GRAMMAR AND LOGIC

by

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B.A., University College, Keele, 1959.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

M.A.

in the Department of

PHILOSOPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April, 1963.
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ABSTRACT

The structure of our world is given in the grammar of our native tongue. If so people whose native tongue has quite a different grammar must be living in a quite different world. A logic such as Aristotle's may seem universal to the speakers of Greek, in fact it may seem universal to speakers of any Indo-European tongue, but the logic will hold good only for the 'universe' of the language or language-family in question.

This implies a relationship between logic and grammar rather like the one Russell and Whitehead claimed for mathematics and logic. Their *Principia Mathematica* tried to show that the mathematical notion of number rests on, or arises out of, the logical notion of class, that is, we come to understand what a number is through our grasp of what a class is. This thesis is a kind of Principia Logica: it suggests that the whole framework of common sense logic rests on, or arises out of, the grammatical structure of the language the logic was conceived in or took shape in terms of. And if so logical criteria come into being and take shape inside a language or language-family, and are dependent for their validity and even for their meaning on the structure of the language in question. To test, or to try to test, a mode of thought or an argument form against a logical system would be to put the cart before the horse: the logic only makes sense because the form of argument or mode of thought was there already.

If so philosophers and logicians ought to think of the words 'world', 'universe' and 'universal' with tongue in cheek. In so far as
a judgment seems to us universally true it is unlikely to hold good for the world of an alien language family. If our world is not the only world anybody writing logic or philosophy down ought to make it clear whose world he has in mind – and to do this it may be enough to make sure it is addressed to somebody in particular. Western philosophers seem to have addressed themselves to the whole world, or to mankind, or God. This thesis shows, if nothing else, how hard it can be to address even one other human being.

To sum up with another analogy; it seems to me, as a single man, that the difference between one and two is greater than the difference between any other two numbers. There may be a world of difference between zero and one, but between one and two there's all the difference in the world – and that's the difference that matters. Perhaps the only way 1,000 differs from 1,001, as Frege puts it, is in the expression on its face.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The original version of the Letter and the Common Sense Interpretation of the Grammarian's Position were written on the train from Montreal to Vancouver on Christmas Day, 1962. The Abstract and Summing-Up, were written this Easter, 1963, here in Quebec. The rest was written soon after Christmas at Vancouver at the homes of Mr. Harry Dickson and his father. I would especially like to thank his wife, for her corrections and suggestions, and his mother for her hospitality and great kindness. Without them I would never have got this done.
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Dear Dr. Brown,

"I can say 'I know what you are thinking' but not 'I know what I'm thinking'". In a remark like this Wittgenstein claims to have condensed a whole cloud of philosophy into a drop of grammar. I'm going to try to give a sketch of this grammar and tell you what I imagine you would think about it in the hope that by doing so just what it is I think about this cloud of philosophy will come clear to both of us. I will try to set down the grammar in the way I think Wittgenstein might do it, not in the form of an argument, but in a set of paradigms or models of proper thinking about the question. I will try to set out your interpretation in the way I think you would do it, that is to say in a sober, scientific, or empirical, or *logical* way.

Now since your way of doing things seems to me to belong to the very cloud of philosophy which is in question my efforts to tell you what you think may not be altogether sympathetic or fair. But we may hope at least to find that there is a genuine difference between us and perhaps find where this difference lies. We may not be able to agree about just what the nature of the difference is, that's perhaps too much to expect. But we ought to be able to grasp what sort of thing is happening when we fail to agree, and what sort of a problem we are up against.

We ought to approach this problem in terms of the difference between the people in the dispute, the logician and the grammarian, and
before we begin we ought to know what these people are like.

The logician has his reservations about modern linguistic analysis, but essentially, for the time being at least, this is what he practices. He sympathizes, again with reservations, with what we might call the modern progressive school: liberalism, humanism, and the sort of things that usually go along with a cautious confidence in scientific thinking. Cautious because reason so often is, and perhaps in the end ought only to be the slave of the passions, but a confidence nevertheless because he believes that if we are going to think at all we ought to give it all the detachment or impartiality we are honestly capable of. His vices - he would be the first to admit they are vices - go hand in hand with his virtues: a temptation to put off commitments or decisions until enough evidence is brought to bear, even when there can never be enough evidence; and a preoccupation with small or remote issues while keeping an open-minded neutrality about the first questions and things that really matter.

The grammarian is a primitivist. To call him old-fashioned would be a misleading understatement. He distrusts everything modern, especially the scientific thinking which explains sins as errors; but he lacks the grace of the more Christian part of our humanist tradition which forgives errors as sins. As a result, true to the tradition idea of a grammarian, he is always finding fault and making a personal issue out of everything. It's only to be expected that in a modern scientific world a traditional grammarian will find himself at logger-heads with his world: not only with its conclusions and assumptions but
with its very way of putting things.

But there is one striking difference between this grammarian and the old-fashioned grammarian as popularly conceived. In the popular view the grammarian insists that there is only one correct way to talk - the grammatical way - just as there is only one correct way to think - the logical way. And he may go on to say that this way, definable in terms of a set of rules, is categorically binding on us if any proper talking or coherent thinking is to go on at all. The more primitive grammarian of this thesis on the other hand agrees that for every speaking or thinking person there is a proper way to talk, or at least he would say that in any given situation there is, and agrees that this is categorically binding. But he would go on to say that what constitutes correctness is determined by the grammar peculiar to the people the speaker is born into. This holds good for dialects and slangs as well as languages: whatever the speech-form is its grammatical rules are binding on its speakers.

This claim yields a categorical imperative of a special kind: right behaviour is rooted in the proper speaking of our native tongue, the language we were brought up in. Taking a large view this would condense a whole cloud of moral philosophy into the question of how to speak. To the grammarian ethics is a way of putting off doing what we don't want to do, or becoming the kind of person we ought to be but don't have the nerve to. Taking a closer view you might think of it as the Socratic notion that right living begins in knowing our own minds - knowing what we mean by finding out what it is we want to say. I think of it as the Confucian notion that right conduct in public and in private life begins
in finding the exact definition of what we feel. Either way the
grammarians text is a dictionary rather than a sermon or treatise.

Doesn't the grammarians position involve him in paradoxes?
On the one hand it seems to imply that what is right and wrong can vary
from one linguistic group to another, and in fact must change as the
language of the group changes. This seems such an unsteady notion of
morality as not to be morality at all. On the other hand it seems too
static: the ideas of right and wrong we inherit from our parents when
we learn their language seem to be, at least for us, their children,
fixed and immutable, we can never hope to improve on them. And can this
be true morality, when we have only to do what we are told? The faculty
of moral judgment, which has seemed to many philosophers of the western
world a considerable part of what makes man man seems to have no place
in the Grammarians framework of thinking at all.

I have no subtle resolution of this problem. From inside the
logician's framework of thinking this is paradoxical; from inside the
grammarians it is not. In Montreal the French Canadians feel it matters
that they should be able to conduct their affairs in their native tongue.
The grammarian would be on their side on the grounds that a man's mind
can't work freely and as it should in a foreign tongue even when we are
word perfect in it. The French Canadians and the French tongue belong to one
another, they are one flesh. They resent an enforced cohabitation with
English in their own public affairs. As a foreigner in Quebec and one
who has been struggling with French for years I think I know just how
they feel. But as a student of western philosophy I'm hard put to it to know how to say anything in that would do justice to their complaint.

I hope this has made it clear why I have to ask you to accept this letter as part of the thesis. If the grammarian's position makes sense to anybody that will be because you made it possible for it to be stated. So I hope it is clear too why I have to see the thesis as a P.S. to this letter. I take very much to heart what Nekrassov said to Demidoff when he joined the Bolshevik-Bolsheviks - "When a party has only one member there's little chance that it will ever have two. But once it has two members...." .....then, I think Wittgenstein might say, it comes into being.

Yours sincerely,

David Fielding.
The story goes that once when G. E. Moore was giving a lecture on Common Sense Philosophy he looked up at the blue ceiling of the lecture hall and said, "I know I am looking at the sky". The story is probably untrue but its very existence illustrates the popularity of the idea that philosophers are out of touch with the way things are, and not least Common Sense philosophers. This was perhaps part of Wittgenstein's quarrel with Moore, both as a philosopher and as a person, illustrated in his claim that we can say "I know what you are thinking" but we can't say "I know what I am thinking". The latter remark might be called grammatically odd on the grounds that although it doesn't seem to be grammatically incorrect in the usual sense it is so hard to think of an occasion when it would be the proper and useful thing to say. Further, "I know what I am thinking" seems to suggest "I know my own mind" and this isn't obviously true, especially among professional philosophers. And if it doesn't suggest this it implies, worse, a philosophical doctrine to the effect that we know our own minds in a way that we don't and can't ever hope to know other people's. This thesis takes it for granted that this doctrine is false and systematically misleading. It assumes that we only come to have minds at all because we began as children by mimicking other people who already do; that is to say we know our own minds by analogy with other people's. This is not the argument of the thesis, it is what the thesis takes for granted.

The thesis suggests that a remark, or set of remarks, questions or arguments always takes for granted a whole philosophical outlook.
This "taking for granted" might be called **syntactic implication**: a remark syntactically implies a whole system of thinking in the sense that the remark is characteristic of that system: syntactical—as opposed to ordinary—implication, is to do with the form rather than the content of the remark. From the very form of the remark we can gather something about the frame of reference of the people doing the talking. Logical systems are sometimes thought of as universal, or at least as nonlocal. This thesis has it that a logical system takes shape and makes sense in terms of a local characteristic way of thinking and talking: a logical deduction syntactically implies a system of thought and speech. In this sense logic is the child of grammar; or more exactly, grammar is the ground logic stands on. This is the crux of the thesis. A mode of argument takes for granted a whole framework of thinking which is so rigid that only certain sorts of questions even so much as make sense in that mode. So just for example, the whole framework of the familiar religious-atheist argument and all its variations take it for granted that polytheism don't require serious refutation. There is simply no way of raising serious questions about animism, magic or the gods in religious or philosophical enquiries.

So we can talk about the limits of the programme of a philosophical enquiry and notice that the scope of the programme dictates what sort of questions and doubts can be raised. The programme determines the character of the kinds of enquiry it can give rise to. Conversely we can deduce the character of the programme from the style or phrasing of the individual doubts and questions. We can harden the notion of syntactic
implication into programmatic entailment: a question programmatically entails a whole frame of reference and system of thinking in the sense that the very act of asking it disqualifies whole ranges of questions belonging to alien systems of thought. So the object of this enterprise is to show how it would be possible to get into a position to comment on the defects, if there are any, in the character of modern scientific and philosophical thinking. These defects are beyond the scope of this thesis.

The form of this thesis is in a sense a search for a form. The Letter limits the 'universe of discourse' to our world - the world you and I take for granted when we understand each other. The need to keep in mind whose world it is in question is the reason why I have to see the whole thesis as a letter addressed to somebody personally. The Preface takes as a starting point our suspicion that Wittgenstein is saying something more radical and disturbing than meets the eye. It suggests that he is not a philosopher in the same sense as most of the philosophers of the western world. And this is why the form what he says takes is so different from most western philosophy.

These two parts form the Introduction; the next five parts are the text. The Grammar itself tries to follow Wittgenstein's style, and sets out the thesis as a series of remarks. The Footnote tries to show how Wittgenstein can be interpreted as a grammarian, and to show how the grammar can be related to some key ideas of Whorf in metalinguistics, Ryle in philosophy, Köhler in psychology, Bultman in Theology, Spitzer in literary criticism, and Kafka in literature. The Interpretation by the logician tries to put the grammarian's remarks into common sense
philosophical form, pointing out how objections might be raised as it goes along. The Argument brings this logician face to face with the grammarian in the hope that at least on some point or other they will be able to sort themselves out. Summing-Up gives a logician and the grammarian a last work each on the whole business, and on each other.
.0 There's no point in trying to go outside the limits of the language, or if there is it is the point of suicide. Here "There's no point" "That's the point" come to the same thing: there's nothing to say.

.1 Wittgenstein says: "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world". Do they? If we think inside these limits how can they be grasped as limits? If we try to go outside these limits how can the limits be phrased?

.2 You can do it only by working with two grammars: the limits of a language can be defined in terms of another language. As Neils Bohr works with mutually exclusive experimental procedures so grammatical complementarity works in terms of mutually exclusive grammars.

.3 O.K. A language can be used to define the limits of another language, but surely both languages describe the same world? Yes, it seems that way from inside the limits of one language. But our world is distinct from their world to just the extent that our languages are distinct.

.31 Our world is the world: that's common sense. But it's common sense from inside the grammar of our language. We have to think of foreigners not only speaking an alien language and thinking in an alien way, but figuratively speaking, living in an alien world.

.4 Notice how all this can be brought to bear on philosophers and on schools of philosophy: just as languages are mutually insulated by their grammar so philosophical systems are insulated by their characteristic structure.

.5 So the argument of this thesis is related to philosophy as metalinguistics
is to linguistics: it is concerned not so much with particular philosophical systems as with the character of the framework of thinking that those systems take shape in.

1 An attack on a whole framework of thinking will be self-defeating if it is phrased in the language characteristic of that framework.

1.1 Notice the categorical distinction between questioning an argument and questioning a whole framework of arguments. To question an argument in a genuine way you have to enter its framework: to question a framework in a genuine way you have to enter another framework.

1.2 Descartes says that all our thinking may be confused by an arch-deceiver, the Evil Demon. But if so, says Descartes, no thinking can get a start at all, not even this argument.

1.21 But the Evil Demon is a red herring: it begs the question of whether there might be another whole system of thinking, an alien syntax, from whose standpoint Cartesian thinking might really be called into question.

1.3 Genuine argument can only take place inside a framework of thinking.

1.31 The structure of any one framework may beg the question of the authenticity of another: as scientific thinking (e.g. anthropology) begs the question of the authenticity of animistic thinking.

2 To attack a framework of arguments as if it was just another argument is a category mistake: it is to mistake a class of things for a member of that class.

2.1 Ryle's case against Descartes is circular in just this sense: it
fails to escape from the framework that it is trying to attack.

2.11 It's one thing for Ryle to attack a number of arguments, quite another sort of thing to attack a whole framework of arguments. Ryle pretends to the second but manages to do only the first.

2.12 But Ryle's attack on Descartes is still a philosophical attack. What makes it circular? - An attack on Descartes has to be phrased in a Cartesian way: but an attack on the Cartesian mode of thought can't be put in a Cartesian mode of argument, not without being self-defeating.

2.121 This is a question of syntax: if Ryle's syntax is Cartesian, serious questions about that syntax go out of court. They need a different programme altogether.

2.122 And just look at Ryle's style. What makes Ryle so angry with Descartes if not his own dualism?

2.2 Compare Köhler's attack on intuitionism and behaviourism. Quite a different style but a very similar paradox: Köhler hasn't himself escaped from the dualism he is trying to attack.

2.3 They are protesting against the grammar of their own protests: objecting to the ground of their own objections.

3 Questions about our own framework of thinking requires a suspension of belief in that framework.

3.1 The relation between a question and the framework of thinking the question comes up in, is outside the traditional scope of philosophy. This relationship can be called "programmatic entailment".

3.11 A question programmatically entails a framework of thinking in the
sense that to ask a question is to take the framework for granted.

3.2 Programmatic entailment is not an ordinary logical relationship. The structure of the framework programmes all the thinking going on inside the framework: logical relationships come inside frameworks not between them.

3.21 The way thinking is oriented, ordered or controlled in any framework - the kinds of questions and doubts that make sense there - is implicit in the syntax of that thinking.

3.3 Is your scientific framework of thinking privileged? Or is it open to question just like any other framework? It can't be open to scientific question - that would be question-begging.

4 We can entertain an alien framework by entering into the spirit of an alien world.

4.1 "The spirit of an alien world"? That doesn't sound very scientific. It is not scientific or unscientific: imagine talking about "entering into the spirit of scientific thinking" (e.g. 17th century English, or modern central African schoolboys).

4.11 But if it's not scientific can it be exact? Well, think of various modern translations of Homer, can't they be more or less exact? And isn't this a question of whether or not they manage to enter into the spirit of Homer?

4.111 Ah, but we can never hope for a perfect translation - This is like saying we can never know other minds, and just as silly.

4.2 Or compare Bultman's programme of demythologizing the New Testament. His distinction between the primitive and the modern world is
systematic, a difference of whole frameworks.

4.2 There is no logical exit from the modern world. Bultmann wants to interpret the primitive framework of the old world scientifically, this thesis wants to question the scientific framework from a primitive standpoint.

5 There is a ready-made primitive framework implicit in the syntax of ordinary language.

5.1 Spitzer suggests that traces of primitive thinking are fossilized in modern languages in animistic grammatical forms. The argument of this thesis works in terms of these grammatical forms.

5.2 So just as "I think" seems to imply "I am" - a thinking subject; "It occurred to me" seems to imply, by the same token, a prescientific force or power, an "It" responsible for my thought.

5.21 If you can work in terms of the prescientific "it occurred to me" syntax you may be in a position to grasp the limitations of the whole framework of scientific thinking from the outside.

5.3 You can keep the argument inside the limits of the English tongue simply by working with these two mutually exclusive grammatical forms, scientific and animistic.

5.31 These are mutually exclusive limited worlds, both available within the limits of our language.

5.4 The syntax of "It occurred to me" is a means of undermining the Cartesian mode of argument; but it also exhibits the animistic structure of our everyday thinking.

6 "In the fight between yourself and the world, back the world."
At the end of the Tractatus Wittgenstein seems to think that there is the "unspeakable", namely the mystical. There is no room for the mystical in the argument of this thesis. It may sometimes be tempting to call things unspeakable, but when Wittgenstein says "there is indeed the unspeakable" this sound grammatically odd, to say the least.

On the other hand, when he says "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" this seems to make good sense. And the very idea of talking about such limits seems to suggest that it makes sense to talk of what is beyond our world and our words, even if that turns out to be simply nothing. Isn't this grammatically odd too? Probably Wittgenstein thought that there was nothing beyond those limits in which case, yes, it does seem odd to talk about them. This thesis argues that there is something, namely other languages, foreigner's "worlds", alien frameworks of thinking, unfamiliar frames of reference, and, in that sense, other minds. The limits of their languages mean the limits of their worlds.

This thesis is more concerned with the structure of our world and with the limitations of our system of thinking considered as a system. It locates the structure in, or interprets it as, a characteristic syntax or phraseology. It proceeds in terms of mutually exclusive phraseologies: if the grammars of English and Hopi are mutually exclusive the limitations of each have to be grasped from within the grammar of the other.

Whorf is not concerned with the untranslatability, if that's the word, of individual words, concepts, notions or what have you, so much as the way a whole grammar or framework of thinking systematically excludes another whole framework. He sees no reason, he says, for supposing that the Hopi have anything like our notion of, for example, space and time which we tend to presume are universal. What we take to be intuitions may be a question of what is built into the structure of our language and into the structure of our thinking. If so our Kantian intuitions of space and time may be genuine intuitions and in a sense universal: but only inside our language or language-family (Indo-European, or what Whorf calls "Standard American European) there's no reason to suppose they are international currency.

But there again these universals may turn out to be universal and categorical only when we are thinking in a Kantian tone of voice, so to speak. It is not obvious that everybody thinks in terms of universals and intuitions at all, not in a Kantian sense anyway. It's hard to imagine a Cockney for example, or a Homeric Greek, talking of space and time in anything like a Kantian sense, any more than they would talk of categorical imperatives or the kingdom of ends. To them any general talk about morality would be quite foreign and probably suspect.

This suggests two mutually exclusive ways of talking: a moral
or Kantian way, and a Homeric or Cockney way. We can guess what Kant would say about Odysseus - that he was noble but not wholly ethical, not all a man should be.

Can we guess what a Cockney would say about Kant? He might be unable to take seriously any of Kant's general remarks about what we ought to do. Once we have started talking, the Cockney might say, we show that we have already made our decision - even if the decision is to put the decision off and to keep an open mind - since morality is part and parcel of a whole mode of life. To the Cockney the Kantian mode of speech is part and parcel of the "Oxford scholar" mode of life: one which is not concerned to deal with problems as they come up but only as they are looked at from a philosophical distance with academic detachment. Not even Homer's gods on Olympus achieve Kant's degree of detachment, and a Cockney doesn't need to have taken a course in classics or philosophy to detect the peculiarity of Kant's tone.

This suggests that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is at loggerheads with Kantian thinking in a radical and systematic way, not just in the way that Whorf suggests about the universality of our notions of space and time. And it serves to bring out the point we wanted to make about Whorf, namely that his hypothesis can be tested not only between families of languages but between kinds of syntax within a single language, for example that characteristic of Oxford philosophy and that of everyday City of London life.
Gilbert Ryle The Concept of Mind.

Somewhere in The Critique of Practical Reason Kant talks about the "architectonic" of his thesis - the overall design which holds all the parts of his argument together and makes them form a whole. We wouldn't hope to catch on to Kant's architectonic at first reading, it is something which emerges in the course of our familiarizing ourselves with his style and characteristic mode of arguments piecemeal, point by point, so that for them what might be called the Total Kant never gets under way at all. But this sort of thing hardly does Kant justice. To get to genuine grips with Kantian thinking we ought to grasp Kant's architectonic and come to terms with that as such.

In what seems at first to be a similar way Ryle sets out in The Concept of Mind to attack not just the individual arguments of Cartesian dualism but what he calls the "architecture" of the Cartesian position. And most people, Ryle says, subscribe to the general idea of this dualism even though they may be strongly opposed to many of its arguments considered one by one. This thesis tries to turn this argument against The Concept of Mind and show that although Ryle claims to be opposed to Descartes in this radical way, the architectonic of Ryle's thinking, his characteristic way of arguing, carries him into the dualist camp along with Descartes. The very phraseology of modern philosophic discourse programmes the arguments along dualistic lines and so disarms the attacks on
the position as a whole. The stronger the attack the stronger the position under attack - it is the same position. Pretty clearly it would be hard to make this point by means of a modern philosophical argument, but we might try to make use of Ryle's notion of a category mistake here.

Ryle cites the case of a visitor being shown over Oxford. He sees lots of colleges and so on and then says "Where's the university?" This is wrong. It is a category mistake. He saw the university when he saw things like colleges but he mistook the class of things for another member of that class. The university was not the category of thing that he was looking for. In rather the same sort of way Ryle is mistaking the nature of dualism. He attacks this, that, and the other argument or assumption of the dualists and is then surprised to find he is popularly understood to be a sort of linguistic behaviourist - after he had been at pains to stress that behaviourism was one of the heresies that dualism led to. Ryle has made a category mistake. He has tried to attack dualism as a system of philosophy without recognising it as underlying his own mode of thought and argument, without first escaping from the architectonic of dualistic thinking as a person. His category mistake was to fail to notice that the dualism he was attacking was a quality of mind which pervades not just Cartesian and behaviourist arguments but the whole mode of modern philosophic argument as such. Ryle is not just dealing with dualistic arguments, he is dealing with them dualistically.
The categories we think in terms of, the categories of our own grammar, are not just one more set of categories like Hopi or Homeric Greek ones: they are binding on us, categorical to us as people. We have to first come to terms with them as people before we can do any coherent thinking at all, let alone carry out philosophical arguments against this very system of categories.

Wolfgang Köhler, Gestalt Psychology

Symptomatic of this error is a curious anger: an emotion in excess of the facts as they appear. The gentleman doth protest too much. This point can be made in psychological terms. Ryle's programme in The Concept of Mind is closely matched by Köhler's in Gestalt Psychology. Both regard intuitionism and behaviourism as two sides of a bad penny, whether the coin is philosophical or psychological. Both are out to attack not just a number of arguments but whole schools of thinking, and both fail, according to this thesis, because their heart (their characteristic mode of thinking) belongs to the very party they were trying to attack.

This failure can be located, first in a general way, in their concern to argue against the school they are attacking instead of simply going ahead and putting their own programmes into practice, and second, more specifically, in the presence of this peculiar emotion. Ryle speaks of the "official" theory, the "dogma" of the ghost in the machine, with what he admits is "deliberate abuse": enough evidence on the first page to suggest that the confusion is more than philosophical. Köhler speaks of a "dark pressure" which turns into "a feeling of being hunted", and attributes this feeling
to his promises to have the manuscript ready by a deadline. But this is not a very convincing explanation - why shouldn't this deadline give him a sense of exhilaration or challenge?

This thesis would diagnose Köhler's dark pressure as an inarticulate fear that his whole programme of thinking is inadequate, or that as a person he has not escaped from the system of thinking he is trying to attack. The fear is inarticulate just because it is his own characteristic mode of argument that is uncertain, which is to say that none of his formulations of that uncertainty can be exact just because these formulations would make sense inside the frame of reference in question. This dark pressure might be called dread. It isn't ordinary fear since fear is presumably fear of something, and in this case it is by hypothesis impossible to say what it is that is to be feared. And it isn't an ordinary doubt since a doubt makes sense inside a frame of reference, and in this case it is the frame of reference itself which is being undermined. This dread can be understood as a doubt on the analogy with doubts about what we might call microframeworks such as frames of mind or particular intellectual structures of one sort or another. But the analogy breaks down as soon as we recognise that the frame of reference in question here is Köhler's entire framework of thinking. So long as this is in question Köhler can't do any thinking at all - he can't even raise a doubt or pose a coherent question - at least not the doubts or questions which would get to grips with what is upsetting him. This exact account of dread in terms of a doubt about our whole frame of reference steers clear of the melodramatic mysticism.
of the existentialist's angst. But it also has to be aware of the oversimple commonsense of the Cartesians and empiricists who fail to see the categorical distinction between dread and common or garden fear. The existentialists take it too seriously: the empiricists don't deal with it at all. Descartes raised the point but failed to do it justice. He suggested that all our thinking might be going on under the spell of some Wicked Superdeceiver, an Evil Demon who is vitiating all our arguments and reasoning processes. But this can't be so, says Descartes, because it is incompatible with God's will, which we know to be benign. The empiricists would not put the point quite this way, but their conclusion is in effect much the same: it can't be so because it is incompatible with any common sense about anything whatever.

This thesis argues that it can be so: it may be that the whole framework of thinking in which common sense makes sense is systematically misconceived. And if so Köhler will have to come to terms with the Evil Demon if he is going to overcome his feeling of being hunted.

Rudolph Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*.

The Cartesian Demon makes sense conceptually in terms of the notion of dread: uncertainty about a whole frame of reference. Can it be faced methodologically - is there a way of coming to terms with this demon? Or to demythologise the question: can anybody raise questions about his whole frame of reference without presupposing that framework by his very phrasing of the question? Not, evidently,
inside the framework in question. But what he can do is to operate bilingually, so to speak, and work with two whole frameworks. A full-scale model for this mutual exclusion of two whole modes of thought may be found in Bultmann's programme of demythologizing the New Testament.

Bultmann claims that a proper understanding of the books of the New Testament must begin from a recognition of the limitations of its writers, not just in points of detail but systematically, in terms of the conceptual world they lived in. These writers, he argues, lived, moved and had their being in a world totally alien from ours not just in its furniture and interior decoration but in its architecture and foundations. Looking back on it a Bultmann enlightened by scientific understanding can say that those writers lived in a primitive world and thought in terms of a strange conceptual system. To those writers, on the other hand, as human beings living in that world, the primitive world was the world and their strange conceptual system was plain common sense. Bultmann argues that to come to grips with the New Testament it is essential to think in terms of that conceptual system and enter into the spirit of that primitive world. Only then can the Gospel be demythologized and put into terms that make sense in a scientific world.

The difficulties in Bultmann's case are outside the scope of this paper but it would be useful to notice the difference between his programme and the programme of this thesis. Bultmann is pointing out the radical and systematic distinction between modern scientific
thinking and New Testament magical thinking — until we do this, he says, we can hardly come to terms with the New Testament challenge. His object is to recognise the New Testament challenge in its own terms, to translate this from magical into modern terms and so make the New Testament challenge a challenge for modern people. The object of this thesis on the other hand is to recognise the radical distinction between modern and primitive thinking, and then enter into the spirit of primitive thinking so as to be in a position to ask genuine (however primitive) questions about the entire modern scientific frame of reference. Bultmann's aim is to demythologise New Testament thinking: the object here is to mythologise, so to speak, modern scientific thinking: to look at it as if it was a myth.

Leo Spitzer, 'Language, the Basis of Poetry, Religion and Science' in *Studies in Intellectual History*.

Spitzer's place in modern linguistics is as unorthodox as Bultmann's in theology. Bultmann is too scientific for those who think that theology is a logically unique field of study, with its own peculiar modes of argument, but he is too historical for those who are concerned simply with ethical teaching and moral challenge of Christianity. Spitzer too is too scientific and historical to be a New Critic, since his concern is not with literary form just for literature's sake but for the sake of the most exact historical understanding possible. But he is not scientific enough for the mainstream of modern linguistics since he recognises no neutral
standpoint to make objective analysis of languages from. For Spitzer linguistics is the most exact form of literary criticism and he plunges fully clothed - in modern dress, so to speak - into the text in question. His object is to come face to face with the character of the writer in order to get to grips with the peculiarities of the historical moment when he is writing. To this extent the programme of this thesis is on Spitzer's side.

But in his essay Spitzer tries to show that language finds what he calls its highest realization in science. His argument makes use of Comte's notion of the evolution of human thinking processes - a primitive, a metaphysical and a positivistic stage. Spitzer tries to find illustrations of these stages in the words and phrases of modern languages - fossilised forms of earlier stages coming to the surface in the irregular topology of everyday speech. So, for example, the positivistic descriptions of the fact that drops of water were coming down from the sky would be simply "Rain". The metaphysical stage implied a kind of abstract force or power responsible for the rain in the expression "It is raining". At a third stage there is a more primitive form fracable in the Hungarian "The Rainer is raining" or Shakespeare's "The rain it raineth every day" which suggests that the rain is some sort of being, a person or god of the rain.

This thesis does not distinguish between the animism of "the rainer is raining" and the syntactic implication of "It is raining". In the sense that these are animistic a large part of ordinary talk
is animistic. And if the limits of ordinary talk are the limits of the world of the talkers, this suggests an easy way of entering into the spirit of an animistic world - just by dropping our serious scientific tone and dealing with the problem in an everyday way. Once we grasp the situation in this way the dispute between the grammarian and the logician resolves itself into a difference between the whole outlook of the academic scientist and that of the common man. The result turns, quite simply, on what syntax you use to deal with, for example, this thesis.

Franz Kafka, 'Reflections on Sin' in *Wedding Preparations in the Country and other pieces*.

The aphorisms and parables of Franz Kafka offer an informal discipline in animistic grammar - they allow a reader to get used to thinking in a magical way - living in a magical world. Paradoxically Kafka was alone in his world, which is to say that his world never came into being, but his work does show how this world can be brought into being.
A COMMON SENSE INTERPRETATION OF THE
GRAMMARIAN'S POSITION

The grammarian begins by pointing out what I take it he thinks of as a paradox in Wittgenstein's Tractatus. To say that "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" seems odd to the grammarian because to talk of the limits of a language from within the language seems to imply a standpoint outside those limits from which the limits can be seen as such. But on Wittgenstein's own view what is outside the language is outside the world - it can't be made sense of if only because there's no way of saying it. This is what the grammarian seems to be saying. Just what it is that is on his mind escapes me - perhaps it will come home to me in the course of this outline. Wittgenstein's remark is certainly puzzling: but not I should have thought in the way that the grammarian implies. Why shouldn't we be aware of the limits of our own language? I think as logicians we are, that's precisely why we devise a logic. Still, it seems a bit early to try to raise serious objections so I'll shelve that one and try to follow the next move.

The grammarian now tries to resolve the paradox by borrowing Niels Bohr's notion of complementarity and adapting it to his own ends. Bohr, I gather, offered an interpretation of the Einstein-Podolski-Rosen paradox by claiming that reality - at a quantum level at least - could only be properly described by operating simultaneously with two mutually exclusive experimental procedures. In a way which I take it is supposed to be analogous the grammarian resolves the Wittgenstein paradox by operating with two mutually exclusive grammatical systems. What this
boils down is I think simply this. We are familiar with the popular
notion that the Hopi language in some way structures the world for the
Hopi differently from the way European languages do for us. The gram­
marian is saying that we recognise the limitations of European languages
in a new or unique or perhaps a special way by looking at them from a
Hopi standpoint. Similarly, I am sure the grammarian would admit, the
European, because of his language, is aware of the limitations of the
Hopi language - and by implication of the Hopi idea of reality - in a
way that a monolinguistic Hopi can't possibly be. This already has more
than a hint of a Sapir-Whorf tone to it. The grammarian now goes on to
make the connection plain. He would say I think that in the sense that
a monolinguistic Hopi is unaware of the limitations of his notion of
reality, the grammar of his language (-his way of structuring reality?)
is insulating him from European notions of reality. Now the grammarian
turns on the philosophers. In just the way, he says, that a Hopi is
limited by his language a philosopher is limited by the philosophical
system he has adopted.

In a way this is obviously true, we are all limited by our
philosophies, just as we are limited, in a rather odd sense of the word,
by not knowing Hopi and so not having the Hopi view on things. But if
this is all the grammarian means it's hard to believe it has to be taken
very seriously. On the face of it the only way of making us care about,
for example, the Hopi view of reality would be to tell us why it was so
important. But this, we are to gather from the grammarian's thesis, is
something which in the nature of the case we can't do until we know Hopi.
But the grammarian now brings his case to bear on a specific philosopher: Ryle in *The Concept of Mind*. Ryle is cited as a philosopher trapped by this very paradox: he wants to attack an entire philosophical tradition while still talking its language. Ryle speaks of the "official theory" of mind-body dualism "with deliberate abuse" which in itself makes the grammarian suspect that something in Ryle's thinking remains unresolved. Ryle wants to attack not just one theory in any one of its forms but a whole set of theories, or pattern of thinking, or as Ryle calls it an "architecture". The grammarian locates this intellectual pattern or architecture in a syntax and argues that Ryle is still talking and thinking within the terms of this syntax in the very business of trying to challenge it. The result is self-defeating: if your claim is that there are no such things as dragons you stop worrying about them, you don't scour the countryside dressed in armour challenging them to appear.

For the grammarian this is all a question of phraseology - exactly what is being said turns on how it is being said. He fails, it seems, to distinguish between the logic and the tone of an argument - if the gentleman protests too much his argument, in the grammarian's eyes, ceases to be valid and in fact becomes not an argument at all but a symptom of something. Philosophical, logical or linguistic analysis becomes for the grammarian a kind of literary analysis: we have to concern ourselves with the style - the man himself who is doing the arguing, not the logic of the argument but its phraseology. As logicians we are used to writing this off as *ad hominem* but this doesn't seem to trouble the grammarian.
He is prepared to diagnose Köhler's *Gestalt Psychology* for example as another case of Ryle's disease, namely the anxiety which comes from trying to overthrow a whole framework of thinking while still operating within that very framework.

So far the grammarian has said nothing that could trouble the logician as a logician. "You don't like my style, I don't like yours" that's not philosophy. But here the grammarian takes issue with a specific philosophical argument. An attack such as Ryle's or Köhler's he says is not an ordinary logical attack on an ordinary philosophical or psychological argument; it is an attack on a whole framework or architecture or syntax of thinking. And this he insists is a different sort of thing altogether. It is one thing to attack or question an argument, quite another to attack or question a framework of arguments. This he says is where Cartesian doubt has been misleading us. Descartes suggests that just as we can doubt any one argument we can doubt all arguments. Just as we may be proved wrong in special cases we may be wrong all along the line - and the proofs themselves may all be wrong. He goes on to add that this is incompatible with the will of a benign deity, but logically the possibility is open. But Descartes has failed to notice, says the grammarian, that we can't doubt all arguments: to formulate a doubt is to take something as certain, namely the syntax of the sentence the doubt was expressed in and all that goes along with that syntax. So when A. J. Ayer, for example, claims that Cartesian doubt is philosophically pointless because it can be used against any and every argument - in a way which gets us nowhere - he is making the same
mistake as Descartes. He assumes that total Cartesian doubt can be phrased without self-contradiction, and, says the grammarian, it can't.

I must say it seems to me there is something convincing about this argument and it's one which it's hard to know how to reply to adequately. If Cartesian doubt is incoherent as the grammarian claims, then scepticism seems to be incoherent on much the same grounds. And I must admit I've always thought of myself in a way as a sceptic.

That's by the way. The grammarian's point is that by missing the distinction between doubts about a single argument and doubts about an entire framework of arguments, philosophers have committed what Ryle would call a category mistake. This is important for his case because he wants to go on to say that the way to deal with a framework of arguments (as opposed to a single argument) is to consider its characteristic phraseology. If we accept this move we are in danger of being forced to concede that philosophical analysis is a mere branch of literary or grammatical analysis; and I for one have always assumed that literature and grammar were quite a different sort of thing from logic and science. I think of logic and science as international and, I'd even risk saying, universal, not as something local and peculiar to any one nation or culture.

But the grammarian is quite firm here: he insists that somebody ought to raise questions about the entire frameworks of philosophical and scientific thinking. Philosophers and scientists, he claims, have rendered themselves incapable of doing it because their very phraseology begs the question of the nature of that framework. Somebody ought to do it, and the job must be a grammarian's.
The obvious reply to this is to say that if a logician can't raise questions about his own framework of thinking why should we suppose that a grammarian can? And why should I take a grammarian's analysis as somehow more valid or comprehensive than a logician's? We do have to take some sort of common sense for granted if we are to get a start on any intellectual problem and I prefer the common sense of science or logic to the common sense of grammar whatever that may be.

The grammarian's reply here is a radical one. He says that what is common sense to one group may not be common sense to the next, and that what he is concerned with is the difference between the common sense of scientific thinking and that of for example New Testament, or Homeric, or animistic thinking. He puts the difference between us clearly by saying that he is not prepared to assume that scientific thinking as such is in any way privileged or more valid in any sense than Biblical or animistic thinking. But to ordinary common sense logic if we can't take it for granted that scientific thinking, at least in its own field, is better than for example animistic thinking we simply do not have common terms of reference. It's hard to see how we can go on conversing.

But the grammarian is not prepared to stop there. In fact this is where his argument, he claims, properly begins. I find it hard to know what to say here. As a man with a certain respect for common sense I can hardly go any further. Still, as a logician I am not obliged to limit myself to matters of common sense. Mathematicians are prepared, I gather, to entertain preposterous hypotheses, why shouldn't I? A mathematical system may be beautiful in its symmetry, simplicity and comprehensiveness,
why shouldn't a logical one? The grammarian's next move is to introduce a preposterous hypothesis. Our job of making sense of it will not be strictly speaking a logical one, but our logical training ought to equip us to deal with it in its own terms.

The grammarian's hypothesis is that the only way to reach a critical distance from scientific thinking is to adopt an unscientific frame of reference, that is to say to think ourselves into a thoroughly alien frame of mind and only then look back at scientific thinking, from that distance. The first part of this programme seems familiar enough - we know roughly what it's like to try to read, say, a translation of Homer in a way which does justice to the Homeric frame of reference - the Homeric "world". In something like this sense Rudolf Bultmann speaks of the "world" of the New Testament which has to be taken lock, stock and barrel before it can be genuinely understood, demythologized, and rendered intelligible to modern believers. Bultmann's claim seems to be that until we have faced the categorical difference between the New Testament world and our modern one we can't read the New Testament for what it is, namely animistic and demon-ridden, - we read instead a falsification of it. Only when we have come face to face with this primitive world are we in a position to interpret it to a modern audience. The grammarian's programme begins in step with Bultmann's but ends facing the opposite way so to speak. Bultmann's object was to return to the modern world in order to reinterpret the historical events of the New Testament in modern scientific demythologized terms (so that the central issues of the Christian challenge would not be confused with local historical irrelevancies). The grammarian's
object on the other hand is to get into a primitive frame of mind and to stay in it in order to maintain a critical distance from the framework and phraseology of modern scientific thinking. Bultmann assumes that the scientific frame of reference is the valid one. The grammarian on the contrary is trying to establish a frame of reference in which scientific thinking is wrong thinking.

The hypothesis is that to get a proper grasp of the framework of scientific thinking we must enter into the spirit of some thoroughly unscientific frame of reference and think from there. The programme is presumably to participate imaginatively in the mental processes of a primitive prescientific people. This talk about "imaginative participation" and "thinking ourselves into the spirit of" something all sounds pretty alien to the logician. Never mind, there's nothing on the face of it puzzling about the child's facility for entering a Jack-and-the-Beanstalk world, so, by parity of reasoning, there should be nothing inherently puzzling about our being asked, by Bultmann, to enter the magical world of the New Testament. This facility for allowing the imagination play is not confined to children, and the grammarian suggests a simply comparison here with the translator.

It is hardly enough for the translator of for example Plato to have a perfect command of the foreign idiom. If he is going to produce anything that can genuinely claim to be Platonic he has first to give himself up to Plato, abandon himself, lose himself to Platonism. If the imagination has got itself a bad name in philosophic circles through being undisciplined and useless here's one case where it is hard and
indispensible discipline for the translator who wants to do an honest
and authentic job.

Here the grammarian throws out a warning. The imagination in
this sense involves the whole personality; and entering heart and soul
into an alien frame of reference may make more of a demand on us than we
are accustomed to expecting from the study of philosophy or grammar.
What we would be asked to do would be to become as little children again
and become new men with new minds. This has a not unfamiliar ring: it
sounds like the sort of thing that preachers and professors have been
asking us to do ever since we can remember. But that's one of the reasons
why it's so hard - preachers and professors have been expecting us to pro-
gress - the grammarian asks us to go back and become primitive men with
primitive minds.

That's the grammarian's programme as far as I can understand
it. Let me try to sum it up. First; if the attack on an entire philo-
sophic system of thinking is constructed in the phraseology of that
system the attack will be self-defeating. The grammarian therefore
concerns himself with the phraseology of an argument rather than with its
validity. He does so on the grounds that the question of its validity
doesn't arise until the person arguing is recognised for who he is. He
is concerned with grammar (style) before logic (validity). But, second,
philosophers have supposed that entire frameworks of thinking can be
attacked just as individual arguments can, and this is a category
mistake which confuses questions of character (grammar) with problems
of philosophy (logic). But since these philosophers have in face tried
to raise questions of the validity of entire frameworks somebody ought to sort them out. And since the philosophers can't help themselves the grammarian is obliged to. But since, third, questions of entire frameworks of thinking require the analyst to stand at a critical distance from the frameworks in question any question about our own framework of thinking (and this is where the grammarian seems to think we ought to begin) requires a suspension of belief in our own thinking. It is not obvious that logic in the ordinary sense can play any further part in this discussion, in fact, the terms of the discussion seem to exclude it categorically. But still, just as mathematicians can entertain hypothetical systems we as logicians are asked to entertain a hypothetical system from within which we can assess the entire framework of modern philosophical thinking. Fourth, the problem then becomes more of a practical one - how a logician, or indeed anybody in his right mind, is to bring himself to entertain an unscientific framework of thinking. We find some sort of guide in Bultmann's programme of demythology which insists on the categorical distinction between New Testament and scientific systems of thinking; but the grammarian insists that we go further. He wants us to develop our arguments from within the alien frame of reference. Finally he suggested the analogy of the problem confronting the translator of Plato who has to try to extinguish his own personality and try to enter into the spirit of Plato if he is going to do a genuine job of translation. This last seems to be a perfectly exact and intelligible problem even though it is not within the usual scope of philosophy. Let's go on now to try to sketch in the rest of his argument.
The grammarian now goes on to point out what I think I would call the conceptual difficulties facing any modern scientific thinking person who wanted to entertain the grammarian's programme of primitivism. This might be summed up as follows: modern thinking, that is to say scientific thinking, cannot get to grips with primitive thinking in any genuine way because by its very nature - or as the grammarian would say by its very syntax - it begs the question of the validity of primitive thinking as such. The grammarian concludes, not without begging a few questions of his own to my mind, that the relationship between a set of questions and the syntax of these questions is something not just outside the scope of philosophy: the syntax is something on which philosophy rests. He calls this relationship one of programmatic entailment: - a question or set of questions programmatically entails a philosophical framework or syntax which itself orders or programmes the pattern of thinking about the question and dictates the kind of answer that can be given it. The grammarian concludes that this ordering or programming is right outside the grasp of philosophy and has to be understood on the analogy of the relationship between people as such.

Now in one sense it seems obvious that the grammarian is guilty of the very sin he is charging the modernists with. His attack on us seems to be this: that by our very phraseology - scientific, logical or what have you - we are begging the question of validity of a genuinely primitive framework. The very syntax of our thinking precludes, he seems to be arguing, even the possibility of an authentic animistic world. There may be a sense in which this is so, though personally I
am reluctant to believe that this sense can be a very significant one; but what is most blatantly unfair about his way of putting this - and after all it does seem to be our unfairness to his primitivism that he is objecting to - is that the question of the authenticity of modern scientific logical or empirical thinking is begged by the axiomatic nature of the grammarian's notion of animism. Worse, it is begged in precisely the same way that the logical or scientific thinker was supposed to have begged the question of animism.

The grammarian's only reply to this is that this is how things have to be - some questions have to be begged if anything is going to be said at all and the question of whether or not this matters - whether it is to be taken seriously or not, according to the grammarian, turns on what framework you happen to belong to - the syntax you have adopted. This seems to me to be open to all sorts of questions and arguments which don't seem to concern the grammarian. He goes on to ask us to suspend our disbelief for the moment in the authenticity of animistic thinking. I'll shelve my objections here for the sake of continuity and move provisionally on to the next stage.

At this point the grammarian begins to sound more like a grammarian. His object, he says, is to locate and imaginatively enter (or as he puts it: to enter into the spirit of) a genuinely animistic world. He does this in a rather odd way. Following the assumption that our ancestors thought in an animistic way and coupling this with the idea that the structure of their thinking can be correlated with the structure of their speech, the grammarian puts forward the hypothesis
that we can enter into the spirit of an animistic world by learning
to talk (and by implication to think) in terms of a genuinely animistic
world. He consequently makes his undramatic entry into this animistic
world by drawing attention to what we can call the fossilised animistic
terminology in our language. By this the grammarian means partly that
some of our words, if not all, have as their roots words which had a
magical significance for our primitive forefathers. But, more important,
he also means that we are to find in everyday idioms and phrases traces
of magical thinking. Just as, he would argue, the expression "the sun
is setting" derives from a preCopernican conception of the solar system
(and to talk of the "solar system" is to reveal our Copernican commit­
ments) so the French Il fait beau seems to attribute, to the grammarian's
eyes anyway, a metaphysical or even an animistic character to the "Il"
in question. Similarly the Hungarian "the rainer is raining" (meaning
it's raining) and the Roumanian "the sun is entering into sainthood"
(meaning it's setting) - examples which he lifts from a perfectly
scientific paper by Leo Spitzer - seem to carry with them traces of
animistic thinking.

Now however sceptical we may feel about this form of argument -
and even Spitzer's article seems open to a number of objections, let
alone the grammarian's - we would have assumed that his examples were
animistic exceptions which proved the scientific rule. These examples
stand out just because our thinking is in general so different. The
grammarian, on the contrary, does not hesitate to push his argument into
another conflict with Descartes. He borrows an argument of Lichtenberg's
to the effect that the Cartesian deduction of a thinking subject from
the concept of *je pense* is an invalid generalization on the basis of
a speech habit. The grammarian makes this point by suggesting that the
form of the expression "it occurs to me" familiar enough in European
languages makes no such assumption of a thinking subject capable of
initiating thoughts into existence. Instead it implies the existence
of an animistic "it" which is in some way itself responsible for the
occurrence of the idea to me.

But putting aside for a moment the objections we can raise
against his case can we see what sort of thing the grammarian is trying
to do? Certainly - he is trying to show that our thinking is in origin
(and in part still is) animistic. Our task of catching on to what it is
like to think in an animistic way is therefore, according to the grammar­
ian, fairly simple - we have simply to think in terms of the animistic
elements of our tongue. We can now state his conclusion, such as it is.

The animistic syntax offers us a ready made animistic system of thinking.
By entering this and thinking in terms of it we can get a unique detach­
ment from modern scientific thinking. We also get, thrown in free with
the syntax so to speak, an exhibition of the "programmatic relationship"
which was so hard to phrase in philosophical or scientific terms in the
expression "it occurs to me".

Now I have been leaning over backwards in my efforts to do
justice to what the grammarian is trying to say. I have the feeling
that the grammarian not only will, but must, by the logic (or should I
say grammar?) of his position object to my interpretation. Before I let
him do so I would like to make it clear that the last thing I want to do is to defend what I have been saying. What I would like to do is to attack it head on. But how can I if this is not what the grammarian means? Perhaps the best way out of this odd position would be to see how the grammarian would answer my objections point by point.
Logician Having done my best to give a fair account of what it is I think you are trying to say let me now make it clear that I think your thesis, in so far as it can be understood, is wrong. I think I could produce several arguments any one of which would undermine your case. I won't develop them very far, I'll just state them to give you the chance to show what sort of response you would make. But before I do that I have one point to make which I don't see how you can respond to. It concerns your starting-point and the theme of your whole argument. According to you, you and I are talking different languages. This is crucial because you argue that in some Whorf-Sapir sense there can be no genuine understanding between languages, for reasons which you've been at great pains to show. Now if you're right we have no business to be arguing at all, we're wasting our time — yet here you are evidently waiting for me to stop talking so that you can reply to what I'm saying. There's something very funny about this: it seems to me your very presence contradicts your case. And to put the same point a different way: according to your argument I'm supposed to be incapable, as a logician, of grasping what you're driving at. Yet I've just done my best to give a more or less logical outline of what I think you're saying and you seem to be letting it go at that. Either, it seems to me, you should have walked away during my outline, or, if you stayed you should have protested that my account of your case failed to do it justice. Otherwise you give away
your case before we start by admitting that logic can cope
with and do justice to the very thing you claimed it couldn't.
Let me sum this up in a simple question: are we understanding
each other or aren't we? If we aren't why are we here: and
if we are understanding each other doesn't that cut the ground
from under your case?

**Grammarian**

Your question is unreal. When people disagree very radically
as we do you can't stop in the middle of an argument and ask
are we understanding each other? That's silly, if not rude.
In an argument like this we have to try to understand each
other: whether we succeed or not may not be obvious at all,
certainly not immediately. For example if we part company
shouting rude words at each other an observer might say that
genuine communication had not been achieved. But you know as
well as I do that people sometimes start shouting just when
they feel their position being undermined. A few days later
one of us might have a change of heart. Then we might be
able to say that understanding had taken place, in spite of
how things seemed at the time. We may even find ourselves
using each other's turns of phrase or characteristic style
of debate, or even whole arguments. If this is not under-
standing it's hard to think what is.

**Logician**

I think you miss my point. On your thesis your thesis can't
be put logically. I did put it logically. You accepted it
the way I put it. Therefore your thesis falls. I can reduce this to symbolic logic - just what part of my argument do you want to quarrel with?

Grammarian You said what you thought I meant. Whether you think this can be said or not remains to be seen. If you think it can it undermines your position as a more or less orthodox logician. If you decide it can't then that after all is no more than what we would have expected.

Logician I see. Your point is that if your argument is valid it's valid and if it's invalid my mode of expression is inappropriate?

Grammarian That's how it must seem if you insist on wanting the conclusion before you've had the argument out.

Logician You have evaded the issue. I can't tell you how irritating I find this sort of argument. But before you diagnose my irritation as something or other about my logic let me move to my next point, or rather my first point of straightforward disagreement. This follows very directly from what we have just been saying. Your argument against Ryle, such as it is, seems to turn on the idea that Ryle is operating within the same frame of reference as the Cartesian arguments he is trying to attack. First of all I don't think he is. I think I could show he isn't and I'm sure would protest very lucidly that he isn't. But I have no need to go to such lengths, because I can turn your own mode of argument against
you. You argue that to escape from the Descartes-Ryle "framework" as you call it you have to operate in a dif-
ferent idiom so to speak, not the dualistic idiom of Carte-
sian or Oxford philosophy, but the animistic idiom of every-
day life. But surely if the language of everyday life is
animistic Ryle is animistic, because if anybody is operating
with the language of everyday life Ryle is. He is as good
an example of an ordinary-language philosopher as you'll find.
If your case rests on ordinary language, as it seems to,
then it falls just because Ryle is speaking your language.
If it rests on something else what is it?

Grammarian

It rests on ordinary language. Ryle doesn't speak ordinary
language any more than any of the other Ordinary Language
Philosophers. You could tell at a glance whether Ryle was
engaged in an ordinary conversation or whether he was doing
philosophy. And that's just what puts Wittgenstein into a
different world from you linguistic analysis men. Wittgenstein
maintained the tone of a conversation. He wrote as if he was
dealing with points as they came up, as we do in real life,
not as if he was giving a lecture in a lecture room. That's
what makes Wittgenstein more like Socrates, Confucius or
Sydney Smith than like the main stream of scholastic, raciona-
list and empiricist philosophers. The latter wrote, lectured
or preached for audiences; the former simply engaged in con-
versation.
This is all very well, but just what is it that makes what Wittgenstein says conversational and right and what Ryle says academic and wrong? Is there something about Wittgenstein's style that makes him in some curious way irrefutable? How is it that he can make a set of disjointed and allusive remarks about logic and mathematics and find himself above criticism? Is guerilla warfare somehow intrinsically nobler than full-scale fighting? There's no doubt it's harder to say when the guerilla are defeated. This is no joke. When I tried to make sense of your "Grammar" I tried to do it in a presentable way. I tried to get some sort of continuous argument out of what I had grasped from your remarks. I'm prepared to believe the job could have been done far better by somebody more sympathetic to your position. But why on earth should my effort to bring continuity be in itself an error? I simply am not prepared to believe that the effort to say something coherently and consecutively is in itself a vice. You set up your Grammar in point form. What, if you'll allow me to be rude, stopped you from writing out your argument properly like everybody else, short of laziness, or incompetence, or both?

I think this is a very fair question and I think I can give it a clear answer. The reason why Wittgenstein wrote in point form and not in essay form was that he felt that guerilla warfare as you put it was the only kind of warfare
open to the philosopher. Since he believes himself out of key with his time he can't write consecutively at any length. This would be false to the radical differences which he knew existed between himself and his reader. He seems to have thought too that where mistakes are not being made the philosopher has nothing to do. In any case this is my view of the grammarian. If I write an essay as if a reader can grasp what I am saying just like another essay then at best I simply mislead him. And doesn't this answer your first point: Wittgenstein can't argue with modern philosophers without committing himself to their frame of reference? This thesis is that the frame of reference is categorically distinct from any arguments inside that framework. It seems to follow that for me to argue would be for me to commit a category mistake. All I can do is to set out the terms and illustrate the mode of my style of argument. Once I engage in argument with you I enter your frame of reference - that's to say I lose my case.

*Logician* So what are you doing now if not arguing?

*Grammarian* Sorting out the grounds genuine argument can get a start on.

*Logician* Is that why we don't seem to be getting anywhere?

*Grammarian* Let me sum this up then. I don't believe in writing philosophical essays. I don't think they get anybody anywhere. Commit them to the flames. Even if I did believe in it I wouldn't have a sympathetic audience and if you know your
readers don't have the same frame of reference as yourself
it's silly to go on talking as if they do.

Logician
This sounds like a mixture of rationalization and defeatism.
Why are you writing at all? Let's not lose sight of this simple point: if you are going to try to communicate you have to try to do as best you can. If you are entering realms whereof one cannot speak, then, as I think Wittgenstein might say, shut up. The choice is between being coherent or fragmentary, cogent or allusive, consecutive or anecdotal, readable or confused: make it, don't make excuses. Let me ask you my first question again, it's really not a hard one - Do you have something to tell us or don't you?

Grammarian
That is a hard question and I don't know the answer.

Logician
I am not satisfied that that's honest. Let me explain why.
The next point I was going to make was that at one stage of your argument I did feel myself on familiar ground and I did feel that you had a strong and unusual argument. It was the one which said that Cartesian doubt, and by implication scepticism, was false because it rested on a category mistake. It confused doubts about individual questions with doubts about all possible questions, or more exactly, with doubts about the whole framework of questions and answers that we normally accept. This, I thought you were implying, was vicious because it obscured a genuine question about the possibility of a whole framework of doubts and questions and
answers being misconceived and being replaceable by alternative frameworks. If this is not what you were saying then I haven't followed you here at all. If it was what you were saying then you are capable of making yourself understood in which case your claim that we can't understand one another or that you can't meet me halfway seems to me to fall.

Grammarian

I don't know what to say. I said it the best way I knew. If I had pretended you were going to agree with everything else I siad we might never have got as far as we have got.

Logician

In that case let me assume that I have seen what you were driving at and let me now intercept the move you went on to make. You claimed that once we get a glimpse of the fact that our own notion of common sense is not universal, unique or privileged - except in the sense that our own notions have the privilege of being ours - then it becomes possible for us to set about raising questions of the validity or authenticity of our own whole frame of reference. Now your point about the category mistake which confused questions and frameworks of questions was not necessarily pointless. But surely this is. We are ourselves. What we call our common sense is our common sense. It's not a blind scrap of good trying to hold up for judgment our own whole framework of common sense when all we have to judge it by is that same common sense. The judgment would be in a private language - there would be nothing to check it against.
Grammarian: True. But all I was trying to do here was to bring out a mistake I think we are in the habit of making about the ground of our own thinking. Just to see that our common sense is what we have got used to as common sense and is not somehow universal or unique may be if not the beginning of wisdom perhaps the step that has to be taken before the wisdom can get a start.
SUMMING UP

Logician

Now that some months have gone by perhaps we can look back on the argument of this thesis in something like cold blood. If I say what I think of the whole thing first that will give the grammarian the chance to have the last word. And this seems only right and proper since it is after all his thesis.

I would like to say two things, one about the grammar itself and the other about the way the issue has been handled here.

First, it seems to me that the grammar does not make sense; I would insist that what the grammarian says as he says it can't be properly understood. That is not to say that it is complete nonsense and not worth taking note of. I found it intriguing and provocative and at one point at least, disturbing to me as a philosopher. What was this point? It was, as I understood it, to the effect that any remark, even a remark expressing doubt, takes something as certain. This Something has to do with the syntax or phraseology of that doubt, or of the structure of thinking that this doubt is a part of, or is in some way closely tied up with that structure. This, to me, was the central idea of the grammar, and it seems to challenge a lot of popular modern philosophical thinking.

How the challenge is to be met I find it hard to say. On the one hand it seems to throw doubt on the commonly held belief in empirical or scientific or sceptical thinking; but on the other hand so far from making me want to give up this kind of thinking it seems to me to be
itself nothing more or less than an unusually thoroughgoing kind of scepticism. The question that I am left with is this: can I, as a sceptic raise doubts about my own scepticism? If I can't I'm no true sceptic since there's something I'm not prepared to question. If I can.... my mind boggles.

But second, having admitted that there may be an element of truth in what the grammarian says - in spite of the way he has chosen to put it - I have a very big proviso. The grammarian's whole way of going about things just will not do. Nor can it be condoned as an experiment - the search, as he puts it, for an appropriate form. If people are going to talk at all they simply have to talk in such a way that they can be understood. This obligation is something like the obligation - dare I say it? - to speak grammatically. If we don't we won't be understood. We can't be understood. In a word: the grammarian doesn't - and isn't. He is trapped in just that concept of a private language which he started, or tried to start, out from.

Grammarian

First I would like to thank the logician for what I hope he will allow me to call his integrity, or intellectual honesty, in turning his own scepticism against himself. Let me underline this as a fair interpretation of what I was trying to say. As for the charge that what I in fact say, as it stands, doesn't make sense, I feel like saying what Rudolf Bultmann said to Karl Jaspers in a famous argument: any attempt to clear myself would make me look absurd.

But though I feel I have made myself ridiculous enough already I will attempt a reply. The logician talks as if what he takes as common
sense is beyond possible question. It is as if his thinking works by
taking for granted that common sense is and can only be the same and single
common sense: his. Because I don't share his common sense my way of think­ing is, to his way of thinking, beyond the pale. But I see no reason for
supposing that what is common sense to any group of philosophers is neces­sarily privileged or beyond criticism. It may be beyond criticism to them,
but that's another matter. Yet this is just what strikes me as odd about
modern scientific thinking - scepticism or empiricism - those who belong
to the circle don't seem to be able to imagine what it would be like to
raise doubts about it. I don't know what to say about this. I can only
put it down to the monotheistic tradition which it seems to me empiricists
and sceptics belong to: they have got used to writing off other modes of
thought as Philistine - not just strange but perverse and morally suspect.
The logician seems to me to stand in the shadow of an omniscient god which
follows him everywhere. All his arguments, questions and doubts - not
least those challenging the god - share that omniscient syntax. That's
how it looks to the Philistine.

I would like to sum up with simply a regret. It is a regret not
only about that modern mode of thinking, but about the frame of mind which
this thinking tends to carry with it. This frame of mind seems, on the face
of it, open, awake, and ready for anything that comes. In fact it is open
and ready, but in a queer way: anything and everything that comes is grasped
only in so far as it can be made to fit the mode of thought in question.
What is queer is that everything which can't be made to fit is written off
not as wrong or wicked but as meaningless, unintelligible, nameless. As a
result no thinking can get so much as a start in the modern world except
modern thinking. Modern thinking has no challengers. And this is a pity because from my standpoint modern thinking is wrong thinking.

I'll end by paying my respects to a modern, somebody whose religion I disagree with head on but who I have great regard for — Rudolf Bultmann. He ends his argument by thanking Karl Jaspers for his willingness to try to communicate. In just this way I would like to thank the logician for his efforts to come to terms with my grammar.
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