CHAPTER SIX

GRAMMAR AND EXISTENCE:

A PREFACE TO ONTOLOGY

I

My purpose in this paper is to examine the current dogma that to sanction the move from

(1) S is white

to

(2) (Ef) S is f

or from

(3) S is a man

to

(4) (EK) S is a K

or from

(5) Tom is clever or Tom is tall

to

(6) (Ep) p or Tom is tall

is to sanction the move from empirical statements to statements asserting the existence of *entities* of a higher order than perceptible individuals. I shall begin by assuming that if these moves, each of which is a form of what is called 'existential quantification', do involve a commitment to such entities, the entities in question are such straightforward abstract entities as Triangularity, Mankind, and the proposition *that* Tom is clever. I shall subsequently turn my attention to the idea, recently elaborated by Peter Geach, but which stems from the work of Gottlob Frege, that what one is committed to by these moves, or their ordinary language counterparts, is not *abstract individuals*, entities which ape the individuality of perceptible things, but rather what, for the moment, I shall simply refer to as *non-individual entities*, entities which have no *names*, but are, somehow, *stood for* by parts of speech other than names.

I shall begin by exploring the move from (1) to (2), taking as my point of departure the fact that the latter is often 'informally' rendered by

(2^1) There is an f such that S is f.

For, I believe, a careful examination of this 'reading' will enable us to put our finger on the source of the dogma in its first or orthodox form.

Now a first glance at (2^1) may well lead one to think that the expression 'an f' in 'There is an f…' has the form of the particle 'an' followed by a variable which takes common nouns, or expressions having the force of common nouns, as its values. Another glance, however, raises the question, 'If the first "f" is a common noun variable, must not the same be true of the second?' One sees immediately, however, that if the *second* 'f' were a common noun variable, the 'white' from which the quantification began would have to be a common noun. We should accordingly expect (1) to read,

(1^1) S is *a* white

and even if we hastily transform (1^1) into

(1^2) S is a white thing

we are startled to think that 'quantification over predicate variables' involves the questionable idea that 'S is white' has the form 'S is a white thing', or must be transformed into the latter as a condition of the quantification. We also notice that this line of thought carries with it the implication that (2^1) should read

(2^2) There is an f such that S is *an* f.

Now it is perfectly clear that something has gone wrong; a conviction which is conclusively reinforced by the reflection that if we 'read'

(7) (Ex) x is white

as

(7^1) There is an x such that x is white

parity of reasoning would require us to interpret the second 'x' as a common noun variable, which it simply cannot be.

What, then, are we to make of the expressions 'an x' in (7^1) and 'an f' in (2^1)? Since we cannot dodge the fact that in their ordinary use the context 'a(n)—' calls for a common noun to fill the gap, is there any other way than the above in which these expressions can be construed in terms of common nouns? The answer, of course, is obvious to one who knows the literature of the problem, for one immediately thinks of those curious common nouns 'individual' and

'quality', and of the locutions, 'There is an individual…' and 'There is a quality…'. Surely, then, it is the *category* words, 'individual' and 'quality', which belong after the 'There is a…' in the 'informal readings' of (2) and (7).

If we follow up this line of thought, we end up with *something* like

(2^3) There is a quality, f, such that S is f,

and

(7^2) There is an individual, x, such that x is white

and with the idea that the 'f' which occurs in the context 'an f' of the original 'informal reading' is playing a dual role: (*a*) the role of the category word (*constant*) 'quality'; (*b*) the role of a *variable* which reappears at the end of the sentence. But is (2^3) a well-formed sentence? Here is the rub; for notice that 'There is a quality, f, …' commits us to the form

(8) f is a quality

and, if 'white' is to be a value of 'f', to

(9) White is a quality.

But if so, this means that just as 'quality' plays in (9) a role analogous to that of 'man' in 'Tom is a man', so 'white' is playing a role analogous to that of 'Tom'. We have, it appears, avoided the Scylla of turning 'white' into a *common noun,* only to whirl into the Charybdis of the idea that 'quantification over a predicate variable' involves turning it into a *proper name,* with a consequent commitment to Platonism. And this fact stands out even more clearly if we replace our original sentence (1) by

(10) S is triangular.

For whereas ‘white’ can play both the adjective and noun roles, so that (9) is a proper English sentence, we must actually transform ‘triangular’ into ‘triangularity’ to get the statement which corresponds to (9), namely

(11) Triangularity is a quality.

II

I asked a moment ago if (2^3) is a well-formed sentence, and we now have serious grounds for doubt. For while, as we have just seen, the first ‘f’ in (2^3) must be a variable which takes such *singular terms* as ‘white(ness)’ and ‘triangularity’ for its values, the *second* ‘f’ is required by *its* context, namely ‘S is—’, to take *adjectives.* If, therefore, ‘f’ is to be the same variable throughout the sentence, the concluding context must be reformulated to admit of a variable which also takes singular terms. How this might be done is no mystery. We simply construct our variable with the aid of the most convenient of the suffixes which are used to form abstract nouns from adjectives, thus ‘f-ness’, and rewrite (2^3) to read

(2^4) There is a quality, f-ness, such that S has f-ness

and discover that what our ‘informal reading’ of (2) has given us is an existential statement which stands to

(1^1) S has whiteness

as ‘There is a man, x, such that S loves x’ stands to ‘S loves Socrates’.

Well, then, to go from (1) to a quantified statement in which 'the predicate is quantified', must we first, in effect, transform it into (1^1)—in which, after all, the predicate is no longer '(is) white' but 'exemplifies whiteness'? Does all quantification presuppose a point of departure in which the constants to be replaced by variables are *singular terms*? The answer, surely, is a categorical No. The contrary supposition is generated *not* by reflecting on the logic of quantification as such, but by reflecting, as we have been doing, on an '*informal reading*' of quantified statements, a reading which may have much to recommend it in the way of making certain logical relationships intuitive, but is far from giving us the *ordinary language equivalent* of these quantified statements. The 'informal reading' is a *contrived* reading which generates puzzles as soon as its auxiliary role is overlooked, and it is made the focal-point of philosophical reflection on quantification and existence.

III

But what, then, it may well be asked, *is* the correct reading of (2), if it is neither 'There is an f such that S is f' (2^1) nor 'There is a quality, f-ness, such that S has f-ness' (2^4)? In other words, how *should* we ordinarily say what the logistician says by means of (2)? Now it is easy enough, if I may be permitted a paradox, to *invent* an 'ordinary language equivalent' of (2). One simply begins by noting that the force in the case of quantification over variables of type 0, the force of '(Ex) x is white' (7) is captured by

(7^3) *Something* is white

and proceeds to represent (2) by

(2^6) S is *something*.

The latter both preserves the form '… is …' (as contrasted with '… has (or exemplifies) ...') and, by avoiding the reading 'There is an f …' by-passes the stream of thought explored in sections I and II above.

Now, if we could convince ourselves that (2^6) would be a *reasonable* invention—or, better, that it is not *really* an invention at all—we would have gained an important vantage-point in the battle over abstract entities. The above suggestion, however, in the absence of an elaborate interpretation and defense, is scarcely more than a promissory note. And there is no dodging the fact that most if not all of the general statements we make which correspond to logistically formulated statements in which there is quantification over variables which take adjectives, common nouns, verbs, and sentences for their values, do involve the use of category words. And since the use of category words involves a prima facie commitment to abstract singular terms such as 'Triangularity'—and others which we shall be exploring in a moment—the question naturally arises, 'Does the use of these singular terms involve a commitment to Platonism?'

But before we begin to explore the significance of the fact that we do make use of category words and abstract singular terms, it is important to dwell for a moment on the claim which is implicit in the argument up to this point. This claim—which it is my purpose to defend—can be summed up by saying that one no more has to construe '(Ef) S is f' (2) as saying 'There is a quality, f-ness, such that S has f-ness' (2^4) than we have to construe 'S is white' (1) as *really* saying 'S has whiteness' (1^1).[1] Another way of making this claim is by saying that the widespread view that the introduction of predicate variables carries with it the use of such category words as 'quality', 'attribute', or 'property' is simply a mistake.

Indeed, from this point of view, not only is the 'introduction of the category word "quality"' a distinct step in 'committing oneself to a framework of qualities', this 'commitment'

involves the introduction of a *new* set of variables ('f-ness' as opposed to 'f') and a set of singular terms (e.g. 'whiteness', 'triangularity') to be their values. According to this claim, it is a mistake to suppose that a *predicate* variable belongs in the context '… is a C' where 'C' is a category word. Thus 'f is a quality' (8) would be ill formed, the proper expression being

(12) f-ness is a quality.

For while the singular term 'Socrates' belongs in both the ordinary context 'Socrates is a man' and the categorizing context

(13) Socrates is a particular

and the singular term variable 'x' belongs in both the context, '— is white' and the context '— is an individual', 'triangular' must be turned into 'triangularity' and 'f' to 'f-ness' as one moves from 'S is —' to '— is a quality'. The reason, of course, is that 'Socrates' is a singular term, and 'x' a singular term variable to begin with, while 'triangular' and 'f' are not. (It should not be assumed that 'Socrates' is unambiguously the same singular term in both cases.)

IV

Before taking the next step in the argument, it will be useful to develop the parallel claim—which I also wish to defend—in connection with the move from 'S is a man' (3) to '(EK) S is a K' (4). To read (4) as

(4^1) There is a K such that S is a K

and to take the context 'There is a K ...' seriously leads one to

(4^2) There is a class,[2] K-kind, such that S *is a member of K-kind*

just as 'There is an f such that S is f' (2^1) led us to 'There is a quality, f-ness, such that S *has* f-ness' (2^4). Furthermore, just as 'S has white-ness' (1^1) is the *categorial counterpart* of (1), so

(3^1) S *is a member of* mankind

is the categorical counterpart of (3). And, it seems to me, 'man' is no more functioning as the *name* of a *class* in (3) than 'white' is functioning as the *name* of a *quality* in (1). Furthermore, just as the 'is' in the latter is not 'has' or 'exemplifies' in disguise, so the 'is a' in the former is not 'is a member of' in disguise. It is surely as incorrect to regard 'S is a man' as a class-membership statement, as it is to regard 'S is triangular' as a quality-exemplification statement.

The 'introduction of classes' *as extensional entities* takes its point of departure from common nouns (and expressions having the force of common nouns) which are applied to a certain domain of logical subjects—where a logical subject is, roughly, an item referred to by a singular term.[3] If we limit our attention to classes pertaining to physical things, the point I wish to make can best be put by saying that once one has made the move from statements of the forms

(14) S is a K

and

(15) S is an f-thing[4]

to their categorial counterparts

(14^1) S *is a member of* K-kind

and

(15[1]) S *is a member of* the class of f-things

it is an *additional* step to introduce *classes* as extensional entities in terms of co-extensive classes. For it is simply not true that in nontechnical contexts classes are identical if their memberships coincide.

To resume, just as the transition from (1) to (2) does not involve treating 'f' as a variable for which *singular terms* ('names of properties') are values, so, I wish to argue, the transition from 'S is a man' (3) to '(EK) S is a K' (4) and from 'S is a white-thing' (1[2]) to

(18) (E f-thing) S is an f-thing

do not involve treating 'K' or 'f-thing' as variables for which *singular terms* ('names of kinds') are values.

Again, just as it is, I believe, clarifying to read '(Ex) x is white' as '*Something* is white', rather than 'There is an individual, x, such that x is white', and '(Ef) S is f' as 'S is something' rather than 'There is a property, f-ness, such that S has f-ness', so I believe it to be clarifying to read '(EK) S is a K' (4) as

(4[3]) S is a *something*

rather than as 'There is a class, K-kind, such that S is a member of K-kind' (4[2]).

Finally, to mobilize the force of these considerations, note that the statement

(19) (EK) **::** (Ex)(Ey) x is a K • y is a K • $x \neq y \supset$ **:•** (z) z is a K $\supset$ **:** $z=x \vee z=y$

does not *say* 'There is a class …', though what it *does* say can be put categorizingly by saying 'There is a *class* which has a *member* and another *member,* and all its *members* are identical with either of these'.

V

Similar considerations apply, *mutatis mutandis,* to the move from 'Tom is clever or Tom is tall' (5) to '(Ep) p or Tom is tall' (6). The variable 'p' is no more to be construed as taking singular terms for its values, than is 'f' or 'K'. On the other hand, the statement

(5^1) (The proposition) *that* Tom is clever is a disjunct of (the proposition) *that* Tom is tall

is the categorial counterpart of (5) just as 'S has (the quality) whiteness' is the categorial counterpart of (1) 'S is white'. It will be convenient to use the expression 'that-p' as the variable which corresponds to 'p' as 'f-ness' to 'f', and 'K-kind' to 'K'. And to conclude the drawing of parallels, I believe it to be clarifying to read '(Ep) p or Tom is tall' (6) as

(6^1) *Something* or Tom is tall.

Note, by the way, that if, as it seems reasonable to suppose, 'that it is raining' is functioning as a singular term in

(20) Jones believes *that* it is raining,

the quantified statement corresponding to (20) as (6) corresponds to (5) would be *not*

(21) (Ep) Jones believes p

but rather

(21[1]) (E that-p) Jones believes (the proposition) that-p.

But we shall have something more to say on this topic in our concluding remarks.

VI

Let us suppose, for the moment, that the above line of thought can be carried through and defended. And let us ask what light it throws on the idea that the 'existentially quantified' formulae of the logistician are the counterparts of the statements in everyday discourse in which, to use Quine's phrase, we make ontological commitments, i.e. say that there are objects or entities of such and such kinds? Just this, that they are *not* the counterparts. Or, more precisely, that there is no *general* correspondence between *existentially quantified formulae* and *existence statements.* Only in those cases where the variable which is quantified is a variable of which the values are singular terms will a quantified formula be the counterpart of an existence statement. Nor is this all; not even all (so-called) existential quantification over singular term variables has the force of an existence statement. For the latter involve common nouns or expressions having the force of common nouns. Thus,

(22) There are tame tigers

involves the context

(23) x is a tame tiger.

Failure to see that common nouns or expressions having the force of common nouns are essentially involved in existence statements is due, in part, to the mistaken idea that such a statement as 'S is white' (1), in which occurs the adjective 'white', differs only, so to speak,

graphologically from ‘S is a white thing’ (12), in which occurs the common noun expression ‘white-thing’. For if this were so, then ‘Something is white’ would differ only graphologically from ‘something is a white thing’ and we could use indifferently the formulae ‘(Ex) x is white’ (7) and ‘(Ex) x is a white thing’ (7^4). It is important to see that it is just as incorrect to read ‘(Ex) x is white’ as ‘There is a thing which …’ as to read ‘(Ef) S is f’ as ‘There is a property …’. For unless one sees that not even quantification over singular term variables of type 0 makes, *as such,* an existence commitment involving an ontological category, i.e. *says* ‘There are particulars’, one is likely to think that ‘There are particulars’ is unavoidable in a way in which ‘There are qualities’ *might* not be. For while we can scarcely hope to dispense with quantification over variables of type 0, able philosophers have found it possible to hope that quantification over variables of higher types can (in principle) be dispensed with, or at least reduced to the status of a bookkeeping device for dealing with cash in which it does not appear.

We have already had something to say about the force of ‘thing’ in the noun expression ‘white thing’, and we shall have more to say about the category words ‘individual’ and ‘particular’ at the end of the argument. The point I am concerned to press at the moment, however, is that among the forms by the use of which one most clearly and explicitly asserts the existence of objects of a certain sort—I am not concerned with singular existence statements, which raise their own problems—are the forms ‘There is an N’, ‘Something is an N’ and ‘There are Ns’, and that the logistical counterpart of these forms is

(24) (Ei) i is an N

where ‘i’ is a variable taking singular terms of a given type as its values, and ‘N’ is an appropriate common noun.

We can sum this up by saying that only where the so-called 'existential quantification' is a quantification over a context of the form 'i is an N' is a quantified statement the counterpart of a statement asserting the existence of objects of a certain sort—and this, after all, is analytic.[5] Put this positively, the thesis seems to ring true. If, however, we make the same point negatively, by saying that to quantify over an adjective-, common noun-, or sentence-variable is not to make the PMese equivalent of a statement asserting the existence of attributes, kinds, or propositions, it becomes clear that we have much more work to do. For, to take but the case of quantification over an adjective variable, our claim that it is illuminating to parallel the reading of '(Ex) x is white' (7) as '*Something* is white' (7^3), by a reading of '(Ef) S is f' (2) as 'S is *something*' (2^5) stand in urgent need of expansion and clarification.

Perhaps the best way of accomplishing this is by examining the constructive views advanced in Peter Geach's contribution to the Aristotelian Society symposium[6] on 'What there is' which takes its point of departure from Quine's provoking essay of this name. Geach sees that Quine's account won't do. He sees, to put the matter in terms of our examples, that the statement 'S is white' (1) entails the general statement

(2^6) There is something which S *is*

(i.e. white) and insists, correctly, that the latter is not to be confused with

(2^7) There is something which S *has*

(i.e. whiteness). To take another example, he sees that

(25) Jack and Jill are both tall

entails the general statement

(26) There is something which Jack and Jill both *are*

and that the latter statement is not to be confused with

(26^1) There is something which Jack and Jill *have in common.*

It would be incorrect to attach the rider 'i.e. tallness' to the former. The proper rider would be 'i.e. tall', thus

(26^2) There is something (i.e. tall) which Jack and Jill both *are*.

Now Geach's '*There is something* which S *is*' corresponds to our 'S is *something*'. And his insistence that the something which S *is* is *white* and not *whiteness* corresponds to our distinction between 'S is something' and 'S has (i.e. exemplifies) something'. Thus, in the terms of our analysis, Geach's 'There is something which S *is*' (2^6) is the counterpart of '(Ef) S is f' (2) and he has correctly seen that the latter does not involve a commitment to the use of such abstract singular terms as 'whiteness' or 'tallness'.

But while he is on the right track up to this point, he builds the above insight into a larger mistake. For he is misled by his own formulation into supposing that

(26^2) *There is something* (i.e. tall) which both Jack and Jill are

although it does not commit us to the 'abstract or universal entity' *tallness,* does commit us to the 'property' *tall.* Thus he tells us that while the predicate 'red' is not to be construed as a *name,* it does 'stand for' something, and he proposes 'property' as a 'general term for what predicates stand for'. He continues, 'This way of speaking [saying that what a predicate stands for is a property] has its dangers, but can be given a harmless interpretation; "property" may here be

taken to be just short for "something that an object is or is not".'[7] Now Geach's *properties* are essentially the same sort of thing as Frege's *concepts*. Indeed, it is clear from other statements of his that Geach would have used Frege's term were it not for its conceptualistic connotations. I shall shortly be discussing a difficulty which is present in Frege's account of concepts. It will, however, be convenient to lay the groundwork by exploring what Geach has to say about properties.

Now it is important to realize that Geach gives *two* accounts of the term 'property'; one of which, though cautious, is based on a simple grammatical mistake, while the other is derived from Frege's account, and is more difficult to expose. The cautious account is contained in the passage quoted above, in which he stipulates that 'property' is to be equivalent to 'something that an object is or is not'. The Fregean account is the one in which properties are introduced as *what predicates stand for*. We shall return at a later stage in the argument to the dangers involved in the idea that predicates stand for properties. Our present concern is with the force of the statement 'There is something which Jack and Jill both *are*' (26).

Let me begin by noting that in our illustration, 'There is something which Jack and Jill both *are*' (26), was a generalization from 'Jack and Jill are both tall' (25). Now to move from the latter to

(27) Jack and Jill are both something[8]

is to avoid at least the appearance of an existence statement. For the hypothesis with which we are working is that only those 'something-' statements which are of the form 'Something is an N', where 'N' is a common noun, have the force of existence statements—thus of the statement 'There are Ns'. But Geach's formulation, beginning, as it does, with 'There is. ..', though it is equally legitimate and equally involves no commitment to abstract singular terms, has the prima

facie appearance of an existence statement. And, I am sorry to say, Geach has been taken in by it. And if the entities he introduces are what things *are* rather than what they *exemplify,* they are abstract entities, none the less, as Quine has noted in his reply,[9] and Geach's denial that these entities are *individually* referred to by such *singular terms* as 'Tallness' is open, as we shall see, to the reply that he has avoided the abstract individual *tallness* only at the expense of treating the adjective 'tall' as a peculiar kind of singular term, and hence introducing the abstract individual *tall.*

The key point to notice is that unlike existence statements proper, the statement

(26) *There is something* which Jack and Jill both *are*

begins not with 'There is *a* …', not with 'There is *a something* …', but simply with 'There is something …'. If it began with 'There is a something …', thus using 'something' as a common noun, one might well look for a common noun, such as 'property', to pinpoint just what *sort* of 'something' 'there is' which Jack and Jill both are. We could then have

(26^3) There is a property which Jack and Jill both *are*.

But all this, as by now should be obvious, is logical nonsense. 'Something' is *not* a common noun, and it is incorrect, therefore, to introduce 'property' as equivalent to 'something which an object is or is not'. The term 'property' has, as a common noun, the form '— is a property' whereas, *unless* '*something*' *is to be construed as a common noun,* the supposed equivalent has the form '— is something which an object is or is not', thus

(28) Tall is something which an object is or is not

and *not* '— is *a* something which an object is or is not'. Only if the expression 'something which an object is or is not' were a common noun expression (which it is not) would it be correct to introduce the common noun 'property' as its stipulated equivalent. In short, *this* way of introducing the term 'property' is simply a mistake.

It is important to remember that I have not criticized Geach's claim that there is something which Jack and Jill both *are*. It is to what he proceeds to *make* of this claim that I took exception. I want now to examine this claim in closer detail, for I think that once we get the hang of Geach's formulation we will be less tempted to make his mistake.

Suppose we had begun with an example which involved the common noun 'man', instead of the adjective 'tall', say

(29) Tom is a man.

The corresponding generalization, as we have represented it, would be,

(30) Tom is a *something*

where the fact that the 'something' comes after the indefinite article makes it clear that 'something' is, so to speak, quantifying over a common noun variable.

How would we express this generalization in the manner of Geach? Certainly we can say

(30^1) There is something which Tom is.

But this does not distinguish the result of generalizing from (29) on the one hand, and from

(31) Tom is tall

on the other. While to say ‘There is *a* something which Tom is’ is to court disaster. The answer suggests itself when we note that the ‘There is something which …’ manner of expressing quantification rests on a rhetorical device which I shall call ‘question-echoing counterparts’. The point is simply that such a statement as

(10) S is triangular

can serve as the answer to either of the following questions,

(32) *What* is triangular?

and

(33) S is *what?*

Now to the original statement there correspond the following pair of question-echoing counterparts,

(10^1) S is what is triangular: *Triangular* is what S is.

It is important to note that although the adjective ‘triangular’ is serving as the *grammatical* subject of the second of these statements the ‘role’ it is playing is a unique one, and is, indeed, *rhetorical* in character. It would surely be a howler to suppose that because it is functioning in this context as a grammatical subject, it is in any more profound sense functioning as subject. *Its role is rhetorically derivative from its adjectival role in the original, or non-question-echoing statement*. Other examples of question-echoing counterparts would be ‘*Tom* is who is a man’: ‘ *A man* is what Tom is’ and ‘*Tall* is what Jack and Jill both are’: ‘It is *Jack and Jill* who are both tall.’

Now the question-word ‘what?’ plays a number of roles in English which might well be split up among a number of interrogatives. In particular, we might introduce the interrogative ‘quale?’ to indicate that the answer is to be in terms of an adjective, and the interrogative ‘quid?’ to indicate that the answer is to be in terms of a common noun. Then we would have the question-echoing counterparts

(31[1]) *Tall is quale* Tom is: *Tom* is *who* is tall,

(29[2]) *A man* is *quid* Tom is: *Tom* is *who* is a man.

To the first of each of these pairs there would correspond a general statement which would bear the mark of its origin, thus,

(34) *There is something* which is *quale* Tom is (i.e. tall).

(35) *There is something* which is *quid* Tom is (i.e. a man)

or, more concisely,

(34[1]) *There is somequale* which Tom is (i.e. tall).

(35[1]) *There is somequid* which Tom is (i.e. a man).

VIII

I pointed out above that Geach gives *two* accounts of how the general term ‘property’ might be introduced. Of these two accounts we have so far considered only one—the ‘cautious’ one, we have called it—and found it to be a mistake. The second account, as we noted, derives from Frege, and our discussion of it will be usefully prepared by a theme from Frege’s ‘On Concept and Object’.[10]

It will be remembered that Frege distinguishes between *concepts* and *objects* and is faced by the problem: 'How can one say of anything that it is a concept?' For the term 'concept' being, presumably, a common noun, we should be able to make statements of the form

(36) — is a concept.

Frege, however, proceeds to rule out such statements as

(37) The concept *square root of four* is a concept

on the ground that the expression 'the concept *square root of four*', being a singular term, refers to an *object* rather than a concept. The same objection would, presumably, hold against

(38) The concept *man* is a concept

and

(39) The concept *triangular* is a concept

and, even more obviously, against

(38^1) Man-kind is a concept

and

(39^1) Triangularity is a concept.

Since, presumably, *something* can fill the blank in '— is a concept', we seem to be left with

(38^1) *Man* is a concept

and

(39[1]) *Triangular* is a concept.

These sentences, however, are puzzling, to say the least, for it is difficult to repress the feeling that since ‘concept’ is a common noun, the context ‘— is a concept’ requires a singular term rather than an adjective or a common noun to complete it.

Now our discussion of Geach has made it clear that we *can* form sentences in which something other than a singular term is the grammatical subject. Consider, for example,

(40) *Triangular* is what (quale) the table is

and

(41) *Men* is what (quid) Tom and Dick are.

Or, as we can also put it,

(40[1]) *Triangular* is something which the table is.

(41[1]) *Men* is something which Tom and Dick are.

But, as we emphasized at that time, there is nothing in these contexts which authorizes the introduction of a common noun, whether ‘concept’ or ‘property’. There is, however, another context which tempts one to introduce such a common noun, namely,

(42) — is what ‘triangular’ stands for

(43) — is what ‘man’ stands for.

For, one is tempted to expostulate with Geach, surely adjectives and common nouns *stand for something—though,* of course, they are not *names*. Surely we can say

(44) ‘Triangular’ stands for something

or

(44[1]) There is something which ‘triangular’ stands for

And can we not therefore legitimately introduce the common noun ‘concept’ as having the force of ‘something which a predicate stands for’? The answer is, as before, No; not, however, because it is incorrect to say that there is something which ‘triangular’ stands for (or *bedeutet),* but because the expression ‘something which a predicate stands for’ like the expression ‘something which an object is or is not’ does not play the sort of role which would make it proper to introduce a common noun as its stipulated equivalent. This time, however, the matter is not quite so simple, for there is a related line of thought which does seem to authorize without grammatical absurdity the introduction of a common noun having the force of Frege’s ‘concept’ or Geach’s ‘property’. This line of thought rests on the idea that ‘means’[11]—which I shall now use in place of ‘stands for’ because its simpler grammatical form will make the point more intuitive-has at least the appearance of being a *transitive verb*. That this appearance is misleading will be the burden of a subsequent stage in my argument. But accepting, for the moment, this appearance at its face value, and taking as our starting-point, without comment, the sentence

(45) ‘Triangular’ means triangular,

the following moves all seem in good order; first to

(45^1) Triangular is meant by 'triangular'

then, on the analogy of the move from 'x is victimized by y' to 'x is the victim of y', to

(45^2) Triangular *is the meaning* of 'triangular',

which involves the common noun 'meaning'. It is then a simple step to stipulate that 'concept', 'property', 'nature', and 'form' are to be general terms for the meanings of adjectives and common nouns.

I shall be subjecting this line of thought to a severe critique in a moment. For the time being, however, I shall simply postulate that this mode of introducing such sentences as 'Triangular is a meaning', 'Triangular is a concept' and 'Triangular is a property' is in some sense misguided. For I want to go on to the question, Would this mean that Frege's notion of a concept is misguided? The answer is No rather than Yes. Frege did have something important in mind which he builds into his notion of a concept, and which does not require the use of adjectives, common nouns, or verbs as the grammatical subjects of sentences. For the significant core of Frege's doctrine is compatible with the idea that the common noun context '— is a concept' requires *something like* a singular term for its subject, and hence with the rejection of a simple concept-object dichotomy. The clue to the correct formulation of this core theme is found in his characterization of concepts as 'unsaturated' *(ungesaettigte).* For, in effect, this means that we may be able to get somewhere with 'unsaturated' singular terms—if we can find such—as the subject of statements of the form '— is a concept'. And once we have hit upon this suggestion, the next move follows of itself. For among the singular terms available to us from the previous

discussion are singular terms of the form 'that-p', and we know what an 'unsaturated' singular term of this form would look like. In short, we hit upon, for example,

(39^3) *That x is triangular* is a concept.

On this analysis, concepts would be 'unsaturated' propositions. And if, as Frege seems to do, we use the term 'object' in such a manner that anything referred to by a singular term is an object, we would have to say that concepts differ from objects not by being *non*-objects, but by being 'unsaturated' or 'incomplete' objects. Thus, when Frege says that to 'assert something about a concept … it must first be converted into an object, or, speaking more precisely, represented by an object' (p. 46), his thought was undoubtedly guided by the fact that (39^3) comes as close as it does to having the *adjective* 'triangular' as its subject, by having the *unsaturated* singular *term* 'that x is *triangular*' as its subject instead.

Now if the above line of thought is sound, we would no longer be precluded from saying that triangularity is a concept (39^1) by the fact that 'triangularity' is a singular term. The fundamental difference between 'triangularity' and '*that* x is triangular' would be that the latter makes explicit a *gappiness* or *incompleteness* which is perhaps implicit in the former. Indeed, it is tempting to suppose that the abstract singular term 'triangularity' simply has the force of the unsaturated singular term 'that x is triangular'. We shall subsequently see that this is not the case, but if we permit ourselves this supposition for the moment, then we would interpret the statement 'Triangularity is a quality' (11) as, so to speak, a rewriting of

(11^1) That x is triangular is a quality

and, consequently, regard a *quality* as a specific form of *concept*, the latter being a more inclusive notion, including as it does *multiply* as well as *singly* unsaturated propositions, and a variety of each.

Now it must be admitted that the idea that there are abstract entities such as triangularity, mankind, etc., takes a most interesting, if disturbing, turn if these entities are to be equated with gappy or unsaturated propositions. The notion of a *gappy* entity is a puzzling one, even if it is softened into the idea of an *incomplete* entity. On the other hand, it appears to illuminate contrasting historical positions. For if one accepts the idea that 'Triangularity' is simply, so to speak, a rewriting of 'That x is triangular', one is tempted to say that the difference between the Platonic and the Aristotelian conceptions of universals is that Plato takes the abstract singular term 'triangularity' to be a name which conceals no gaps, whereas Aristotle, by denying the apartness of the universal, is, in effect, recognizing the unsaturated, incomplete, or gappy status which is made explicit by the unsaturated abstract singular term 'that x is triangular'. There is, I believe, some truth to this suggestion—though I do not think that it does justice to the radical character of Aristotle's rejection of Plato's Ideas. But that is a story for another occasion.

IX

Let us suppose, for the time being, then, that the abstract singular term 'triangularity' simply has the force of 'that x is triangular'. Then in addition to its intrinsic interest, the above discussion has shown us a way of saying something about triangularity without using the singular term 'triangularity'. Thus, instead of saying

(46) Triangularity implies having three sides

we can say

(46[1]) *That* anything is triangular implies *that* it has three sides.

The latter preserves—indeed, highlights—the adjectival role of 'triangular'.

No sooner have we said this, however, than we see how little we have said, if our aim is to avoid Platonistic anxieties. For if we put aside the complications introduced by the *generality* of (46[1]) and turn our attention, instead, to

(47) That S is triangular implies that S has three sides

it becomes manifest that we have avoided the singular term 'triangularity' only to embrace the singular term 'that S is triangular', and that we have escaped *universals* only to accept *propositions.*

Actually, however, this new turn of events has brought us to the very heart of the matter. Statement (47) is, indeed, of the form

(48) that-p implies that-q

and does involve two singular terms. *But not all logical connectives play a predicate role,* and while those which *do* connect *singular terms* of the form 'that-p', those which do *not* connect *statements* and statement expressions, and statements are *not* singular terms, having, as they do, the form 'p' rather than 'that-p'. Both predicative and non-predicative connectives have their legitimate place in the grammar of our language, but unless these places are carefully distinguished and correctly understood, philosophical perplexities of the most pervasive sort will be endemic.

The story is, in essence, a familiar one. Truth-functional connectives do not require that the connected expressions function as singular terms. Thus, as we saw above, while 'Tom is

clever or Tom is tall' (5) and '(Ep) p or Tom is tall' (6) have *categorial counterparts* which *are* built around the singular terms 'that Tom is clever', 'that Tom is tall', and the singular term variable 'that-p', neither (5) nor (6) itself contains any other singular term than 'Tom'.

Can we, then, say what is said by *'That* S is triangular implies *that* S has three sides' (47) and *'That* anything is triangular implies *that* it has three sides' (461) without committing ourselves to singular terms formed from statements? Surely it will be said, all we need to do is to make use of the familiar symbol '⊃' which was specifically designed to be the *non-predicative core* of the predicative term 'implies'. We would then have

(47^1) S is triangular ⊃ S has three sides

and

(46^2) (x) x is triangular ⊃ x has three sides

and if this move is successful, we should have freed ourselves (temporarily, at least) not only from expressions of the form 'that-p', but also, unless we find other reasons for reintroducing them, from unsaturated singular terms of the forms 'that x is f' and 'that x is a K'; and hence from 'f-ness' and 'K-kind'. We would indeed have extricated ourselves from Plato's beard.

X

It is well to pause for a moment to let the fact sink in that our argument has brought the problem of abstract entities face to face with the problem of *necessary connection*; and to note that it is but a short step to the problem of 'causal connection' or 'natural implication', and to the realization that 'causally implies' like 'logically implies' is a *predicative* connective and requires the use of abstract singular terms as in

(49) *That* it has just lightninged (causally) implies *that* it win shortly thunder

and

(50) *That* x is released (causally) implies *that* x will fall.

XI

Even if we could take it as established that to quantify over adjective-, common noun- and statement-variables is not to assert the existence of qualities, kinds, or propositions, we would sooner or later have to face the fact that ordinary language does involve the use of the singular terms and the common nouns which raise the spectre of Platonism—and, indeed, that we do make the existence statements which the Platonist hails as the substance of his position. For we do make such statements as 'There is a quality (thus triangularity) which …', 'There is a class (thus, dog-kind—or the class of white things) which …', and 'There is a proposition (thus, *that* Caesar crossed the Rubicon) which …'. These statements, genuinely existential in character, make forthright ontological commitments. Or are these commitments, perhaps, less forthright than they seem? Can they, perhaps, be 'reduced' to statements which make no reference, explicit or implicit, to ontological categories?

We asked above 'Is there any way of saying something about triangularity without actually using the abstract singular term "triangularity"?' This question led us first to the idea of the *predicative* implication-statement 'That anything is triangular implies that it has three sides', which avoids 'triangularity' but at the expense of using the unsaturated abstract singular term 'that x is triangular'. The effort to avoid even these abstract singular terms led us then to the notion of a general truth-functional statement to be represented as

(46^2) (x) x is triangular ⊃ x has three sides.

Without questioning the soundness of this notion, I shall now ask instead, 'Is there any statement of which the subject is "f-ness" which *cannot* be reformulated as a statement in which "f-ness" is replaced by the sentential function "x is f" (N.B.: *not* 'that x is r')?' To this question correspond a number of others of which two are more directly germane to our argument, namely, 'Is there any statement of which the subject is "K-kind" which *cannot* be reformulated as a statement in which "K-kind" is replaced by "x is a K" (not "that x is a K")?' and 'Is there any statement of which the subject is *"that-p"* which cannot be reformulated as a statement in which *"that-p"* is replaced by "p"?' And to these questions the direct and simple answer is Yes. For neither

(51) f-ness is a quality

nor

(52) K-kind is a class

nor

(53) *That* p is a proposition

can be so reformulated.

But if these contexts (which we have called categorizing contexts) do not admit of the desired reformulation, and consequently revive our Platonistic anxieties, it is equally true that these anxieties can be at least temporarily stilled by a relatively simple and straightforward therapy. This relief is provided by pointing out that whereas the truth or falsity of statements to the effect that a physical object belongs to an empirical kind is ascertained by observing or

inferring that it satisfies certain empirical criteria, the truth or falsity of such categorizing statements as

(11) Triangularity is a quality,

(54) Dog-kind is a class,

(55) *That* Chicago is large is a proposition,

is ascertained *not* by 'examining' triangularity, betweenness, dog-kind, or *that* Chicago is large, but by reflecting on the role in discourse of the corresponding expressions. This is the insight contained in Carnap's contention (in *The Logical Syntax of Language)* that the above statements are in the 'material mode of speech' and are the 'quasi-syntactical' counterparts (roughly—for I am following the general spirit, rather than the letter of Carnap's account) of

(11^2) 'Triangular' (N .B. : *not* 'triangularity') is an adjective (in English),[12]

(54^1) 'Dog' (N.B.: *not* 'dog-kind') is a common noun (in English),

(55^1) 'Chicago is large' (N.B.: *not* 'that Chicago is large') is a sentence (in English).

But surely, it will be said, the word 'triangular' is just as abstract an entity as triangularity. Where is the 'nominalistic' gain? Is not the term '"triangular"', as much a singular term as 'triangularity', and 'adjective' as much a common noun as 'quality'? The answer is simple and straightforward. '"Triangular"', is not a singular term, but a common noun, and the gain arises in that we can hope to equate (11^3) with *something* like

(11^3) (x) x is a 'triangular' $\supset$ x is an adjective

where ‘ ‘triangular’ ’, is a common noun referring to items playing a certain *linguistic role,* as ‘bishop’ is a common noun referring to items playing a certain *chess* role. ‘A ‘triangular’ is an adjective’ would be the counterpart of ‘A bishop is a diagonal-mover’.

Unfortunately, no sooner is one relaxed by this therapy, and considering the possibility of extending it to some other contexts in which ‘abstract entities are acknowledged’, than a number of more serious objections arise which threaten a relapse.

The first of these objections grants that *if* the only contexts involving such expressions as ‘triangularity’, ‘betweenness’, ‘dog-kind’, and *‘that* Chicago is large’ which could not be reformulated in the object language without the use of abstract singular terms were *categorizing statements* such as (11), (54), and (55) above, or such other statements as might be capable of straightforward treatment under the more general notion of ‘quasi-syntactical statements in the material mode of speech’, *then* the Carnapian therapy—vintage 1932—would be successful. After granting this, however, it proceeds to argue that there are contexts in which abstract singular terms occur, which neither can be reformulated in the object language, to avoid them, nor respond to this syntactical treatment. Consequently, it continues, there are reasons which cannot be dispelled by any therapy yet mentioned for thinking that we are committed to the straightforward existence of qualities, relations, kinds, propositions, etc. And if, it concludes, by way of counter-attack, there *are* such entities, then even the idea that such a categorizing statement as

(11) Triangularity is a quality

is *really* about the adjective ‘triangular’ instead of, as it purports to be, about triangularity, must be simply a mistake.

XII

Now the task of examining all contexts in which abstract singular terms occur to see if they admit of an interpretation free of Platonistic implications, is an intricate and demanding one which, even if I were prepared to undertake it, would require a larger canvas than is at hand. I shall therefore limit myself to a few manageable points which, as I see it, lay the groundwork for a successful use of a therapy essentially the same as the one proposed by Carnap (but which, of course, has a much longer—and indeed, venerable—history).

The first point I wish to make arises from the fact that if we press the above critic to specify the contexts he has in mind, the chances are that he will come up with examples from discourse in which we are either explaining what a word means or characterizing the thoughts and beliefs of intelligent beings.

It goes without saying that one of the oldest and strongest roots of conceptual realism is the conviction that we cannot make sense of thinking in its various modes unless we interpret it as involving something like an 'intellectual perception' of abstract entities. Thus the road we are traveling leads sooner or later to the problem of problems, the Mind-Body problem, the Gordian knot which has been cut so often, but never untied. I do not propose to untie it on this occasion. I shall therefore turn my attention to discourse about the meanings of words to see if it involves a commitment to abstract entities.

Let us consider, therefore, such a context as the following:

(56) 'Dreieckig' (in German) means ...

And let us ask what we should place at the end of this context to make a well-formed sentence. A number of answers suggest themselves, of which the first, and most obviously unsatisfactory, is that what we should place there is the quoted expression '"triangular"'. This clearly won't do, at

least as it stands, for the simple reason that if we were looking for the *beginning* of a sentence which has as its ending

(57) ... (in German) means ‘triangular’

we would find the answer—assuming that Germans form the names of expressions, as we do, by means of the quoting device—in

(58) ‘“Triangular”’ (in German) means ‘triangular’.

Now we might try to put this informally by saying that the German word ‘dreieckig’ means a *quality* and not a *word,* and that if any German expression means the *word* ‘triangular’ it is the German expression ‘“triangular”’. But so to put the matter raises more puzzles than it resolves, for when we say that the German word ‘dreieckig’ means a *quality,* we imply that the proper way to complete the original context (56), is by the use of the abstract singular term ‘triangularity’, which would give us

(59) ‘Dreieckig’ (in German) means (the quality) triangularity,

and a moment’s reflection tells us that this won’t do at all. For surely the German word which means triangularity is ‘Dreieckigkeit’ and *not* ‘dreieckig’, thus

(60) ‘Dreieckigkeit’ (in German) means triangularity.[13]

Now the source of our trouble is that we have been taking for granted that what belongs in the place of the dots in (56) is a singular term. But, then, it will be said, is not ‘means’ a transitive verb? And does it not, therefore, require to be followed by an expression which refers to an *object,* as do the concluding expressions in

(61) Tom hit *Harry*,

(62) Tom hit *a man*,

(63) Tom hit the man next door.

It is this reasoning which confronts us with our dilemma, for if the context takes a singular term, and if, as we have seen, it does not take 'triangularity', what else is there for it to take but '"triangular"'. We must apparently choose between

(64) 'Dreieckig' (in German) means 'triangular'

which is false, and,

(65) 'Dreieckig' (in German) means triangular

which because it uses the adjective 'triangular' rather than a singular term is, apparently, ill-formed.

Now the way out of this labyrinth consists in recognizing that it is incorrect to say that 'dreieckig' means a *word*, and equally incorrect to say that it means a *non-word*, for the simple reason that 'means' is not a *transitive* verb. Not that it is an *intransitive* verb, for it is neither, and the attempt to fit it under one or the other of these headings, on the supposition that they are not only mutually exclusive but jointly exhaustive, is the cause of the puzzle.

Once this point has been made, however, it can be granted that even though

(64) 'Dreieckig' (in German) means 'triangular'

is false, there is a sense in which the *true* statement

(65) 'Dreieckig' (in German) means *triangular*

is about the English word ‘triangular’. For by making statements of this form we bring people to understand the German word ‘dreieckig’, for example, by leading them to reflect on their use of its English counterpart. It is because the understanding of (53) involves an imaginative rehearsal of the *use* of ‘triangular’ that (53) differs from a simple statement to the effect that ‘dreieckig’ is the German counterpart of the English word ‘triangular’. The latter statement could be *fully* understood, as the former could not, by someone who did not have the English word ‘triangular’ in his active vocabulary.

Now the prime result of all this logic chopping is that the context

(66) ‘—’ (in L) means …

does *not* require a singular term to fill the right-hand blank. Thus, to use other relevant examples,

(67) ‘Homme’ (in French) means *man* [not *mankind*]

and

(68) ‘Paris est belle’ (in French) means *Paris is beautiful* [not *that Paris is beautiful*].

It follows that the existentially quantified counterparts of (65), (67), and (68) are

(69) (Ef) ‘dreieckig’ (in German) means *f*,

(70) (EK) ‘Homme’ (in French) means *K*,

(71) (Ep) ‘Paris est belle’ (in French) means *p*,

and that it would be as incorrect to read these as ‘There is a quality ...’, ‘There is a class ...’, and ‘There is a property ...’, as we found it to be to make the corresponding readings in the case of (2), (4), and (6).

We are now in a position to grant that we do speak of the ‘meaning’ of a word while insisting that the common noun ‘meaning’ (or its sophisticated counterparts, ‘concept’ (Frege) and ‘property’ (Geach))—far from embodying a fundamental logical category—arises from contexts of the form ‘“—” means ...’ (66), by treating ‘means’ as of a piece with ordinary transitive verbs. Thus, by analogy we have

(65^1) *Triangular* is meant (in German) by ‘dreieckig’,

(65^2) *Triangular* is what ‘dreieckig’ (in German) means,

(69^1) There is something (i.e. *triangular)* which ‘dreieckig’ (in German) means

and while none of these involves a commitment to a common noun expression having the force of ‘meaning’ the fact that one of the principles of linguistic development is *analogy,* easily generates the common noun ‘meaning’ and permits us to say

(65^3) *Triangular* is *the meaning* of ‘dreieckig’ (in German)

and to make the statement properly existential in form,

(69^2) There is *a* meaning which ‘dreieckig’ (in German) means

or, with Geach,

(69^3) There is a *property* which ‘dreieckig’ (in German) *stands for*.

In other words, while it would be incorrect simply to say that there are no such things as meanings, or Frege’s concepts, or Geach’s properties, to trace the common noun ‘meaning’ to its source in the translation rubric ‘“—” (in L) means ...’ (66) is to make what amounts to this point in a less misleading and dogmatic way.

The upshot of the foregoing discussion of meaning with respect to the primary theme of this article can be summed up by saying that the translation context (66) does not properly take a singular term on the right-hand side unless the expression of L which is placed in the single quotes of the left hand side is itself a singular term. In other words, this context does not of itself *originate* a commitment to abstract entities.

This point might be obscured by a failure, where the quoted expression of L is a sentence, to distinguish between the context

(72) '—' (in L) means p

and the context

(73) X—by uttering '…' (in L)—asserts *that*-p

where X is a person. The former context abstracts from the many specific ways in which the English sentence represented by 'p' and the corresponding sentence of L function in discourse. That the context

(74) X asserts that-p

unlike context (72) above does involve the use of the abstract singular term 'that-p' is a point to which we shall return at the close of the argument.

XIII

Perhaps the most interesting consequence of the above analysis is the fact that it frees the 'semantical definition of truth' from the commitment to propositions which it has often been

taken to involve. Thus, the definiens of Carnap's definition of 'true sentence of L' developed on pages 49ff. of his *Introduction to Semantics,* namely,

(75) S is a true sentence of L $=_{Df}$ (Ep) S designates *p* (in L) • p

is incorrectly read as 'there is a proposition, p, such that S designates *p* (in L) and p'. It can readily be seen that this reading exhibits inconsistencies which are the counterpart of those explored in the opening section of this chapter in connection with the 'informal reading' of '(Ef) S is f' as 'there is an f such that S is f'.Thus, whereas 'S designates p' requires that 'p' be a sentential variable and not a singular term variable, the context 'there is a proposition, p, ...' requires that 'p' be a singular term variable of the form 'that-p'. And if we revise the definition to avoid the inconsistency by taking 'S' to be the name of a that-clause (in L) rather than the name of a sentence, thus obtaining

(76) S is a true that-clause (in L) $=_{Df}$ There is a proposition, that-p, such that S designates *that-p* (in L) and that-p

we see at once that we have an ill-formed expression on our hands, for the concluding conjunct 'p' of the original definiens has been turned into the *singular term* variable 'that-p', and to patch *this* up we must turn 'and that-p' into 'and that-p *is the case*', where 'that-p is the case' is the categorized counterpart of 'p', as 'S has f-ness' is of 'S is f'.

The 'propositional' reading of Carnap's definition becomes, under the pressure of the demand for consistency,

(77) T is a true that-clause (in L) $=_{Df}$ there is a proposition, that-p, such that T designates *that-p* (in L) and that-p is the case.

and while I do not wish to impugn the consistency of the notion, thus introduced, of the truth of a that-clause, I do wish to insist that this notion is philosophically unsound in so far as it *rests on* the mistaken idea that the truth must be defined in terms of propositions, and *leads to* the mistaken idea that the truth of *statements* is derivative from that of *that-clauses.*[14]

XIV

Our success in showing that the context '"—" (in L) means …' does not *originate* a commitment to the use of abstract singular terms (though it accepts them with grace if they are already in use) raises the hope that *all* other uses of abstract singular terms stem from their use in 'quasi-syntactical statements in the material mode of speech'. In other words, the hope is revived that what we have called the syntactical therapy will work. If, however, as a result of this optimism we take a closer look at this therapy, we find that it is not without its own difficulties. Indeed, it is apparently open to a simple and devastating objection. How can 'Triangularity is a quality' (11) have something like the force of '"Triangular" (in English) is an adjective' (11^2) in view of the fact that (11) *makes no reference to the English language*? The objection is no mere question begging, for it presents an argument to prove that (11) makes no reference to the English language in general nor to the English word 'triangular' in particular. It points out that the German translation of (11) is

(11g) Dreieckigkeit ist eine qualitaet

and argues that there is just as much reason to say that (11g) is about the German word 'dreieckig' as to say that (11) is about the English word 'triangular'. Since (11g) presumably makes the same statement as its English counterpart (11), the objection concludes that neither of these statements is about either word.

Again, how can the truth of (11) be ascertained by reflecting on the use of the word 'triangular' if, were a German to say

(78) Dreieckigkeit ist eine qualitaet, aber es gibt keine Englische Sprache,

his colleagues would recognize that his statement was only contingently false? For if his statement is only contingently false, it might have been true, and if it had been true, he could have made a true statement, namely (11g) above even though there was no English language in general, nor, in particular, such an English word as 'triangular'. And if there is only a contingent connection between the truth of (11g) and the existence of the English language, how *could* we English users ascertain the truth of (11) simply by reflecting on the syntax of the English word 'triangular'?

The answer to this puzzle involves two steps, the first of which we have already taken, for it consists in reminding ourselves that

(79) 'Dreieckigkeit ist eine qualitaet' (in German) means *triangularity is a quality*

does not involve the singular term '*that* triangularity is a quality'. Consequently, the fact that (11g) 'has the meaning it does' does not commit us to the existence of a nonlinguistic abstract entity (a proposition) of which (11g) is the German name; nor, *a fortiori*, does the fact that (11) and (11g) 'have the same meaning' commit us to the existence of a nonlinguistic abstract entity which stands over and against both languages and has a name in each. That there is a *linguistic* abstract entity, of which 'that triangularity is a quality' is the English name, is indeed the case. But, as has been pointed out, 'that triangularity is a quality' stands to all vocables, English or German, which play a certain (complex) linguistic role as 'the pawn' stands to pawns of

whatever shape, size, or colour. It has been pointed out above, that statements about linguistic roles are reducible to statements involving no abstract singular terms.

Now if we take seriously the fact that the *inter-translatability* of (11) and (11g), their existence as *counterparts* of one another in the two languages, does not involve the existence of a proposition which they both name, we are in a position to approach the question 'By virtue of what are these two sentences counterparts?' without being tangled *ab initio* in a commitment to Platonic entities. In other words, we can look for a role which (11) might play in English and for a role which (11g) might play in German which would make (11) and (11g) *counterparts* and appropriately *inter-translatable,* unhampered by the mistaken idea that two inter-translatable expressions must be different names of one entity.

And once we undertake this unhampered search, the result is surelya foregone conclusion. Thus the second step consists in noting that while

(80) Triangularity is a quality, but 'triangular' is not an adjective in the language I speak

is not in any simple sense self-contradictory, as is shown by the fact that *one* of its German counterparts,

(80g) Dreieckigkeit ist eine qualitaet aber 'triangular' ist nicht ein Adjectiv in seine (Sellars) Sprache

is only contingently false, it is nevertheless 'logically odd' in a way which requires its falsity. Notice that not only (83g) but both

(80^1) Triangularity is a quality, but 'triangular' was not an adjective in the language I spoke yesterday

and

(80^2) Triangularity is a quality, but 'triangular' will not be an adjective in the language I will speak tomorrow

are *contingently* false. The logical oddity of (80) consequently hinges on the fact that I cannot-and *this* is a matter of strict logic-simultaneously make understanding use of 'triangularity is a quality' while understandingly denying that 'triangular' is an adjective. And the reason for this is simply that to know how to use singular terms ending in '-ity' is to know that they are formed from adjectives; while to know how to use the common noun 'quality' is (roughly) to know that its well formed singular sentences are of the form '— is a quality' where the blank is appropriately filled by an abstract noun. (That the parallel points about '-keit' and 'qualitaet' in German are genuine parallels is clear.) Thus a more penetrating examination (80) shows it to be self-contradictory in spite of the fact that *one* of its German counterparts is not.

Thus, while my ability to use 'triangular' understandingly involves an ability to use sentences of the form '— is triangular' in reporting and describing matters of physical, extralinguistic fact, my ability to use 'triangularity' understandingly involves no new dimension of the reporting and describing of extralinguistic fact—no scrutiny of abstract entities—but constitutes, rather, my grasp of the adjectival role of 'triangular'.

Is this all there is to it? Is the story really so simple? Of course not. Philosophy moves along asymptotes, and to move along one, it must move along many. Progress is dialectical, and comes from raising and answering objections. This time the objection is that the above account makes unintelligible the plain fact that we have the *two* sentences 'Triangularity is a *quality*' (11) and '"Triangular" (in English) is an *adjective*' (11^2). Why should our "grasp of the adjectival role

of ‘triangular’”, be embodied in the former, when the latter does exactly this job in such a straightforward and successful way?

The answer to this question is best approached by noting an important difference between the two abstract singular-term expressions ‘triangularity’ and ‘that x is triangular’, which we have hitherto taken to have the same force. The existence of such a difference is made clear by the fact that there is something odd about the statement ‘*That x is triangular* is a quality’ (11^1) and even odder about

(81) *That Socrates is a K* is a particular.

To begin with, it is, surely, *triangularity* which is the quality just as it is *Socrates* which is the particular. If so, a distinction is called for between ‘Triangularity is a quality’ (11) and what we might represent as

(82) *That x is triangular* is a particular-gappy proposition

and, correspondingly, between

(83) Socrates is a particular

and

(84) *That Socrates is a K* is a kind-gappy proposition.

Thus, if we assume for the moment that *ontological* categories are the material mode of speech for *syntactical* categories, then the syntactical counterpart of ‘Triangularity is a quality’ (11) would not be

(11^4) ‘x is triangular’ is a singular-term gappy attributive sentence

but simply '"Triangular" (in English) is an adjective' (11^2) and the syntactical counterpart of 'Socrates is a particular' (83) not

(84^1) 'Socrates is a K' is a common-noun gappy classifying sentence

but simply

(83^1) 'Socrates' is a singular term (of type 0).

The non-self-sufficiency, then, of universals and individuals is not a matter of gappiness, but rather a reflection of the fact that adjectives, common nouns, and singular terms alike are what they are because of their different contribution to the statement-making role performed by the *sentence.*

It is often said that 'one place predicate' is a more penetrating syntactical concept than that of an adjective—even when the latter is expanded to include adjectival expressions as well as simple adjectives. And there *is* certainly an element of truth in this contention which we might try to put by saying that 'one place predicate' makes explicit reference to the way in which adjectives are incomplete. But once we try to spell this out, we see that the point is not that 'adjective' obscures the fact that adjectives are incomplete—for it does not—but rather that it does not give us, so to speak, an intuitive picture of this incompleteness. Indeed, we are only half-way to this intuitive picture if we replace (11^2) by

(11^5) 'Triangular' (in English) is a one place predicate.

To get it we must say

(11^6) '— is triangular' (in English) is a singular-term-gappy-attributive sentence.

Consider, now, the statement

(82^1) *That — is triangular* is a particular-gappy state of affairs

(which is a candid reading of what might also be rendered by

(82^2) *That x is triangular* is a propositional (N.B.: *not* sentential) function).

What can we make of it? Are we not tempted to think that (82^1) is simply a rewriting of (11^6)? For, we might argue, how *could* (82^1) be true if it were *not* a rewriting of (11^6)? Can it be a complete sentence if it *contains* a gap instead of *mentioning* it? And where can an appropriate gap be found if not in the gappy sentence '— is triangular'?

Why, then, would we hesitate? What is there about the 'feel' of (82^1) which militates against the idea that it could be a rewriting of (11^6)? I think I can put my finger on it by calling attention to the fact that a foreigner who was learning English and had made substantial progress, but had not yet added the word 'triangular' to his vocabulary, could fully understand (11^6), whereas (82^1) cannot be fully understood unless one not only knows that 'triangular' is an English word, but actually has it in one's active vocabulary.

But if this is the source of our hesitation, we are in a position to answer our original question. For we have now located a difference between the 'material' and the 'formal' modes of speech which enables us to see how they can 'have the same force' without one being a simple *rewriting* of the other. For while it would be incorrect to say that '*That — is triangular* is a particular-gappy state of affairs' (82^1) is a *mere* rewriting of' '"— is triangular" (in English) is a singular-term-gappy attributive sentence' (11^6), it is at least a reasonable next step in the direction of the truth to interpret it as a rewriting which presupposes that 'writer' and 'reader' are able to *use* as well as *mention* sentences of the form '— is triangular'.

It should be noted, in this connection, that a similar point can be made about the difference between '"Dreieckig" (in German) means *triangular*' (65) and

(65[4]) 'Dreieckig' (in German) is the counterpart of the English word 'triangular'.

For the former presupposes, as the latter does not, that the English-speaking person to whom it is addressed not only recognizes that 'triangular' is an English word, but enjoys its presence in his active vocabulary. It is, as we have seen, by leading those to whom it is addressed to rehearse in imagination the role of 'triangular' that (65) is an explanation of the German word 'dreieckig'. Thus (65) has essentially the force of '"dreieckig" (in German), plays the same role as "triangular" in *our* language'.

And this is the place to pick up a topic which was raised towards the end of our first bout with the rubric '"—" means …' only to be dropped like the hot potato it is. I there pointed out that the context '"—" (in L) means *p*' (72), where '—' is a *sentence* of L, must not be confused with 'X, by uttering "—" (in L), asserts *that-p*' (73). The latter *does,* whereas the former does not, involve the use of the singular term 'that-p'. What then are we to do about *this* apparent commitment to Platonic entities? The clue is contained in (73) itself. I am not, however, suggesting that 'X asserts that-p' (74) is a simple *rewriting* of

(85) X utters '—' (in L)

which won't do at all for the obvious reason that one can assert, for example, that it is raining without using any given language, L. Shall we, then, accept the equation.

(86) X asserted that-p $=_{Df}$ There is a language, L, and a sentence S, such that S is a sentence of L *and* S (in L) means *p and* X, speaking L, uttered S?

This might be the *beginning* of an analysis, for our discussion of the material mode of speech has shown us that 'X asserts that-p' (74) might *mention* a sentence (in this case a sentence in an unspecified language), even though it does not appear to do so, and that 'that-p' can be construed as the name of a role which is played in different languages by different vocables and in the unspecified language by unspecified vocables. On the other hand, that 86 cannot be the *end* of the analysis is clear.

XV

I began by arguing that 'existential quantification over predicate or sentential variables' does not assert the existence of abstract entities. I then suggested that if the only contexts involving abstract singular terms of the forms 'f-ness', 'K-kind', and 'that-p' which could not be reformulated in terms of expressions of the forms 'x is f', 'x is a K', and 'p' were categorizing statements such as 'f-ness is a quality', 'K-kind is a class', 'that p is a proposition', then we might well hope to relieve Platonistic anxieties by the use of syntactical therapy. I then examined a context which has been thought to correlate words with extralinguistic abstract entities, namely the context '"—" (in L) means …', and found that it does not do so. Encouraged by this, I proceeded to examine the distinction between the material and the formal modes of speech to see if the idea that such categorizing statements as 'Triangularity is a quality' have the force of syntactical statements such as '"triangular" is an adjective' can run the gauntlet of familiar objections, with what I believe to be hopeful results.

Yet if I stand off and scrutinize the argument, my enthusiasm cannot but be sobered by a consciousness of how much remains to be done before something like a nominalistic position is secure. For I cannot overlook the fact that two of the most puzzling contexts in which abstract

singular terms occur have been noted only to be passed over in search of simpler game. I refer, of course, in the first place to *mentalistic* contexts such as

(87) Jones inferred *that* S is f

and, in the second, to such 'nomological' contexts as

(88) *That* it has just lightninged implies *that* it will shortly thunder.

Then there are such evaluative contexts as

(89) *That* he was late is better than *that* he not have come at all.

The task of clarifying the force of contexts such as these is as large as philosophy itself. And to this task the foregoing is but a prolegomenon.

[1] It might be thought illuminating to replace the original statement, (1), by

(1^2) S: Whiteness

and the statement

(9) White is a quality

by

(9^1) Whiteness: Qualitykind

and to say that in (1^2) 'Whiteness' is the 'predicate', whereas in (9^1) it is the 'subject'. It must be pointed out, however, that one has not shown that (1^2) is not simply a *rewriting* of the *categorial counterpart* of (1), namely

(1^1) S has whiteness

[that 'whiteness' is juxtaposed to 'S' says that S has whiteness] or, indeed, a rewriting of (1) itself [that 'whiteness' is juxtaposed to 'S' says that S is white]—in which case the singular term 'whiteness' would be a sham—unless one sketches the *modus operandi* of a new form of language which breaks away from our ordinary categories of 'singular term', 'common noun', 'adjective', etc., and which cannot in any straightforward sense be translated into the language we actually use. That (1^1)—or (1)—could be *rewritten* as (1^1), and that (9) could be *rewritten* as (9^1) has not the slightest tendency to show that they have a common logical form to be represented by '— : …'. Compare Peter Strawson's contribution to the symposium on "Logical Subjects and Physical Objects" in Volume XVII of the *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1957), and my criticisms thereof.

[2] By no means all common nouns and common noun expressions stand for *kinds* of thing. Kinds are a distinctive subset of *classes*, and we speak of the *instances* rather than the *members of kinds*. Since I am not concerned in this paper with the distinctive character of kinds, I shall refer to kinds simply as classes and speak of their members rather than their instances.

[3] The term 'individual' is often used in the sense of 'logical subject' as characterized above, In this broad use, 'individual' is to be contrasted with 'particular', for particulars are, *roughly*, those individuals which are referred to by the singular terms which occur in observation statements.

[4] It is important to note that while we can form the expression 'white-thing' from the adjective 'white' and the category word 'thing' in accordance with the formula

(16) S is a white-thing $=_{Df}$ S is a thing . S is white

it would be a serious mistake to suppose that all common nouns pertaining to physical objects are built from adjectives and the category word 'thing' in accordance with the formula

(17) S is an N $=_{Df}$ (S is a thing) and S is A_1 … A_n

(where 'N' is a common noun and the 'A_i's adjectives). To suppose that 'thing' is the sole *primitive* common name is *(a)* to overlook the fact that the category word 'thing' has a use only because there are statements of the form 'S is an N'; *(b)* to expose oneself to all the classical puzzles about *substrata.* (This point is elaborated in my "Substance and Form in Aristotle: an Exploration" in *The Journal of Philosophy,* 54, 1957, pp. 688-99.) Reflection on the first of these points makes it clear, incidentally, that it is a mistake to view the category of substance or thinghood as a *summum genus.*

[5] It follows that the phrase 'existential quantification' should be dropped and replaced by (rather than abbreviated into) one of its logistical equivalents, e.g. ∑-quantification.

[6] Supplementary Volume XXV, 1951, p. 257

[7] *Op. cit.,* p. 133.

[8] Clearly the reading of '(Ef) S is f' as 'S is something' would require the use of indices to draw distinctions which become relevant when it is a question of reading such statements as (27). For if Jack were tall and Jill were short, it would follow that Jack and Jill were both *something,* though they would not be 'the *same* something'.

[9] *Op. cit.,* pp. 149 ff.

[10] First published in Volume XVI of the *Vierteljahrschrift fuer Wissenschaftliche Philosophie* (1892), pp. 192-205; translated by Peter Geach and published in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege* by Peter Geach and Max Black, New York, Philosophical Library, 1952.

[11] There is a family of semantical concepts each of which might be (and has been) conceived of as a 'mode of meaning'. Thus we might say that in our language 'triangular' *connotes* triangularity, *denotes*$_1$ triangular things, and *denotes*$_2$ the class of triangular things. Each of these is a legitimate concept and a proper subject for logical investigation. But none of them, obviously, is what Geach has in mind when he speaks of 'triangular' as *standing for* something. The sense of 'meaning' which I have in mind is that in which it is an *informative* statement for us to say that 'dreieckig' (in German) means *triangular*, whereas, '"triangular" (in our language) means *triangular*' is as 'trifling' as 'White horses are white'.

[12] This Carnapian interpretation of categorizing statements would carry with it a reinterpretation of the categorial counterparts of such statements as (1). Thus, 'S exemplifies f-ness' would be the equivalent in the material mode, a *quasi-semantical* equivalent of '"f" is *true of* S'. The relation of the latter to '"S is f" is true' would remain to be explored. Again, 'S is a member of K-kind' would be the quasi-semantical equivalent of '"K" is *true of* S'. The latter, however, would seem to be as closely related to 'S satisfies the criteria of "K"', as to '"S is a K" is true'.
[13] See footnote 1, ?[internal page reference]?.
[14] To point out that Carnap's definition of 'true sentence of L' does not have these consequences is not to endorse his definition as an *explication* of the concept of truth. See Chapter 6 above ["Truth and 'Correspondence'", *Science, Perception and Reality*].