given in support of the truth of that claim, then one can be said to know that claim. On the grammar of this use of "I know," Wittgenstein says:

"I know" often means: I have the proper grounds for my statement. So if the other person is acquainted with the language-game, he would admit that I know. The other, if he is acquainted with the language-game, must be able to imagine how one may know something of the kind (OC, 18).

Once again, still discussing grounds-provision uses of "I know," he says:

If somebody believes something, he needn't always be able to answer the question 'why he believes it'; but if he knows something, then the question "how does he know?" must be capable of being answered (OC, 550).

He adds:

And if one does answer this question, one must do so according to generally accepted axioms. This is how something of this sort may be known (OC, 551).

With this use of "I know" we understand (because we are familiar with this language-game) that saying "I know" involves our being able to show how we know, and Wittgenstein suggests in the third passage cited above, our
showing how we know is done "according to generally accepted axioms." The claim here is that we not only understand that this use of "I know" involves our being able to provide grounds for our claims, but that we also have some general criteria as to what counts as grounds for this or that claim. (The sense in which we use the word 'criteria' here must not be confused with its use in Chapter One. Rather, it is here used in the sense of "a standard by which anything is judged" (ODD).) And this claim makes sense, in that if we did not have some general criteria as to what constitutes the proper grounds for a claim to knowledge on a particular matter, then we would not be able to speak of knowing at all. But, since we do speak of knowing, that is, we do say that we know certain things, then, indeed, we say that because we understand that these and not those things count as grounds for our knowing this.

Let us note, however, that when we look at our list of examples of the uses of "I know," the criteria of acceptable grounds for a claim to knowledge will vary from one case to another. In example 1, for instance, the guitarist's citing a thorough background in harmonic theory was good enough grounds for saying that he knew that he could have played one chord rather than another. In this case we could say that there is agreement, at least among musicians, that someone's having a thorough background in harmonic theory is a criterion according to which one
could be said to know that, in such-and-such a case, an E-flat-major chord could be replaced by a C-minor-seventh chord. In example 15, on the other hand, if the doctor said that he knew that his diagnosis was correct because he studied medicine, his claim to knowledge would not have enough of the right kinds of grounds. With this case there is agreement, at least among the medical community, that, in addition to medical training, the criterion according to which one can be said to know that such-and-such a diagnosis is correct involves the ability to conduct and correctly interpret certain tests, as well as weigh and evaluate other relevant evidence.

We don't mean to suggest here that everyone who speaks a language, where knowledge-claims are part of that language, will know precisely what grounds count as the right grounds for any particular knowledge-claim. No -- these things are, and rightly should be, the topic of many an argument. What we are suggesting is that when someone asks another person, "How do you know . . . ?", an answer to that question will be intelligible (or unintelligible for that matter) in light of what we roughly count, according to certain conventional criteria, as proper grounds for this or that knowledge-claim. Indeed, when one asks the question "How do you know . . . ?", he is equipped to understand the answer to that question or else he would not ask that question, at least not
meaningfully. And the reason why he is prepared to understand the answer to that question is that he, like the person answering the question, knows roughly what the criteria are.

**Sense and Context**

Looking at our list of examples of the uses of "I know" once again, we find that there is one very important feature present in all of them, i.e., a context. This may seem like a trivial point, but consider what it would be like if someone were to make knowledge-claims outside of a context. Imagine this case: You are alone walking down a busy downtown street where you encounter a stranger -- let's call him stranger X -- at a street-corner waiting for the semaphore to change. Suddenly, without any prompting from you or anyone else, he starts telling you and the other puzzled bystanders the things that he knows. Furthermore, what stranger X says he knows, he does in fact know; he even provides enough of the right kinds of grounds for his knowledge-claims. But, despite the accuracy of his claims and the adequacy of the grounds he provides -- assuming here that his use of "I know" is of the grounds-provision kind -- in support of those claims, you, like Wittgenstein at several points in *On Certainty*, feel something is "wrong" here. Wittgenstein expresses this feeling as follows:
Then why don't I simply say with Moore "I know that I am in England"? Saying this is meaningful in particular circumstances, which I can imagine. But when I utter the sentence outside these circumstances, then it at once strikes me as fishy. Ought it to? (OC, 423)

What is "fishy" about Moore's saying that he knows that he is in England, as with the stranger's saying the things that he knows in the way that he did, is that their claims have the pretense of being meaningful claims because they are accurate, and because we can imagine a context in which they could be meaningful claims. Indeed, if Moore was the passenger on the malfunctioning aircraft in (our) example 9, there wouldn't be anything "fishy" about his saying that he knew he was in England; in example 9 the context for that claim is appropriate, and therefore the claim is meaningful, independently of whether it is right or wrong, accurate or inaccurate. As Wittgenstein points out, the truth of a claim is not the first and final consideration of a claim:

It is queer: if I say without any special occasion, "I know" -- for example, "I know that I am sitting in a chair", this statement seems to me unjustified and presumptuous. But if I make the same statement where there is need for it, then, although I am not a jot more certain of its truth, it seems to me to be perfectly justified and everyday (OC, 553; see also OC, 237, 347, 348).

The notion here is that before we begin to assess the truth of a claim, we must understand why that claim was made, and that is something which an appropriate context will tell us. This becomes apparent when we imagine how strange
it would be if one of the other people -- call him stranger Y -- listening to stranger X, were to start (seriously) disputing the truth of stranger X's claims. We would probably think that they knew each other and that they were resuming a dispute after a long pause -- in that case the situation would make sense to us, or, at least that is how we would make sense out of it. But if you knew that they did not know each other and that they were, nevertheless, disputing (or for that matter even agreeing on) the truth of stranger X's knowledge-claims, then you would find something wrong with the whole situation. The strangeness of the situation would strike you immediately.

The reason why we would find something wrong in the above situation (if in fact we knew that these two strangers did not know each other and if they carried on as we've described) is that they were engaging in a language-game which is not part of our linguistic repertoire. When we make knowledge-claims, we do so in appropriate contexts -- that is how knowledge-claims are made. The strangers we have described are not making knowledge-claims in the way that we do, and that is why the situation would be so strange to us, why it would not make sense for us. In fact, the only way that we could make sense of that situation would be to interpret it within one of our language-games: e.g., that they were not strangers and they they were resuming a dispute after
a long pause, or that they were friends playing a practical joke on those surrounding them by acting out their little prank, etc. And our trying to assimilate that situation to one of our language-games speaks for the idea that this and not that is a language-game where knowledge-claims make sense for us. As Wittgenstein, in a follow-up to passage 553 (cited above), says:

In its language-game it is not presumptuous. There it has no higher position than, simply, the human language-game. But as soon as I say this sentence outside its context, it appears in a false light (OC, 554).

What we might say about the strangers' conduct is that they were making knowledge-claims as though knowledge-claiming was like something else we do, e.g., spontaneously discussing the weather with a stranger, which is a wholly different language-game. That is why what they said in their conversation did not make sense to us.

Let us now look a little closer at the concept of context and what role it has with respect to knowledge-claims. Let us first note that an appropriate context will tell us why a person has made a knowledge-claim and whether a knowledge-claim is warranted in such-and-such a case. Indeed, knowledge-claims are made for a reason: we do not state our knowledge-claims without an intended purpose. Once again, if we encountered stranger X in the street, making knowledge-claims as we've described, we
might ask ourselves, "Why is he saying those things?," and we might further ask ourselves, "What position is he taking with respect to what question, problem, or issue?" In this situation an issue or problem would constitute a possible context for certain of his claims. For instance, with respect to Moore's claim that he knows that he is in England, that claim would be meaningful if Moore was the airplane passenger in (our) example 9 where we can clearly see why he would make that claim; i.e., the claim was make in light of the issue that none of the passengers knew where the emergency landing of the aircraft was going to take place.

As fas as our saying that a context will tell us when a knowledge-claim is warranted all that we can say is that in such-and-such contexts we do make knowledge-claims meaningfully and unproblematically. It is not as if we consult a chart to see in which contexts a knowledge-claim is appropriate, or that we are in any way unsure; it is the case that we just recognize that in such-and-such a case a knowledge-claim is appropriate. Simply, put, making knowledge-claims is an activity which we have mastered for the purposes of fulfilling certain aims and goals in our lives; it is part of our knowing our way about.

The fact that there are, and that in our day-to-day dealings we recognized, appropriate contexts for our
knowledge-claims, makes its way into daylight -- indeed, it would probably never otherwise arise -- in that we recognize those situations where knowledge-claims are made in wrong contexts. Wittgenstein says that "... we recognize normal circumstances but cannot precisely describe them. At most we can describe a range of abnormal ones" (OC, 27). Indeed, we recognize those situations where knowledge-claims are made in the wrong context, e.g., the situation of the stranger, and we can describe the fault with those situations in terms of the appropriate contexts which cannot be precisely described because they are appropriate. That is, we explain those cases in which knowledge-claims are made in wrong contexts with reference to cases where they are made in right contexts, which themselves cannot be, nor for that matter need be, compared with anything else.

Another function of the context in our language, generally speaking, is that it determines the sense of a proposition. The best way to show this is by example. Take, for instance, example 12 of our list of examples of the uses of "I know" where, you will recall, the lazy husband responds to his wife's nagging him to go to work with the statement, "I know when I have to be at work." In that context we equated the husband's saying "I know ... " with "I don't have to be reminded." We said that the husband could have responded with either of the above
statements, and the sense of what he was saying would be the same. Now consider this alternative: A University of Windsor professor accepts a once-a-week-all-expenses-paid-on-top-of-a-hefty-salary teaching position at the University of Saskatoon. Having inherited a huge sum of money, he owns a private aircraft and has a long runway on his huge estate from which he plans on flying to his new once-a-week job. On the morning when he is for the first time ready to go to his new job, his wife asks him, "Do you know when you have to be at work?" He replies; "Yes, I know when I have to be at work; I have checked a map, and Saskatoon's time zone is Central Time which means I have to be there at . . ."

What distinguishes the sense of "I know when I have to be at work" in the above two examples is the context. When that statement is made in an appropriate context, it means one thing in one context, and another thing in another context. In itself a proposition hasn't a sense, but it can have many different senses in various appropriate contexts, provided, of course, that it occurs in one of our language-games (PI, 117, p. 188; OC, 622).

Wittgenstein's Critique of Moore

In this section we propose to give an account of Wittgenstein's critique of Moore. Before we do that, however, let us discuss Moore and Wittgenstein common
adversary, i.e., the skeptic, and how they, each in his own way, go about their treatment of skepticism. This will help us to better understand and appreciate Wittgenstein's criticisms of Moore.

One version of the skeptic's position might be roughly stated this way: 'There is a distinct class of propositions which, no matter how greatly we might believe them to be true, are not precluded from doubt in a way that we can say that we know them with absolute certainty.'

This class of propositions, which David Hume calls propositions of matters of fact, are distinguished from propositions of relations of ideas. In his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, he says:

> All the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, relations of ideas and matters of fact. Of the first kind are the sciences of geometry, algebra, and arithmetic, and in short, every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain . . . Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe . . . Matters of fact . . . are not ascertained in the same manner, nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it can never imply a contradiction.5

Presumably we can know propositions of relations of ideas with certainty, while we can do no better than believe that propositions of matters of fact, many of which we accept by common sense to be true, are in fact true. Another way that this distinction gets put is: it is logically
possible to be mistaken about the truth of propositions of matters of fact, while it is logically impossible to be mistaken about the truth of propositions of relations of ideas. Let us now look at what someone like Hume would have to say about one of Moore's (matter of fact) propositions, i.e., "The earth has existed for many years past," which for the sake of brevity we will be rendering, "The world is an old place."

Someone like Hume would say that we don't know with certainty that the world is an old place. Indeed, it has been claimed by some philosophers -- mostly by those of the Cartesian or empiricist strain -- that it is logically possible that the world (including me) was created five minutes ago. A well-known statement of this position is Bertrand Russell's in his *Analysis of Mind*. There Russell says that because

> everything constituting a memory-belief is happening now ... It is not logically necessary to the existence of the memory-belief that the event remembered should have occurred, or even that the past should have existed at all. There is no logical impossibility in the hypothesis that the world sprang into being five minutes ago, exactly as it then was, with a population that "remembered" a wholly unreal past. There is no logically necessary connection between events at different times; therefore nothing that is happening now or will happen in the future can disprove the hypothesis that the world began five minutes ago.

In support of this claim Russell and others who take this position ask us to imagine that even our concepts of time (e.g., "five minutes ago," "twenty years ago," "within
three hours," "five days from now," etc.) were created in us five minutes ago. Along with the creation of everything else five minutes ago, so too, my "programmed" memory was created five minutes ago. Included in it, along with every other representation which could conceivably arise in my consciousness, were the concepts of time mentioned above. These philosophers conclude that, since it is logically possible that the world was created five minutes ago, then there are grounds for doubting that the world is an old place: we can only believe that its being an old place is probable, or as some (e.g., A.J. Ayer, who, like Russell, follows Hume on this point) would say, a probable hypothesis.

Moore was very uneasy with the skeptic's position, and as a result he took to the task of defending the common sense view of the world. In DCS, he enumerates a host of propositions which he believes express the common sense view. Among these propositions is the proposition that the world is an old place. Furthermore, in PEW, he sets out to prove the proposition that there are things which exist outside of our minds -- which, again, he takes to be a proposition of the common sense view of the world.

As we all well know, it is precisely the common sense view of the world that the skeptic is challenging; and in this case he does so by introducing the notion that it is logically possible that the world is not an old place,
and that, for that matter, it does not, and never did, exist, etc. At the same time he admits that he himself does not believe that the possibilities which he has introduced are true, but adds that he cannot prove them false or true. He then concludes that those things which we believe to be true are in very high degree probable, but not knowable in such a way that there could be no mistake about them. Finally, after many futile attempts at resolving this problem of knowledge, he (in many cases reluctantly) has no other resort but to endorse the philosophical stand of skepticism, while at the same time he invites the rest of the philosophical world to try to solve the problem which he so miserably failed in solving himself.

Let us from the outset make the point that Moore did not intend his DCS to be a refutation of (any brand of) skepticism. But this is not to say that there is no connection between it and the skeptic's position. Indeed, Moore or anyone else's having to say that they know that the world is an old place, and that it exists, etc., is occasioned by the skeptic's denial that anyone knows such things. On the other hand, to think of the DCS as being a mere recital -- as some all to often do -- of the things that he knows, is wrong: it's true that such a recital occurs, but that's not all that's involved. Furthermore, Moore's stated intention makes the DCS sound like a mere
notice of disagreement between his position and that of other philosophers, which, although it certainly was that, does not adequately characterize the scope and nature of the work as a defence of common sense. Basically, the question of the work's scope and nature is something which Moore left for his reader to resolve.

In section I of the DCS (which is the section that we are primarily concerned with here), Moore is interested in doing three things: (1) stating and articulating what he calls 'the common sense view of the world,' (2) stating the position of two philosophical camps who are critical of the common sense view of the world, and (3) showing what he believes to be significant defects with the points of view in (2). If he succeeds in accomplishing (3), he will have succeeded in defending (not proving) the common sense view of the world presented in (1).

With respect to (1), Moore enumerates a host of propositions which he says he knows with certainty to be true, and, which, when taken as a whole, constitute (at least in part) the common sense view of the world. Among these propositions are, e.g., "There exists at present a body which is my body," "I am a human being, and I have, at different times since my body was born, had many different experiences, of each of many different kinds . . .," etc. In addition to these propositions (or truisms, as Moore calls them) is the single proposition (or trism)
which again Moore says he knows with certainty to be true, and which could not be made except with reference to the original list of propositions. This proposition states that almost every human being has at one time or another known a proposition corresponding to each of the propositions he enumerates.

With respect to (2), Moore outlines the basic tenets of both the idealist and the skeptical points of view, and how they, each in their own way, formulate their opposition to the common sense view of the world. His outline of the skeptic's position -- we have no need to and therefore will not be considering his discussion of the idealist position -- is very close to our own, and therefore it is unnecessary for us to duplicate his discussion here.

Moving on to (3), then, Moore, as we've said earlier, considers the skeptic's position defective; specifically, he says that "it is really self-contradictory, i.e. entails both of two mutually incompatible propositions" (PP, p. 42). He explains that when the skeptic says 'No human being has ever known of the existence of other human beings,' that, since he is making that statement to and about other human beings, his making that statement entails the contradiction that other human beings both do and don't exist.

Now, the skeptic will agree with Moore that if in
fact we do know that other human beings exist, then our
saying that they don't, does indeed constitute a flat-out
contradiction. But, it is precisely the skeptic's position
that I do not know (but only believe) the proposition that
other human beings exist, and that, since this type of
proposition (unlike e.g. propositions about my mental
states) does not admit of being known with certainty (at
least not at the present time), its contrary is possible
without implying a contradiction. In other words, against
Moore, the skeptic can say: "It is true that I believe
that other human beings exist, and when I write about these
matters of epistemology, I believe that there exist many
human beings who will read and either argue with, or dispute
some of my ideas. I, for example, believe that you,
Professor Moore, exist, and that you are a real human being
living in a real world with many millions of other human
beings. This world which I believe exists, I also believe
is very old, and that it has rivers, and mountains,
universities and hotels, and a lot of other things, including
those things which you, Moore, have enumerated in your
Defence of Common Sense. But, I know none of these things,
and it is logically possible that all of these things which
I believe to be true, are in reality untrue. That is, it
is logically possible that the (real) universe is one
which consists of me, a spirit, and an evil genius who/is deceiving me into falsely believing in the existence
of Moore, his professorship, Cambridge University, and everything else which I take, that is, believe, to be true." Thus, seen in this way (as it actually has been since at least as far back as Descartes' *Meditations*), the skeptic's position does not entail a contradiction, and it remains intact, despite Moore's charges.

Clearly here, then, the point of contention between the skeptic and Moore revolves around the question of whether I know or merely believe those propositions which constitute the common sense view of the world. And now the skeptic, having made the case that the common sense view of the world is a matter of belief, will invite Moore to show that he (and, perhaps, in unknown ways, everyone else) knows with certainty the common sense view of the world to be true.

Moore anticipates this move by the skeptic, and responds by saying, ". . . I think I have nothing better to say than that it seems to me that I do know (it), with certainty" (PP, p. 44). Furthermore, knowing that what he has just said invites the skeptic's request for a proof that he knows those things which he says he knows, Moore adds that even though there must be some evidence for his knowing what he says he knows, he does not know what that evidence is.

Well, this, of course, is not good enough to defend the common sense view of the world from the skeptic's
assaults on it. By saying that he knows what the skeptic says none of us knows, Moore is simply begging the question. Wittgenstein was well aware of the inadequacy of Moore’s defence:

What is the proof that I know something? Most certainly not my saying I know it.

And so, when some writers enumerate all the things they know, that proves nothing whatever. So the possibility of knowledge about physical objects cannot be proved by the protestations of those who believe that they have such knowledge. (OC, 487-8).

Thus, since Moore’s attempt at rebutting the skeptic fails, some other approach must be brought forward.

Wittgenstein does just this. From the Wittgensteinian point of view, the skeptic’s position (as we’ve outlined it above) is shown to be untenable and, ultimately, incoherent; what the skeptic says is a logical possibility is not something that anyone would consider a real possibility.

Before we start with our discussion of Wittgenstein’s treatment of skepticism, let us clarify exactly what the skeptic means by 'logically possible' when he says something like, "It is logically possible that the world was created five minutes ago." As the term has been used by pre-Wittgensteinian philosophers in this century, a proposition is said to be logically possible when it is not self-contradictory. For example, saying "It is at this moment freezing cold and scorching hot outdoors."
expresses a logical impossibility. And, once again, the skeptic wants to say that if it is a logical possibility that the world was created five minutes ago, then it is a real possibility; that is, there is nothing a priori precluding doubt about the proposition that the world is an old place, and that it was not created five minutes ago along with me and my preprogrammed memory.

Furthermore, when the skeptic speaks of a certain proposition as being logically possible or impossible, his characterizing a proposition in either of those two ways connects with a certain philosophical use of the locution "I can (or cannot) imagine . . ." Those propositions which are said to be logically possible are ones which I can imagine, while propositions which are said to be logically impossible are ones which I cannot imagine. Thus, when the skeptic says that it is logically possible that the world was created five minutes ago, he is saying that he can imagine that state of affairs, while when he says that it is logically impossible that is freezing cold and (at the same time) scorching hot outdoors, he is saying that he cannot imagine that.

Wittgenstein believes that the skeptic has a false picture of doubt (OC, 249). He explains that to really doubt something, one must have grounds for that doubt (OC, 122, 288, 323, 458); that is, one's doubting that, e.g., the world is an old place involves there being some-
thing which speaks against its being so, something which is more potent than one's saying that it is "logically possible" that it isn't so. The mere imaginability and that is about all the skeptic's logical possibility amounts to, if it ever amounts to anything at all -- of something's not being the case is no ground for doubting whether or not it is the case (OC, 4). To say that it is "logically possible" that the world was created five minutes ago is not to say that I can seriously entertain the notion that in fact it was created five minutes ago, that it is not an old place. That doubt just does not have enough "punch" to play any significant role in my life, or in the life of any other (sane) human being, including the skeptic. As Wittgenstein puts point: "... (that kind of doubt) would strike me as idle. Nothing would follow from it, nothing be explained by it. It would not tie in with anything in my life" (OC, 117).

It is not as if I have chosen to believe that the world is an old place, or that I have satisfied myself of it with, e.g. a proof, etc.; no, I have simply always acted with unshakeable conviction in a way that affirms that it is an old place (OC, 103). And if a skeptic were to tell me that it is logically possible that the world is not an old place, or that it is logically possible that when I get up from the chair that I am now sitting, my feet will be attached to my legs, etc.,
I would not check to see about my feet as I got up from the chair (at least not in a way such that I would not know what to expect -- which would constitute genuine doubt), nor would I somehow attempt to investigate "the truth" of the proposition that the world is an old place. Like every other human being I act with (not because of) the conviction that the world is an old place, that my feet will be attached to my legs when I get up from my chair, etc., etc., (OC, 103). Wittgenstein puts the point this way:

"Why don't I satisfy myself that I have two feet when I get up from a chair? There is no why. That is how I act (OC, 148; see also OC 204).

My acting in the way that I do is a matter of my never having been in a situation which would stir me to actually doubt that the world is an old place; and, in the other case, my getting up from a chair is not the kind of situation -- assuming a normal everyday situation here, e.g., my getting up from the chair at the desk in my office -- which would stir me to doubt my feet are attached to my legs (OC, 255). Although these propositions conjure up certain pictures, they are pictures "with which we cannot go on to do anything" (RFM, p. 59). We do not have in our lives a use for the proposition that it is logically possible that the world was created five minutes ago, or that it is logically possible that when I get up from the chair that I am now sitting at, my feet will not be
attached to my legs. The forms of life which would make those propositions useful are not part of our lives.

Wittgenstein:

... It is not every sentence-like formation that we know how to do something with, not every technique has an application in our lives...

(PI, 520).

So how does doubt get expressed. That is, in a language-game, and not merely in certain phrases.

... (the) expression of doubt by no means always makes sense, nor does it always have a point.

One simply tends to forget that even doubting belongs to a language-game (RPP II, 342).

Earlier we said that the skeptic's position is incoherent. It is incoherent because all kinds of my activities affirm the proposition that the world is an old place, while none of my activities cohere with the proposition that the world was created five minutes ago; as Wittgenstein suggests, everything speaks for the former proposition, nothing for the latter (OC, 190).

Thus, even though one may say that it is "logically possible" that the world and I were created five minutes ago, it is not a real possibility, at least, not for me and other reasonable and normal human beings. And what, then, is a logical possibility when it does not express a real possibility? It seems to be nothing more than an idle phrase which, when hooked up with propositions such as those we have discussed, is incoherent. This is not to say, however, that the phrase 'logical possibility' has no use whatsoever; it may, for example have a use in
mathematics, or in the study of certain types of deductive logic, etc.

We now finally come to Wittgenstein's critique of Moore which is aimed almost entirely at Moore's use of "I know." Wittgenstein says: "Moore's mistake lies in this -- countering the assertion that one cannot know that, by saying 'I do know it'" (OC, 521).

When we scan our list of the ordinary uses of "I know," we find that Moore's use does not correspond to any of them, nor for that matter, it seems, to any other ordinary uses that we might think of. To be sure, it obviously is not a use in the manner of (our) examples 12 and 14, nor is it like those other uses where the provision of grounds is part of the grammar. Moore's use of "I know" is a familiar philosophical one: One can say one knows a claim only when one is absolutely certain about that claim in such a way that there could be no mistake about it. (This, as we've seen, was precisely the way the skeptic uses (or would use) "I know," too). Moore's "variation" on this philosophical use is, as we've made clear in the first section of this chapter, "one can claim to know those things which are accepted by common sense as being true when doubting them would be absurd." In contradistinction to Moore, Wittgenstein, referring to the grounds-provision use of "I know," says: "'I know . . . may mean 'I do not doubt' but does not mean that the
words 'I doubt . . .' are senseless, that doubt is logically excluded" (PI, p. 221). Wittgenstein, unlike Moore, saw that when someone in ordinary discourse says "I know . . .," they are not using that locution to mean "It is senseless to doubt . . .," and that doubt is grammatically (or "logically") related to saying that one knows. Thus, if one is not inclined to doubt that which (it ordinarily goes without saying) he knows, then it is misleading to say that he knows. This is the point that Wittgenstein, referring to one (although it could have been to any of a number of other) of Moore's propositions, is making when he says:

... how do I know that this is my hand? Do I even here know exactly what it means to 'say it is my hand'? -- When I say "how do I know?" I do not mean that I have the least doubt of it. What we have here is a foundation for all my action. But it seems to me that it is wrongly expressed by the words "I know" (OC, 414).

It is misleading (or "wrongly expressed") to say that one knows those things which one is not ordinarily inclined to doubt, because -- excepting here those other uses of "I know" whose grammar we understand to be different from that of the grounds-provision use of "I know" -- one's saying "I know . . ." implies, by virtue of the grammar of this use of "I know," that, unlike I who know the claim, there might be those who don't know it, who doubt it, who might dispute my claim, and who may ask me to show how I know what I claim to know. That is, because this use of
"I know" invites questions like, "How do you know?", or "What grounds have you for saying that you know ...?", in short, expressions of doubt, it is misleading to say, as Moore does, that one knows those propositions which one neither doubts, nor thereby would have reason to bring grounds or evidence forth for. Wittgenstein:

If Moore says that he knows the earth existed etc., most of us will grant him that it has existed all that time, and also believe him when he says he is convinced of it. But has he also got the right ground for his conviction? For if not, then after all he does not know ... (OC, 91).

Given the grammar of "I know," Moore should not say that he knows, e.g., that the earth has existed for a long time etc., any more than the skeptic, to whom Moore is reacting, should say that he does not know it, because neither Moore, nor the skeptic, nor anyone else is (under normal circumstances) inclined to doubt that proposition and other ones like it.

Another problem with Moore's use of "I know" is that he believes that one can say that one knows when there's no being mistaken about it (OC, 178). We've seen, however, that the grammar of "I know" is different: Despite the fact that what I claim to know I am comfortably certain I do know, I might be mistaken about its being the case. Indeed, if one thought that saying "I know" guaranteed as fact that which one was claiming to know, then he would be hard-pressed to account for the
expression "I thought I knew" (OC, 12). "I know" expresses comfortable certainty, not absolute certainty (OC, 278, 357), and "it may surely happen that whenever I said 'I know' it turned out to be wrong" (OC, 580).

Furthermore, when Moore says that he knows those propositions which he enumerates, he is not informing us about certain thing which he knows and that we might not know. If that were the case, his claiming to know would be a perfectly legitimate one: he is telling us about something which he knows and we don't know, and the context, at least in part, for his doing so is our not knowing, but being interested in knowing, that which he claims to know. But, since we don't doubt those things which Moore says he knows, the context for his saying that he knows is absent, and, to the extent that a knowledge-claim is made unproblematically in a context where there might be some doubt about the truth of that claim, Moore's making a claim outside of such a context renders the sense of his claim problematic. Even though his claim might be true, his making that claim outside of a context in which it would be warranted makes the sense of his claim problematic; that is, it is not clear why he is claiming to know that which he says he knows.

Finally, in keeping with the grammar of "I know" it is quite possible that someone might claim to know the opposite from what I claim to know. Indeed, in
response to my (what I believe to be well-grounded) claim, someone might say to me, "I think that there is something fishy about what you say you know; I know differently ..." Our disagreement might lead to a dispute over the relevance and/or weight of the evidence or grounds that he and I bring forth for each of our respective claims. In the end I might be convinced that what I thought I knew, that is, what I had previously claimed to know, is not correct, and I might concede to him that he knows what I, due to his showing me that it is so, now know. Thus, that which I say I know is a matter of opinion whereby I hold a point of view on a matter which eventually someone who holds an altogether different point of view might convince me that I am wrong in holding.

Now, in this connection, Wittgenstein points out that,

If Moore were to pronounce the opposite of those propositions which he declares certain (as the grammar of "I know" allows), we should not just not share his opinion; we should regard him as demented (OC, 155).

Wittgenstein's point here is that those things which Moore says he knows are not a matter of opinion such that Moore holds a point of view which others might not hold. The propositions which Moore enumerates are (as we shall see in the next chapter) so entrenched in our language-games (OC, 381-391) that, not only do we not doubt them or vary in "our opinions" about them, but if we encountered someone who actually did doubt them, we should think him demented.
In a discussion with Norman Malcolm,\textsuperscript{10} Wittgenstein attributed\textsuperscript{11} to Moore the position that for him knowledge was a mental state. In that discussion Wittgenstein said that when Moore, e.g., stands at a house that is twenty feet away and says, "I know that there's a house," he "wants to produce in himself a feeling of knowing... he wants to exhibit knowing for certain to himself."\textsuperscript{12}

When we look at the history of philosophy, particularly the history of British philosophy, we find that the problem of knowledge for Moore's philosophical ancestors was one of putting propositions about things external to oneself on an equal footing with propositions about one's own mental states and processes. That is, propositions about our own mental states and processes, like propositions of logic and mathematics, were taken to be absolutely certain, while propositions about things outside of us were taken to be open to doubt and uncertainty. The idea here is that my mental states and processes are "immediate" and "indubitable" and that I thereby have direct knowledge of them, while my knowledge of things external to myself is not direct knowledge, and that I am not as certain about those things as I am about my own mental states and processes. Such is the tradition in which Moore and many of his contemporaries (e.g., Bertrand Russell and A.J. Ayer) have their roots.
When we look at Moore's conception of knowledge, we find that when he, e.g., stands in front of a house pointing his finger at it and exclaiming that he knows that it is a house, he, it seems, believed that his experience had the same sort of immediacy and indubitability as do our states of pain, joy, depression etc. The implication of Moore's conception of knowledge is that he can determine through reflection whether he knows a certain proposition or merely believes it, and without the possibility of being mistaken about it. When I look into myself and at what is happening when I stand in front of this house, there is nothing which speaks against my not knowing that that house is there. Like my "other" states, my states of knowing are of such a kind that it makes no sense to speak of my being mistaken about them, and it would be absurd to say that I do not know that which so immediately and indubitably pervades my consciousness as does the proposition that that is a house.

Wittgenstein agrees with Moore that the possibility of being mistaken about propositions such as "that is a house (hand, etc.)" makes no sense (OC, 17, 32), but he disagrees with him that that is so because knowledge is a mental state. In fact, Wittgenstein maintains that such a picture of knowledge is wrong (RPP I, 303), and he, furthermore, suggests that philosophers who hold that knowledge is a mental state have been misled by the surface grammar of "I know":
Expectation is, grammatically, a state; like: being of an opinion, hoping for something, knowing something, being able to do something (PI, 572; italics mine).

That is, when we look at (some) propositions where words and phrases like "know," "believe," "hope for," "been of the opinion that," are used, and propositions where words (which it is understood relate to this or that mental state) like "joy," "depression," "fear," etc., are used, the form (or surface grammar) of these propositions is the same.

This is shown in the following examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{known.} & \quad \text{been depressed (about...)} \\
\text{fear.} & \quad \text{been able to do...} \\
\text{hoped for...} & \\
\text{I've} & \quad \text{expected...} \\
\text{believed...} & \\
\text{been of the opinion that...} & \text{(etc.)}
\end{align*}
\]

According to Wittgenstein, it is the sameness in the form of these propositions which misleads some philosophers (e.g. Moore) into believing that knowledge, belief, holding an opinion, etc., are mental states like depression, joy, fear, etc., are (PI, 90).\(^1\)

In order to get clear on this matter, Wittgenstein points out that

\[
\ldots\text{in order to understand the grammar of these states it is necessary to ask: "What counts as a criterion for anyone's being in such a state?" (States of hardness, of weight, of fitting.) (PI, 572).}
\]

Now, when we look at our states of pain, joy, etc.
there is one distinguishing characteristic common to them all, i.e., unremitting continuity. We might say that unremitting continuity is a criterion by which a psychological phenomenon might qualify to be called a state. Indeed, when we look at propositions where the words "pain," "joy," and that of other states are employed, it is understood (implicitly or explicitly) that states have unremitting continuity. Some examples:

"He was depressed the whole day."
"I have been in pain since yesterday."
"Nothing but intense fear overcame him as he walked down that dark ghetto alley."
"Since Monday he has been continually depressed."

When we look at knowing, we find that it does not have unremitting continuity. Unlike our saying, "Since Monday he has been continuously depressed," we cannot say, "Since Monday he had continuously and unremittingly known . . .". Wittgenstein shows this contrast as follows:

Think of this language-game: Determine how long an impression lasts by means of a stop-watch. The duration of knowledge, ability, understanding, could not be determined this way (RPP II, 51; see also PI, p. 59).

The above language-game, though showing the grammatical difference between knowing and seeing, could have just as easily been used to show the grammatical difference between knowing, and, say, being depressed. Indeed, if RPP II, 51 reads " . . . Determine how long someone's being depressed lasts . . ." instead of " . . . Determine how long an impression lasts . . ." it would reveal that
knowledge, unlike joy, fear, depression, and the like, is not a mental state.*

* It should be mentioned that the version of skepticism I have focussed on in this chapter is the one that Moore was preoccupied with, and it should not be taken to include other versions of skepticism.
CHAPTER III

WITTGENSTEIN ON MOORE'S TRUISMS

In the last chapter we have seen that it is misleading for one to say that he knows the propositions Moore enumerated. In this chapter we shall look at what function those propositions have in our lives and how, if not with "I know," they might best be prefixed. We shall not discuss nor argue the merits of every detail of what some commentators call Wittgenstein's theory of knowledge, even though much of what we shall be discussing here forms an important part of that theory (if there is one). Rather, we shall attempt to sketch out Wittgenstein's views on Moore's truisms, and, having such a sketch before us, we shall look at and show why other expressions are better suited to express what Moore said he knows.

The Function of Moore's Propositions In Our Lives

In chapter one we said that the function of a word or proposition can be seen from an examination of its use. Presumably that is how we would go about establishing the function of Moore's propositions. But there is a hitch: Moore's propositions have no use, or at least they are not used to inform someone of the facts they express. ¹ A
proposition is said to be informative when it is used to express some fact to someone who up until its disclosure was unacquainted with the fact being disclosed. Clearly, Moore's propositions are not used to inform someone of the facts they express, for nobody is unacquainted with those facts; as Wittgenstein puts it: "The truths which Moore says he knows, are such as, roughly speaking, all of us know, if he knows them" (OC, 100). Unlike propositions which have uses in our day-to-day lives and whose functions are thereby easily seen, the function Moore's propositions have (if they have any) will not be seen as easily, nor will they be seen in the same way.

The function that Moore's propositions have in our lives is different from, although in important ways connected to, propositions we use in our day-to-day lives. Their function is a special one. Wittgenstein says when Moore says he knows such and such, he is really enumerating a lot of propositions which we affirm without special testing; propositions, that is, which have a peculiar logical role in the system of our empirical propositions (OC, 136).

The propositions . . . which Moore retails as examples of . . . known truths are indeed interesting. Not because anyone knows their truth, or believes that he knows them, but because they all have a similar role in the system of our empirical judgements (OC, 137).

Let us begin unpacking these two passages by focussing on the idea that Moore's propositions are ones that "we affirm without special testing."
Empirical propositions are for the most part affirmed in one of two ways: (1) as the result of investigation, or (2) without any investigation -- indeed, with certain of Moore's propositions it would make no sense to speak of investigating them -- they are simply believed to be true. An example of a type (1) proposition would be, "Water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen atoms," while Moore's propositions are type (2) propositions. Understanding the matter of (2) is key to understanding Wittgenstein's conception of the function of Moore's propositions in our lives. Let us, then, elaborate on it.

Moore's propositions are the type of propositions that we, on the basis of no evidence, accept as being true. There is no doubt about them, we wholly accept them, are unmistakably certain of them. But, let us ask, are we justified in claiming unmistakable certainty of them? Needn't they be backed up with evidence? Aren't we being hasty in accepting them without evidence or justification? To be sure, in chapter two we said that Moore's propositions are the type of propositions we simply do not doubt. But it is one thing not to doubt a proposition and quite another thing to be able to claim unmistakable certainty of it. Indeed, it can be said of certain propositions that, even though we have no known reason to doubt them, we are not justified in claiming certainty of them. For, we may not be aware of the reasons why someone else who is not
certain of them may doubt them. That is, some other person who is not certain of something we are certain of may have grounds for doubting it, while we do not doubt it because we are unaware of such grounds. I may, for example, have no doubt that my friend, George, from Toronto is on the next airplane arriving in Windsor as I await him at the airport. In our brief telephone conversation earlier that day, he asked me to meet him at the airport at such and such a time. That was pretty well the whole of our conversation. Knowing him as a very reliable person whom I've met at the airport on countless other occasions, I cancelled my previous engagements, and arranged to go to the airport. From the time I spoke with George on the telephone up to the time when I was at the airport awaiting his arrival, I had no doubt whatever that he was coming to Windsor. But, suppose my not doubting that he was on his way to Windsor was a condition of my not knowing all the facts behind his coming to Windsor. Suppose that he was, unbeknownst to me at the time, coming to Windsor in order to donate a kidney to his cousin who was involved in an automobile accident and who was in a Windsor hospital awaiting a kidney transplant. As I await George at the airport, I am approached by his uncle who asks me if I know whether his nephew is on the airplane. I tell him I have no reason to doubt it. He explains the circumstances surrounding George's trip, and tells me that when he last spoke with him, he had
second thoughts about giving up a kidney, the transplant, the whole trip. He said that George's last words about coming to Windsor were, "I'll see," and, even though his Air Canada reservation was confirmed, he was not to be contacted since that conversation. Knowing how much George hated surgery, I, too, at that point had doubts as to whether he would be on the plane. George's uncle produced in me a doubt about something I had not previously doubted. Thus, the mere lack of doubt does not itself establish something as certain. Indeed, we are not sure of Moore's propositions because we do not doubt them, but rather, it would be more accurate to say, we do not doubt them because we are certain of them.

What, in part, distinguishes Moore's propositions from a proposition such as, "George will be on the next airplane coming in from Toronto," is that the latter has a use as a knowledge-claim, while Moore's propositions have no such use. We can easily imagine an everyday situation in which one may doubt (and another may, thereby, have reason to claim) the proposition, "George will be on the next airplane from Toronto." The same is not, however, true of Moore's propositions; for, the situation in which one might doubt (and another may claim to know) one of Moore's propositions does not arise. Nevertheless, we can, thanks to science-fiction stories, just as easily imagine a situation in which someone may doubt one of Moore's
propositions. Imagining a situation in which Moore's propositions would have a use as knowledge-claims would, however, involve imagining our lives and the world to be very much unlike our lives and the world actually are. In our lives, in our world, Moore's propositions are not claims, which is to say, we do not use them as claims.

Now, someone may object to our saying that Moore's propositions are not claims. He may say something like: "Granted, in our daily lives, the non-philosophical side of our lives, we are extremely unlikely to utter one of Moore's propositions as a claim. But, in philosophy, Moore's propositions are claims. In philosophy, Moore's propositions are part of a theory about the way the world is; they constitute, at least in part, the common sense (or Naive Realsim) view of the world. Moore's view of the world is not, however, shared by all philosophers: it is one view competing with many other views. For example, it competes with the Idealist's view of the world, and in so doing, Moore's propositions become claims -- claims which, like any other claim, are in need of justification. If other philosophical views of the world are more or less as plausible -- and many, if not most, philosophers think they are -- as Moore's view of the world, then Moore's propositions are not certain, much less unmistakably certain, and they are in need of justification." Our objector's point here is a well-known, but not insurmountable, one. In the
remainder of this section we shall see what role Moore's propositions have in our lives, and against this background, we shall see that they are in no need of justification.

Before we continue, let us remind ourselves of some of Moore's propositions. Among the many propositions Moore says he is certain of are the following:

There exists at present a living human body which is my body. This body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since, though not without undergoing changes; it was, for instance, much smaller when it was born, and for some time afterwards, than it is now. . . . the earth has existed . . . for many years before I was born; and for many of these years, also, large numbers of human bodies had, at every moment, been alive upon it; and many of these bodies had died and ceased to exist before I was born (PP, p. 33).

In addition to Moore's propositions, Wittgenstein discusses a number of propositions he believes are on an equal footing with Moore's propositions. Some are explicit, while others are implicit. First the explicit ones: "I have forebears, . . . every human being has them. . . . there are various cities, and, quite generally, in the main facts of geography and history. . . . the earth is a body on whose surface we move and . . . it no more suddenly disappears or the like than any other solid body: this table, this house, this tree, etc." (OC, 234); " . . . every human being has a brain, . . . there is an island, Australia, . . . I had great-grandparents, . . . the people who gave themselves out as my parents really were my parents" (OC, 159).
Now a few of the implicit ones, which might be rendered as follows: "There is a continuity in nature" (OC, 167); "Tables and other physical objects remain in existence when no one pays attention to them" (OC, 163); "I have never been on the moon" (OC, 171); "My name is . . ." (OC, 470, 515). There are others, but these will suffice.

The above propositions, in Wittgenstein's view, express, not claims or, collectively, a theory about the way the world is, but rather something basic about our lives—each of our lives. Each of the above propositions is a statement of one of our fundamental beliefs, beliefs which are seen from the ways in which we act, our forms of life. They express not ungrounded presuppositions (or claims), but ungrounded ways of acting (OC, 110), the ways in which we simply act (OC, 148, 232; see Z, 309; PI, 217). These basic, ungrounded ways in which we act lie beyond being justified or unjustified, and are neither reasonable nor unreasonable (OC, 359, 559). They are "something animal" (OC, 359), a natural part of being human, a part of our natural history (PI, 25; see PI, 415, p. 230; Z, 469). Our acting on the proposition (even though we may never think of it) that physical objects do not disappear when we are not paying attention to them, or that a group of scientists is not transporting us to and from the moon every night while we are asleep, that we had great-grandparents, that the world is an old place, etc., is as natural for us as
collecting stores for the winter is for a squirrel (OC, 287). That fundamental propositions actually have this status in our lives is not seen so much from their being intrinsically obvious or convincing, but from what lies around them (OC, 144). Let us, then, look at what lies around them and how it reflects on their having this status.

A prominent theme in *On Certainty* is that Moore's propositions lie at the bottom of, are the unmoving foundation of, our language-games (OC, 204, 403, 411, 558). They are, Wittgenstein says, the foundation for all my action (OC, 414), of all judging (OC, 308, 419, 614), of all operating with thoughts (with language) (OC, 401). He also says that they are "the substratum of all enquiring and asserting" (OC, 162; see OC, 88, 151), "the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false" (OC, 94), and "the rock bottom of all my convictions" (OC, 248). This foundation figuration suggests that just as a house stands, is and continues to be a house, on a foundation, language-games are played and continue to be played on the foundation of fundamental propositions. This aspect of fundamental propositions is conveyed by Wittgenstein in three very useful similies; fundamental propositions are to language-games what hinges are to a door (OC, 341, 343, 655), a riverbed is to a river (OC, 97 99), an axis is to a body which rotates on it (OC, 152). Just as a house cannot stand without a firm foundation,
a door cannot open and close without stable hinges, a river cannot flow without a solid riverbed, etc., so, too, Wittgenstein wants to say, our language-games cannot function without the solid and unmovimg foundation of fundamental propositions. Let us see what lies behind this view. To do so, let us look at a particular language-game, i.e., that of scientific investigation, and see how it is connected to such fundamental propositions.

Wittgenstein says that "it belongs to the logic of scientific investigation that certain things are in deed not doubted" (OC, 342). One such thing that is not doubted, that is in deed certain in scientific investigation, is what might be called "the principle of the continuity and uniformity of nature." Wittgenstein:

Think of chemical investigations. Lavoisier makes experiments with substances in his laboratory and now concludes that this and that takes place when there is burning. He does not say that it might happen otherwise another time. He has got a world-picture -- not of course one that he invented; he learned it as a child. I say world-picture and not hypothesis, because it is the matter-of-course foundation for his research and as such goes unmentioned (OC, 187).

Lavoisier's activity, the very practice of conducting scientific investigations, rest, in part, on the proposition that there is a continuity and uniformity in nature. To conduct scientific investigations is to do so in light of the fact that there is continuity and uniformity in nature -- such is the logic of scientific investigation. Were
the proposition of the continuity and uniformity of nature not part of the scientist's investigative activity, part of, that is, the language-game of scientific investigation, the language-game of scientific investigation would not be what it is, the way we know it, play it. Scientists would not make general statements nor formulate laws about the phenomena they investigate. In fact, a society which did not accept the principle of the continuity and uniformity of nature would probably not make scientific investigations, at least not as we know them. In such a society there probably would not be what we call 'scientists' and 'scientific investigation.' Our language-game of scientific investigation, however, involves our acting on the proposition that there is a continuity and uniformity in nature; as Wittgenstein says: "... all enquiry on our part is so set as to exempt certain propositions from doubt" (OC, 88). The proposition that there is a continuity and uniformity in nature, together with certain other propositions such as, every effect has a cause, and, the manner in which we calculate is correct, constitute the hinges on which scientific investigation turn (OC, 341, 343). They are "fundamental principles of human enquiry" (OC, 670), part of the "conceptual (linguistic) situation" (OC, 51; see OC, 135).

The above propositions or principles, in Wittgenstein's view belong to what he calls "a system." What Wittgenstein means by "a system" can be seen somewhat in
the following passage:

All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis takes place already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument. The system is not so much the point of departure, as the element in which arguments have their life (OC, 105).

In what follows, I shall begin with an explanation of what Wittgenstein means by "a system," and then, with reference to an example, elucidate on it.

A "system," on my reading of Wittgenstein, is a framework which provides the boundaries within which questions are asked (see OC, 341), judgements made (see OC, 614), investigations conducted (see OC, 162), etc.; in short, it is a framework within which our conceptual activities are conducted (see OC, 401, 411). Hypotheses are put forth, discussed, argued for or against, accepted or rejected, within a system. The search for evidence in support of a hypothesis occurs within a system. Doubts are raised, conclusions drawn, questions answered, within a system. Claims are justified, verified, said to be true or false, within a system. This framework is a conceptual requirement without which the above activities would lose their point and become vacuous (OC, 517, 617). The above activities, we might say, presuppose the framework within which they occur (OC, 337, 446).

The propositions which belong to this system "do not
form a homogeneous mass" (OC, 213); some belong to the system's foundation (OC, 411), where they "stand unshakeably fast" (OC, 144), while other propositions in the system "are more or less liable to shift" (ibid). The former type propositions are methodological, propositions which characterize a method, while the latter are propositions within a method (OC, 318). Let us now take as an example the language-game of neurophysiological investigation and look at its system and the status and relation of the propositions within it.

One of the things that neurophysiologists are interested in and hypothesize about these days is the (neurophysiological) etiology of schizophrenia and other psychological disorders. Some have, in recent years, for example, argued that schizophrenia is caused by a deficiency of the neurotransmitter dopamine, thereby preventing normal brain function and inducing schizophrenia. Tests were conducted, evidence compiled, results assessed, and to the extent that these were judged to comply with and fulfill the general standards of neurophysiological research, the conclusion was drawn that schizophrenia is caused by a dopamine deficiency. Other neurophysiologists do not hold that this is the cause of schizophrenia. They argue that schizophrenia is caused by a genetic disorder in which a protein substance called 'taraxein' reacts with other chemicals in the brain in such a way as to form chemical compounds that are toxic and which
disturb the function of the brain. They, too, have conducted tests and cite evidence in support of their claim. These claims, as well as a host of other claims concerning the etiology of schizophrenia, are controversial. None of them have as yet been confirmed or disconfirmed, and they coexist on roughly an equal footing at the present time.

All neurphysiologists involved in the study of the etymology of schizophrenia share certain presuppositions in common. One such presupposition is that schizophrenia is caused by irregularities in the function of the brain (as opposed to, say, "the presence of a demon in the soul," which they would, it is safe to say, dismiss immediately.) This presupposition is part of the justification of any claim concerning the (neuropsychological) etiology of schizophrenia, and it is in terms of it that such a claim can turn out to be true or false (OC, 4, 83). Both the neuropsychologist who claims that schizophrenia is caused by a dopamine deficiency and the one who claims that it is caused by toxicity take the proposition that schizophrenia is caused by irregularities in the function of the brain as being settled. It is a premise common to both of their claims. But this is not to say this presupposition must, therefore, be true, or that it cannot be doubted, for, even though it is based on strong evidence (e.g., that lobotomies and severe enough brain damage affect a person's behavior, as do certain drugs, etc.), it may turn out to be "part of a kind of mythology"
(OC, 95). No, it is to say that for the neurophysiologist involved in developing, testing, arguing for or against the above-mentioned hypotheses, it is regarded as true and is not doubted. Without regarding this presupposition as being true, the neurophysiologist could not hypothesize about the (neurophysiological) etiology of schizophrenia (OC, 337). Nevertheless, this proposition is liable to shift and it may one day go the same way the belief that the psychoses are caused by the influence of demons did (see OC, 96-97). Wittgenstein says that "we use judgements as principles of judgement" (OC, 124) and that "the same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing" (OC, 98).

The proposition that the psychoses are caused by irregularities in the function of the brain is a judgement which, even though its current status is that of a rule by which other propositions are judged or tested, could itself once again become that which is tested. 8

Finally, at the foundation of the neurophysiologist's system are propositions which "stand unshakeably fast." The following would be among these: Human beings exist and have brains; the brain is located in the skull; no human being could survive without a brain; human beings behave differently from one another; all these things are true of all human beings at all times. Earlier we said that the principle of the continuity and uniformity of nature and
certain other principles belong to the foundation of scientific enquiry; thus, they, too, belong here. That these propositions "stand unshakeably fast," that they are certain, as certain as anything could be, is seen from what neurophysiologists do. Their advancing hypotheses, making claims, assessing and communicating test results to one another, arguing and doubting certain claims, involves their holding these propositions unshakeably fast. Were any one neurophysiologist not to hold any of these propositions fast, were they not part of the framework within which he conducts his work, he would not be doing neurophysiology, he would not be what we call a 'neurophysiologist,' what we think of as being a neurophysiologist. The neurophysiologist qua neurophysiologist holds these propositions unshakeably fast; they are an unmovable, solid part of the framework within which his activities take place. In and to the extent that neurophysiologists hold certain claims -- and they do -- about, e.g., the cause of schizophrenia, etc., the presupposition that psychological disorders are caused by irregularities in the function of the brain, they must, as a matter of entailment, hold that human beings exist, that they have brains, and other propositions which are fundamental to the neurophysiological enterprise. Certainly propositions in the system stand or fall depending on the solidity of other propositions, while all propositions in the system stand on, and cannot stand without, the solid
foundation of fundamental propositions.

We have here spoken of the role of fundamental propositions in scientific investigation generally, and in neurophysiological research in particular. But it is not only in the area of scientific investigation that certain propositions act as foundations. Wittgenstein speaks of fundamental propositions in connection with language-games generally, as "the foundation for all my action" (OC, 414; see also OC, 204, 403, 411, 588). Moore's propositions and other ones like them serve as the foundation for all the many ways in which we act, for all the many language-games we play. They collectively express basic facts about the way we live our lives (OC, 7, 117, 338).

Prefixing Moore's Propositions

In chapter two, we saw that it is misleading for one to say that he knows Moore's propositions and other ones like them. We saw there that (in the case of one of its uses) "I know" is used to prefix claims which one may doubt, that doubt is grammatically related to saying "I know," and that the context for one's saying "I know" is one in which one may doubt that which "I know" prefixes. We also saw that Moore's propositions are the type of propositions we do not doubt, that they do not function as claims, that their function is different from that of claims in our lives. We should now like to look at how, if not with "I know," Moore's propositions might best
be prefixed.

In On Certainty, Wittgenstein considers the following questions: "Suppose I replace Moore's 'I know' by 'I am of the unshakeable conviction'?," (OC, 86), and, "Instead of 'I know . . . ', couldn't Moore have said 'It stands fast for me that . . . '? And further: 'It stands fast for me and many others . . .'" (OC, 116). Shortly after each of these questions is asked, he remarks:

And now if I were to say "It is my unshakeable conviction that etc.", this means in the present case too that I have not consciously arrived at the conviction by following a particular line of thought, but that it is anchored in all my questions and answers, so anchored that I cannot touch it (OC, 103).

I should like to say: Moore does not know what he asserts he knows, but it stands fast for him, as also for me, regarding it as absolutely solid is part of our method of doubt and enquiry (OC, 151).

Wittgenstein is quite clearly here suggesting that the best way to prefix Moore's propositions would be with either of these two locutions. (Seeing as these locutions are basically synonymous, I shall consider only one of them, i.e., "I am of the unshakeable conviction," in what follows.)

Let us see if this is so. To do so, let us conduct a grammatical investigation of the locution "I am of the unshakeable conviction," starting with some examples.

The following are examples of how "I am of the unshakeable conviction" may be used:

1. Judge to a character witness at a murder trial: "You
say that you are absolutely convinced that so-and-so had nothing to do with the murder he is accused of having committed?" Character witness: "Knowing him for all the many years I've known him, I am of the unshakeable conviction that he is absolutely incapable of murder."

2. Prime Minister of Canada is asked to discuss his views on the future of the Canadian way of life. Prime Minister: "... I am of the unshakeable conviction that future Canadians will uphold the democratic ideal...".

3. Christian priest addressing his congregation: "Many Christians' faith has dwindled in recent years due, in large part, to the teachings of the Theory of Evolution. ... I, for one, am of the unshakeable conviction that my Maker liveth, that He is the source of all life, ..."

In chapter one, we saw that words and phrases with established uses can be meaningfully used in ways in which they had never been used before. We said that words and phrases often have an applicability which makes it possible for them to lend themselves for use in new ways. Having seen how Moore's propositions function in our lives, let us, with reference to the above examples, see if "I am of the unshakeable conviction" lends itself for use in the way Wittgenstein suggests.

We can see from the above examples that one says "I am of the unshakeable conviction" about that which one hasn't the least bit of doubt, about that in which one's
belief is unwavering. In fact, if one were to say "I do not in the least bit doubt . . .," or, "I am of the unwavering belief . . .," instead of "I am of the unshakeable conviction . . ." in the above examples, the sense of the statements in which "I am of the unshakeable conviction" occurs would essentially remain the same. Wittgenstein, I believe, preferred the two locutions he suggests rather than "I do not in the least bit doubt . . ." because his locutions do not carry with them the connotation that Moore's propositions are the type of propositions we may, but just happen not to, doubt. "I do not in the least bit doubt . . ." has such a connotation. Wittgenstein's locutions are also better suited to express the status of Moore's propositions in our lives than is "I am of the unwavering belief . . ." because the latter connotes that one can, but just happens not to, waver in his belief. As we have seen, wavering in one's belief in Moore's propositions or doubting them would immobilize us; we would be unable to carry on with our language-games. One's wavering in one's belief about the future of one's country would not bring with it such a consequence. Nevertheless, in that we do not waver in or doubt Moore's propositions in our lives, the locution "I am of the unshakeable conviction" has an applicability which lends itself for use as a prefix to Moore's propositions.

A major difference in the grammars of "I know" and "I am of the unshakeable conviction" is that the former
commits one to giving reasons for what one says he knows, while this is not the case with the latter. To slightly vary one of Wittgenstein's remarks on belief (OC, 556), 'one does not say: he is in a position for such and such to be an unshakeable conviction for him,' while we do say that one may be in a position (have good grounds, reasons, the credentials) to know. In view of this difference, had Moore said "I am of the unshakeable conviction . . ." rather than "I know . . .," he would not have come under attack from the skeptic who insisted that Moore provide grounds for what he said he knows, which, as we've seen, is in keeping with the grammar of "I know." When one says "I am of the unshakeable conviction" or "It stands fast for me" in connection with Moore's propositions, he grammatically shuts out the skeptic's insistence on grounds, and the problem the skeptic's insistence on grounds stir up in connection with "I know" disappears. A whole cloud of philosophy has been condensed into a drop of grammar!*

* It should be mentioned that in my discussion of the role of fundamental propositions in our lives, I have attempted to solidify a position which was left fluid by Wittgenstein, one which he may not have accepted had he lived to reconsider his remarks in *On Certainty.*
On occasion Wittgenstein will use the words 'grammatical,' 'grammatically' (e.g. PI, 572; OC, 433) in a sense which is close to their traditional sense, or, as he might say, in their 'surface grammar' sense. But such occurrences are very rare, and when Wittgenstein uses any of these words, he almost always intends their extended or 'depth grammar' sense. (We shall discuss this distinction later on in this chapter.)

Although the word 'use' is used in both of these senses, these headings, though somewhat suggestive of it, do not completely capture this distinction. I use them, therefore, more as labels which will help keep distinct the two senses of 'use' I wish to discuss.

Wittgenstein says "a definition often clears up the grammar (or use) of a word" (BB, p. 26), but points out that this is usually not the case (PI, 182). As we shall see, e.g., Funk and Wagnalls' definition of "know" as "to be cognizant of; have a concept in the mind" does anything but clear up the grammar of "know."

What rules are and what part they play in Wittgenstein's writings has been the source of much confusion and misunderstanding in the literature on Wittgenstein. Thus, some comments on this matter are in order.

First, when Wittgenstein speaks of the "rule(s) of the language-game" (PI, 53) or "grammatical rules" (BB, p. 55), he does not mean to suggest that our linguistic activities are (ordinarily) carried out or guided by a consideration of what rules are to be applied before we go to say something. "In practice," he says, "we rarely use language as . . . a calculus. For not only do we think of the rules of usage -- of definitions, etc. -- while using language, but when asked to give such rules, in most cases we aren't able to do so" (BB, p. 25). We are for the most part competent language-users, and as such our language-use is, in the main, spontaneous -- we just do it. (On this matter, see J.F.M. Hunter, "Wittgenstein's Theory of Linguistic Self-Sufficiency," Dialogue, 6 (1967): 367-82.) There is an occasion, however, in which someone may consider the rules for the application of a word before he goes to say it. For instance, person A of our example may have to recall the rules told him by person B when, after having no practice in the use of either of the two words, he wants to
use one of them. But this is clearly the exceptional case, and, in fact, we do not go about our linguistic activities in this way.

But someone who still cannot make sense of what Wittgenstein means by "rule" may protest: "We use the word 'rule' in phrases like, 'follow the rules,' 'abide by this rule,' 'employ these rules,' 'assemble according to rules,' etc. Thus, Wittgenstein means that linguistic activity is guided by rules -- we see from the examples of the use of the word 'rule' that this is what it implies -- when he says things like 'the rules of the language-game,' or he is incorrectly applying the word 'rule' to whatever he might be trying to say." Looking at those phrases, it does seem that the word 'rule' implies a "standard, principle, regulation, guide, or formula for procedure or conduct" (The Scribner-Saintam English Paperback Dictionary). This seems to present us with a dilemma: Either Wittgenstein was using the word 'rule' incorrectly and holding an idea which simply is not the case, or he was using the word 'rule' incorrectly and we have no way of knowing what he meant by it. And this is true if, in fact, we have correctly and exhaustively described the use of the word 'rule.' But have we? How about this use: "As a rule, this word is used this way."? This use of the word 'rule,' I suggest, does not imply the above definition, and I further suggest that it is the sense in which Wittgenstein used it -- even though his use never takes the form of this expression.

In the Blue Book, Wittgenstein distinguished between "a process being in accordance with a rule" and a "process involving a rule" (BB, p. 13). Expanding a mathematical series, for example, is a process involving a rule. The very activity of expanding a series involves knowing and employing the rule(s) according to which it is to be done. Where there is no rule, there is no expanding a series. Most of our word usage, on the other hand, is a process in accordance with a rule or rules. Rules in this case specify or characterize an activity which does not involve the employment of rules. In this case, unlike the other, the activity is logically prior and independent of the rules that characterize it. This is seen from the fact that we learn and know how to use words without rules, and are only later able to specify the rules according their use; whereas, in the case of a process involving a rule, one's learning and knowing how to, e.g., expand a series is precisely the learning and knowing of the rules involved for doing so.

So what, then, in view of the "as a rule" sense of the word 'rule' can we say about what rules are and what role they play in Wittgenstein's writings? Wittgenstein's talk of rules, I believe, aims at bringing to light the fact that the members of a given culture are able to com-
municate with one another in that they agree on their use of language, that is, that they "as a rule" use this or that word in such and such ways (PI, 240-242). But this does not mean that Wittgenstein strictly equates rules and use, and that a rule is in each case merely a statement of the use of a word or phrase. In many cases -- and this depends on the complexity of any one word or phrase -- we can state the specific "wheres" and "hows" of a word's use, and these might be called the rules for its employment. It is in this sense that we could have a "list of rules" (PI, 197). In other cases (e.g., with the word "Hey!"), the statement of its use (i.e., it is used to get someone's attention) is the whole of the rule (and complexity) of its use. We shall have other things to say about rules as we continue through this chapter.

5This is something like the view taken by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* where, very roughly, language was seen as that which signifies states of affairs, and where states of affairs were seen as the meanings of propositions which signify them (TLP, 3.21-3.24, 3.203, 3.261). Bertrand Russell took a very similar position (see his *My Philosophical Development* (London: George Allan and Unwin, 1959), p. 111).

6"Sign," I believe, is here being used to include words, mathematical symbols, pointing arrows, etc.; in short, all those things which 'can mean.'

7Our point here must not be misunderstood. We are not merely making the obvious enough point that certain words, phrases, etc., do not have strictly circumscribed utility within, as it were, the bounds of a strictly circumscribed applicability (as in resting a chess piece on any of a number of lots to which it is allowed to move), but also that the applicability of words is not strictly circumscribed.

8This was basically the view taken by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. This is reflected in the following remarks: "The totality of propositions is language" (TLP, 4.001), and, "A proposition is a picture of reality" (TLP, 4.01).

9This was Russell's view. See his 'On Denoting,' and 'Philosophy of Logical Atomism,' in Robert C. Marsh, (ed.), *Logic and Knowledge* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1971), passim.

10One wonders how it is that other philosophers have
overlooked (at least the importance of) this point. Wittgenstein, having made the same oversight in the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, suggests that "the aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity" (PI, 129; see 415).

This point gets its importance from the fact that philosophers -- e.g., Russell (see PI, 46), the earlier Wittgenstein (see PI, 23, 46), nominalists (see PI, 383) -- all too often have overlooked it, with the resulting characterization of language as a frozen, abstract, and immobile system of signs.

Cf. RPP I, 450: "The words 'I am happy' are a bit of the behavior of joy." And this time in connection with the justification of a judgement: "You will find that the justification for calling something an expression of doubt, conviction, etc., largely, though of course not wholly, consists in descriptions of gestures, the play of facial expression, and even the tone of voice" (BB, p. 103).

Our discussion here may suggest that, for Wittgenstein, these ingredients for the understanding are baked up by the mind into the cake of understanding, that somehow the mind (consciously or unconsciously) pieces together all these things into that which will be understood. Such an explanation is certainly not unknown to philosophy, but nothing could be further from Wittgenstein's views (see PI, 152-54, 321, 396, p. 182). In most cases our understanding a sentence or proposition does not consist in, sizing up and piecing together the combination of words, gestures, facial expressions, etc., but the words and the characteristic accompaniments, the whole of the linguistic transaction, the sentence and its grammatical background (PG, 104), is what is understood.

The only occasion where one might ponder any combination or all of these things would be in the exceptional case where they are (for one reason or another) missing in such a way as to render the sense of the sentence unclear. Take, for example, the following case: A Federal Liberal party backbencher walking out of the House of Commons is approached by a television news crew and asked to comment on a recently adopted budget. He is known to have had many disagreements in the past with the government over their handling of the economy, which has cost him a Cabinet appointment. In recent months he has been somewhat less vocal, or at least not as publicly vocal, in his disagreements with the party. Asked if he thinks this budget will bring down inflation and lower the unemployment level, he said nothing more than, "Everyone here thinks it will," and
walked away. Now, this little scenario was later aired on a special panel-discussion television program in which many such vignettes were interspersed with discussion. After each visual showing, the panel would discuss things either mentioned in it or related things. The shot of the backbencher was selected because of his prudence, notoriety, and expertise, and, even though his comment was not very illuminating as far as economic matters go, it was seen by the editors as indicative of something. After viewing the shot of the backbencher, the program's anchorman invited the panel's comments. The first panelist to speak said, "I never thought I'd hear him say that everyone, including himself, agrees on this budget; so many of its key tenets would have enraged him only a few months ago. I . . ."
The other panelists stir and sigh, one of them interjecting, "Hang on! You don't seriously think that his comment was approving of the budget and that he meant to include himself with 'everybody.' Surely you can see that it was a tongue-and-cheek comment which really meant: 'Everyone, among whom no one knows what they're doing, backs this budget.' It's not that he's abandoned his principles; he's just not pushing the issue." These two panelists dispute each others' interpretation of the M.P.'s comment by pointing out certain aspects of his behavior such as his quick departure, his gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions, etc. Such is not the case, however, with the vast majority of linguistic transactions.


15 There are some commentators who would object to speaking of "one of our forms of life," for they understand Wittgenstein use of the phrase 'form of life' to cover the whole of how we live. Presumably Hopi Indians, who have no conception of time (see Benjamin Lee Whorf, "An American Model of the Universe," and "Some Verbal Categories of Hopi," in Language, Thought, and Reality (Cambridge, Mass: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1956)), have a slightly different form of life, while other (if there are any) intelligent beings in the universe may have completely different forms of life from our own. This is somewhat the view expressed in the following passage: "... it is possible that speaking is part of an activity in another sense: not in the sense that together with other things it constitutes a whole activity, but in the sense that any given utterance is part of a general competence in using the expression it contains. On this interpretation, this competence would be it is that is called a form of life" (J.F.M. Hunter, "'Forms
of Life' in Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations," in E.D. Klemke (ed.), Essays on Wittgenstein (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 288; see also, e.g., Bernard Williams, "Wittgenstein and Idealism," in Godfrey Vasey (ed.), Understanding Wittgenstein (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 90. This view is, I suspect, in part fueled by Wittgenstein's remark that "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life" (PI, 19). If "language" is here understood to be a whole system of signs and symbols in the life of a culture, then, even though it has to reconcile itself with many other things Wittgenstein says, this view would have some plausibility. But if "language" is understood as this or that language-game, which is certainly consistent with many other things Wittgenstein says (see BB, p. 81; Z, 322), then our view, supported by passages such as RPP I, 630, is the more plausible view.

There are other interpreters (e.g., Norman Malcolm) of Wittgenstein who are of a behavioristic bent and who as a result say such things as the following: "The gestures, facial expressions, words, and activities that constitute pitying and comforting a person or a dog are, I think, a good example of what Wittgenstein means by a 'form of life'" (op. cit., p. 119). The behavioristic strain in this passage is suggested by the word 'constitute,' i.e., that gestures, facial expressions, etc., constitute pitying and comforting. Not only was Wittgenstein not a behaviorist, but he also criticized and rejected behaviorism (see RPP II., 33; PI, 307-8; see also Peter Geach, Mental Acts (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 2-4). Malcolm's interpretation of what a form of life is for Wittgenstein makes it out to be no different from a language-game which a form of life is a part of (PI, 23). Gestures and facial expressions are, as we have seen, and as Wittgenstein says, characteristic accompaniments, and not themselves a constituent part of the form of life the expression of which they may be the observable accomplishment of. Indeed, we may share a form of life with another culture where no such accompaniments occur with, e.g., pitying. Are we then to say that they do not pity? Surely not; once we have found our feet with them, to use one of Wittgenstein's expressions (PI, p. 223), we might say that they express pity differently than we (Westerners, North Americans) do.

Finally, there are those who would agree with our rejection of the two interpretations discussed above, but maintain that something like nuance-behavior in our example is not what Wittgenstein meant by form of life. They say that the basic, universal, cross-cultural ways in which all human beings act are to be counted as forms of life. (Such an interpretation is offered by Patrick Sherry, Religion,
Truth, and Language-Games (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1977) pp. 22-23.) This position is groundless and arbitrary. While it is true that there are certain ways of life which are common to all human beings, there are many forms of life which, though basic to our culture, are not basic to others. For example, hostility and aggression, however slight and refined, are forms of life in our culture, while they are not forms of life of the Tasaday tribe in the Philippine rain forest (see John Nance, The Gentle Tasaday (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975). Nance's study of the Tasaday, as well as many other anthropological studies, make quite clear the fact that the fundamental ways in which the people of one culture or tribe act are not always to be found everywhere among all peoples on earth. Indeed, Wittgenstein's frequent allusions to imaginary tribes whose lives are in many (sometimes bizarre) ways different from our own (e.g., OC, 92, 264; RPP I, 662) suggest that he thought (at least possible) that the lives of people in other cultures may be in certain fundamental respects different from our own.

16 Some commentators in recent years have downplayed Wittgenstein's distinction between surface and depth grammar. For example, Stanley Cavell says: "Certain claims Wittgenstein makes about grammar I do not want to go into, nor will I ever mean to rely on, his distinction between 'surface grammar' and 'depth grammar.' In such contexts, 'surface' mostly means, so far as I can see, 'incomplete' or 'hasty'. . . . It is not a region of this thought I place much confidence in" (Stanley Cavell, The Claim of Reason (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 30). In our discussion we shall see not only that 'surface' does not mean 'hasty' or 'incomplete', but that Wittgenstein's distinction between surface and depth grammar is an important part of his overall method and a key to understanding the nature of philosophical problems.

17 Surface grammar is not the only cause of our misunderstandings; it is one "among other things" (PI, 90). These "other things" are discussed by Wittgenstein in the Blue Book (pp. 17-18), and include: (1) "the tendency to look for something in common to all entities which we commonly subsume under a general term" (see PI, 65), (2) the tendency of thinking that "the meaning of a word is an image," and (3) the irresistible temptation "to ask and answer questions in the way science does" (Cf. LC, pp. 24-28). Wittgenstein also speaks of the misleading influence of "pictures" (PI, 11; Z, 111; BB, p. 40), by which he means false conception of hypotheses about how things are or must be; for example, the hypothesis that thinking or remembering
is or must be a mental process. These pictures are not brought on by false observation and examination as may be the case with scientific hypotheses, but such pictures have a linguistic origin: "Such hypotheses or pictures . . . are embodied in many of the forms of expression of our everyday language" (BB, p. 40; see BB, p. 31; PI, 94; Z, 111).


19 E.g., In Book I of his *Appearance and Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1897), F.H. Bradley takes the concept of time and other "common sense" concepts like relation, cause, space, etc., and has them "degraded to the rank of mere appearances" (p. 23). All of these concepts, Bradley argued, are self-contradictory, and, since reality itself cannot be contradictory, they cannot be real (of Reality), and must, therefore, be mere appearances. Book II is devoted to an enquiry into Reality.

Some sixteen years later, Edmund Husserl wrote: "... Time is the name for a complete self-contained sphere of problems and one of exceptional difficulty" (*Ideas: General Introduction To Phenomenology* (New York: Collier Books, 1975), p. 216). For him, too, the nature of time warranted investigation.

Finally, away from the nature of time space, etc., and into the area of "philosophical grammar," the theme of our ignorance still finds its expression: "(It) is a rather singular fact, that everything you are really sure of, right off is something that you do not know the meaning of, and the moment you get a precise statement you will not be sure whether it is true or false, at least right off. The process of sound philosophizing, to my mind, consists mainly in passing from those obvious, vague, and familiar things, that we feel sure of, to something precise, clear, definite, which by reflection and analysis we find involved in the vague thing that start from, and is so to speak, the real truth of which the vague thing is a sort of shadow" (Bertrand Russell, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism," in Robert Marsh (ed.), *Logic and Knowledge* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1971), pp. 179-80).

As we shall see shortly, for Wittgenstein, the problem of the nature of time, like philosophical problems generally, "(is) solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known" (PI, 109): "It is not new facts about time which we want to know. All the facts that concern us lie open before us" (BB, p. 6). The
philosophical problem of time is one based neither on an
ignorance of reality, nor an ignorance of the meaning (as
Russell understands the word) of words, but a confusion or
misunderstanding of their uses.

20. Nothing, it seems, could be more counter-intuitive
especially for one who is philosophically perplexed, than
to think of a problem such as the problem of the nature of
time as being one merely about the use of a word -- although
this helps explain why the problem was never diagnosed in
this way before Wittgenstein. And Wittgenstein realizes
just how counter-intuitive his suggestion is, and he, there-
fore, makes every effort at weaning his reader to looking
at philosophical problems as problems about the use of words.
Philosophy is seen as a slow, therapeutic turn-around in the
way one thinks about philosophical matters, and methods and
techniques are invented and deployed in the "battle against
the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language"
(PI, 109). We shall look at some of these methods in the
next section of this chapter.

21. Hopi Indians, for example, are said not to have any
conception of time. Here we might say that this is so because
they do not use the (or our) concept of time.

22. This, I believe, is the point Wittgenstein is making
in the following passages: "Essence is expressed by grammar"
(PI, 371); "Grammar tells us what kind of an object anything
is. Theology as grammar" (PI, 373). (Cf. "The way you use
the word 'God' does not show whom you mean -- but, rather,
what you mean" (CV, p. 50; see RPP I, 475; Z, 717).) Now,
we are not saying that time is an object in the sense that
'that table over there' is an object -- as something which
one can, as it were, point to and trip over, or touch and
refer to. Rather, we get clear on what the concept of time
is by looking at how the word 'time' is used; the grammar of
the word 'time' tells us 'what' time is, tells us what role
the word 'time' plays in our lives.


24. It is apparent that our remaining 'unconscious of
the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games'
is quite natural in the sense that when we engage ourselves
in philosophical discussion or thought, we are not attending
to the language -- at least not analytically -- with which
those thoughts are expressed, but rather to the subject-
matter of those thoughts. This helps to explain why phil-
osophers before Wittgenstein did not realize just how far-
reaching the importance of language was in philosophical
problems.
25 E.g., John Canfield ("Criteria and Rules of Language," *Philosophical Review*, 83 (1974): 70-87) argues that the only sense in which Wittgenstein uses the word 'criterion' is the defining criterion sense.


28 Anthony Kenny, *op. cit.*., p. 259:

Chapter II: Wittgenstein and Moore on Knowledge and Skepticism

Hereafter I shall abbreviate the titles of these works as follows: for *A Defence of Common Sense*, "DCS"; for *Proof of the External World*, "PEW". Page numbers will refer to a volume in which both works were published, i.e., G.E.M. Moore, *Philosophical Papers* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1959), which shall be indicated by "FP" and followed by the page number.

Actually, Wittgenstein's position is quite the contrary; that is, it is his position that "I know" has many meanings, even though passage 243 does not suggest that.

This by no means represents the skeptical position, for, indeed, there is no one skeptical position, but many different positions. It is, however, safe to say that most skeptics would agree with the general outlook of skepticism advanced here, which for our purposes is adequate.

I have here used the language with which the skeptic himself states his position. It is precisely the skeptic's use of certain words and phrases that Wittgenstein is (at least in part) critical of. We shall return to this theme.


In his *Rules For the Direction of the Mind*, Descartes makes a distinction similar to Hume's: "... Arithmetic and Geometry alone are free from any taint of falsity or uncertainty. We must note then that there are two ways by
which we arrive at the knowledge of facts, viz., by experience and by deduction. We must further observe that while our inferences from experience are frequently fallacious, deduction, or the pure illusion of one thing from another, though it may be passed "over, cannot be erroneous when performed by an understanding that is in the least degree rational" (Rene Descartes, The Philosophical Works of Descartes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), p. 4.

Bertrand Russell, as we shall see shortly, subscribes to Hume's distinction.


By 'real possibility' we mean that which one would regard as capable of happening, of coming about, or proving true. A proposition like, "The train will be about two hours late," expresses such a possibility.

As recently as a few years ago, Garrett Vander Veer argued for the skeptical position by saying: "... skeptical hypotheses do not require one's 'real' belief, any more than they require 'real' doubt. To be effective, they only need be regarded as logical possibilities" (Philosophical Skepticism and Ordinary-Language Analysis (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regent's Press, 1978), p. 103). As we shall see, such an argument fails.

It should be mentioned that not all skeptics argue their position from the point of view of imaginability. Many have in recent years argued from the point of view of 'possible worlds,' which due to the scope of this chapter we are unable to take up here.


In his writings, Moore does not say that knowledge is a mental state. However, given what he does say about knowledge, it seems that his conception of the use of "I know" entails the position that knowledge is a mental state.

Cf. "Theaetetus: '... It seems to me that one who knows something is perceiving the thing he knows, and, so far as I can see at present, knowledge is nothing but perception'" (Plato, Theaetetus, 151e).

As is well known, the question of what knowledge
is goes back to the Greeks (see Plato's Theaetetus). From then to this very day, it has been one of the philosopher's favourite questions. But, like the question of what time is (discussed in chapter one), the question "What is knowledge?" is based on and has its roots in a confusion about the use of the word "know." An investigation into the etymology of "I know" is very instructive on this point.

The original Greek verb EIDO, from which EIDOS ("idea", literally: that-which-is-seen) is derived, translates into "I see." Somewhere along the way the present active of EIDO fell into disuse, and was replaced by ORAO. ORAO is now "I see." OIDA, however, which is the perfect tense of ORAO translates into "I know" which is the perfect tense. Actually, OIDA has only perfect and pluperfect forms in the paradigms. Thus, the present tense "I know" has the grammatical form of the present tense:

OIDA: I know
OIDAS: You know
OIDE(N): He, she knows

And the past tense "I knew" has the grammatical form of the pluperfect tense:

EDEIN: I know
EDEIS: You knew
EDEI: He, she knew

The interest that this has for us is that OIDA which is literally and grammatically "I have seen" is equated to "I know." What I have seen, I know! Or, what one has seen is what one knows! The past of the verb "to see" is the present of the verb "to know."*

Now, when Protagoras said that knowledge is perception (see Plato, Theaetetus, 151e-152b), he was being faithful to the literal meaning of OIDA. But that was not how Athenians in the market-place used the term OIDA, no more than we use the word 'good-bye' to mean "God be with you," which is its literal meaning. Protagoras was, we might say, like many philosophers in our time, guilty of thinking about the meaning of a word (Pl, 65), rather than looking at and letting the use of words teach (him) their meaning (Pl, p. 220).

Plato, of course, rejected Protagoras' view of knowledge. But, this is not to say that Plato's discussion

*I am indebted to Professor Patrick Flood of The University of Windsor Department of Philosophy for bringing the etymology of "I know" to my attention.
of what knowledge is has no affinities with Protagoras'; for, both men adhered to the standard that: one can be said to know X when one is absolutely certain about X in such a way that there could be no mistake about it. Protagoras accommodated both this standard and the literal meaning of OIDA with the view that knowledge is perception. Such a view, however, blatently flew in the face of Greek usage of OIDA, and, as Plato indicated, made false judgements impossible (Theaetetus, 170d) and contradiction legitimate (ibid, 178c). But here we should like to ask, whence came this standard for what knowledge is. It was certainly not part of the grammar of OIDA, for such a standard, in making knowledge-claims nearly impossible, would cause the concept OIDA to lose its purpose (see PI, 345). As we know, not only did the concept OIDA have a purpose in the everyday life of the average Greek, but its purpose survived the philosophers' imposition of the above standard on it. The above standard, it seems, has its roots in the surface grammar of OIDA.

The relation between ORAO and OIDA undoubtedly played a major role in misleading Protagoras and Plato in the use of the word OIDA. The surface grammars of ORAO and OIDA being so closely related, they were given to the impression that OIDA functions in much the same way that ORAO does. OIDA ("I know") understood as a prefix to that which one is absolutely certain of, was, it seems, likened to ORAO ("I see") in the sense that one is (normally) certain about what one sees when he sees it. (Remember, in Plato's lifetime there were no skeptical doctrines about the deception of the senses. Such a view was for the first time formulated by Arcesilas and Carneades in Plato's Academy some one hundred years after his death.) Whereas with ORAO what one sees, one knows he sees, with Plato's use of OIDA one knows when he knows that he knows (see Theaetetus, 165b ff.). Even though such formulations are based on ancient confusions about language-use, philosophers to this very day speak of 'knowing-knowers' and about 'knowing that one knows' (see e.g., Roderick Chisholm, Theory of Knowledge (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1977), pp. 113-16).

14 The word 'unremitting' here may suggest that there is no letting up, no temporary relief from, or breaks in, say, depression. This is, of course, simply untrue. The word 'unremitting' is here used in order to point out that a state is something which endures over some period of time, continuously and uninterruptedly, from one moment to the next.

Chapter III: Wittgenstein on Moore's Truisms

1 This, however, is not to say that Moore's proposi-
tions could not have such a use, for we can easily imagine their having such a use in certain situations (OC, 264). Rather, we are saying that in the normal, everyday course of our lives, the situation in which Moore's propositions might be used to inform someone of the facts they express does not arise.

2Indeed, the fact that most human beings go through a lifetime never consciously reflecting on these facts of life points to just how matter-of-course they are.

3Even though Wittgenstein thought fundamental propositions necessary for the above-stated language-games, he did not believe that any one proposition or any set of propositions need necessarily belong to their foundation. He says that the relation between fundamental propositions and other propositions may change in which "fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid" (OC, 96).

4Earlier in On Certainty, Wittgenstein says that "everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic" (OC, 56) and that the proposition "What could a mistake here be like!" is a logical proposition, "for it describes the conceptual (linguistic) situation" (OC, 51).

5At OC, 410, Wittgenstein speaks of an enormous system our knowledge forms, and at OC, 411, he speaks of "the entire system of our language-games." I shall discuss the concept 'system' in the narrower sense of a set of propositions belonging to this or that language-game, which might be thought of as a small part of the enormous system Wittgenstein speaks of.


7As did for us, for example, the once widely held belief that the psychoses are caused by the influence of demons or the wrath of gods.

8At the present time, for instance, parapsychologists at the Moscow Institute of Neurological Sciences are investigating alternative possibilities; that is, the possibility that the psychoses are not (wholly) caused by irregularities in the function of the brain. Should they compile enough evidence in support of one of these alternative hypotheses, the proposition that the psychoses are caused by irregularities in the function of the brain would lose its position as a rule.
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Born in 1956 in Windsor, Ontario, Branko Bilcar spent three years touring North America as a professional musician playing with a number of bands in a variety of musical idioms. He began undergraduate studies at the University of Windsor in 1977, and graduate studies in 1980. Upon the completion of his M.A. degree, he will enter the Ph.D. program of the University of Toronto.