It is well-known that some syntactic domains are transparent to some movement types, but not to others. The classical example is improper movement, whereby A'-movement can leave a finite clause (What did it seem that Alex had eaten?), but A -movement cannot (*Alex seems ate natto). One particularly general account of these asymmetries, known as the "Williams Cycle", stems from Williams (1974, 2003, 2013) and van Riemsdijk and Williams (1981). The core intuition behind the Williams Cycle is that there is a systematic relationship between the locality of an operation and the height of its trigger in the functional sequence (i.e. the clausal spine).

In this talk, I argue that case assignment is impossible in configurations that parallel these generalized improper-movement configurations. Thus, like improper movement, there is "improper case". The empirical motivation comes from (i) the interaction between case and movement and (ii) crossclausal case assignment in Finnish. I propose the Ban on Improper Case, according to which a DP in XP cannot license dependent case on another DP across YP if Y is higher than X in the functional sequence. This conclusion indicates that the principles governing the locality of case assignment are the same as the principles governing the locality of movement. I argue that a unified analysis of these effects becomes available if we radically rethink how clausal embedding works, as initiated by Williams (2003, 2013).