

Hare's Arguments Against Ethical Naturalism

L. W. Sumner

The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 64, No. 23 (Dec. 7, 1967), 779-791.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-362X%2819671207%2964%3A23%3C779%3AHAAEN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>

The Journal of Philosophy is currently published by Journal of Philosophy, Inc..

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/jphil.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

VOLUME LXIV, NO. 23, DECEMBER 7, 1967

HARE'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST ETHICAL NATURALISM

SINCE G. E. Moore one conviction common to nearly all the major figures in moral philosophy has been that naturalism in ethics is somehow or other fundamentally wrong. It is not just that this or that naturalistic theory is mistaken, nor even that all such theories have as a matter of fact been mistaken; it is rather that *any* naturalistic theory *must* be mistaken. Naturalism is fallacious; it commits the naturalistic fallacy.

Of a conviction so widely held one may justifiably expect a proof, but here one will be disappointed, for the sad truth is that most attempts to demonstrate that naturalism commits a fallacy have fallen distressingly short of the mark. This problem began with Moore's "open question" argument, though it by no means ended there. The advent of each new sort of ethical theory has brought with it a fresh attempt to supply the missing proof. The most recent of these attempts has been made by that group of moral philosophers commonly called "prescriptivists." The *locus classicus* of the prescriptivist assault against naturalism is chapter 5 of R. M. Hare's *The Language of Morals*.^{*} The question at hand is whether prescriptivists have done any better than their predecessors at exposing the fallacy in naturalism; my intention is to go some way toward answering this question by examining the arguments Hare employs.

Little will be said here about Hare's place in the anti-naturalist tradition, though he regards himself as refurbishing Moore's line of attack [83-84]. One point, however, is worth remarking. Hare shares with others in the tradition the desire to show that no naturalistic analysis of any "value-word" is possible. He also shares the strategy of attempting to prove this quite general position by concentrating attention on one in particular of these value-words, namely 'good'.

^{*} Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952. All page references to this work are included in the text and enclosed in square brackets.

Clearly the assumption is that what is found to be true of 'good' will also be true of all other value-words, thus that 'good' is a typical case [78-79]. This assumption could perhaps be justified, but anti-naturalists have seldom, if ever, troubled to do so. The result is a rather questionable strategy, that of "refuting" naturalism by dealing exclusively with what is certain to be one of the hardest cases for a naturalist. It is possible that no simple or convenient or interesting naturalistic analysis of 'good' is possible, just because no simple or convenient or interesting analysis of 'good' of any sort, naturalistic or otherwise, is possible. In this case, if naturalism fails for 'good', it will be only for reasons that will apply to every competing theory as well. And it might well be the case that naturalistic analyses of most other value-words are quite feasible. Most arguments against naturalism, then, Hare's included, look very much like arguments from a special case.

We have proceeded thus far as though we knew what naturalism is, what "naturalistic analyses of value-words" are. It is unlikely that we do. One problem here is that for a long while few were willing to admit that they were naturalists in ethics, and thus we lack statements of what the theory is. Most such statements come from the mouths of anti-naturalists and are meant merely to serve as preludes to attack. Fortunately we may here ignore the question what naturalism is and focus attention on what Hare conceives it to be, since it is our intent to determine whether his arguments succeed against the position as he himself construes it. This means that we shall be ignoring what in another context might be a rather important issue, namely whether there have been any holders of the position called "naturalism," as Hare defines it.

Hare does not state, clearly and univocally, his definition of ethical naturalism. He does, however, furnish us with a series of remarks about naturalism [81-83] which may be plausibly treated as (perhaps mutually complementary) attempts at a definition of the theory. Were we to treat each of them as a definition in its own right, we would get somewhat the following list:

- D₁ X is a naturalistic theory =_{ae} X is a theory against which Moore's refutation (or some version of it) is valid [82]
- D₂ X is a naturalistic theory =_{ae} X is the theory that the characteristic 'good' is related to some set of characteristics of things in the way in which the characteristic 'rectangular' is related to the set of characteristics 'rectilinear

- and having all its angles of 90 degrees'
[82]
- D₂ X is a naturalistic theory = *ae* X is the theory that the characteristic 'good' is logically dependent on some set of characteristics of things [81]
- D₃ X is a naturalistic theory = *ae* X is the theory that there is a set of characteristics of a thing which entail that the thing is good [81]
- D₄ X is a naturalistic theory = *ae* X is the theory that 'good' means 'having such and such a set of characteristics' [82-83]
- D₅ X is a naturalistic theory = *ae* X is the theory that there are defining characteristics for 'good' [83]
- D₇ X is a naturalistic theory = *ae* X is the theory that there is a set of characteristics of things such that the statement that a thing is good and lacks that set of characteristics is a contradiction [82-83]
- D₈ X is a naturalistic theory = *ae* X is the theory that there is a set of characteristics of things such that it is logically impossible that a thing should be good and lack that set of characteristics [83]

Of these definitions D₁ seems uncharitable, to say the least, and will be discarded. All of D₃ through D₈ are intended as explications of the relation mentioned in D₂; since the question whether Hare explicates this relation correctly need not concern us, D₂ is likewise dispensable. Hare clearly regards the remaining definitions as at least coextensive; that is, the definienda are all intended to pick out the same class of theories. The belief that they do appears to rest on a number of assumptions about the meaning of 'logically dependent', 'entails', 'means', 'defining characteristics', 'contradiction', and 'logically impossible'. These assumptions are too numerous to sort out here; suffice it to say that some at least of them seem highly questionable, and that even if they are made true by stipulation their very proliferation shows that Hare, like other anti-naturalists, is not at all *careful* in the way he defines the theory he is attacking. For our purpose it is enough that in one way or another Hare arrives at D₈, which he treats throughout his argument as the privileged definition of ethical naturalism. Under this definition naturalism becomes (a) a theory about *meaning* and (b) a theory about the meaning of a certain *word*. Whether this is an accurate account of what naturalists actually do is, again, another matter.

D_3 to D_8 have some additional shortcomings. First, naturalism is defined as a theory about 'good'; an adequate definition would have to be expanded to include all other so-called "value-words." This we shall not attempt here. Second, Hare vacillates between treating naturalism as a theory about 'good' *simpliciter* and as a theory about 'good' as it occurs in phrases like 'good picture', 'good chronometer', 'good man'. The latter mode is both easier to work with and more charitable toward naturalists, for it does not commit them to believing that there is some characteristic or set of characteristics common to all good things, in virtue of which they are good. If we adopt this revision, accept D_8 as the privileged definition, and identify the relevant set of characteristics as C , we get the following:

D. X is a naturalistic theory =_{at} X is the theory that 'good A ' means ' A which is C '

Though we shall adopt D_8 as our working definition of a naturalistic theory, it is clear that it too is fraught with difficulty. Presumably Hare does not wish to claim that, for *any* C , a theory that defines 'good A ' as ' A which is C ' is naturalistic or commits the naturalistic fallacy. Indeed he quite clearly denies this [92]. Thus a theory that defines 'good A ' as ' A that is worthy of commendation' would not be naturalistic. But why not, since it satisfies D_8 ? Clearly we need some restriction of ' C ' to *natural* characteristics of things. Such a restriction is exceedingly hard to come by without circularity, i.e., without defining 'natural characteristic' as one such that a theory that defines 'good A ' as ' A having that characteristic' commits the naturalistic fallacy. Hare does not attempt to solve this problem, nor shall we. Instead he seems to assume that we all know what the guilty properties of things are; we can all pick out natural from (not nonnatural but) evaluative properties. I shall assume, I think contrary to fact, that we have this skill.

Given this account of what naturalism is, it is Hare's task to show that it involves a fallacy. I shall not quibble about the word 'fallacy'. However, I shall take it to be incumbent upon Hare to provide an argument to show that *any* naturalistic theory, whatever its details, *must* be mistaken. In terms of D_8 , Hare must show that there is no A and no C such that 'good A ' means ' A which is C '. This is important: to "expose the fallacy in naturalism" it is not sufficient to show that this or that theory has the *wrong* analysis of 'good A '. Rather, one must show that no naturalistic analysis of 'good A ' is *possible*. Hare's argument is designed to do just this. However, part of my purpose is to show that, although Hare believes himself to be advancing a single

conclusive argument against naturalism, in fact (a) he puts forward at least six quite distinct arguments and (b) none of them is conclusive—or even very plausible. What follows is an attempt to reconstruct the different arguments Hare at one point or another proposes, and to justify the negative criticism of them.

The first argument [84] goes somewhat as follows:

- A₁ (1) If 'good *A*' means '*A* which is *C*' then "This *A* which is *C* is good' means 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*'.
 (2) In saying "This *A* which is *C* is good" we do not wish to say "This *A* which is *C* is *C*."
 ∴ (3) 'Good *A*' does not mean '*A* which is *C*'.

The argument so stated is a curious sort of *modus tollens*. It is not of the form 'if *p* then *q*, and not-*q*; so not-*p*'. It is rather of the form 'if *p* then *q*, and we wish that not-*q*; so not-*p*'. This argument-form would appear to have interesting possibilities. Clearly, however, something has gone wrong. We begin to see what it is by asking who "we" are in (2). There would appear to be at least two relevant possibilities, both of which Hare exploits in other contexts. The first is that 'we' refers to the person who has put forward the definition of 'good *A*'; for ease of reference we shall call him "the naturalist." One issue raised immediately is what *sort* of definition the naturalist is proposing, in what spirit it is to be taken. More will be said about this matter below; for the moment it will suffice to point out that, under this interpretation, (2) will in all likelihood be false. At least there is no earthly reason to expect it to be true.

The other, and at present more likely, possibility is that 'we' refers to English speakers in general, those who know and use the language. But still, the matter cannot be one of what we English speakers "wish to say" in saying that this *A* which is *C* is good. Individual speakers may have any number of interesting but irrelevant wishes in using this locution. Even were there a consensus of wishes among language users, whatever this might mean, it would hardly lead us to conclude that 'This *A* which is *C* is good' does not mean 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*', only perhaps that we *wish* it didn't.

The issue must be, then, not what English speakers wish to say (whatever that is taken to mean) but rather what they do say, or, better, what what they say means. The argument then becomes:

- A₂ (1) If 'good *A*' means '*A* which is *C*', then 'This *A* which is *C* is good' means 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*'.
 (4) 'This *A* which is *C* is good' does not mean 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*'.
 ∴ (3) 'Good *A*' does not mean '*A* which is *C*'.

Now we have a straightforward *modus tollens*. To cast the argument in this way is to treat a naturalistic definition of 'good *A*' as what is commonly called a "lexical" definition, that is, as an attempt to report what the phrase 'good *A*' as used by English speakers means. It is no longer to stipulate, nor to persuade. Since this is in fact the way Hare seems to treat naturalism, we may take A_2 as a reasonable reconstrual of A_1 .

But if this is the argument, then it is plainly inadequate. Even if one accepts the truth of (1), how is one to be convinced of the truth of (4)? To establish (4) is to establish that 'good *A*' does not mean '*A* which is *C*'—but this is what the argument is supposed to prove. The argument would appear, then, to be circular, or, better, if (3) can be proved without it, unnecessary. Indeed, perhaps it is enough to say that A_2 is simply a version of Moore's open-question argument, treating definitions of 'good' as what Moore called "verbal definitions proper." As such it suffers from all the weaknesses of the species. But Hare must have more to offer than this; his intention to "restate Moore's argument" [84] surely must be interpreted as the intent to rehabilitate, refurbish, or strengthen the argument rather than merely to copy it.

In fact Hare does have considerably more to offer. The arguments thus far considered are clearly intended to be supplemented by, and perhaps intended to be interpreted as, yet a further argument. The distinctive feature of this argument is that it introduces the notion of *commending*. It may be stated as follows [85]:

- A_2 (1) If 'good *A*' means '*A* which is *C*', then 'This *A* which is *C* is good' means 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*'.
- (5) We wish to use 'This *A* which is *C* is good' to commend the *A* for being *C*.
- (6) 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*' cannot be used to commend the *A* for being *C*.
- ∴ (3) 'Good *A*' does not mean '*A* which is *C*'.

As in the case of A_1 , the argument form is a rather peculiar one. The definition of 'good *A*' as '*A* which is *C*' prevents our using a certain sentence in the way in which we wish to, namely to commend the *A* for being *C*; thus the definition is unacceptable. As before, we may recast the argument by (a) interpreting the 'we' of (5) as referring to English speakers in general, and (b) treating the matter as one, not of what we wish to do with a certain sentence (whatever this means), but of what we in fact do with it. Except for one rather puzzling passage [92–93] it is clear that, for Hare, what is at stake is the way in which certain English sentences are in fact used.

The argument will then look somewhat like the following [89, 90-91]:

- A. (1) If 'good *A*' means '*A* which is *C*', then 'This *A* which is *C* is good' means 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*'.
- (7) 'This *A* which is *C* is good' is used to commend the *A* for being *C*.
- (6) 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*' cannot be used to commend the *A* for being *C*.
- ∴ (4) 'This *A* which is *C* is good' does not mean 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*'.
- ∴ (3) 'Good *A*' does not mean '*A* which is *C*'.

In short, defining 'good *A*' as '*A* which is *C*' will rob us of a quite specific ability, namely, the ability to use the sentence 'This *A* which is *C* is good' to commend the *A* for being *C*. Notice that, thus far at least, it has not been asserted that defining 'good *A*' as '*A* which is *C*' robs us of the general ability to commend *A*'s by calling them good *A*'s, nor of the more specific ability to commend *A*'s for being *C* by calling them good *A*'s. All that is thus far claimed is that we no longer have *one* way of commending an *A* for being *C*, namely, saying "This *A* which is *C* is good."

This argument represents at least the beginning of Hare's emendation of the open-question argument; the all-important innovation is consideration of the function of the word 'good', namely to commend. It is on this argument, and on further variations of it, that Hare's enterprise stands or falls. There are obviously a number of ways in which the above argument may be criticized. In the first place, it is as it stands invalid because incomplete. It requires the addition of at least the following premise:

- (8) If 'This *A* which is *C* is good' means 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*', then any linguistic function performable by using the former sentence must be performable by using the latter.

The argument, with the addition of this premise and some further reconstruction, would then be valid. Of course doubt now arises concerning both the meaning and truth of (8). Its meaning depends largely on what one means by 'linguistic function'; this issue will be gone into later. Its truth would seem to depend on that of a further premise:

- (9) For any two sentences, *p* and *q*, *p* means the same as *q* only if any linguistic function performable by using *p* is performable by using *q*, and vice versa.

As we shall see, Hare in one of his later arguments makes use of a premise similar to (9) but referring not to sentences but to words. Since the two issues are connected, I shall say no more here about (9)

except to register the conviction that both it and (8) are almost certainly false. The question now at hand concerns the truth of the other premises of A_4 . The argument employs three such premises, and I shall try to show that serious problems arise in the case of each.

First (1). We have thus far left this assertion unquestioned, but it is now time to remedy this defect. In order to do so it is necessary to reformulate (1) in a way that will not affect the argument:

- (10) If 'good A ' means ' A which is C ', then 'A good A is an A which is C ' means 'An A which is C is an A which is C '.

It is clear that (1) is true if and only if (10) is true. Against (10) all I have to offer is a miserable *ad hominem*. Hare himself [89-90] does not accept the truth of a statement similar in all essential respects to (10), namely

- (11) If 'puppy' means 'young dog', then 'A puppy is a young dog' means 'A young dog is a young dog'.

If Hare thinks (11) false, then it is odd he should accept, if only by implication, (10). Since the only apparent difference between (10) and (11) is that the former is about 'good A ' while the latter is about 'puppy', it is incumbent upon Hare to show that this difference *makes* a difference. But this would seem to be what the whole argument is about.

Hare's reason for thinking (11) false is that 'A puppy is a young dog', when used to report a definition, is equivalent in meaning to

- (12) The English sentence 'If anything is a puppy it is a young dog (and vice versa)' is analytic.

and that (12) does not mean the same as

- (13) The English sentence 'If anything is a young dog it is a young dog' is analytic.

Whether Hare is right about this or not does not really concern me. All that does concern me is that, by parity of reasoning, 'A good A is an A which is C ' will be equivalent in meaning to

- (14) The English sentence 'If anything is a good A then it is an A which is C (and vice versa)' is analytic.

and (14) will not mean the same as

- (15) The English sentence 'If anything is an A which is C then it is an A which is C ' is analytic.

But, still by parity of reasoning, this will falsify (10), and ultimately (1).

So much then for (1). We are left with (7) and (6). Let us suppose for a moment that (7) is true. What in that case is the status of (6) will depend largely on the reason why "This *A* which is *C* is *C*" cannot be used to commend the *A* for being *C*. The reason would appear to be that the sentence is analytic [90–91]. Thus it is (at this stage at least) not denied that the sentence "This *A* is *C*" could be used to commend the *A*. This denial will figure in one of Hare's later arguments, but is not involved at this juncture. The essential point of *A*₄ is that "This *A* which is *C* is *C*" cannot be used to commend the *A* for being *C*. And the reason that it cannot is that it is analytic, that it does not say "anything of substance" about the *A*. It would appear, then, that Hare is relying on some such principle as the following:

(16) A sentence that is analytic cannot be used to commend.

and perhaps as well the more general principle:

(17) A sentence that is analytic can be used only to state a definition.

Both (17) and (16) are, however, as they stand, questionable to say the least. The point of (17) is to place a limit on what can be done with an analytic sentence, what linguistic functions it can be used to perform. Allowing still for the vagueness of 'linguistic function', it seems that no such limit exists. The common view, to the extent there is one, would appear to be that the question of what a sentence *means* and the question of what linguistic jobs can be done with it are quite different. Whether a sentence is analytic is determined by what the meaning of the sentence is; what the sentence can be used to do is determined by a number of further factors, e.g., the situations in which it is most commonly uttered, the sorts of persons to whom it is addressed, the ingenuity of the speaker, etc. There seems at least no obvious limit to what an analytic sentence can be used to do. To shift attention to tautologies for a moment, compare the following situations: (a) Smith, an instructor in logic, is furnishing his class a list of elementary valid argument-forms: "And here is another one: if either *p* or *q*, and not-*p*, then *q*"; (b) Smith, later, is addressing one of his students who persists in getting it wrong: "No, you dunderhead, if either *p* or *q*, and not-*p*, then *q*"; (c) Jones, a debater, sums up his argument by asserting with a flourish the principle which ties it all together: "But if either *p* or *q*, and not-*p*, then *q*." Now in each case exactly the same sentence, a tautology, has been uttered and in each case it means the same. But it has certainly been uttered for different reasons, and it seems plausible to say (granted one wants ever to say it) that it has been uttered to perform different functions. In the first

case it is used to instruct or inform, in the second to berate or scold, in the third to conclude a case or display skill. Examples of jobs that tautologies and analytic sentences can be used to perform could be multiplied endlessly (see, for instance, the common uses of 'Fair is fair', 'Boys will be boys', etc.). Can an analytic sentence or a tautology be used to perform the specific function of commending? Imagine Smith, the logic instructor, finding in his class only one student who can get the tautology right and asserting it with emphasis to point out that *that* is the way it is done.

The upshot thus far is that Hare has certainly provided no reason for believing that 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*' could not be used to commend the *A* for being *C*, and thus no reason for thinking that 'This *A* which is *C* is good' could not be so used if 'good *A*' meant the same as '*A* which is *C*'. There does, however, seem to be something a little fishy about 'This *A* which is *C* is *C*'. It does have the appearance of that sort of sentence which a language user would have few occasions for uttering, whereas 'This *A* which is *C* is good' does not have that appearance. However, it is just this matter of appearances which is at issue. '*A* which is *C*' is being advanced as the meaning in English of 'good *A*'. If this account of the meaning of 'good *A*' is semantically accurate, then there ought to be few occasions (which is not to say no occasions) on which speakers of the language would be called upon to say that a particular *A* which is *C* is good. The sentence would be redundant, and the reply to this cannot be that any account of the meaning of 'good *A*' in terms of *C* will leave this sentence nonredundant; for this is just the open-question argument all over again. As for commending, again if the account of the meaning of 'good *A*' were correct, language users would not have to say 'This *A* which is *C* is good' in order to commend it; they could perfectly well do so simply by saying 'This *A* is *C*'. But more on this point later.

The above criticism of Hare's A_4 has, however, a certain uneasy obviousness about it. One has the feeling that there is more going on in Hare's argument than just this, that it has somewhat more substance to it. This feeling is well grounded. We have proceeded thus far by assuming that when Hare uses the term 'commend' he means something quite ordinary by it. Under this construal, commending is a common sort of activity, akin to praising, recommending, approving, and so on. The problem has been that, if this is what Hare means by 'commend', then (6) appears to be false. I suspect, however, that this is not at all what he means, or at least not all that he means. At any rate I think it is wise to assume that Hare here means something more by commending than we have allowed for. I am even willing to

assume, if only for the sake of argument, that he has in mind some sense of 'commend' for which (6) is true. What I now wish to point out is that, if this is the case, it raises serious doubts as to the status of (7).

The sense of 'commend' with which we have been working thus far I shall call the *ordinary* sense; it is the sense in which commending is one among many of what Austin called "illocutionary acts." It is not our job here to identify what *special* sense of the term Hare might avail himself of. However, it would appear to be one at least akin to another special notion he uses, that of prescribing. To commend something would then be to commit oneself to acting in some way, perhaps to choosing the thing. The details of this special sense of commending need not be worked out, so long as it is recognized as a departure from the ordinary sense of the term. That it is requires more argument than can be spared here. Perhaps the following will do. Hare clearly intends in (7) to assert that 'This *A* which is *C* is good' is *always* used to commend the *A* for being *C*, or at least always so used when the sentence has any "evaluative force" at all. In the ordinary sense, commending is but one activity among others that this sentence could be used to do; it could just as easily be used to praise, or grade, or evaluate, or recommend, or indeed to describe or state a fact. Thus if Hare wishes to maintain that the sentence is always used to commend, and especially if he wishes to maintain that this excludes its being used to describe, then some special sense of 'commend' is in the offing.

When used as a premise in A_4 , (7) is clearly meant to be unproblematic, obvious, hardly worth stating, etc. If 'commend' is being used in its ordinary sense, then it may have this status. But if some special sense of 'commend' is being appealed to, then (7) is no longer obvious; it requires defense. Presumably its defense becomes part and parcel of Hare's prescriptivist position about 'good'. Now I think it can be shown that this position is indefensible; thus I think that (7), so interpreted, can be shown to be false. However, I cannot undertake to confute Hare's positive theory here, and thus the present study is necessarily incomplete. However, we can now see that, if Hare is to present a 'refutation' of naturalism, he must fall back on his own competing theory about 'good'. This turn of events has some interesting consequences. First, since Hare *needs* this special sense of 'commend' in the argument against naturalism, this argument is not self-sufficient, but is rather a mere adjunct to the positive theory. Second, this theory must be established independent of a refutation of naturalism; Hare cannot *use* this refutation as an argument for his own

theory. Third, the notions of a *refutation* of naturalism and of a naturalistic *fallacy* now reach their vanishing point. It is no longer a matter of showing that naturalism commits a fallacy. The activity in question now is the much more familiar one of constructing a theory about the meaning of 'good' which is, if possible, better than any naturalistic theory. Naturalism in ethics is then, at best, superseded. It is shown to be "fallacious" only in the sense that any theory, when replaced by a better one, is shown thereby to be fallacious. Naturalism then commits no *special* error; there is no naturalistic *fallacy*. At any rate, it is clear that the burden of proof is upon Hare to show that (7) is true. He is not entitled to *assume* its truth in an argument against naturalism.

Hare's A_4 is thus impaled upon a dilemma rooted in this notion of commending, assuming that one can clearly differentiate between what we have called the ordinary sense of the term and Hare's special sense. If it is used in the ordinary sense, then (6) is false; if it is used in the special sense, then (7) is at best problematic and at worst false. In either case the argument lacks an ingredient essential to its success.

The issue does not end here, however, for Hare has further arguments. One of them is formulable as follows [85]:

- A_5 (18) If 'good A ' means ' A which is C ', then it is impossible to commend A 's for being C .
 (19) It is not impossible to commend A 's for being C .
 \therefore (3) 'Good A ' does not mean ' A which is C '.

Of this argument I shall say little. Hare clearly intends it as a formulation of A_4 . It differs from A_4 , however, in at least one respect. The point of A_4 is that defining 'good A ' as ' A which is C ' robs us of one particular way of commending an A for being C , namely, saying 'This A which is C is good'. This argument now generalizes somewhat: if 'good A ' means ' A which is C ', then we will have no means whatever of commending an A for being C . Saying, for instance, 'This A is C ' will not do the job. This argument raises, so far as I can see, no issues not raised by other of Hare's arguments. One wants again to know what 'commend' means here. In particular, one wants to know why calling a thing C will not suffice to commend it for being C , in the way that calling a person polite may be to commend him for being polite. The answer to this question may be that ' C ', so long as it is a naturalistic term, will differ from 'good' in one essential respect, namely that it cannot be used to commend. But this issue brings us to Hare's last argument.

The argument is a simple one [91-92]:

- A₄ (20) 'Good *A*' is used to commend *A*'s.
 (21) '*A* which is *C*' cannot be used to commend *A*'s.
 ∴ (3) 'Good *A*' does not mean '*A* which is *C*'.

It is clear that Hare did not distinguish A₆ from his previous arguments. It is also clear that it is distinct. A₄ is compatible with our being able to commend *A*'s for being *C* by some means other than saying 'This *A* which is *C* is good'. A₅ is compatible with our being able to commend *A*'s for having characteristics other than *C*. This new argument holds that, if 'good *A*' means '*A* which is *C*', then we cannot use 'good *A*' to commend *A*'s at all, for possessing any characteristics. However, the argument as formulated above is clearly incomplete, requiring an additional premise. The premise in question would appear to be a counterpart to our earlier (9), namely

- (22) For any two words, *a* and *b*, *a* means the same as *b* only if any linguistic function performable by using *a* is performable by using *b*, and vice versa.

The argument, being in an obvious way stronger than its predecessors, will raise all the problems raised by them, especially those connected with the notion of commending. Besides these issues, (20) and (21) would appear to have special problems. Up to this point it has been *sentences* that are used to commend; now it is *words* or *phrases*. It will have to be explained how the function of a sentence is attached to one of its constituents.

But it is the additional premise (22) that raises the interestingly new issues. (22) states a necessary condition for two words to be equivalent in meaning. I shall here assume that 'linguistic function' has the sense of 'illocutionary act', for reasons set out earlier. If (22) is intended simply as a description of one necessary condition for words to be equivalent in meaning (and not rather as a requirement, recommendation, or proposal), then it seems obviously false. Consider the case of a quite ordinary, sedate English word that has a colloquial, or slang, or vulgar equivalent. My intuition is that the second means the same as, is a synonym of, the first. It is unlikely, however, that they have the same function. Indeed, it is to be wondered whether there are any two terms in the language equivalent in function in the required way. Synonymous expressions are difficult enough to come by as it is, without there being added conditions. The falsity of (22) is, indeed, just a special case of a general principle alluded to earlier, namely that the meaning of an expression is one matter and what it is used to do is another. But if (22) is false, then the last of Hare's arguments against naturalism, like the others, fails of its purpose.