

⇒ Defense of Common Sense

~~Aristotle~~ The Role of Commonsense has been debatable since beginning, Aristotle was 1st Commonsense philosopher. In modern phil. many philosophers appeal to Commonsense such as Descartes, Leibnitz & Berkeley.

In contemporary times, Moore has been the strongest advocate of Commonsense or ordinary lang. He defended Commonsense belief over speculative ideas. He says that doubt on Commonsense expresses doubt on a person's mental health. Yet, it is very amusing to find many theories which do not appeal to Commonsense at all. These metaphysical theories appear perfect but irrelevant to our common life.

⇒ Moore defends Commonsense as -

- ✓ Moore alludes to many basic theisms which no philosopher can deny without absurdity such as -
- (1) All human beings have same living body as I
 - (2) My body is at distance from that mantelpiece
 - (3) Earth existed since ages as its inhabitants had been in contact with each other
 - (4) Phrases like 'we' or 'us' shows belief in our own existence as of others.

✓ Commonsense sometimes means acceptance of some beliefs that are commonly held, though not invariably held - belief in existence of God, soul etc. Moore is not interested in establishing them or refusing them, but argues only for those beliefs which are held to be true by all men without exception. They are assumed even by those who reject and question them.

✓ Commonsense sometimes is a way of knowing such that it requires no evidence to hold certain propositions true, - these propositions are known indubitably without any mental effort. Moore accords to such Commonsense & argues that there is no need to draw sophisticated logical arguments to refute those who disregard such simple truths for ex. I have a body or my body is at a distance from that mantelpiece.

✓ Commonsense often means certain truths which cannot be made evident by proofs but there is absurdity in holding opinion contrary to them. Moore defends such truths when he defends Commonsense & holds that absurdity involves in some philosophers who claim that we cannot know with certainty that we exist or not. Moore argues that if this is true, then all philosophical discussion is contingent as no one ever lived to hold any views

⇒ Moore's defence of Commonsense is
in a way defence of ordinary lang. as -

Moore regards philosophical paradoxes as the result of rejection of ordinary language. When philosophers reject certain propositions that such as 'there are material things', they tend to imply that these propositions mean sth different from what they are ordinarily understood to mean. In doing so, they are rejecting ordinary lang. But Moore argues that, there is no sophisticated meaning behind ordinary lang. ordinary lang. is the correct lang.

Moore says that in ordinary lang. when we say such words as material things, we mean such object as tables & chairs. In ordinary lang. knowing means knowing with certainty, not simply believing.

ordinary lang. does not misrepresent facts, whereas philosophers distort facts by employing sophisticated lang. in interpreting ordinary lang. statements. Most philosophical controversies are the result of attempt to find any hidden meaning behind simple meaning of statements.

However, Moore says that still sth. is needed - to analyze the meaning of ordinary lang. statements. From such analysis, Moore comes out with his theory of Commonsense data - what we immediately see,

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is part of the surface of the object & rest we just infer.

With this theory of commonsense data - analysis, meaning of ordinary statement, Moore himself is committing the same error for which he condemns the philosophers - trying to find some sophisticated meaning in ordinary statements. It may be argued that, Berkeley was also undertaking an analysis & interpretation of commonsense notion of matter found in ordinary lang. When he asserted esse est percipi in what way then is Moore different from his opponent?

⇒ Summary of Moore's defence :

- ✓ Common sense is universally accepted
- ✓ There is some kind of compulsion felt by us in acceptance of common sense worldviews
- ✓ Various kinds of inconsistencies will flow from the denial of common sense belief
- ✓ To say that there is common sense view of the world is to say that it is true
- ✓ one can see by inspection that commonsense is self-evident.

⇒ Critical Comments

- ✓ He never gave any systemized explanation of Common Sense, but gave only a list of certain Common sense beliefs.
- ✓ He said that Commonsense beliefs are self-evident, then why does he give argument to prove them? Further many of these axioms are overlapping!
- ✓ Many of these beliefs are based on superstitions or dogmas which have been or are liable to be rejected on scientific knowledge. So, there is always chance for refutation in future.