Chap 7 **Form, logic and language**

1. Why should we be worried about contradicting ourselves? Students are often taught to think about logic roughly as follows: the reason you should learn the principles of valid argument and make an effort to apply them in your own thinking is that if you do not you will not be thinking rationally. Imagine a tribe in which there was no knowledge, say, of the Law of Contradiction, or where people did not care about it or, worse, defied it on purpose. Things will not go very well for that tribe, it might be thought. People would often go wrong in planning their actions. Even when they have a well-grounded argument, they would often fail to convince their audiences. They would do poorly at figuring things out. To be sure, all of those things happen with us too from time to time even though we do know and accept the Law of Contradiction, but the difference is that either these people do not even care, or they have no way of knowing what went wrong.

The general idea is that allegiance to logic is necessary to protect us from certain forms of intellectual sloppiness or worse. There is a certain desirable quality of thought that logic helps us attain or maintain. We have a choice between making an effort to follow logic or giving up on it.

We might call this the "layman justification" of the teaching of logic. However, professional logicians and philosophers will often justify a concern with logic along different lines. They will argue that the study of the forms of our thought is an important form of inquiry in its own right. It will help us get clear about the nature of what is sometimes called "logical reality", i.e. the character of logical relations, of logical necessity, of valid inference, etc. Regardless of the practical utility of studying logic, it is considered a worthy pursuit in itself, since it is part of the human quest for knowledge of the way things are. For some philosophers, this quest is closely bound up with the problems of philosophy. Thus Bertrand Russell, in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, argued that problems of philosophy "all reduce themselves, in so far as they are genuinely philosophical, to problems of logic."[1]

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[1] Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969, originally 1914), Chap. 11, "Logic as the Essence of Philosophy", p. 42. Logicians tend not to offer justifications of their interest in the specific issues they discuss, thus implicitly affirming their faith in the importance of logical inquiry for its own sake.

Accordingly, knowledge of such things as the law of contradiction may either be taken to be important for its own sake, or because of the dire consequences of neglecting it. In either case, it appears, we may distinguish between two aspects to the law. On the one hand, there is the question of how the law is to be applied, i.e. what makes something a contradiction, and on the other hand, the question of what the law says concerning contradictions, i.e. that they should be avoided (on the practical reading) or that they are contrary to logic (theoretical reading). Evidently, it is *because* these two aspects can be distinguished that the study of logic can be meaningfully pursued: there *is* such a thing as the form of correct or logical thinking (since thought can also be *contrary* to logic), and hence this form is something we may search for: we are clear about the importance of thinking logically, and therefore we need to establish how it is done.

The principles of valid argument apply to the *form* of an argument. Whether an argument is contradictory or not is to be decided by looking at its surface, as it were. The contradiction must be something that has or can be made out as having the form "p&~p", i.e. it consists in a sentence in conjunction with the negation of itself. For an argument to be contradictory, then, must be something we can identify independently of its subject matter: we need not have any "substantive" knowledge about the matter at hand. (This is sometimes put by saying that the principles of valid argument are "topic-neutral".) This also means that for something to be a contradiction is a matter that is independent of the speaker's intentions. Either your words were contradictory or they were not. Whether you, as the speaker, agree with this verdict is neither here nor there.[2]

In practice, this is how it is supposed to play out: if you are worried whether your argument is muddled, you just identify its form and check it against a system of logical rules; if it passes the test, you are all right. These rules lay down the relations between various forms of expression, among them affirmation, negation and conjunction.

This is a fairly commonly held view, what might be called the standard view, of logical argument.

2. Wittgenstein was critical of the standard view. In *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol I, he writes:

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[2] According to the article on "Logic, Modern", by Albert E. Blumberg, in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "[l]ogic confines itself to those arguments whose validity rests exclusively on the *logical form* of the statements composing them and which may therefore be treated as instances of corresponding valid *argument forms*". The article then goes on to admit that "there is still no satisfactory account of logical form", thus suggesting that there is really no clear

But isn't contradiction forbidden by the law of contradiction? – **[1]** At any rate "Non (p and non p)" doesn't forbid anything. It is a tautology. **[2]** But if we forbid a contradiction, then we are excluding forms of contradiction [*Widerspruchsformen*] from our language. We expunge these forms. (§ 44.)

Consider the portion I have marked **[1]** (I shall return to **[2]** later). Wittgenstein, apparently, is arguing as follows: to understand the idea of prohibiting contradictions, consider what it would mean to *permit* contradictions. Obviously, it is hard to understand what permitting them would mean. Like it or not, anything of the form "(p&~p)" will have the truth-value "false". Even if an absolute monarch were to grant his subjects the right to utter statements of this form, that would not enable them to utter them as *true* statements. So it is not clear what the king's grant would mean. However, if it is not clear what it would mean to permit something, it can be no clearer what it would mean not to permit it. The law does not forbid anything, one would like to say, because there is nothing to forbid.[3]

But could we not imagine deciding that sentences of the form "(p&~p)" are no longer to be considered false for all values of "p"? But that would simply mean changing the use of the symbols in it. The fact that anything used the way we use the formula "(p&~p)" will have the truth-value "false" is a feature of the symbols of which it consists, as Wittgenstein made clear in his *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics* (p. 231 f):

> … if we said "The law of contradiction doesn't hold" or "'Not both p and not p' is no longer true", we would be saying that we are not using "not" and "and" as negation and conjunction any more, or that "p" is not a proposition, or something of the sort.[4] – Thus we might say that the laws of logic show what we do with propositions, as opposed to expressing opinions or convictions.

understanding of what logic is about. Paul Edwards (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York & London: Macmillan, 1967, Vol. 5.)

[3] Clearly, on the other hand, we would not want to forbid contradictions in the sense of making it a punishable offence to formulate them. That would mean outlawing their use, say, in jokes, logic tests, philosophy papers, etc.

[4] Another possibility would be that "true" is no longer the favoured term in the true-false dichotomy, i.e. the relation of "true" and "false" to belief and assertion would be the opposite of what they are at present. Thus, from now on the claim that p was not true might be cited as grounds for acting on p, and vice versa. But in that case all we could conclude is that the use of the morphemes "true" and "false" had been switched.

Wittgenstein is saying that there is no "getting out" of the law of contradiction, for there is no outside. The feeling of being *inside* something is an illusion. There is nothing we choose to follow, or not to follow. Further on Wittgenstein says:

> What would go wrong if we denied these laws? Nothing: except that it would upset our system. And that means simply upsetting *us.* For it doesn't mean that there is no longer any system. (*LFM,* p. 235.)

Apparently he is here contrasting "our system", i.e. the system of rules constructed by the logician, with the actual use of language. How we use language, how people actually speak, is not affected by any problems that might beset the logician's system.[5]

If we accept this line of thought, it means that the standard view concerning the importance of logic and of the law of contradiction is misleading, since there is no general principle that we might neglect or that we could choose not to believe in or might be ignorant about.

3. So far, it seems to me that Wittgenstein's point is clear enough (even though it will probably not be universally accepted). However, the concluding part of the remark quoted above, the portion marked **[2]**, is less straightforward. How is the forbidding which consists in our excluding forms of contradiction from our language related to the (misconceived) idea that the law of contradiction forbids something? One difference, obviously, is this: in the one case, it is a question of *the law* forbidding something, and in the other case it is *"we"* who do something or other. The following reading seems near at hand: "If we forbid the forming of contradictory utterances, this is not because they express contradictory thoughts, since there can be no such thing as the expression of a contradictory thought. Rather, it is because their form is confusing: it is not clear what they express, or whether they do express anything at all. Thus, they are useless and should be avoided."

This reading is supported by the following remark in volume II of the same collection:

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[5] For a clarifying discussion of these issues, see David R. Cerbone, "How to Do Things with Wood: Wittgenstein, Frege, and the Problem of Illogical Thought", in A. Crary and R. Read (eds.), *The New Wittgenstein* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000).

… you must not forget that "A contradiction doesn't make sense" does not mean that the sense of a contradiction is nonsense. – We exclude contradictions from language; we have no clear-cut use for them, and we don't want to use them. (§ 290.)[6]

These remarks are somewhat enigmatic. What is Wittgenstein talking about here? Exactly what combinations of words are to be excluded? What is it to exclude forms of words from language? Who is to do the excluding, and how is it done? Does the "we" refer to the philosopher-logician? Is Wittgenstein, then, recommending a return to the legislative role, which he had apparently just denounced? All these questions hang together.

Let us start by considering the idea of the *form* of a sentence. In a passage preceding § 44 Wittgenstein writes (§§ 37, 39):

Is it a contradiction if I say: "This is beautiful and this is not beautiful" (pointing at different objects)? And ought one to say that it isn't a contradiction, because the two words "This" mean different things? No; the two "This's" have the same meaning. "Today" has the same meaning today as it had yesterday, "here" the same meaning here and there. It is not here as with the sentence "Mr. White turned white".

"This is beautiful" and "This is not beautiful" *is* a contradiction, but it has a use.

But isn't it clear that the two "this's" have different meanings, since they can be replaced by different proper names? – Replaced? "This" just doesn't now mean "A", now "B". – Of course not by itself, but taken together with the pointing gesture. – Very well; that is only to say that a sign consisting of the word "this" and one gesture[7] has a different meaning from a sign consisting of "this" and another gesture.

The suggestion that the utterance is contradictory comes as quite a surprise. Wittgenstein, here, is evidently pointing to a difficulty about the idea of the *form* of an utterance. Suppose, for instance,

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[6] These remarks echo an earlier remark, *Philosophical Investigations* (§ 500):

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

[7] "a gesture" in Anscombe's translation.

that someone were to define the concept of negation as follows: "the negation of any expression is the expression obtained by inserting the word 'not' in the original expression", and analogously for conjunction, and were then to define a contradiction as the conjunction of a sentence with its negation. Well, by that definition "This is beautiful and this is not beautiful" *is* a contradiction. Yet clearly this is not a form of words that we should like to exclude from the language. Of course, we use such sentences every day. Wittgenstein seems to be suggesting, however, that if we wish to stay true to the notion that for a sentence to be a contradiction is a matter of its form, it is not so easy to explain why this sentence is not a contradiction. The form of a sentence, if there is such a thing, must be independent of the circumstances of its use. It should be something that can be identified by anyone who has learnt the meanings of the words making up the sentence – and the meaning of the word "this" is not learnt separately for every object to which it refers.

Interspersed between these remarks is § 38:

The basic evil of Russell's logic, as also of mine in the *Tractatus*, is that what a proposition[8] is is illustrated by a few commonplace examples, and then presupposed as understood in full generality.

And § 39 ends as follows:

But that is of course mere juggling with words. What you are saying is that your sentence "This is beautiful and this is not beautiful" is not a complete sentence, because these words have to have gestures going with them. – But why is it not a complete sentence in this case? It is a sentence of a different kind from, say "The sun is rising"; it has a very different kind of employment. But such are the differences that there are, this is the profusion that there is in the realm of sentences.

The lesson to be drawn is that the idea that a sentence has a determinate logical form comes from our restricting our contemplation to a few commonplace examples, such as "The sun is rising" or

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[8] The translator, Elizabeth Anscombe, wavers between "sentence" and "proposition" in her translation of the German *"Satz"*. On the one hand, Wittgenstein himself uses the word "proposition", say, in his lectures on mathematics. On the other hand, this term, introduced by Russell, has a degree of artificiality and carries a range of misleading connotations. It implies that there is something underneath the actual physical sentence in which the logical characteristics of what is

"The cat is on the mat" (where, for instance, there is no problem about deciding *which* sun, cat or mat is being referred to).

Another example of a "useful contradiction" is given in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, I, § 885: "The sentence 'I hear and I don't hear…' might be used as the expression of auditory imagination. A use for the form of contradiction."[9] Another everyday example that is frequently mentioned in connection with discussing contradictions is the utterance "It's raining and it isn't". This may be a fully adequate characterization of the weather. As these examples show, there are cases in which the aptest description of an experience or a state of affairs is a sentence in the form of a contradiction: i.e. a sentence pointing out that a certain characterization and its negation are both equally adequate (or inadequate) to the case at hand.

Someone who says, "It's raining and it isn't" is not using the word "raining" in two different senses. He is not, as it were, giving separate responses to two different questions (he is not saying, "Well, if you use the word 'rain' in the sense …., it *is* raining, but if you use it in the sense …, it's *not*"), but rather only one question was asked and his response to it is ambivalent. The contradictory form of words is a way for him to get across what the weather is like. It does not prevent him making a point, rather it helps him say what he is trying to say.

Of course no one would take the definition of a contradiction suggested above seriously: for one thing, there are innumerable ways of expressing or implying negation in English; the same, of course, is true of conjunctions. Besides, if contradictions are merely defined by the words "not" and "and", the definition applies only to English sentences; the "laws of thought" would be a different set of principles for every language spoken by humanity.

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uttered or written resides. In this way, it encourages our inclination to assume that utterances have a logical form (which may or may not coincide with their grammatical form). I shall use the word "sentence" whenever possible.

[9] Cp. also Wittgenstein's discussion on seeing aspects, *Philosophical Investigations*, II:xi. Do we see the same thing or something different when the aspect shifts from duck to rabbit? Both things can be said:

> "But this isn't *seeing*!" –"But this is seeing!" – It must be possible to give both remarks a conceptual justification.

> But this is seeing! – *To what extent* is it seeing? (P. 203.) (In German: „*Inwiefern* ist es ein Sehen?")

Anscombe's renders the latter remark as "*In what sense* is it seeing?" But this misses the point, which is that we are not dealing with two different senses of the word "see" here (which might correspond to two separate words in a different language) but rather with an openness in the use of the word. Wittgenstein warns: "Here we are in enormous danger of wanting to make fine distinctions" (p. 200). The danger here is that we will lose sight of the problem.

Obviously, Wittgenstein is not taking up the logician's concept of logical form and showing that it is inadequate; rather, he is pointing out that, even in the simplest case and aside from all the complications just mentioned, the idea of a formal criterion by which a muddled argument can be spotted does not carry water. Wittgenstein, then, is apparently driving a wedge (not deeply enough, however, as I shall try to suggest) between the concept of a contradiction as a *sentence form* and as *a muddled form of expression* that should be expunged from the language.

4. In *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, I, § 1132, Wittgenstein writes:

> Why shouldn't it be that one excludes mutually contradictory conclusions: not because they are contradictory, but because they are useless? Or put it like this: one need not shy away from them as from something unclean, because they are contradictory: let them be excluded because they are no use for anything.

We have seen some examples of formal contradictions that are usable. But what are the useless forms of expression that are to be excluded? Wittgenstein does not give many examples. *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, II, § 290, which was quoted above, continues as follows:

> And if "It's raining but I don't believe it" is senseless, then again it is because an extension along certain lines leads to this technique. But under unusual circumstances that sentence could be given a clear sense.

Wittgenstein's formulation is somewhat confusing. Two thoughts seem to have been telescoped into the first sentence. The idea, I would suggest, is this: if certain common forms of expression are extended along certain lines, "It's raining but I don't believe it" should be a possible thing to say. After all, we *do* say things like, "It's raining but he doesn't believe it", "It was raining but I didn't believe it", "Suppose it's raining and I don't believe it", etc. But then, why not "It's raining but I don't believe it"? Nevertheless, the sentence strikes us as senseless, not *because* of the extension of those lines (as Wittgenstein's words suggest), but in spite of it.[10]

Philosophers have asked: why should there *not* be a first person present tense indicative form of this sentence? Conjoining an assertion with a denial of belief in what is asserted seems self-

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[10] The line of thought is more clearly spelled out in *Philosophical Investigations*, II:x.

contradictory, and yet no formal contradiction is involved. This, of course, is the conundrum known as Moore's paradox. Wittgenstein returns to this puzzle on several occasions.

The question is: would sentences of this form – Moore-type sentences – be good examples of expungeable contradictions? On the one hand, they might be thought to be good examples. One advantage of getting rid of the idea that any sentence with a certain surface form ("p&~p") has to be a contradiction in the otiose sense is that we gain a broader understanding of the sort of muddle a contradiction is. It is then capable of taking account, for instance, of Moore-type sentences, where the sentence itself does not have the form of a contradiction but there is an inner conflict in what seems to be conveyed. It could be considered an instance of what might be called "depth contradictions" as opposed to "surface contradictions".

However, I wish to question whether this is in fact a fruitful approach to the issue. The idea that a certain class of sentences needs to be identified is still retained on this account; it is just that the borders delimiting this class are redrawn, so that certain sentences that used to fall outside are now inside, and *vice versa*. The problem is still being considered on a general level.

We should note that Wittgenstein's critique of the traditional conception of contradictions was two-pronged: on the one hand, contradiction in the otiose sense is not a surface property, and on the other hand, there is no great harm in permitting contradictions: if an utterance is contradictory in the otiose sense that simply means that it is useless or pointless. The traditional idea that a contradiction could wreak havoc in the system (since a contradictory sentence entails anything) becomes irrelevant if we do not suppose that our judgments form a system. But if what is at stake is the *usefulness* of an utterance – i.e. whether anything can be done with it – this does not seem to be a question of formal properties. Whether what someone says is useful or not is a question of its role in a context of speaking.

What is involved in an utterance being useful or useless can, I suppose, be a variety of things. Wittgenstein does not say much about it, but then of course there is no need for him to be very precise here, for he is not supplying a new criterion of contradiction, but simply urging us to look in a different direction in order to get clear about what kind of concept it is. Anyway, a rough characterization might be something like this: what you are saying is useless to me if I am at a loss how to respond to it. I find your words confusing. I do not know how to go on with what you say.

More specifically, in calling what you say contradictory, I might be taken to be saying something along the following lines: "It sounds to me as if you are saying two things, (a) and (b). Now, either one of them would be OK by itself. But since you said (b), I don't know how I'm supposed to take (a), and vice versa. Either claim pulls the rug from under the other."

In any case, it does not seem possible to lay down any general conditions for usefulness, since whether I can make sense of what someone says depends on the particular context of speaking. What it takes for one claim to pull the rug from under another is not a matter of form, but depends on the way the claims are embedded in a situation. Wittgenstein himself notes this in connection with the Moore-type example, since he points out that "It's raining and I don't believe it" could make sense in certain circumstances (we could imagine the first part spoken on the phone and the second part in an aside to someone in the room[11]; or the first part being an official announcement and the second part the speaker's own opinion; or the first part an assertion of fact and the second part a confession of the speaker's inability to fathom it; etc.). Besides, the idea that we would *need* criteria for deciding whether something is confusing is amusing: we surely do not need to be *told* when to be confused.

If being contradictory is seen as a matter of pointlessness or confusion, this also means that the verdict is not always final. When I accuse someone of contradicting herself, the accusation is part of the dialogue in which we are engaged. I see a difficulty in relating to her words because I sense a conflict between the different things she is conveying. Through my accusation I challenge her to make her position clear. My challenge may make her realize that she had not thought things through, and so make her revise her line of argument (of course she may not care: for instance if she is in a position of power in which she does not have to court my assent). On the other hand, she may be able to remove the sense of a conflict by explaining what she meant, or by giving it a slant in which the conflict no longer arises. Whether what she said *was* contradictory is not simply a matter of what was uttered at the time (nor of what went through the speaker's mind), but of how it fitted in with what had gone before and how it could be developed further. And that, of course, is something on which the interlocutors may either come to agree or disagree. We could even imagine a case in which two persons are arguing the same side of an issue: when they are told their position is self-contradictory, one of them may concede the point while the other one – convincingly perhaps – goes on to argue that the contradiction is only apparent. In such a case, the question whether the original position was contradictory or not might be held to be radically indeterminate.[12]

Rather than utterances being pointless or confusing because their (surface or depth) form happens to be contradictory, "contradiction", we might say, is a word we use to express a certain

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[11] The example was suggested by Martin Gustafsson.

[12] Consider, here, the role of accusations of contradiction in philosophical argument. Such accusations are rarely received lying down: they often become the pivotal point around which the entire disagreement turns. For the other party to agree that the contradiction is real and not just apparent may require her to rethink the whole issue.

kind of confusion. Calling an argument contradictory is one way of saying "you have a problem" (or "I have a problem", as the case may be), while giving a broad suggestion as to how the situation is to be remedied.

5. Getting back to Wittgenstein's remark about "It's raining and I don't believe it", it seems as if he had not fully digested the insight that contradiction in the otiose sense is not a matter of form. For once one admits that such a sentence *could* make sense, what would be the point of discussing whether the sentence is or is not a contradiction *in itself*? If its being contradictory is not a property of the sentence itself, nor a property of the utterance as made on a particular occasion, then what is it supposed to be a property of? In fact, there seems to be no room for such a thing as a "depth contradiction".

Wittgenstein here seems to be taking a kind of hybrid position between the standard view of contradiction and the acknowledgement that it is in the context of a dialogue that claims may or may not be contradictory. His treatment of the issue, I should like to suggest, still carries over some reminiscences, egg-shells as it were, of an earlier discussion, that concerning the consistency of mathematics. Wittgenstein was critical of the logicist project of trying to "prove" arithmetic on the basis of logic, and the attendant preoccupation with mathematical paradoxes. The idea that contradictions are not harmful, just pointless, belongs to that discussion and is a response to the logicists.[13]

However, the problem of mathematical paradoxes is altogether different from the question of contradictions in speaking, and running the issues together makes for confusion. Wittgenstein is here, I am suggesting, still partly in the grips of the simplified idea of a proposition that he himself criticizes. This point might be clarified with reference to a discussion by Robert Fogelin on Wittgenstein and contradiction.[14] Fogelin raises the question whether our language, or some portions of it, might be "dilemma-prone" in the sense in which a game can be said to be dilemma-prone if it is possible for a situation to arise in which the rules make incompatible demands: say, at a certain juncture a given player has to move and is not allowed to move. Fogelin suggests, and assumes that Wittgenstein would agree, that this would not prevent our calling this a game, at least as long as the impasse was infrequent or easy to avoid.

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[13] See, e.g., Wittgenstein, *Remarks of the Foundations of Mathematics*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), esp. pp. 254-56, 370-78.

[14] Robert J. Fogelin, "Wittgenstein's Critique of Philosophy", in H. Sluga & D. Stern (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 53 ff.

Now this may be so, but it does not clarify the problem of contradicting oneself in speaking. In fact, I wish to claim that this is one of the contexts in which the game analogy of language is not helpful. The impasse in a game (like a logical paradox in a calculus) arises because the rules allow for it. The conflict is among the rules themselves. If this is a problem, it is one regardless of what the players are trying to do. This is connected with the fact that what can be done (i.e. what counts as doing something) in a game is determined by the rules. In chess, for instance, a move is what it is regardless of the player's intention in performing it. In that sense, moves in a game are not expressive of the player. (We might also put this point by saying that a chess move, in as far as we regard it as a chess move, has a fixed context, and thus its identity is independent of who makes it and why.) Analogously, what we do in mathematics is determined by the rules of the calculus. It does not matter what we mean.[15] However, the problem with contradictions in speaking is not that "language allows us" to formulate contradictions. The fact that it does so is not a deficiency of language. Where contradictions are a problem it is the speaker who has a problem.

Now, Moore's paradox arises in the same way as a paradox in mathematics. It does not come about because we feel a need to say something and are bewildered because we do not know how to express it. The sentence "It's raining and I don't believe it's raining" is a paper construct. The apparent puzzle arises out of the realization that if certain rules of grammar are extended consistently, there seems to be no reason for avoiding this form of words, and yet it would sound odd in most circumstances (apart from some exceptional ones). The response to the problem, it is thought, is to explain why the sentence does not make sense even though on the surface it seems acceptable.

But surely this is putting the cart before the horse. What is being assumed here is that the question whether a sentence makes sense can be raised in isolation from the occasion of utterance. But if we follow through on Wittgenstein's suggestion that the problem of contradictory utterances is that they are useless, this means that we cannot even raise the question whether a form of words is contradictory except in a case in which someone utters it; and then, of course, the answer will

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[15] For a related discussion, see Chap. IV, "Expressings Beliefs", in Elizabeth Wolgast, *Paradoxes of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977). Wolgast points out that sentences of arithmetic, geometry and logic are not normally used to express beliefs (p. 107). She argues that what makes a contradiction otiose is not its form but the fact that the beliefs expressed are in conflict with one another. This, however, leaves the question of what it means for beliefs to be in conflict open, leaving room for the temptation to suppose that it is ultimately a matter of a formal conflict between the sentences expressing the beliefs.

depend on the particular circumstances of the utterance. Moore's paradox, in other words, is only a make-believe problem, and requires no "solution".[16]

In fact, when Wittgenstein talks of excluding contradictions (*den Widerspruch*), or forms of contradiction (*Widerspruchsformen*), from our language, I would argue that that is another expression of the division in his thinking. It is as if he thought we could avoid self-contradiction by shying away from certain forms of words. Similarly, when he says that we have "no clear-cut use" for contradictions, he is suggesting that two steps are to be taken: first, certain sentences are singled out as contradictions on the basis of their form, and then we decide that they are useless – rather than their being called contradictory because they suffer from (this particular form of) uselessness. In other words, he is here articulating something that is not far removed from the standard view of logic. But then he immediately contradicts himself by acknowledging that "It's raining but I don't believe it" *can* be given sense in certain circumstances. It would seem, then, that he had not entirely managed to overcome the idea that logic is a system underlying our thought and speech.[17]

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[16] My thinking about Moore's paradox has been sharpened through numerous discussions with Yrsa Neuman.

[17] Elizabeth Anscombe notes this duality in Wittgenstein's thought in a passage in *Intention* which has largely been overlooked. She writes: "If we say 'It does not make sense for this man to say he did this for no particular reason' we are not 'excluding a form of words from the language'; we are saying 'we cannot understand such a man'. (Wittgenstein seems to have moved from an interest in the first sort of 'not making sense' to the second as *Philosophical Investigations* developed.)" G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963, p. 27.

However, I believe she is wrong about the chronology. Wittgenstein does not seem to have moved from the first kind of interest to the second, rather both perspectives seem to have been present side by side to the end. § 290 of the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* was probably written in 1947 or 1948. (Anscombe may not have been familiar with Wittgenstein's 1940's notebooks at the time of writing *Intention*.)

Actually, the idea of "hinge propositions" in Wittgenstein's last notes, *On Certainty*, seem to present a problem that is closely analogous to that concerning forms of contradiction, entailing the existence of propositions which have a role in our thought even though they are never used, and which may retain their sense even though their status shifts between that of unquestioned grounds and that of empirical hypotheses. Here, at the very end, we find Wittgenstein unambiguously embracing the conventional idea that form determines sense independently of use; a view of which he had been strongly critical elsewhere.