Master of Sacred Theology Thesis   Concordia Seminary Scholarship

5-1-1966

An Examination of the Logic of Religious Discourse with a View to Ascertaining the Impact of Linguistic Analysis Upon Contemporary Philosophy of Religion

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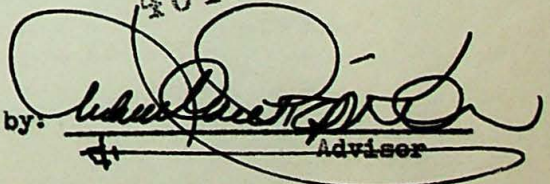
AN EXAMINATION OF THE LOGIC OF RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE WITH A VIEW

TO ASCERTAINING THE IMPACT OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS UPON

CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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May 1966

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Adviser

_____
Reader

SHORT TITLE:

THE LOGIC OF RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

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CHAPTER I

THE LOGIC OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

The Problem

This paper proposes to examine how linguistic analysis, together
with its precursor logical positivism, has provoked a reassessment of
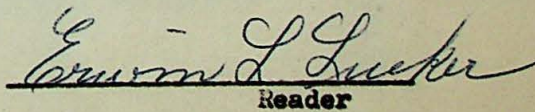the nature of religious discourse. The problem is accurately stated in
two questions: (1) What are the challenges which analysis directs to the
philosopher of religion in the area of religious language? (2) In what
ways do the replies of the philosophers of religion relate to and illu-
mine these challenges?

Delimiting the Scope

A number of factors limit the scope of the study. Chronologically
the investigation is restricted to ideational activity of the twentieth
century. Great Britian, some of the commonwealth nations (New Zealand,
Australia, Canada), and the United States provide the geographical bounda-
ries.[1] The author's decision not to include currents of contemporary phil-
osophy which are involved in linguistic problems, but are not immediately
related to linguistic analysis or directly relevant to the question of
religious discourse, is also a limiting factor. On this account the con-
tinental discussion of the interrelation between language and phenomenology

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[1]The geographical boundaries are roughly those of analysis' sphere
of influence. The Scandinavian countries also, in part, enter this cate-
gory. Austria is included by reason of the Vienna Circle.

has not been an object of research.[2] For the same reason the work of

Paul Tillich has not been examined, although it touches on religious

discourse at many points. Finally, the recent investigation of axiologi-

cal and ethical language, although it may be extrapolated from its own

sphere into the realm of religious discourse, does not lie within the

scope of the study.

In addition, the paper is circumscribed in that it offers critiques

neither of the philosophical movement known as linguistic analysis, nor

of the numerous theories which describe the nature of religious dis-

course.[3] On the other hand, the paper seeks to record particular criti-

cisms of individual statements or concepts when the criticisms of other

men are illuminative.

It is the writer's persuasion that presuppositions restrict the

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[2]This discussion includes, among many others, Georg Jánoska's Die
sprachlichen Grundlagen der Philosophie (Graz: Akademische Druck- und
Verlagsanstalt, 1962), and articles by Johannes Bapt. Lotz, "Sprache
und Denken. Zur Phänomenologie und Metaphysik der Sprache," Scholastik,
XXXI (1956), 496-514, and "Philosophie und Sprache," Scholastik, XL
(October 1965), 481-511. The two articles deal in part with Heidegger's
philosophy of language. In this regard it is interesting to note that
the editors of Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Tübingen: J. C. B.
Mohr, c.1962), felt constrained to invite Ian Ramsey, an English theo-
logian, to write the article titled "Theologie und Philosophie IV. Im
Angelsächsischen Bereich," VI, 830-838. Evidently the continental theo-
logians did not feel at home discussing the impact of linguistic analysis
on theology in Great Britian.

[3]A well-reasoned critique of linguistic analysis is the work Clarity
is Not Enough: Essays in Criticism of Linguistic Philosophy, edited by
H. D. Lewis (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1963). It offers a variety
of penetrating evaluations, some by analysts. On the other hand, the work
of Ernest Gellner, Words and Things: A Critical Account of Linguistic
Philosophy, introduced by Bertrand Russell (London: Victor Gollancz,
1959), provides some profound criticism in popular style, but suffers
from being the work of a single author.

extent of any investigation. It is impossible to "sneak from one's skin." The better part of wisdom is to expose the presuppositions, and to utilize them in bounding the limits of the study. Here are four assumptions which have influenced both research and composition decidedly. First, the writer assumes that the question of meaning in language offers a profitable juncture at which to address oneself to the question of meaning in life. Second, it is assumed that theology and philosophy of religion are distinguishable, but not separable. A theology at least implies a philosophy of religion, and if there is a philosophy of religion, there is also a correlative theology. On this basis the author has included both theologians and philosophers of religion among those whose works are examined particularly in Chapters IV and V. Third, the writer shares with many others the conviction that contemporary philosophy and philosophy of religion are ensnared by the "Cartesian blight." Kant's Copernican revolution had its roots in the interiorization of Descartes. The modern extension of that revolution, including the specialized study of man's language both in philosophy and religion, finds its ultimate frame of reference in Descartes' restrictive cogito ergo sum. The splintered world of specialization is mirrored in linguistic analysis and in the philosophy of religion when both disciplines limit their investigations solely to the language of man. In view of this third assumption the author has tried to avoid over-abridging the examination of linguistic analysis, and the dialogue between religious philosophy and analysis as well. Finally, the author has written an ideational account of linguistic analysis as it relates to religious language under the assumption that God the Creator is

active no less in the world of human thought than in the world of nature. With this faith-commitment he takes up a discussion of linguistic analysis in the assurance that God reigns and moulds all things for His Church.

A word is needed regarding recurrent terms. "Logical positivism" or "logical empiricism" or "positivism" is generally understood as a philosophical movement of the late 1920's which attempted to anchor the meaning of propositions in their verifiability. "Linguistic analysis" is understood as a contemporary philosophical movement which views the purpose of philosophy as the descriptive (as opposed to prescriptive) analysis of language. "Philosophical analysis," "logical analysis," and "analysis" are used synonymously with "linguistic analysis." A third term is "logic." It occurs especially in reference to statements, utterances, or discourse, and is to be contrasted with the "logic" of rational thought. The term may be defined as the threads of inter-relation, often contextually covert, which bind a statement, utterance, or discourse into a "meaningful" unit. A fourth term is "religious discourse." It may be defined as a group of linguistic utterances or statements ultimately referring to God. Synonymous phrases are "theological discourse," "religious statements," and "religious utterances."

Purpose and Importance of the Study

The concern which led the writer to this study was more than academic. The importance and the purpose of the research were for him indivisible. The purpose of the study is to answer the two questions which

compose the problem. If the first question (What are the challenges
which analysis directs to the philosopher of religion in the area of
religious language?) is answered, the significance of the study may be
said to lie in its contribution to dialogue between the Church (and its
philosophers) and the world. It is possible that the questions of lin-
guistic analysis are not unrelated to the challenge of Dietrich
Bonhoeffer on the one hand, and of Rudolf Bultmann on the other. If
the first question is answered, it may be possible to approach with
new freshness the problem of "old beliefs losing their meaning" in the
contemporary world. For while classical theology has generally been
argumentative and controversial when dealing with objections that
Christian doctrine is either false or unproved (together with arguments
that it is impracticable, harsh, and trivial), "theologians have seldom
encountered the charge 'This is not an assertion at all,' 'There is
nothing here that one can either believe or disbelieve.'"[4] Then too,
if the challenges of linguistic analysis are adequately apprehended,
"God-is-dead" talk may seek its proper level of flotation. The dis-
placement of the term "God" as the head of a certain family of words in
favor of the term "religion" as the head of the same linguistic family[5]
is not a totally unrelated problem. Finally, the Church's somewhat appre-
hensive attitude toward dialogue with the world may be exposed in all its

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[4]G. C. Stead, "How Theologians Reason," Faith and Logic, edited by
Basil Mitchell (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 116.

[5]John Hick, Philosophy of Religion (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:
Prentice-Hall, c.1963), p. 88.

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nakedness if the challenges of analysis are carefully examined. Speci-
fically, the time-gap between the world's question (in this case the
question of linguistic analysis) and the Church's answer will be seen
for what it is: a time-gap too long for proper nurture of healthy
dialogue.

If the second question (In what way do the replies of the philoso-
phers of religion relate to and illumine the challenges of analysis?)
is answered, the importance of the study may be said to consist in its
contribution to dialogue within the Church. The twentieth century has
been labeled the century of ecumenism. An essential element of ecumenical
conversation is meaningful dialogue. But purposeful dialogue is im-
possible when Coleridge's paraphrased line applies: "Words, words,
everywhere, and not a thought to think." It is to be hoped that con-
temporary study of the logic of religious discourse will bear fruit in
these conversations. To the degree that the study summarizes the con-
cerns of religious philosophers who deal with the nature of religious
language it will contribute in a small way to meaningful dialogue within
the Church.

Dialogue in the Church also involves interconfessional conversation
in the area of biblical hermeneutics. Contemporary biblical studies
must necessarily take cognizance of current philosophy of religion, for
when the latter addresses itself to the question of religious language
it inevitably touches the sphere of biblical hermeneutics. This study
sets out to demonstrate current activity in the philosophy of religion
with the conviction that biblical hermeneutics may profit from a dialogic
encounter.

Dialogue in the Church also involves dialogue among her philosophers. If the second question of the problem is properly asked and answered, the study will be valuable because it investigates the apologetics of current religious philosophers as they relate to linguistic analysis. A comparison of their widely differing methods and conclusions will be both instructive and stimulating. In fact, a rather new definition of the task of the philosophy of religion emerges from the encounter with analysis, one which should not go unchallenged and unobserved among the nonanalytic philosophers of the Church. In order to contribute to dialogue among the many philosophers of the Church, abundant bibliographical references have been included.

Finally, the importance of the study lies in part in its exposition of the problem of cognition in religious discourse. If the study merely alerts the reader to the necessity of measuring both the assets and the liabilities involved in attributing cognition to religious language, it has accomplished an important objective. If religious language is seen to have, in any sense, a cognitive element, the question of the "meaning" of and the criteria of cognition immediately arises. If on the other hand cognition is not construed as an essential element of religious language, the relation of religious faith to the "nude facts" of empirical reality comes to the fore at once. The emphasis on worship in the liturgical revival is a healthy phenomenon. But the question of cognition in religious discourse invades also the Church's worship life.

History and Previous Treatments of Problem

The question of "meaning" in religious language is as old as the

discourse itself. Saint Paul refers to some of the difficulties in writing to the Corinthians:

> There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning; but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.[6]

The Christological controversies of the early Church were extensively concerned with the meaning of words. From one perspective the whole of church history may be viewed as the Church's attempt to delineate and clarify the meaning of key terms. In centuries since the Reformation it has been especially the language of natural theology that has been scrutinized. But especially in the twentieth century the problem has assumed overwhelming significance. It is precisely because the question of meaning in religious discourse is so intimately connected with the philosophy of analysis that this study proposes to address itself to both aspects of the giant problem.

Previous investigations of the problem have often lacked both objectivity and depth. Those philosophers of religion who have taken cognizance of the phenomenon of logical positivism, the precursor of linguistic analysis, have all too frequently attacked it with a war cry. Others have all too readily dismissed linguistic analysis itself in favor of the second viable philosophical option of current times, existentialism. On the other hand, the philosophers of religion who have earnestly endeavored to seek out the core and challenge of linguistic analysis frequently rush through an investigation of analysis in order to arrive more quickly at an appropriate apologetics. In sum, the men who have dealt with the

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[6] I Corinthians 14:10-11.

problem at hand have frequently tended to divide themselves into two

groups: if they are philosophers concerned with linguistic analysis, they

are quick to dismiss the question of religious language; if they are

philosophers of religion, they often rush through a discussion of philo-

sophical analysis, or take little cognizance of the conclusions of other

philosophers of religion. While there have been many books, articles, and

symposia which have addressed the question, to this writer's knowledge

none has taken really adequate notice either of the impact of logical

positivism on linguistic analysis as it affects analysis'challenges to

religious discourse, or of the precise nature of the analytic challenges

to theology, or of the diversity of answers given by philosophers of

religion.[7]

Methodology and Sources

The methodology of the study has been constructed to deal with the

two basic questions of the problem. Chapter II is an ideational-historical

survey of logical positivism as the precursor of linguistic analysis.

Chapter III sets out to characterize linguistic analysis as it encounters

theology and religious language. Two basic challenges emerge. In the

first, analysis demonstrates its positivistic parentage by demanding the

verifiability-falsifiability of religious discourse as a *sine qua non* for

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[7]This statement does not aim to depreciate New Essays in Philosophi-
cal Theology, edited by Antony G. N. Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York:
Macmillan Company, c.1955), or works of Basil Mitchell, Ian Ramsey,
Ronald Hepburn, and many others. It does indicate the need for a full-
blown examination of the problem as it stands in 1966, an examination
both of the analytic challenges (together with their philosophical history)
and of representative replies to these challenges.

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admittance to the realm of meaningful language. In the second, analysis asks for the "logic" of religious discourse. In this request analysis admits the formal validity of religious discourse as a useful "language-game," or field of language, because it is found among people. Chapter IV summarizes nine representative theories of the nature of religious language offered in answer to the first analytic challenge. Chapter V summarizes thirteen theories of religious language which represent typical answers to the second analytic challenge. Chapter VI summarizes the entire study and offers some tentative conclusions.

Major sources used in the study include writings of logical positivists, linguistic analysts, and historians of philosophy, as well as works of philosophers of religion. Only philosophers of religion who offered an explicit theory of religious language were consulted in detail.[8] In the case of these writers, the works are carefully summarized and documented. The author has taken the liberty to rearrange some sections of these works, but every precaution was taken to avoid distortion. Some parts not specifically germane to the particular theory of religious language were not included in the summaries. Biographical information is provided for the men discussed in Chapters IV and V. At times more than one work of an author was consulted. All of the study's major sources are listed in the primary bibliography.

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[8]An excellent work by Richard Luecke, New Meanings for New Beings (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), deserves mention at this point. It is not summarized in this study because Luecke's theory of religious language is so well hidden in the book's substance that it would undoubtedly suffer distortion if the present writer were to attempt to extract it.

The author has sought to choose his words with care. The spirit
of Ezra Pound's plea for the care of the language has been an important
methodological principle both in research and writing:

Language is not a mere cabinet curio or museum exhibit. It does
definitely function in all human life from tribal state onward.
You cannot govern without it, you cannot make laws without it.
That is you make laws and they become mere mare's nests for graft
and discussion.... . . Printed word or drum telegraph are neither
without bearing on the aggregate life of the folk. As language
becomes the most powerful instrument of perfidy, so language alone
can riddle and cut through the meshes. Used to conceal meaning,
used to blur meaning, to produce the complete and utter inferno of
the past century . . . against which SOLELY a care for language,
for accurate registration by language avails. And if men too
long neglect it, their children will find themselves begging and
their offspring betrayed.[9]

[9] Ezra Pound, Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, edited by T. S. Eliot
([Norfolk, Connecticut]: New Directions, 1954), pp. 76, 77.

CHAPTER II

LOGICAL POSITIVISM, THE IMMEDIATE PRECURSOR
OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

The Stage

For some historians of philosophy, logical positivism was an inter-
ruption in the development of philosophical analysis. The line that runs
from Moore through Wittgenstein to Ryle and the other contemporary analysts,
they contend, snapped with the iconoclasm of logical empiricism. On the
other hand, it will be profitable to examine logical positivism as a pre-
cursor of linguistic analysis. Contemporary linguistic analysis will make
as much sense as its history, and the history of linguistic analysis in-
volves the development and flowering of logical positivism, its precursor.
Although it is difficult to ascertain the period of greatest influence,
the years 1927-1937 might well be considered the "Golden Age" of logical
positivism. Birth pangs were prolonged, and an interplay of complex factors
give growth and maturity to the movement.

In the late nineteenth century, Neo-Idealists were active in England
and on the continent. Logical positivism asserted its identity against
an idealistic backdrop. The movement questioned the logic of a statement
such as "Time is unreal." It asked for the sense of "Absolute Reality."
It confronted the hostility of F. H. Bradley, with his overwhelming con-
tempt of the empiricist tradition. G. J. Warnock characterizes the Abso-
lute Idealism of Bernard Bosanquet and F. H. Bradley as highly and ambitious-
ly metaphysical, burdened with impressive rhetoric, and little concerned

with ordinary ways of thinking.[1] Even as late as 1939 a strained situation

existed. In that year C. D. Broad, an idealist, published an article basing

the cosmological argument for God's existence on the assertion that some

existential propositions are intrinsically necessary. In the face of numer-

ous arguments to the contrary, Broad published the exact same article four-

teen years later.[2]

It was in antithesis to dogmatic idealistic philosphy that logical

positivism assumed its character. This antithesis, coupled with redoubled

efforts in inductive scientific research and phenomenal advances in

theoretical science, produced a nutritive environment for rapid develop-

ment. H. J. Paton characterizes the impact of science upon the develop-

ment of logical positivism with this statement:

> If I were asked to state in one word the main impulse to all this
> new thinking, and particularly to the whole logical and linguistic
> movement of this century, I should take the question literally and
> say simply that it was science (including mathematics).[3]

[1]G. J. Warnock, English Philosophy Since 1900 (London: Oxford Univer-
sity Press, c.1958), pp. 3, 5, 6, 9. Warnock warns that this rather color-
ful movement should not be viewed as traditional on the English scene,
for it was an "exotic" alien import.

[2]Eric Lionel Mascall, Words and Images (New York: Ronald Press
Company, c.1957), p. 30. Revolution in Philosophy, edited by Alfred
J. Ayer (London: Macmillan and Company, c.1956), gives an accurate de-
scription of the philosophical climate preceding logical positivism,
including the philosophy of Bradley and logical atomism.

[3]H. J. Paton, "Fifty Years of Philosophy," Contemporary British
Philosophy, edited by H. D. Lewis (London: George Allen and Unwin,
c.1956), p. 352. Frederick Ferré notes in Language, Logic and God (First
edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1961), that the rise of in-
ductive science demonstrated a concern more for methodology than empiri-
cal results. Philosophy, too, ceased to concern itself with synthesis of
natural scientific matters, and turned its attention to a methodology
which would simultaneously demonstrate its distinction from the sciences
while still contributing to them. See pp. 4-6.

The basic theses of the complex philosophical revolution popularly called "logical positivism" or "logical empiricism," dogmatic in their style and iconoclastic in their content, are subjects for consideration in the next pages:

a. The function of philosophy is logical analysis. . . . philosophy has become the logical analysis of science through the syntactical analysis of scientific language.
b. All cognitively significant (meaningful) discourse is divisible without remainder into analytic or synthetic propositions.
c. Any proposition that purports to be factual or empirical has meaning only if it is possible in principle to describe a method for its verification.
d. All metaphysical assertions, being neither analytic nor synthetic propositions, are meaningless.
e. There is a single language for all science; it is similar in form to the language of physics, and all synthetic propositions are reducible to elementary experiences expressible in this language.
f. All normative assertions, whether positing moral, aesthetic, or religious values, are scientifically unverifiable, and are, therefore to be classified as forms of non-cognitive discourse.[4]

Developments in England: the New Logic and Logical Atomism

In philosophical history England generally rests in the empirical camp. But as an "exotic" import, the idealists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries affirmed the validity of reason and logic. Consequent to their interest, it was first in England that the "new logic" assumed precise form and achieved influential status. The devaluation of traditional Aristotelian logic, and the definite formulation of the "new logic," were fundamental contributions of English philosophy to the gradual development of logical positivism.

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[4]Albert William Levi, Philosophy and the Modern World (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, c.1959), pp. 344-345.

Since the days of Aristotle, men imparted to traditional logic an
ontological character at least of sorts. The fact that the relation
between thought and word was commonly interpreted as a coding-decoding
process, or image-mirror picture, evidences an unconscious vindication
of logic's ontological status. John Findlay claims that past philosophical
interpretations of language have generally assumed that words were ex-
pressions of thoughts on the one hand, and that they meant things on
the other. Thoughts were construed as invisible ghostly acts which
could, in certain cases, dispense with speech.[5] Even thoughts were to
be "thought" in accordance with Aristotelian logic.

There is no need to describe how, during the nineteenth century, the
fifth axiom of Euclidean geometry was weighed in the balance and found
wanting as an integral element of man's perception and reasoning. Nor
is there the need to consider the implications of this challenge for
Aristotle's logic. Our concern is the devaluation of traditional logic
within logical positivism. The continental positivists were attempting
to translate relational sentences into logic. Aristotelian logic was
not amenable to the effort. As a consequence, the positivists questioned
the validity of traditional logic in the sphere of relational sentences.
Hans Reichenbach gave an example of their challenge years later:

> It is true that the sentence "Peter is tall" has the subject "Peter"
> and the predicate "tall". But the sentence "Peter is taller than
> Paul" has two subjects, namely "Peter" and "Paul", since the predi-
> cate "taller than" is a relation. The misunderstanding of linguistic

[5]John Niemayer Findlay, "Some Reactions to Recent Cambridge Philo-
sophy (1940-1)," Language, Mind and Value (New York: Humanities Press,
c.1963), pp. 16-17. This article originally appeared in Australasian Jour-
nal of Psychology and Philosophy (December 1940; April 1941).

structures, originating from adherence to Aristotelian logic, has seriously impaired the science of linguistics.[6]

Carnap isolated the inadequacy of traditional logic in 1930, explicitly linking it with the Aristotelian-scholastic system:

> The desire to replace metaphysical concept-poetry by a rigorous, scientific method of philosophizing would have remained a pious hope if the system of traditional logic had been the only logical instrument available. Traditional logic was totally incapable of satisfying the requirement of richness of content, formal rigor and technical utility which its new role demanded of it. Formal logic rested on the Aristotelian-scholastic system which in the course of its further development had been only slightly improved and extended.[7]

The new logic was an attempt to demonstrate the inadequacy of Aristotelian logic, simultaneously constructing other logical systems with basic axioms freely posited and developed. Following Leibniz's ideas, Frege, Peano, and Schröder made the first attempts at a reconstruction of logic. On the basis of their work, Whitehead and Russell created the foundational work of the new logic, _Principia Mathematica_ (1910-13). Further attempts depended wholly on their accomplishment.[8] Russell and Whitehead's work "demonstrated how the concept of natural numbers, the theory of manifolds, and notions like continuity and derivation can be strictly deduced from a handful of primitive notions and about the same number of logical axioms,"

[6]Hans Reichenbach, _The Rise of Scientific Philosophy_ (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, c.1951), pp. 220-221.

[7]Rudolf Carnap, "The Old and the New Logic," _Logical Positivism_, edited by A. J. Ayer (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, c.1959), pp. 133-134. The article originally appeared as "Die alte und die neue Logik," _Erkenntnis_, I (1930-31).

[8]_Ibid._, pp. 134-135. Frege's contribution to the development of new logic is accurately summarized by W. C. Kneale, "Gottlob Frege and Mathematical Logic," _The Revolution in Philosophy_, edited by A. J. Ayer (London: Macmillan and Company, c.1956), pp. 26-40.

while its specific significance for positivism lay in the logic of proposi-

tions: "the theory of logical types, . . . the logical divisions of all

statements into true, false, and meaningless, and the distinction between

atomic and molecular propositions."[9]

Immediately the relationship of the new logic to human language came

in for question. Although the Copleston-Ayer broadcast occurred in 1949,

the question put by Copleston was a question commonly raised in the earlier

days of the new logic:

> Copleston: My question is this. Within a three-valued system of
> logic is there any rule of consistency at all? [They
> have been discussing such a formal logic.]
> Ayer: Yes. Otherwise it wouldn't be a system of logic.
> Copleston: Then does it not seem that there is at least one proto-
> proposition which governs all possible systems of logic?
> [He is referring to the principle of non-contradiction.]
> Ayer: No, that doesn't follow.[10]

Russell stepped confidently and related the new logic to language.

It was Russell's opinion, according to J. O. Urmson, that

> a logic from which the whole of mathematics with all its complexi-
> ties can be derived must be an adequate skeleton (minus the extra-
> logical vocabulary which the variables replace) of a language
> capable of expressing all that can be adequately said at all.[11]

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[9]Levi, p. 340.

[10]A. J. Ayer and F. C. Copleston, "Logical Positivism--A Debate,"
Modern Introduction to Philosophy, edited by Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap
(Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, c.1957), p. 600. This debate occurred in
1949 over the British Broadcasting Corporation. In reference to the princi-
ple of non-contradiction, Ernest Nagel in "Logic Without Ontology," Readings
in Philosophical Analysis, edited by H. Feigl and W. Sellars (New York:
Appleton-Century-Crofts, c.1949), pp. 191-210, contends that any attempt to
justify logical principles (such as the principle of non-contradiction) in
terms of their supposed conformity to a structure of facts overlooks the
function of these logical principles as formulative and regulative of human
pursuits.

[11]J. O. Urmson, Philosophical Analysis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956),
p. 7. Guido Küng of Notre Dame University, in Ontologie und logitische
Analyse der Sprache (Wien: Springer-Verlag, c.1963), examines Russell's

Russell was convinced that his notations in the Principia embodied the
essence of language. Where common language appeared to diverge, the
skeleton had been in some way concealed.[12] Ludwig Wittgenstein noted that
F. P. Ramsey of Cambridge cast the new logic in a similar role, although
Wittgenstein did not approve in his later Investigations:

> F. P. Ramsey hat einmal im Gespräch mit mir betont, die Logik sei
> eine "normative Wissenschaft". Genau welche Idee ihm dabei vor-
> schwebte, weiss ich nicht; sie war aber zweifellos eng verwandt mit
> der, die mir erst später aufgegangen ist: dass wir nämlich in der
> Philosophie den Gebrauch der Wörter oft mit Spielen, Kalkülen nach
> festen Regeln, vergleichen, aber nicht sagen können, wer die Sprache
> gebraucht, müsse ein solches Spiel spielen.[13]

The new logic provided a focus for positivistic thought. If Aristo-
telian logic dealt inadequately with certain relational sentences, and
if other systems were no less "logically" exhaustive, then Aristotelian

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role (among others) in the impact of logic upon linguistic analysis. He
states the purpose of his study (p. 13): "Aufgabe der ersten Teils ist es,
eine Einführung in die gerade im deutschen Sprachgebiet allzu wenig
bekannten Denkgewohnheiten der zeitgenössischen logischen Sprachanalyse
zu geben, und insbesondere den Weg zur zweistelligen Semantik der Abbildung
zu schildern, während der zweite Teil der speziellen Frage der Abbildungs-
beziehung der Prädikatzeichen, d.h. der zeitgenössischen Formulierung der
Universaliesfrage, nachgehen wird."

[12]Warnock, p. 38. Insofar as the application of computer-science to
natural language indicates an approach somewhat paralleling Russell's,
Natural Language and the Computer, edited by Paul L. Garvin (New York:
McGraw Hill Book Co., c.1963), is an informative investigation. Garvin
discusses the computer's role in linguistic analysis. M. E. Maron gives
a logician's view of the endeavor. There are also discussions of the
progress made in translating natural language through the computer.

[13]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical
Investigations, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,
1953), p. 38. The provided English translation reads: "F. P. Ramsey once
emphasized in conversation with me that logic was a 'normative science'.
I do not know exactly what he had in mind, but it was doubtless closely
related to what only dawned on me later: namely, that in philosophy we
often compare the use of words with games and calculi which have fixed
rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language must be playing
such a game" (p. 38e).

logic served as a questionable basis for linguistic construction. Even the principle of non-contradiction was no more than a postulate! The dissection of language was an inevitable consequence of the development of new logic.

The new logic assumed philosophical dress in the "logical atomism" of Bertrand Russell and others. Logical atomists contended that the world consists of an indefinitely large number of "atomic facts" to which true atomic propositions correspond.[14] It was assumed that if propositions were of a logical character, the atomic facts which corresponded to them were apprehended only through logical propositions. In logical atomism were to be found the building blocks of logical positivism, for the latter imitated the former's exhaustive division of all "meaningful" propositions into analytic and empirical. Warnock clarifies the situation:

> According to the purest doctrines of Logical Atomism, a proposition can be stated significantly either if there is, or could be, an atomic fact to which it corresponds, or if it is a truth-function, however complex, of propositions of that sort.[15]

Ludwig Wittgenstein of Cambridge was the liaison between developments in England and stirrings on the continent. In 1922 he published his famed Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. This work was at one and the same time an impetus to the development of logical positivism on the continent, and a summary of developments in England. It assumed that

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[14]Urmson, p. 16. Urmson claims that it is not fanciful to see a similarity to Leibniz's world of monads here. Gustav Bergmann, in "Revolt Against Logical Atomism," Meaning and Existence (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, c.1959), pp. 39-72, examines critically Urmson's Philosophical Analysis in its account of the logical atomism of Russell and Wittgenstein; Bertrand Russell does the same in "Philosophical Analysis," Hibbert Journal, LIV (May 1956), 319-329.

[15]Warnock, p. 41.

new logic was in some way applicable to human language. It viewed propositions as pictures. It upheld the dichotomy of statements into analytic and empirical with an endorsement of logical atomism. It urged continental positivism to delineate more precisely the "meaning" of empirical statements. Speaking of Wittgenstein's Tractatus at home and abroad, Gilbert Ryle comments:

> In Vienna some of its teachings were applied polemically, namely to demolishing the pretensions of philosophy to be the science of transcendent realities. In England, on the whole, others of its teachings were applied more constructively, namely to stating the positive functions which philosophical propositions perform. . . . In England, on the whole, interest was concentrated on Wittgenstein's description of philosophy as an activity of clarifying or elucidating the meanings of the expressions used, e.g. by scientists; that is, on the medicinal virtues of his account of the nonsensical. In Vienna, on the whole, interest was concentrated on the lethal potentialities of Wittgenstein's account of nonsense.[16]

In its concentration upon the "lethal potentialities of Wittgenstein's account of nonsense," the continental Wiener Kreis (Vienna Circle) paralleled and advanced beyond logical atomism.

Developments on the Continent: Der Wiener Kreis

The so-called "Vienna Circle" coagulated in the early 1920's around Moritz Schlick, philosophy professor at the University of Vienna. Included in the circle were Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, Herbert Feigl, Friedrich Waismann, Edgar Zilsel, Victor Kraft, Philipp Frank, Karl Menger, Kurt Gödel, and Hans Hahn.[17] Most of the men were scientists.

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[16]Gilbert Ryle, "The Theory of Meaning," British Philosophy in the Mid-Century, edited by C. A. Mace (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1957), p. 262.

[17]A. J. Ayer, Logical Positivism (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, c.1959), p. 3. Victor Kraft, Der Wiener Kreis: Der Ursprung des Neopositivismus (Wien: Springer-Verlag, c.1950), pp. 1-10, presents an excellent historical survey of the Circle from the perspective of a participant.

Schlick had written his doctoral dissertation in physics; Carnap and

Frank were theoretical physicists; Hahn, Menger, and Gödel were mathema-

ticians; Neurath was an economist and sociologist; and Wittgenstein, whose

ideas were discussed in his absence, was an engineer.[18] Since the re-

mainder of this chapter will consider in detail the philosophical position

taken by the Viennese together with their English counterparts, our

present concern will be with the philosophical ancestry and the mental

temperament of this "circle" of Viennese intellectuals.

The Vienna Circle publicly recognized its ideational indebtedness to

Hume, Comte, Mill, Mach, Helmholtz, Reimann, Poincaré, Einstein, Leibniz,

Frege, Russell, Whitehead, and Wittgenstein in a manifesto titled Wissen-

schaftliche Weltauffassung, Der Wiener Kreis. Excluding contemporaries,

Hume and Mach most clearly approximated the Circle's perspective.[19] The

empirical accent of logical positivism originated with Hume. The roots

of manipulative logic run back to Leibniz, for he divided propositions

into truths of reason and truths of fact. In addition, he attempted an

analysis of the former.[20]

The fact that the group gathered around Moritz Schlick prefigured

its later development. In 1918 Schlick published Allgemeine Erkenntnis-

lehre dealing with the theory of knowledge. Many of the views later

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[18]Brand Blanshard, Reason and Analysis (London: George Allen and
Unwin, c.1962), p. 106.

[19]Ayer, Logical Positivism, p. 4. The manifesto was published in
Vienna, 1929.

[20]Julius R. Weinberg, An Examination of Logical Positivism (Paterson,
New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams and Company, 1960 [originally published
1936]), pp. 3-4.

characteristic of logical positivism appeared there in seed.[21] The

meetings with Schlick were irregular until the group organized itself as

the "Verein Ernst Mach" in 1928.[22]

The Meaning of Meaning, published by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards

in 1923, was a contemporaneous influence on the Circle, at least upon

Rudolf Carnap. The authors attempted to differentiate between "emotive"

and "referential" use in language. They suggested that the distinction

between the two uses, coupled with a preference for the former, is the

essence of semantic positivism.[23] This dichotomy reasserted itself in

the Circle's later distinction between meaningless/meaningful.

Logical positivism made an international debut before a forum of

philosophical experts at the Seventh International Congress of Philosophy

in Oxford, 1930. Moritz Schlick discussed "The Future of Philosophy,"

and heralded a new era:

> we are witnessing the beginning of a new era in philosophy . . .
> its future will be very different from its past, which has been
> so full of failures, vain struggles, and futile disputes.[24]

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[21]Alfred J. Ayer, "The Vienna Circle," The Revolution in Philosophy,
edited by Alfred J. Ayer (London: Macmillan and Company, c.1956), p. 71.
Georg Jánoska, Die sprachlichen Grundlagen der Philosophie (Graz, Austria:
Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1962), p. 11, quotes Schlick's 1925
edition of Allgemeine Erkenntnislehre (where Schlick favorably cites
Einstein) as follows: "Insofern sich die Sätze der Mathematik auf die
Wirklichkeit beziehen, sind sie nicht sicher, und insofern sie sicher
sind, beziehen sie sich nicht auf Wirklichkeit."

[22]Blanshard, p. 109.

[23]Levi, p. 376.

[24]Joergen Joergensen, The Development of Logical Empiricism (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, c.1951), pp. 40-41. This work is Vol. II,
No. 9 of the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, a logical
positivist work.

The message was the same on the continent. Congresses met in the late twenties and in the thirties. In 1929, the Circle displayed its wares in Prague; in 1930, there was a meeting in Königsberg. Prague in 1934, Paris in 1935, and Copenhagen in 1936, the last with causality as its theme, provided a wide geographical exposure.[25]

The movement sought out its blood brothers at an early date. The Circle formed an alliance with the so-called "Berlin School" (Hans Reichenbach and Kurt Grelling); with Scandinavian philosophers such as Eino Kaila and Joergen Joergensen; with the Uppsala school of empiricists; with the Dutch group gathered around Mannoury pursuing what they called "Significs"; with the Münster group of logicians; with American sympathizers, including Nagel and Quine; and with British analysts of various shades, from Ryle and Braithwaite to Wisdom and Ayer.[26]

The scientific temperament of the Viennese indicated that the group's philosophical stance would be decidedly empirical. The intellectual world was not disappointed, for the Circle took to task the modernizing of Comte, simultaneously applying the new logic and an empirical criterion to the language of Everyman.

Kantian Heritage and Comtian Corrections

Immanuel Kant concerned himself with the dichotomy of the analytic and the synthetic. He dealt exhaustively with the sphere of knowledge.

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[25]Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[26]Ayer, Logical Positivism, pp. 5-6. That the Scandinavians were actively involved in early logical positivism is evident from the historical survey of Georg Henrik von Wright, Den logiska empirismen (Helsingfors: n.p., 1943).

Auguste Comte's philosophizing led him to assert that evolutionary develop-
ment endowed man with an all-encompassing scientific method. Man had out-
grown the religiously metaphysical, and dismissed any yearning for freedom,
God, and immortality apart from the worship of science.

The logical positivists probed beneath both Kant and Comte, taking
from each the needed tools of exploration. Acknowledging Kant's work,
they admitted his dichotomy of analytic and synthetic knowledge; but they
advanced beyond him with the iconoclastic proposal that philosophy deals
with propositions rather than knowledge. With this consideration they
superseded Comte no less than Kant. They contended that science not only
exhausts knowledge; science frames the limits of meaningful discourse as
well. With the radical proposal to deal only with propositions of language
the logical positivists created a new age in philosophical history. They
stood on the shoulders of both Kant and Comte, but sprouted wings of their
own.[27]

The basic assumption of logical positivism was that all meaningful
statements are either analytic or synthetic. The dichotomy is exhaustive,
but the validation of a proposition differs in either case. According to
Ayer, a proposition is analytic when its validity is solely contingent on
definition of its symbols. A proposition is synthetic when its validity
is determined by facts of experience.[28]

The analytic statement is valid by definition. The rules of the

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[27]Jánoska, pp. 16-22, admirably describes the Kantian heritage
of Viennese logical positivism.

[28]H. J. Paton, The Modern Predicament: A Study in the Philosophy of
Religion (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1955), p. 37.

"game" determine its status within the game of logic. An analytic state-
ment is either tautological or contradictory--a contradiction is merely
a tautology negated. If a statement is contradictory, it is logically
"meaningful" though not necessarily true ("The triangle is four-sided").

Positivists explained the lack of novelty in tautological, necessary
statements in at least three ways: (1) they followed Kant in suggesting
that a statement is analytic when the predicate-concept is part of the
subject content ("Bodies are extended"); (2) they submitted that a propo-
sition is analytic because its truth follows from the meaning of the terms
alone ("Full brothers of the same man are full brothers of each other");
(3) they proposed that the contradictory of an analytic proposition is
always and inexorably self-contradictory.[29] In any case, the positivists
were certain there was no possibility of surprise in tautological state-
ments. For this reason they claimed that analytic propositions are
barred from any reference to "fact."[30]

For the logical positivists the concept of "truth" was tautological.
Ayer contended that a reference to "truth" adds nothing to the logical
sense of a statement. To say that a statement is "true" is to make a
tautological statement:

> This indicates that to ask What is truth? is tantamount to asking
> what is the analysis of the sentence "p is true"? where the values

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[29]Blanshard, pp. 257-258.

[30]Blanshard argues that if analytic propositions, according to the
positivists, say nothing about "fact," it is difficult to evaluate the
positivistic argument that analytic propositions are informative in ref-
erence to linguistic usage. If "Blue is a color" indicates that people
do not use the first element in situations where they refuse to use the
second, this tautology says something "factual." Meanwhile, the positiv-
ists assert that all such analytic statements are tautologous. See p. 260.

of p are propositions. But it is evident that in a sentence of
the form "p is true" or "It is true that p" the reference to truth
never adds anything to the sense. If I say that it is true that
Shakespeare wrote Hamlet, or that the proposition "Shakespeare
wrote Hamlet" is true, I am saying no more than that Shakespeare
wrote Hamlet. . . . this shows that the words "true" and "false"
are not used to stand for anything, but function in the sentence
merely as assertion and negation signs. That is to say, truth and
falsehood are not genuine concepts. Consequently, there can be no
logical problem concerning the nature of truth.[31]

Analytic statements are valid by definition. The other class of
statements are "meaningful" factual propositions which are empirically
verifiable.[32] Synthetic statements are meaningful to the degree they are
"experientially" possible. The so-called "verification principle" arose
to test and validate the meaning of synthetic statements. The verifica-
tion principle, in sum, stated that the meaning of a proposition is the
possibility of the state of affairs which it represents.[33] Moritz Schlick
defined meaning in terms of verification in 1936:

> Thus, whenever we ask about a sentence, "What does it mean?", what
> we expect is instruction as to the circumstances in which the
> sentence is to be used; we want a description of the conditions
> under which the sentence will form a true proposition and of those
> which will make it false. . . . Stating the meaning of a sentence
> amounts to stating the rules according to which the sentence is to
> be used, and this is the same as stating the way in which it can be
> verified (or falsified). The meaning of a proposition is the method
> of its verification.[34]

We shall discuss this principle in greater detail below.

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[31]Alfred J. Ayer, "The Criterion of Truth," Philosophy and Analysis,
edited by Margaret MacDonald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), p. 238.

[32]Ayer, Logical Positivism, p. 10.

[33]Weinberg, p. 178.

[34]Moritz Schlick, "Meaning and Verification," Philosophical Review,
XLV (July 1936), 339.

Logical positivism welded together the Kantian heritage and the
Comtian spirit as it advanced beyond both in an examination of propositions
rather than knowledge.[35] In dividing all meaningful propositions into
analytic and synthetic, it defined the sense or meaning of a proposition
in terms of the method of its verification. "Verification" of analytic
statements occurred in definition; the sense-meaning of an analytic state-
ment is tautologous. "Verification" of synthetic statements displayed
itself in the sciences, that is, through empiricism; the sense-meaning
of a synthetic statement is "empirically verifiable." The meaning of a
proposition evidences itself either in definition or in verification.
If through the former, the meaning is necessary but tautological; if
through the latter, the meaning is contingent but wholly empirical.
Meaning through definition had been widely accepted in the philosophical
world, for this was the method of mathematics. But on the other hand, if
logical positivists claimed to limit meaningful contingent statements to
the empirically verifiable, the burden of delineating the precise charac-
ter of the verification principle rested squarely on the shoulders of the
positivists.

The Verification Principle and the Burden of Precision

The positivistic clarification of the verification principle, necessi-
tated by the exhaustive synthetic-analytic dichotomy, was imprecise,
variable, and axiomatically inconsistent. The fact that James' pragmatism

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[35] Logical positivism differed from Comte specifically in viewing
metaphysics not as false, but as meaningless.

contributed to the establishment of the principle[36] suggests that sus-
ceptibility to multitudinous variations was an inborn liability. On the
other hand, throughout the complex development from stringent empirical
"verifiability" to principled "confirmability," the positivists held to
two theses unwaveringly: a factual proposition refers to empirical fact
alone; this fact is always what its assertor would regard as the best
warrant for the truth of his assertion.[37] It would be imprecise to
measure logical positivism solely by the verification principle, but
an examination of the principle's maturation will lead to an understand-
ing of the development and eventual disintegration of the movement. We
will distinguish five stages in the development of the verification prin-
ciple, and then consider how some of the principle's constituent elements
contributed to a relaxation of the original formulation.

The initial formulation of the verification principle was probably
the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Although he endorsed logical atomism
with Russell, he concerned himself with the relation of atomic fact to
atomic proposition--later called the problem of verification. In his
Tractatus Wittgenstein interpreted the situation with the abandon of
solipism. He limited meaning in a factual proposition when and only

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[36]Gilbert Ryle, "Introduction," The Revolution in Philosophy, edited
by A. J. Ayer (London: Macmillan and Company, c.1956), p. 9. T. R. Miles'
summary of positivistic "operational definitions" in Religion and the
Scientific Outlook (London: Allen and Unwin, c.1959), p. 20, demonstrates
a definite pragmatic orientation in the movement. In the procedure of
"operational definition" the meaning of a term is explained by the opera-
tions involved in determing whether the statement containing the term is
true or false. Thus "IQ" is defined in terms of a person's performance
on an intelligence test.

[37]Blanshard, p. 205.

when, as Blanshard says, "it refers to what is given within the set of sensible facts comprising 'one self.'"[38] It is obvious that Wittgenstein was heavily indebted to logical atomism at this time. In fact, his formulation is so imprecise that Maxwell Charlesworth refuses to associate him with the logical positivists. He contends that although Wittgenstein subscribed to the verification principle, he held "verification" to mean different things.[39] There is room for discussion here, but little profit in pursuing the question.

The second developmental stage was Moritz Schlick's "consistent empiricism" of 1932. Schlick held that to pronounce a synthetic proposition "meaningful" was to guarantee its verifiability in _principle_ to one person.[40] A "meaningful" synthetic statement is not limited to the realm of past empirical experience, but it must be _capable_ of empirical verification in principle. Schlick argued that "verification in principle" meant, in fact, "conceivable." Thus the proposition "There is a mountain of a height of 3000 meters on the other side of the moon" made sense even though in 1932 science lacked the technical means of verifying the proposition experientially. The verification remained conceivable.[41]

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[38]Blanshard, p. 200.

[39]Maxwell John Charlesworth, _Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis_, Vo. IX of Duquesne Studies (Pittsburg: Duquesne University, c.1959), pp. 99-100. R. B. Braithwaite, in "An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief," _Existence of God_, edited by John Hick (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1964), p. 252, argues that the first explicit statement of the verification principle was Friedrich Waismann's in _Erkenntnis_, I (1930), 229.

[40]Blanshard, p. 209.

[41]Moritz Schlick, "Positivism and Realism," _Logical Positivism_, edited by Alfred J. Ayer (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, c.1959), p. 88. The article was originally published in _Erkenntnis_, III (1932-33).

Schlick further limited meaningful propositions to such as were veri-
fiable in principle by a single person. The synthetic proposition was
restricted to one mind; in this regard Schlick's formulation was no
advance beyond Wittgenstein's.

The second stage gave way to a third because of several deficien-
cies. The verification principle as formulated in stage two outlawed
sentences of universal form including statements [even of science] express-
ive of general laws.[42] Again, Schlick's "verifiability in principle" was
limited to appearance in person or at first hand of such empirical evidence
as was necessary or in principle possible.

The third stage signaled the acceptance of verifiability in prin-
ciple by anyone. Conversely, stage three relegated only statements of
logical impossibility and tautologies to the realm of the "meaningless"
statement.[43] Urmson characterizes the "strong" verification principle,
which appears to be stage three, with this statement:

> Any statement, to be significant, must be, in principle, capable
> of being conclusively verified or falsified; every proposition

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[42]Carl G. Hempel, "Empiricist Criterion of Meaning," Logical Positiv-
ism, edited by Alfred J. Ayer (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, c.1959),
p. 112. The article originally appeared in Revue Internationale de
Philosophie, IV (1950). Miles (p. 27) makes reference to the problem of
generalities as it appeared in sentences dealing with atoms and electrons.
The positivist found himself in a dilemma: fellow-scientists introduced
"atom," "electron," "proton" as descriptions of effects; but these terms
stood for something permanently unknown, and properly should be jettisoned
as "meaningless." The problem resolved itself in a reformulation of the
principle which allowed a sentence to be considered meaningful if trans-
latable into other sentences which referred to what was (in principle)
observable.

[43]Blanshard, p. 221. Joergensen notes (p. 40) that it was approxi-
mately at this time, after 1930, that logical positivists preferred to be
called "logical empiricists," thereby stressing that they did not consider
themselves tied to a positivistic view in the more narrow and dogmatic
sense.

is a truth-function of a set of simple statements all of which
could in principle be checked and the truth or falsehood of the
proposition thus conclusively established.[44]

Schlick also made the change from the second to the third stage. He
allowed for speculation about immortality, and argues that such specula-
tion was within the confines of the verification as defined (verification
in principle by anyone). His suggestion aroused the indignation of other
positivists, including Ayer.[45]

The fourth stage of development was in one sense a reversal. Stage
four dealt with "falsifiability" rather than verifiability. Karl Popper
suggested in Logik der Forshung (1935) that falsifiability was the only
proper method of demarcating between statements of the empirical sciences
and all other statements. As early as 1919 Popper was forced to examine
the traditionally empirical approach to the verifications of theories.
He recalls his thinking of the summer of 1919 in these words:

> The most characteristic element in the situation seemed to me
> the incessant stream of confirmations, of observations which
> "verified" the theories in question; and this was the point
> constantly emphasized by their adherents. A Marxist could not
> open a newspaper without finding on every page confirming evidence
> for his interpretation of history. . . . The Freudian analysts
> emphasized that their theories were daily, nay, hourly, verified
> by their "clinical observations". And as to [Alfred] Adler, I
> was much impressed by a personal experience. Once, in 1919, I
> reported to him a case which to me did not seem particularly Adlerian,

[44]Urmson, p. 111.

[45]Blanshard, p. 223. For a comparison of Ayer and Schlick's views
on the possibility of meaningful statements regarding immortality, see
Virgil C. Aldrich, "Messrs. Schlick and Ayer on Immortality," Readings
in Philosophical Analysis, edited by H. Feigl and W. Sellars (New York:
Appleton-Century-Crofts, c.1949), pp. 171-174. The article first appear-
ed in Philosophical Review (1938). Antony G. N. Flew, in "Can a Man
Witness His Own Funeral?" Hibbert Journal, LIV (April 1956), 242-250,
challenges Schlick by suggesting that Schlick's imagination of his funeral
is not equivalent to imagining or describing a world without a body.

but which he found no difficulty whatever in analysing in terms of
his theory of inferiority feelings, although he had not even seen
the child. Slightly shocked, I asked him how he could be so sure
about all this. "Because of my thousandfold experience", he re-
plied . . . .[46]

As early as the winter of 1919 Popper claims to have settled on falsifia-
bility. He determined that it was relatively easy to obtain confirma-
tions, or verifications, for nearly every theory. He concluded that
confirmations should count only if they were "risky," that is, if they
were unenlightened by the theory in question. Every "good" scientific
theory is one which forbids certain things to happen; "the more a theory
forbids, the better it is." Irrefutability is a theoretical vice, not
a virtue. Popper's thinking of 1919 can be summarized in one statement:
"falsifiability, or refutability, is a criterion of the scientific status
of a theory."[47]

Popper argues that the problem he attacked both in the early twenties
and in his Logik der Forshung of 1935 was neither the problem of meaning-
fulness or significance, nor the problem of truth or acceptability. With
the criterion of falsifiability he claims to have been "drawing a line
(as well as this can be done) between the statements, or systems of state-
ments, of the empirical sciences, and all other statements—whether they
are of a religious or of a metaphysical character, or simply pseudo-
scientific."[48]

[46]Karl R. Popper, "Philosophy of Science: A Personal Report," British
Philosophy in the Mid-Century, edited by C. A. Mace (New York: Macmillan
Company, c.1957), pp. 157-158.

[47]Ibid., pp. 159-160. Italics are his.

[48]Ibid., p. 162.

The positivists of Vienna assumed that Popper's criterion of falsifiability dealt with meaning, not demarcation. Popper attempted, in a letter to the editor of Erkenntnis in 1933, to depict the Viennese concern with meaning as a pseudo-problem compared with his problem of demarcation:

> my contribution was classified by members of the [Vienna] Circle as a proposal to replace the verifiability criterion of meaning by a falsifiability criterion of meaning--which effectually made nonsense of my views. My protests that I was trying to solve, not their pseudo-problem of meaning, but the problem of demarcation, were of no avail.[49]

Although the positivists did not interpret Popper's intentions correctly, they used his criterion of falsifiability in their attempt to clarify the verification principle and arrive at a theory of meaning.[50] The falsifiability of a statement provided the meaning of a statement in delimiting a specified area which, by contradictory empirical falsification, was ruled out of bounds. Conversely, only synthetic statements capable of falsification were deemed meaningful by the positivists. Findlay discusses the falsifiability criterion with this comment:

> words do not mean by virtue of some mysterious internal property; they only do so because the man who utters them is prepared in some situation, actual or conceivable, to apply them to something.

[49] Ibid., p. 165. Erkenntnis was a journal established by the logical positivists in Vienna. Blanshard (p. 228) apparently sees Popper's contribution as a criterion of meaning rather than demarcation.

[50] Popper insists that his intentions were misread by the positivists. Referring to the shifts and modifications which were introduced in the positivistic discussion of sense and nonsense as a result of his falsifiability criterion, Popper remarks ("Philosophy of Science," British Philosophy, p. 165), "I wish to repeat that although I created this confusion, I never participated in it. Neither falsifiability nor testability were proposed by me as criteria of meaning, although I may plead guilty to having introduced both terms into the discussion; but, cross my heart, not into the theory of meaning."

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If, no matter what situation turns up, he still refuses to say
that this is what he meant, if he persists in saying that he means
'something different' or 'something more', we may rightly question
whether he means anything at all.[51]

Alasdair MacIntyre refers to the criterion in terms of assertions:

If we make any assertion we declare that some state of affairs is
to be found to the exclusion of others. The occurrence of that
state of affairs verifies, the occurrence of the excluded states
of affairs falsifies our assertion. An assertion which excluded
no state of affairs, the maintaining of which was compatible with
the happening of anything and everything would not be an assertion
at all.[52]

One beneficial aspect of falsifiability for the positivists was that

it allowed the inclusion of scientific laws as "meaningful."[53] But

according to Blanshard, there was a difficulty involved. The disjunction

which Popper used as his fulcrum (the conditional distinction between

universal and particular propositions) was his Achilles' heel. It is

true that one can falsify, but not verify, the proposition that all swans

are white. But while one can verify, he cannot falsify the proposition

that some swans are white. In such a logically-particular proposition,

the particular can be contradicted or falsified only by the establish-

ment of a universal proposition; this is impossible under empirical

methods.[54] This difficulty necessitated a more precise, but less stringent

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[51]Findlay, p. 23.

[52]Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Logical Status of Religious Belief,"
Metaphysical Beliefs (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 180.

[53]Blanshard, p. 228.

[54]Ibid. Throughout Blanshard's discussion, Popper's intention in
proposing falsifiability (namely demarcation) has been ignored in favor
of the positivists' use of the criterion. Popper says ("Philosophy of
Science," British Philosophy, pp. 165-166) in reference to the criticism
of his falsifiability criterion, "Criticism of my alleged views was
widespread and highly successful. I have yet to meet a criticism of my
views."

formulation of the principle, reinstating it in the sphere of verifia-
bility.

The fifth stage was Ayer's in his book Language, Truth and Logic,
first published in 1936. Ayer distinguished between strong and weak
verification.[55] Stage five signaled a transition from "verifiability"
to "confirmability": "A proposition is significant if there are some
observations which would be relevant to its truth or falsity."[56] The
stringent demands of Schlick dissipated in the allowance for universal
and general sentences, although the positivistic temperament remained.[57]

It is extremely difficult to characterize the verifiability principle
in stage five. The principle abandoned some of its earlier dogmatism
and with that its clearly distinguishable characteristics. Ayer, in com-
paring the final stage of the principle with its embryonic formulations,
paints a misty picture of the fully developed principle:

> Because of this and other difficulties the view which came to pre-
> vail among the logical positivists was that the demands that a
> statement be conclusively verifiable, or that it be conclusively
> falsifiable, were both too stringent as criteria of meaning. They
> chose instead to be satisfied with a weaker criterion by which it

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[55]Blanshard, p. 229. In the second edition (New York: Dover Pub-
lications, n.d.) of 1946, Ayer demonstrated a concern for a restatement
of the verification principle. Although he relaxed the principle some-
what, he adhered (p. 5) to the 1936 statement of the principle with the
comment, "I still believe that the point of view which [the 1936 edition]
expresses is substantially correct." Two articles in A Modern Introduc-
tion to Philosophy, edited by Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap (Glencoe, Illi-
nois: Free Press, c.1957), are reprints of discussions arising from
Ayer's first edition. W. T. Stace's "Metaphysics and Meaning," pp. 565-
575, was originally published in Mind, 1935. A. C. Ewing's Meaning-
lessness," pp. 576-585, which challenges Ayer's position outrightly, was
originally published in Mind, 1937.

[56]Urmson, p. 113.

[57]Levi, p. 373.

was required only that a statement be capable of being in some degree
confirmed or disconfirmed by observation; if it were not itself an
elementary statement, it had to be such that elementary statements
could support it, but they did not need to entail it or to entail its
negation. Unfortunately, this notion of "support" or confirmation"
has never yet been adequately formalized.[58]

Blanshard claims to find a particular manifestation of stage five in
America. Carnap, for example, argued that the disputes about "meaning-
fulness" and verification resolved themselves in "ideal language." But
it was apparent that the solution was merely a masked formulation of the
problem, for the battle front was moved to a delineation of the boundaries
of "empirical" language.[59]

The Ayer-Copleston debate of 1949 exemplifies the difficulties which
stage five encountered. Copleston asserted that the proposition "We both
have immortal souls" was capable of future verification. In the light of
such verifiability, he asked, was the statement meaningless? Ayer replied
that a predictive statement has only a predictive sense. The statement
merely indicated the possibility of further religious experiences; it
found no "meaning" in the present by simple virtue of its future
verifiability.[60]

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[58]Ayer, Logical Positivism, p. 14. As late as his inaugural address
at Oxford in November, 1960, Ayer had "no wish to disown the verification
principle, though it suffers from a vagueness which it has not yet been
found possible to eradicate. I doubt, however, if it is a wholly effec-
tive means of distinguishing questions of analysis or interpretation from
question of fact." See his "Philosophy and Language," The Concept of a
Person and Other Essays (New York: St. Martin's Press, c.1963), pp. 20-21.
David Makinson, in "Nidditch's Definition of Verifiability," Mind, LXXIV
(April 1965), 240-247, arrives at a redefinition of verifiability, but
fails to satisfy himself with it.

[59]Blanshard, pp. 233-234. Carnap posited an "ideal language" in
"Testability and Meaning," Philosophy of Science, III and IV (1936-37).

[60]Ayer and Copleson, "Logical Positivism--A Debate," Modern Intro-
duction to Philosophy, p. 614.

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The iconoclastic nature of the verification principle was clearly evident even in the principle's imprecision. Its claim to be a touchstone for every "meaningful" statement was both its weakness and its strength. Ian Crombie notes that the "doctrine that unverifiable statements are meaningless is like the doctrine that cars are fast; not entirely false, but blanketing so many important distinctions as to be useless."[61] In the following section of the chapter we will examine the disarray which the verification principle created in the sphere of metaphysics. At present our concern is with difficulties integral to the principle's formulation.

That the verification principle was an attempt to put teeth into the analytic-synthetic dichotomy is apparent from the above description of its evolutional formulation. But even for the "common man" the fully-developed principle fell short of requirement because it allowed no ostensive verification for the common man's statements about the existence of some thing or other.[62]

In addition, experiential statements generally lack conclusive verification. Friedrich Waismann, a charter member of the Vienna Circle, challenged the principle on this ground:

An experiential statement is, as a rule, not conclusively verifiable for two different reasons: (1) because of the existence of an unlimited number of tests; (2) because of the open texture of the terms involved. These two reasons correspond to two different senses of "incompleteness." The first is related to the fact that I can never

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[61]Ian M. Crombie, "The Possibility of Theological Statements," Faith and Logic, edited by Basil Mitchell (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 33.

[62]Blanshard, p. 226. For example, "The clock is on the mantel."

conclude the description of a material object, or of a situation.
I may, for instance, look at my table from ever new points in space
without ever exhausting all the possibilities. The second (and more
exciting one) is due to the fact that our factual knowledge is in-
complete in another dimension: there is always a chance that some-
thing unforeseen may occur. . . . (a) that I should get acquainted
with some totally new experience such as at present I cannot even
imagine; (b) that some new discovery was made which would affect
our whole interpretation of certain facts.[63]

Waismann's reference to "open texture" isolates an intrinsic weakness of

the verification principle.

The logical status of the verification principle was questioned from

the beginning. Was the principle a verifiable statement? Was it a tauto-

logy inapplicable to contingent experience? Was it a persuasive defini-

tion? Carl Hempel defined its logical status in terms of a pragmatic

referent:

As a consequence, the empiricist criterion of meaning, like the
result of any other explication, represents a linguistic proposal
which itself is neither true nor false, but for which adequacy is
claimed in two respects: first in the sense that the explication
provides a reasonably close analysis of the commonly accepted mean-
ing of the explicandum--and this claim implies an empirical asser-
tion; and secondly in the sense that the explication achieves a
"rational reconstruction" of the explicandum, i.e., that it pro-
vides, together perhaps with other explications, a general conceptual
framework which permits a consistent and precise restatement and
theoretical systematization of the contexts in which the explican-
dum is used--and this claim implies at least an assertion of a
logical character.[64]

C. L. Stevenson, on the other hand, suggested that the verification prin-

ciple was a "persuasive" definition of meaning. This factor, in his

[63]Friedrich Waismann, "Verifiability," Logic and Language, edited by
Antony G. N. Flew (First Series: Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p. 124.
Paul van Buren, in The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (New York: Macmillan
Company, c.1963), pp. 111-112, suggests that his use of the word "secular"
in the book's title is an example of an unfolding "open texture."

[64]Hempel, "Empiricist Criterion," Logical Positivism, p. 125.

opinion, did not detract from the principle's importance, but alerted one to different kinds of language exemplified persuasively.[65] Blanshard contends that the verifiability criterion was caught in a three-way self-destruction: (1) it laid down a universal negative, but admitted the impossibility of investigating all statements in order to verify that no statement which failed to conform had meaning; (2) the principle could assume no status in the positivistic theory of truth since it was not empirical, a priori, or conventional in nature; (3) it could give no account of the verification process.[66]

Men also questioned the verification principle because it failed to deal intelligibly with the anxious questions--metaphysical questions-- which continued to haunt even the man of positive outlook. The principle involved itself in quandaries from which it escaped only by flashing the "meaningless" sign. Consider Copleston's question to Ayer:

> I don't want to assume the mantle of a prophet, and I hope that the statement is false; but it is this: "Atomic warfare will take place, and it will blot out the entire human race." Now, most people would think that this statement has meaning; it means what it says. But how could it possibly be verified empirically? Supposing it were fulfilled, the last man could not say with his last breath, "Copleston's prediction has been verified," because he would not be entitled to say this until he was dead, that is, until he was no longer in a position to verify the statement.[67]

We now turn to the positivistic treatment of metaphysical questions.

65Urmson, p. 170. If Stevenson's suggestion were accepted, it would invalidate conclusively the claim of logical positivism.

66Blanshard, pp. 239, 242, 245.

67Ayer and Copleston, "Logical Positivism--A Debate," Modern Introduction to Philosophy, p. 607.

Monism without Metaphysics: Metaphysical and Theological
Statements and Systems under Logical Positivism

Perhaps the most striking feature of logical positivism was its
iconoclasm. This feature earned for the movement both its odium and its
popularity. David Hume attempted to destroy the structure of metaphysics
through empirical reasoning:

> If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity, or school meta-
> physics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract
> reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any
> experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?
> No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but
> sophistry and illusion.[68]

The logical positivists took another grip on the bull's horns--at the
point of proposition. They viewed philosophy solely as analysis: the
clarification of language and the categorization of propositions, in-
cluding the metaphysical, into meaningful/meaningless.

We have investigated at length how positivism divided meaningful
propositions into analytic-tautological and synthetic. This proposition-
al dichotomy necessitates a mental dichotomy as well. Ludwig Wittgenstein
in his early years dichotomized thought when he

> bifurcated all true utterances into the brutally empirical, on
> the one hand, and the emptily tautological, on the other; by
> implication, he divided our thought-shifts into those justified
> by tautological transformation, on the one hand, and by augmented
> experience on the other.[69]

When Carnap applied the criterion of symbolic conventionalism (conven-
tion by simple decision) to analytic statements and the criterion of

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[68] David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (Chicago:
Open Court Publishing Company, 1930), p. 176.

[69] John Niemayer Findlay, "The Methodology of Normative Ethics (1961),"
Language, Mind and Value (New York: Humanities Press, c.1963), p. 248.

confirmability to synthetic statements, he provided criteria for the mental

processes of man no less than for his propositions.[70]

By definition a dichotomy of the whole leaves nothing in excess of
the two parts. The positivistic bifurcation of thought had its effects
also in metaphysics:

> The ultimate consequence of Hume's theory of causality and the
> discovery of non-Euclidean geometry is the rampantly anti-
> metaphysical bias of the scientific philosophy of contemporary
> positivism. This bias is all-pervasive, even axiomatic . . . .[71]

Carnap stated categorically that what lies beyond possible experience also
lies beyond possible expression:

> We have seen earlier that the meaning of a statement lies in the
> method of its verification. A statement asserts only so much as
> is verifiable with respect to it. Therefore a sentence can be used
> only to assert an empirical proposition . . . . If something were
> to lie, in principle, beyond possible experience, it could be
> neither said nor thought nor asked.[72]

Even Kant suffered at the hand of the verifiability criterion in that it
is the "logical tool" by which empiricism overcame the supposed dichotomy
between "things of appearance" and "things in themselves." This tool
eliminated the "things in themselves" because it "makes it meaningless to
speak about things which are unknowable in principle."[73]

The positivistic search for a "unified science" epitomized the im-
pulse which drove the positivists to mental-propositional bifurcation

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[70]Levi, p. 370.

[71]Ibid., p. 335.

[72]Rudolf Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical
Analysis of Language," Logical Positivism, edited by A. J. Ayer (Glencoe,
Illinois: Free Press, c.1959), p. 76. The article originally appeared as
"Überwindung der Metaphysik durch Logische Analyse der Sprache,"
Erkenntnis, II (1932).

[73]Reichenbach, p. 259.

and subsequent anti-metaphysical bias. One of the primary objectives of

the Viennese positivists was to establish a unity of science, a "monism

free from metaphysics."[74] If, as Carnap charges above, one can neither

speak nor think nor seek what lies "beyond possible experience," a "monism

free from metaphysics" takes the field by simple default. The many sciences

give way to one:

> with the aid of the new logic, logical analysis leads to a unified
> science. There are not different sciences with fundamentally dif-
> ferent methods or different sources of knowledge, but only one
> science. All knowledge finds its place in this science and, indeed,
> is knowledge of basically the same kind; the appearance of fundamental
> differences between the sciences are the deceptive result of our using
> different sub-languages to express them.[75]

The equation of the experiential with the propositional in unified

science necessitated an elimination of anything "beyond possible experi-

ence," that is, what is neither analytic nor synthetic. Consequently

a necessary (tautological) statement has no dealings with a contingent

proposition. The Ayer-Copleston debate shows this to be true. In

Thomistic fashion Copleston posits metaphysics as a necessary explana-

tion of the world's existence. Ayer rules the move invalid with the

contention that is meaningless to discuss anything "outside" the world.

He argues that a necessary proposition is not automatically a contingent

proposition.[76] There is room for the synthetic and the a priori, but not

for the synthetic a priori.

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[74]Joergensen, p. 76.

[75]Carnap, "The Old and the New Logic," Logical Positivism, p. 144.

[76]Ayer and Copleston, "Logical Positivism--A Debate," Modern Intro-
duction to Philosophy, pp. 589-596. J. N. Findlay, in "Can God's Exis-
tence by Disproved," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, edited by

One cannot easily measure all the ramifications of the positivistic
attack on metaphysical statements.   Perhaps C. E. M. Joad found all
rotten eggs in the one basket with his evaluation:

> Under [logical positivism's] influence young men and women confi-
> dently affirm that there are no absolutes, that metaphysics is
> nonsense, that the scientific is the only method which reaches
> valid results and that the order of reality which science studies
> is the only order that there is.[77]

While perhaps the impact of logical positivism was not as dramatic as
Joad would lead one to believe, its iconoclasm did indeed rattle the
worlds of philosophy and philosophical theology.   We turn now to the
explicit positivistic attitude towards metaphysical and theological
statements.

The claim of logical positivism was that metaphysical and theological

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Antony G. N. Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York: Macmillan Company,
c.1955), pp. 47-56, contends that the theist's definition of "God" makes
the notion or idea of the same "necessary." He then reminds the theist
that logical analysis has demonstrated logical "necessity" to be found
only in tautological-analytic statements, not in the synthetic. As a
result, God's existence as a contingent force upon the world (with which
the theist's synthetic statements deal) is inconclusively demonstrated.
On the other hand, in an article titled "Reflections on Necessary Existence,"
Process and Divinity, edited by W. L. Reese and E. Freeman (LaSalle,
Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, c.1964), 515-527, Findlay suggests
that Hartshorne has reopened the Anselmic question of the "necessity" of
God's existence with forcefulness. He says (p. 516): "I have moved far
from my simple Mind [and New Essays] 'disproof' of God's existence, and
I cannot say how far from each other we shall ultimately find ourselves.
I have been powerfully moved by Professor Hartshorne's suggestion, so
strange to theological tradition, that it may be feasible to recognize
both a necessary and a contingent 'side' in God . . . ."

[77]C. E. M. Joad, A Critique of Logical Positivism (London: Gollancz,
c.1950), p. 10. Joad's opinion of logical positivism here expressed
parallels a letter to the editor of Philosophy written in May, 1935, and
published in Vol. X (July 1935), 259-263, in spite of a fifteen year
span.

statements flow from a misapplication of words.[78] Carnap contended that

originally every word had its own meaning. A word frequently changed

meaning in the course of historical development, or lost its primary mean-

ing in the course of historical development, or lost its primary meaning

without acquiring a new one. In this way "pseudo-concepts" arose.[79] The

"pseudo-concept" is a fundamental misapplication of words. A word assuming

the form of a syntactical subject is not necessarily a valid conceptual

subject, although it may claim and appear to be. Carnap discusses the word

"God" as an example of a pseudo-subject. Not even the first requirement

of logic is met in the case of this word, namely the requirement of syn-

tactical specification (the form of the word's occurrence in elementary

sentences). An elementary sentence would necessarily assume the form "x

is a God." The metaphysician either rejects this form entirely without

substituting another, or if he accepts, he neglects to indicate the syn-

tactical category of the variable x.[80] But Carnap claims to see a different

motive in the positivistic challenge when compared with the challenges of

earlier anti-metaphysicians. Positivism isolates logical conflict as the

difficulty of metaphysical statements. Metaphysics is not a false fairy

tale; it is a meaningless sequence of words:

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[78]The positivistic insistence that religious discourse is by defini-
tion metaphysical was itself an alienating factor. For an interesting
discussion of the relation between metaphysical and religious language,
in which the historical particularity of Christian language shows itself
inimical to metaphysical theology and language (as in Hegel), consult
D. H. MacKinnon, "Metaphysical and Religious Language," Proceedings of the
Aristotelian Society, LIV (1953-54), 115-130.

[79]Carnap, "Elimination of Metaphysics," Logical Positivism, p. 62.
It is possible that Carnap's view of the origin and development of language
betrays an evolutionary presupposition unbecoming a positivist.

[80]Ibid., p. 66. Carnap includes among categories "material things,
properties of things, relations between things, numbers."

The difference between our thesis and that of the earlier anti-metaphysicians should now be clear. We do not regard metaphysics as "mere speculation" or "fairy tales". The statements of a fairy tale do not conflict with logic, but only with experience; they are perfectly meaningful, although false. Metaphysics is not "superstition"; it is possible to believe true and false propositions, but not to believe meaningless sequences of words.[81]

To relegate metaphysical or theological statements to the sphere of "pseudo-statements" was a negative process. The positivists were not satisfied to delineate the logical inadequacies of these statements; they also isolated the "positive" aspect of pseudo-statements. They assured all who would listen that the "expression of some emotional attitude" may certainly be a "significant task." In their appraisal they created a place for metaphysical and theological statements within the realm of emotion:

> analysis shows that these sentences do not say anything, being instead only an expression of some emotional attitude. To express this may certainly be a significant task. However, the adequate means for its expression is art, for example, lyric poetry or music. If, instead of these, the linguistic dress of a theory is chosen, a danger arises: a theoretical content, which does not exist, is feigned. If a metaphysician or theologian wishes to retain the usual form of language, he should understand thoroughly and explain clearly that it is not representation but expression; not theory, information, or cognition, but rather poetry or myth. If a mystic asserts that he has experiences that transcend all concepts, he cannot be challenged. But he cannot speak about it,

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[81] Ibid., p. 72. Friedrich Waismann, a charter member of the Vienna Circle, does not dismiss metaphysics with such rapidity. In "How I See Philosophy," Logical Positivism, edited by A. J. Ayer (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, c.1959), p. 380, he says: "To say that metaphysics is nonsense is nonsense. It fails to acknowledge the enormous part played at least in the past by those systems. . . . Metaphysicians, like artists, are the antennae of their time: they have a flair for feeling which way the spirit is moving." Waismann's article first appeared in Contemporary British Philosophy, edited by H. D. Lewis (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1956), pp. 447-490.

since speaking means grasping concepts and reducing to facts which
can be incorporated into science.[82]

Carnap leaves room for expression of one's "basic attitude" in life, but

argues that art is a much more adequate medium than metaphysical statements:

> we find that metaphysics also arises from the need to give expres-
> sion to a man's attitude in life, his emotional and volitional
> reaction to the environment, to society, to the tasks to which he
> devotes himself, to the misfortunes that befall him. . . . What
> is here essential for our considerations is only the fact that art
> is an adequate, metaphysics an inadequate means for the expression
> of the basic attitude.[83]

It was noted above that positivism advanced beyond Hume in considering

propositions rather than empirical reasoning. Ayer seizes this supposed

advance in his attempt to vindicate the positivistic condemnation of meta-

physical utterances. Logical positivism, he claims, was original in making

the impossibility of metaphysics depend not upon the nature of what could

be known, but upon the nature of what could be said.[84] From this perspec-

tive Ayer views the positivistic-linguistic challenge to theology as far

more radical than earlier epistemological challenges. He will not allow

the positivistic challenge to be called "atheistic" or "agnostic":

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[82]Joergensen, p. 5. This translated paragraph comes from Wissen-
schaftliche Weltauffassung: Der Wiener Kreis (Vienna: Wolf, 1929), pp. 16-
17, the Vienna Circle's official position-statement. H. H. Price, in
"Logical Positivism and Theology," Philosophy, X (July 1935), 313-331,
discussed the effect of logical positivism upon theological statements.
He argued that if the conditions prescribed by the positivists are accept-
ed, theological statements are meaningless and non-sensical. But he
charged that the positivists had delimited experience to achieve their
purpose. There is room, he argued, for "religious experience"; through
it theological statements can be verified or refuted.

[83]Carnap, "Elimination of Metaphysics," p. 79. Ben Kimpel suggests,
in Language and Religion (New York: Philosophical Library, c.1957), p. 7,
that a philosophy about language in religion presupposes a philosophy of
religion. Hence those who suggest that religious language is purely "emotive"
assume that religion is totally concerned with experience and experiential.

[84]Ayer, Logical Positivism, p. 11.

our view that all utterances about God are nonsensical, so far
from being identical with, or even lending any support to, either
of these familiar contentions, is actually incompatible with them.
For if the assertion that there is a god is nonsensical, then the
atheist's assertion that there is no god is equally nonsensical,
since it is only a significant proposition that can be significantly
contradicted . . . .

In the same train of thought, Ayer continues,

The point which we wish to establish is that there cannot be any
transcendent truths of religion. For the sentences which the
theist uses to express such "truths" are not literally significant.[85]

For the positivists, theological statements are meaningless only when
they are put in propositional form. From the beginning the positivists
allowed for mystical experience.[86] On the other hand, they endorsed
Dr. Johnson's statement referring to Jacob Boehme's mystical experience,
"If Jacob saw the unutterable, Jacob should not have tried to utter it."[87]

When discussing the verification principle, the positivists restricted
"possible experience" to the utterable. They disallowed both the argument
that a contingent statement could serve as a necessary statement and the
argument that empirical and supra-empirical statements could be mixed. It
is all the more surprising, then, when Ayer claims that the field of "possible
experience" is not limited to the utterable when dealing with the realm

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[85]Alfred J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic (Second edition; New York:
Dover Publications, n.d. [1946]), pp. 115, 117-118. In another place,
Ayer says that belief in a supernatural deity serves three intellectual
needs: it explains the world's existence and nature; it assures one that
life is worth living; it answers the question of how one ought to live.
Considered logically, he claims, belief does not fulfill any of these
functions. See Alfred J. Ayer et al., Religion and the Intellectuals:
A Symposium (New York: [Partisan Review], c.1950), pp. 31-34.

[86]See Joergensen, p. 5; see also supra, p. 46, n. 82.

[87]MacIntyre, p. 178.

of "God":

> we are not setting any arbitrary boundaries to the field of possible
> experience. As an illustration of this let us consider the case of
> the man who claims to have an immediate, non-sensory experience of
> God. So long as he uses the word "God" simply as a name for the
> content of his experience, I have no right to disbelieve him. . . .
> I can at least understand that he is having some experience of a
> kind that I do not have. And this I may readily believe. . . . At
> the same time it must be remarked that "God," in this usage, cannot
> be the name of a transcendent being. For to say that one was imme-
> diately acquainted with a transcendent being would be self-
> contradictory.[88]

In sum, the positivist hangs the theist by his own rope. If the theist

allows that it is impossible to define God fully in intelligible terms

(as all theists allow), the theist is simultaneously allowing, argues the

positivist, that it is impossible for a sentence to be both significant

and "about" God.[89] The positivist says, "If a mystic admits that the

object of his vision is something which cannot be described, then he must

also admit that he is bound to talk nonsense when he describes it."[90]

With this statement he challenges the theist to answer on positivistic

terms. He invites the theist to enter his system; if the theist does so,

he must either limit God to the mystically "unutterable" or bind Him over

to the "empirical" of the naturalist.

Some theologians are slow to dismiss the positivistic frame of ref-

erence. Thomas McPherson, for one, contends that the positivistic position

is not without merit:

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[88] Alfred J. Ayer, "Verification and Experience," Logical Positivism
(Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, c.1959), p. 239. The article appeared
in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1936-37.

[89] Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, 2d ed., p. 118.

[90] Ibid.

What to the Jews was a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolish-
ness is to the logical positivists nonsense. There is more to be
learnt from this than has yet, I think, been realized by most theo-
logians.[91]

Is it possible, he asks, that logical positivism is a "friend" of religion

in its allowance for the inexpressible? If Otto's Idea of the Holy sought

to recover the essential element of religion in its non-rational aspect,

does positivism differ greatly?[92] McPherson demonstrates his case from

Wittgenstein's early treatise. He grants that statements in the Tractatus

("Not how the world is, is the mystical, but that it is," 6.44; "There is

indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical," 6.522)

leave no room for the mystical question. But, he argues, Wittgenstein's

conclusion--that in religion one is asking questions that cannot properly

be asked when he is asking questions that cannot be answered--is more apt

than any other could be.[93]

Logical Positivism in the Larger Context

One arrives with difficulty at the role of logical positivism in the

history of philosophy. Without a doubt logical positivism served as the

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[91]Thomas McPherson, "Religion as the Inexpressible," New Essays in
Philosophical Theology, edited by Antony G. N. Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre
(New York: Macmillan Company, c.1955), p. 134.

[92]Ibid., p. 139. McPherson's emphasis is not without parallels in
the theology of Karl Barth.

[93]Ibid., pp. 138-139. Robert Calhoun, in "The Place of Language in
Religion," Philosophy of Religion, edited by George L. Abernethy and
Thomas A. Langford (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1962), p. 302, reminds
the mystic that a tremendous affirmation underlies all his negations:
that God is transcendent, incommensurable with all that is infinite;
"hence, unless one is to keep wholly silent, avoiding even negative
assertions, it seems necessary to probe further after some ground for
affirmation."

immediate precursor of contemporary linguistic analysis. But from another

perspective, logical positivism was an unwelcomed interruption in the devel-

opment of linguistic analysis. Insofar as Wittgenstein and Moore differed

from Carnap and Russell in allowing for a consideration of the sphere of

ordinary language and not solely an analysis of symbolic logic,[94] one can

argue that logical positivism was a momentary freak in the evolutionary

development of philosophical analysis. Logical positivism froze a method,

and made it standard: "To use the words of a recent analyst, it tended to

'freeze the philosophical method of Moore and Wittgenstein into slogan and

dogma.'"[95] Logical positivism grew out of embryonic linguistic analysis,

but in the end proved itself inimical to analysis. Logical positivism

was at the same time parent, child, and prodigal son. Wittgenstein, for

example, contributed in his early years to the development of logical

positivism. But his major contributions, as will be demonstrated in

Chapter III, were to the field of linguistic analysis. It is not surpris-

ing therefore that stringent logical positivism did not long remain a

viable option in the philosophical world. Once its concerns were voiced,

it was absorbed by a more inclusive movement, philosophical analysis.

Urmson explains why logical positivism-empiricism, at the end of the

1930's, was forced to alter itself. It had conceived language as a clear-

cut truth-function structure. But "indefinite statements," such as the

reductive analysis of the word "nation," or the challenge to offer a

phenomenalistic analysis of statements about material objects, were not

easily explained. Supporters were driven to the corner:

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[94]Levi, p. 443.

[95]Charlesworth, p. 127. The analyst is Stuart Hampshire.

Such a view of language had seemed essential to empiricism, since it showed how the edifice of our knowledge was securely based on experience; to give it up involved as radical a change of view as the abandonment of the view that all our conceptual apparatus was built up out of simple ideas would have meant for Locke. Such a defence of analysis . . . was therefore impossible for the analysts since in employing it they would have abandoned their whole conception of the purpose and nature of analysis.[96]

The positivists knew that if they deserted their original purpose they would abandon the truth-function view of language, and with it the appeal to empirical verification.[97] Urmson claims that a decisive disavowal of logical positivism-atomism was first linked with an endorsement of linguistic analysis in John Wisdom's article "Philosophical Perplexity," published in 1936.[98] This article viewed language as "ordinary" language rather than as a form of symbolic logic. "In philosophical method it is far more similar to present-day work than to anything which had preceded it."[99]

It is safe to conclude that stringent logical positivism has run its course. It is not at present a viable option in the field of philosophy although its influence is felt within contemporary linguistic analysis

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[96] Urmson, p. 159.

[97] Ibid., p. 161.

[98] Ibid., p. 173. John Wisdom's article, "Philosophical Perplexity," appeared in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, XVI (1936). Urmson recognizes the difficulty involved in isolating any one specific point such as the one indicated.

[99] Ibid., p. 178. Warnock (p. 106) qualifies Urmson's historiography with a reminder that as early as 1931 Gilbert Ryle had suggested that "philosophical analysis" might be the "sole and whole function of philosophy." Its goal was to be "the detection of the sources in linguistic idioms of recurrent misconstructions and absurd theories," said Ryle in "Systematically Misleading Expressions," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, XI (1931).

and the modern scientific method.[100]

As late as 1950, however, C. E. M. Joad delivered an impassioned con-
demnation of the movement in A Critique of Logical Positivism.[101] Even
in 1950 stringent "logical positivism" as pictured by Joad was no longer
a breathing philosophy. In spite of Ayer's second edition of Language,
Truth and Logic in 1946, by 1950 the movement had dissipated and entered
the stream of philosophical analysis.[102] Joad showed little familiarity
with this transition. As a consequence he attacked a straw man who might
possibly have adorned the Vienna Circle, but who certainly would not have
walked the Oxford campus in 1950. His wrathful and impassioned attack
was "emotive" at best.[103]

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[100]Frederick Ferré says in "Verification, Faith, and Credulity,"
Religion in Life, XXXII (Winter 1962-63), 46: "Logical Positivism, a
favorite object of theological fury for nearly a generation, has expired
as a movement and scarcely anyone can be found to mourn. Theologians are
quite understandably triumphant . . . and philosophers, even the most
'tough minded' sort, are now at pains to dissociate themselves from the
brash excesses of the Vienna Circle and its sympathizers of the 1930's."
C. A. Qadir, in "Contemporary Philosophy and Religion," International
Philosophical Quarterly, V (September 1965), 365, notes that even in
Pakistan, with an understandable cultural lag, logical positivism is
largely a spent force.

[101]C. E. M. Joad, A Critique of Logical Positivism (London: Victor
Gollancz, c.1950).

[102]G. J. Warnock, in "Analysis and Imagination," The Revolution in
Philosophy, edited by Alfred J. Ayer (London: Macmillan and Company, c.
1956), p. 124, clarifies the analysts' view of logical positivism: "I
should like to say in very plain terms that I am not, nor is any philo-
sopher of my acquaintance, a Logical Positivist. This is worth saying,
obvious though it must be in the light of this series of lectures, be-
cause there has seemed to be a current belief that Logical Positivism
is somehow the official doctrine of contemporary philosophy. There is,
in fact, no such official doctrine; and it is even more certain, if
possible, that Logical Positivism is not it."

[103]Supra, p. 43, n. 77.

On the other hand, Burnham Beckwith's Religion, Philosophy, and
Science: An Introduction to Logical Positivism, published in 1957, attempt-
ed to recreate the philosophy of Comte within the formal structure of
logical positivism.[104] Although written in 1957, the book took little
cognizance of the transitional difficulties of the verification principle,
or for that matter, the relaxation of the principle. All metaphysical
statements remained completely meaningless for Beckwith. It is obvious
that this American work divorced itself from British developments, for
it failed to appreciate the logic of any "language game" other than the
rough-and-tumble Rugby of logical positivism.

Logical positivism left its imprint within linguistic analysis
although it lost its identity. The relationship between the two move-
ments is complex. The influence of the former within the latter will
become more apparent as we investigate linguistic analysis and the status
of religious language in it.

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[104]Burnham P. Beckwith, Religion, Philosophy, and Science: An Intro-
duction to Logical Positivism (New York: Philosophical Library, c.1957).

CHAPTER III

THE LURE OF THE PART: LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Linguistic Analysis as Related to Logical Positivism

Within the scope of this study it is impossible to investigate all of the complex ancestral, social, and ideational interdependencies between logical positivism and linguistic analysis. But that there are cemented alliances is apparent. It will be our task instead to examine the essential connective links between the two movements in discussing philosophical analysis. A brief survey of the work of two bridge-builders, George E. Moore and Alfred J. Ayer, will provide a good beginning.

Brand Blanshard canonizes George E. Moore as the "patron saint" of linguistic analysis. Around him both positivists and later analysts rallied. His interests were theirs: he shared a common disinclination towards metaphysics; his was an intellectual integrity which even the most destructive respected; his was a distate for rhetoric, and a preference for simple language. Lastly,

> he gave to the 'philosophers of ordinary language' the suggestion
> that started them on their way. He suggested that common sense
> and its language supplied to philosophy both its main problems
> and a touchstone by which its speculative claims might be checked.[1]

Moore's work is more fully described by G. J. Warnock. Moore concluded that philosophical writing was infected with hastiness and confusion. Philosophers arrived at answers before considering exactly what questions

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[1]Brand Blanshard, _Reason and Analysis_ (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1962), p. 310.

to ask. Working out these conclusions, Moore concerned himself with the
problem of saying what a proposition meant in his analyses. But he com-
plicated things by forcing analysis into a standard pattern: analysis
was always to consist in a verbal paraphrase longer than the original
statement, synonymous, but more explicit. Although Moore committed him-
self theoretically to a pattern of philosophizing which paralleled his
metaphysical predecessors, his practice defined philosophy in terms of
clarification rather than discovery. His practice consisted almost
entirely in the pursuit of analyses.[2] It was the practice of analysis
which guaranteed Moore's revered status in the ancestral ranks of linguis-
tic analysis.[3]

While Moore's philosophizing was broad enough to serve as a rally-
ing point for both logical positivism and linguistic analysis, Alfred J.
Ayer evoked decision. Ayer helped to crystalize the objectives of linguis-
tic analysis in his defense of logical positivism. Reaction to his work
was an important factor in the historical development of philosophical
analysis. In this man stringent logical positivism found its most able
English proponent—and its last. Conversely, linguistic analysis saw in
him an archenemy who demanded a more exact description of the movement's
identity as distinguished from logical positivism.

On the one hand, Ayer contributed positively to the development of
linguistic analysis in his second edition of Language, Truth and Logic.

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[2]G. J. Warnock, English Philosophy Since 1900 (London: Oxford Univer-
sity Press, c.1958), pp. 15, 24, 27, 29.

[3]Moore's work demonstrates that embryonic analysis had a strong be-
ginning before logical positivism appeared as a recognizable phenomenon.

1946, with the suggestion that the philosopher is concerned with "defini-
tion" of words. By "definition" he meant something technical, namely
"definition in use."[4] This "definition in use" Ayer derived from Russell.
Philosophical "definition in use" is the defining of a phrase without
employing the defiendum or any of its synonyms, while still indicat-
ing the significance the phrase bears in its context.[5] Russell had been
led to the theory of descriptions, adopted by Ayer in 1946, by a consider-
ation of the misleading form of a statement such as "The Loch Ness mon-
ster is a sea-serpent."[6] Simply because words can be arranged syntacti-
cally does not indicate, argues Russell, that they have a definition
apart from their context. In fact, definition in use is the only proper
mode of analysis, for it protects one from broaching the realized dis-
crepancy between the structure of language and the actual nature of things.[7]

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[4]Blanshard, pp. 323-324.

[5]Ibid., p. 325. Ian Ramsey, in Religious Language (London: SCM Press,
1957), pp. 94-95, claims that John Hawkin's Horae Synopticae (1909), with
its strong statistical interest in studies of the Gospels, echoed Russell's
ideal of a scientific language. It assumed, in sum, that "odd" passages
have no value. Similarly, Hawkins saw little need for the repetition
found in some sections of the Gospels. Ramsey says this approach may
parallel Russell's insistence that there is no need to have p (a proposi-
tion) twice. In a chapter titled "Formal Knowledge and Religious Claims,"
Religious Knowledge ([Glencoe, Illinois]: Free Press, c.1961), pp. 33-43,
Paul Schmidt contends that religious claims are not to be paralleled with
the formal system of logic developed in the twentieth century.

[6]Blanshard, p. 332. Antony G. N. Flew, in his editorial introduction
to Logic and Language (First Series; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p. 7,
notes that Wittgenstein credited to Russell the discovery that the apparent
logical form of a proposition need not be its real form. Flew acclaims
this discovery as the central and fundamental discovery of modern British
philosophy.

[7]Blanshard, p. 329.

Ayer used the "theory of descriptions" or definitions in his attempted demolition of metaphysics. It was his argument that the theory prevented the extrapolation of discrepancy between language and the nature of things into an improper metaphysics.[8] With his insistence upon "definition in use" Ayer drew attention to a procedure which later achieved recognized status in linguistic analysis. While he used Russell's emphasis in his logical-positivistic attack upon metaphysics with little intention of extending it to the sphere of "ordinary language," Ayer contributed, perhaps unknowingly, to the employment of "use" in later analytic methodology.

On the other hand, Ayer's work also produced negative reaction. In part at least, linguistic analysis formulated its methodology to contrast with Ayer's. The second edition of Language, Truth and Logic in 1946 encouraged the analysts to clarify their objectives and methodology.[9] The lessons from Ayer's second edition were not easily learned, but neither were they easily forgotten. Emerging analysis pondered three lessons: (1) the failure of the verification principle, evident in the imprecision of its definition, demonstrated that analysis was neither to assume nor encourage an empirical view of the world; (2) the imprecision of the verification principle showed that an attempt to base analysis on a "principle," or to characterize explicitly the technique of analysis, was doomed to

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[8] Ibid.

[9] An indication of Cambridge reaction to Ayer's new edition of Language, Truth and Logic is found in John Wisdom's review of the book in Mind, LVII (1948). The scathing review is reprinted in Wisdom's Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), pp. 229-247.

technical failure; (3) by deduction Oxford philosophers were free to conclude that each kind of proposition had its own "logic."[10] In sum, Ayer contributed both positively and negatively to the development of emerging linguistic analysis.

Descriptive Definitions of Linguistic Analysis

It is no less difficult to define "linguistic analysis" as a philosophical movement than it is to define existentialism.[11] Since the adherents of both existentialism and analysis recognize methodology as their unifying bond as opposed to a body of mutually accepted presuppositions and conclusions, the participants reject attempts to define the two movements when they fail to emphasize the primacy of methodology. With this caution it is advisable to offer descriptive definitions--more descriptive than definitive--of philosophical analysis in order that the methodological processes of analysis are not slighted.

Even descriptions will be difficult:

Apart from a reluctance to subscribe in common to any general formula, there is a good deal of quite serious disagreement amongst [analysts] ; while there is undoubtedly a 'family resemblance' between their views and their methods it would be hard to find a description, however loose and elastic, which would apply to all or even most.[12]

The attempt to find a "common core of method or conclusion" in what Ryle and Austin have said about knowing; Pears and Paul about metaphysics;

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[10]Maxwell John Charlesworth, Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, c.1959), pp. 148-149.

[11]Terms such as "linguistic analysis," "philosophical analysis," "philosophy of language," and "analysis" are synonymous and interchangeable.

[12]J. O. Urmson, Philosophical Analysis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 164.

Strawson and Warnock about logic; Hart about law; Weldon about politics; Hare, Toulmin, Urmson, Hampshire, and Nowell-Smith about ethics, is a most difficult assignment. The task is complicated by the disinclination of these philosophers to talk about what they are doing. "If they are asked what philosophy means for them, they are apt to say, 'it is the sort of thing I am doing now' and return to their work."[13] At least their work is not repetitious, for a constantly changing complexion graces the face of analysis.[14] Since the face of the movement changes so quickly, only a descriptive approach, using "descriptive definitions," can hope to isolate and characterize the "common core" of analysis through an investigation of its methodology.

One description of linguistic analysis emphasizes especially the logical-positivistic parentage of the movement. G. E. Hughes appears to pattern analytic methodology after logical positivism when he says,

> The technique of analysing statements into their empirical and non-empirical elements and then displaying the empirical elements as contingent and the non-empirical as non-existential, possibly even as tautologies, and of examining the often intricate and curious ways in which these elements can be combined in one statement—this, I should be the last to deny, has proved a most valuable device in that it often throws a flood of light on the ways in which we describe the world.[15]

Blanshard, too, describes the movement in terms of its positivistic foundations. He contends that although the analysts have stressed three

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[13]Blanshard, p. 339.

[14]H. J. Paton, The Modern Predicament (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1955), p. 32.

[15]G. E. Hughes, "Can God's Existence be Disproved - B," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, edited by Antony G. N. Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York: Macmillan and Co., c.1955), p. 61. Hughes protests the extension of this methodology beyond its legitimate sphere.

elements of the positivistic tradition, they have not bound themselves
to it by an unbreakable alliance. First, while analysis stresses the
verification criterion of meaning, the verifiability principle has not
become a bond of unity because of the principle's many definitions.
Second, while analysts generally endorse the analytic theory of the a
priori, the analytic character of a priori statements is not accepted
by Arthur Pap, Wilfrid Sellars, and C. H. Langford. Third, while the
emotivist theory of value seems to characterize the analytic movement,
one of its founders, G. E. Moore, constructed an ethical philosophy of
another stripe.[16]

The paradoxes which appear in any descriptive definition of linguistic
analysis illuminate the movement's methodology in that they preclude a
precise listing of assumptions and presuppositions. This is the case
when Gustav Bergmann differentiates between two types of linguistic phil-
osophy. The "formalists," such as Carnap, devote themselves to construc-
ting symbolic systems and artificial languages. The "antiformalists"
probe and prune "the language we speak." Both view philosophical problems
as verbal complexities.[17] The task which Bergmann assigns to the formalists
closely parallels the logical-positivistic attempt to construct a unified
scientific language. But Bergmann's formalists are not logical positivists

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[16]Blanshard, pp. 93, 341. In "The Philosophy of Analysis," Clarity
is Not Enough: Essays in Criticism of Linguistic Philosophy, edited by
H. D. Lewis (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1963), pp. 76-109,
Blanshard expands his descriptive definition of analysis in terms of
its logical-positivistic parentage.

[17]Gustav Bergmann, "Two Types of Linguistic Philosophy," The Meta-
physics of Logical Positivism (First edition; New York: Longmans, Green
and Company, c.1954), pp. 107-108.

in the strictest sense of the verification principle. Therefore the distance between the formalists and the antiformalists is quantitative rather than qualitative; their methodology differs little. Bergmann thus offers a descriptive definition of analysis which emphasizes its positivistic parentage when he makes all philosophical problems "verbal" for both formalists and antiformalists and when he emphasizes the qualitative similarity of methodology used by both.

Since analysis is more a methodology than a "school," a descriptive definition emphasizing its positivistic parentage cannot be wholly exhaustive. Analysis is not revived positivism. William Blackstone argues that the philosophy of language, in contrast to logical positivism, does not allow analysis to become a reduction to constituents. It rejects as well the formulation of an ideal logic associated with reduction. Instead the concern is to search out the "informal" logic of statements and concepts in their use. In sum, philosophical analysis does not use the method of "translation," or other substitutional methods.[18]

A second descriptive definition of analysis emphasizes the movement's interest in language "use." The epistemological quest of traditional philosophy takes a new turn when "use" of language is the point of departure:

> To know for Plato meant to have intimations of the forms from which particular things derive their reality; to know for Kant meant to respect the synthesis which the mind creates within the molds of the understanding. To know in the newer forms of Philosophical Analysis is to have mastered the machinery of discourse, to have subjugated the recalcitrance of grammar

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[18] William T. Blackstone, _The Problem of Religious Knowledge_ (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, c.1963), p. 33. Blackstone notes that Peter Strawson encouraged the recognition of "informal" logic.

to the requirements of facile use.[19]

To be concerned with the use is to be concerned with induction rather

than deduction. An investigation of language use rules out preconceived

classification:

> An attempt to make clear the precise nature of the linguistic pro-
> cedures implicit in any puzzling expressions without a preconceived
> classification [such as the principle of verification] is the hall-
> mark, not, alas, always deserved, of the newer approach.[20]

"Don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use," and "Every statement has

its own logic," are two slogans which identify the emphasis upon use.[21]

Propositions are not limited to a single function as in logical positiv-

ism, or to two or three. It is a tactical error, says the analyst, to

approach language with preconceived categories, for one thereby disre-

gards the use of language.

This description of analysis emphasizes the movement's radical dis-

sociation from logical positivism. Whereas positivism assumed that all

non-tautological propositions describe sense-experiences, at least in

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[19]Albert William Levi, Philosophy and the Modern World (Bloomington,
Indiana: Indiana University Press, c.1959), pp. 445-446. T. R. Miles,
in Religion and the Scientific Outlook (London: Allen and Unwin, c.1959),
pp. 62-64, offers a healthy corrective to Levi in suggesting that current
analysis is concerned with the traditional "theory of knowledge." Its
questions, "How do we know this?" and "What arguments are relevant to
establishing its truth or falsity?" demonstrate it to be within the stream
of philosophy and epistemology as traditionally defined.

[20]Urmson, p. 199.

[21]Ibid., p. 179. Gustav Bergmann, in Meaning and Existence (Madison:
University of Wisconsin Press, c.1959), pp. 67-68, suggests that in fol-
lowing the slogan "Don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use," Oxford
(the term Bergmann uses to identify the Oxford analysts) slips into the
debauchery of behaviorism which it so long avoided in psychology. Oxford
"propounds the psychologists' context theory as still another monolithic
theory of meaning," and in this regard philosophical analysis is both
behavioristic and Hegelian, says Bergmann.

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principle, analysis does not affirm or deny this possibility. Analysis rules out the possibility that all meaningful statements serve a single purpose with its emphasis upon use.

But any one descriptive definition of analysis fails to provide a precise and complete characterization of the movement. This becomes evident in the definition which lays special emphasis upon "use." For while they agree to recognize varied "uses" in language, and while they admit to no prearranged classification, some analysts fail to divest themselves fully of the positivistic insistence that all statements serve as sense-experience descriptions. While they find numerous "uses" in language, they ultimately uncover one "use": that of describing a sense-experience that is in some way verifiable. Thus when Ronald Hepburn insists upon the study of the "particular instance" and not the general issue,[22] thereby offering a descriptive definition of analysis which emphasizes its concern for "use," he deceives himself in his failure to recognize that the study of particular instance is not truly analytic, or concerned with "use" alone, if the general issue is limited to the empirical by implicit definition.

Gilbert Ryle, on the other hand, offers a descriptive definition of linguistic analysis which avoids the subordination of "uses" to empirical "use." He views the task of philosophy as an interest in the "informal logic of the employment of expressions, the nature of logical howlers that people do or might commit if they strung their words together in

[22]Ronald W. Hepburn, "Poetry and Religious Belief," Metaphysical Beliefs, edited by Alasdair MacIntyre (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 160.

certain ways . . . ."[23] Ryle emphasizes both positive and negative ele-

ments of a concern with use. Positively, an investigation of the "informal

logic" of expressions is a study of non-Aristotelian logic present in

certain uses of language. This study, for example, might indicate that

a statement made in a game of checkers has its own "informal" logic.[24]

Negatively considered the concern for use is the search for and elimination

of "logical howlers" committed by people when they switch categories or

"uses" unknowingly.

A third descriptive definition of philosophical analysis entails a

description of the psychological approach-avoidance set common to many

of its adherents. This description takes special notice of the frequent

occurrence of the pronoun "we" in the writings of some analysts. M. B.

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[23]Blanshard, Reason and Analysis, p. 353. Ryle's words are found in
Philosophical Review, LXII (1953), 185. Blanshard disagrees sharply with
Ryle, and views the task of analysis with some disrespect. He sees little
validity in the analytic approach to problems of philosophy, and refers to
analysis as an attempt to make molehills out of mountains, following the
uncanny genius of Wittgenstein. See especially Blanshard, Reason and
Analysis, pp. 364-365.

[24]Gilbert Ryle discusses informal logic in Dilemmas (Cambridge: Uni-
versity Press, 1954), pp. 111-129. In reference to informal logic he says
(p. 117): "Not all strict inferences pivot on the recognized logical con-
stants, and not all topic-neutral expressions qualify for treatment as
logical constants." As an example of informal logic Ryle gives the follow-
ing (p. 118): "If you hear on good authority that she took arsenic and
fell ill you will reject the rumor that she fell ill and took arsenic.
This familiar use of 'and' carries with it the temporal notion expressed
by 'and subsequently' and even the causal notion expressed by 'and in
consequence'. The logicians' conscript 'and' does only its appointed
duty--a duty in which 'she took arsenic and fell ill' is an absolute
paraphrase of 'she fell ill and took arsenic'." Examples of informal
logic are multiple. For a lover to say, "She's pretty and she's not,"
makes no "sense," but it is perhaps the best method to describe his be-
loved. In the armed forces the phrase "The commander requests" is brack-
eted by the logic of military discipline; the phrase indicates far more
than a polite request.

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Foster contends that repeated use of the pronoun derives neither from empirical observations nor from metaphysical presuppositions. "We" does not refer to an empirically-delimited group of men, for philosophical analysis does not begin with an empirical statement about the linguistic usage of certain historically-determinable groups. The use of "we" by the certain analysts refers to the whole of mankind. The decision to include himself in the "we" is not a decision which any analyst can ever suppose to have "taken," or the taking would be verifiable by empirical means.[25] Foster includes the following as examples of the phenomenon:

"The philosopher, as an analyst, is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things. He is concerned only with the way in which we speak about them." A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic. Ch. II.

"In ordinary language we call a person 'rational' if he is capable of learning from experience." H. Feigl in "Logical Empiricism," Readings in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Feigl and Sellars, p. 15.

"A full understanding of the logic of value-terms can only be achieved by continual and sensitive attention to the way we use them." R. M. Hare, Language and Morals, p. 126.

"Philosophers' arguments have frequently turned on references to what we do and do not say, or, more strongly, on what we can or cannot say." G. Ryle, "Ordinary Language," in Philosophical Review, 1953.[26]

Foster concludes that the analysts who include themselves in the "we"-group are men who have moved from a timeless deduction, like Descartes, to a temporal study; from a "spiritualistic metaphysics" to "humanism." In fact, these assertions are a type of "theological anthropology."[27]

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[25] M. B. Foster,"'We' in Modern Philosophy," Faith and Logic, edited by Basil Mitchell (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), pp. 217-219.

[26] Ibid., pp. 194-195. Italics and casual references are Foster's.

[27] Ibid., pp. 218-219.

Foster describes analysis in terms of a "we-ism" demonstrative of

an underlying contemporary humanism, assuredly temporal but not empirical-

ly verifiable. His description is somewhat akin to Blanshard's when

Blanshard attempts to isolate a set of tendencies, tastes, and aversions

common to analysts. An admiration of science, an aversion to metaphysics,

a mutual dislike of anything pompous or high-flown in language, specula-

tion, or moral claim, Blanshard suggests, are characteristic of analy-

sis.[28]

A descriptive definition which delineates mutual inclinations and

aversions runs the danger of saying little about analytic methodology.

In fact, all three descriptive definitions here offered have this weak-

ness in common. Perhaps only in examining the process of "analysis" will

a descriptive definition of linguistic analysis come clean--and even then

imperfectly.

Cambridge Philosophical Analysis: Metaphysical Therapy

Descriptive definitions offer no pardon from the rigors of accurate

historiography. While a purely historical account of the development of

analysis does not lie within the scope of this study, an examination of

the historical manifestations of analysis is essential. It will be

advantageous to examine analysis at Cambridge and Oxford from a histo-

rical perspective.[29]

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[28]Blanshard, Reason and Analysis, pp. 93-94. Blanshard also notes
the analysts' aversion to philosophers described by McTaggart as the sort
who "wanted to believe that they ate a good dinner only in order to
strengthen themselves to appreciate Dante."

[29]Oxford remains the hub of analysis although currently analysts

The Cambridge analysts concerned themselves primarily with meta-
physical statements. A psychiatric term, "therapeutics," accurately
describes the school's activities. Charlesworth includes John Wisdom,
G. A. Paul, Morris Lazerowitz, and Norman Malcolm among the "Cambridge
School" analysts. The school dominated the field of analysis roughly
from 1933 to the end of World War II.[30]

The Cambridge "therapists" began therapy where a counselor begins
counseling--with the immediate problem. For them metaphysical statements
were valuable--not necessarily meaningless--precisely because these state-
ments gave opportunity for analytic therapy. Ayer charges that the [Cam-
bridge] logical analysts were far more indulgent than the Viennese positiv-
ists. Although they opposed metaphysics when it was merely "rhapsodical,"

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may be found elsewhere in Britain, in the United States, in some Scandin-
avian countries, in Australia and New Zealand, and in the Netherlands.
Bernhard Erling, in Nature and History (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1960), p. 13,
notes that a Swede, Harald Eklund, uses analysis in several of his recent
essays including Tro, erfarenhet, verklighet (Stockholm, 1956) and Person-
ligt och sakligt religionsfrågor (Stockholm, 1958). Erling also men-
tions (p. 11) that Axel Gyllenkrok's Systematisk teologi och vetenskaplig
metod, med särskild hänsyn till etiken (Uppsala: Lundequestska bokhandeln,
1959 [Uppsala universitets årsskrift 1959:2]) uses contemporary British
analysis in arriving at its conclusion that scientific systematic theology
is unattainable, although a systematic and normative ethics may be possible.
C. A. Qadir, in "Contemporary Philosophy and Religion," International
Philosophical Quarterly, V (September 1965), 364-365 (a presidential
address offered before the Pakistan Philosophical Congress in Hyderabad
in April, 1964; originally published in Pakistan Philosophical Journal
of July, 1964), says that no small number of younger philosophers in
Pakistan think and write in the style of Anglo-Americans, and are con-
cerned with analysis of language.

[30]Charlesworth, pp. 151-152. Charlesworth notes that Wisdom was
from Cambridge University, Paul from Oxford, Lazerowitz from Smith College
(USA), and Malcolm from Cornell. The wide geographical disbursement
evidently did not interfere with Cambridge unity. B. A. Farrell, in "An
Appraisal of Therapeutic Positivism," Mind, LV (January 1946; April 1946),
25-48, 133-150, discusses Wisdom, Paul, and Malcolm in a somewhat critical,
but appreciative, evaluation.

they allowed the contention that the "metaphysician may sometimes be seeing
the world in a fresh and interesting way; he may have good reason for
being dissatisfied with our ordinary concepts, or for proposing to revise
them." Errors manifested in metaphysical statements may be instructive.
If Wittgenstein was right in suggesting that problems in philosophy arose
because men are deluded by features of their language, "the metaphysician,
by his very extravagancies, may also contribute to their dissolution."[31]

This recognition of the intrinsic value of metaphysical statements
is foreign to Ayer's positivism. For the "therapeutic analyst," the
positivist's verification principle was simply a linguistic proposal
valuable in its illumination, but not absolutely true. Proposals of the
transcendentalists were no less valuable and illuminative. For example,
the statement "There is a God" is valuable in that it isolates structural
features of the cosmos.[32]

A recognition of the intrinsic value of metaphysical statements
argues that when past metaphysicians claimed to construct ontologies, in
many cases they undertook a far more advantageous task: "creating new lan-
guages which bring out certain analogies more pointedly and more system-
atically than is possible in our current language." For the therapists,
the study of any form of philosophy is a valuable endeavor regardless of

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[31] Alfred J. Ayer, Logical Positivism (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press,
c.1959), p. 17. Undoubtedly Ayer is referring to Wittgenstein's state-
ment (#123) in Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigations,
translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p. 49e,
"A philosophical problem has the form: 'I don't know my way about.'"

[32] Charlesworth, pp. 159-160.

perplexity or confusion.33   John Wisdom described the Cambridge attitude

towards metaphysical statements in Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis:

These untruths [paradoxical, provoking statements] persist. This
is not merely because they are symptoms of an intractable disorder
but because they are philosophically useful. The curious thing is
that their philosophical usefulness depends upon their paradoxical-
ness and thus upon their falsehood. They are false because they
are needed where ordinary language fails, though it must not be
supposed that they are or should be in some perfect language. They
are in a language not free from the same sort of defects as those
from the effects of which they are designed to free us.34

From a positive evaluation of metaphysical statements the Cambridge

analysts advanced to depth therapy. Wisdom asserts that "therapeutic

analysis" is somewhat parallel to psychoanalysis: the patient does his

own work guided by the analyst.35 Wisdom's handling of the verification

principle is an excellent example of "psychoanalytic therapy." He finds

the principle an opportune candidate for therapeutic analysis. There is

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33John Niemayer Findlay, "Some Reactions to Recent Cambridge Philo-
sophy (1940-1)," Language, Mind and Value (New York: Humanities Press,
c.1963), pp. 37-38. The article originally appeared in Australasian
Journal of Psychology and Philosophy (1940-1941).

34John Wisdom, "Philosophical Perplexity," Philosophy and Psycho-
Analysis (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), p. 50. The article
originally appeared in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, XVI (1936).
In "The Modes of Thought and the Logic of God," The Existence of God,
edited by John Hick (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1964), p. 298,
Wisdom posits two questions for therapeutic analysis, and thereby asserts
the value of metaphysical questions: "And yet in spite of all this and
whatever the answer may be the old questions 'Does God exist?' 'Does
the Devil exist?' aren't senseless, aren't beyond the scope of thought
and reason. On the contrary they call for new awareness of what has so
long been about us, in case knowing nature so well we never know her."
This broadcast, originally made over the British Broadcasting Corporation
in 1950, is an exercise in wrestling with what Wisdom calls philosophically
useful "untruths." Warnock (p. 93) notes (comparing Wisdom and
Wittgenstein) that while Wittgenstein visualized a philosopher's paradox
as both interesting and important, Wisdom allows that it is also defen-
sible.

35Charlesworth, p. 157.

therapeutic value for the principle's friends no less than for its

enemies:

> I say that the verification principle is a metaphysical principle
> because I want (1) to draw the attention of those who accept it to
> the deplorably old-fashioned clothes in which it presents itself.
> Indeed, it resembles not only positivistic theories but also the
> worst transcendental theories by appearing in the disguise either
> of a scientific discovery removing popular illusion, or of a logi-
> cal equation (incorrect) from which deductions may be made. No
> wonder our conservative friends cannot accept it. I want (2) to
> draw the attention of those who reject it to the fact that because
> they are taken in by its disguise they fail to recognize the merits
> which like other metaphysical theories it conceals. Both those who
> accept it and those who reject it do not realize what they are doing
> because they do not notice that it is disguised.[36]

By drawing attention to two paradoxical, "provoking" statements Wisdom

proposes to demonstrate the logical validity of each in its particular

use. This type of analysis will not be decisive, but it will be infor-

mative. The Cambridge analyst did not claim to clear away metaphysical

confusions with his linguistic analysis: Wisdom suggests that analysis

"leaves us free to begin."[37]

In sum, the Cambridge analysts developed "therapeutic analysis."

In cases where metaphysical difficulties arise, analysis isolates the

features which impel one man one way and another the other. Once this

is accomplished, analysis demonstrates that no absolute answer is possible

in cases of "decision."[38]

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[36]John Wisdom, "Metaphysics and Verification," Philosophy and
Psycho-Analysis, p. 55. Wisdom continues his therapeutic analysis of
the verification principle in "Metamorphoses of the Verifiability Theo-
ry of Meaning," Mind, LXXII (July 1963), 335-347.

[37]Charlesworth, p. 160.

[38]Ibid., p. 159. Wisdom says one is left "free to begin."

The value of metaphysical statements resides in their proper analysis. Although the Cambridge analysts would have denied any purpose in analysis other than "therapy," one gets the impression that the unspoken goal of analytic therapy is the avoidance of metaphysical traps once one has been set "free to begin" anew. In any case, Cambridge therapeutic analysis was an important historical manifestation of the analytic movement in its beginnings.

Oxford: the Logics of Language

If the concern of Cambridge therapy lay with the analysis of metaphysical statements, Oxford is no less the center of a study of the logic of languages--or the logics of language. Cambridge therapy was distantly related to classical philosophy; the relation of Oxford analysis to classical philosophy is more tenuous. Methodological purpose ultimately distinguishes Oxford analysis from Cambridge therapy, and radically separates it from traditional philosophy as well. The transference of philosophical investigation from the sphere of human experience and thinking to the logics of language signifies that methodology--not ontology, epistemology, or therapy--is the essence of philosophy. In Oxford methodology Cambridge therapy is washed clean. To involve oneself in Oxford analysis is to involve oneself in the discovery and delineation of the logics of language.

The philosophy of language reached the "term of its revolution" in Oxford analysis. On the one hand, Oxford analysis is undogmatic; the positivistic and "reductionistic" tendency of analysis is almost wholly eliminated. On the other hand, the philosophical pretensions of analysis are more severely limited. "Analysis appears now no longer as the

whole of philosophy; it is rather an instrument of philosophy."[39]
Included among the "Oxford philosophers" are two principle figures,
John Austin and Gilbert Ryle, and numerous attendants, including Herbert
L. A. Hart, Peter F. Strawson, Stuart Hampshire, Stephen E. Toulmin,
Richard Marry Hare, Patrick Nowell-Smith, and Isaiah Berlin.[40]

In the case of philosophical analysis the perennial intellectual
dependence of Cambridge on Oxford reversed itself. Oxford owes much to
Cambridge, for it was Ludwig Wittgenstein of Cambridge who provided the
initial stimulus to Oxford analysis. While at Cambridge Wittgenstein
demonstrated the possibility and necessity of examining the language
of principle domains. In his Tractatus he endorsed the imprecise veri-
fication principle of logical atomism, later formulated in logical posi-
tivism. This endorsement signaled a restriction of the function of lan-
guage to the descriptively empirical. But Wittgenstein's position changed
radically in his Philosophical Investigations. In the Tractatus he
included intimations and suggestions of the centrality of language, even

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[39]Ibid., p. 170. Italics are Charlesworth's. With the statement
that analysis is no longer the "whole" of philosophy Charlesworth compares
Oxford analysis with logical positivism. When he suggests that analysis
is an "instrument" of philosophy, he fails to differentiate carefully be-
tween Cambridge and Oxford. Whereas in the Cambridge school analysis was
an "instrument" for therapy (and thus also "philosophy" somewhat classical-
ly defined), in the Oxford school analysis is an "instrument" insofar as
"instrument [methodology] of philosophy" and "philosophy" are univocal.

[40]Ibid., p. 168. Morris Weitz, in "Oxford Philosophy," Philosophical
Review, LXII (April 1953), 187-233, gives his impression (after a year's
visit to Oxford) of some of the earlier papers of Strawson, Berlin, Ryle,
Hart, and others. Austin died in 1960; Toulmin has been director of the
Nuffield Foundation Unit for the History of Ideas since 1960; Nowell-Smith
is at Leicester University; Hampshire moved to Princeton U. in 1963; Hare,
Ryle, Hart, Strawson, and Berlin are at Oxford University.

ordinary language, but in the Investigations ordinary language became

the major theme.[41] Wittgenstein concluded that language consisted of

"languages":

> Man kann sich leicht eine Sprache vorstellen, die nur aus Befehlen
> und Meldungen in der Schlacht besteht.--Oder eine Sprache, die nur
> aus Fragen besteht und einem Ausdruck der Bejahung und der Vernein-
> ung. Und unzähliges Andere.----Und eine Sprache vorstellen heisst,
> sich eine Lebensform vorstellen.[42]

He used the phrase "language-game" to describe the widespread variation

in language, and confessed to the inadequacy of his Tractatus-theory

of linguistic structure:

> Das Wort "Sprachspiel" soll hier hervorheben, dass das Sprechen
> der Sprache ein Teil ist einer Tätigkeit, oder einer Lebensform.
>
> Führe dir die Mannigfaltigkeit der Sprachspiele an diesen Beispielen,
> und andern, vor Augen:
>   Befehlen, und nach Befehlen handeln--
>   Beschreiben eines Gegenstands nach dem Ansehen, oder nach Messungen--
>   Herstellen eines Gegenstands nach einer Beschreibung (Zeichnung)--
>   Berichten eines Hergangs--
>   Über den Hergang Vermutungen anstellen--
>   Eine Hypothese aufstellen und prüfen--
>   Darstellen der Ergebnisse eines Experiments durch Tabellen und
>   Diagramme--
>   Eine Geschichte erfinden; und lesen--
>   Theater spielen--
>   Reigen singen--
>   Rätsel raten--
>   Einen Witz machen; erzählen--
>   Ein angewandtes Rechenexempel lösen--
>   Aus einer Sprache in die andere übersetzen--
>   Bitten, Danken, Fluchen, Grüssen, Beten.
> --Es ist interessant, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Werkzeuge der Sprache
> und ihrer Verwendungsweisen, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Wort- und
> Satzarten, mit dem zu vergleichen, was Logiker über den Bau der

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[41]Levi, p. 464. Warnock notes (p. 66) that Wittgenstein's view of language in the Tractatus did not differ greatly from Russell's.

[42]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigations, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p. 8.

Sprache gesagt haben. (Und auch der Verfasser der <u>Logisch-
Philosophischen Abhandlung</u>).[43]

He dismissed those who accused him of taking the "easy way out,"

and offered instead a challenging new analytic methodology:

> Hier stossen wir auf die grosse Frage, die hinter allen diesen
> Betrachtungen steht.--Denn man könnte mir nun einwenden: "Du
> machst dir's leicht! Du redest von allen möglichen Sprachspielen,
> hast aber nirgends gesagt, was denn das Wesentliche des Sprachspiels,
> und also der Sprache, ist. Was allen diesen Vorgängen gemeinsam ist
> und sie zur Sprache, oder zu Teilen der Sprache macht. Du schenkst
> dir also gerade den Teil der Untersuchung, der dir selbst seinerzeit
> das meiste Kopfzerbrechen gemacht hat, nämlich den, die <u>allgemeine
> Form des Satzes</u> und der Sprache betreffend."

> Und das ist wahr.--Statt etwas anzugeben, was allem, was wir Sprache
> nennen, gemeinsam ist, sage ich, es ist diesen Erscheinungen gar-
> nicht Eines gemeinsam, weswegen wir für alle das gleiche Wort ver-
> wenden,--sondern sie sind mit einander in vielen verschiedenen
> Weisen verwandt. Und dieser Verwandtschaft, oder dieser Verwandt-
> schaften wegen nennen wir sie alle "Sprachen".[44]

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[43]Wittgenstein, pp. 11-12. The provided English translation (pp.
11e-12e) reads: "Here the term 'language-<u>game</u>' is meant to bring into
prominence the fact that the <u>speaking</u> of language is part of an activity,
or of a form of life. Review the multiplicity of language-games in the
following examples, and in others: Giving orders, and obeying them--
Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements--Con-
structing an object from a description (a drawing)--Reporting an event--
Speculating about an event--Forming and testing a hypothesis--Presenting
the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams--Making up a story;
and reading it--Play-acting--Singing catches--Guessing riddles--Making a
joke; telling it--Solving a problem in practical arithmetic--Translating
from one language into another--Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, pray-
ing.--It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in
language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word
and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of lan-
guage. (Including the author of <u>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</u>.)"

[44]Wittgenstein, p. 31. The provided English translation (p. 31e)
reads: "Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all
these considerations.--For someone might object against me: 'You take the
easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have no-
where said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language,
is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into
language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of
the investigation that once gave you yourself most headache, the part

Wittgenstein realized that the criteria of meaning used in logical empir-
icism derived from analyzing the use of statements in mathematics, logic,
and natural science.[45] The way was clear to analyze the use of language
in other domains.

This brief summary of Wittgenstein's work is not out of place in a
consideration of Oxford analysis. In point of fact, Wittgenstein exert-
ed greater influence at Oxford than at Cambridge. His Investigations
stirred greater interest among the Oxford analysts than among his Cam-
bridge compatriots. Almost single-handedly he turned Oxford philosophy
to a concern with analysis.

Wittgenstein's theory in the Investigations was a complete turnabout
from the Tractatus. His reversal suggests an illuminative comparison
between logical positivism and Oxford analysis. Logical positivism pic-
tured language as an invention of man; linguistic analysis saw it as an
organism.[46] Viewing language as an organism disallowed a reductionistic
tendency, especially if it were positivistic in temperament.[47]

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about the general form of propositions and of language.' And this is true.--
Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am
saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us
use the same word for all,--but that they are related to one another in
many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these
relationships, that we call them all 'language'."

[45]Paul F. Schmidt, Religious Knowledge ([Glencoe, Illinois]: Free
Press, c.1961), p. 75. Schmidt makes no explicit reference to the
thought of Wittgenstein at this place, but the argument is parallel.

[46]Frederick Ferré, Language, Logic and God (First edition; New
York: Harper and Brothers, c.1961), p. 58.

[47]Charlesworth, p. 183.

The Oxford disapproval of propositional analytic-synthetic dichotomies derives from an organic view of language. If an expression fits into an organic whole, and if an expression has no meaning apart from a particular context, by definition there are no reducible analytic statements.[48] On the other hand, the positivistic reduction of synthetic statements into true/false and meaningless is no less unsure for the analysts. For example, "performatory" statement are perfectly meaningful and "objective" although properly neither true nor false.[49] In "performatory" discourse, language is an "intervention in the world." Nothing is described, nor is the aim to arouse emotion. Rather, after the words are spoken ("I promise," "I approve," "I, Nancy, take thee"), the situation is changed by the very uttering of the words.[50]

It is evident that Oxford analysis views language as an organism which may have "informal logic" irreducible in terms of formal elements. Language is not an instrument. Friedrich Waismann, a charter member of the Vienna Circle, adequately summarizes our discussion of the difference

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[48]Ibid., p. 173.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Hepburn, "Poetry and Religious Belief," Metaphysical Beliefs, p. 121. Warnock notes (p. 154) that John Austin was especially concerned with performatory utterances. Austin's account of performatives is found in How to do Things with Words, edited from lecture notes by J. O. Urmson (Oxford: University Press, 1962); see also John Austin, Philosophical Papers (Oxford: University Press, 1961). Donald D. Evans, in The Logic of Self-Involvement (London: SCM Press, c.1963), summarizes Austin's discussion of performatives and proceeds to study Christian use of language about God as Creator from that perspective. T. R. Miles, in Religion and the Scientific Outlook (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1959), pp. 185-186, suggests that "pseudo-causal" prayer language should be abandoned in favor of "performatory" prayer. Thus the prayer "Thy will be done" is to be understood as "I hereby acknowledge the need to do according to thy will."

between logical positivism and linguistic analysis in his reference to
the "texture" and "logic" of strata:

> "The formal motifs which we have been considering all combine to
> impress a certain stamp on a stratum; they give us the means to
> characterize each stratum 'from within' that is with reference to
> the subject." If we carefully study the texture of the concepts
> which occur in a given stratum, the logic of its propositions, the
> meaning of truth, the web of verification, the senses in which a
> description may be complete or incomplete--if we consider all that,
> we may thereby characterize the subject-matter. . . . The analogy
> with science is obvious. The questions, "What is a point?" "What
> is a straight line?" have been debated for more than 2000 years
> until the solution was found in a reversal of the problem situa-
> tion. . . . In like manner we may say that each stratum has a
> logic of its own and that this logic determines the meaning of
> certain base terms.[51]

By implication Waismann admits that language is not easily reduced to a
single function, that of describing the empirically verifiable.

Oxford analysis deals with the logics of organic language. Its
methodology developed from a sharpening of Wittgenstein's tools and an
extrapolation of his initial efforts. Wittgenstein referred to language
in terms of the use of language. Language was meaningful without a philo-
sophical justification of its sense or significance.[52] Wittgenstein
defined "meaning" in terms of word use. For Oxford analysts, this defini-
tion lent itself too easily to a "behavioristic" theory of meaning: "to
mean" consists in using words in a certain way. By sharpening this defi-
nition the analysts made it their own. Oxford analysis defines meaning

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[51]Friedrich Waismann, "Language Strata," Logic and Language, edited
by Antony G. N. Flew (Second Series; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p.
30. G. C. Stead, in "How Theologians Reason," Faith and Logic, edited by
Basil Mitchell (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), pp. 114-115, refuses
to make logical generalizations about theological statements because of
their "open texture." He suggests that "the theologian is concerned to
state things, and it may be essential . . . that [his statement's] con-
notation is not precisely delimited."

[52]Charlesworth, p. 114.

in terms of <u>use</u>, not in terms of "consisting" in the certain use of words. This definition of meaning is a methodological rule of thumb.[53] In addition, Oxford analysts oppose the suggestion that all words "mean" in the same way that proper names "mean,"[54] that is, by ostensive definition. Combining this emphasis with a definition of meaning in terms of use, the analysts focused their interest on contextual relations. Put another way, definition of meaning in terms of use is a definition in terms of the "occasion":

> instead of assuming that expressions have a fixed and absolute meaning quite independent of the speaker and the context, we must admit that expressions only have meaning in context. We must look not for the "object" to which the expression refers, but for the "<u>occasion</u>" which gives its use significance. So, Nowell-Smith says, instead of the question, "What does the word 'X' mean?" we should always ask two questions, "For what job is the word 'X' used?" and "Under what conditions is it proper to use the word for that job?"[55]

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[53] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 170.

[54] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 174.

[55] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 172. Niels Egmont Christensen, a Danish analyst, distinguishes between his own and the Oxford analysts' theory of meaning in <u>On the Nature of Meanings: A Philosophical Analysis</u> (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1961), p. 153: "for us the use or role by which we define meaning is only one use, that of referring or making truths." Again, p. 14, "the meaning of an expression pertains to the capacity of that expression of being rightly produced when and where, and only when and where, something specific of a non-linguistic kind is present, be it an object, property, relation, situation, or whatever it may be. The abstract entity defined by this capacity is, we maintain, the meaning of at least a large class of expressions and accordingly the 'thing' sought by analytic philosophers when raising the general question [what sort of things are meanings?]." His definition shows a distinguishable link with logical positivism. Peter Zinkernagel, another Dane, agrees with much of Oxford philosophy in his <u>Conditions for Description</u>, translated by Olas Lindum (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, c.1962), but he betrays an alliance with logical positivism when he charges (p. 118) "that objective science, more than anything else, is a precise formulation of characteristics of everyday language. . . . Oxford philosophers sometimes seem to forget that such sciences as geometry and physics are investigations into fundamental concepts of our language."

Oxford analysts sharpened not only Wittgenstein's definition of meaning, but also his handling of the interrelations of language "games." While the analysts were no less anxious than Wittgenstein to depict the precise interrelations between "logics" or "games," they have been more successful than he in isolating the variety of logics. Reluctant to discuss the precise relations between games of languages, Bernard Williams includes among the distinguishing marks of a language game the following: (1) types of logical relation holding within language; (2) subject-matter; (3) uses of technical terms; (4) purposes; (5) more generally, activities with which the language is associated.[56]

Gilbert Ryle of Oxford prefers to speak of "categories" rather than games. Ryle defines categories as "sentence-factors," and contends that each expression belongs to a distinguishable type with an indefinite number of instances.[57] Ryle demonstrates what he means by category in a discussion of "use" and "usage." He distinguishes between "ordinary use" and "ordinary usage," and apparently makes each a category. He terms it a philosophical "howler" to identify the two and to pretend that actual use of expressions is in some way a criterion for significance. "Job-analysis is not Mass Observation." He suggests that one discovers the ordinary use of an expression much as he discovers the ordinary use of a tool—by manipulating it.[58]

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[56] Bernard Williams, "Tertullian's Paradox," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, edited by Antony G. N. Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1955), p. 194.

[57] Blanshard, Reason and Analysis, p. 346.

[58] Charlesworth, pp. 180-181. "Mass Observation" is the British

John Austin and Peter F. Strawson are two other Oxford analysts who have taken their cue from Wittgenstein, but advanced beyond him. Austin differed from Wittgenstein both in method and motive. In method, he dissected the details of linguistic uses with less of a flair. Instead of providing hints, clues, and pointers of a set exposition, he trained his ears for the fine nuances. Wittgenstein held that the purpose of language description was the dissolution of philosophical problems. Austin's motive differed. He gave the impression that there was something to be learned, both from and about language. He did not dismiss the multitude of adverbs that describe, for example, one's actions, in order to limit investigation to "voluntary" and"involuntary" action. For Austin, linguistic distinctions were informative; language appeared to be a storehouse of "long-garnered principles and distinctions."[59] Strawson, on the other hand, attempts to clarify some of the older terms of philosophical classification. With H. H. Price he has investigated "categories," "particulars," "universals," and other terms.[60]

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equivalent of the Gallup poll. Warnock (p. 101) questions Ryle's method of category-analysis, especially in Ryle's Concept of Mind, by asserting the presence of a "ghost" within the analysis. He finds the "ghost of [Moore's] old programme of 'analysis', the attempt to reduce to some single approved grade of basic facts such propositions as seem to mention facts of other sorts"--in Ryle's case, a behavioristic interpretation. Warnock further claims (p. 101) that such a method is "unlike that species of unprejudiced investigation the sole aim of which is to achieve a clear grasp of the concepts we employ." Ryle's "one-world theory" is critically analyzed by C. A. Campbell in "Ryle on the Intellect," Clarity is Not Enough, edited by H. D. Lewis (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1963), pp. 278-310.

[59]Warnock, pp. 147-151. Austin died in 1960. Evaluations of his work are given by J. O. Urmson, Norman Malcolm, W. V. Quine, and Stuart Hampshire in Journal of Philosophy, LXII (October 1965), 499-513.

[60]Warnock, p. 154. For a discussion of the metaphysical implications

We have already touched on the honing of Wittgenstein's analytic methodology in our discussion of the Oxford effort to sharpen his definition of "meaning" and to describe more adequately his language games. But it must be noted that at the hands of the Oxford analysts Wittgenstein's methodology has reached a point of keen precision. The Oxford analysts refined the "paradigm case technique" and the "significant comparison" in polishing Wittgenstein's method. Analysis employs the paradigm case technique in clarifying the function of discourse. The technique parallels a first case with a second to understand more fully the first. Uses in paralleled contexts are uses that are the meaning of the expression.[61]

Flew refers to the paradigm case in these terms:

> the meaning of [a word] can be elucidated by looking at simple paradigm cases: such as those in which fastidious language users employ [that word] when the madness of metaphysics is not upon them; such as those by reference to which the expression usually is, and ultimately has always to be, explained.[62]

In "significant comparison," a phrase is compared to other forms of language, or other activities, which accomplish an identical purpose. This process of contrast illumines the original phrase.[63]

The search for the logics of language has not proceeded without heckling and philosophical rebuttal. Condescendingly, John Wisdom refers

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of Peter Strawson's Individuals: an Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics (1959), see F. Zabeeh, "Oxford and Metaphysics: a New Page in Contemporary Philosophy," International Philosophical Quarterly, III (May 1963), 312-314.

[61]Ferré, pp. 64-65.

[62]Antony G. N. Flew, "Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom," New Essays, p. 150.

[63]Ferré, p. 65.

to the suggestion that every expression has its own peculiar logic as the "idiosyncrasy platitude."[64] Charlesworth contends that the approach sanctifies the status quo. Satisfaction with the status quo is evident, he claims, in the concrete work of Oxford analysis. One is forced to pretend that every proposition has its own logic; attempts to show the logic false are construed as misdirected efforts to reduce it to an alien logical form.[65] Blanshard's contention that "category-mistakes" occur exclusively in thought or belief, and not in expressions--as Ryle contends--is a parallel criticism.[66]

A more concerted attack on the "idiosyncrasy platitude" involves transferring the scrimmage from the field of linguistic analysis to the field of epistemology. In suggesting that Ryle is not as totally concerned with linguistics as he might imagine, Blanshard assumes the point he sets out to prove:

> Now the only way to decide whether it is a howler to say "thinking is speaking" is to get clear whether thinking is speaking. If this is in truth the way to decide, then philosophy will remain what men have commonly thought it to be, a reflective exploration of the nature of things.[67]

Blanshard's argument parallels Charlesworth's when Charlesworth accuses the analysts of inconsistency. The analysts claim both that language is composed of "public words," and that through inspection of ordinary language difficulties are cleared. The analysts are inconsistent in

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[64] Charlesworth, p. 182.

[65] Ibid., p. 184.

[66] Blanshard, Reason and Analysis, p. 336. See also p. 354.

[67] Ibid., p. 354.

their contention that difficulties arise out of the confluence of "categories" within ordinary language.[68]   Blanshard and Charlesworth have difficulty with the suggestion that both the problem and the solution are found in linguistics. An appeal to the court of language appears foolhardy if it is true that problems initially reside in language. Putting the argument another way, Charlesworth criticizes Oxford's attempt to scuttle all word-reference. The analysts accurately argue that all words do not "mean" in the same way as proper names; but they are not thereby relieved of the necessity to explain their ascription of words to categories such as "performatory," "ascriptive," or "confirmatory." What is present in a specific circumstance to make a particular utterance appropriate?[69] Answering questions like these is part of the Oxford analysts' recreational program.

Challenges to the World of Theology

Oxford analysts made a brief foray against Oxford theologians in a short-lived periodical called University in 1950 and 1951.[70] In addition, the analytic movement pushed itself into the worshipping communities at Oxford and Cambridge; the influence of the movement was clearly evident. V. H. H. Green notes that

> At both Universities, though latterly to a more marked degree at Oxford than at Cambridge, developments in the treatment of philosophy could be seen to challenge religious orthodoxy. Trends in

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[68]Charlesworth, pp. 177-180.

[69]Ibid., p. 175.

[70]Eric Lionel Mascall, Words and Images (New York: Ronald Press Company, c.1957), p. 14. Some of the University discussions are found in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, pp. 96-108.

the interpretation of philosophy, the reaction to the dominance of absolute idealism giving way to assumptions that were non-mentaphysical and primarily linguistic, sapped the foundations of religious belief, even though their exponents themselves were sometimes sincere church- men. The work of G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, the profound if partial ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein . . . raised fundamental ques- tions about the nature of reality which by-passed religious issues since religious experience was incapable of verification.[71]

The confrontation between analysis and theology was not limited to the skirmish between philosophers and theologians in the University dis- cussions, or to the sphere of corporate worship at Cambridge and Oxford. The challenges to theology are more inclusive. Our investigation centers in two areas of confrontation. The first challenge of confrontation de- rives from a restatement--within linguistic analysis--of some basic ele- ments of logical positivism, especially verifiability, or conversely, falsifiability. The second major challenge is the analysts' demand that theologians isolate and explicate the distinguishing characteristics-- the "logic" or "logics"--of religious discourse.

Properly understood, stringent logical positivism is no longer a viable philosophical option.[72] It is true that the principle of verifia- bility, or confirmability, finds hearty acceptance in the scientific method so heavily endorsed in the technical world, but it would be in- correct to equate this weakened principle with verifiability as it was rigidly interpreted in the earlier stages of logical positivism. Similarly, only in referring to the earlier stages of the movement may one claim

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[71]V. H. H. Green, Religion at Oxford and Cambridge (London: SCM Press, c.1964), pp. 342-343.

[72]Miles (p. 140) isolates as the essential characteristic of logical positivism the tenet that moral and religious assertions are not to be taken seriously; in this sense, he contends, the label "logical positiv- ism" is no longer appropriate. See also supra, pp. 50-52.

that logical positivism is wholly defunct. But it would be unwise to eliminate the term completely in spite of its imprecision. We shall here refer to the earlier stages of the movement as "stringent" logical positivism, and the later stages as "modified" logical positivism. In view of this distinction, stringent logical positivism is a matter of history; modified logical positivism manifests itself in a variety of guises, including the scientific method and some types of linguistic analysis.[73]

All this has to do with the first analytic-positivistic challenge to theology in that some contemporary analysts and analytic theologians, while adopting the methodology of linguistic analysis, have not ceased to bracket the totality of "meaningful" logics with the qualification that ultimately all logics are empirically based. This apparently is the verification principle in new dress. Some of its iconoclastic nature is hidden, and some of its rigid dogmatism softened, but the principle of verifiability (or falsifiability) has crept into contemporary philosophical analysis as a positivistic carry-over.[74] This type of analytic challenge ultimately puts theology and religious language to the empirical test: is the language of religious discourse empirically verifiable, or falsifiable, even in principle? We shall consider each element in turn

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[73]Writing in the "Introduction" of Faith and Logic (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), Basil Mitchell makes this statement about logical positivists (p. 4): "It is convenient to restrict the term 'Logical Positivist' to those who regard the verification principle as the sole criterion of meaning. In this sense of the word there are few Logical Positivists in the field to-day."

[74]John Wisdom carries out "therapeutic analysis" on the verification principle in "Metamorphoses of the Verifiability Theory of Meaning," Mind, LXXII (July 1963), 335-347, when he demonstrates the possibility of logical positivism's reincarnation in the methodology of "use." He asserts that the positivistic dichotomy into meaningful/meaningless was structurally

as we characterize the first of the two analytic challenges to religious
language.

The challenge for empirical verification (also in principle) of reli-
gious discourse appears in various forms. John Wisdom grants that when
a man sings of God being "in His heaven," his words obviously express
inward emotions. But when this man writes about belief in God, and his
writings are read by young men to settle their doubts, the impression is
not one of men simply concerned to settle their doubts once and for all.

> The disputants speak as if they are concerned with a matter of
> scientific fact, . . . but still of fact and still a matter about
> which reasons for and against may be offered, although no scientific
> reasons in the sense of field surveys for fossils or experiments
> on delinquents are to the point.[75]

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dependent on deductive consequences which could be drawn from verifia-
bility. Verifiability, as a wedge between the meaningful-meaningless,
"was a necessary condition for the meaningfulness of any kind of non-
analytic statement" (337). The obverse is to suggest that "for a theory
to be unverifiable it is necessary that there is no possible set of
initial conditions enabling a verification to be deduced" (338). Thus
the principle (theory) of verifiability presupposed a principle of no
initial conditions--and its defense appeared to be preposterous (339).
If the theory was to be unverifiable, there must be a true theory some-
where in the world of the same logical form (340). The question is,
Would logical positivists be prepared to accept this? This is Wisdom's
reductio ad absurdum.

Wisdom contends that neither can a wedge be driven between the
meaningful/meaningless by means of an analysis of the "use of" (342).
One of the primary aims of this method of "having a use" is to "provide
a sure basis to which to refer philosophical statements." But if philo-
sophy utilizes this restriction ("that what has a use is verifiable")
haphazardly, the analyst's model is a reincarnation of logical positivism.
If the analyst does not take this approach, he perhaps fails to penetrate
the philosophical doctrines under attack, although all too often, Wisdom
claims, the "extreme horn" is adopted (346-347). See also R. W. Ashby,
"Use and Verification," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, LVI
(1955-56), 149-166, and R. B. Braithwaite's argument summarized infra,
pp. 119-120.

[75]John Wisdom, "Gods," Logic and Language, edited by Antony G. N. Flew
(First Series; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p. 194. Wisdom is here
referring either to Bishop Gore or to C. E. M. Joad.

With this comment Wisdom assumes that religious statements claim a con-
cern with the cosmos. When they make such statements, theologians must
be prepared to support them through empirical justification, and allow
contrary scientific evidence to enter the case as well.[76]

Ian Crombie permits the "critic" in his article to apply the verifi-
cation principle to religious discourse from another angle. The critic's
difficulty with theological assertions begins when statements "purport
to be about a particular object, which it is in principle impossible to
'indicate' in any non-linguistic way"--that is, God--, an object which
is "different from any other particular objects in whose existence we
have any ground for believing." The critic's difficulty doubles when
the theist claims his statements to be true, to have a "determinate
meaning," but insists that neither he nor his statements can become
"embroiled in scientific dispute." The theist ultimately "claims an
immunity which belongs properly to persons who do not make statements of
fact." In sum,

> the rules laid down about how such utterances are to be taken
> (e.g. that "God" is indeed a proper name, but that it is in
> principle impossible to see God) are such that he [the philosopher]
> cannot see either what its reference can be (the first perplexity)
> or what its content (the second).[77]

Crombie's critic complains that the Christian refers his statements
to a particular being--God--"with particular kinds of events," including

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[76]H. J. Paton suggests in The Modern Predicament (London: George Allen
and Unwin, c.1955), pp. 42-43, that the very intelligibility of theo-
logical assertions may be put in doubt if the "crudely anthropomorphic
interpretation," which makes the assertions appear as empirical state-
ments, were abandoned. Paton advises extreme care in the use of analysis.

[77]Ian M. Crombie, "The Possibility of Theological Statements," Faith
and Logic, pp. 39-47, 48. Crombie employs the critic's argumentation to

creation and judgment. But if the theist is queried ("Which person?,"
"Where is He?," "What events are you talking about?"), he construes the
questions as a "crude misunderstanding of the nature of theological
language." The critic unveils his covert reliance on the verification
principle with these words:

> Yet if he [the theist] uses words which appear to be proper names,
> or which appear to refer to cosmological happenings, or to occur-
> rences in human personalities, surely such questions are perfectly
> proper ones to ask.[78]

Here again one confronts the iconoclasm of modified logical positivism
in new dress. "Which," "where," and "what" are empirical watchwords;
in assuming that these interrogatory adverbs are valid in examining reli-
gious discourse, the critic applies the verification principle to the
sphere of religious language.

H. A. Hodges provides another view of the verificational challenge
when he describes the encounter between theologian and analyst. The theist
raises questions to which he offers theism as an answer. The difficulty
is that the analyst is unprepared to accept any interrogative sentence as
a reasonable question, or for that matter, **any** sentence beginning with a
causal particle as a reasonable explanation. Hodges continues,

> We think there can be "idle" questions, and before accepting a
> question as reasonable we require some indication of a possibility
> of answering it. If we are not satisfied on these points, we may
> dismiss the question and its alleged answer as logically mean-
> ingless . . . .[79]

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make way for his analogical, authoritative, self-justifying theory of
religious language. See infra, pp. 160-164.

[78]Ibid., p. 36.

[79]H. A. Hodges, "What is to Become of Philosophical Theology," Contem-
porary British Philosophy, edited H. D. Lewis (London: George Allen and
Unwin, c.1956), p. 219. Hodges does not endorse this position himself.

While some analysts insist on interrogative questions which begin with
"which," "where," and "when," others discount the interrogatives, and
explicative propositions as well.

A second form in which some contemporary analysis betrays its posi-
tivistic parentage is its demand for the "falsifiability" of religious
assertions. Above falsifiability appeared as the fourth stage in the
development of the verification principle. Popper's theory of falsifia-
bility was used by the positivists to salvage scientific hypotheses and
general laws.[80] Falsifiability is the converse of verifiability; the
challenge of falsifiability is in principle the challenge of verifiabili-
ty. Those analysts who rely on falsifiability in their search for reli-
gious logic conclusively demonstrate their positivistic ancestry.
Charlesworth puts the case succinctly:

> faced with the problem of accommodating religious language, many
> of the Analysts fall back, defensively, upon a kind of disguised
> verificationism which enables them to dismiss religious utterances
> as logically meaningless.[81]

He further contends that only with the introduction of an arbitrary meta-
physical assumption ("that an assertion is meaningful only if we know
what would count against its truth in the way in which we know what would
count against the truth of an empirical assertion") are religious state-
ments deemed meaningless. This "truism" is in fact "identical with the
verification principle of the Logical Positivists."[82]

[80]Supra, pp. 31-34.

[81]M. J. Charlesworth, "Linguistic Analysis and Language about God,"
International Philosophical Quarterly, I (February 1961), 140.

[82]Ibid. Italics are his. Charlesworth's statement stands in need
of some qualification.

The most ardent falsifiability-challenge comes from Antony Flew.
His contention that theological assertions are doomed to the "death of
a thousand qualifications" is a precise formulation of the falsifiability-
challenge. Flew uses John Wisdom's parable of the gardener to make his
point: what originally is offered as a theological assertion ultimately
may dissipate through the death of a thousand qualifications. This is
the parable. Two men discover a well-kept garden. One argues that a
gardener tends the garden. The "Believer" and the other man pitch tents
as they keep their watch for the gardener. They set up electric fences
and train bloodhounds, but discover no gardener. The Believer remains
convinced: "But there is a gardener, invisible,intangible, insensible
to electric shocks, a gardener who has no scent and makes no sound, a
gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves."
Flew asks, "Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eter-
nally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no
gardener at all?"[83]

Extrapolating the parable of the gardener, Flew next considers the
"falsification" of theological statements. He uses the principle of
non-contradiction as a fulcrum:

> Now to assert that such and such is the case is necessarily equi-
> valent to denying that such and such is not the case. . . . For
> if the utterance is indeed an assertion, it will necessarily be
> equivalent to a denial of the negation of that assertion. . . . to
> know the meaning of the negation of an assertion, is as near as
> makes no matter, to know the meaning of that assertion. And if
> there is nothing which a putative assertion denies then there is

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[83]Antony G. N. Flew, "Theology and Falsification," New Essays, pp.
96-97. Flew took the parable from Wisdom's "Gods," Logic and Language,
First Series, pp. 187-206. Wisdom's article first appeared in Pro-
ceedings of the Aristotelian Society (1944-1945).

nothing which it asserts either: and so it is not really an assertion.[84]

Flew's falsifiability-challenge is the converse of the challenge of verifiability. He poses the question of falsifiability in this way: "What would have to occur or to have occurred to constitute for you a disproof of the love of, or of the existence of, God?"[85] The question demonstrates Flew's indebtedness to the positivistic heritage.[86]

There are several logical alternatives to Flew's challenge of falsifiability, but only two, the third and the fourth, take him at his word: (1) theological statements are relevant to falsification, but never conclusively falsifiable; (2) theological statements are wholly unfalsifiable because they are not assertions at all; (3) theological statements are assertions which can be falsified in principle and in practice; (4) theological statements are assertions which can be falsified in principle, but not in practice.[87] Basil Mitchell accepted the first alternative, arguing that the nature of faith precludes the taking of theological assertions as "provisional hypotheses." R. M. Hare elected the second

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[84]Flew, "Theology and Falsification," New Essays, p. 98. It is interesting to consider Blanshard's answer to falsifiability in this context. See supra, p. 34.

[85]Ibid., p. 99.

[86]James W. Woelfel, in "'Non-Metaphysical" Christian Philosophy and Linguistic Philosophy," New Theology No. 2, edited by Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1965), p. 51, refers to Flew as a proponent of "analytic positivism" in these words: "What theology confronts today in men like Antony Flew is a refurbished and broadened positivism sharpened by the methods of linguistic analysis. The verification principle remains for the newer positivist the corner-stone of philosophy." Woelfel's article first appeared in Scottish Journal of Theology, XVII (March 1964), 10-20.

[87]Ferré, pp. 50-51.

alternative. Ian Crombie and John Hick selected the fourth, suggesting
that falsification in practice is impossible because ultimate evidence
to the contrary is available only in death.[88] Our concern is not to
analyze the logical alternatives, but to recognize that the endorsement
of the alternatives suggests the serious nature of the challenge in the
first place. Some theologians lay bare the very nerve of their theology
in the face of this challenge. As Hepburn suggests,

> The value of this modified verification-challenge is precisely this,
> that it forces a theologian to expose the very nerve of his posi-
> tion, to become clear with himself (and to express to other people)
> on what his theology stands or falls. And incidentally he may dis-
> cover by his very inability to do this that his theology is logically
> confused, or not at any point properly anchored to reality.[89]

The analytic confrontation of theology entails not only a restatement
of the verifiability-falsifiability principle. The second major analytic
challenge more accurately mirrors the methodological core of analysis in
demanding the "logic" or "logics" of religious discourse. For this reason
it is found in a variety of configurations. The first configuration is
that the constructive philosophy of analysis is not a speculative metaphysics
in support of theology, but a linguistic re-description of the familiar.[90]

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[88]Ibid., pp. 51-52. Austin Farrer, in "A Starting-Point for the
Philosophical Examination of Theological Belief," Faith and Logic, edited
by Basil Mitchell (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 11, answers
Flew straightforwardly. He suggests that it is impossible to take any
single theological statement and proceed therewith to its logical analysis.
This is the case because the sentence will be a "parable," and to estab-
lish its mere religious sense is "to recover the context of very strangely
contrasting parables in which it stands, together with the art of balanc-
ing parables. This is a long and complicated task. And it is a task for
believers."

[89]Ronald W. Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox (London: C. A. Watts
and Company, c.1958), p. 12.

[90]Ibid., p. 9.

While theology has at times allied itself with philosophical metaphysics, supportive alliance with linguistic methodology is impossible. Linguistic philosophy denies that it is anything other than an analytic method. Philosophical analysis is far removed from Kant, who would limit reason "to make room for faith." Philosophical analysis constructs no metaphysics like Bradley's, which not only leaves room for God but necessitates His existence. Theology fears a philosophical movement whose theological methodology, in Hepburn's terms, is the sifting of sense from nonsense. Hepburn's challenge to theology seems simple enough. He offers two tests to sift theological sense from nonsense: (1) Are there other words which can be used instead of the expression in question? (2) How can you teach the expression?[91] While these methodological questions at first glance appear to be innocuous, they offer a serious challenge in providing no set metaphysics for theology's environment.[92] They limit

[91]Hepburn, "Poetry and Religious Belief," Metaphysical Beliefs, p. 154.

[92]A recent article by F. Zabeeh, "Oxford and Metaphysics: a New Page in Contemporary Philosophy," International Philosophical Quarterly, III (May 1963), 307-320, suggests that Oxford analysis has not alienated itself totally from a qualified metaphysics. The appearance of three works, P. F. Strawson's Individuals: an Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics (1959), R. A. Harré's Theories and Things; a Brief Study in Prescriptive Metaphysics (1961), and D. S. Shwayder's Modes of Referring and Problems of Universals: an Essay in Metaphysics (1961), validates, Zabeeh asserts (308), what R. M. Hare recently said about his Oxford colleagues in "School for Philosophers," Ratio, II (February 1960), 115: "what we spend most of our time in Oxford doing is metaphysics. . . . We insist only on distinguishing between serious metaphysical inquiry and verbiage disguised as such." For the attempt of British churchmen to evaluate the status of metaphysics in contemporary British thought, see the collection of essays edited by Ian T. Ramsey, Prospect for Metaphysics (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1961), especially the essay by C. B. Daly, "Metaphysics and the Limits of Language," pp. 178-205.

theology to methodology, and the content of the discipline to that which
is non-transcendent. For at times there are no "other words which can
be used instead of the expression," as in the case of "God." In cases
like this, theology lays itself open to the charge of "non-sense."
McPherson distinguishes four types of "non-sense":

> We need only compare "'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves Did
> gyre and gimble in the wabe," and "This book is red and green
> all over," and "All only every but," and "Socrates is numerous."
> Each of these utterances is nonsensical for a different reason.[93]

Linguistic analysis challenges theology to select the most appropriate
"non-sense" as its own, or to demonstrate that its discourse is not "non-
sense." The methodology of analysis offers little escape to the realm of
metaphysics as a justification for any sort of "non-sense."

Michael Foster contends that analytic methodology is inimical to
Christian theology both intrinsically and in its correlative disinclina-
tion towards metaphysics. One of the assumptions of philosophical analy-
sis, he asserts, is that all thinking—and therefore all philosophical
thinking—consists in solving problems. The analyst pictures himself
allied with the scientist in the task of dispelling mystery. Mystery
arises from two sources: lack of knowledge, and unclear thinking. Science
cares for the first; the business of philosophy is the second. If the
task of analysis is the eradication of unclear thinking, says Foster, by
definition its methodology neither fosters nor allows for the mysteries
of theological language.[94]

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[93]Thomas McPherson, "Religion as the Inexpressible," New Essays,
p. 133.

[94]Michael B. Foster, Mystery and Philosophy (London: SCM Press,
1957), pp. 18-22. Foster includes Hans Reichenbach, Moritz Schlick, and

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A second methodological confrontation between analysis and theology which is not directly concerned with the restatement of the verification principle involves an appeal to pragmatic results. The analyst challenges the theologian to measure the practical accomplishments of analysis. Hepburn contends that theology is uneasy with philosophical analysis because of its partial success in "therapeutic" efforts. Even though successes are infrequent, the theologian fears the advance of analysis. He sees his own paradoxes not as exhibits in the museum of metaphysical marvels, but as candidates for dissolution.[95]

J. J. C. Smart attempts to achieve such a therapeutic coup d' état in his application of analytic methodology, for he relishes the possibility of turning "metaphysical marvels" into logically analyzed questions. Smart asserts that analysis advances the task of theology by applying its logic to metaphysical questions. Many theological questions are "metaphysical," that is, confused; they must be studied in the light of logical knowledge before progress will show its face.[96] Smart defines linguistic "therapeutic" analysis as a philosophical methodology whose "logic" (in the wide sense) is any "conceptual investigation." This logic is concerned with logical rather than metaphysical questions. For example,

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some British analysts (including Gilbert Ryle) in this description. In the remaining chapters of his work Foster investigates the concept of mystery in Greek philosophy, in the Bible, in conflict with science, and in correlation with ethics. In general the book is an apologetic against the analytic thrust at mystery, although Foster does not deal specifically with the question of mysterious language.

[95]Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox, p. 7.

[96]J. J. C. Smart, "Metaphysics, Logic and Theology," New Essays, pp. 24-25.

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"Is goodness reducible to a set of non-ethical properties?" is preferred

to "Is the will free?" Smart contends that techniques for answering

logical questions are available; though one may not in fact be able to

answer logical questions, he knows roughly what sort of answer is

required.[97] Smart asserts that so-called "metaphysical questions" will

disappear if the proper logical questions are asked. The following

characteristics are generally found in metaphysical questions: (1) the

question has the appearance of being factual; (2) it is in some way

puzzling, and one does not know how to set about answering it; (3) one

feels that it matters what the answer is.[98] As an example of theologi-

cal "therapeutic analysis" Smart takes to hand the problem of evil. He

begins with the theological difficulty involved in positing the con-

current existence of evil and God. This metaphysical question dissolves

into a logical question if "logic" is properly applied. The clarifying

argumentation is complex, but logical. First-order evils exist, the

theist might say, so that men might have second-order goods, such as

sympathy and kindness, which are impossible without them. Second-order

evils provide the third-order good, forgiveness. Then enters the question

of free will: Did God "buy" free will for man at the expense of evil?

Why did God not make people so that they always freely chose the good?

Smart ultimately finds the resolution in a logical question: "Is there

a contradiction in saying that God could have made us so that we always

freely chose right?" This analytic conclusion, Smart contends, allows

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[97] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[98] Ibid., pp. 15-17.

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the theologian to see a metaphysical question as it really is: a logical question.[99] It appears that Smart vindicates the analytic approach to metaphysical-theological questions by arguing that the logical question is prior. While he and Hepburn do not find absolute methodological agreement, both view the analytic approach as a threat to a theologian's psyche, if not also to his theology.

Up to this point the theologian who assumes a position of complete reliance on revelation may count himself secure. But philosophical analysis challenges him as well. The third facet of the second major challenge is the argument that any appeal to the self-validating nature of revelatory statements is unacceptable. The question of "meaning" is not withdrawn from theologians who retreat to an authoritative position, relying totally on "revelation." In fact, the question is pressed doubly hard.[100] Mascall's suggestion that theological language eludes exact characterization because its subject matter, God transcendent and beings related to Him, stands in sharp contrast to every other concern of human thought and discourse[101] is not exempt. The analysts' immediate reaction is the question, "What do you mean?" Retreat to the self-validating nature of meaning in revelatory statements is no answer. The analysts persist in their demand for the "logic" of theological language, its rules of ideational syntax, its points of empirical contiguity. They are not content

[99]Ibid., pp. 25-26.

[100]Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox, p. 6. See also Hepburn's "From World to God," Mind, LXXII (January 1963), 43, where he links together the appeal to historical revelation and the cosmological argument.

[101]Mascall, p. 93.

with the answer, "Thus says the Lord." H. J. Paton allows the possibility that theological discourse is a form of "ideal" language. He even includes the possibility of a self-validating "meaning" as proposed by the authoritative position. But he does not dismiss the analytic challenge, noting that the "ideal character of a language depends on what it is to say."[102]

Thus far we have considered one type of analytic challenge which, in its reliance upon logical positivism, demands the verifiability or falsifiability of religious discourse. We have examined, in addition, three facets of the second type of challenge, which is methodological in character. A fourth facet of the second major analytic challenge concerns arguments for the existence of God. Linguistic analysis has restated and sharpened the attack on traditional arguments for God's existence.[103] Hepburn provides an excellent example of analytic reconsideration of arguments for God's existence. He considers the Thomistic cosmological argument from the analytic perspective. (1) The cosmological argument concludes that there is one Being who owes existence to Himself. (2) Among the premises of the argument is the claim that no being owes its existence to itself. At this point, says Hepburn, the Thomist interrupts and reminds him that no finite being owes its existence to itself; that does not rule out an infinite being. Hepburn continues with the question: (3) How is the Thomist to characterize this "infinite being"? Among other attributes, the theist must include that of "owing existence

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[102] Paton, p. 43. Ninian Smart, in Reasons and Faiths: an Investigation of Religious Discourse, Christian and Non-Christian (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, c.1958), p. 200, contends that proponents of 'extreme revelationism are unthinkingly allied to those who would assert that religious propositions are, because unverifiable, meaningless."

[103] Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox, p. 4.

to itself." Hepburn concludes that the theist posits an idea which covertly contains the original puzzling idea. This is the intrinsic difficulty in "halting the regress of causes."[104] In short, Hepburn resorts to the "idiosyncrasy platitude," the "logic of each expression," to disallow the Thomistic cosmological argument. The apologist's ability to ask if there is any one thing in the world without a prior cause is no license to extrapolate the question to the universe at large.

> we can reject this and any similar version of the Argument by refusing to identify the nebula or atom or whatever it is with the universe. To identify them is to forget . . . that thing-words and words like 'cosmos' and 'universe' have crucially different logics.[105]

John Findlay uses another version of the "idiosyncrasy" platitude in questioning the ontological argument of Anselm:

> if God is to satisfy religious claims and needs, He must be a being in every way inescapable, One whose existence and whose possession of certain excellences we cannot possibly conceive away. And the views in question really make it self-evidently absurd (if they don't make it ungrammatical) to speak of such a Being and attribute existence to Him. It was indeed an ill day for Anselm when he hit upon his famous proof. For on that day he not only laid bare something that is of the essence of

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[104] Ibid., p. 166. In "From World to God," Mind, LXXII (January 1963), 43, Hepburn tries to make his analysis of the cosmological argument one not easily dismissed by contemporary Christian apologetics: "I want, in fact, to suggest that the Cosmological Argument—or some transformation of it—is not just one approach to apologetics among others, one to be distinguished altogether from apologetics based on historical revelation. It is an indispensable part of any Christian apologetics whatever, including those that centre on revelation. For, as we have seen, at some point appeal must be made away from the finite and historical locus of revelation to the infinite and eternal God to whom these allegedly testify."

[105] Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox, p. 169. Italics are his. Brian Wicker, in God and Modern Philosophy (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, c.1964), examines the Thomistic cosmological arguments anew in the light of linguistic analysis. He concludes that their basic validity has not been affected by the claims of analysis.

an adequate religious object, but also something that entails its
necessary non-existence.[106]

In summary, the confrontation between theology and analysis falls
into two parts. First, one segment of linguistic analysis betrays its
positivistic ancestry in challenging theology to provide the verifiability
or falsifiability of religious discourse. This group of analysts demands
either the empirical contingency, or the falsifiability of religious state-
ments. The second group demands the "logic" of religious discourse. Four
configurations of the second type of assault were noted: the intentional
refusal of philosophical analysis to provide a nutritive metaphysics for
theology; the generation of a fearful attitude on the part of some theo-
logians at the successes of therapeutic analysis; the argument that any
appeal to the self-validating nature of the meaning of revelatory state-
ments was unacceptable; and the subjection of traditional arguments for
God's existence to new linguistic scrutiny.

In actuality the confrontation includes more than these two major
challenges, which have a negative air about them. Analysis asks theology
to isolate and explicate the logic of religious discourse. The request
is as much a probing inquiry as a disguised trap. Viewed from this per-
spective, the query of analysis is no less an opportunity than a challenge.
The analysts have vindicated the analytic approach to man's language. It
is possible that the same approach may illumine the theologian's tasks

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[106] John Niemayer Findlay, "Can God's Existence be Disproved (1948),"
Language, Mind and Value (New York: Humanities Press, c.1963), p.103. A
footnote adds at the end of this quotation, "Or 'non-significance', if
this alternative is preferred." Findlay's article is an attempt to demon-
strate that there is an ontological argument to disprove the existence of
God, namely the worshipping attitude of man which so exalts the conception
that there is no room for its apprehension. But see also supra, p. 42, n. 76.

and problems if pursued. Wolfhart Pannenberg uses "universal history" as
the hypothetical framework for theological investigation, Rudolf Bultmann
existential historicity, and G. Ernest Wright "Heilsgeschichte." The
challenge of linguistic analysis may be an additional hypothesis for
working the mines of theological complexities.[107]

For example, Robert C. Coburn, a philosopher from the University of
Chicago, uses linguistic analysis to examine the nature of theological
discourse. He frames his discussion in terms of "religious limiting
questions." By a "limiting question" he means "an utterance or inscrip-
tion which has the grammatical structure of a question, but which does
not do the job of asking a straightforward question of either a theoreti-
cal or practical sort."[108] He defines a "religious limiting question"
in terms of problems to which Christian theology speaks: "moral"
problems (ordering of values); problems of morale (the inability of
selves to reconcile themselves to ills of the flesh); and problems regard-
ing the "meaning" of things (yearnings to see things as a whole, to find
an intelligible pattern in experience). A typical religious limiting
question is, "What is the meaning of life?"[109] Coburn contends that one
of the primary functions of theological language is to provide a logically

[107]William Hordern, in Speaking of God (New York: Macmillan Company,
c.1964), p. 186, contends that two theologians, F. H. Cleobury and E. L.
Mascall, discover little theological value in a conversation with analytic
philosophy because they doubt that Christianity can stand on revelation
alone. Hordern argues for a cordial and positive relationship between
theology and analytic philosophy (pp. 185-200).

[108]Robert C. Coburn, "A Neglected Use of Theological Language," Mind,
LXXII (July 1963), 371.

[109]Ibid., 373-374.

complete answer to these questions. He defines the logically complete

answer as

> an answer the acceptance of which by the person raising the question
> is logically incompatible with his continuing to ask the question;
> that is to say, incompatible in the sense that his continuing to
> ask the question in some form or other would normally be taken as
> showing either he had not understood the answer which has previous-
> ly been provided, or he had not accepted it. . . . an answer to a
> question is a logically complete one provided it renders any sub-
> sequent utterance of the question it answers logically odd.[110]

A person's acceptance of the answer that "The ways of the Almighty and

all-wise God are righteous, though beyond understanding" is, for example,

logically incompatible with the same person's asking the question, "But

why was my child crippled by polio?"[111]

Our purpose is not to endorse Coburn's interpretation of theological

discourse, but to indicate that analytic philosophy is capable of address-

ing a theological inquiry in a positive fashion. Coburn demonstrates how

analysis may provide a valuable hypothetical framework for the theologian's

task.

The two succeeding chapters summarize some of the answers given the

analytic challenges. Chapter IV deals with representative views which

describe the nature of religious discourse in terms of its verifiability

or falsifiability--the first major analytic challenge. Chapter V examines

"logics" of religious discourse--addressing the second major analytic

challenge.[112] In both chapters, the analytic challenges open doors for

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[110]Ibid., 375.

[111]Ibid., 376. In the article Coburn also analyzes the explanatory
power of this function of theological discourse.

[112]This inquiry does not imply that this twofold approach is the only

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discussion. Blanshard anticipates the apprehension a theologian might

feel in addressing himself to analysis when he says,

> One of the worst dangers in philosophical and theological thinking,
> as in political thinking, is professional self-justification. That
> a new theory would find us with our occupation gone is no argument
> against it. A great many occupations obviously ought to go. . . .
> What the philosopher is called upon to do if his methods are ques-
> tioned is not to fly incontinently to their defence, but to examine
> as objectively as he can the proposals offered in their place.[113]

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possible way to approach the answers given the challenges of analysis.
Woelfel (p. 50) distinguishes between "metaphysical" and "non-metaphysical"
thinkers who have encountered linguistic analysis from the Christian
perspective. His "non-metaphysical" men (Hare, Miles, Hepburn, Braithwaite)
in part parallel our Chapter IV, while his "metaphysical" section (es-
pecially when Ramsey is trumpeted) may partially indicate what we have in
mind with the "logic" of religious language. In addition, Jerry H. Gill,
in "The Meaning of Religious Language," Christianity Today, IX (January
1965), 384-389, reviews the work of some of these men as they address,
in varying methods, the following syllogism: "1. All cognitively meaning-
ful language is either definitional or empirical in nature; 2. no reli-
gious language is either definitional or empirical in nature; 3. no
religious language is cognitively meaningful language." His article is
short and lacks desired breadth, but the syllogism offers another way
to approach the answers given the analytic challenges.

[113]Blanshard, Reason and Analysis, p. 259.

CHAPTER IV

VERIFIABILITY-FALSIFIABILITY IN THEORIES OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE: ANSWERING THE FIRST ANALYTIC CHALLENGE

Introduction

Chapter III shows that the first analytic challenge to theology betrays a discernible positivistic parentage. This limits discussion of the "logic" of religious discourse to the realm of the verifiability or falsifiability of religious language.[1] Chapter IV proposes to review the works of representative men who have accepted the challenge as given. The writers address that analytic challenge which is structured in a positivistic frame of reference. Thereby they affirm both the validity of the stated question and the restrictive framework which is its setting. Each respondent acknowledges either the verifiability or falsifiability of some aspect of religious language.

There are at least three characteristics of the first positivistic-analytic challenge affirmed by the writers here reviewed: (1) the disinclination to identify more than one "language game" in human language; (2) the empirical anchorage of all meaningful statements; (3) verifiability-falsifiability as the logical tool for the apprehension of meaning. Not all respondents equally endorse each characteristic by applying it to religious discourse, but each endorses some aspects of at least two characteristics.

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[1]Supra, pp. 86-93.

A clarification of the three characteristics which are generally
affirmed provides an excellent orientation to the summaries. The dis-
inclination to identify more than one "language game" in human language
(1) is a carry-over from stringent logical positivism. The men here
discussed construe religious statements as differing little from other
utterances. A corollary is the argument that cognition of some sort is
an essential element of religious thought and language. Religious state-
ments are not considered to be "emotive" in the logical-positivistic sense.
In reference to the empirical anchorage of all meaningful statements (2),
the majority of the men bracket linguistic "logics" with the empirical
sphere; hence only one "logic" exists. Questions about God which are
ordinarily interpreted as misunderstandings of religious language ("Which
Person?," "Where is He?," "What events are you talking about?") are not
considered irrelevant. The empirical placement of religious language
implies, in some of the cases, an empirical investigation of the action
said to be implied in the use of religious statements. For others of
the men here discussed, an individual's religious experience provides
the contact between empirical base and resultant religious statement.
In reference to verifiability-falsifiability as the logical tool used to
apprehend the meaning of religious statements (3), most of the men assume
that a proposition is significant if there are observations—even theo-
retical—relevant to its truth or falsity. For some the "use principle"
comes into play as a modification of the verification principle: the mean-
ing of a religious statement is restricted to an empirically verifiable—
at least in principle—use. Conversely, empirical confirmation also allows
for the admittance of contrary evidence. Others of the men assert that

falsifiability is the logical tool to be used in extracting the meaning

of a religious utterance. For them a religious assertion is meaningful

only when one knows what counts against the possibility of its truthful-

ness. Asserting "that" is also asserting "that not"--at least in prin-

ciple.

The chapter begins with a position of remarkable affinity to the

methodology of logical positivism. In turn the chapter considers men

who, with increasingly less zeal, demonstrate a positivistic bias in their

endeavor to dissect and describe the nature of religious language.[2] Four

polarizations emerge in the study (moving from a greater to a lesser de-

pendence on some form of verifiability): "Verifiability and Religious Ex-

perience," "Verifiability and Religious Propositions," "Falsifiability

and Religious Propositions," and "Proleptic Verification and Religious

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[2]Chapters IV and V of this study are structurally arranged so as to
demonstrate a rather complex phenomenon which has come to light in research.
The phenomenon is this: as decreasingly less emphasis is laid on the
verifiable-falsifiable nature of religious language (Chapter IV), there
is a corresponding need to emphasize the esoteric-personal "logic" (or
"blik") which binds together the discourse of religion (Chapter V). Thus
if one views the works of the writers summarized in these two chapters
from the perspective of the first analytic-positivistic challenge, the
two chapters together are arranged in order of decreasing acceptability.
On the other hand, if one views the works of the writers here summarized
in these two chapters from the perspective of the second analytic chal-
lenge, the request for the "logic" or "logics" of religious language, the
two chapters together are arranged to proceed from a position of least
acceptability (the first man in Chapter IV) to one of greatest rapport
(Chapter V).
    The concept "blik" originated with Richard Hare, who used it in the
"University Discussions" reprinted in New Essays in Philosophical Theology,
edited by Antony G. N. Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York: Macmillan
Company, c.1955), pp. 99-102. In reply to Antony Flew's parable of the
gardener Hare used the term "blik" to denote the Weltanshauung which is the
Christian's (in contrast to the nonbeliever's). The term describes the
belief-complex which underlies and gives meaning to the Christian's use
of religious language. Among others, Paul van Buren and William Hordern
have used the term which Hare coined. In all probability the term is a
German loan-word.

Propositions." The chapter moves along a curve rather than along a straight line. The changes are less dramatic than subtle. In any case, the summaries speak for themselves. The concluding statement of the chapter demonstrates the interdependence and the interweaving of the diverse strands.

Verifiability and Religious Experience

John B. Wilson and David Cox are among the philosopher-theologians who address themselves seriously to the request for verification in the sphere of religious thought and language. Both demonstrate an affinity to the logical-positivistic strain in attributing a significant role to religious experience, an affinity not found among the rest of the men considered in this chapter. Ultimately it is in the realm of religious experience that each applies the criterion of verifiability which he finds to be an integral element in religious language.

John B. Wilson

John Boyd Wilson[3] provides both a theory of general language and a specific rationale for religious language. In his discussion of general language he isolates five types of statements. Imperative and attitudinal statements are not verifiable at all, or only in a trivial way. Their use and meaning are in the expression of a speaker's feelings or desires, but they are valueless in argument because their concern is with expression,

[3]Wilson is an Anglican, the son of an Anglican clergyman. In 1956 he was assistant master at King's School, Canterbury, England, and served as second master until 1962. He was professor of religious knowledge at the University of Trinity College, Toronto, 1962-63. Currently he lectures in philosophy at the University of Sussex, Brighton, England.

not truth.[4] An empirical statement, the second type, provides information about man's experience of the world. Analytic statements are tautologous. Value statements are processes of commendation; they assign value. Their meaning depends on the accepted method of axiological verification. For example, a "good" knife is good if it fulfills the qualities of sharpness, weight, and others. Metaphysical statements are the fifth type. On their meaning and method of verification it is difficult to agree; perhaps there are none. This admission does not classify metaphysical statements as "meaningless," but puts them in the tray labeled "waiting" for further explication. Since men do not know what a metaphysical statement means or how to verify it, "we must reserve judgment about whether it is true or not."[5]

Wilson lists three requirements of a true statement in ordinary language: (1) one must know what the statement means; (2) one must know the right way to verify it; (3) one must have good evidence for believing it. In examining the question of a "true" statement Wilson turns to the verificational approach of science for guidance. He contends that a common method of verification in science has provided meaning for its statements. He proposes a parallel approach to metaphysical statements. From an intensive investigation of "experiences" some experiences may emerge "which we may all have which we should want to describe by statements that are now classified metaphysical." The resulting statement would not be "metaphysical" (in the sense of the preceding paragraph),

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[4] John Wilson, Language and the Pursuit of Truth (Cambridge: University Press, 1956), p. 56.

[5] Ibid., pp. 58, 60, 65, 70-73.

but "empirical," although it would not be verified through experience of the senses.[6]

In a later work, Philosophy and Religion, Wilson resumes his discussion of metaphysical statements, particularly those of a religious nature. He brackets his investigation with three questions: What is the psychological connection between religious belief and assertion, and the religious way of life? What is supposed, by religious people, to be the logical connection between the two? What is, in fact, the logical connection?[7] In sum, Wilson seeks a method of "verification" which demonstrates the logical connection between religious assertions and the religious way of life. He distinguishes four types of religious assertions, each with its own "logic": (1) assertions of empirical fact; (2) analytic assertions concerned with meaning or use of religious terms; (3) assertions of value; (4) assertions which "look like assertions of empirical fact, but whose subject-matter appears to be some supernatural entity or state of affairs . . . ."[8] The author selects the fourth type for investigation because it is most relevant for sociologist, logician, and philosopher.[9]

Wilson evaluates three attempts to demonstrate the logical nature of this fourth type of religious assertion, and summarily dismisses all three as inadequate. The first, represented by neo-Thomists, regards religious

[6]Ibid., pp. 76, 93, 96-97.

[7]John Wilson, Philosophy and Religion; the Logic of Religious Belief (London: Oxford University Press, c.1961), pp. 16-17.

[8]Ibid., p. 30.

[9]Ibid., p. 33.

assertions as explanations of the world's existence. Wilson labels this
type a retention of the misconstrued hope that the supernatural inheres
in and affects the natural world. Under the impact of modern science, the
only supposed relation between theology and the world is that of _explicans_
and _explicandum_. Wilson contends that the relation is more subtle than
the "explanatory" hypothesis suggests.[10]

The linguistic theory--the second attempt--which explains theologi-
cal and religious assertions as "self-justifying" is no less imprecise
and inadequate for Wilson. If this theory argues that assertions perform
a job other than describing, its adherents cannot construe religious asser-
tions as genuinely factual in any way. Neither can religious assertions
inform "in the way [in] which they must if they are to sustain the fabric
of anything which we shall call a religion." The underlying structural
belief of a religion implies a correlation between statements of belief
and the world outside, "between the set of symbols and the thing
symbolized."[11]

Wilson isolates the theory of "assertions as derived from authority"
as the third misconstructed clarification of religious statements. The
theory is incomplete. It resembles a mathematical table in that one ques-
tions whether or not the logical game of religion, as it turns out to be
under such an "authority," is empirically useful. The view presupposes
that it is logically inappropriate to give logical reasons for religious
belief and assertion. Especially this factor of the theory, says Wilson,

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[10]_Ibid._, p. 45.

[11]_Ibid._, p. 50. Wilson includes MacIntyre and Farrer in this group.

is deficient.[12]

His own explanation of religious assertions Wilson bases on the contention that "a statement is informative in proportion to its vulnerability." "There is a ten-foot, striped, male, lop-eared zebra in the middle of the next room," is more informative--and more vulnerable--than the statement "There is something in the next room."[13] Wilson sets out to discover how the empirical and the religious can make sense logically when one assumes that an assertion's informative character varies in proportion to its vulnerability. To avoid poisoning the well when he refers to "religious experience" during the investigation, Wilson agrees that the phrase need not imply an experience of something existing independently of the observer. To use the phrase does not necessarily imply objective reality.[14]

The informative and vulnerable character of a religious assertion depends upon its cognitive nature. In consequence, Wilson scrutinizes two misconceptions that underlie the denial of "cognition" in religious belief (and assertions). The denial assumes first "that there is a basic, ontological difference between what can be said to exist and what cannot,"

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[12]Ibid., p. 58.

[13]Ibid., p. 66. In "Religious Assertions," Hibbert Journal, LVI (1958), 148-149, Wilson comments regarding his theory of religious language to this effect: "The position I wish to defend begins by accepting the view of Professor Flew and most other modern philosophers regarding what can properly be said to count as a meaningful assertion or statement of fact: namely, that such assertions must be verifiable and falsifiable by experience, or that there must be tests for assertions to pass. I think that if this acceptance is not made, religious apologists are bound to convey an impression of continuous retreat and evasion. . . . In my view, therefore, the Christian apologist need not be concerned to assail the view that all assertions must (logically) be falsifiable, since many of his own assertions actually are."

[14]Wilson, Philosophy and Religion, pp. 71-72.

and second, "that only perceptions or sense-experience can be cognitive (only sense-data can really be data)."[15] Wilson uses the tools of a pragmatic idealist to dissect the first misconception. He asserts that no basic difference exists between an "existential" statement and an "experience-statement" except that the latter indicates the permanent and general availability of certain experiences, while the former is not necessarily applicable to the majority of people, although it is no less reliable. To move from an existential to an empirical statement, "all we need is a certain number of people with a common and recurrent experience, and some way of distinguishing genuine from illusive experience."[16]

Wilson's attempt to demonstrate the absence of logical restriction in religious assertions is his answer to the second misconception. He parallels religious and aesthetic assertions in order to blueprint a testing-system for religious assertions.[17] One must include within the structural assumptions underlying the logical possibility of an evaluative system of religious assertions: (1) the assumption that under certain

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[15]Ibid., p. 81.

[16]Ibid., p. 84.

[17]Ibid., p. 87. Although Wilson does not specifically refer to poetry, it should be noted that the relation between religious language and poetry has come under scrutiny. W. Fraser Mitchell, in "The Language of Religion," Readings in Religious Philosophy, edited by Geddes MacGregor and J. Wesley Robb (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, c.1962), pp. 392-398, writes as a poet who sees the language of religion as closely akin to poetry. Ronald W. Hepburn, in "Poetry and Religious Belief," Metaphysical Beliefs, edited by Alasdair MacIntyre (London: SCM Press, 1957), pp. 85-166, presents an intriguing study. He states (p. 86): "I am confident of two things; first, that the theologian's appeal to poetry can perfectly properly clarify some aspects of his use of language, if used with caution; secondly, that without such caution the appeal to poetry can easily result in a blurring of necessary distinctions and a smothering of unanswered questions."

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conditions certain people will always have certain experiences of a kind

that existential assertions could be constructed to incorporate them;

(2) the assumption that these experiences are important enough to ensure

continued interest in the process of testing.[18] Wilson further suggests

that the construction of a plan through which people might enter religious

experience is essentially the religious expert's--not the philosopher's--

task.[19] The situational use of worship may be helpful, but in all cases

the possibility of falsification must be retained, at least in principle.

The program must necessarily proceed without bias. The program is essen-

tially a "logical skeleton for the establishment of any kind of entity,"

so most certainly it should apply also in the case of the religious.[20]

In sum, Wilson argues that basic religious assertions have a status which

philosophy can recognize, and there is a proper method of testing their

validity in experience.

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[18]Wilson, Philosophy and Religion, pp. 90-91.

[19]Although he does not make specific reference to the type of reli-
gious experience here described by Wilson, John Warwick Montgomery, in
"The Theologian's Craft," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXVII (February
1966), 67-98, attempts to parallel the theologian's and the scientist's
craft. In contradistinction to Wilson, he argues that Scripture rather
than religious experience is the basis of the theologian's craft. But
Montgomery's argumentation is muddled and poorly organized. It demon-
strates the basic difficulty of his thesis which, if carried through logi-
cally, should include an appeal to religious experience--as does Wilson's.

[20]Wilson, Philosophy and Religion, pp. 87-94. At this point Wilson's
discussion dovetails with his earlier book's. In "Religious Assertions,"
Hibbert Journal, LVI (1958), 148-160, Wilson discusses in greater detail
the measurement of experiences which contribute to the meaning of reli-
gious utterances. The parallels between Wilson's proposals and those of
H. H. Price in "Logical Positivism and Theology," Philosophy, X (July
1935), 313-331 (supra, p. 46, n. 82) are of considerable interest. Kai
Nielsen, in "'Christian Positivism' and the Appeal to Religious Experience,"
Journal of Religion, XLII (1962), 248-261, criticizes Wilson's general
orientation as a carry-over from early logical positivism.

Wilson admits that his program of testing may in fact "tie down" a word such as "God" to tested experience, but he also posits a sphere of "expandibility." By analytic definition, "God" can be defined as "The Almighty Father," "Lord of the Universe." Then too, one can ground the word in experiences of other people past and present, and trust their assertions about God when they are reliable. In addition, one can move to the future by stating that "God" means "at least so-and-so" from tested experience, but that the word is capable of representing much more if one could have the "necessary experience." The tying of words to experience, as in the case of "God," does not eliminate the mysterious:

> It is essential that we should know what we mean by "God" at any one time, and this involves basing the word firmly on experience. But this does not involve the implication that we know all about God himself.[21]

After all, the believer is correct in claiming that an experience is a sine qua non for the full "meaning" of the term "God," and of other religious assertions. A philosopher or non-believer is able to define "God" analytically as the "Creator of the Universe," but he is not thereby granted a full understanding of the word.[22]

Up to this point Wilson claims to have dealt with the milieu of logical clarification. He also discusses the milieu of practical decision which he deems inevitable as a man chooses a particular religion, denomination, or sect, and works it out according to the above logical clarification (always open to disproof). Wilson claims that an examination of the first milieu precedes and clarifies the second, while the second

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[21]Wilson, Philosophy and Religion, pp. 100-101.

[22]Ibid., pp. 104-105.

reinforces the first. There can be no practical decision without logical clarification. Conversely, without practical decision no logical clarification is more than academic. Wilson closes the chapter with a plea for decisive practice.[23]

Wilson sums up his theory of religious language with the argument that through religious experience, and not by regarding religious assertions as explanations, self-justifications, or authorizations, one can "rationally enter the realm of religious belief." He puts his case succinctly:

> The existence of such experience and the fact that it can (logically) be organized in such a way as to give sense and truth to religious assertions is, so to speak, the ticket or pass-word by whose virtue Reason permits us to enter.[24]

David Cox

In 1950 David Cox[25] suggested an overhaul of Christian doctrine according to the criterion of logical positivism, the verification principle. His intention was the restatement of Christian doctrine to show its relation to human experience. If the task of restatement is accomplished, Cox asserted that theologians are left not with a body of doctrine consisting

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[23]Ibid., pp. 107-117. In Thinking with Concepts (Cambridge: University Press, c.1963), Wilson demonstrates the same practical concern by connecting the practice of philosophical analysis to daily problems.

[24]Wilson, Philosophy and Religion, p. 108.

[25]Cox was ordained an Anglican priest in 1949, and was curate of Warsop 1948-51. He has been vicar of All Saints Chatham in the diocese of Rochester since 1956. His books include Jung and St. Paul (1959), God and the Self (1960), History and Myth (1961), and What Christians Believe (1963).

of "statements of fact," but with a number of "empirical hypotheses."[26] The resulting "empirical hypotheses," Cox claimed, would accommodate the verification principle. As a substitute for the assertion "God exists," Cox suggested "Some men and women have had, and all may have, experiences called 'meeting God.'"[27]

Verifiability and Religious Propositions

Ben F. Kimpel, Richard B. Braithwaite, Paul van Buren and Paul F. Schmidt are no less concerned with the verifiability of religious statements than Wilson and Cox, but in general they apply verifiability more directly at the level of religious propositions than at the level of religious experience. All four propose that religious assertions are empirically verifiable, at least in principle. They differ in their definitions of verifiability. Ben F. Kimpel straightforwardly asserts the testability of synthetic propositions, including religious propositions. Richard B. Braithwaite affirms his accord with the "spirit of empiricism" by emphasizing the empirical testing of one's intentions stated in religious propositions. Paul van Buren alters the verification principle to the "use principle," and contends that theological statements have use and meaning in their expression of an historical perspective (expressed in empirically-anchored words) which possess empirical consequences. These consequences, in turn, are open to empirical investigation. Paul F. Schmidt finds the

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[26] David Cox, "The Significance of Christianity," _Readings in Religious Philosophy_, edited by Geddes MacGregor and J. W. Robb (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, c.1962), p. 358. The article first appeared in _Mind_, LIX (1950), 209-218.

[27] _Ibid._, p. 362.

use of religious language to lie in the attitudes it produces, attitudes which appear to participate in a naturalistic system. In general, this group of four is one step removed from hard-core verifiability. The evidence for this lies in the fact that they deal with religious language rather than religious experience. Nevertheless, in addressing the first positivistic-analytic challenge, the men affirm and endorse the basic positivistic presuppositions which underlie the challenge.

Ben F. Kimpel

Ben F. Kimpel[28] criticizes the notion that religious truth is paradoxical, and defends the factual interpretation of faith-statements. He accepts the division of all statements (including theological) into synthetic and analytic, and suggests that "interpretations affirmed in religious faith are synthetic propositions." A faith-statement "affirms an interpretation of a reality believed to be other than language itself . . . ."[29] Because he assumes the "realities" of synthetic statements to be "other than language itself," Kimpel supports the testability of synthetic propositions, including synthetic theological statements.[30]

Kimpel criticizes the notion that religious truth is paradoxical in his assumption that statement and fact correlate. He discusses at some length the principle of non-contradiction as it relates to the problem

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[28]Ben [jamin] F. Kimpel is professor of philosophy at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.

[29]Ben F. Kimpel, Language and Religion (New York: Philosophical Library, c.1957), p. 75.

[30]Ibid., p. 88.

of paradox. Aristotle correctly demonstrated the principle to be a neces-
sary condition for (a) the existence of realities independent of thought,
(b) thinking about realities, and (c) making affirmations about realities.
Kimpel concludes that religious statements intentionally paradoxical in
form are not intelligible. This is the case not only because a property
cannot be both __affirmed__ and __denied__ a reality under the same set of condi-
tions, as the modern analysts argue in positing non-contradiction as a
logical elective freely made in language; it is also true because para-
doxical properties cannot adhere to a reality under the same set of con-
ditions, as Aristotle argued.[31]

Holding a factual interpretation of faith-statements, Kimpel argues
that a difference in the meaning of theological affirmations does not im-
ply different denoted realities. For example, a reference to "the Lord,
the first," is a reference to the same reality as "the Lord, who made
heaven and earth."[32]

Richard B. Braithwaite

Richard B. Braithwaite[33] sets out to determine, in empirical terms,
what is the __use__ of religious statements in a man's religious expression.
He summarily dismisses the theory that theological propositions are scien-
tific explanations of facts in the empirical world. This hypothesis he

[31]Ibid., pp. 113-133. Kimpel notwithstanding, Erwin L. Lueker, in
"Jesus Christ: Conservative and Liberal," Concordia Theological Month-
ly, XXXV (July-August 1964), 403-406, offers an excellent example of the
proper use of paradox.

[32]Kimpel, p. 68.

[33]Braithwaite has been Knightsbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy in
the University of Cambridge since 1953.

analyzes as non-falsifiable, and concludes that "a hypothesis which is consistent with every possible empirical fact is not an empirical one."[34] In analytic style, Braithwaite determines to employ the "use principle" as a modified form of the verification principle, thereby retaining verification by use:

> Since I wish to continue to employ verification in the restricted sense of ascertaining truth-value, I shall take the principle of meaning in this new form in which the word "verification" has disappeared. But in removing this term from the statement of the principle, there is no desertion from the spirit of empiricism. The older verification principle is subsumed under the new use principle: the use of an empirical statement derives from the fact that the statement is empirically verifiable, and the logical-positivist thesis of the "linguistic" character of logical and mathematical statements can be equally well, if not better, expressed in terms of their use than of their method of verification. Moreover the only way of discovering how a statement is used is by an empirical enquiry; a statement need not itself be empirically verifiable, but that it is used in a particular way is always a straightforwardly empirical proposition.[35]

Since he will argue that religious assertions are _used_ as moral assertions, Braithwaite initially chooses to discuss moral assertions. The use of a moral assertion is to express the attitude of the asserter. "It is not used to assert the proposition that he has the attitude—a verifiable psychological proposition; it is used to show forth or evince his attitude." When a man asserts that "he ought to do so-and-so," he is in fact asserting that he "resolves, to the best of his ability, to do so-and-so." He

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[34] R[ichard] B[evan] Braithwaite, "An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief," The Existence of God, edited by John Hick (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1964), p. 232. The article (pp. 229-252) is a full reprint of Braithwaite's book of the same title, originally delivered as the Eddington Lecture on November 22, 1955, and published in 1955 by the Cambridge University Press. The book (or lecture) itself is not readily available.

[35] Ibid., pp. 235-236.

does an action simply because he intends to do it, if possible.[36]   In

sharp distinction to those who offer an "emotive" theory of ethics

Braithwaite proposes a "conative" theory:

> The form of ethics without propositions which I shall adopt is
> therefore a conative rather than an emotive theory: it makes
> the primary use of a moral assertion that of expressing the in-
> tention of the asserter to act in a particular sort of way specified
> in the assertion.[37]

Braithwaite asserts that the primary use of religious assertions is

to announce allegiance to a set of moral principles.[38]   The typical mean-

ing of the body of Christian assertions is to proclaim the intention to

follow the "agapeistic way of life":

> The view which I put forward for your consideration is that the
> intention of a Christian to follow a Christian way of life is not
> only the criterion for the sincerity of his belief in the assertions
> of Christianity; it is the criterion of the meaningfulness of his
> assertions. Just as the meaning of a moral assertion is given by
> its use in expressing the asserter's intention to act, . . . so the
> meaning of a religious assertion is given by its use in expressing
> the asserter's intention to follow a specified policy of behavior. . . .
> it is the intention to behave which constitutes what is known as
> religious conviction.[39]

Braithwaite contends that the unification of convictional and intentional

statements is assured because any alternative produces a destructive

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[36]Ibid., pp. 236-238. It is interesting to note the parallels be-
tween Braithwaite and T. R. Miles'in Religion and the Scientific Outlook
(London: Allen and Unwin, c.1959). Both rely on the "use principle" and
begin their discussion of religious assertions with an examination of
the place of moral assertions. For Miles work, see infra. pp. 203-212.

[37]Braithwaite, p. 237.

[38]Ibid., p. 239. As early as 1935, H. H. Price described an "attitu-
dinarian" theory of religious statements that somewhat prefigured
Braithwaite's theory. Price offered his suggestion in "Logical Positiv-
ism and Theology," Philosophy, X (July 1935), 313-331. See also supra,
p. 46, n. 82.

[39]Braithwaite, p. 239.

situation. If religious assertions are severed from moral principles, the asserter is sure to be questioned about the connection between assertion and Christian practice. "Unless religious principles are moral principles, it makes no sense to speak of putting them into practice."[40]

Braithwaite takes pains to demonstrate that his account of the logic and meaning of religious statements fully accords with the "spirit of empiricism." He contends that whether or not a man has the intention to pursue a particular behavioral policy "can be empirically tested, both by observing what he does and by hearing what he replies when he is questioned about his intentions."[41]

Although Braithwaite construes religious assertions as moral assertions, he carefully distinguishes the two. First, a specified behavior policy is not completely and fully indicated by any one religious assertion in isolation; this procedure may occur in a moral assertion. Second, the conduct advocated by religion concerns not only external, but also internal behavior. It concerns action not only of the will, but "of the heart."[42]

Braithwaite hits on "stories" as the variable and influential backdrop which differentiates one world-religion's assertions from another's.

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[40] Ibid., pp. 240-241.

[41] Ibid., p. 237. Eric Lionel Mascall, in Words and Images (New York: Ronald Press Company, c.1957), p. 50, charges Braithwaite with ambiguity in his use of the word "empirical": first Braithwaite invokes Locke, Hume, Mill, and Russell to describe the position that all significant factual assertions concern sensibly experienceable objects; but then he uses the word "empirical" to describe the position that all significant factual assertions must be such that it is possible to have a sensible experience of the way in which someone uses them.

[42] Braithwaite, pp. 242-243.

the intentions to pursue the behavior policies, which may be the same for different religions, are associated with thinking of different stories . . . . By a story I shall mean here a proposition or set of propositions which are straightforwardly empirical propositions capable of empirical test and which are thought of by the religious man in connection with his resolution to follow the way of life advocated by his religion.[43]

The story "is a set of empirical propositions." This permits the **meaning** of the story's language to be apprehended "by the standard method of understanding how the story-statements can be verified." It is possible for empirical story-statements to vary from Christian to Christian, but through it all, "the interpretations will all be in terms of empirical propositions."[44] Braithwaite finds the importance of stories not in their "truth," but in their "meaning":

For it is not necessary, on my view, for the asserter of a religious assertion to believe in the truth of the story involved in the assertions: what is necessary is that the story should be entertained in thought, i.e. that the statement of the story should be understood as having a meaning. I have secured this by requiring that the story should consist of empirical propositions.[45]

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[43]Ibid., p. 244.

[44]Ibid., p. 245. Mascall (pp. 55-62) criticizes Braithwaite for refusing to see that the "stories" of Christianity are of differing varieties, not all similarly amenable to his division of interpretation. He suggests that Braithwaite offers no reason for choosing Christianity over, for example, Buddhism. Braithwaite refuses to admit the relevance of some Christian stories even though they have empirical facets (as in the case of the birth of Christ). Mascall concludes that if one starts where Braithwaite chooses to begin, he is likely to end where he ends.

[45]Braithwaite, p. 246. Paul van Buren, in The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1963), p. 145, claims that Braithwaite is inadequate in his explanation because he has failed to do justice to the historical aspect of the Gospel, and has completely neglected the peculiarity of the "Easter Event." See infra, pp. 129-131.

Paul van Buren

Paul van Buren[46] endorses linguistic analysis as the most suitable
approach to the problem which Bonhoeffer and Bultmann addressed on the
continent. Two considerations, the fact that empiricism is traditional
and that industrialism and technology are a way of life, recommend to
him the analytic over the existentialist approach in the English-speaking
theological world.[47] More explicitly, "The problem of the Gospel in a
secular age is a problem of the logic of its apparently meaningless lan-
guage, and linguistic analysis will give us help in clarifying it."[48]

Van Buren isolates a modified verification principle, the "use
principle," as the heart of linguistic analysis:

> If a statement has a function, so that it may in principle be
> verified or falsified, the statement is meaningful, and unless
> or until a theological statement can be submitted in some way to
> verification, it cannot be said to have a meaning in our language-
> game.[49]

This approach necessitates a thorough examination of the context of
faith's language because function and precise meaning will vary with the
context.[50] Van Buren's modification of the verification principle seeks
to find "what sort of things would count for an assertion and what sort

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[46]In 1963 van Buren taught at the Episcopal Theological Seminary
of the Southwest in Austin, Texas. Currently he teaches in the depart-
ment of religion, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.

[47]Paul van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, Based on an
Analysis of Its Language (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1963), pp.
16-17.

[48]Ibid., p. 84.

[49]Ibid., pp. 104-105.

[50]Ibid., p. 105.

of things would count against it."[51] The modified principle contributes
to a re-evaluation of theological statements. It indicates that theologi-
cal statements, meaningless when interpreted as straightforward assertions
about the world, have use and meaning in their expression of a historical
perspective. The historical perspective gives rise to far-reaching empir-
ical consequences in a man's life because the stating of the perspective
is the declaration of an intention to live a certain life.[52] In sum,
the verification principle limits the nature of cosmological assertions
in the sphere of religious discourse. Conversely, questions about "God"
are answered only insofar as they are addressed to the history of the
Nazarene.[53]

Van Buren admits his debt to the analytic traditions of Ramsey, Hare
and Braithwaite. He contends that theological employment of linguistic
analysis has centered primarily on eighteenth century theological prob-
lems, with a concurrent failure to apply analytic methodology to problems
of contemporary theology concerned with the kerygma and biblical studies.
Van Buren commends Ian Ramsey for his application of analysis to biblical
theology, and admits his reliance of Ramsey's discussion of the "odd"

[51] Ibid., p. 15.

[52] Ibid., p. 199.

[53] Ibid., p. 148. Langdon B. Gilkey, in "A New Linguistic Madness,"
New Theology No. 2, edited by Martin Marty and Dean G. Peerman (New York:
Macmillan Company, c.1965), pp. 39-49, summarizes and reviews van Buren's
work. He concludes that van Buren grossly distorts his material in apply-
ing analysis. Gilkey's article first appeared in Journal of Religion, XLIV
(July 1964), 238-243. Similarly, Hugo Meynell, in "Gospel Without God,"
Theology, LXVIII (August 1965), 361-366, criticizes van Buren both theologi-
cally and philosophically. Eric Lionell Mascall, in The Secularisation of
Christianity (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, c.1965), pp. 40-105, gives
both a summary and a critique of van Buren's work from the Anglo-Catholic
perspective.

logical behavior of certain words.[54]   In addition, van Buren notes three

agreements with R. M. Hare and R. B. Braithwaite. The first is that "simple

literal theism" is wrong, and "qualified literal theism" meaningless.

Literal theism is mythological, homeless in the modern world, and dis-

credited by modern science.[55] The second consensus is that the "language

of faith has meaning . . . it has a function which may be clarified by

linguistic analysis." The actual function of words provides the key to

understanding faith's language.[56] Third, even though a straightforward

use of the word "God" is to be abandoned, "the language of faith has

meaning when it is taken to refer to the Christian way of life . . . ."

"The Way" is thus a central element of van Buren's linguistic interpreta-

tion.[57]

Van Buren chooses a non-cognitive, "blik" conception of faith as

methodologically fundamental.[58] Logically, to find "meaning in history"

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[54]van Buren, pp. 88, 104-105. Ramsey discusses especially the oddness
of "I"; see infra, pp. 185-186.

[55]Ibid., pp. 99-100.

[56]Ibid., pp. 100-101.

[57]Ibid., p. 101.

[58]Ibid., p. 97. At this point a reader might question the methodology
of this study and ask: Is it proper to include van Buren in Chapter IV
rather than Chapter V, especially in view of his espousal of the "blik"?
In addition, how does his emphasis on the non-cognitive character of faith
(pp. 98-99) fit into the structure of Chapter IV? The present author has
included van Buren in Chapter IV of this study for three reasons: (1)
van Buren emphasizes the "use principle" as the analytic equivalent of
the verification principle, and endorses it as such (pp. 104-105, passim);
(2) he states that the function of theological language is the articulation
of an historical perspective with far-reaching empirical consequences
(p. 132), consequences which one would suppose to be empirically verifiable
or testable (even as all statements must "be submitted in some way to veri-
fication," p. 105), although van Buren does not draw this conclusion as

is to have a "blik." To have a "blik" is to intend to behave in a certain
way in connection with the "entertainment" of specified backdrop stories.
"Meaning" in this context signifies commitment, a decision which occurs
in relation to a situation of discernment.[59] Van Buren selects a non-
cognitive, "blik" conception of faith because he distrusts a cognitive
conception built on a "natural sense of the divine." The cognitive con-
ception of faith is merely a wilderness road in that it isolates a dis-
tinct segment of experience as "religious" and leads inevitably to a
defensive posture.[60]

With these ground rules, van Buren prepares to analyze the Gospel's
language. That is, he endeavors to ascertain the function of theological
language. If to have a "blik" is to have an intention to behave in a
certain way in connection with the "entertainment" of specific backdrop
stories, an analysis of the Gospel's language begins with the story of
the Nazarene:

> When the language of the Gospel is analyzed so as to reveal its
> logical meaning or function, the history of Jesus of Nazareth proves
> to be indispensable to it; if this history is pushed into the back-
> ground, faith may be a perspective, but it is either not historical
> at all, or it is grounded in some other piece of history.[61]

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does his mentor, R. B. Braithwaite; (3) van Buren emphasizes strongly the
need to restrict "God"-language to man-language (p. 103), thereby ruling
out, to all appearances, any consideration of the transcendent (or the
mysterious) which is found almost without exception among the men considered
in Chapter V.

[59]Ibid., pp. 113-114. At this point van Buren's debt to Hare, Braithwaite,
and Ramsey becomes especially evident.

[60]Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[61]Ibid., p. 196. Van Buren appears to attack Bultmann's perspective
of historicity at this point.

It is impossible to speak of a "sheer discernment," for conversion to the Christian historical perspective "depends in part upon some acquaintance with the history of Jesus."[62] But van Buren gives a warning to avoid the pitfall of supernatural language:

> With the particular empirical attitudes which are reflected in the way we have chosen to use the word "history," we can only speak historically of Jesus by using words with which we speak of other men.[63]

Van Buren emphasizes the "freedom" of Jesus of Nazareth as a characteristic which does not break these strictures. Jesus was "free" because "He trusted in the God of love." This statement is best related to statements such as "He loved men," and "He was willing to die." The phrase "appears to have 'cash value' in the realm of human conduct." In the sense that "freedom" for the Christian means that the Christian "trusted in God," or "loved men" and was "willing to die," van Buren concludes that freedom is not the "consequence of faith," but rather the "logical meaning" of faith.[64] In another place van Buren shows how words used about Jesus were essentially words used of other men. The emphasis of classical Christology on the human "nature" lies contextually in the sphere of "language appropriate to the history of a free man."[65] In summing up his discussion of Jesus of Nazareth, the author argues that

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[62]Ibid., p. 144.

[63]Ibid., p. 124. Compare Harvey Cox, The Secular City (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1965), p. 255: "We speak of God politically whenever we give occasion to our neighbors to become the responsible, adult agent." Cox quotes Gerhard Ebeling to this effect (p. 255): "worldly talk of God is godly talk of the world."

[64]van Buren, pp. 123-124.

[65]Ibid., p. 168.

the Christian faith was not and is not the direct result of seeing Jesus as a historical figure. On the other hand, the Christian faith is based on history. The seeming contradiction is due to the intervening "Easter event." "Faith is not based simply on a picture of the historical Jesus, but the historical Jesus is indispensable for faith."[66]

Van Buren previously stated that the functions of theological statements include discernment, duty, and commitment. These functions should not be mixed with statements which purport to give "factual" information;[67] the distinction is especially important in discussing the "Easter event." Peter's statement regarding the Risen One, "He appeared to me," is a record of the sensation of appearance which suggests the "objective" character of the image. This or similar statements of sense-content cannot be verified by common-sense or empirical methods. "Only 'I' can record what was 'on the mirror of my mind.'" The statement of sense-content is verified by ascertaining whether the words and actions of the asserter conform to it: "The test is one of consistency."[68] From the sense-content statement, a second assertion might conceivably follow: "Jesus is risen." If through empirical verification the second assertion is demonstrated false, the difficulty lies not in the sense-content statement (the impression is still real), but in drawing a conclusion which appears empirically verifiable. The impression is not invalidated.[69]

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[66] Ibid., pp. 125-126.

[67] Ibid., p. 105.

[68] Ibid., p. 129.

[69] Ibid., p. 130.

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Actually, the disciples' use of the statement "Jesus is risen" ruled out any notion of empirical verification. When the disciples asserted "Jesus is risen," they stated an exceedingly odd linguistic assertion:

> The word "Jesus" is a proper name, and we may assume that it functions as any other proper name would function. Logically, it would be improper to use the word "is" of anyone who had died. . . . The word "risen" was at home in the context of such phrases as "Kingdom of God" and "a new heaven and a new earth," which were used to point to the end and goal of all existence. The assertion "Jesus is risen" takes the name of a historical man and says that he was of the realm of "the end."[70]

Van Buren further contends that words which point to the "end and goal of all existence" find their meaning in their use. Their use is "to inform the hearer of, or to commend to him, a certain attitude of the speaker." The attitude expressed is verifiable through an investigation of the one who spoke.[71] In sum, the statement "Jesus is risen" does not signify a change from the sense-content statement, "He appeared to me," to an empirical assertion. "It is a movement to an 'end-word' statement, which is verified by the conduct of the man who uses it."[72] In consequence, van Buren refuses to use the word "fact" for the Easter event:

> As historians, and indeed as proper users of the English language, we would prefer not to speak of the Easter event as a 'fact' at all, not in the ordinary use of the word. . . . All we can say is that something happened.[73]

Van Buren interprets the function of theological language to be the articulation of an historical perspective, or conversely, the declaration

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[70] Ibid., pp. 130-131.

[71] Ibid., p. 131.

[72] Ibid., pp. 131-132.

[73] Ibid., p. 128.

of the intention to live a certain life. This functional theory manifests itself both in his discussion of the historical Jesus and in his consideration of the "Easter event." A third area is the language of the kerygma. If the "Easter faith was a new perspective upon life arising out of a situation of discernment focused on the history of Jesus,"[74] witness to the new perspective might well manifest a similar logical analysis of language. Van Buren equates a discussion of the kerygma with a consideration of today's problematic understanding of the Gospel. The problem of understanding the Gospel is the difficulty in finding any meaningful way to speak of God: "the problem now is that the word 'God' is dead."[75] Man has only man's language:

> If no family resemblances were allowed between the language of the Gospel and the way in which we speak of being loved by another human being, we should have to abandon all hope of understanding what the Gospel means.[76]

Contemporary analyses of theological language have translated "God-statements" to "man-statements"; this is no great loss. Man is involved in a multitude of language-games. "Statements about human existence" are not on the same level throughout.

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[74] Ibid., p. 132.

[75] Ibid., pp. 102-103. Richard R. Caemmerer, in "Current Contributions to Christian Preaching," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXVII (January 1966), 38-47, wrestles indirectly with the problem as he applies the insights of analysis to the task of preaching. In "Christian Education Post Mortem Dei," Religious Education, LX (January-February 1965), 4-10, van Buren unravels the ramifications of his thesis for Christian education. Ian Ramsey, Gordon Kaufman, David Hunter, Frederick Ferré, and Bernard Cooke review the article in turn. They agree that the article is provocative, but recognize the need for further constructive restatement of theological foundations, a need not filled by van Buren's article.

[76] van Buren, p. 199.

To confine ourselves to the language developed by men (and what other choice is available to us?) appears to confine our subject to the realm which is at least in principle open to human investigation, but that does not exclude the richness and variety within this human realm.[77]

In view of his readiness to translate "God-statements" to "man-statements," van Buren's discussion of prayer indicates the direction his kerygmatic analysis will take:

The meaning of intercessory prayer is its use: it begins in reflection upon the situation in the light of the Christian perspective and leads to appropriate action.[78]

In cases where nothing can be done, as in an international situation, "holding the situation up to God" is basically reflection within the historical perspective of the Christian.[79]

Discussing the language of the kerygma is discussing the contemporary understanding of the Gospel. It is unwinding the difficulty in speaking of God. If "God-statements" are to be translated into the language-games of man, there is no better place to enter the logic of kerygmatic language than with Jesus of Nazareth. The exclusive, particular character of kerygmatic language is evident, says van Buren, in that "it claims the universal significance of a particular, historical individual, Jesus of Nazareth." His freedom, when discussed, is the exclusive element. Although no _empirical_ grounds exist to justify the argument that a similar "freedom"-experience is not possible from any other "free man," it is _logically_ possible to make this exclusive claim, for by his statement

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[77]_Ibid._, p. 103.

[78]_Ibid._, p. 189.

[79]_Ibid._

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the asserter expresses the firmness of his conviction.[80]

The particularity of kerygmatic language is thus balanced by a universality. Kerygmatic language "claims that in the history of Jesus of Nazareth something universal, eternal, absolute, something it calls 'God,' was manifested." The universal aspect includes a perspective of all that there is, a certain understanding of self, man, history, and the world. The universal perspective has its norm in the history of the Nazarene and the Easter event.[81] The universal perspective indicates that the perceiver was "taken hold of," that "something has happened to the believer, rather than that he has done something." But more, the response is the act of a free man: "the new discernment and its accompanying commitment to a way of life is experienced as a response." Properly speaking, the language of faith is the "recommendation to his listener to see Jesus, the world, and himself in [the new perspective] and to act accordingly."[82] Van Buren sums up the universality and particularity of kerygmatic language with reference to the complex logic of "blik":

> It is one thing to say that Christians have always taken the history of Jesus to be indispensable and definitive for their faith, but it is quite another to think that this "uniqueness" can somehow be proved. . . . Claims of "finality" are simply the language appropriate to articulating a historical perspective. The logic of these claims can be illuminated by setting them alongside the statement "I'm I."[83]

80Ibid., pp. 135-139.

81Ibid., pp. 139-141.

82Ibid., p. 141.

83Ibid., p. 155.

Paul F. Schmidt

Paul F. Schmidt[84] concludes that ethical statements neither specifically concern religious beliefs nor exhaust the totality of religious assertions. In spite of this conclusion, he counts the relationship between religious assertions and ethical concerns an important factor in any consideration of religious utterances:

> Our discussion indicates that any adequate account of the meaning of religious assertions must do justice to the frequent connection of ethics and religion.[85]

Closely approximating Braithwaite, Schmidt holds that the "primary purpose of religious language is to produce certain attitudes in oneself and in others."[86] Spelling out this axiom, Schmidt argues that the function of cosmological religious statements is to recommend certain attitudes toward nature and man's behavior relative to nature. Historical religious statements are means of expressing attitudes toward special events and persons in history. Theological statements, in their religious rather than their metaphysical function, express attitudes connected with God/god. Ethical statements in their religious function refer to behavioral dispositions toward other people. Finally, devotional statements recommend certain feelings for a "way of life."[87]

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[84]Paul Frederick Schmidt has been associate professor of philosophy at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, since 1958.

[85]Paul F. Schmidt, Religious Knowledge ([Glencoe, Illinois]: Free Press, c.1961), p. 71.

[86]Ibid., p. 77.

[87]Ibid., pp. 91-94.

Although Schmidt does not offer the suggestion, it is possible to conclude from his study that the logic of religious statements, which functions attitudinally, necessitates the verifiability of the statements in an empirical testing of the stated intentions and attitudes.

Falsifiability and Religious Propositions

William A. Christian and William T. Blackstone are one more step removed from the stringent criterion of verifiability in their endorsement of falsifiability. Falsifiability essentially weakens the verification principle by a method of conversion, but does not differ materially from it.[88] While Braithwaite, Wilson, and van Buren endorsed falsifiability as an integral tool for the apprehension of meaning in religious discourse, they did not posit it as the sole criterion of meaning, as do Christian and Blackstone. In their utilization of falsifiability, both Christian and Blackstone affirm the empirical placement of religious language (at least in principle), but they do so with less theoretical clarity and commitment than the men thus far considered.

William A. Christian

William A. Christian[89] sets out to demonstrate that, together with the functions of confession and injunction, religious statements express genuine "truth-claims." His is an examination of conditions under which truth claims are possible.[90] His concern is with "proposals for belief"

[88] Supra, pp. 31-34.

[89] Christian is professor of philosophy at Yale University.

[90] William A. Christian, Meaning and Truth in Religion (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, c.1964), p. 1.

which appear in the setting of sustained inquiry.[91] Only in this setting can genuine disagreements about "proposals for belief" arise. Arise they must, for if no genuine disagreements are possible among those who offer proposals for belief, significant truth-claims are impossible in religious language.[92]

In discussing the possibility of disagreements Christian distinguishes between "doctrinal proposals" and "basic proposals." World religions are able to disagree on a doctrinal proposal if the subject, through extrapolation, is broad enough for both parties to accept as meaningful, and if the predicate is untrue for one or the other. A second type of proposal allows for more significant disagreement. The "basic proposal" differs from the doctrinal proposal in logical form. In the case of the basic proposal, the predicate is assigned by both participating groups, but to different subjects.[93] Since his study of the cognitive nature of religious discourse is primarily concerned with basic proposals, Christian sees fit to list the distinguishing marks of a basic proposal: "its subject term expresses the central concept of some scheme"; and "its predicate expresses the basic concept of some inquiry."[94] He chooses to discuss the

[91] Ibid., pp. 12-13. Christian assumes (p. 3) the possibility of a general logic of inquiry "which becomes specified in various ways when specific interests (for example, scientific, moral, or religious interests) prompt us to ask questions of various sorts."

[92] Ibid., p. 24.

[93] Ibid., pp. 15-19. Christian contends that a doctrinal proposal presupposes some basic proposals because the latter give the point and importance of doctrine. The doctrinal proposal (p. 21) "depends on a basic proposal for explanation of its context in experience and discourse."

[94] Ibid., p. 21.

basic proposal because it is an easier task to isolate disagreements in
the area of basic proposals than to locate common logical subjects to
which doctrines of different religions give reference in doctrinal
proposals.[95]

Before discussing the predicates of basic proposals, Christian dis-
tinguishes four conditions which nominate a proposal as a candidate
truth-claim. These four conditions are here summarized:

a. The proposal must be capable of self-consistent formulation.
b. The proposal must be liable to significant disagreement, for if
   something cannot be negated consistently (falsifiability), it
   has no significant consequences.
c. The proposal must permit a reference to its logical subject.
   The term used as logical subject must mean something in a cer-
   tain way. "This condition requires of the proposal 'm is F'
   that there should be additional information about m, beyond say-
   ing that it is F." The proposer must find some fact or other as
   a starting-point for his reference, and then connect the fact
   with the logical subject of his proposal. It must be logically
   possible to accept the fact without accepting the proposal.
d. The proposal must permit some support for the assignment of its
   predicate to its subject. "It must be possible to give some
   reason for saying that m is F." Giving a reason involves "bring-
   ing up some fact or another according to some principle of judg-
   ment." Each proposal, with its own predicate, formulates its
   rules of judgment in this matter.[96]

In examining the construction of a basic proposal, Christian holds that
the predicate must be formulated so that its application is not restricted
to one logical subject, although it may be true of not more than one.
This type of predicate is educible from a general theory of religion
borrowed by philosophy from the phenomenology of religion. The general
theory must fill the following conditions: it must yield a predicate
directly applicable to the religious object and not to the religious

[95]Ibid., pp. 23-24.
[96]Ibid., pp. 24-34.

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person experiencing the object; it must not designate a logical subject
for basic religious proposals (thus ruling out "Religion is worship of
God"); it must have a reasonably wide range of application; it must per-
mit reasonable interpretations of the word "religion."[97] After evaluating
several theories of religious predication, including Schliermacher's,
Kant's, and Otto's, Christian offers his own. In brief, "a religious
interest is an interest in something more important than anything else
in the universe." Christian contends that his formulation allows for the
creation of basic proposals in that it is a sufficient predicate.[98]

Christian is led by Braithwaite's account of religious language to
discuss the relation of religious injunctions and confessions to basic
proposals. He challenges Braithwaite with a question taken from his
general theory of religion: "When does a moral policy have religious
import? Ordinarily, we would say, only if it is related to something which
is religiously valued." Christian suggests that religious valuations (in
Braithwaite's case the "stories") not only tell why something is to be
done. The religious valuation is an integral element of that kind of
injunction, and distinguishes the religious from the non-religious:

> A religious injunction depends on a basic proposal for its signifi-
> cance. So, if "God is love" is a religious utterance by virtue of
> some policy it enjoins, the policy is connected with something m
> to which some basic religious predicate is implicitly applied.[99]

[97] Ibid., pp. 57-58. Ninian Smart, in Reasons and Faiths (London:
Routledge and Kegan Paul, c.1958), p. 197, discounts the suggestion that
there can be any single definition of religion in terms of content (e.g.,
"man's relationship with the divine") such as Christian here suggests.
See infra, p. 174.

[98] Christian, p. 60. Christian here follows Luther's definition of "a
god" in the latter's explanation of the First Commandment in the Large
Catechism. Christian's reliance on Tillich also seems to emerge at this
point.

[99] Ibid., pp. 140-141.

Religious utterances that are "confessions" also involve an element relative to a basic proposal. "Religious states involve referential attitudes," for a religious confession "includes an implicit or explicit reference to something m, other than the emotional state of the speaker, to which he is related in a religious way." In this way religious confession also presupposes a basic religious proposal for its significance.[100]

Christian is now in a position to examine the "judgments" needed to evaluate the truth-claims of religious utterances, although he concedes that religious judgments may be only reasonably certain and stable.[101]

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[100]Ibid., pp. 142-143.

[101]Ibid., p. 146. In regard to "truth-claims," reference should be made to a Roman Catholic writer, Hugo A. Meynell, whose Sense, Nonsense and Christianity (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964) was unavailable to this writer even after a thorough search which included the facilities of the Pius XII Library of St. Louis University and the Library of the Catholic University of America. Meynell grants a difference in degree, but not in kind, between analytic and synthetic statements. Nevertheless, he is concerned to examine the verifiable nature of faith-statements, and offers a discussion of "truth-conditions" in his study. He contends that historical statements of faith are at present verifiable and falsifiable—at least in principle. Eschatological statements are only verifiable or falsifiable in the future. Reacting to various forms of theological "reductionism" (his term), Meynell limits the importance of present experience (and utterances) in traditional Christian belief. "Reductionistic" theologies invert the proportion among truth-conditions of traditional faith (where past and future facts were the necessary conditions) and present experiential facts. Three reviews of Sense, Nonsense and Christianity appear in Appendix A. If the work could be carefully analyzed, it appears to this writer that it would fall in the considerations of the present chapter.

As far as the present writer could discover, use or disavowal of linguistic analysis on the part of Roman Catholic writers has been rather limited. Maxwell J. Charlesworth, a Roman Catholic, has investigated the history of analysis in Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, c.1959), but has failed to face the theological issues squarely. Joseph M. Bochenski's The Logic of Religion (New York: New York University Press, 1965) was not available to this writer. Of this work Theology Digest, XIV (Spring 1966), 65, says in a brief review: "A distinguished Dominican scholar, the president of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, attempts 'to use modern mathematical logic to establish a general logic of religion applicable to all great religions.'"

The first argument which enters a judgement of religious truth-claim is the argument of consistency and coherence. In this argumentation the important matter is that no single general theory of religion (and derived from it, a basic religious question to replace all others) can be sought. "But it is fair to ask for some questions to be stated, so we could understand the point of the proposal and thus see more clearly how its various parts contribute to making this point."[102]

Dialectical arguments are the second type to be offered for or against a truth-proposal. This argument corresponds to the second condition of a truth-proposal. It investigates how well the proposal compares and contrasts with rival proposals; it evaluates the proposal's power to interpret alternatives. While it is always proper to "try to show how some proposal conserves, and expresses in a more consistent and coherent way, the values of another," Christian urges an exhaustive comparison between each of the rival proposals.[103]

The third type of argument which enters the judgment of a truth-proposal is argumentation concerning the adequacy of references permitted by the stated truth-proposal. Christian suggests that logical subjects of predicates modified by the references under discussion include the following types: qualities, relations, particular natural entities, particular human individuals and groups, nature, mankind, pure forms, pure being, and transcendent active being.[104] It is in discussing the references which modify these types of logical subjects that Christian

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[102]Christian, pp. 148, 153.

[103]Ibid., pp. 156, 160, 161.

[104]Ibid., p. 169.

examines the third type of argumentation involved with the judgment of

a truth-proposal. As examples of the questions which give rise to dif-

ferent types of references, Christian offers the following queries:

> Will you give me an example of it? What does it do? What are its
> effects? Am I acquainted with any of its parts or members? Is it
> related in some other way to anything in my experience? If it is
> beyond my experience, how is it beyond my experience?[105]

He lists five methods by which reference to logical subjects of basic

religious proposals is possible. (1) "Ostensive reference" is used only

in referring to particular natural entities, particular human individuals,

and groups of logical subject. The difficulties involved in isolating a

particular subject may be eliminated partially by adopting a symbol for

the proposed subject. (2) "Giving examples" best provides referential

modification for qualities, relations, and pure forms. While the first

two types of logical subjects (qualities, relations) are susceptible to

exemplification because they involve qualities and not an "ideal," pure

forms are not referenced as easily by exemplification. They are better

exemplified in analogy, or in the via negativa. (3) "Assigning regular

effects" is an apt reference to nature and to a transcendent active being

when either of these is the logical subject. The difficulty with this

type of reference is that, for example, the farther the meaning of "cause"

is extended and the more analogically it is used, the more difficult it is

to use the concept "cause" to refer to something particular. (4) "Assign-

ing extraordinary effects" does not necessarily involve "miracle," but it

may, expecially in the case of a private event. This type of reference-

method is very useful in modifying the transcendent active being as a

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[105] Ibid., p. 198.

logical subject. Utter transcendence need not be implied, for if it is the effects of the transcendent being are likely to be imperceptible to historical judgment. (5) "Interpretation" is a deductive reference which demonstrates how the predicate is related in some way to the logical subject. It differs from causal reference in that its goal of reference occupies a different ontological level.[106]

Christian also provides guidelines for the use of these five major modes of predicating reference. In arriving at references to logical subjects of religious proposals, it is best to remain aloof from superlatives or comparatives.[107] Christian argues that it is "fair to make an inference from the kind of reference a proposal uses to the nature of the logical subject of the proposal, that which is being proposed as the religious object." He continues:

> The reason is that there are logical limitations on making references in religion. . . . So if a proposer seriously means to use a certain reference, then this can tell us something about the proposal he is, in effect, making. We can pose a dilemma: either his proposal is of a type for which the mode of reference is admissible, or the reference fails.[108]

A reference can fail (a) if it is baseless and offers no factual starting point (the difficulty with superlatives); (b) if it is misconstructed, for it may use categories inappropriate to its factual starting point; (c) if the reference is insufficient, because references in one mode of reference may need the supplementation of another.[109] With an emphasis

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[106] Ibid., pp. 185-198.

[107] Ibid., pp. 199.

[108] Ibid., pp. 205-206.

[109] Ibid., p. 208.

on facts (a), Christian contends that his theory of meaning is, in a weak sense, empirical on two accounts: references to logical subjects begin with facts as their starting point, both private and public facts; second, facts "can be adduced in support of a claim that a basic predicate is true of some logical subject."[110] He summarizes the procedures used to support the predications of basic proposals in this way:

> The general requirement is that it is possible to formulate, in the frame of the predicate in question, rules of relevance for appeals to facts, a procedure for judgment, and norms of judgment.[111]

After this digression, which dealt with different modes of predicative reference and different types of logical subjects (all of which concerned the third type of argument involved in the judgment of truth-proposals), Christian turns to the fourth major argument involved in the judgment of truth-proposals. This argument deals with the possibility or impossibility of truth in religious propositions. It serves as a summary statement of the book's thesis.

In the course of developing the fourth argument Christian examines three factors integral to the charge that there can be no possibility of a true religious proposition. (1) The opponent contends that certainty is not possible in religion. Christian agrees to the impossibility of obtaining absolute certainty both a priori and from experience. He counters with the contention that no human knowledge is certain in this sense. Nevertheless, sure knowledge of "suggestions" (which illuminate one's life) in religion is possible, although this does not assure absolute

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[110]Ibid., pp. 210-211.

[111]Ibid., p. 236.

certainty about propositions derived from trustworthy suggestions. "For our fundamental orientation and basic guidance in life we rely on experience which cannot be funded into propositional meaning without remainder." Similarly at an even deeper level, one may accept trusted "basic suppositions" without being religious in the sense that a "suggestion" is religious. Propositions derived from basic suppositions are reasonably certain, their trustworthiness varying with availability of relevant facts and urgency of decision. (2) At this point Christian's opponent counters with the suggestion that religious questions are not decidable. This argument depends, says Christian, on the assumption that judgment is not possible in religion. His whole book has demonstrated the opposite. (3) In the third place the opponent charges that claiming truth for religion involves insensitive, intolerant, obsessive, or idolatrous exclusiveness. Christian states that in regards to insensitivity, when one asserts a proposition p, he is not asserting that only p is true. Christian further suggests that tolerance does not imply skepticism. And finally, in the light of Christian's theory of religion, the opponent's charge of idolatry permits the stating of no religious proposition.[112]

In conclusion Christian states that it has been his purpose to "throw light on some of the ways in which we do (and might) think and speak when we are prompted by religious interest." His examination of the problem was not restricted to the discussion of meaning and truth, and the criteria of significance and truth, required only for religious discourse. His task involved the generalization of these concepts in order that the theory

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[112]Ibid., pp. 238-263.

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is "powerful enough to extend in an illuminating way beyond the domain of its origin."[113]

William T. Blackstone

William T. Blackstone[114] approaches the question of religious dis-
course from the perspective of religious knowledge. He assumes that an
investigation of religious language does not consist in describing its
uses. Correlatively, he deems it necessary to evaluate criteria of cog-
nitivity applicable to religious belief and language. He insists that
prior to an investigation of religious language one must ascertain what
religious language is, that is, what its limits are. It is his sugges-
tion that religious language concerns a belief which provides an object(s)
of devotion and presents a pervasive orientation-frame.[115]

The analysts have done well, says Blackstone, in drawing attention
to meaning in use, but they have not resolved the problem of religious
"cognition." It is ultimately necessary, in spite of all the "logic" of
religious language, to establish criteria which delimit what is and what
is not cognitive language. Simple description of the many uses of reli-
gious language is no substitute for an analysis of the criteria of its
cognitive significance.[116] Blackstone rejects the conclusion of some

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[113]Ibid., pp. 263-264.

[114]Blackstone has been associate professor of philosophy at the
University of Georgia since 1961.

[115]William T. Blackstone, The Problem of Religious Knowledge (Engle-
wood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, c.1963), pp. 38-39.

[116]Ibid., p. 54. In this regard it is interesting to compare an
editorial in Christianity Today, IX (July 1965), 1073, which dismisses

analysts that if religious assertions are non-cognitive they are automatically emotive. He urges the proposing of specific criteria for cognition. The criterion offered by those who see religious language as emotive—a criterion of cognitive meaning which eliminates metaphysics—Blackstone views as insufficient.[117] He submits, in essence, that the falsifiability test is a proper criterion of cognitive significance in religious discourse.[118] In view of this proffered criterion, Blackstone will not allow "religious experience" to serve as a justifying ground for supposed objective import in religious sentences:

> All religious sentences . . . which purport to have objective import and which have as their justifying grounds merely "religious experience" cannot be classified as knowledge. This includes not only the claims that God exists, but that Christ is his son. . . . And to the extent that any religious sentence based on this appeal cannot be given some clear meaning so that the speaker and the hearer can know or find out what the sentence is about and the extent of the claim being made about it, the issue of the cognitivity of these sentences arises again.[119]

Blackstone includes in the category of cognitive religious statements assertions that are predictive, descriptive, historical, explanatory, and those which make autobiographical claims.[120] All are

the "linguistic theologians," although they validate religious beliefs as working models in the scientific world, because they do not resolve the question of "truth."

[117] William T. Blackstone, "Religious Language, Emotivism, and Cognitivity," Iliff Review, XVIII (Winter 1961), 41-44.

[118] Blackstone, Problem of Religious Knowledge, p. 54. Blackstone somewhat imprecisely offers this suggestion, stating, e.g., on p. 55 that the predictive statement "Christ will return" is easily testable and falsifiable.

[119] Ibid., p. 144.

[120] Ibid., p. 56.

falsifiable, at least in principle. He notes that analogical religious statements are sometimes set forth as cognitive, but are not to be interpreted literally or treated as straightforward empirical hypotheses. These analogical statements cause no end of difficulty.[121] Religious sentences which claim to impart knowledge, but to which no falsifying evidence applies, create a complex problem for one concerned with the question, "Is religious knowledge possible?" Such statements are supposed to be true analogically or symbolically. Even more disconcerting, it is often this type of sentence, and not the "descriptive, historical, or explanatory sentences," which fulfills the appropriate functions of focusing attitudinal orientation and providing an object(s) of devotion. Since Blackstone apportions the degree of "attitude of belief" according to the criteria of cognitivity, he holds that sentences which appeal to analogy and symbolism are not candidates for an attitude of belief since they fail to fulfill the criteria of cognitivity.[122]

Blackstone argues that his conclusion (regarding cognitive criteria and the necessity of cognitivity as a basis for religious belief) does not imply that analogical-symbolical statements have no value in the lives of people. His conclusion does imply, however, that the "cognitive status and knowledge status of a belief are at least partially independent of the psychological and pragmatic import of a belief."[123]

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[121] Ibid., p. 62.

[122] Ibid., p. 167. Examples of analogical or symbolical utterances include "God created the world," "God is a loving heavenly father," and "Christ is the son of God," according to Blackstone.

[123] Ibid., pp. 167-168.

Proleptic Verification and Religious Propositions

John Hick

John Hick[124] is the sole representative of proleptic verification whom this study will consider although others, including Ian Crombie, have endorsed the proposal with less zeal. Hick enlists the principle of verification to describe the nature of religious discourse, but the verification is eschatological. He straddles the border between thinkers of this chapter, who address the positivistic-analytic challenge, and thinkers who attempt to describe the peculiar "logic" of religious discourse in non-positivistic terms (Chapter V).

Hick assumes that religious faith (and religious language) share a "common epistemological structure with cognition in other fields." This structure involves both a "significance" and an "interpretation" which are viable also in the theological realm.[125]

The epistemological structure which has worked with success in other fields is verificational in nature, says Hick. He defines the "essence of verification" as the "exclusion of rational doubt."[126] At another place he contends that the core of verification is "the removal of

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[124]Hick, an ordained Presbyterian, was assistant professor of philosophy at Cornell University from 1956 to 1959. Since then he has been Stuart Professor of Christian Philosophy at Princeton Theological Seminary.

[125]John Hick, Faith and Knowledge: a Modern Introduction to the Problem of Religious Knowledge (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, c.1957), p. 164. It is likely that for Hick "significance" denotes "meaning."

[126]Ibid., p. 161.

ignorance or uncertainty concerning the truth of some proposition."[127]

Verification is often related to predictions which are conditional.[128]

Placing theological assertions in the realm of cognition, Hick suggests

that a predictive, conditional verification is applicable also to reli-

gious assertions. It is through _eschatological_ verification of religious

assertions that the assertion-status of religious language is protected.[129]

Hick treats the verification of theological statements as a "logico-

psychological rather than as a purely logical concept." Viewed thus,

a proposition cannot be verified unless someone is present to verify it;

the verb "verify" is active rather than passive.[130]

Hick sets out to protect his theory against the charge that since

it is not falsifiable, it fails to guarantee the meaning of religious

assertions. He argues that verifiability and falsifiability are not al-

ways symetrically related--as two sides of a coin. For example, the

proposition "There are three successive sevens in the decimal determina-

tion of π," may one day be verified if it is true, but it can never be

falsified if it is false. This argumentation applies, says Hick, to

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[127] John Hick, "Theology and Verification," _The Existence of God_, edited by John Hick (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1964), p. 253. This chapter reprints an article first published in _Theology Today_, XVII (April 1960), 12-31.

[128] _Ibid._, p. 259.

[129] Hick, _Faith and Knowledge_, p. 152. I. M. Crombie, in "Theology and Falsification," _New Essays_, p. 126, offers a similar suggestion in stating that for the Christian, "the operation of getting into position to decide" whether a given claim is true or false "is called dying . . . . By this test, then, religious utterances can be called statements of fact . . . ."

[130] Hick, "Theology and Verification," _Existence of God_, p. 254.

eschatological verification as well. The hypothesis may be false, but **that** it is false can never be a fact which anyone experientially verifies.[131]

A second attack on eschatological verification offers a substitute hypothesis. To those who argue that present experience is sufficient verification of the validity of religious assertions, Hick says:

> In other words, our imagined objector has pointed out not that the existence of God makes a difference within human experience, but only that belief in the existence of God makes such a difference. And to show that belief in a proposition p has certain causal effects is not to show that p itself makes some verifiable claim about the nature of the universe. It appears, then, that we cannot substitute for the concept of eschatological verification a reference to the Christian's present experience of a new life.[132]

Hick sharpens his hypothesis of eschatological verification by examining in turn supposed logical possibilities which would invalidate eschatological verification. What if after physical death one's consciousness persists and creates its own world, in a process similar to dream-construction? The traditional Christian under such circumstances may experience impressive divine judgment with subsequent misery or bliss, each according to his conscience or theology. All this might occur in a universe with no God. The seeming verification in this case would be illusory. Another possibility is that the future world will be essentially a continuation of the present, and religiously no less ambiguous. Suppose this new world is capable of either a theistic or nontheistic interpretation. Suppose there were no conclusive experience either to validate or invalidate theism. How would the eschatological verification

[131]Ibid., p. 258. Hick is especially concerned to answer Antony Flew's objection at this point. See supra, pp. 91-92.

[132]Hick, Faith and Knowledge, p. 154.

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of Christian faith fare in these circumstances?[133]

As answers to these logical disclaimers Hick's earlier work offered the Beatific Vision and the Kingdom. Of the latter he says:

> We have no information that would enable us to visualize the King-dom. But its apprehended significance will be the direct expression of the divine purpose, so that at every point the citizens of the King-dom are conscious of being in the divine presence. Given this experience, atheism and agnosticism, while remaining logical possibilities, will have become dead options, of no greater plausibility than is solipsism now. We shall have what in all other spheres we describe as knowledge, namely rational certainty.[134]

In a later work Hick is more explicit. He isolates two developments in the Beatific Vision which would conclusively verify the existence of God. The first is "an experience of the fulfillment of God's purpose for ourselves, as this has been disclosed in Christian revelation." This fulfillment is not capable of falsification, but neither need the Christian know the concrete form the fulfillment will assume. The existence of God will be verified, second, "with an experience of communion with God as he has revealed himself in the person of Christ." The stipulation "as he has revealed himself in the person of Christ" provides a solution to the problem of knowing how or that one has encountered God, for experiencing the reign of the Son will surely assure encounter with God.[135]

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[133]Ibid., pp. 154-155.

[134]Ibid., p. 162. Blackstone (p. 114) suggests that Hick's attempt at falsifiability in principle through eschatological verification is argumentation in a circle. Hick assumes the assertion-status of religious beliefs (kingdom of God, immortality) in order to prove the possibility of eschatological verification.

[135]Hick, "Theology and Verification," Existence of God, pp. 269-271. Ronald W. Hepburn, in Christianity and Paradox (London: C. A. Watts and Company, c.1958), p. 79, opposes the position of the "Christologists" who attempt to point to Jesus (the man) and say, "There you find God, if you're looking," with this statement: "'Has not Christology made it

Hick claims that eschatological verification provides a cognitive
dimension to theological assertions. But more, the Christian's positing
of a future experience renders the present choice between theism and
atheism a real--not an empty or verbal--choice.[136]

Interweaving the Strands

To avoid an impression that the matter discussed in this chapter is
as simple as its four categories indicate, a summary statement is attached.
Each of the men considered is a thinker in his own right. No amount of
categorization can eliminate individuality. Still, although the strands
of thought are multiple, they interweave in a surprisingly consistent
pattern.

Christian, Braithwaite (in the "stories"), Blackstone, and Hick con-
tend that in some way religious assertions are "cognitive," but cognition
is variously defined. Christian, Blackstone, and Hick provide for the
cognitive judgment of religious assertions. Braithwaite, Wilson, van
Buren, Christian, and Blackstone look to falsifiability as one logical
tool through which religious statements receive cognitive "cash value."
While Christian speaks of a "factual" starting point for the reference of
religious language, and Kimpel assumes that statement and fact correlate,
Wilson selects an empirical basis for metaphysical statements by endorsing

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impossible for itself to assert its most important claim--the claim that
the relation between God, men and Jesus is what it says it is?' For if
that claim is taken seriously, it implies that men are not in a position
to know whether it is well founded or not." Hick examines Hepburn's book
in "A Philosopher Criticizes Theology," London Quarterly and Holborn
Review, CLXXXVII (April 1962), 103-110.

[136]Hick, "Theology and Verification," Existence of God, p. 261.

"religious experience" as the seedbed of religious assertions. Cox
agrees in part with Wilson by referring to empirical hypotheses. Hick
and Blackstone explicitly rule out religious experience as the guarantor
of religious cognition, but both place religious language within the total
realm of human language, as do van Buren, Christian, and Kimpel. Hick
prefers to speak of eschatological verification (as opposed to falsifia-
bility), while Kimpel promotes the cause of testability. Braithwaite and
van Buren choose to speak of the "use principle" rather than verification
as such, but Blackstone insists that a mere functional analysis of the
"use" of religious statements is insufficient.

Along with the general emphasis on the verifiable-falsifiable nature
of religious language there is a common tendency to relate religious asser-
tions to the attitudinal-ethical sphere. Schmidt, Christian, Braithwaite,
van Buren, and Wilson relate religious assertions in some way to the
sphere of ethics. Schmidt and Braithwaite assert that the purpose of
religious statements is to evince attitudes. Blackstone agrees that some
religious statements serve to produce attitudes, but contends that none
of these have cognitive value. More specifically, Braithwaite and van
Buren argue that religious assertions function to express allegiances
to set moral principles. Injecting the verification principle, Braithwaite
and van Buren suggest that empirical testing of intentions is possible
and necessary. (Perhaps Schmidt does the same.) Van Buren supports the
empirical testing of intentions because he views religious assertions as
expressions of an historical perspective with far-reaching empirical
consequences. Braithwaite and van Buren also agree in the need for
underlying background "stories," but their agreement is somewhat

superficial. Christian argues that a religious injunction depends on a basic religious proposal for its significance.

The men summarized in this chapter agree in selecting verifiability-falsifiability as the point from which to proceed in a description of the nature of religious discourse. While some contend more vigorously for the cognitive value of religious language in terms of its verifiability-falsifiability than others, all agree to the need for an empirical placement or anchorage of religious language as determinative of its logical meaning. In this respect all the men address the first of the two major challenges of linguistic analysis, the challenge born of positivistic parentage.

CHAPTER V

THE "LOGICS" OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

Introduction

Linguistic analysis offers two major challenges to the philosophy of religion. The first challenge demonstrates the positivistic parentage of analysis in its demand for the verifiability or falsifiability of religious language. The second challenge flows from an analysis "come of age." It asks theologians and philosophers of religion to characterize, if they can, the conceptual framework, the rules of thought, the syntactics of interrelation in the religious language game. In short, it inquires into the "logic" of religious language. The current chapter deals with answers to the second challenge.

The thinkers represented in this chapter address themselves to the question, "What is the 'logic' of religious language?" Most--except the analogists--endorse the implicit methodology of the second analytic challenge. They dismiss philosophy from the task of constructing a supportive metaphysics for theology. They have read some completed analyses, and complimented the responsible analyst. They have listened carefully to the sharpened attacks on traditional arguments for God's existence. And each has accepted the challenge to describe the "logic" of religious language.

What features other than the mutual encounter with the second analytic challenge characterize the thinkers represented here? Generally they endorse the notion of a specific "logic" of and for religious language.

Some employ the "use principle" to validate a specifically religious language game. The analogists are not so quick to accept a sui generis language game in religion. And yet, although they emphasize the use of ordinary language in religion, they endorse implicitly some type of religious "language game" in their insistence that the subject of religious language determines and qualifies the use of analogy. Recognizing the individual singularity of the various analogists, it may be said that the men of this chapter listened closely to the analysts' challenge, and responded with descriptions of the "logic" of religious language.

A second feature which characterizes the majority (again excepting the analogists) is a strong emphasis on individuality and personality. While the men represented in Chapter IV referred to the meaning of religious language in terms of contiguity, confirmability, verifiability, or falsifiability in the world of "external" reality, the men of this chapter argue, in general, that any "verification" of religious language takes place in the milieu of the homo loquens. Almost to a man these writers propose that it is the "blik," the "onlook," the life-orientation adopted by the speaker which validates religious language.[1]

A third feature which helps to identify these men (except for the analogists) is their apathy toward cognition in religious language. Almost to a man they depreciate the cognitive element of religious language. A correlative is the widespread acceptance of radical relativism. Once

[1]One gets the impression that many of the nonanalogists in this chapter have their roots in nineteenth century idealism, via existentialism. On the other hand, the men of Chapter IV were influenced to a greater degree by the realistic empiricism of the early twentieth century.

cognition is no part of religious language, the relativism of belief which supports religious language (or "blik") is virtually assured.

The chapter begins with the analogists. In one sense they straddle the two major challenges of analysis as they rely on the logic of authority to describe the nature of religious language. In general they argue that it is the subject matter which properly qualifies ordinary language and moulds it into religious language. The second group is described with the caption, "Logic of Situation." Both men in this group claim to find the logic of religious language in its phenomenological context. The third group defines the logic of religious discourse as logically "odd" in that it parallels the logic of personal language (as when the word "I" is the subject of a statement). The fourth group describes the logic of religious language in terms of the expressive character of religious language. The men analyze the logic of religious language with reference to the life-orientation which lies behind the language and which, in turn, the language expresses. At the same time, great caution is indicated, and the placing of men into groups is not meant to erase the individuality of each, as the conclusion of the chapter demonstrates.

Logic of Authority

Alasdair MacIntyre, Ian MacHattie Crombie, and Eric Lionel Mascall describe the logic of religion discourse in terms of the subject it discusses, namely God. Natural theology provides at least the basic rationale for talk about God. But more, as each of the men unravels his theology, he offers his particular theory of the authorization for religious

language: from MacIntyre's awe before the mystery of worship, to Crombie's

authorizing Christ, to Mascall's intelligible God apprehended in mystery.

Alasdair MacIntyre

Alasdair MacIntyre[2] offers a critical comment to the interpretation

of theological language proposed by Karl Barth's followers. This school,

says MacIntyre, holds that religious language (including the Bible) be-

comes meaningful only with a special miracle of grace; in any other case

it is meaningless. MacIntyre contends that since most religious language

utilizes familiar words with familiar meanings (his basic assumption),

its sense is equally apparent to believer and unbeliever.[3] In addition,

MacIntyre disapproves of theologians who attempt to deflate the analyst's

case by admitting that theological language is essentially "nonsensical,"

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[2]Alasdair Alexander Chalmers MacIntyre was on the staff of the Univer-
sity of Manchester, England, in 1955. In 1959 he became lecturer in philo-
sophy at the University of Leeds. Although MacIntyre reckoned himself a
Christian in the editorial introduction (p. ix) of New Essays in Philoso-
phical Theology (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1955), James W. Woelfel
notes in "'Non-Metaphysical' Christian Philosophy and Linguistic Philo-
sophy," New Theology No. 2, edited by Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman
(New York: Macmillan Company, c.1965), p. 61, n. 6, that MacIntyre is no
longer a professed Christian. How this change affects his stated theory
of religious language is not readily apparent.

[3]Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Logical Status of Religous Belief," Meta-
physical Beliefs, edited by Alasdair MacIntyre (London: SCM Press, 1957),
pp. 175-176. William T. Blackstone, in The Problem of Religious Know-
ledge (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, c.1963), p. 104,
argues that MacIntyre's reliance on authority as the ultimate justifica-
tion for religious language is the logical equivalent to Barthianism.
MacIntyre is led (says Blackstone) to the conclusion that religious beliefs
are unfalsifiable, and that it is logically improper to argue in their be-
half, because for him religion consists in unconditional belief and free
choice. By this assumption MacIntyre indicates that if one were to cite
evidence, he would be treating religion hypothetically, and not uncondition-
ally. Basil Mitchell examines MacIntyre's cited article in "Justification
of Religious Belief," Philosophical Quarterly, XI (1961), 213-226.

or that religion deals with "what cannot be said." The difficulty is
that these theologians use the phrase "nonsensical" in a way different
from the analysts.[4]

It is MacIntyre's claim that worship lies at the heart of the dis-
cussion of theological discourse:

> In worship we do not talk about God, but to him. . . . In formulat-
> ing doctrine we are trying to say what we do when we pray. So the
> language of liturgy is at the heart of the matter.[5]

The language of worship is itself "systematically unclear and reticent
about the object of worship." Five features in the language of liturgy
cooperate to create this effect: (1) use of the vocative is frequent; (2)
epithets occur in the gerundive, or hover between the gerundive and the
descriptive; (3) metaphors used in worship express our hopes from God,
our praise of Him, but not a description of Him; (4) God's greatness is
suggested by using metaphors of the worshippers, not of God; (5) the fact
that worship is not limited to any particular situation makes the expres-
sions of worship imprecise.[6]

MacIntyre's discussion of God's "existence" further clarifies his
theory of the self-justifying nature of religious discourse. It is his
conviction that no nonreligious concept appropriately elucidates the
notion of God. This is especially the case with the nonreligious concept
"existence":

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[4] MacIntyre, "The Logical Status of Religious Belief," Metaphysical
Beliefs, p. 178. McPherson (supra, p. 49) may be a case in point.

[5] Ibid., p. 188.

[6] Ibid., pp. 188-189.

Either one speaks from within religious language, as it were: in which case "God exists" would be a pointless expression; or one speaks from outside; in which case "God exists" has no determinate meaning.[7]

In sum, MacIntyre asserts that religious language has a self-justifying character. His description of religious language is inherently imprecise because it can unfold only as the language is used.

Ian MacHattie Crombie

Ian MacHattie Crombie[8] attempts to use the paradoxical nature of theological language to provide a rationale for religious discourse. The paradoxical features of theological statements do not demonstrate the impossibility of meaningful theological statements. Rather, these features contribute to a meaningful apprehension of theological statements in their "partial characterization of [the] subject." The paradoxical features demonstrate that theological statements "are made about no object which falls within our normal experience." Crombie summarizes his argument briefly:

> the inquirer may learn from the paradoxical features of theological statements, that, if they are anything, they are about a mystery. If he requires further specification . . . he must seek it from two sources. Firstly from the affinities and relationships which exist between theological statements and utterances of other kinds (for

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[7] Ibid., p. 203. William T. Blackstone, in "MacIntyre's Analysis of Religion," Iliff Review, XIX (Fall 1962), 27-32, accuses MacIntyre of prescribing rather than describing the uses of religious language, and contends that MacIntyre's view does not remove difficulties which concern the factual meaningfulness of religious assertions.

[8] Crombie, an Anglican, is a fellow of Wadham College, Oxford. His works include An Examination of Plato's Doctrine, Vol. I, Plato on Man and Society (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), and Vol. II, Plato on Knowledge and Reality (New York: Humanities Press, 1963); and Plato: The Midwife's Apprentice (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965).

example moral judgments; to do the will of God is our supreme duty); and secondly by considering whether a sense of mystery seems to be the appropriate response to any part of our experience.[9]

It is apparent that the "formal properties" of theological statements (the syntactical rules of their relations to other statements of other kinds, and the hermeneutical rules of their interpretation) must be in some sense mutually contradictory if theological statements are to perform their task.[10] For Crombie, the formal properties of theological statements and the undergirding theology of the statements appear to be one and the same. If one wishes to apprehend a theological statement together with its intended meaning, "it is essential to do equal justice to each of three propositions." He continues,

> First that the theist believes in God as a transcendent **being**, and therefore intends what he says about Him to be referred directly to God and not obliquely to this world; second that the theist genuinely believes God to be **transcendent** and therefore beyond our comprehension; and third, that since on the one hand God is a mystery, and since, on the other hand, if a man is to talk at all he must talk intelligibly, therefore he only talks about God in images.[11]

Crombie finds no direct inference from the paradoxicality of formal properties to the meaninglessness of theological statements. While it is true that the critic has a **probable** inference to that effect, the theist also has a probable case. The theist contends that he is under obligation to use language governed by paradoxical rules for the expression of his beliefs.[12]

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[9] I. M. Crombie, "The Possibility of Theological Statements," **Faith and Logic**, edited by Basil Mitchell (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), pp. 33-34.

[10] Ibid., p. 39.

[11] Ibid., p. 73.

[12] Ibid., p. 50.

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Crombie divides a statement about God into two parts. The "subject,"
or whatever it is called, is God. This word has no other use; it is
"playing, so to speak, on its Home Ground."[13] The "logical mother" of the
subject, "God," Crombie calls "undifferentiated theism." Religious belief
has two parents in its logical structure: undifferentiated theism is the
logical mother, and "theophanic revelation" the logical father.[14]

Against the critic who charges that theological statements cannot
be meaningful because they employ a proper name ("God") which seems to
be logically incapable of precise reference, Crombie posits the sphere
of natural theology. He uses the word "God" to define a sense in which
one can mean inconceivables. "God" is used to denote the postulated,
though unimaginable, absence of limitations or imperfections which dog
men's steps. In this way "God" becomes the touchstone of theological
statements for the critic.[15] Undifferentiated theism is necessarily the

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[13] I. M. Crombie, "Theology and Falsification," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, edited by Antony G. N. Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1955), pp. 110-111.

[14] Ibid., p. 111. The "undifferentiated theism" appears to be Crombie's reference to natural theology, for he discounts any discussion of God without a thought of God. Crombie's argument finds a parallel in Gordon D. Kaufman, "Two Models of Transcendence: An Inquiry into the Problem of Theological Meaning," The Heritage of Christian Thought, edited by Robert E. Cushman and Egil Grislis (New York: Harper and Row, c.1965), p. 186: "We shall have to show that the meaning of words like 'God' and 'transcendence' is similar in some respects to certain types of ordinary meaning with referents in finite experience, and that these latter types of meaning can serve as analogues in terms of which the theological meaning can be apprehended. . . . Inasmuch as this is a general philosophical task dealing with the very foundations of theology and faith, it can be regarded as the legitimate heir of natural theology for our time."

[15] Crombie, "Possibility of Theological Statements," Faith and Logic, pp. 56-67. God is not, says Crombie, the "reference point" for the Christian, whose every thought of God is one of worship. William P. Alston, in "Elucidation of Religious Statements," Process and Divinity, edited by

logical mother of religious belief and theological statements in that

> Without her we should not know whither statements concerning the word [God] were to be referred; the subject in theological utterances would be unattached. All that we should know of them is that they were not to be referred to anything with which we are or could hope to be acquainted. . . .[16]

The second part of a statement about God is the predicate. The predicate normally consists of ordinary words put to unordinary uses.[17] Crombie describes the character of theolgical predicates by comparing them to analogical transfers from one field to another in ordinary language. Two factors are involved in daily analogical transfer: (1) there is a certain "appropriateness" in transferred words; (2) one can isolate particular circumstances in which a word is used or withheld in a transferred sense. Crombie suggests that a similar "feel" is present with the transference of parabolic predicates in theological statements.[18]

William L. Reese and Eugene Freeman (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, c.1964), pp. 430-431, disagrees with Crombie at this point. He argues that it is incorrect to imagine that in a sentence about God one can first attempt to explain the subject-term, and then the key predicate-terms. Only if one could teach someone who God is other than through descriptive phrases would this be possible.

[16]Crombie, "Theology and Falsification," New Essays, p. 116.

[17]Ibid., pp. 110-111.

[18]Ibid., pp. 120-121. Crombie argues against Flew (supra, pp. 91-92) that it is the "feel" which prevents Christians from "qualifying" a theological assertion out of existence. Alston, Process and Divinity, p. 442, emphasizes the positive aspect of analogues rather than the necessity of a restrictive "feel": "By drawing analogies we get a picture, with taboos against using it in familiar ways. What is needed is a positive description of the ways in which it is to be used." He includes the following among the uses to which the "theistic picture" is put: explanation of facts in the natural world; for prediction of future course of events; expression of feelings; imaginative presentation of moral ideals; reports of perception in religious experience; guide to worship.

Crombie is not content to posit theological predicates as something of a parallel to analogies in daily language. He asserts that no one less than Jesus enables the Christian to use parabolic predication. The predicate of a theological statement is essentially a "parable" spoken on Christ's authority. Just as He spoke in human language with parable, "so we too speak of God in parable--authoritative parable, authorized parable; knowing that the truth is not literally that which our parables represent."[19]

Eric Lionel Mascall

Eric Lionel Mascall[20] begins his study of religious discourse with a critique of A. J. Ayer's criterion of meaning. He sums up his argument concisely:

> It is, I would maintain, clear to anyone . . . that the fundamental criterion of meaningfulness is not sense-verifiability but intelligibility, that is to say that in order to know whether a statement has meaning you should see whether it is possible to understand it. This statement is of course a tautology, and therein lies its strength. For meaningfulness is a primary notion, which cannot be described in terms of anything else.[21]

In describing religious language Mascall endeavors to construct an alternative to both idealism and empiricism. At the same time, the alternative is to be as empirical as Ayer's "in the sense that it asserts that all

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[19]Crombie, "Theology and Falsification," New Essays, pp. 122-123. It appears that Crombie's appeal to the parables of Jesus as bestowing significance to theological discourse is a type of analogical approach ultimately dependent on a strong incarnational theology. Also, Crombie may be showing his Platonic bias with this statement.

[20]Mascall was ordained an Anglican priest in 1932. From 1947-62, he was lecturer in philosophy of Religion at Oxford. He has been professor of historical theology, London University, King's College, since 1962.

[21]Eric Lionel Mascall, Words and Images: A Study in Theological Discourse (New York: Ronald Press Company, c.1957), p. 13.

the knowledge that we can have of reality is based upon our personal ex-
perience," but "refuses to limit experience to sense-experience or to
limit sense-experience to the mere awareness of sense-phenomena."[22]
Mascall poses his criticism of Ayer in terms of three propositions:

> The first criticism is that sense-experience itself may consist of
> something more than the experience of sense-objects. The second is
> that experience may consist of something more than sense-experience.
> And the third is that there may be experience which is not expres-
> sible in sentences at all, or which is expressible only in sentences
> of a very peculiar kind.[23]

In the first criticism Mascall endorses what he calls the Thomist-
Aristotelian tradition of apprehension. His second and third defend the
possibility of mystical knowledge.[24]

The author views as erroneous the argument of modern philosophers
that the senses perform all apprehension while the intellect merely reasons.
It is his primary contention that the intellect not only reasons, but ap-
prehends as well. "It has, as its object, not only truths but things."[25]
A discussion of the mind's apprehension is essential to clarification of
the religious apprehension referenced in religious discourse. In opposi-
tion to a "sensationalist" position derived from Descartes' maxim of "saf-
ety first"--a position obsessively seeking clarity and sterilizing itself
in glacial frigidity--Mascall formulates a three-pronged theory of appre-
hension: (1) the essence of perception is not sense-awareness, but

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[22] Ibid., p. 30.

[23] Ibid., p. 31.

[24] Ibid., pp. 39, 42. Mascall contends (p. 44) that it is possible to
describe and discuss mystical experience while remaining intelligible.

[25] Ibid., pp. 63, 66.

intellectual apprehension: "the intellect uses the sensible phenomenon as an <u>objectum quo</u>, through which it passes to the apprehension of the <u>objectum quod</u> which is the intelligible trans-sensible being"; (2) the intelligible object is grasped through sensible phenomena, not deduced from or constructed out of them; (3) an attitude of "involvement, contemplation, and penetration" is a prerequisite for penetration beneath sensible phenomena to the "real intelligible things" supporting them.[26]

The sense of mystery is important to the structure undergirding Mascall's description of religious discourse. Mystery is an object inviting contemplation, urging penetration in contemplation; it is not a question demanding an answer.[27] As mystery is contemplated a background of receding depth appears. Remaining itself obscure, the mystery illuminates its surroundings.[28] In sum, the nature of man's apprehension of trans-sensible entities is essentially obscure in its contemplative penetration. But through the method of apprehension, physical objects, persons, and supremely God-transcendent can be grasped.[29]

With this supportive apprehension-theory of sensation, Mascall proceeds to examine analogy as the most appropriate method of religious discourse. He is convinced that language is not a mere coding-decoding process. It is a means of communing by which two minds enter a common intellectual life. The formulas of language, then, are neither the

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[26] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

[27] Ibid., pp. 76, 78-79.

[28] Ibid., p. 79.

[29] Ibid., pp. 82, 87.

<u>objecta quae</u> of communication, nor are they more or less accurate "structural replicas of thought."[30] Macall justifies the communicative technique of St. John of the Cross, with its particular descriptive method, not by a "conformity to a predetermined criterion, but its simple capacity to get its stuff across." A current example is the frequent use, in dogmatic theology, of imaginal analogies to expound theological truth or mystery.[31]

Mascall hails the use of analogy as proper in the face of the charge that one thereby refers to an object outside the sphere of sensation. It is of the essence of theism to admit that God is infinite and suprasensible. Nevertheless, "God can be known and thought and described, however obscurely and imperfectly, on the basis of our experience of the world in which we find ourselves, the world of sensory experience." The ultimate purpose of the doctrine of analogy is not to provide the possibility of theological thought or discourse, "but to explain how such a <u>prima facie</u> unlikely activity is possible." Thought and knowledge of God precede discourse, for man is related to Him in creation.[32] If analogical statements about God are possible, using words whose primary application is to finite beings apprehended through senses, "there must be a certain affinity between God and finite beings which is not excluded by the radical difference which we have seen to characterize their existential status."[33] In sum, Mascall

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[30]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 92.

[31]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 95.

[32]<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 102-103.

[33]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 105.

adds little to the traditional Thomistic doctrine of analogy, if indeed

he adds anything at all.

Mascall contends that images as well as words have an epistemologi-

cal character inexhaustible by descriptive coding-decoding.[34] He argues

that

> the image or the image-complex, like the word or the word-complex, is
> an objectum quo, by the entertainment and contemplation of which the
> mind is able to enter into intimate cognitive union with the reality
> of which it is a manifestation.[35]

Christian imagery, thought, and discourse are anchored in two realms, both

controlled by God: the natural world and the Church. Thus, "rooted though

it is in the natural order, wherein the Word of God is the light that light-

eth every man," imagery is understood only in its fulfillment in Christ,

the Word made flesh. God gives the great images to the Church, and

> in our thought and speech about him as in all else, God does not
> destroy the powers of our nature but confirms them and validates
> them, even in the act by which he makes them the raw material of
> supernature and grace.[36]

Logic of Situation

The two men here considered claim to discover the logic of religious

language in its phenomenological context. They move back one step from

self-validation of religious language in natural theology (as in the ana-

logists) by centering concern on the phenomenological formulation of

supportive religious beliefs. Conversely, they move one step closer to

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[34]Ibid., p. 112.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., pp. 125-126.

the "blik," or religious "outlook," as the validating factor for religious language. Both men admit a unique logic in religious language. Both contend that a contextual situation provides the validation of religious language, or that it is at least in terms of the religious situation that one approaches the question of the logic of religious language.

Ninian Smart

Ninian Smart[37] attempts to describe, through linguistic analysis, the logic of religious discourses of the world's major religions. Assuming that linguistic analysis permits one to approach religious statements with greater neutrality than any other methodological approach to the history of religions, Smart describes his work as "an investigation of religious concepts in a spirit of higher-order neutrality."[38]

Smart prefers the term "language frame" over Waismann's "stratum" or Wittgenstein's "language game," and sets out "to exhibit the style of propositions in the spiritual frame."[39] He hesitates to call his a study of "religious language," for he considers the context of spiritual statements to be of great importance. As a consequence, he limits his study principally to the consideration of religious activities which surround

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[37]Roderick Ninian Smart was Lecturer in History and Philosophy of Religion at the University of London, King's College, 1956-61. He has been the H. G. Wood Professor of Theology in the University of Birmingham since 1961.

[38]Ninian Smart, Reasons and Faiths: an Investigation of Religious Discourse, Christian and Non-Christian (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, c.1958), p. 4.

[39]Ibid., p. 10.

spiritual language.[40] The variety of religious activities in world reli-
gions indicate a situation of widely divergent discourses. Smart visualizes
not only "macroscopic" differences between the language of spirit and other
language-frames; he also distinguishes "microscopic" divergencies within
the former. An investigation of the divergent "strands" within the
language of spirit is as essential as the scrutiny of various language
frames.[41] In sum, the comparative study of religions appears to offer the
most appropriate methodology for isolating the logics of religious dis-
courses. With this approach Smart hopes to protect himself against the
supposition that any one faith provides the "correct" picture of religious
discourse.[42]

Smart concentrates on three major religious strands: the "numinous,"
the "mystical," and the "incarnation." These three strands do not exhaust
the totality of religious discourse. However, they permit an investiga-
tion of the major strands of importance. The author examines Brahmanism
(which he calls a numinous strand) to determine how propositions about
the Creator, the object of worship and praise, are established. He sum-
marizes his study in this way:

> holiness is not a straightforward empirical property, for propositions
> about the divine express a humble reaction to the glories and mysteries
> in the world, which is directed at a divine target said to lie beyond
> the world, for thereby its dread mysteriousness is well delineated.
> This Power's nature is said to contain sentience, partly because the
> emergence of the world from the dark void seems chosen. And Brahman
> is not only beyond all this but far, for herein is signalized the
> great gulf fixed between the sinful worshipper and the pure and

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[40] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[41] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[42] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

resplendent object of worship.[43]

In turn, Smart reflects on the fashion in which propositions of mystical claims are confirmed. Hinayana Buddhism, he claims, manifests the mystical experience in isolation:

> we may say not too misleadingly that Hinayana is built round the mystical path, even though there are extraneous manifestations of theism and polytheism.[44]

The preconditions for attaining nirvana, and the type of experience which culminates in the Path, have their effect on religious discourse.

> First, the intensity of the bliss is such that it is best, albeit inadequately, expressed by saying that it is "indescribable", "ineffable", etc. Second, the mystical state does not involve having mental images or perceptions (and thus in the Upaniṣads is compared to dreamless sleep), and so there is nothing about it to describe (and thus it is unlike day-dreaming and visualization in general).[45]

The mystical experience is a transfiguration, and the man becomes a "holy" man, a "man transfigured."[46]

At this point Smart indicates that language of doctrinal strands—such as the numinous and mystical—is not precise. Its imprecision is evident in the reluctance of theologians to draw definitive conceptual lines unless forced by heresy. Laxity in precision is the child of the loose use of expressive language which accommodates varying spiritual expressions. In addition, a "pretence of precision" may lead to the loss of religious wonder; faith without wonder has no essence. In any case, it

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[43]Ibid., p. 53.

[44]Ibid., pp. 57, 59.

[45]Ibid., p. 71.

[46]Ibid., p. 76.

is precisely the lack of precision which allows the interweaving of diverse

strands to occur.[47] Smart contends that

> the strand of discourse about Brahman, expressive of a reaction
> to the mysteries of reality, is related to the language about the
> Atman, expressive of inner mystical achievement.[48]

The similarities between Atman and Brahman, between that realized in

mystical experience and the reality behind phenomena, Smart collates un-

der three points: (1) with reference to formal characteristics of the

mystical experience (timelessness, imperceptibility, the transcendence

of nirvana); (2) with reference to the type of doctrine prominently associ-

ated with mysticism; (3) with reference to certain consequences of mysti-

cal attainment.[49] He concludes that

> The identification of Brahman with the Atman serves, then, as a
> prominent example of the kind of weaving together of different
> strands of discourse in a doctrinal scheme.[50]

Having discussed the mystical and numinous strands of spiritual dis-

course, Smart turns to the "incarnation" strand. This strand includes,

among others, the Christian faith. Incarnation presupposes the existence

of an extra-mundane deity. The establishment of a claim of divinity inter-

locks propositions about a holy Teacher with propositions about an object

of worship. Modes by which this propositional union is effected are:

(a) a formal resemblance (as manifested in miracles) is posited between

the incarnate deity and the object of worship, as for example, an analogical

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[47]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[48]Ibid., p. 77.

[49]Ibid., p. 82.

[50]Ibid., p. 107.

similarity in purity and holiness; (b) a verbal display of the Teacher's omniscience demonstrates his power to save, and this brings him close to God on the principle that the holy constitutes a source of salvation; (c) "his life includes some gesture or gestures which have the effect of bringing salvation to mankind: for this to happen he must either be God's very special instrument or God himself"; (d) Messianic prophecies are construed as foreshadowing the union of Teacher and object or worship.[51]

Smart's discussion of doctrinal priorities and his consideration of epistemological questions are of little concern here, but his examination of moral beliefs is illuminating. He regards moral beliefs as representing an independent strand of discourse subsequently combined with other spiritual strands.[52] He puts his case concisely:

> it seems not inappropriate to treat moral propositions as logically independent of religious ones, except in the sense that by becoming incorporated into doctrinal schemes they acquire the status also of being religious propositions. Hence, from our point of view, they may be considered as constituting a separate strand of discourse within doctrinal schemes.[53]

The numinous strand incorporates the moral strand through superimposition; the whole of life becomes worship of God.[54] The relationship between the mystical and the moral strands is more complex. In the mystical, the prized goal of human behavior is union with the divine. Attainment of this goal generally requires at least moderate asceticism, and moral rules appear to be valuable training in self-control. On the other hand, the

[51]Ibid., pp. 125-126.

[52]Ibid., p. 179.

[53]Ibid., p. 182.

[54]Ibid., p. 183.

quietistic ideal of the moral judgments engendered within the mystical strand leans toward such principles as <u>ahimsa,</u> or non-injury.[55] The relation between the incarnation strand and the moral strand presupposes an extra-mundane God. The incarnate deity is likely considered to be the supreme example for daily life. The incarnation strand shows not merely how well moral conduct meshes with religious activity, but also what makes coalescence possible, namely the merciful goodness of God.[56]

From this study of the religious activities which surround religious discourse of the three spiritual strands, Smart concludes that no single analysis of religious language emerges. Religious language is "logically variegated."[57] The rationale for examining separately the divergent strands of religious discourse is to be found primarily in the diverging doctrinal schemes which underlie the propositions.[58]

Unwilling to make a theoretical statement about all religious discourse, in the end Smart does not hesitate to suggest that one can isolate types of grounds through which the claims made in different strands of religious discourse are validated. He concludes that there are four ways through which the claims of the numinous, mystical, and incarnation strands of religious discourse validate themselves. (1) <u>Basic</u> justifications appeal directly to some supportive aspect of the discourse itself. In the numinous strand, for example, appeal is made to the marvelous and

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[55] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 192.

[56] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 192-194.

[57] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 197.

[58] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 179.

awe-inspiring features of the world through which the Holy Being reveals Himself. (2) The _formal_ ground parallels the correspondence theory of truth, or rationality. In the mystical strand, for example, a formal appeal for confirmation is made to the mystic's behavior and utterances, to his life, and to the lucidity of his spirituality. Again, the simplicity of monotheism is a formal advantage over the multiplicity of polytheism. (3) _Organic_ justification appeals to analogies and similarities. This type is especially active in the incarnation strand. (4) Finally, support for the doctrinal strand is claimed through priority decision, that is, through "preferential" justification. In this method (a variation of formal justification), different doctrinal schemes are supported by varying the strength of basic ingredients because of pragmatic considerations and fluctuating base strengths. This mode is used especially in interweaving the strands.[59]

These four types of claim-validation, evident in the preceding examination of religious discourses, make it apparent that blind acceptance of religious thinking does not agree even with religious practice. Extreme revelationists, insistent on separating reason and faith, are distantly removed from the practices of religion:

> For this reason, proponents of extreme revelationism are unthinkingly allied to those who would assert that religious propositions are, because unverifiable, meaningless. But it should of course be remembered that the type of reasoning employed on behalf of religious claims is of a special nature, and is of course quite unlike that which is exemplified in mathematics or physics.[60]

Smart vindicates the title of his book, _Reasons and Faiths_, in concluding

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[59] _Ibid._, pp. 198-199, 127.

[60] _Ibid._, p. 200.

that each spiritual strand of religious practice, inseparable from an
attendant religious discourse, provides a validation for its own proposi-
tions. Form this perspective, reason(s) and faith(s) are complementary,
not antithetical.

Peter Munz

Peter Munz[61] locates his study of religious statements between two
antitheses, naturalism and the traditional interpretation of religious
utterances. His attempt to validate the status of theological discourse
has a double purpose:

> Firstly, it serves to free religious knowledge from the clutches of
> the naturalists who would reduce it to something else. . . .
> . . . .
> Secondly, it becomes a criticism of the traditional justifications
> of religious knowledge. . . . The old accounts accord a privileged
> position to some religious statements, and the naturalistic treat-
> ments deny status to all religious statements. As against these two
> approaches, the philosophy of religion should show how and why reli-
> gious statements are acceptable; and that no religious statement can
> claim a privileged position in regard to its meaning and truth other
> than the one accorded to it by general reasonableness and plausi-
> bility.[62]

Munz argues that the relationship between belief and behavior is the
direct opposite of common interpretation. He contends that the emergence
of myth and ritual is explicable without explicit reference to prior
belief. He posits the symbol as the direct, immediate consequence of a
"feeling-state." Once the dependent relationship between belief and be-
havior is established, "the road is open for an explanation of belief as

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[61] In 1959 Munz was Senior Lecturer in History at Victoria University,
Wellington, New Zealand.

[62] Peter Munz, Problems of Religious Knowledge (London: SCM Press,
c.1959), p. 29.

a belief or a theory about ritual and myth."[63]

Munz seeks to ascertain what the theologian's role is if the nature of the relationship between myth and belief is as he has described it. Traditionally, behavior has been viewed as action subsequent to belief. The theologian's task was one of deduction. But now the tables are turned:

> According to the argument of the present book, the function of theology is to give a description of the symbol picture in the same way in which the physicist describes another picture of the world we are living in. The theologian is to treat the symbol picture as his subject-matter. He has to think about it and observe certain rules of thought, just as the physicist does.[64]

In considering the place of symbolism in the theologian's new task, Munz concludes that the theologian may evade both anthropomorphism and agnosticism if he remembers that symbols represent nothing transcendent: they are ends which describe the world or worlds in which man finds himself. This approach to symbolism demonstrates the invalidity of analogy as well.[65] The theologian must remain convinced that the only element of certainty in religious thought resides in the picture symbol. Throughout the process of "theologizing," the symbol must always remain open to hypothetical interpretation; dogmatic hardening of interpretation is not to be allowed.[66] In sum, theology is a theory about the symbol picture. The truth of theology can be tested only against the symbol picture. When there is no symbol picture, the theologian cannot offer the invitation

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[63]*Ibid.*, p. 65.

[64]*Ibid.*, p. 85.

[65]*Ibid.*, p. 99.

[66]*Ibid.*, p. 175.

to believe in the truth of theological statements.[67] In this "new" theology propositional symbols are not "first principles" from which theology can be deduced. Propositional symbols themselves are the "subject matter" of theological thought.[68]

Munz interjects one material qualification for the work of the theologian. The theologian, by the very nature of his vocation, must utilize the concept of eternity in his analysis of symbol.

.He assumes that the concept of eternity has a definite meaning and then proceeds to the elucidation and interpretation of the symbol picture with the help of that concept.[69]

The theologian chooses to use the concept of eternity under the knowledge that detection of eternity is the "only proper therapy for man."[70]

There remains for Munz to discuss the environment within which the symbol picture is best cultivated. The most healthy environment is one in which the symbol picture contributes to an eternal therapy for man: "This is the sense in which I would say that the maxim extra ecclesiam nulla salus is true. Without the cultivation of the symbol picture we cannot see eternity . . . ."[71] Munz emphasizes the importance of the worship situation as a stimulus for the symbol picture:

A Church is a community of people who have decided to cultivate a certain symbol picture. Hence the basic principle that lex orandi is the lex credendi. . . . For the lex credendi is merely an interpretation of and a speculation about the lex orandi.[72]

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[67] Ibid., p. 175.

[68] Ibid., p. 124.

[69] Ibid., p. 128.

[70] Ibid., p. 129.

[71] Ibid., p. 130-131.

[72] Ibid., p. 176.

Logic of Particularity in Religious Language

The third group of men describe the logic of religious language as "odd"--Ian T. Ramsey's term--in its own special way. They feel that the particularity of religious language parallels the logic of "personal" language, that is, language which discusses persons. While these men favorably compare the peculiarity of the logic of religious language with the peculiarity of personal language, they disagree on the elements of personal language which most accurately parallel the logic of religious language. Ramsey contends that the movement of language from empirical anchorage to a situation of discernment-commitment (the religious situation) is best described in terms of the logic manifested in the use of the word "I." Frank H. Cleobury merely refers to "personal" language. William Hordern isolates several aspects of the "personal language game" which are parallel with the logic of religious language. Donald D. Evans emphasizes the self-involving and performative factors of personal language as the parallel to the logic of religious language. As a group, all contend that the special character of religious language resides in the particularity of its logic, a particularity which in some ways parallels the logic of personal statements.

Ian T. Ramsey

Ian Thomas Ramsey[73] endeavors to demonstrate what follows "from

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[73]Ramsey was ordained an Anglican priest in 1941. He has been Canon Theologian of Leicester Cathedral since 1944, and Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion in the University of Oxford, as well as Fellow of Oriel College, since 1951. The writer did not have access

grounding theological words and phrases in what I have called a character-istically religious situation."[74] Ramsey acts with the conviction that contemporary analysis provides a novel insight into problems and contro-versies of theology, "illuminating its claim and reforming its apologet-ic."[75]

Utilizing an analytic approach, Ramsey moves the empirical anchorage of theological words to "discernment," that is, to a religious situation through which men are aware that they are more than their public behavior.[76] As meaningful parallels to the situation of "religious discernment," he directs attention to situations in which phrases are used in a peculiarly unusual way. He refers to situations characterized by such phrases as "the ice breaks," or "the light dawns."[77] The religious empiricist is sure to find features which parallel "discernment" in situations described by existentialists as "authentic existence," or "involvement."[78] On the other hand, the characteristically religious situation is not merely "emotional," that is, subjective. A religious situation has an "objective" reference in its occurrence; it is "subject-object" in structure. There

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to Ramsey's latest work, Christian Discourse: Some Logical Explorations (Oxford: University Press, c.1965).

[74] Ian T. Ramsey, Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 10.

[75] Ibid., p. 11.

[76] Ibid., p. 15. Ramsey appeals to Joseph Butler's The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature (18th century) in selecting "discernment" as the characteristic situation.

[77] Ramsey, Religious Language, p. 17.

[78] Ibid., p. 22.

is an objective "depth" which emerges.[79] Ramsey is set on describing

"discernment" because it is his conviction that

> when theological phrases . . . are seen as sponsoring such a sit-
> uation, they can then be given such a logical structure as by-passes
> many traditional confusions and controversies which are in fact
> from this standpoint mere brawling.[80]

Ramsey is not content to describe the empirical anchorage of religious

language with mere reference to discernment. In addition there is a con-

comitant "commitment" involved in the religious situation:

> Now it is such a total commitment, appropriate to a "question of
> great consequence," a commitment which is based upon but goes beyond
> rational considerations which are "matters of speculation"; a commit-
> ment which sees in a situation all that the understanding can give
> us and more; a commitment which is exemplified by conscientious action
> building on "probabilities" . . . .[81]

The commitment is a situation upon which discernment focuses; man discerns

the situation as making a claim on him.[82] Religious commitment is tied

to key words. Their logic has the peculiar nature of resembling words

which characterize personal loyalty as well as words of mathematical

axioms. The commitment-words have a logic which combines features of

both, for they are "key-words suited to the whole job of living—'apex'

words."[83]

If religious language has as its purpose to speak about situations

of discernment and commitment, religious language will be "object language

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[79] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[80] Ibid., p. 26.

[81] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[82] Ibid., p. 29.

[83] Ibid., p. 37.

which exhibits logical peculiarities, logical impropriety."[84] Theological

language will use words which are recognizably "straight-forward," but

"strained" in some way to tell the tale of discernment and commitment.[85]

In addition, theological language will include certain tautologies whose

function it will be to commend the "key words," the "ultimates of explana-

tion."[86]

Theology is concerned to use and qualify observational language so

that it is suitable currency for religious language--for what in part ex-

tends beyond observational language. Ramsey selects the word "I" as a

word whose characteristics are not exhausted in "object" language. He

suggests that it is enlightening to parallel this word with "God" in con-

sidering the religious situation, for "God" too participates in a sphere

apart from the "object."[87] More forcefully,

> our conclusion is that for the religious man "God" is a key word, an
> irreducible posit, an ultimate of explanation expressive of the kind
> of commitment he professes. It is to be talked about in terms of
> the object-language over which it presides, but only when this object-
> language is qualified; in which case this qualified object-language
> becomes also currency for that odd discernment with which religious
> commitment, when it is not bigotry or fanaticism, will necessarily
> be associated.[88]

In sum, religious language talks of discernment with which a total commit-

ment is associated by way of response, but it speaks of this discernment-

commitment in terms of a qualified object-language presided over by the

84 Ibid., p. 38.

85 Ibid., p. 39.

86 Ibid., p. 40.

87 Ibid., p. 38.

88 Ibid., p. 47.

key word "God."

Ramsey next turns to the several ways in which object-language is qualified for religious use. He investigates three methods of transference through which words with empirical moorings become descriptive of the religious situation. The first is the method of negative theology. The use of language in negative theology is the attempt to describe God at the cost of emphasizing His distance from certain elements of perceptual language. The merit of negative statements is that they are primarily evocative, and provide a technique for meditation.[89] In the second method, the "method of contrasts," puzzlement over certain words used in religious discourse (unity, simplicity, perfection) is gradually eliminated by positing opposite words, and then contrasting the two. The contrasting comparison is never halted so long as one can go on striving to remove the diverse element (that is, until the experience of discernment). With the method of contrasts, one always begins with a situation of empirical anchorage.[90] Ramsey's third mode of distinguishing the logical behavior of religious language is the "Model-Qualifier." The qualifier prescribes the specific mode by which the model is to be developed. This process encourages movement in accordance with the qualifier's nature. "First Cause" is an example of the Model-Qualifier method. The qualifier

[89] Ibid., p. 53.

[90] Ibid., p. 55. Vladimir Lossky, in The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church (London: James Clarke and Company, 1957), pp. 25, 37, 39, speaks of "apophaticism" (the method of negations) and "cataphaticism" (the method of affirmations) as two modes used to reduce mystery when an attempt is made to comprehend God. The former is Eastern, the latter Western (in the Church). They present something of a parallel to the methods Ramsey has thus far considered.

(in this case "First") pursues the model until it confronts commitment. At commitment there is the ultimate of explanation. At commitment the Qualifier-Model may indeed have a grammatical similarity with the point of its inception, but no logical parallel is present.[91] These three methods of qualification--from empirical anchorage to discernment and commitment--provide Ramsey the conclusion that all words, if suitably qualified, can lead to the religious situation. Put another way, this is the claim that God can be seen in all the words of His creation.[92]

At this point it seems wise to interrupt, temporarily, our summary of Ramsey's Religious Language in order to demonstrate from others of his works that all words, if suitably qualified, can lead to the religious situation. In Freedom and Immortality, Ramsey shows the empirical anchorage of two metaphysical ideas (and words) which are related to theology. He posits as a basic linguistic assumption that "no situation at any given time will ever be exhaustively covered by object language."[93] For example, when ordinary language refers to a "decision" in complex terms-- as it often does--it demonstrates a diversity which allows that some human

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[91]Ramsey, Religious Language, pp. 62-65. In "Towards the Relevant in Theological Language," Modern Churchman, VIII (October 1964), 46-58, Ramsey examines the process of choosing relevant phrases from empirical situations which may be properly qualified.

[92]Ramsey, Religious Language, p. 80. After discussing two contemporary approaches to the Scripture itself, the historical-critical and the Bultmannian-existential schools, Ramsey concludes (p. 106) that both demonstrate the validity of his arguments concerning theological language, even biblical language. The Bible cannot be made to conform to public language. It speaks of the same discernment-commitment situations which are the bases of contemporary religious language.

[93]Ian T. Ramsey, Freedom and Immortality (London: SCM Press, c.1960), p. 93.

behavior in "decision" eludes complete description in scientific terms.
The complexity involved in the word "decision" provides an argument for
the existence of free will.[94]

Ramsey argues in a similar pattern in his consideration of scientific
language. Scientific events give rise, in disclosures, to all kinds of
invariants.[95] From invariants the scientist deduces empirically verifiable
factors. The scientific words which describe invariants differ in logical
character from theological words. There is a vast logical difference
between the behavior of theological and scientific words. "From theo-
logical assertions no verifiable deductions can be made; from scientific
ones they can and must be."[96]

There is a point, however, at which the <u>scientific</u> and the <u>personal</u>
interlock--at the point of the word "I." The assertion "I exist" gives
no opportunity, through a process of rigorous deduction, for a detailed
assertion about me. On the other hand, all sorts of scientific assertions
entail "I exist." For example,

> When the mathematician says of me, "He is executing circular motions
> with such and such angular velocity and with a centrifugal force
> on his partner which raises her feet 45° to the vertical"--his
> assertion will entail (if I am on the dance floor) "I exist."[97]

From this one can argue that the diversely logical areas of science and

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[94]Ibid., p. 149. Ramsey adds "duty" and "obligation" as additional
situations not wholly deducible into object-language, and as arguments
for free will.

[95]Ian T. Ramsey, Religion and Science: Conflict and Synthesis, Some
Philosophical Reflections (London: S. P. C. K. Press, c.1964), p. 73.

[96]Ibid., p. 75.

[97]Ibid., p. 74.

theology "can be united together on the basis of logical clues supplied by
behavior of the word 'I.'"[98] The case of God is parallel. From "God
exists" nothing verifiable can be deduced logically, for the world is
not necessary to God. But "God exists" is a presupposition of all scien-
tific, verifiable assertions.[99] In final analysis,

> religious language is grounded in the personal . . . the personal
> is not only a category which is never wholly reducible to scientific
> terms, but . . . interlocks with all the diverse languages of science
> to unite them as a common presupposition.[100]

Ramsey attempts to discover how the theological assertion "God exists"
serves as the presupposition of all scientific empirical assertions.
(Without explicit statement he is demonstrating how all words suitably
qualified can lead to the religious situation.) In sum, this is his argu-
ment. The scientist needs, in work and theories, "invariants" (such as
particle and mass) which are neither mere jingles nor descriptive labels.
The invariants arise in one way or another from—and witness to—a dis-
closure or insight. The scientist is careful not to construe his invari-
ants as descriptions, although he may neglect momentarily the disclosure-
basis of his central concepts. He is forced by his scientific objective
to participate in deductive verification which is ruled out in theology
(for language about the cosmic disclosure, "God exists," is no less capable
of empirical verification than the phrase "I exist"). However, the very
particularity and peculiarity which attaches to the logical character

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[98]Ibid., p. 75. Ramsey discusses in greater detail the question of
the "I," or self-identity and personality, in "Persons and Funerals:
What Do Person Words Mean?" Hibbert Journal, LIV (May 1956), 330-338.

[99]Ramsey, Religion and Science, p. 74.

[100]Ibid., p. 76.

of "God exists" permits this phrase, without generating the "nonsense of category-confusion," to be linked with all empirical assertions as a presupposition of said assertions. "Here then," Ramsey says,

> is a synthetic venture which tries to do justice both to the diversity and to the ultimate interlocking of scientific and theological discourse; both to the experimental method in science, and the grounding of scientific invariants in disclosures that are ultimately theological.[101]

"God" in this perspective names that invariant "which is anchored objectively in a disclosure situation, when that situation involves the whole universe."[102]

At the point of cosmic disclosure we return to the summary of Ramsey's Religious Language. The three methods of qualification have as their goal the situation of discernment-commitment. Whether the "light breaks" or not is a matter which man himself cannot control.[103] There is the possibility that if man conjectures himself to be in control of a discernment-producing power, he would construe himself master of the mysterious. Ramsey warns that while an empirical approach to religious language ascertains what logical placement the traditional phrases of Christianity have, the empirical approach never imagines language to be an exact "verbal photograph" of what it talks about. There is the mysterious disclosed in

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[101] Ibid., pp. 81-82, 83.

[102] Ibid., p. 73. In Freedom and Immortality, pp. 99-100, Ramsey criticizes the idealists, especially Bradley, for removing the objectivity present in cases of "disclosure." In the awareness that one is "transcending" public behavior, one is also aware of some "transcendent," for no experience can be utterly subjective; "if ever there were any purely subjective experience it would be beyond our ken and beyond our language to talk of it." To see how Ramsey visualizes a situation of discernment-commitment in the Resurrection, an "odd" situation of more than purely subjective experience, see his "Logical Character of Resurrection-belief," Theology, LX (May 1957), 186-192.

[103] Ramsey, Religious Language, p. 79.

the discernment-commitment situation, and it is never fully exhausted in
the empirical placing of religious language.[104] Ultimately it is to the
worship situation that one must retire for guidance in plotting and
mapping theological phrases:

> Here then is a method by which not only are problems overcome, but
> where at every point we plot and map our theological phrases with
> reference to a characteristically religious situation--one of worship
> wonder, awe. Without such an empirical anchorage all our theological
> thinking is in vain, and where there is controversy and argument we
> are to look for their resolution where they are fulfilled: in
> worship.[105]

Frank Harold Cleobury

Frank Harold Cleobury[106] proposes in Christian Rationalism and Philo-
sophical Analysis to refute Braithwaite's thesis: "The central argument
of this book is in effect a refutation of Braithwaite's thesis."[107]
Cleobury, an idealist, is unwilling to capitulate to the realist which he
claims to find behind the facade of philosophical analysis. He addresses
himself to the question of language in idealistic philosophy by dividing
language into "personal" and "impersonal." Impersonal language consists
in sentences whose grammatical subjects are material-object or scientific-
object nouns.[108] Sentences of personal language have a direct relation

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[104]Ibid., p. 171.

[105]Ibid., p. 89.

[106]Cleobury was ordained an Anglican priest in 1951. He has been
rector of Hertingfordbury, Diocese of St. Albans, since 1955.

[107]F[rank] H[arold] Cleobury, Christian Rationalism and Philosophical
Analysis (London: James Clarke and Company, c.1959), p. 17.

[108]Ibid., p. 66.

to an objective situation not claimed in sentences of impersonal language. Correlatively, personal nouns can be "reified," but impersonal nouns cannot.[109]

Cleobury asserts that sentences with "God" as subject occupy a position intermediate between the two extremes. As regards their grammatical subject, the word "God," the sentences more nearly approximate personal language. But as regards their predicates, "they must . . . be interpreted as elliptical references to our own experience."[110]

Through idealistic argumentation Cleobury vindicates man's right to "reify" the word "God" by his ability to distinguish between perception and imagination. The thought of God is essential to daily perceptual experience because it is He who can guarantee the "World-for-the-Standard-Observer." Thus while the total subject of a theological statement can be "reified," the predicate must be interpreted analogically, and justified with references to human experiences.[111]

William Hordern

William Hordern[112] proposes to examine theological communication as he converses with analytic philosophy.[113] It is his contention that

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[109] Ibid., p. 101.

[110] Ibid., pp. 101-102.

[111] Ibid., pp. 102-103; see also pp. 39-40.

[112] Hordern was professor of religion at Swarthmore College, 1949-57. He became professor of theology at Garret Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, in 1957. Hordern is president-elect of Luther Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Sask.

[113] William Hordern, Speaking of God; The Nature and Purpose of Theological Language (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1964), p. 59.

theological language forms a distinguishable language game.[114] Heeding Wittgenstein's summons to the study of context, Hordern insists that "to analyze a language is always to analyze a community" because every language has a communal context. Accordingly, the paradigm case of theological affirmations is found in their use in the Church.[115]

Hordern visualizes a convictional element in most language games. In each game the speaker witnesses to his convictor in such a way that the hearer apprehends the convictor for himself.[116] But it must be remembered that in the deepest sense one does not choose his convictors arbitrarily, or in any other way: "we are chosen by our convictors."[117] Within this convictional argumentation Hordern equates religious and convictional statements:

> But, logically speaking, ultimate religious statements can be classified with other statements where man can only refer to the evidence, trusting that the evidence can justify itself. They are convictional statements that point to their convictor.[118]

It is self-evident that an appeal to reason cannot neutralize conflicting convictional claims because the evidence allowed by reason depends on prior conviction to begin with.[119]

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[114]Ibid., pp. 81-84. Hordern cites as marks which distinguish language games: use, different vocabularies, untranslatability of basic terms, differing methods of verification, and differing "convictional" foundations. Theological language is a game because its use relates to religious life, esoteric vocabulary is untranslatable, and its verification depends on conviction, says Hordern.

[115]Ibid., pp. 93-94.

[116]Ibid., pp. 102-103.

[117]Ibid., p. 100.

[118]Ibid., p. 105.

[119]Ibid., p. 107.

Theological language points to a convictor known as mystery.[120] The chief characteristic of mystery is its numinous transcendence:

> The principal mark of a mystery is not that it fills us with a sense of ignorance; on the contrary it fills us with awe, wonder and reverence which quite frequently increase as knowledge grows.[121]

Since theological language deals with a transcendent, revealing God, analogies which are proffered are "eroded" by qualifications. This process is no occasion for lament, especially among those who know the structure of a language game. Thus even paradox is legitimately used to remind one of the encounter with mystery.[122] In any event, the use of analogy in Christian language is guaranteed in God's revelation of Himself.[123]

Since theological language is convictional and somewhat mysterious, one cannot hope to understand it without apprehending its roots in mystery. "Quite literally, the man who has not worshipped cannot know what theological language is about . . . ."[124] The question, "Why is there something, and not nothing?" is not a logical question because it does not formulate a problem soluble by knowledge alone. On the other hand, it is the beginning of worship in that it expresses "a sense of awe, wonder, and reverence before the mystery of existence."[125]

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[120] Ibid., p. 113.

[121] Ibid., p. 115.

[122] Ibid., pp. 125, 127.

[123] Ibid., p. 131.

[124] Ibid., p. 128.

[125] Ibid., p. 119. Hordern argues (p. 122) that Hutchinson's distinction between "religious" and "theological" language must not be pressed.

Hordern deems it necessary to examine in greater detail the game of personal language. He contends that theological language has more in common with the personal language game than with any other language game.[126] He discusses first the concept "person" in order to clarify the meaning of the personal language game. Awareness and knowledge of self as self flow from the need to make decisions. Language about "I," the known self, is "odd," for the ordinary subject-object division of other language is absent. Following knowledge of self there arises the necessity of revealing the self to others, and with the revelation, the distinction between authentic and inauthentic actions. Knowledge of other persons is often not scientific knowledge, but it remains "verifiable" in its own game. To be known as a person, a man must reveal himself through words and actions. In addition, the listening man must respond in rapport to the spoken "word" if the speaker is to be known. Knowledge of another self implies trust and love, because to know another person is to know a unique individual.[127] The game of personal language fits the schema of the "person." The meaning of a personal statement is never wholly understood without a full description of the context. In personal language, intention and purpose, not causation, are used in explanation; persons are agents with motives, intentions, and purpose. In sum, "The words of personal language will not have the precision of the technical words of science, but they will be more expressive."[128]

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[126] Ibid., p. 132.

[127] Ibid., pp. 136-147.

[128] Ibid., pp. 149, 151, 148.

In a detailed discussion of the overlap between personal language and theological language, Hordern urges Christians to "reinstate the reality of personal knowledge and language" within theological language.[129] Just as it was not impossible to analyze the context of personal language, so it is not impossible to analyze the logic of the faith which is the context of theological language.[130] God demonstrated in revelation that the key to speaking about Him resides in the sphere of personal language.[131] All personal relations require some sort of revelation. Even so knowledge of God, the mystery, depends upon revelation. He reveals Himself through historical situations in the revelatory biblical events. The Bible's concern is not the reporting of history, but the manifestation of the person of God through history.[132] The particularity of biblical revelation is a stumbling-block only to those who approach it thinking in terms of scientific knowledge. If God is a person offering a person-to-person relationship, He can work only in particularity of revelation. Consequently, meaningful statements about God can be made by the believer only when

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[129]Ibid., pp. 158-159. Ronald W. Hepburn, in Christianity and Paradox (London: C. A. Watts, c.1958), pp. 56-57, contends that the "men of encounter" try to retain at all costs the I-Thou encounter with God without distortion. This pushes them towards the exclusion of descriptive elements in the word "God." Hepburn argues that they are giving an illusion of immediacy in oscillating between "descriptive and proper-name uses of the word 'God'." He continues: "So even if one grants that you have encountered a Thou in prayer, we shall still have to turn to reflection, perhaps to philosophical theology, to set about establishing the truth or falsity of the statements that this is God the Creator, the Infinite, Eternal Ground of Being."

[130]Hordern, p. 98.

[131]Ibid., p. 134.

[132]Ibid., p. 161.

he begins with particular events of special revelation, and not with the
whole of history.[133]

The personal relationship between God and man implies a similarity
between the theological language game and the personal language game.
By examining the personal relationship between God and man, Hordern ad-
vances his thesis regarding the personal character of theological state-
ments. When God offers a personal relationship with man, a response is
demanded.[134] In confrontation with God, a true Person, a man's distorted
personhood attains wholeness.[135] In wholeness man responds with prayer,
confession of sins, worship, and a life of obedience.[136]

Statements in the game of personal language are "verified" only upon
entering a personal relationship with the person referred to in the state-
ment, says Hordern. Similarly, a personal relation is necessary in the
case of God-statements, although this does not rule out the necessity of
history in the Gospel's proclamation. A personal relationship with God
presupposes a prior revelation in certain concrete historical events.[137]
Verification of theological statements proceeds parallel to a verification
of personal statements:

> To verify a personal statement I must introduce you to the person
> involved and believe that in your relationship with the person you
> will find the statement verified. Similarly, to verify a theological
> statement, the Church can do no more than introduce a man to God in

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[133]Ibid., p. 164. It appears that Hordern has removed any possibility
of natural theology.

[134]Ibid., p. 167.

[135]Ibid., p. 169.

[136]Ibid., p. 170.

[137]Ibid., p. 175.

the faith God can verify himself in the relationship that will then be formed. As convictional language theology has to have the confidence that its convictor has the power to convict.[138]

To avoid the argument concerning a cognitive element in the verification of theological statements, Hordern chooses to speak of "knowing" God in terms of Barth's definition of knowledge. Knowledge is "that confirmation of human acquaintance with an object whereby its trueness becomes a determing factor in the existence of the man who knows."[139]

Donald D. Evans

Donald D. Evans[140] accepts many of the methodological procedures of

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[138]Ibid., p. 176.

[139]Ibid., pp. 180-182. Earlier (pp. 155, 157) Hordern distinguishes his position from Buber's: "because man does have personal relations and knows others as persons, he can speak about these relations in the appropriate language without slipping into I-it language." He concludes that there is a legitimate way, in personal language, to speak "objectively" about God, for personal language describes events that occur independently of the self.

[140]Donald D. Evans kindly furnished this writer with his curriculum vitae. He was born 21 September 1927 at Ft. William, Ontario. After receiving a B. A. in 1950 from the University of Toronto, he worked under Gilbert Ryle at Balliol College, Oxford, and received the B. Phil. in 1953. Theological studies were pursued at Balliol College, Oxford, 1951-52, and McGill University, 1953-55, under Dr. G. B. Caird. He received his B. D. at McGill in 1955. Evans ministered to a congregation of the United Church of Canada, 1955-58. He conducted research in philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford, under J. L. Austin and J. O. Urmson, 1958-60. His doctoral thesis in philosophy was accepted by Oxford in 1962, and he received the D. Phil. degree that year. I. T. Ramsey and A. M. Quinton were the examiners. From 1960 to the summer of 1964 Evans served as assistant professor of Philosophy of Religion in the Faculty of Divinity, McGill University. Since 1964 he has been associate professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto, teaching epistemology, ethics, and philosophy of religion. His current interest is in the area of agnosticism and faith, "a book," as Evans describes it, "on the rationale of faith; this will be a new philosophical theology which makes use of insights in both analytical and existential philosophy." Evans' books include The Logic of Self-Involvement (infra), and Communist Faith and Christian Faith (Toronto: Ryerson, 1964).

philosophical analysis. But he explicitly rejects the assumption that the "logic" of any language game guarantees that game's validity by the mere fact that people speak in a certain way. To adopt the latter view in reference to "talk about God" is to eliminate the argument that there is no God because proponents of the God-talk language game neither open it to outside attack nor deem it in need of outside justification. Says Evans, "I reject the philosophical view of language as something to be divided up into language-games which are each self-justifying and autonomous."[141]

Evans posits and examines three uses of language: performative, causal, and expressive. In discussing the performative use he notes his indebtedness to John Austin's How to Do Things with Words and Philosophical Papers.[142] After discussing performative and causal uses of language, Evans draws this "language-map":[143]

<u>Performative language</u>
which may be

explicit or non-explicit
[self-labeling or uttered
in verb other than first
person indicative present]

pure or autobiographical
[purely performative, or
referring to self and
reporting on mental state]

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[141] Donald D. Evans, The Logic of Self-Involvement: A Philosophical Study of Everyday Language with Special Reference to the Christian Use of Language about God as Creator (London: SCM Press, c.1963), pp. 22-24. In view of this approach, it is not surprising that Evans insists (p. 17) that biblical language is the inceptive point from which any analysis of Christian language must proceed.

[142] Supra. p. 77, n. 60.

[143] I have supplied bracketed information with material from other parts of the book in order to provide an adequate summary of the material. Up to this point Evans has discussed performative language, implications and commitments, conditions for entailment, and uses of language. The materials not bracketed are taken directly from pp. 74-75.

["all pure performatives are explicit, but not all explicit
performatives are pure, for some are autobiographical,"
p. 45]

can be classified as:

Constative   [class includes statements, e.g. "I
                           warn you that Brown is dangerous"]

Verdictive   [class includes verdicts, e.g. "I
                           value your ring at $300"]

Exercitive   [an exercise of authority, e.g. "I
                           appoint you governor of Kenya"]

Commissive . .

[commissive is more-than-verbal
commitment, e.g. "I pledge my
loyalty and support"]
             Behabitive . .

[behabitive concerns social be-
havior, e.g. "I apologize for my
behavior"]

. .self-involving [i.e. the
speaker implies mental states
other than or in addition to
belief, and/or commits him-
self to future patterns of
behavior; something more
than mere factual content
is involved]

Implications	and	Commitments
[ways in which speaker may imply intentions, attitudes]		[performatives as commitments]
Indefeasible ["I commend Smith for being submissive"]		Indefeasible [commitments where it is impossible to deny a commitment made]
Prima-facie:		Prima-facie
(a) Speaker-independent ["Smith is loyal and honest"]		[possible to deny commitment to conduct]
(b) Speaker-dependent ["That is a very valuable picture"]		
Contextual		Contextual
(a) Occasional [speaker sets implications aside]		(a) Occasional
(b) Traditional ["Smith is sub-missive and restrained" (in a eulogy)]		(b) Traditional

Conditions for Entailment

Entailments depend on
{
Performative force

Abstractable content
}

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Uses of Language

Performative [performative use of language
gives meaning; "Jones is treach-
erous" said in order to warn]

Causal [causal use of language is no
part of meaning; utterance used
as a means to a particular end;
e.g., "Jones is treacherous" when
said in order to alarm]

After discussing performative and causal language, Evans turns to
expressive language, the third use. He distinguishes between expressions
of feeling, and expressions of opinion (Commissive)/expressions of inten-
tion (Behabitive). He notes that language is self-involving in Behabitive
and Commissive performatives and when used to express feelings.[144] Although
there is an intimate interrelation among all three, Commissive and Behabi-
tive expressions differ from expressions of feeling in that they reside
in the sphere of performative language. Evans comments,

An expression of feeling differs from a report of feeling, but it
can be used as a report of feeling; that is, it can be used as an
alternative to a verbal report, as a code-sign.[145]

Expressions of feeling are the third major use of language, but
separation of language into "uses" does not signify the mutual exclusion
of uses. Consequently, one may ask three distinct questions of any utter-
ance: (a) What is its performative force? (b) What feeling does it ex-
press? (c) What effects does it have in people? The so-called "emotive"
theories of religious language fail to achieve clarity if the three dis-
tinct uses of language are ignored.[146]

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[144] Ibid., p. 78.

[145] Ibid., p. 91.

[146] Ibid., p. 110.

In his consideration of expressive language, Evans discovers a distinction which is of great importance for him. It is so-called "rapportive" language. Rapportive language is language resulting from one's understanding of the words or actions of another. When an utterance with reference to another's action is understood only in the degree that one has rapport and affinity with the agent of the action, it is termed "rapportive." "Actions typically call for 'rapportive' utterances when they are **expressive** or when their **rationale** is **profound**." A rapportive utterance is classed according to understanding, not according to use; the three uses of language remain. Rapportive utterances are usually self-revelatory; they may or may not be self-involving.[147]

To this point Evans has concluded that Behabitive-performative, Commissive-performative, expressive, and some rapportive language is self-involving. By self-involvement he means that the speaker implies mental states other than or in addition to belief, and/or commits himself to future patterns of behavior; something more than mere factual content is involved.[148] Now Evans examines in detail the situation which gives genesis to self-involving language.

Self-involving language is the case where one "looks on x as y." Evans coins the word "onlook" to suggest what it is to "look on x as y . . . ."[149] "An onlook is not merely speculative, subjective, or

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[147] Ibid., pp. 111-114. Italics are Evans'.

[148] Ibid., pp. 74-75, 258.

[149] Ibid., pp. 124-125. Evans suggests that "view" is misleading in its proximity to "opinion"; "conception" is too intellectual, and like "outlook" and "perspective," it lacks the element of commitment.

fanciful." Rather, onlooks are "practical, putatively-objective and
serious." The combination of Commissive and Verdictive aspects in the
expression of an onlook is important. Both committal to policy of be-
havior and registry of a proper and appropriate description are present;
the utterance of onlook combines understanding with judgment.[150]

Many onlooks are literal. Others are non-literal ("I look on Henry
as a brother"). Some non-literal onlooks are "parabolic"; they indicate
a similarity (look on x as y) in terms of an appropriate attitude. On
the other hand, some non-literal onlooks are "analogical"; they assert
a similarity between x and y independent of any similarity of appropriate
attitude.[151]

Evans suggests that his study of performative language has signifi-
cance both for the biblical language of creation and for man's responsive
language in the "onlook" of creation. The word of God in creation had
an Exercitive force in establishing the subordinate status and role of
the creature, a Verdictive force in determining the value of the creature,
and a Commissive force as a word of promise in which God committed Himself
to preserving the created order. In sum, God's word in the world's crea-
tion was no less performative than was His word in the creation of the
Israelite nation.[152] Man replies to the performative word of God in
creation with self-involving performatives correlated with his acknow-
ledgement of God's action, that is, from within an onlook of non-literal,

[150]Ibid., pp. 127-128.

[151]Ibid., pp. 129-130.

[152]Ibid., pp. 145-151, 157.

parabolic significance.[153]

Evans next considers the impressive and expressive element of the action of divine world-creation, utilizing the concepts of holiness and divine glory as typological models. He seeks to apply his discussion of expressive language to the biblical statements which correlate holiness-glory with creation. He concludes that divine glory and holiness are "impressive" in that they evoke a correlative human feeling and rapportive acknowledgement, but they are "expressive" in that they are "connected with the inner divine quality in somewhat the same sort of way that an observable expression of feeling is connected with the feeling which it expresses."[154]

Continuing his discussion of expressive language as related to creation, Evans views a man's utterance that "God is the Creator of the world" as rapportive because the

> world-Creation has as its profound rationale the "new creation" of man in the likeness of God, sharing in the divine love and unity and glory. . . . Second, world-Creation is an impressive-expressive action which requires an affinity with the Agent if it is to be understood.[155]

Man's rapportive utterance regarding God as Creator arises from the onlook

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[153] Ibid., pp. 158-160.

[154] Ibid., pp. 174-175. In another place (pp. 209-211) Evans relates impressive and expressive glory to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. If one understands God's glory as expressive self-revealing behavior, he can understand the meaning of three claims which Christians make about Jesus: (a) Jesus is irreplaceable, for no mere report of glory can replace Him; (b) Jesus is unique because He is the criterion of expression of divine glory; (c) Jesus is divine. God's glory in Jesus is understood in its impressive significance insofar as one is impressed; one must become like Jesus in order to appreciate impressively the glory He reveals.

[155] Ibid., p. 218.

which is his, an onlook of "profound rationale" and "affinity with the
Agent." The rapportive statement is conclusively self-revealing and
self-involving, and its meaning is clear only from within the "onlook,"

Evans also discusses the third use of language, the causal use, as
it relates to creation. Causal language in creation does not serve the
same purpose as it does in daily life, where it notes and reports only
causal action in an utterance neither self-involving nor rapportive.
Evans holds that

> "causal" language concerning Creation can be interpreted in terms of
> parabolic onlooks, so that this language too is self-involving and
> rapportive. Comparisons which seem at first to be straight-forward
> analogies between human and divine causality turn out to be compari-
> sons of attitudes, expressed in parabolic onlooks.[156]

For example, the causal language of the potter in creation is obviously
parabolic.[157]

In his last chapter, Evans raises intriguing questions about the
interrelation between self-involving language and the self-involvement
of religious commitment. He suggests that the method of applying the
logic of self-involvement could profitably be used in areas of Christian
concern other than the language of creation.[158]

Expressive Logic of Life-Direction

Thomas Miles, Frederick Ferré, John A. Hutchinson, and Willem F.
Zuurdeeg describe the logic of religious language in terms of the expressive

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[156]Ibid., p. 219.

[157]Ibid., p. 228.

[158]Ibid., pp. 253-268.

character of the language, that is, in terms of the underlying life-direction to which the language gives expression in religious utterance.[159] The men especially stress the dynamic character of the operative mind as it moulds a religious perspective which validates religious language. Miles posits "qualified silence" as the supportive perspective; Ferré, conceptual activity and metaphysical synthesis; Hutchinson, an existential life-orientation; and Zuurdeeg, the homo loquens. For all, the logic of religious language is anchored to a base which expresses life-direction.

Thomas Richard Miles

Thomas Richard Miles[160] offers the "use principle" as a crucial modification of the verification principle, a modification which is very helpful in distinguishing empirical assertions from other assertions.[161] The verification tool, modified through a large-scale abandonment of the word "meaningless" and tempered with the admission that past metaphysicians were not writing nonsense, is a valuable philosophical asset:

> Its value, I would suggest, is threefold. (1) In the first place,
> it forces us to make a distinction between those assertions which
> are factually significant and those which are not. (2) Secondly,
> it serves to expose assertions which appear at first glance to be
> factually significant but which can be seen on examination to be
> meaningless. (3) Thirdly . . . it helps to recognize a widespread

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[159]It is to be admitted that the difference between this group and the "odd-logic" group (supra, pp. 179-203) is one of degree. An interchange of personnel between the groups is entirely feasible.

[160]When Miles wrote the work under consideration in 1957 (sic), he was in the Department of Philosophy, University College of North Wales, Bangor.

[161]T [homas] R [ichard] Miles, Religion and the Scientific Outlook (London: George Allen and Unwin, c.1959), pp. 28-29.

mistake which has arisen over the usage of the words "exist", "true", and "facts."[162]

Miles elects to use the phrase "factually significant" in his explanation of the use principle. But he counters the charge that his selection of this phrase disguises a metaphysical assumption of empiricism with the contention that the modified verification principle would have achieved little in its attack on metaphysics if this were the case. He holds that his analysis of such terms as "exist," "true," and "facts" demonstrates the effectiveness of the attack.[163]

Miles admits that an objector can lodge another complaint against him: "To say that the only assertions which refer to what really exists are empirical ones is a thinly disguised form of atheistic materialism."[164] Miles argues that some idea of "absolute existence" underlies this objection. The objector errs in thinking that existing things form a class distinguishable by special characteristics from things that do not exist. What methods, Miles asks, can be constructed to give judgments about ultimate constituents of the universe? Statements or assertions about ultimate constituents are out of place when one attempts classification. While it is true that sometimes metaphysical questions can be rephrased as "second-order" questions of "thing-words," they remain meaningless if asked according to "first order." To inquire about "absolute existence" is to ask a

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[162]Ibid., p. 32. Miles sees (p. 25) his book either as an attack on early logical positivism, or as a defense of an extremely modified version of the same.

[163]Ibid., pp. 36-38.

[164]Ibid., p. 39.

question independently of the context that gives it meaning.[165] In answer

to the objector, Miles makes no excuse for equating "factually significant"

with "empirical." If he is accused of begging the question (that is, of

assuming that the empirical is what "really is"), he insists that he has

begged no question since the question is a meaningless one. He challenges

the objector, in turn, to say what he means by "really exist."[166] Miles

concludes his introductory discussion with the statement that "the main

arguments of this book will be based on the assumption that sentences

involving reference to 'absolute existence' are meaningless."[167]

In quick succession the author deals with literal materialism, beha-

viorism, and determinism as examples of the "absolute" error. Claims of

literal materialism are claims about what "exists" in the "absolute" sense;

these claims, as demonstrated above, are to be dismissed as meaningless.[168]

Similarly, behaviorism and determinism pose no threat to traditional reli-

gion because they participate in an "absolute" mistake. On the other hand,

neither does psychical research serve as a defensive apologetics for reli-

gion.[169]

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[165]Ibid., pp. 39-43. Miles says (p. 44) that analysis of "true"and
"factual" will show the same with these terms.

[166]Ibid., p. 44. Miles offers no commitment to empiricism in the sense
of according privileged status to empirical truths, for he claims (p. 45)
that no assertion is more important than another.

[167]Ibid., p. 46.

[168]Ibid., p. 67.

[169]Ibid., p. 102. Miles' comment regarding psychoanalysis (p. 133)
is enlightening: "as far as the central religious notions of repentance,
forgiveness, commitment, and dedication are concerned, there is nothing
in psycho-analytic theory--any more than in any other factual investiga-
tion--to prove or even make plausible the view that such ideas are

In the fashion of Braithwaite, Miles discusses moral assertions prior

to analysis of theological discourse. He distinguishes no grounds for the

outright dismissal of moral assertions in view of the use principle. Moral

assertions have a "perfectly legitimate function," although it is not for

the analyst to prescribe morals.[170] The truth or falsity of moral asser-

tions is in last resort a matter of personal conviction rather than a con-

clusion of rational argumentation. Most emphatically, Miles contends,

moral assertions are not validated by deducing a set of "'ought'-sentences"

from a set of "'is'-sentences."[171]

Miles limits himself to a consideration of sentences which contain the

word "God" in his discussion of theological discourse and religious language.

Here as in other realms of human discourse, the modified verification prin-

ciple is a valuable tool. It serves to expose sentences which appear to

be factually significant, but which are in principle unfalsifiable and

unverifiable.[172] The use principle aids in answering modern philosophy's

question of theology, "To what list does the word 'God' belong?" Miles

seeks out a frame of reference for the assertion "There is a God," dis-

missing in turn the "mathematical," "moral," and "empirical" frames.

Assuming that "God" cannot exist in an "absolute" sense independent of

a reference-frame, Miles argues that the man making assertions about God

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unimportant, or that a life which gives expression to these ideas is the
wrong sort of life to live."

[170]Ibid., p. 53. Miles demonstrates a reliance on Braithwaite both
in his preparatory discussion of moral assertions and in the use principle.

[171]Ibid., pp. 60, 57.

[172]Ibid., pp. 138, 141.

needs to isolate the valid frame and indicate what methods are employed in the frame's argumentation.[173]

Before presenting his own position regarding the "theistic" reference-frame Miles sets about to examine and dismiss other suggestions. He rejects "theism without tears," a view which anchors theological discourse emotively.[174] The second rejected interpretation is the language of "simple literal theism." If language about God is taken literally, it involves empirically verifiable assertions about a visible and tangible god. The language of "simple literal theism," though meaningful, is obviously false.[175] Third, "qualified literal" theological language is meaningless. It is a masquerade appearing to be genuine, but unfalsifiable and unverifiable upon examination. When the assertion "purports to give factual information," there is every right to expect verification or falsification.[176] The difficulty involved is the "absolute" mistake:

> If we agree that the word "God" indicates something invisible and intangible, there are just no criteria for deciding whether God intervened [at Dunkirk]; and in the absence of such criteria it is as pointless to assert that he did intervene as to assert that he did not.[177]

Miles rejects as meaningless, for example, the assertion "God answers [petitionary] prayer," and construes it as an assertion of qualified

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[173]Ibid., p. 144.

[174]Ibid., pp. 152-153. Miles says that the title "theism without tears" describes the inability to shed tears over the problem of the "cash value" of theological language.

[175]Ibid., p. 146.

[176]Ibid., pp. 147-148.

[177]Ibid., p. 149.

theism. The statement suggests the activity of an "extra entity," but one

is at a loss to list empirical criteria by which the statement could be

verified or falsified even though it has the appearance of an empirical

assertion.[178] Miles offers to campaign against the language of "qualified

literal theism," especially when it defines God in terms of some "para-

physical" entity.[179] But he is not prepared to dismiss religious language,

or treat it disparagingly, or suppose it less important than the language

of scientific investigation, when it concerns itself with the question,

"How ought I to live?"[180]

In his theory of theological language Miles admits the insufficiency

of merely attributing "cash-value" to theological statements. To do so is

to remove all mystery from talk about God.[181] He prefers instead to dis-

cuss the "way of silence," silence qualified by parables. He selects the

way of silence deliberately:

> A person who insists on linguistic grounds that sentences containing
> the word "God" cannot be understood literally is not committed to
> accepting the theistic parable; but he is not committed to rejecting
> it either. If he accepts, as I do, he can no longer adopt . . .
> a "prosaic" silence; he must accept what I call "the way of silence"--
> a phrase which I have deliberately chosen on account of its religious

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[178]Ibid., pp. 181-184. Miles further contends (pp. 185-186) that "if
'God sends rain in answer to prayer' is a pointless form of words, then
'O God, please send some rain' is pointless also," and calls for an abandon-
ment of this "pseudo-causal" prayer language. By contrast, says Miles, the
so-called "performatory" prayer "Thy will be done" is a commitment and a
dedication, and thus a valid prayer.

[179]Ibid., p. 163.

[180]Ibid., p. 54.

[181]Ibid., p. 158. While Miles does not comment exactly to the point,
to attribute "cash-value" apparently is the "absolute" mistake.

overtones, and its affinities with traditional religious thinking.[182]

He contrasts his interpretation of qualified silence with the theologian's

assertion that God is a mystery:

> God, to you, is a mystery; to me even the word "mystery" has an em-
> pirical taint, and is misleading. You say "I do not know" and try
> to talk; I say "I do not know" and remain silent. You admit that your
> talk is not literal; I qualify my silence by telling parables. Is
> there really all that difference between us?[183]

Having introduced the "parable" as a taciturn qualification essential

to theism, Miles discusses the parable in greater detail. He lists three

characteristics of Scriptural parables which are also characteristics of

theistic language when it qualifies silence. (1) The question of literal

truth or falsity is unimportant in a parable. Thus, in considering the

theistic statement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,"

whether the account is literally true is unimportant. Literal talk about

"creation by God" is meaningless because man has no experience against

which to measure "creation" by God. (2) "Parables contain, for the most

part, assertions that are empirical; and we know perfectly well what states

of affairs would constitute the 'cash-value' of these assertions."

Similarly, the literal meaning of words in the creation account are per-

fectly clear. (3) Parables convey a message, give a new "slant" or

orientation to life. Similarly, the doctrine of creation forces the recog-

nition that every event is part of God's purpose; the whole of life is

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[182]Ibid., p. 162. Miles refers (p. 169) to the "doctrine of creation
by an all-loving God" as the "theistic parable," and suggests that instead
of the question "Do you believe in the existence of God?" the question "Do
you accept the theistic parable?" should be asked.

[183]Ibid., p. 163. In discussing mystery (p. 164), the conversing theo-
logian asks Miles if parables are true in the sense of having objective
validity." Miles replies that it makes no difference one way or another.

affected by a message taken seriously.[184]

Miles considers methods by which parabolic language is identified. In the case of some theological assertions, only the mode of expression and the speaker's attitude determine whether words are parabolic, or the language of qualified theism. "God intervened at Dunkirk," or "God made the world," may or may not be parabolic. The more closely the language in question relates to daily life, the higher the probability that it is language of qualified theism. In addition, language used about God is generally parabolic in nature when it is not ordinarily used in reference to people.[185]

Inevitably the question of ultimates arises. Miles does not avoid consideration of the sort of arguments used to support one parable against another. He rejects the suggestion that any one parable is "objectively valid" or "true" with two arguments (which are really one): either one can say that it makes no sense to ask whether a theistic parable is valid (the "absolute" mistake); or one can say that it makes sense to ask the question, but one is at a loss to know what constitutes the answer. The second alternative is to move from not saying anything to saying "I do not know." Neither argument is a radical departure from the "way of silence." On the other hand, neither answer allows the selection of parables to become a matter of personal preference. The conclusion that one parable is better than another is protected, for it is possible to refer to parables as "good," "appropriate," "important," and "plausible." In final

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[184] Ibid., pp. 166-169.

[185] Ibid., pp. 173-174. Miles cautions that neither criteria is infallibly reliable.

analysis, not rational argument, but personal conviction determines the evaluation of a particular parable; argument never settles the matter con- clusively.[186] It is true that consideration of empirical fact influences the choice of parable. There is always the possibility that

> those who are impressed by the advances of a particular science may come to regard a particular religious parable as unnecessary or in- appropriate, and that those who are concerned with preserving trad- itional religious parables may regard the growth of a particular science with suspicion.[187]

In addition, parables are open to influence on moral grounds. People may choose a parable because it makes sense of their existing moral beliefs. But in final analysis, the decision about the worth of a parable is a per- sonal decision.[188]

The fact that decision is involved in the selection of parable indi- cates the presence of conversion and change of outlook. There is no speci- fic factual knowledge available to believers and unavailable to unbelievers. If there were, the selection of parables would be "empirical." Just as the acceptance of the theistic parable involves the believer in action and commitment, so also the parabolic acceptance of a purposeless, indif- ferent world involves commitment to life thus interpreted. "It follows,

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[186] Ibid., pp. 170-171.

[187] Ibid., p. 219. This statement is to be balanced by another (pp. 218-219) in which Miles remarks, "To insist that such language is parable and not literal truth is to ascribe a recognizable and legitimate function to a group of basic religious assertions, and the result is to supply a permanent guarantee that these assertions cannot be refuted by the find- ings of science."

[188] Ibid., pp. 172-173. Earlier in the work (p. 53) Miles delineates between moral assertions and parable-assertions: "In general we may say that no moral assertion necessarily entails a parable-assertion, but moral assertions can be the consequence of parable-assertions, and parable- assertions can therefore be cited as the reason for particular behavior."

statements serve a "worshipful" function, it is necessary to understand what it is to worship in order to apprehend the logic of religious language.[193]

The study of language proceeds on three fronts: (1) the study of relationships among verbal signs ("syntactics"); (2) the study of the relationship between language and user-interpreter ("interpretics"); (3) the study of the relationship between language and its referent ("semantics"). Confusion in the study of theological language has resulted in part because of the failure to distinguish these three dimensions of the "signification-situation." J. L. Mackie interprets theological discourse solely in terms of the first relationship, R. B. Braithwaite and Ronald W. Hepburn in terms of "interpretics," and those who emphasize falsifiability in terms of the third relationship.[194]

In considering "syntactics" Ferré divides theological discourse into "systematic language of academic theology" and "religious language of living faith." Syntactic adequacy in the religious language of faith is evaluated with reference to "internal language-norms," namely Scripture, church traditions, creeds, and other authoritative statements. Religious language is coherent in so far as it repeats, in its faith-utterances, the "faith of our fathers, living still." Canons of formal logic do not apply between "utterances which are the protocol-statements' of religion."[195]

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[193]Frederick Ferré, Language, Logic and God (First edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1961), p. 137.

[194]Ibid., pp. 148-149. In his later work, Exploring the Logic of Faith, p. 55, Ferré distinguishes three "dimensions" within which the language of Christian faith operates: the dimension of emotion, conation, and cognition.

[195]Ferré, Language, Logic and God, p. 151.

The syntactics of systematic theological discourse, the "systematic language of academic theology," are not based necessarily and exclusively on demands for "systematic coherence," for systematic pronouncements may be mirrored "in the very creeds which judge the language of living faith," religious language.[196]

The language of systematic theology exemplifies syntactics of both formal and "informal" logic. The formal rules of syntax have a descriptive content with no "cash-value"; syntax is composed of logical connectives such as "and," "not," "if . . . then." The informal rules of syntax, on the other hand, are not distinct from and independent of the content-matter being discussed (as in the case of the rules of formal logic), "but are openly dependent upon the definitions that establish inferences within the language of a given subject matter," in this case theology. As Gilbert Ryle says, "Not all strict inferences pivot on the recognized logical constants."[197] Although at times the rules of informal logic oppose those of formal logic, they may serve as an "incentive to increased conceptual precision." "She's pretty and she's not," "He's likable and he's not," are statements that require further refinement of the concepts "pretty" and "likable" before an adequate non-paradoxical statement is possible. In a similar way, a paradoxical statement about God indicates

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[196] Ibid., pp. 154-155.

[197] Ibid., pp. 151-152. Italics are his. Arthur Carl Piepkorn, in "What Does 'Inerrancy' Mean?," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXVI (September 1965), 577-593, examines some of the difficulties involved when a term (inerrancy) is loaded with connotations from outside its field. His suggestion that "inerrancy" is an "ecclesiastical term subject to definition by usage" (577) is something of a parallel to Ferré's suggestion that informal syntax is determined by the subject-matter being discussed.

that its concepts are due for further investigation even though they are
related through informal logic.[198] Ferré agrees with proponents of in-
formal logic when they suggest that before a word is taken into the exac-
titude of formal logic, it must be refined:

> Judgment, imagination--even intuition--must go into the determina-
> tion of the syntactic powers of every central theological concept
> before formal logical operations with it become profitable; it is
> precisely in this preliminary determination that the living issues
> lie.[199]

Discussing "interpretics," the relationship between language and
the user-interpreter, Ferré distinguishes between a "passive" and a
"responsive" significance. The "passive" concerns the _affect_ of the lan-
guage in the interpreter. In this realm the emotions are active, and the
language can be termed "emotive" by conventional association. This lan-
guage also has a "reactive" significance.[200] The "responsive" significance
of interpretics refers to things and events "which are themselves the sym-
bols demanding our response." In interpretics, to speak of a responsive
significance is to speak of words which deal with symbols of "great
potency." Not the words or phrases, but their content is of the greatest
concern: "much of what is most characteristic of theological meaning is
best understood in these terms."[201] In reference to the responsive-active

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[198] Ferré, _Language, Logic and God_, p. 153.

[199] _Ibid._, p. 154.

[200] _Ibid._, pp. 155-156. In _Exploring the Logic of Faith_, pp. 57-58,
Ferré suggests that the emotive "dimension" of language includes the
"reassuring" function of religious language in that it produces and ex-
presses an attitude. A "judging" function is also found in the emotion-
dimension, for utterances of faith may evoke and express emotions of
humility, guilt, and unworthiness.

[201] Ferré, _Language, Logic and God_, pp. 156-157. In the schema of

significance of interpretics, Ferré reminds his reader that man is the
moulder and master of discourse. Pre-linguistic social interests and
activities give birth to language. But even after birth language is not
independent; language-forms are open to growth and transformation because
of man's moulding. Word, thought, and purpose abide, says Ferré, but the
greatest of these is purpose. So also theological language is a child of
human purpose, and it is within the Christian community that the syntactics
of Christian discourse are formed.[202]

Turning to "semantics," Ferré is able to consider the role of cog-
nition in theological discourse. In the relationship between language and
its referent (semantics), the "facts" to which theological statements make
reference are not the same as those referred to and discussed in the empiri-
cal sciences. And still, "there seems no escape from the conclusion that
the intended semantic reference of theological discourse is to 'metaphysi-
cal fact' of some kind." The metaphysical "facts" which serve as referents
are not given independently of the creative powers of intelligence, but
are dependent on the "conceptual activity of the mind." From this premise
Ferré concludes that "the nature of metaphysics . . . is <u>conceptual syn-
thesis</u>." Since a metaphysical system provides coherence for all "the
facts," a metaphysical fact plays a key role in the system.[203] Ferré
refers to the "cognitive dimension" of theological discourse as the meta-
physical function of theological language, that is, that function of

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<u>Exploring the Logic of Faith</u>, p. 60, the "challenging" function of emotion-
dimension (where "calling" or "mission" is embedded in the language of
Christian faith) seems to be the parallel term.

[202]Ferré, <u>Language, Logic and God</u>, p. 158.

[203]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 160-161.

theological language which has metaphysical facts as referents and conceptual synthesis as its goal. Metaphysical statements in theological discourse "are not scientific in function, but their intended reference, like scientific statements, is to reality," reality as a whole.[204]

The conceptual synthesis actuated by theological speech is bound up with man's personality:

> Theological speech projects a model of immense responsive significance, drawn from "the facts," as the key to its conceptual synthesis. This model, for theism, is made up of the "spiritual" characteristics of personality: will, purpose, wisdom, love, and the like.[205]

If indeed theological discourse is in some way concerned with "the facts," then to seek the relationship between theological language and its referents (the task of semantics) is to search for a better understanding of the world under the light of one's own theological discourse. In any case, a man cannot avoid the decision to choose one or the other metaphysical view, and with it, the language of decision.[206]

Ferré contends that the conceptual synthesis created by theological discourse needs some sort of modified verification. The comprehensive conceptual synthesis allows for verification by measuring the power of the synthesis to integrate and illuminate:

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[204]Ferré, Exploring the Logic of Faith, p. 73. Ferré affirms (p. 97) the close relation of cognitive to the "emotive-conative" dimension of theological language so as to avoid the impression that "a Christian can, without losing anything essential, abandon all claims to (or even interest in) truth or falsity." Italics are his.

[205]Ferré, Language, Logic and God, p. 164. In "Mapping the Logic of Models in Science and Theology," Christian Scholar, XLVI (Spring 1963) 9-39, Ferré examines in greater detail the process of arriving at what appear to be synthetic-metaphysical models.

[206]Ferré, Language, Logic and God, pp. 165-166.

In this process of [modified] verification, at last, the complicated connection between empirical (e.g. scientific) assertions and non-empirical statements is evident. All properly warranted empirical statements themselves become data for synthesis and intelligible organization within the framework provided by the theological conceptual scheme. The propositional elements of the latter do not logically entail or imply any of the former propositions, and in consequence the latter . . . cannot be simply refuted by discovering the falsity of the former; but a theological synthesis which cannot bring intelligibility to the propositions of science, history, and all human knowledge is to that extent a weak synthesis and--as a whole--fails, to that degree, in its verification.[207]

Ferré urges theologians to use the altered verification principle to full advantage. Theologians are prepared, with the modified principle, to isolate the logic of specific utterances and compare the different logics. Two expressions with different logical types of meaning "cannot in any simple way contradict or support one another." The verification principle certifies that some assertions are empirical, and thus removes them from the realm of theological logic. The connection cannot be "unidimensional." A corollary of this employment of the verification principle is that if a theologian makes statements which concern any empirical state of affairs, his statements are open to proof or disproof empirically. Conversely, "the acceptance or rejection of nonempirical elements in theology cannot hang on the acceptance or rejection of associated empirical elements."[208]

John A. Hutchinson

John Alexander Hutchinson[209] distinguishes sign, symbol, and image.

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[207] Frederick Ferré, "Verification, Faith, and Credulity," Religion in Life, XXXII (Winter 1962-63), 57.

[208] Ibid., 50-51.

[209] Hutchinson was professor of religion at Columbia University, 1955-60. Since 1960 he has been professor of philosophy and religion at Claremont Graduate School in California.

A sign is a term, and its primary purpose is referential. A symbol is a term, and its significant purpose is expressive. Symbols are apprehended with immediacy because they are emotively-charged terms. They participate in the reality they symbolize and possess a wide variety of meanings. In the symbol-situation, contextual meaning preponderates.[210] An image, on the other hand, is any "immediate datum of human awareness."[211]

In reference to images Hutchinson chooses to describe the "objective imagination," the peculiar capacity of the human mind for images. Relying heavily on Kroner, a neo-Kantian, Hutchinson develops a theory which defines the objective imagination as the mind exploring and encountering outside its own borders.[212] The instrument of metaphor is the basic tool of the mind as it lays hold of the world's manifold character. Metaphor is "a kind of growing point of the mind's life in its responses to the ever-changing and new character of the world."[213] The mind also deals with ideas. The distinct feature of an image is its immediacy of apprehension, but an idea consists in the observed similarity between two or more images, a similarity which the mind abstracts.[214]

In consideration of the stated definitions of sign, symbol, and image Hutchinson views his theory of language to be in essential disagreement

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[210] John A. Hutchinson, Language and Faith: Studies in Sign, Symbol and Meaning (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c.1963), pp. 37, 40-42.

[211] Ibid., p. 74.

[212] Ibid., pp. 76, 85-86.

[213] Ibid., p. 91.

[214] Ibid., p. 87. Hutchinson argues (p. 89) that "we think in terms of ideas; and we act by means of images."

with much of modern analysis:

> To approach language first of all as an activity is admittedly a sharp-
> ly different view from that of much analytic or semantic philosophy.
> And to regard it as a kind of activity that expresses or articulates
> a human self, or significant aspects of selfhood, is to be doubly
> controversial. Yet this is precisely what is proposed.[215]

He denies that his approach rules out all test of authenticity in language.
Two standards, or cognitive rules, of utterance remain: (1) conformity of
the uttered statement to attitudes of the whole self; (2) conformity of
utterance to the real self in its encounter with the world.[216]

Having constructed a general theory of language, Hutchinson moves on
to draw the consequences for religious language in specifics. He views
religion as total life-orientation. The essence of "total life-orientation"
includes the needs of man: identification, purpose, and meaning in life.
Drawing on phenomenological research, Hutchinson asserts that the lumin-
ous and powerful images of religion provide the precise life-orientation
which man needs. Man receives a "convincing and authoritative statement
of who he is and what he is living for." He receives a set of values
that provide goals, that engage and fulfill his powers. Put another way,
"faith and its symbolic expressions may be regarded as expressions of the
human will to live."[217] Religion is total life-orientation, and according-
ly, religious or faith statements are "orientation statements."[218]

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[215] Ibid., p. 47. Hutchinson claims (p. 48) that selfhood is impossible
without self-articulation, but he denies that this approach equates self-
articulation with selfhood. Regarding his contention that analysis seldom
views language as an activity, see supra, pp. 76-77.

[216] Ibid., p. 51.

[217] Ibid., pp. 101, 122, 124.

[218] Ibid., p. 101.

Hutchinson chooses to speak phenomenologically rather than theologically in offering a rationale for religious discourse:

My thesis is that religious language, or, as I would prefer to say, faith language, may be characterized as symbolic or expressive language used for the purpose of total life orientation.[219]

The author deals phenomenologically with the possibility of cognitive religious experience and statement. He records a wide variety of usage in the so-called cognitive words (including "true," "false," "meaning"),[220] and proposes to extrapolate the ideas of truth and knowledge from the sphere of propositional and referential knowledge to the fields of "expressive statement," including religious statements. He contends that the "language" and "statements" of the expressive field (art, science, philosophy, religion) provide parallels with the language of propositional and referential knowledge which are not easily dismissed: they have the intent to communicate; they have a sort of "consistency" and coherence similar to the propositional; the degree to which the expressive statements claim to deal with referents determines the degree to which the criterion of adequacy applies in the determination of the statement's credibility.[221]

The nature of truth and knowledge is connected to the life of action. Hutchinson argues that in the life of action the duality of essence and existence, self and world, is dissolved. Action is a logically primitive

[219] Ibid., p. 13. D. H. MacKinnon, in "Death," New Essays in Philosophical Theology (New York: Macmillan Company, c.1955), pp. 261-266, seems to argue that the logic of religious language is existential in nature; he urges that especially language about death and immortality must be traced to its human source.

[220] Hutchinson, pp. 127-132.

[221] Ibid., pp. 142-145.

idea not susceptible to dissection; it is the "widest category of human selfhood." Accordingly, "existential truth may be defined as the adequacy of essence to existence; and existential meaning may be defined as possible existential truth."[222] Within this existential context religious statements are no less cognitive than the statements of other experiential realms. In three successive chapters Hutchinson examines the expressive language of science, art, and philosophy, emphasizing that each discipline is related to the common life and to the common existential problem.[223]

In a more precise examination of religious discourse, Hutchinson uses the metaphor of a "religious-theological spectrum" to isolate the distinguishing features of two forms of religious discourse, "faith statements" and "theological statements."[224] The primary terms in first-order faith statements are images. Images are expressive in form; their purpose and function is the straightforward expression of religious experience.[225] Hutchinson lists seven recurrent forms through which men traditionally communicate their ultimate concern: (1) confession or witness (which expresses the meaning of existence for the speaker); (2) prayer (direct and personal appeal to Power in expressive language); (3) ritual

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[222] Ibid., pp. 152-154.

[223] Ibid., pp. 158-226. Hutchinson differentiates (p. 65) between primary language and derivative languages (including art, science, philosophy and religion). Each derivative language has a certain common experience and common language as its basis, but develops specific categories for the communication of particular aspects of human experience about which it is particularly concerned. It appears that little is left for the primary language other than the "life of action."

[224] Ibid., p. 236. Hutchinson carries through his earlier suggestion (p. 91) that metaphor is the basic tool of the mind in his use of the spectrum-metaphor at this place.

[225] Ibid., p. 227.

(configuration of expressive image in word, act, or other media, repeated
at set times); (4) myth or sacred story (expression of values by which
a man lives and declares life meaningful); (5) commandment (moral impera-
tive which consists of prescriptions for human action); (6) homily or
sermon (communication of direct experience from person to person); (7)
scripture or sacred writing.[226] While direct religious experience may
contain a rational structure, the cognition therein contained is appre-
hended and expressed in terms of images rather than ideas.[227]

On the other end of the spectrum are second-order religious statements,
or "theological" statements:

> Second-order religious statements, or theological statements, are
> conceptual rather than expressive or symbolic in form; their main
> terms are not images but concepts, and their purpose is not direct
> expression but the understanding of religion. . . . theological
> statements are the linguistic vehicle for the study and understand-
> ing of religion.[228]

The clear emergence and predominance of "conceptual terms in the language"
distinguish first-order religious language from explicit theological
utterance. Theological statements are essentially a technical language,
a "linguistic vehicle for the study of religion."[229] On the metaphorical
spectrum between the two poles of first and second-order religious state-
ments there are overlapping areas. Creeds, for example, are partly faith
language and partly theological language.[230]

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[226]Ibid., pp. 228-236.

[227]Ibid., p. 239.

[228]Ibid., p. 227.

[229]Ibid., p. 240.

[230]Ibid., p. 241. In his final chapters (pp. 248-293), Hutchinson

Willem F. Zuurdeeg

Willem Frederick Zuurdeeg[231] is convinced that the analytic method
is the appropriate methodology in the philosophy of religion. It provides
both a conception of the philosophy of religion as analysis of language
and a disqualification of metaphysics and ontology.[232] He sets out to
analyze the language of theology, hoping thereby to construct a philosophy
of religion which takes proper cognizance of philosophical analysis.

Zuurdeeg endorses analysis' classification of indicative, analytical,
and tautological discourse. Indicative language appears in crude form in
daily language, and in purified form in the language of empirical science.
Analytic language is the language of philosophy, a language "not interest-
ed in facts but in meanings." Tautological language is the language of
logic and mathematics.[233]

But Zuurdeeg takes exception with the analytic philosopher as he

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uses his conclusions as an hypothesis to array the world religions, par-
ticularly Christianity, along the metaphorical spectrum. But Ninian
Smart, in Reasons and Faiths (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, c.1958),
p. 15, opposes the suggestion that there is any one inclusive language
frame for the multitude of spiritual discourses in the world (e.g.,
Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity).

[231]Zuurdeeg was ordained in a Dutch-Presbyterian church, the Remon-
strant Brethren, in 1934. Emigrating from Holland to America, he taught
briefly at Elmhurst College near Chicago, and then in 1948 joined the
faculty of McCormick Seminary in Chicago. In May, 1960, he was elevated
to professor of philosophy of religion. His first major work was A Re-
search for the Consequences of the Vienna Circle for Ethics (Utrecht:
Kenink, 1946), Zuurdeeg died December 3, 1963.

[232]Willem F. Zuurdeeg, An Analytical Philosophy of Religion (New York:
Abingdon Press, c.1958), p. 17.

[233]Ibid., p. 44.

describes him. He contends that "convictional" language deals with "reali-
ty" no less than does indicative language. These two types of language
view reality differently; it is the task of the analytic philosopher to
prescribe what is "real" and what is not when it comes to references of
these languages.[234] The philosophy of analysis errs in that it fails to
recognize the existing unity between the man who speaks and the language
he speaks. Zuurdeeg commits himself to an investigation of this convic-
tional unity as it concerns theological discourse. His primary assumptions
isolate what are for him the vulnerable aspects of current analysis.

 a. The general [analytic] position omits a language which is not a
   specific language but the language which underlies both the lan-
   guage of common life and the specific languages, namely convic-
   tional language.
 b. Convictional language is not given full justice by terms such as
   "use" and "function"; it shows a unity of word, thought, and per-
   son; it is the person in his relationships to himself, to others,
   and to the "world."
 c. We are analyzing not just words or sentences but language in the
   sense of man-who-speaks.[235]

Theological language is not a direct parallel to convictional lan-
guage. The language of theology is neither "is-language" (convictional)
nor "use-language" (indicative). However, the language of theology is
akin to the former in its attempt to express the "personality center" in
matters of "ultimate importance." At the same time, it is akin to the
latter in that it "implies an element of distance, of reflection."
Zuurdeeg chooses to call theological language "employ-language":

 It makes some sense to say that is-language is spontaneous, and use-
 language artificial. Employ-language cannot be easily characterized

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[234] Ibid., p. 45.

[235] Ibid., p. 19.

in this way. The laborious work of a theologian is neither the spon-
taneous approval of an act of generosity; nor is theological language
artificial in the way in which chemical terminology deserves that
name. The "giving account of" which characterizes employ-language
can be called "reflective," or "meditative."[236]

Employ-language differs from is-language in its reflective element; it

differs from use-language in that it does not operate "according to strict

rules" prescribed by specific purposes.

Because the employ-language of theology is somewhat akin to convic-

tional language, Zuurdeeg discusses in greater detail the structure of

convictional language. While indicative, analytical, and tautological

language each has a "logical structure" of sorts, there is no parallel

in convictional language:

> We should admit that convictional language does not possess this
> "logical" structure, and that therefore logic cannot serve as its
> metalanguage. That is to say that the metalanguage of convictional
> language must possess a nonlogical structure.[237]

Because convictional language has no specific logical structure, Zuurdeeg

prefers to speak of "situational analysis" rather than "logical analysis"

of convictional language.[238] If it is accepted that "a man _is_ his convic-

tions, his word," and if "when we speak of 'language' we mean man himself,

man-who-speaks, _homo loquens_,"[239] the only analytic possibility is "sit-

uational analysis." A philosophy of religion which uses the analytic

approach to language must be qualified

by an account of the language situation, to which belong: a) the

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236 _Ibid._, p. 59.

237 _Ibid._, p. 63.

238 _Ibid._, p. 64.

239 _Ibid._, p. 59.

person who communicates; b) the community within which the language functions; c) the (subjectively) objective references of the language[s]; d) the "worlds" within which these elements are related; e) the historical backgrounds of these elements.[240]

Unity in Diversity

The men considered in this chapter take up the second major challenge of analysis, the challenge which demands an explanation of the specific "logic" of religious language. This brief résumé is appended to show both the collective unity and the individual diversity of the views here brought together. But in no sense is this recapitulation a substitute for the expanded expositions.

The second challenge of analysis assumes implicitly that there is a specific logic of religious language. The men who address the second challenge accept the assumption as valid. The analogists locate the special character of the logic of religious language in the justification for the use of analogy. MacIntyre argues that the use of analogy is validated in worship. Crombie suggests that the paradoxical nature of theological language qualifies the use of ordinary language for religious analogy. He adds that the ultimate authority of parable-analogy is Christ Himself. Mascall anchors the peculiar character of the logic of religious language in the mind's apprehension of mystery. The non-analogists are less concerned with authorization for specific logic than with the particularity of religious logic. Smart speaks in terms of a "spiritual frame," and within the frame, different strands of religious activity which contribute to the logic of religious discourse phenomenologically. Munz places the

[240]Ibid., p. 17.

concern with "eternity" at the core of religious symbol. He argues that the only element of certainty in religious thought resides in the picture symbol. In this way he locates the logic of religious language in the sphere of picture symbol. Ramsey refers to the "odd" logic of religious language, a logic which parallels the logic of "I"-language. Cleobury places God-sentences midway between personal and impersonal language--in a unique logical status. Hordern contends that religious language is a distinguishable language game which parallels the personal language game and evidences a convictional element in its logic. Evans does not propose an autonomous language game for religion, but argues that religious language contains aspects of performative, causal, and expressive language insofar as these aspects are validated in the speaker's "onlook." Hutchinson refers to the special logic of religious utterances in terms of their use as "orientation statements." Zuurdeeg locates the peculiarity of religious language in its function as "employ-language." Miles and Ferré both posit a modified use principle as the logical tool which isolates the specific logic of religious statements. Miles proposes that the modified principle brings to light the "absolute mistakes" present in pseudo-religious utterances. He defines religious language as silence qualified by theistic parables. Ferré suggests that the modified principle permits one to distinguish the logic of religious utterances from the logic of scientific utterances.

With the exception of the analogists, the men stress the importance of the individual personality in the formulation and use of the logic of religious language. This characteristic receives slight emphasis among the analogists. Smart, on the other hand, endorses the importance of the individual in the question of the logic of religious language by implication

when he contends that the strand's religious activities, carried on by individuals, support the logic of a strand. Munz accepts the idea by implication when he argues that religious symbols do not deal with the transcendent, but describe the world of man. Ramsey stresses the importance of personal commitment and discernment. In addition, he uses the logic of "I"-language as a basis for describing the logic of religious language. Cleobury's underlying idealism endorses the importance of the human personage in the formulation and use of religious language. Hordern takes note of the convictional element of religious language, and the similarities between the theological language game and the game of personal language. Evans' "onlook" and his emphases on self-involvement and rapportive elements in religious language are essentially the marks of a personalist. Miles' endeavor to avoid the "absolute mistake" is the obverse of a stress on the personal. He states that ultimately personal conviction determines the worth of one or another particular parable. Ferré allows for the creative powers of the intelligence and the conceptual powers of the mind as important factors in religious language. Hutchinson contends that the individual's active mind constructs expressive, meaningful images in the orientation statements of religion. Zuurdeeg stresses the homo loquens, man-who-speaks, as he who uses convictional language.

The general apathy of the men toward a cognitive element in religious language (as "cognitive" is traditionally defined) is bound up with the endorsement of a particular logic for religious language. Some make greater effort than others to retain or explain cognition. Two of the analogists, Crombie and Mascall, deal at least obliquely with the problem. Crombie touches on the question of cognition in his discussion of "undifferentiated

theism." Mascall allows for cognition (as he defines it) in the argument concerning rational apprehension. Smart attempts to retain some semblance of cognition in his contention that reason(s) and faith(s) are not at odds--although the underlying religious activities need not involve cognitive elements. Ferré seeks to retain cognition of sorts in his emphasis on metaphysical synthesis, but he refers to "metaphysical" facts in religion as different from empirical facts. Ramsey allows for no verifiable deductions from theological assertions, but his covert idealism makes religious statements no less cognitive than others. In this matter Cleobury is in essential agreement with Ramsey. Evans contends that something more than factual content is involved in self-performative language, but he does not dismiss the importance of factual content. Munz opposes the naturalistic interpretation of religious language. He suggests instead that the task of the theologian is not deductive, and that the truth of theology is to be tested only against the symbol picture. Miles states that the parable is not concerned with literal truth or falsity; personal decision determines the worth of a parable. Hordern defines "to know"--a cognitive term--in Barthian style in order to avoid the problem of traditional cognition. Hutchinson offers a phenomenological definition of cognition, and contends that the nature of truth and knowledge is connected with the life of action. Finally, Zuurdeeg stresses the unity of the man-who-speaks and the language he speaks, and apparently rules out a strong cognitive element.

The strands of thinking are diverse and complex, and it is unfair to summarize the thoughts out of context. All the men address the second major analytic challenge, but each in his own way--independently and

coherently. Rigid classification has little appreciable value. Perhaps

the most appropriate conclusion is a directive to the writings themselves.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE LOGIC OF RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE WITH A VIEW
TO ASCERTAINING THE IMPACT OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS UPON
CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Chapter I

This study examines how linguistic analysis, together with its pre-
cursor logical positivism, has provoked a reassessment of the nature of
religious discourse. The problem is accurately stated in the form of
two questions: (1) What are the challenges which analysis addresses to
the philosophers of religion in the area of religious language? (2) In
what way do the answers of the philosophers of religion illuminate and
relate to these challenges?

Chapter II

Logical positivism is the ideational precursor of contemporary lin-
guistic analysis. The evolution of logical positivism in the environment
of British idealism, and the role of new logic in the development of
logical positivism, are cursorily reviewed. The study assesses the im-
portance of logical atomism in the emergence of logical positivism, and
then measures the intellectual currents running in the scientifically-
orientated Vienna Circle. Logical positivism appears to have relied
heavily on Kant and Comte, but it pushed beyond both in its concern for
proposition rather than knowledge. The verification principle moved
through five developmental stages as the positivists attempted to erase
its imprecision. In spite of continued reformulation, the principle

contained inherent difficulties.

Positivism unleashed an attack on metaphysical and theological state-
ments with its dichotomy of analytic and synthetic propositions. The
chapter reviews the status of theological statements under positivistic
scrutiny. While logical positivism agreed to the possibility of mystical
experience, it counted theological statements as meaninglessly emotive.

The chapter concludes with an examination of logical positivism in
the larger philosophical context. While logical positivism was in some
ways the precursor of linguistic analysis, positivism was also an irruption
in the development of an analysis which chronologically preceded it.

Chapter III

The third chapter studies contemporary linguistic analysis and the
challenges it hurls at theology. Analysis and logical positivism are
related through two bridge characters, G. E. Moore and Alfred J. Ayer
(and Ludwig Wittgenstein, as explained below). The study seeks to offer
a descriptive definition of linguistic analysis. The logical-positivistic
parentage of analysis, the emphasis of analysis on "use" of language, and
the psychological approach-avoidance set of many analysts are used as
characteristic elements in three attempts to define analysis descriptively.
Although each factor contributes to an understanding of analysis, it is
apparent that the methodology of philosophical analysis provided the most
appropriate entree for an adequate descriptive description of the movement.
On that account the chapter turns to the metaphysical therapy of Cambridge
analysis as a concrete historical manifestation of analytic methodology.
The Cambridge analysts judged metaphysical statements important for their
therapeutic value. The chapter moves from Cambridge to Oxford as it

reviews the trenchant work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the man who led Oxford philosophy to analytic considerations. The Oxford school studies the logics of language. It assumes an organic view of language, and formulates a methodology to dissect the organism. The notion of language games, the paradigm case technique, the significant comparison, and the emphasis on contextual relations are all important elements of analytic methodology.

In turn the chapter examines the challenges of analysis to the world of theology. Two primary challenges emerge. The first derives from analysts who openly evidence their logical-positivistic parentage. Although they endorse in principle the notion of "logics" in language, in practice these analysts bracket the "logics" of language with one "logic"--the "logic" of empirical anchorage. The resultant challenge to theology is a sharpened statement of the logical-positivistic demand for the verifiable or falsifiable element in religious utterance. In sum, the first challenge requires either the verifiability or the falsifiability of religious language as a prerequisite for admittance to the realm of meaning. The second analytic challenge concerns itself with methodology more so than the first, and in that respect it more accurately mirrors the core of analysis. The lack of a supportive metaphysics, the appeal to the results of analyses, the refusal to accept as valid the self-justifying nature of revelatory religious language, and sharpened attacks on traditional arguments for the existence of God--these four elements contribute to the methodological challenge of analysis. The second major challenge of analysis demands the "logic" of religious language. If it is granted (as it is in this challenge) that the "logic" of religious language does not pivot on its verifiability or falsifiability, the question remains: What sort of

syntactical, ideational, contextual interrelation--what sort of "logic"--
is the case when a meaningful religious statement is uttered?

Chapter IV

Chapter IV examines verifiability and falsifiability in proposed
theories of religious language. It investigates the works of men who take
up the first major challenge of analysis. In dealing with that challenge
the men encounter the segment of analysis which evidences a strong positiv-
istic parentage.

Three characteristics of the first positivistic-analytic challenge
are affirmed, in general, by the men who address it. (1) The men evidence
a general disinclination to identify more than one language game in human
language. (2) They admit to the empirical anchorage of all meaningful
statements. (3) They accept verifiability-falsifiability as the appropri-
ate logical tool for the apprehension of meaning in religious language.

The chapter moves from a point of "strong(er)" positivism to a point
of "weak(er)" positivism as it summarizes the views of men who meet, col-
lectively and individually, the first major analytic challenge on its own
grounds. The works of John B. Wilson and David Cox are reviewed under the
title "Verifiability and Religious Experience." Ben F. Kimpel, Richard
B. Braithwaite, Paul van Buren, and Paul F. Schmidt come under investiga-
tion in "Verifiability and Religious Propositions." The section titled
"Falsifiability and Religious Propositions" summarizes the views of
William A. Christian and William T. Blackstone. John Hick's eschatologi-
cal verification is considered under "Proleptic Verification and Reli-
gious Propositions." The chapter concludes with a brief résumé.

Chapter V

The fifth chapter deals with the second analytic challenge, the demand for an explication of the particular "logic" of religious language. It summarizes the works of men who isolate and describe the special logic of religious language. The thinking of these men coalesces in three areas. The men recognize the particular character of the logic of religious language as distinct from other "logics" in human language. Second, they tend to emphasize the role of individuality and personality in the formulation and use of that logic of religious language. Third, they evidence some degree of apathy toward the element of cognition in religious language, as might be expected.

The chapter examines in detail the writings of thirteen men. "The Logic of Authority" reviews the works of Alasdair MacIntyre, Ian MacHattie Crombie, and Eric Lionel Mascall—all three analogists of a sort. The studies of Ninian Smart and Peter Munz suggest the propriety of the subtitle "Logic of Situation." The personal nature of the logic of religious language, endorsed by Ian Ramsey, Frank Harold Cleobury, William Hordern, and Donald D. Evans, comes under investigation in "Logic of Particularity in Religious Language." Finally, "Expressive Logic of Life-Direction" brings together the thought of Thomas Miles, Frederick Ferré, John A. Hutchinson, and Willem F. Zuurdeeg. The chapter closes with a brief recapitulation.

APPENDIX A

Here follow three reviews of Hugo Meynell's <u>Sense, Nonsense and</u>
<u>Christianity</u> (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964). The first review, by Ian
Ramsey, appeared in <u>Journal of Theological Studies</u>, XVI (April 1965),
270-271. The second, by A. H. Armstrong, appeared in <u>Downside Review</u>,
LXXXII (July 1964), 256-258. The third, by George Vass, appeared in
<u>Heythrop Journal</u>, VI (April 1965), 201-203.

a metaphysical personalism whose attractions are at least as evident as any dangers, then or now.

But, these queries aside, undoubtedly in this book Dr. Luce shows us where to set our sights so as to gain a better perspective on Berkeley, and one of the great merits of Dr. Luce's exposition is for example that, *pace* Hume, it gives Berkeley's attack on abstract general ideas the duly subordinate, and not primary, place it had in his thinking. Dr. Luce further notes and rightly that his account confirms broadly the interpretation of Berkeley's philosophy reached independently by T. E. Jessop and himself, and reflected in their edition of the *Works*.

If some of us can still discern a few dark fish swimming in the stream, at least we can also delight in what Dr. Luce has displayed for us on the bank, and if the Boswells and Johnsons chance to come along with their sticks, they may yet be convinced 'that Berkeley teaches common sense' (p. 17). But Dr. Luce has no easy optimism. It is 'not easy to convince folk' of this, and therein 'lies the difficulty and the importance' of the present study (p. 17). All I can say is that if Dr. Luce does not convince the reader, no one will—though on this point and despite my heretical queries, I speak with the affection and gratitude of an old convert.

I. T. RAMSEY

Sense, Nonsense and Christianity: An essay on the logical analysis of religious statements. By HUGO A. MEYNELL. Pp. vi+281. London and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964. 12s. 6d.

IN this essay on the logical analysis of religious statements which still bears some marks of its origin as a research thesis, the author approaches religious statements by first considering statements in general and their relation to 'facts', and next value statements, where he notes especially the bearing of religious beliefs on them. He then turns to statements of traditional Christianity which, as he significantly emphasizes, have a necessary 'commitment to matters of fact', so that any account of them which views them as 'merely or principally evincing present moral dispositions or an expression of present religious experience' is, as he rightly says, radically inadequate. In a chapter on 'Religion and Ontology' he argues that the statements of Christianity are allegations, whether true or false, of 'objective fact' though this phrase becomes a little slippery when we hear that belief in God can mean not only belief in 'that which will render to every man according to his works' (p. 161) but also belief 'that cosmic justice will ultimately be secured' (p. 163). A concluding chapter contains a perceptive and helpful analysis of the truth-conditions

of certain 'mysteries': (a) the inspiration of Scripture, (b) miracles, (c) visions, (d) Christology, (e) the Real Presence.

This is an enterprising book which raises the right kind of questions, and points the way to profitable discussion. But in its legitimate and laudable desire to eschew all reductionisms, and to give an account of Christian statements which makes clear their factual reference and their claim to be about 'objective fact', it only shows how very much more attention needs giving, in the first place, to talk about fact. Further, while Mr. Meynell clearly disclaims any present concern with truth or falsity, is he himself likely to have given an adequate account even of the meaning of Christian assertions, if it makes the 'traditional' kind of apologetic virtually impossible? For as Mr. Meynell points out on pp. 164–5, it follows on his view that in 'the establishment or refutation of the statement that Christ is Lord in the traditional sense, centrality of the truth-conditions is in inverse proportion to their availability as evidence'. Which comes near to saying that the most central doctrines are also the most incredible: which admittedly some believers and even some believing philosophers have liked to think. But fortunately not all.

Mr. Meynell is right to be concerned about questions of fact, objectivity, and reference, but does not he himself take too prosaic a view of facts and objectivity?—a suspicion which is fortified by what he says all too briefly, for example, about Otto. Reductionism is no less reductionism when it is reductionism in a good cause.

I. T. RAMSEY

The Christian Belief in God. By DANIEL JENKINS. Pp. 226. London: Faber & Faber, 1964. 25s.

ALTHOUGH 'it is possible . . . to present the Christian faith in ways which drain it of all mystery', Mr. Jenkins wishes to reaffirm the place of mystery in any study of the case for belief in God, and he censures excessively rationalistic and academic treatments. Where the traditional rational 'proofs' of God's existence are persuasive, they are so usually 'only for those who have been led to believe in God on other grounds'. To learn reliably what God is like, 'philosophical speculation' must be 'checked and controlled at every point by what God has said about Himself in Christ'. Study must focus upon 'the knowledge of God possessed by Jesus himself and the prophets and apostles': upon the testimony (of reliable witnesses) that the events recorded 'are explicable only on the basis of Someone not themselves, who stands over against them, [and] who controls all things': upon the character of the experience of believers who are enabled thereby to 'see the meaning of

and it seems arguable that there is no meaning in speaking of what a man would do freely, when in fact he will never do it. Again, the argument is discussed that no man could avoid all sin throughout his life. What does not appear sufficiently allowed for is that, just in so far as some action or inaction is unavoidable, it cannot possibly be due to free choice. Again, a distinction is made between secondary liberty and autonomous liberty, apparently meaning liberty controlled by God and not wholly so controlled. But surely the very meaning of free choice is that the action is not wholly controlled by any power other than that of the chooser. And the baffling problems connected with eternal punishment are left aside, though perhaps this may be explained as not essential to the subject under discussion.

A review of this book might be prolonged indefinitely; it must be enough to repeat that it is indispensable for future study of the problem.

MARK PONTIFEX

[It must be added that the theory here recommended was put forward by Dom Mark Pontifex twenty-five years ago in this REVIEW ('Predestination', January 1939), and developed by him in his recent contribution to the Faith and Fact series *Providence and Freedom*, to which Fr Most makes suitable acknowledgements.—ED.]

Sense, Nonsense and Christianity by Hugo Meyell. Pp. vi + 281 (Sheed and Ward: Stagbooks) 12s. 6d.

IT will be interesting to see what professional philosophers, especially unbelieving ones, will make of this book: it is to be hoped that they will read it carefully, and that it will help to clarify their minds about religious statements. The present reviewer, who is not a professional philosopher, certainly found it helpful, enlightening and encouraging. It is not a book of apologetics or theology, but, according to its sub-title 'an essay on the logical analysis of religious statements'. This means, as Mr Meynell makes clear in his Introduction, that it is not concerned with determining whether particular religious statements are true or false, or with that deepening of our understanding of a revelation, already accepted as true, which is the business of dogmatic theology. It is a preliminary attempt to show what religious statements are really trying to say, what makes them consistent or inconsistent, sense or nonsense, and by what means, if any, they can be verified or falsified. This does seem to be indispensable. Neglect of it, as Mr Meynell suggests, does a good deal to make much religious apologetic and anti-religious polemic so very wide of the mark, and to account for the rather disconcerting fact that, after serious and intelligent discussions on the philosophy of religion between persons of opposing views, the participants are usually found to hold exactly the same opinions with which they started: there has been no real contact of minds.

Mr Meynell begins with two general chapters on 'Statements and Facts' and 'The Nature of Value-Statements' which seem to a non-professional refreshingly clear and sensible. His rejection of the dogma that statements imply either strictly or not at all and his remarks on 'loose implication' (which plays an important part in his later discussions of religious statements) are particularly welcome (pp. 32-35). The main enquiry into the logic of religious statements begins with chapter 3. A particularly valuable feature of it is the clarity with which Mr Meynell establishes the distinction between traditional Christianity and 'reductionist' theologies, of which he takes the treatments of Christianity by Kant, Schleiermacher and Hegel as his principal examples (Bultmann's rather different sort of 'reductionism' is dealt with in an Appendix). Mr Meynell treats these distinguished thinkers with proper respect, but shows clearly that they are using Christian language in quite different ways from traditional Christians; they are Christians rather in the way in which ancient Greek philosophers were pagans, that is, they use the traditional religious ways of speaking freely in whatever sense they may require for their own philosophical purposes. It is necessary to make this distinction as clear as possible. There is a great deal of 'reductionist' Christianity about, and, especially for anyone engaged in œcumenical dialogue, it is important to have reliable criteria for distinguishing it from traditional Christianity (neither Mr Meynell nor the present reviewer thinks that all the opinions of the 'reductionists' about religion and morality are necessarily false and contemptible; but before evaluating them one must be clear that one is dealing with something entirely different from the traditional faith).

One general criticism of Mr Meynell's analysis which can be made is that, in understandable reaction from some forms of 'reductionism', he is inclined to play down very much the part of present experience in traditional Christian belief, and to talk as if it consisted almost exclusively in 'assent to statements of *past* (historical) and future (eschatological) fact', present religious experience being only a 'by-product of the resulting hope and thankfulness' (p. 136). We must agree with him on the necessity of assent to historical (in principle now verifiable or falsifiable) and eschatological (only verifiable or falsifiable in the future) statements for traditional Christians. But it would seem very odd for God to leave those whom he calls to believe in him without any sufficient present evidence of himself, and very odd for us to believe in a number of remarkable events in the past, and hope for still more remarkable ones in the future, without some sort of present awareness (admittedly very difficult to state satisfactorily) of God revealing them.

On p. 161, when considering the meanings of the word 'God', Mr Meynell says that it is proximate to nonsense to deny the existence of God in the sense of 'first cause'. This at least requires a good deal of argument to support it, and cannot just be asserted as it is here, since

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most unbelievers nowadays would flatly deny that it was necessary to assume any single 'first cause' of events in any sense. On p. 225, in the summary of Bultmann's views, a 'not' seems to have dropped out of the sentence 'God must be regarded as an object for metaphysical speculation, as he is by Catholic theology, and his action must not be conceived as expressing itself in physical events'.   A. H. ARMSTRONG

Logique de la Foi by H. Bouillard, s.J. Pp. 197 (Aubier) n.p.

P. BOUILLARD tells us in his Preface that he was hesitant about accepting the suggestion of collecting these apparently disparate pieces into a single volume. They were also, he says, 'command performances' in each case and require to be seen in a context. But he need have had no anxiety. The fact that they are all animated, as he puts it, by the same intention: 'to bring out the secret correspondence between the logic of human existence and the appeal of the Christian mystery' is of itself sufficient justification. But there is another consideration. The reader of this short book will be given a bird's-eye view of the ground covered by P. Bouillard in his longer works and will thus be encouraged to read them.

The first part of the book consists of two papers on apologetics and an address on Christian liberty. Since the sort of apologetics which P. Bouillard advocates is Blondelian, the topic of liberty is quite naturally connected with it. 'I think', he writes, 'that no one has defined better than Blondel what apologetics ought to be in the modern world. It is true that his work contains obscurities and is out of date in several respects. But it has touched the crucial point so precisely that it is still illuminating for us today' (p. 30). P. Bouillard writes with great clarity and conciseness, and it would be necessary to quote at inordinate length in an attempt to bring out the importance of his conclusions in this (or in any) part of his new book. It is possible only to make a few references to certain passages of peculiar interest. On the certainty of faith he writes: 'God reveals himself to each of us, at the heart of the act of faith which he himself determines. Our awareness of this revelation has the character of a direct and personal apprehension, of an intimate experience, of a supernatural perception analogous to mystical knowledge. Many theologians admit today that it is this experience of God on which the certainty of our faith is founded.' 'But', he continues, 'it must be emphasized no less strongly that God always reveals himself in a mediate way, under the sign and the veil of objects distinct from himself, and that we always know him in this mediate way, through the signs . . . The sign is the human reality of Jesus Christ' (pp. 19-20). On this background, P. Bouillard presents the Blondelian thesis: 'To show the duty of believing, one must first show that the Christian faith conditions the achievement of our human destiny. No apologetic is of use unless, in some fashion, it takes that course. It would be fruitless to establish miracles and great

events if one did not show that the Christian phenomenon of which they form a part gives the answer to the question of our existence' (p. 26).

The second section consists of articles and conferences on Kierkegaard, 'dialectical theology' and Bultmann's 'demythisation' (to use P. Bouillard's term). It contains a *résumé* of the first of his two volumes on Karl Barth, which alone would be enough to recommend it. But it is also an account of 'existential' theology which many might find the first fully intelligible account which they have read. It is a genuine 'dialogue'. The true insights of these thinkers are recognized, and their affinities with Catholic theology are clearly shown. The apparent irrationality of Kierkegaard is discussed in a way which seems most admirably balanced. Barth's rejection of a natural knowledge of God is treated in a really convincing way because P. Bouillard's account of this knowledge is not subject to the objections which can be rightly urged against conventional accounts of it. Bultmann's intentions receive a sympathetic treatment which gives added force to the conclusion that it is, fundamentally, Bultmann's Lutheran approach which leads him to attach so little importance to the historical personage, Jesus Christ (p. 144). The last section consists of an article on Gabriel Marcel and the magisterial discourse for the centenary of Blondel's birth delivered at Aix in 1961. Marcel's work is here considered in all its bearings; it is astonishing that so much ground could be covered with such apparent ease in so short a space. P. Bouillard is generous in his praise of Marcel, and the true value of his work emerges — the criticism is made that his attitude to our time is a rather negative one ('it is in our present world and from our historical situation that we must rejoin the eternal', p. 165). The discourse on Blondel is undoubtedly the best introduction to his work and should gain more readers for P. Bouillard's great book *Blondel et le Christianisme*.

ILLTYD TRETHOWAN

L'Église et les laïcs by Jean Guitton. Pp. 198 (Desclée de Brouwer) 120 F.B.

As the first layman to be invited to attend the Council, first as an observer and then as an auditor, M. Guitton would seem to be well qualified to write on the subject of the role of the laity in the Church. He bases his reflections on Newman's *Rambler* article 'On Consulting the Faithful in matters of Doctrine' (July, 1859) which he reprints in a French translation; as a result, out of 189 pp. of text 131 pp. are taken up with the article, an introduction to it and some extracts from Newman's note to *The Arians* where these are relevant. So we are left with only some sixty pages of M. Guitton's own reflections on the subject of his book. In reality the pages of the book actually devoted to the subject and containing fresh matter amount to exactly forty-six, since the last section consists of an appendix, first published in the *Revue Apologétique* as long

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The Myth of Simplicity. By Mario Bunge. Pp. xii, 240, London, Prentice-Hall International, 1963, 48s.

The 'myth' which Bunge attacks in this book is the idea that the function of science is to simplify—to show that the apparent complexity of the world can be reduced to simple terms. While not denying that the search for simplicity has a place in science, he maintains that its importance has been overrated. The result has been that much contemporary philosophy of science is guilty of oversimplification: it fails to appreciate the true complexity of the physical world. Among those modern trends which are open to criticism on this score are reductionist theories which would reduce physical objects to collections of sense-data; linguistic analysis in so far as it seeks to make ordinary linguistic usage the general philosophical norm, ignoring the depth and subtlety of scientific language; and linguistic formalism which seeks to impose a logically precise, purely formal language which, again, only achieves its end by means of a systematic impoverishment of scientific discourse.

In a painstaking series of studies, Bunge examines a number of aspects of the general notion of simplicity, distinguishing between simplicity as a characteristic of the physical world and as a characteristic of our descriptions of it and, within the latter field, between simplicity of terms, propositions, laws and theories. Some of the analysis may strike the reader as over-elaborate. For instance, more than seven dozen different types of 'law-like statement' are distinguished (not all, admittedly, mutually exclusive) and it is by no means clear at the end that such a minute system of classification was really worth undertaking. Perhaps, though, it is as well that every possible distinction should be made at least once, in order to be sure that no significant differences have been overlooked.

In the main, the author establishes his point that the world, and scientific discourse about it, have a depth and richness to which writers on the philosophy of science have frequently failed to do justice. His argument would, however, have been greatly strengthened if his criticisms of false principles of simplicity had been counterbalanced by a more positive recognition of the genuine concepts of simplicity which science requires. In a true and important sense it can be said that the scientist discovers an underlying simplicity in the structure of the world whenever he finds that a set of apparently unrelated phenomena can be described by a single law, or that several apparently distinct laws are particular instances of a more general one. A universe in which relatively brief and simple law-like statements can convey large amounts of information about natural phenomena is, by any reasonable criterion, structurally simpler than one in which this is not the case. Bunge rightly stresses the difficulties which arise when we try to give precise definition to phrases such as 'simple statement' or 'structural simplicity'; nevertheless it seems impossible to doubt that they do have some significance. Modern developments in Information Theory could probably help to elucidate this question.

The author does not claim, however, to have given any final solution to his problems and it would perhaps be unfair to ask for a more comprehensive treatment of the theme than he intended to give. The book, as it stands, can be read with profit by all who are interested in the logical structure of science.

John L. Russell

Sense, Nonsense and Christianity. By H. Meynell. Pp. 281 (Stagbooks), London, Sheed & Ward, 1964, 12s. 6d.

The book is perhaps the first attempt by a philosopher of Catholic background to subject the statements of traditional Christianity to a kind of linguistic analysis. His task is not primarily to determine whether these statements are true or false, but rather to find the means by which they can be verified or falsified. The first chapter gives a very clear summary description of statements in general. A statement in order to signify facts has to fulfil certain conditions. By distinguishing between the necessary, the central and the peripheral conditions of meaningful propositions, the author explains the basic categories according to which he intends to analyse religious statements. Any statement that does not fulfil its necessary condition would be nonsensical, whereas the non-fulfilment of central conditions renders our propositions logically odd. It is noteworthy that, when discussing this basic distinction of the conditions of meaningfulness, the author relinquishes one of the original tenets of Wittgenstein and Ayer. According to him the necessary conditions of a statement, though strictly implied in it, are not affirmed analytically of the same. The difference between analytic and synthetic propositions is not one of kind but of degree.

In the second chapter the treatment of religious statements is approached by a discussion of value-statements. Braithwaite's reduction of these latter to moral commitment falsifies the nature of religious statements. To be religious implies not the use of a different set of criteria for valuation from that used by those who are not religious: it is rather to hold that there obtains a different state of affairs with an eye to which these criteria have to be employed. In other words religious statements are value-statements which necessarily depend on some factual truth-conditions and only secondarily on religious behaviour and moral attitudes.

The statements of traditional Christian belief are classified according to their factual entailments. The propositions of our Creed refer to historical facts of the past (e.g. 'suffered under Pontius Pilate') to facts of present experience ('I believe in the Holy Catholic Church'), and to future facts ('who cometh to judge the living and the dead'). For traditional Christianity the factual content of religious statements is kept in this threefold division and they are thus mutually irreducible. Modern theological thought on the other hand strives to reduce past and future factual references to present Christian experience. Thus Kant, for example, by translating its statements reduces traditional Christianity into moral imperatives; Schleiermacher's reductionism is founded on an aesthetical basis, where facts, past and future, are resolved in the present feeling-experience of the religious individual. Hegel's attitude to Christian belief is characterized as a 'metaphysical reductionism': religion is absorbed in the philosophy of self-realizing Mind, the subject *par excellence* which can never become the factual object of our religious statements. It is only in the appendix that the author discusses the existentialist

reductionism of Bultmann, and analyses the idea of demythologization. Briefly, 'reductionist' theologies invert the proportion among the truth-conditions of traditional Christianity where past and future facts were the necessary conditions and present experiential facts only the central conditions.

Chapter V proceeds to discuss the ontological implications of traditional religious statements. The common-sense ontology, which seems to be at the basis of traditional belief, presupposes three irreducible types of beings: persons, sensations, material objects. Now just as a 'reductionist' theologian tries to eliminate past and future facts as necessary truth-conditions of his statements, so analytic philosophy endeavours to reduce these three types of existence to one. The author argues that this reduction is not permissible. For instance, religious statements about the existence of God cannot be reduced to the affirmation of a certain pattern of natural phenomena, as Ayer suggested, and the 'God language' of the Bible naturally presupposes and affirms the personal element in God when it acknowledges his manifestation in nature. 'God is angry' is not reducible to the statement 'It thunders'. The truth conditions of religious statements are of wider range than the verifiable propositions of the analyst, already on the level of ontological implications. The case of this 'personal element' presupposed by traditional religious statements is well argued both against Professor Ayer and Professor Ryle. There *are* private facts about persons which are not equivalent to the public facts about them, by virtue of which persons may thus be said in a sense to transcend the public world. If this can be said meaningfully of any person, all the more can the same be affirmed of the traditional idea of God in Christian belief. The Christian acknowledges God not only as the First Cause or the object of man's worship or the sanction of man's works, but as a free personal agent who brought about striking events in past history. This view and its implications can be denied by atheists or deists, but whether one believes it or not, the traditional Christian's affirmation can claim the support of facts which are at least in principle verifiable. Thus the statements of traditional Christianity are allegations, whether true or false, of public or private facts. Chapter VI gives us some examples of how the principles previously stated can be used in the analysis of religious mysteries. For mysteries, too, are religious statements in so far as some of their truth-conditions within the system of a religious doctrine can be pointed out. Thus the truth conditions, necessary central and peripheral, of the Inspiration of Sacred Scripture, of Miracles and Visions, of Christology, of the Real Presence are discussed in turn. The author's presentation of these latter, though rather sweeping, cannot fail to arouse the interest of Christian apologists and systematic theologians.

Some reflections may be added to this interesting attempt by Mr Meynell. The first is concerned rather with the structure of the whole book than with its contents. In his introduction the author forecasts the general trend of his argument: 'of the logical positivist's criteria of meaningfulness some are fulfilled by the doctrines of traditional Christianity, while the others are themselves invalid'. To tell the truth, after reading carefully the ensuing discussions, I am still unable to say *which* criteria of meaning are fulfilled by Christianity and *which* are in themselves

invalid. Secondly, without sharing the somewhat sanguine views of Professor I. Ramsey, who seems to expect from an analytic approach to theology a revolutionary renewal of this discipline, I had anticipated a more positive evaluation of linguistic analysis as applied to Christian doctrine. To use the language of certain philosophical method means a commitment to the basic intuitions of the same, whether in their original sense or in their reasonably revised perspectives. For either one accepts the basic tenets of logical positivism along with its jargon and admits that they are inapplicable to Christian mysteries, or else one enters into a dialogue with the analyst in order to grasp in his very method those basically true intuitions which, correctly understood, not only do not prove our religious statements to be meaningless, but rather throw a new light on them. I believe that this latter alternative is possible without altogether sacrificing the basic tenets of linguistic analysis. There is no half-way house between these alternatives, where we could pick and choose among the ideas of a philosophical method at our pleasure. (Perhaps the author's attitude to the strict division of statements into analytical and synthetic, is an example of this point. It is true, some analysts have already abandoned Ayer's and Wittgenstein's strict division, but to me none of their arguments are altogether convincing.) Thirdly, the most valuable result of the author's investigation is the clear distinction between the 'traditionalist' and 'reductionist' versions of Christian religious statements, and this corresponds with what has happened in the so-called 'reductionist' tendencies in the field of ontology. From a philosophical point of view I found the author's arguments more or less convincing. I am not convinced, however, about their straightforward application to the truth-conditions of traditional Christianity. Mr Meynell affirms on the one hand that the necessary truth-conditions of traditional Christianity are those referring to historical facts of past and future, whereas present Christian experience is only a central condition of the same. But, on the other hand he seems to maintain that the relationship of the latter to the former conditions is a necessary one (cf. p. 248). But is the necessity of this relationship reciprocal? In other words: do the factual conditions of past and future strictly imply *some* present Christian experience? And vice versa? Can we not ask whether this present Christian experience does not turn statements about past and future events into meaningfully religious statements? Whatever this Christian experience is, and however one sets about its 'thematization', is it not our task also to explain? The attempts of 'reductionist' theologians have the merit of emphasizing (even if unduly) the importance of the 'experience' in question. Any Christian religious statement that did not refer to the event of Christ would be admittedly nonsensical. But equally, any Christian statement that did not strictly imply a present Christian experience of the individual who professes it, would be not only odd, but irrelevant from the point of view of traditional Christianity. Not even Catholic apologists can dismiss summarily Paul Tillich's statement: 'Theology deals with what concerns us inescapably, ultimately. . . . Without the element of Ultimate concern no assertion is a theological one' (*The Protestant Era* [London 1951], p. 98).

GEORGE VASS

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