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Linguistic Analysis and Metaphysics as a Problem

Linguistic analysis has been variously described as a revolution in philosophy, a new conception of what philosophy is about, as the discovery of a new method issuing in a truly new subject. Where exactly lies the originality of this present-day movement in British thought and, in particular, its repercussions in the area of metaphysics will form the central idea of this paper. To accomplish that end a certain amount of historical retracing is necessary, beginning with Moore and on up to the Oxford school of ordinary language of today. Much of this is already familiar enough ground and has been admirably sketched in two recent studies, one, *Philosophical Analysis* by J. O. Urmson and the other, from a Thomistic point of view, *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* by M. J. Charlesworth.[1] No pretense, therefore, is made at completeness. Rather, our historical synopsis serves merely as the vehicle for highlighting certain metaphysical problems at the heart of " analysis."

The task of linguistic or logical analysis may be roughly defined as a kind of paraphrase or translation, but " a translation within a language, not from one language to another : a translation from a less explicit to a more explicit form, or from a misleading to an unmisleading form." [2] Wittgenstein, the school's most influential figure, explains the purpose of translation in describing philosophy as " a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language." [3] But for all that, analysis is not grammar, a concern for words *qua* words. What interests the analyst is what these words may *mean*. Thus summing up the preoccupations of British philosophers from the turn of the century G. Ryle makes this comment :

> Meanings . . . are what Moore's analyses have been analyses of ; meanings are what Russell's logical atoms were atoms of ; . . . meanings are what the members of the Vienna circle proffered a general litmus-paper for ; meanings are what the *Tractatus*, with certain qualifications, denies to the would-be propositions of both Formal Logic and of philosophy ; and yet meanings are just what, in different ways, philosophy and logic are *ex officio* about.[4]

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1. *Philosophical Analysis. Its Development Between the Two World Wars* (Oxford, 1956) ; *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* (Pittsburg, 1959).

2. A. J. Ayer (and others), *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London, 1956), p.99.

3. *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, 1953), p.47.

4. A. J. Ayer (and others), *op. cit.*, p.8 ; cf. A. J. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge* (New York, 1956), p.8, p.28.

It is claimed, furthermore, that analysis is neither a sophisticated form of logical positivism nor a version of the traditional English empiricism. More interestingly, analysts propose to solve meaning problems on a piecemeal basis without involvement in any *a priori* epistemological or metaphysical prejudice. The why and wherefore of such a program is abundantly clear in historical perspective.

HISTORICAL DERIVATION

The development of analysis is commonly set down in three main periods : firstly, that of its co-founders, Russell and Moore, which joined with the work of the younger Wittgenstein marked the rise of logical atomism ; the mid-thirties, secondly, saw logical positivism replace atomism as the center of interest through the influence of the Vienna Circle and of A. J. Ayer ; a change is noted, finally, with the beginning of the war and the names of Ryle, Wisdom and Wittgenstein dominate the new scene. Original impetus to the movement was provided by F. H. Bradley and representatives of the neo-Hegelian school, for it was against their grandiose schemes of the universe that Russell and Moore reacted so forcefully.

Attempting a more modest account of the world, Russell relied in great part upon his conception of formal logic. Economy and precision were to be had through logical analysis, by showing that philosophical puzzles were the result of bad grammar (hence the importance of the study of language), and by giving a picture of the world with strict use of his symbolic calculus, the skeleton of the one perfect language into which ordinary language could be translated. Depending on their simplicity or complexity, then, all genuine propositions will be either atomic or molecular and report corresponding facts of the world of science and daily life. J. Wisdom summed up the idea of atomists, saying that if a sentence F expresses the fact F′ then the object of analyzing the sentence F was to get a clearer insight into the ultimate structure of F′.[1] Thus while the method of analysis was linguistic, its aim was metaphysical, i.e., to reveal the structure of facts.[2] Russell's basic assumption is likewise clear, namely, that there exists a world of facts having a structure similar to that of logic.

This metaphysic, Urmson explains, showed the point of analysis and thus justified its practice.[3] Should philosophers find the metaphysic unacceptable, they would be forced either to give up the enterprise of analysis or to think up some better explanation of their practice. Philosophers did find serious flaws in the metaphysics of atom-

1. J. O. URMSON, *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford, 1956), p.26.

2. G. J. WARNOCK, *English Philosophy Since 1900* (London, 1958), p.32 ; URMSON, *op. cit.*, p.50.

3. URMSON, *op. cit.*, p.98.

ism — notably, that while itself an avowed metaphysic, it dismissed metaphysical statements as products of linguistic confusion. Wittgenstein, prominently, was logical enough to brand his conclusions in the *Tractatus* as senseless. Such internal strain could not long endure and atomism lost favor amid the growing rejection of all metaphysics. In the end, the logical atomists were, according to Urmson, inconsistent empiricists (and one may wonder, in passing, if there can be any other kind).[1] The method and practice of analysis continued, nevertheless, with its adherents seeking a new rationale of their occupations. Russell was wrong to claim *his* method to be philosophically neutral but he set a pattern for things to come.

G. E. Moore followed his colleague Russell in the work of analysis but never embraced the doctrine of atomism. Instead he devoted himself to a defense of common sense truths which he found expressed in terms of ordinary language. Unlike Russell, his aim was not to discover facts but to clarify knowledge and to expose doctrines which were in opposition to " common sense " ; like Russell, the means he used was analysis of language. Moore did not think that this was all there was to philosophy nor did he deny the meaningfulness of metaphysics as such. Since his problem, however, was not the fact of common sense truths but how they were to be analyzed, he gave vogue to the opinion that " the business of philosophy is clarification and not discovery ; that its concern is with meaning, not with truth ; that its subject-matter is our thought or language, rather than facts." [2] Moore has endeared himself to present-day analysis because for him, " analysis was not the instrument of a wholesale metaphysics, but the method of a piecemeal elucidation." [3] While escaping the difficulties of atomism, Moore was left with the problem of determining what statements are common sense truths and what are not. Unwilling to say common consent and let it go at that, he never really came to formulate a criterion. His analyses suffer in that regard, for one could never tell if a given analysis was correct and not wholly arbitrary. It is no accident, Charlesworth remarks, that Moore " has never formulated a single complete and satisfactory analysis ; his failure derives from the very nature of his method." [4] Russell at least was not open to this charge since the metaphysic of atomism served as a criterion and justification of his analyses.

Neither Moore nor Russell, however, put forth these new ideas in a sufficiently coherent and vigorous way. It was Wittgenstein who synthesized their practices into a formal position, erecting a philosophy of analysis and establishing himself as the leading figure

1. *Ibid.*, p.53.
2. G. J. Warnock, *English Philosophy Since 1900* (London, 1958), p.29.
3. A. J. Ayer (and others), *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London, 1956), p.98.
4. *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* (Pittsburg, 1959), p.44.

in its development. In an oft-quoted passage in the *Tractatus* he states :

> The object of philosophy is the logical classification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of philosophical propositions but to make propositions clear.[1]

Philosophy, then, becomes pure method, the therapeutic critique of language to clarify thought by pointing out various linguistic confusions that give rise to mental puzzles and a means of solving, or rather dissolving, perennial philosophical problems by showing there were no genuine problems to begin with. This may sound like positivism and, indeed, it has been so interpreted, but Wittgenstein himself always rejected this interpretation. His reason for doing so seems to be that, while positivism made use of an *a priori* metaphysical assumption in delimiting meaning, he professed that his own criterion was based on a purely logical examination of language. He arrived, in any case, at the general positivist idea. " What can be said at all can be said clearly : and whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent," [2] he remarks solemnly, and " what can be said " shortly becomes equivalent to the propositions of the natural sciences.[3]

It would seem best to admit a progression in Wittgenstein's thought from the *Tractatus* period to that of the *Philosophical Investigations*.[4] With his return to Cambridge in 1929 he has rejected atomism and no longer conceives " sense " and " nonsense " in a univocal way. These notions vary from what he calls one " language game " to another. " Think of the tools in a tool-box," he says, " there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a ruler, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws — The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects." [5] Use, then, is the fundamental concept and meaning is the use. He no longer asks " What does P mean ? ",

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1. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, transl. C. Ogden (London, 1922), 4.112.

2. *Ibid.*, p.27.

3. *Ibid.*, 6.53.

4. This view is supported by A. Quinton (" Linguistic Analysis," in *Philosophy in the Mid-Century*, II, ed. R. Klibansky (Florence, 1958), p. 177.) and by G. J. Warnock (" The Philosophy of Wittgenstein," *ibid.*, pp.203-204). C. B. Daly, furthermore, believes that " as Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was positivism negating itself to posit a mysticism ; so the *Philosophical Investigations* show positivism repudiated to make possible a metaphysics." (" Logical Positivism, Metaphysics and Ethics, I : Ludwig Wittgenstein," *Irish Theological Quarterly*, XXIII (1956) p.141). A. Kenny, finally, points out that the issues on which Thomas differed from his medieval critics — the nominalists and Scotists — are exactly the issues on which Wittgenstein was at variance with positivist thought. (" Aquinas and Wittgenstein," *The Downside Review*, LXXVII (1959), pp.217-235).

5. *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, 1953), p.6.

but " How is P used ? ". This way of seeing things, so Wittgenstein claims once again, involves no metaphysical *a priori* because it is justified on purely logical grounds.

Though surely a broader conception of meaning than that outlined in the *Tractatus*, his theory is open to serious objections. One might frame the problem along the lines suggested by Wittgenstein and instead of asking what is the criterion that separates sense from nonsense, ask what is a legitimate use of a word or sentence and what is not. The reply, so obviously circular, that a word has a use if that use is meaningful is thus precluded. Despite an examination of the context and of all circumstances connected with the use of a given term, there must be some final criterion that will distinguish a legitimate use from an illegitimate one — and it is this criterion that Wittgenstein refuses to offer. Without such a norm it is impossible to see how he can justify all he has to say about the nature of philosophy. If, furthermore, a philosopher intends to say something which is not purely logical or tautological — and this cannot be done by logical analysis alone — he is forced to make extralogical assumptions. Some doubt, therefore, is cast upon Wittgenstein's assertion that his conception of meaning derives from a simple logical analysis of language. These and like difficulties continue to plague analysts because it is Wittgenstein who plotted the course.

A certain line of development can now be seen in the practice of analysis, for which reason Charlesworth argues that the rise of logical positivism in the years before the war was a deviation from its natural path.[1] At the basis of positivism, we recall, was the metaphysical and epistemological assumption of the verification principle. Previous history had shown that any effort to justify analysis in this way was self-defeating and a violation of its *raison d'être*, since it involved the same would-be problems analysis was supposed to transcend. In other words, positivism eliminated metaphysics only by eliminating itself. This is all quite true but positivism was only filling the gap left by logical atomism. If the method of analysis was to continue, as it did, and if atomism was judged unacceptable, some new rationale for its practice had to be provided. The verification principle made the equation between factual propositions and those of natural science a simple matter, leaving all other propositions but tautologies so much noise. The business of the philosopher was not, then, to reveal the structure of facts, this being the domain of science, but only to analyze and clarify the logical structure of language as such. Philosophy was analysis and only analysis ; philosophy was logic and, in particular, the logic of science.

The similarity of this positivist scheme with that of atomism should not go unobserved. Both regarded language as a truth-

1. *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* (Pittsburg, 1959), pp.126-127.

functional structure, founded ultimately upon atomic propositions. Such a view appeared essential to empiricism, explains Urmson, for " it showed how the building stones of human knowledge were securely based on experience." [1] Both, furthermore, were a justification of reductive analysis, by tradition the main task of empiricism, a guarantee that empiricist analysis was possible and uniquely possible.[2] The failure of both systems to fulfill their assigned missions emphasized the fact that any attempt to found analysis on an *a priori* principle is self-defeating. A new policy of tolerance will replace these restrictive measures and dominate the thinking of the contemporary scene. The change with regard to the problem of meaning is well summarized by G. J. Warnock when he writes that :

> . . . language has many uses, ethical, aesthetic, literary, and indeed metaphysical uses among them. There is no tendency to say " You must not (or cannot) say that " ; there is a readiness to appraise on its own merits whatever may be said and for whatever purpose, provided only that something *is* said and words are not used idly.[3]

Explaining the change in contemporary analysis, Urmson notes a shift in precept from " The meaning of a statement is the method of its verification " to " Don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use " and " Every statement has its own logic." [4] The pivotal concept becomes that of *use* and Wittgensteins' lead is unmistakable. By asking for the use, one avoids seeking equivalent statements according to one or other preconceived category and focuses on the job for which a particular word or expression is employed. A first consequence is the rejection of what Austin calls the " descriptive fallacy," i.e., given that some words have meaning because they describe things, all words must have meaning in this way.[5] Ryle names this the " ' Fido ' — Fido theory of meaning." [6] There is, then, no single function which all sentences perform — every statement has its own logic.

If this is so, a second and more important consequence for British analysts immediately follows : reductive analysis is impossible and *ipso facto* false. Reduction meant the logical assimilation of one form of statement to another privileged type and, concretely, the translation of ordinary language into simple atomic reports of immediate

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1. J. O. URMSON, *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford, 1956), p.159.

2. *Ibid.*, p.148.

3. A. J. AYER (and others), *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London, 1956), p.125.

4. *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford, 1956), p.179. Cf. also : S. TOULMIN, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge, Eng., 1953), p.83 ; P. NOWELL-SMITH, *Ethics* (London, 1954), p.61. The relationship between meaning and use can also be traced to C. S. Peirce.

5. " Other Minds," in *Logic and Language*, II, ed. A. Flew (Oxford, 1956), p.146.

6. "Meaning and Necessity," *Philosophy*, XIX (1949), p.69.

experience. Such a process would distort rather than reveal the structure of facts or of language. On this view it follows that atomism and positivism are false by their very nature, that language cannot be regarded as truth-functional, that " the ancient doctrine of British empiricism that all non-simple concepts are complexes of simple concepts must finally go." [1] Weitz justly describes the evolution from Russell to Ryle as " from the belief that the prime task of philosophy is the replacement of castigated expressions by good ones, to the belief that this task is the elucidation of expressions such as they are." [2] Today's analysts have something of a broader outlook and Urmson remarks :

> The tendency now will be to ask questions like " What are people doing when they use ethical, scientific, metaphysical language, claim knowledge or express belief, make promises or express sympathy ? " without trying to fit them all into a few *a priori* categories.[3]

One beneficial result of this new tendency is to reintroduce a consideration of analogical language, particularly that of metaphysics and theology. The positivist's aim of complete univocity is quietly disgarded. Indeed, if " use " is the pivotal concept, propositions and not isolated words must be examined ; if " every statement has its own logic," formal logic will not be adequate to handle all significant discourse ; if the complexity and flexibility of language is recognized, willy-nilly analogy becomes an object of study.[4]

Another but less beneficial result is the arbitrary character assigned to meanings by a thorough application of the notion of " use." [5] Meaning, in the end, becomes a matter of convention.[6] It follows, therefore, that analysis is an affair of arbitrary decision, much like modern logic and mathematics, a logical enquiry concerned with statements and their relationships to one another and not with the relation of statements to fact.[7] One might agree that analysis is con-

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1. J. URMSON, *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford, 1956), p.161.

2. "Oxford Philosophy," *The Philosophical Review*, XXXII (1953), p.228.

3. URMSON, *op. cit.*, p.172.

4. Cf. G. J. Warnock's analysis of the notion of "proof" in *English Philosophy Since 1900* (London, 1958), pp.83-84.

5. Differing from Wittgenstein, analysts of the Oxford School regard the equation between meaning and use as a practical methodological rule. Cf. M. WEITZ, "Oxford Philosophy," *The Philosophical Review*, XXXII (1953), p.188.

6. A. QUINTON, " Linguistic Analysis," in *Philosophy in the Mid-Century*, II, ed. R. Klibansky (Florence, 1958), p.148. A significant value of this chapter is the critical bibliography appended.

7. Ayer differs from most analysts in this regard, since he feels that philosophy must be allowed to talk of the relation of propositions with reality. Cf. his *The Problem of Knowledge* (New York, 1956), pp.28-29 and his address, "Meaning and Intentionality," *Proceedings of the XII*th *International Congress of Philosophy* I (Florence, 1958), pp.139-156.

cerned with meanings and not with contingent facts, but to conclude that it is therefore concerned in no way with existence is something that requires further proof.

THE NATURE AND AIM OF ANALYSIS

With this brief conspectus we are in a position to form some conclusions on the nature and aim of contemporary linguistic analysis. Analysis is, first and foremost, concerned with meanings and thought, so distinguishing itself from earlier and more psychologically orientated forms of British thought. A sharp distinction is made between what an idea or image *is* and what it *means*. The shift has been traced to Bradley's critique of psychological empiricism, with Russell and Moore absorbing into their own systems that aspect of the idealist tradition which distinguished sensation from thought and emphasized the importance of the latter.[1] It is not surprising, then, that in their attempt to understand thought analysts turned to language, for it is in language that thought finds its expression. The study of language highlighted certain snares that lie therein, principally that of inferring from grammatical properties of sentences to the make-up of thought and the world and that of putting language to unsuitable tasks. This, in turn, led to the idea that the major, if not all, philosophical problems were generated by linguistic confusion. Analysis, consequently, was the means to dispel this confusion and clarify our thought.

The aim of present day analysis comes into focus : " to clear up puzzlement, prevent misconstruction of language, and expose absurd theories." [2] With no ontological goal of discovering the structure of reality, analysis is termed un-metaphysical as opposed to the doctrinally anti-metaphysical policies of logical positivism. But if metaphysics is permanently put aside, can there be any justification of the analytical technique, any criterion by which to measure the success of solutions to various problems of meanings? Precisely at this point does the analyst propose this new thesis ; the theory and practice of analysis is not committed to any sort of metaphysic but is metaphysically neutral ; its criterion of meaning is founded on purely logical grounds. Previous history, in the form of atomism and positivism, had warned that any attempt to justify analysis by an appeal to metaphysics was fatal to its very existence. When it was further realized that reductive analysis was an impossible and deceptive task, this seemed to render pointless the whole metaphysical program of atomism and positivism — and by extension that of any

1. A. AYER (and others), *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London, 1956), p.42.

2. J. URMSON, *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford, 1956), p.116.

metaphysics. There could be then no metaphysical justification of analysis ; the new rationale of its practice is simply that analysis justifies itself by its efficacy in dissolving mental puzzles. Use the method, we are told, and you will see its value for yourself. Because a general theory or superior principle has no place in the business of analysis, problems must be attacked as they arise, one by one. The work must be peacemeal or, to use Henry Adams' description of British method, " scrappy." [1]

Given these premises, it is a simple matter to define the analyst's conception of philosophy. If philosophical problems are at least *de facto* the result of linguistic confusion, they are really pseudo-problems and the philosophical task is to dissolve them by means of analysis.[2] It follows, furthermore, that philosophy has but a *de facto* necessity and can claim no special area of research, no formal object, its task being the elucidation of what is already known. In short, philosophy is analysis or, as Wittgenstein would say, pure method. A. Quinton sums up the matter when he explains that the *analysis* of linguistic analysis designates the proper object and purpose of philosophy, namely, the clarification of the concepts and methods used in science and in all forms of thought ; philosophy is neither the constructive metaphysical type seen in tradition nor a discipline that ranks along side of or above the special sciences.[3] *Linguistic*, on the other hand, points out the subject matter of philosophy, for language is the raw material to which analysis is applied. Philosophy, Quinton concludes, is " a kind of generalization of formal logic." [4]

CRITIQUE OF ANALYSIS

What analysis calls into question, then, is the very nature and purpose of philosophy. By way of entering into an evaluation of these ideas we shall describe a general scheme or program of analysis which was outlined by Strawson and developed by Warnock.[5] Two main areas of work are first distinguished, the analytic or critical and

1. Cf. G. J. Warnock, " The Philosophy of Wittgenstein," in *Philosophy in the Mid-Century* II, ed. R. Klibansky (Florence, 1958), p.206.

2. Most analysts avoid saying that *all* philosophical problems are problems of language and that philosophy is *only* analysis. That would imply an *a priori* principle and contemporary analysis is supposed to be characterized by its abstention from *a priori* commitments.

3. " Linguistic Analysis," in *Philosophy in the Mid-Century* II, ed. R. Klibansky (Florence, 1958), p.146.

4. *Ibid.* The conclusion is similar to the positivist thesis that all philosophical problems are syntactical or formal and not material.

5. Cf. P. Strawson, " Construction and Analysis," in *The Revolution in Philosophy*, by A. J. Ayer (and others) (London, 1956), pp.106-110 ; G. J. Warnock, " Analysis and Imagination," *ibid.*, pp.112-125.

the imaginative. These are further subdivided, (*a*) the analytic into the therapeutic and systematic and (*b*) the imaginative into the explanatory and inventive. The analytic, we might say, answers the question, " How does our language function ? ", and the imaginative, " Why do we use it in the way we do ? ". More precisely, the therapeutic phase works on individual problems that arise in human discourse while the systematic considers the problem of language on a more universal level. The explanatory attempts to go further and give the *why* of various linguistic uses, which is necessary if one is to claim any real understanding of language and thought. Hume's work on causation is an obvious example of this type of analysis. Finally, there is the inventive stage, conspicuous by the mark that facts remain unchanged while the concepts used to describe them differ. The studies of Copernicus in astronomy and of Einstein in physics clarify the point at issue — these men are inventors of *new* ways of looking at *old* facts. Now this is precisely the analytic conception of metaphysics, a system that offers a new way of looking at facts. Berkeley and Kant are cited as typical metaphysicians in this fashion. The great illusion of the metaphysician, analysts believe, is that he presents his viewpoint as the right and only way of looking at things.[1] With this explanation of metaphysics as an " inventive " task, I propose to show that the work of analysts in the preceding stages is open to serious question.

The first division, we recall, embraced the therapeutic and systematic stages of analysis, the former being the preoccupation of what is called the English school and the latter, that of the American school. The English group comprises Wisdom at Cambridge and Ryle, Austin, Warnock, Hampshire, etc., at Oxford ; the American contribution begins with such European born as Carnap, Hempel and Feigl and is joined by Quine, Goodman, White and Church, among others. The difference of view, minimized by some and emphasized by others, can be explained by the difficulties that plagued atomism and positivism and the alternative they seemed to present. One might turn from natural language and construct and study artificial languages, the argument going that the vague and ambiguous nature of natural language makes it unsuitable for philosophical research. Or one might rest content with natural language, reasoning that this is what is in fact used and that a foolproof language is impossible to achieve. Thus the English school of " ordinary language " sees its task as wholly therapeutic, as resolving philosophical confusion by calling attention to the way in which words are actually used and, consciously departing from Russell, without legislating how words ought to be used. While the Americans have been forced to concentrate on specialized languages of science and mathematics, this school believes the analytic technique

1. *Ibid.*, pp.121-123.

can be applied to all forms of thought and has extended its investigations to politics, history, art and religion.

Although the importance of J. Wisdom's work at Cambridge cannot be denied, the Oxford school of ordinary language commands greater attention today and critique must be centered here. Three major issues spring from the foregoing explanation of its present philosophy : the relationship between subject-matter and method, that between meaning and use, and the question of justification of analysis. These points overlap, to be sure, but for clarity's sake we shall consider each of them separately. Method takes precedence over subject matter in the eyes of the analyst for the very good reason that he regards philosophy as pure method with no particular formal object. One might ask, to begin with, why certain questions and pursuits are called philosophical, even by practitioners of analysis. Presumably because they have something in common and, if so, philosophy can be defined by that something. Every science, moreover, has an evidence proper to itself, an evidence that enters into the very make-up of the kind of demonstration it uses. But it is the evidence that determines the demonstration, not vice-versa. W. O. Martin has argued that to distinguish sciences by their methods is either to put the cart before the horse or to fail to see what is essential in the distinction of the sciences, concluding : " In the definition of a kind of knowledge, subject matter is prior to method." [1] Nothing would seem more evident, because a method is instrumental only ; its task is to take account of all the evidence relevant to a particular area of knowledge ; it must not distort or eliminate evidence. In short, method must be tailored to subject matter. The reason behind the analyst's priority of method is not difficult to find, for if philosophy is defined in terms of subject matter, metaphysics is a second and necessary step. Even as it stands the analyst can hardly avoid the specter of metaphysics. If by therapy he eliminates confusion and dissolves false explanations of the world, in that measure does he seek and foster *true* explanations. But " true " is a relative notion and in this case carries with it a reference to a norm and ultimately to the norm of being.

This same antipathy to metaphysics, it will appear, underlies the analyst's equation of meaning with use. The traditional notion is again reversed and meaning is defined in terms of longuistic use, after the manner of Wittgenstein. The immediate objection is all too clear : a use is a linguistic use because it means or signifies something. A linguistic use, therefore, is defined in terms of meaning and not vice-versa. Fundamentally, what analysis is attempting here is a separation between meaning as a relation and meaning as what is meant, i.e., between the meaningful use of language and its extra-

1. *The Order and Integration of Knowledge* (Ann Arbor, 1957), p.166.

linguistic reference. These notions, however, are correlative and defy separation.[1] All words, the most general included, must in some way refer to or signify something. One would agree with analysts that not all words name something but to add that they do not refer to anything is even more arbitrary than to claim they are all proper names. In order to avoid metaphysics, then, and propose a philosophically neutral method, analysis attempts to study meaning without at the same time studying the real ; it claims to settle meaning problems by a purely logical criterion and without a criterion of reality.[2] All that can result from this is a series of tautologies, an exercise in a game of language. Traditional empiricism, at least, did not make that mistake.

Be that as it may, the Oxford school insists that its single interest is with the arbitrary or conventional use of language. But this evasion of the problem cannot stand, for how is one to judge about these everyday uses of language? The notion of use, Ryle explains, is merely a device to remind us that words have meaning in different ways and especially that meaning is always relative to the context.[3] The context is, of course, important ; but if meaning were strictly relative to the particular context, there would be no common words at all. A much more serious difficulty is raised once it is asked, " What is ordinary language ? ". Surely not the actual way language is used since this is the alleged cause of philosophical confusion. Yet such seems to be the general reply, because ordinary language is said to be *ipso facto* meaningful. Moore made a similar claim for his " common-sense " truths and in neither case are we offered any convincing reasons other than a statement of the axiom itself. Even granted this unsupported premise, difficulties do not vanish. If language is *ipso facto* meaningful, the mystery remains how any problems can arise. While intending to dispel mental puzzles, analysts appear to deny their very problem. If, on the other hand, it was allowed that actual use of language generates linguistic confusion, one would scarcely be in a position to claim that actual use eliminates the confusion. The blind rarely lead the blind. Somewhere in the process an appeal must be made to a norm beyond that of use.

Eschewing this appeal, the ordinary language group is forced to uphold majority use as the final criterion of significance. Analysis cannot legislate but only describe what these predominant habits are ; the interesting question *why* they are so cannot be asked. What

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1. Cf. M. CHARLESWORTH, *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* (Pittsburg, 1959), p.217.

2. This separation helps explain why Ryle proposed — or at least gave the impression of proposing — a behavioristic solution to the connection between language and thought in *The Concept of Mind* (London, 1949).

3. " Ordinary Language," *The Philosophical Review*, XXXII (1953), p.177.

is worse, the analyst cannot state whether the majority rule is right or wrong, justified or arbitrary, and his gyrations in the field of ethics are a direct consequence of this. Nowell-Smith and Toulmin, for example, conclude that all one can do is describe various ways of life and leave the choice up to each individual.[1] Such complete relativism once again stems from a refusal of all extra-linguistic or extra-logical criteria.

Most of the critique could be foreseen in the two principles that are the hallmark of linguistic analysis : the rejection of reductive analysis and what Wisdom named the " idiosyncrasy platitude," every statement has its own logic. Reductive analysis, we remember, translated ordinary language into atomic reports of immediate experience, thus guaranteeing that knowledge is securely based on experience. When the process proved unacceptable, analysts simply concluded that knowledge is not securely based on experience and is conventional or arbitrary. The only legitimate conclusion, however, is that the empiricist brand of reduction does not adequately account for human knowledge. The same must be said of the metaphysics involved in reductive analysis. Granted that atomism and positivism ended in self-contradiction because of the particular metaphysic adopted, there is no reason to conclude that all metaphysics meet the same fate. Analysis has made much of avoiding metaphysical principles, especially those of atomism and positivism, but I suspect that while discarding empiricist metaphysics, it keeps to empiricist analysis. The courageous and logical step would be to discard empiricist analysis as well.

The second principle, the idiosyncrasy platitude, is a natural consequence of the rejection of reduction. Exaggerated liberalism now makes it impossible to show that any proposition is meaningless — for each has its own special logic — and significance must be allowed every proposition. Everyone is right, then, and Charlesworth aptly remarks that the idiosyncrasy platitude leads " to a kind of sanctification of the *status quo*." [2] The absence of metaphysics is again seriously felt, as it will be in our third point of critique, the justification of analysis (or of the analytic method, since the two are the same in their eyes).

We are told very clearly that analysis offers no justification of its philosophy in the traditional sense of the term, i.e., no metaphysical justification. Supposedly, this measure enables analysis to transcend traditional philosophical disputes. Because analysis is a new way of doing philosophy it is further contended that no such justification is needed. Nothing is asserted *a priori* ; instead, analysis

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1. P. Nowell-Smith, *Ethics* (London, 1954), p.315 ; S. Toulmin, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge, Eng., 1953), p.320.

2. *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* (Pittsburg, 1959), p.184.

shows philosophical problems to be products of linguistic confusion and that by reference to a " purely logical " standard. Analysis, therefore, justifies itself by its success in relieving philosophical tension and perplexity. The solution is a wholly pragmatic one and admittedly so.[1] But a justification by result begs the question, for it is the value of these results that are at issue. Any analogy with the psychoanalytic method breaks down at this point because the value of the results is clear only to the analysts, while in the former case there is something of an accepted norm of sanity. If you take our method, the analyst retorts, without any *a priori* prejudices, you will see its value for yourself. If you recognize the value of the method, then, you do not have *a priori* prejudices ; you are, in short, an analyst. The tautology hidden in this appeal Charlesworth translates as : " if you accept the analytic method (which is designed to show that all philosophical problems are pointless), you will discover for yourself that all philosophical problems are pointless." [2] A pragmatic basis is clearly insufficient to solve mental puzzles, to distinguish sense from nonsense. One cannot contend that a method is justified if it brings greater clarity, because an issue is made clearer only if the means of clarification is first acknowledged to be legitimate. To determine the validity of a philosophical method, then, one must eventually ask whether or not it leads to conclusions which are true. Analysts would have to know that the results of their methods are true by something other than the method itself.

To complete this matter of justification something must be said about the claim of a strictly neutral method. It is, in effect, a consequence of the premise we have just considered. If it were true that analysis justifies itself in dissolving philosophical confusion and that its criterion of significance is therefore purely logical, the idea of a neutral method might have some merit. Such is not the case, however. The question-begging appeal of that pragmatic justification vitiates any claim to a neutral method. What is perhaps fundamental to the insistence on neutrality, is the afore-mentioned attempt to divorce meaning from what is meant and the resulting belief that logic is wholly independent of what eventually might prove to be the foundations of metaphysics. But to divorce meaning from what is meant is to uphold a sign in isolation from what it signifies, which is to take a sign at once as a sign and not a sign. There are words in a dictionary whose meanings I do not know ; yet I know that, assuming that they are words, they must have some meaning. If they did not signify, how could they be words ? how could they be signs ? We name things as we know them and, by convention, we name them as

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1. Cf. A. DUNCAN JONES and S. HAMPSHIRE, " Are Philosophical Questions Questions of Language ?," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, XXII (1948), p.44.

2. *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* (Pittsburg, 1959), p.206.

we do. The relations with which we invest certain vocal sounds, converting these into signs, are products of our reason. Any given word is the work of practical reason. If taken as artifacts, words are the business of grammar. That words do not signify naturally (though nature will share in their making) is plain from the diversity of languages expressing much the same things. ' Horse,' ' equus,' and ' cheval ' refer to the same kind of animal. The diversity of these names does not change what they stand for. The logician is not concerned with this or that particular word (e.g. ' horse,' ' man,' ' animal ') as a given artifact, nor with the way it functions in a sentence ; he does not deal with relations of signification so taken. The grammarian has his definitions of noun, verb, adjective, etc. But the logician deals with words as parts of the enunciation qua *signifying* what is true or false. He is not concerned with the truth of a given enunciation (e.g. ' Man is an animal '), but with the enunciation as a sign by means of which something true can be expressed. Logic is described as a tool (' organon ') ; a tool has a purpose. The aim of logic is to find rules and means of setting order among our concepts, such as modes of dividing and defining.

Like the grammarian, the logician treats of words, but defines them as artifical signs of things as we know them. Words are a special kind of sign to the grammarian too, but he does not define them as such. Take ' Socrates,' the name of a given individual ; how this name came about is a matter of history ; how, in French, ' Socrates ' became ' Socrate ' is a problem of philology. But that the name of an individual, whatever it may be, is a sign devised to express an individual qua known, whoever he may be, is the business of logic, yet only to the extent that such a name can be the component of an enunciation as signifying what is true. In other words, this individual man Socrates is not the subject of logic, nor is Socrates qua known such a subject, and neither is *his* name. Socrates qua known, either as a *this*, as an *animal*, or as a *man*, belongs to the order of what are called first intentions. Now, in the example we have chosen, the name ' Socrates ' refers both to the first intention (namely, Socrates qua known) and, by means of this, to Socrates himself. The relation of signification, which makes the sound ' Socrates,' or its written substitute, a sign is still in the order of first intentions.[1] We do not name Socrates to set order in our minds. The logician is concerned with first intentions as the proximate foundation of certain relations which the mind discovers among the objects qua known and in the mind. In the enunciation ' Socrates is a man,' this name ' man ' stands for

1. This meaning of ' intention ' is a new imposition placed upon a word which originally referred to the order of appetite, as in ' What do you intend to do ? ' Hence, ' What is your intention ? ' In the present context, however, ' intention ' does not signify the appetitive act of intending, nor the act of the mind intent upon an object, but what the mind tends toward, namely, the object qua known.

something we know of Socrates, and so does ' animal ' in ' Socrates is an animal.' That Socrates is an animal, or a certain kind of animal called ' man,' is not the logician's concern. What the logician does point out is that man and animal are not said of Socrates in the same way : man can be said only of men, but animal can be said of horses as well, and thing of anything you please. These names (' man,' ' animal,' ' thing ') stand for something that can be said of many, though not in the same way. No matter what we choose to call ' what can be said of many,' everybody keeps using words to that effect and assumes that they are meaningful. Man can be said of Socrates, of Plato or of any individual of their kind ; but animal can be said of both horses and men, not to mention horse and man. In other words, these names stand for different types of " one said of many," and, consequently for different types of relations of one to many. Such relations are called *secunda intellecta,* or second intentions. They are so called because based upon objects qua known, viz., first intentions. These are the proximate foundation of logic, but the proper subject of logic is the second intentions. If the first intentions are removed, there is no knowledge and, therefore, no concepts to be set in order. If the foundations of first intentions are withdrawn, there is nothing to be known and, so far as we are concerned, nothing is — nor could 'nothing' be meaningful.

This brief exposition is intended to show that, though second intentions be only indirectly and remotely based upon reality, extra-logical foundations are still an essential condition of logic. Even though logic were about fictions, fictions still have some starting point in reality, such as a centaur, ' half man and half horse. ' There are no pure fictions, no more than there are relations without terms or signs that do not signify. To separate logic from its real foundations is intellectual suicide.

Perhaps our difficulty with *secunda intellecta* is that we try to conceive them as pictures of reality. Yet, there is neither a man nor a horse in the genus animal, so far as the logician is concerned. He will use ' animal ' as an instance of a certain type of predicability, but there are no animals in logic. Still, if every kind of thing that can be predicated in one way or another were removed, logic itself would be non-existent. As to words, some may evoke pictures in the mind ; ' Fido ' may call to your mind the image of a particular dog, and ' horse ' something you have seen. But the relations of signification attached to these sounds or scratches which, in the mind, point to what they mean, are quite invisible, unless the meaning of ' visible ' be extended. " Meaningless symbols " may be another source of difficulty. For, in symbolic logic, operations are most successfully carried on when what the symbols can be used to stand for is not attended to. But these operations are purely mechanical ; the symbols themselves are not taken as symbols, but as things out there

on the blackboard, or scratches fed into a machine. Symbolic logic so understood deals with extra-logical entities and operations.

The difficulty common to the points we have called into question, in sum, is the lack of a norm which, in turn, stems directly from a refusal of anything that might lead to metaphysics. We agree that the meanings of the word ' meaning ' are a matter of usage. *Nominibus utendum est ut plures.* But *what* the word 'meaning' is used to mean is not a matter of majority rule, no more than what a circle is, or a man, whatever the sound in common usage may be. If it were, then what is true or false, right or wrong would no longer be fair questions ; complete relativism is the result of extending the relativity of words to what they are intended to signify, as if whatever is were what it is by popular decree. Philosophers are thus condemned to forage for a collection of curiosities to be accredited by Gallup polls. This impasse and internal crisis do not promise long life for the present version of analysis. If one may draw a lesson from this crippling of the movement, would it not be that what the word ' philosophy ' means (as distinguished from the word itself), namely, what philosophy is, must be what the majority want it bo be ? The philosopher is then no longer free, but reduced to the role of a puppet playing for the gallery.

I have attempted to " show " that conclusion by tracing certain elements in the history of the movement, rather than by imposing an *a priori* from the outset. If atomism and positivism ended in self-stultification because they espoused an unsatisfactory metaphysic, ordinary-language philosophy, as I see it, reaches its present *impasse* because it outlaws the possibility of metaphysics by decree. This was a *de facto* situation. I should like to maintain, moreover, that some metaphysics, be it minimal and implicit, is *de jure* necessary to the philosophical task. How one can study meaning, distinguish sense from nonsense or describe what are truly factual data by a neutral or utterly self-contained logical method escapes this writer. Admittedly, such a method has appeal, if only it could be of some help in settling philosophical disputes, as Leibniz thought. Pure description, description without suppositions, has been held up as a high ideal in philosophy, but an ideal which, to my limited experience, has never been realized. I wonder further if it is more an ideal suited for a recording machine than for a man.

With regard to the type of neutral method proposed by analysts, at least, we have indicated various reasons that would seem to make a concomitant metaphysic absolutely necessary. These were : the priority of subject-matter over method, the correlation between the meaningful use of language and its extra-linguistic reference or foundation, the insufficiency of a pragmatic justification and, finally, the impossibility of divorcing logic from certain data now commonly called metaphysical. Whatever definite conclusions analysts have

reached, then, I would attribute to the force of *both* their method and implied metaphysic. This implied metaphysic would be one of empiricism, such as is reflected in the principle of verification. I agree with Fr. W. N. Clarke who feels that, like the Communist party, " the principle itself has not really died out but only gone underground and still continues to exercise an unobtrusive but potent influence on the majority of thinkers in the analytic tradition." [1] A. J. Ayer is of the same mind. He argues that analysts are in reality committed to some form of the verification principle, for " from what else does it follow that the analysis of an empirical statement is yielded by a description of the observable situations in which it holds ? " [2]

Fr. J. McGlynn, on the other hand, is more sanguine. The " happy analyst," he believes, might well avoid metaphysical prejudices and so offer a genuine presuppositionless description of thought and action.[3] Because the happy analyst is an ideal case, the difference of opinion is not very strong. It is not clear, however, how the analyst can avoid all metaphysical stands in his description. Fr. McGlynn feels that psychologically, if not logically, one may reach metaphysics by way of description. But would not that be more a question of explicitating what was first only dimly perceived or of formulating some initial pre-conceptual metaphysical insight ? That one must describe from some point of view, Fr. McGlynn agrees, but adds that the nature of what is described may cause one to modify a metaphysical point of view.[4] Again, this seems more a case of growth or maturity in world view than of coming to metaphysics in any strict sense.

I am inclined to think, nevertheless, that there is a true sense to the belief that analysis is a prolegomenon to a future metaphysics. Thus we might regard atomism and even positivism as philosophical successes in as much as the failure of those metaphysical theses was recognized and reasons were advanced to explain that failure. In the same way, analysts may come to see the necessity of metaphysics through the inadequacy of their own particular tenets. For that reason it will be helpful to consider what analysts understand by metaphysics and what they feel is wrong with this enterprise.[5]

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1. " Linguistic Analysis and Natural Theology," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XXXIV (1960), p.114.

2. " Phenomenology and Linguistic Analysis," *The Aristotelian Society*, suppl. vol. XXXII (1959), pp.122-123.

3. " A Critical Evaluation of Analytic Ethics," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XXXIV (1960), p.167.

4. *Ibid.*, p.168.

5. For a different approach to this question, by way of particular problems, cf. Fr. R. MILLER, C.S.B., " Linguistic Analysis and Metaphysics," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XXXIV (1960), pp.80-109. Of special interest is the

THE NATURE OF METAPHYSICS

We have already noted the identification made between metaphysics and the inventive stage of analysis. D. F. Pears enlarges upon this notion when he writes that, above all, metaphysics is

> . . . an attempt to re-order or to reorganize the set of ideas with which we think about the world . . . It is supremely a kind of conceptual revision that the metaphysician undertakes, a re-drawing of the map of thought — or parts of it — on a new plan.[1]

The opinion appears to be rather general among Oxford philosophers. Strawson and Grice are of the same mind as Pears ; Warnock explains that metaphysics provides " alternate conceptual systems " [2] ; Williams reasons that because a metaphysical argument can be neitheir directly deductive nor inductive it must depend on the choice of a particular concept ; [3] Hampshire believes the metaphysical scheme to be a systematic revision of thought with such organizing notions as Exist, True, Same, Possible and Impossible, Certain and Uncertain.[4] Waismann finds characteristic of metaphysics what he calls " vision," namely, a new way of seeing (as opposed to seeing something new), a new account or reading of familiar things.[5] Years before, Wisdom approached the same idea when he wrote that philosophical progress does not consist in acquiring knowledge of new facts but in acquiring new knowledge of facts.[6]

Metaphysics in this view, then, is a conceptual scheme. It may be an interesting, attractive and at times even useful one. Trouble begins, however, when the metaphysician is convinced that the pattern he sees in things is really there. Wittgenstein understood this very

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section devoted to problems of existence as a predicate or purely formal concept, of necessary propositions and of universals (*ibid.*, pp.96-106). Fr. W. N. Clarke, S.J., considers the significant questions of theodicy in " Linguistic Analysis and Natural Theology," *op. cit.*, pp.110-126.

1. *The Nature of Metaphysics*, ed. D. Pears (London, 1957), p.23. For all practical purposes, " conceptual revision " is the same as the positivist conclusion about metaphysics. In neither view can metaphysics say anything about the world. Some analysts in the U.S. admit a similar new dimension for metaphysics. G. Bergmann allows it emotive significance (*The Metaphysics of Logical Positivism*, New York, 1954), while M. Lazerowitz, like Wisdom, calls metaphysical statements linguistic innovations to satisfy some unconscious need or desire (*The Structure of Metaphysics*, New York, 1955). A. Pap resembles Wittgenstein in equating metaphysics with mysticism (*Semantics and Necessary Truth, An Inquiry into the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy*, New Haven, 1958, pp.90, 188, 201).

2. *English Philosophy Since 1900* (London, 1958), p.144.

3. *The Nature of Metaphysics*, ed. D. Pears (London, 1957), pp.56-57.

4. *Ibid.*, p.29.

5. *Contemporary British Philosophy* III, ed. Lewis, Allen and Unwin (London, 1956), pp.451-454.

6. As quoted in J. URMSON, *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford, 1956), p.26.

well, for he came to reject his metaphysics of logical atomism as " the foisting of an *invention* upon the facts," a superstition at bottom which should be dispelled by some sort of therapy.[1] Moore, on the other hand, had no such pre-conceived idea about the world ; unlike atomists and positivists he was not bound by " a foreknowledge of the pattern to be revealed." [2] Such is the constant temptation and basic error of the metaphysician : he forces his vision upon the facts and from this root difficulty is led to claim completeness, exclusiveness and finality for his view.

Let us look at these three faults. The conceptual framework of the metaphysician, it is explained, is a partial set of concepts which he applies to the whole of experience and conceives as the adequate set for description and explanation of the world.[3] He draws conclusions about the universe as a whole, about reality in its ultimate nature, offering a total and complete view of things, a *Weltaunschaung*. In brief, he has taken the disastrous step of reductionism. The Pythagoreans, for example, applied their conceptual system of geometry to the world ; Russell, his mathematical logic and some modern metaphysicians, evolutionary biology. Thus analysts find that scientific theories, as compared to those of metaphysics, lack sufficient generality. The analogy they see on other points, however, is rather strong. As an example of the scientist's new way of seeing facts, take the history of dynamics. Whereas Galileo conceived force as something that maintained the motion of a body, the foundation of Newton's system is that force is what changes the motion of a body. Neither reading can be called true nor false and the same might be said of the various theories of light. Succeeding metaphysicians, so it is argued, do much the same thing : they read reality in different ways. Such readings should not be called true, however useful they may be. Many analysts would further propose that metaphysical theories, like scientific ones, are subject to the pragmatic test of trial and error.[4] The one notable difference between the two, then, is the range of vision.

In addition to completeness the metaphysician also claims his view to be exclusive, to be the *only* way of looking at things. " Phenomena may be viewed in more than one way," objects Warnock, " comprehended within more than one theory, interpreted by more than one set of explanatory concepts," concluding therefrom that it is " almost impossible to believe that some *one* way of seeing, some *one* sort of theory, has any exclusive claim to be the *right* way." [5] If a

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1. G. J. Warnock, *English Philosophy Since 1900* (London, 1958), p.67.

2. A. Ayer (and others), *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London, 1956), p.98.

3. *The Nature of Metaphysics*, ed. D. Pears (London, 1957), pp.142-143.

4. *Ibid.*, p.148. Carnap and his followers, on the other hand, permit one to choose any conceptual scheme.

5. *English Philosophy Since 1900* (London, 1958), p.144.

man allows his synthesis to be treated purely on its merits and does not regard it as the only satisfactory way of handling a problem, Pears would not call him a metaphysician in the usual sense of the term.[1] Lastly, Hampshire sees no reason why systematic philosophy should be dogmatic and claim finality for itself, believing that there is room for a variety of different tentative systems.[2] He argues that knowledge is limited by its very nature, must always be incomplete and that what remains to be known must be inexhaustible.[3]

One might easily sympathize with some of these objections, especially when one looks at the metaphysicians in question. Descartes, Berkeley, Kant, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Hegel, Marx, McTaggart and Bradley are those usually cited, as philosophers who constructed their systems in the interest of science, of history or of some moral belief. Metaphysics for the analyst, then, would seem to be the *a priori*, deductive systems of the rationalists or perhaps the obscure and linguistically contorted utterances of some existentialists. The notion of metaphysics as a preconceived idea may well fit some of these cases. One wonders if there might be some misunderstanding about the proper nature of metaphysics. At any rate, Thomism and analogous forms of realism are not considered in an explicit way, though I suspect Thomism is generally regarded as pure theology. We should point out, however, that the analytic conception of metaphysics is a logical consequence of its premises. If philosophy is analysis, pure method, with no ontological or epistemological assumptions, with no world-view, conclusions can neither be final nor complete. Traditional metaphysics is assumed to make this claim and must therefore be discarded ; there will only be room for changing conceptual apparatus. One system cannot claim to be *the* system. This, of course, is the old argument of relativism but it points to a problem and misconception that is common to the faults which analysts have found with metaphysics. We might call this the problem of partial truth.

The heart of the analyst's objection I take to be the following : since an explanation of reality must be given in terms of a particular set of concepts, the claim that this represents or agrees with reality can only be false. We could agree that error in philosophy frequently arises from the fact that a partial truth is erected into one that is unique and omnipotent. Fr. A. Dondeyne, in like manner, agrees with Jaspers that a truth turns into error when by the force of its own prestige it eclipses every other truth and plays the role of a dictator.[4] But analysts do not seem to admit the possibility of a partial but true

1. *The Nature of Metaphysics* (London, 1957), pp.19-20.
2. *Ibid.*, p.35.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.33-34.
4. *Foi chrétienne et Pensée contemporaine* (Louvain, 1951), p.39.

view of the whole. The metaphysician must swear to tell nothing but the truth but he cannot be bound to tell the whole truth. Analysts, on the contrary, are perfectionists in that they feel language should express thought perfectly and that thought, if trustworthy, should express reality perfectly. Descartes' subtle influence, for whom the real was present according to the totality of its determinations in every true idea, shows that rationalism has, after all, triumphed over its empirical antagonists.

We would not wish, then, to call a metaphysic exclusive in the analytic use of the term. On the other hand, we can affirm that some philosophical positions misrepresent reality and are false, those denying the freedom of human choice, the spirituality of the soul or the existence of God, for example. Nor would anyone wish to proclaim a metaphysic complete in the sense that the last word on the subject was spoken some centuries ago but, as Fr. Copleston points out, a full understanding of reality has been the limiting goal of metaphysics, even with those who admit the practical unattainability of this goal.[1] The assumption involved therein, Fr. Copleston adds, is not that of definite answers to questions (contrary to the preconceived scheme notion of analysis), but that reality is intelligible.[2] One can go further into the question of completeness and argue that reality is richer than our philosophical concepts and that a certain " mystery of being " always remains. Every system, therefore, will be incomplete and finite and each must strive continually to make its synthesis as full and adequate as possible. Thomism, moreover, because of its doctrine of abstraction has special reason to maintain that human knowledge is perfectible and that progress is a never-ending affair. Still more fundamentally, its doctrine of the *analogia entis* submits before the variety and richness of the real and opposes any sort of reduction, idealistic or positivistic, which banishes one class of beings in the interest of a privileged kind. Positively, a mark of the genius of Thomism is its ability to assimilate new advances and the partial insights of other philosophies into its own synthesis. This catholicity, so to speak, is evidence of its genuinely profound and secure base. For all that it is senseless to hail Thomism as a finished task or to imply that the authors who go by that name have a monopoly on philosophical truth.

The notion of partial truth, nonetheless, of a partial but true view of the whole, remains a scandal to some and a contradiction to others. It has led more than once to error in theology and the *Magisterium* of the Church has spoken against those saying that our concepts, while indicating the truth to a certain degree, necessarily deform it. That Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* is true but not all that can be said

1. *Contemporary Philosophy* (London, 1954), p.72.
2. *Ibid.*

about the great man and by no existing logic implies that Shakespeare wrote *only Hamlet*. The complex question of the relation between a multiplicity of philosophical positions within scholasticism and the unity of truth we cannot develop here. Suffice it to recall that the idea of a philosophical pluralism and of an analogous unity of perennial philosophy has been proposed by Fr. Przywara and brilliantly reargued by Fr. Harvanek.[1] The analytic critique has, at any rate, evoked some genuine problems.

A better known critique of metaphysics comes from A. J. Ayer. The Oxford professor concedes that positivism is a thing of the past and his thought is assuredly less dogmatic and increasingly more empirical. Quoting Ramsey's remark, " What we can't say we can't say, and we can't whistle it either," Ayer still feels that a great deal of bad philosophy comes from people trying to whistle what they cannot say.[2] Behind this belief is the verification principle which, Ayer explains, is a definition but not an arbitrary definition. It attempts to lay down the conditions which govern our acceptance and understanding of common sense and scientific statements, that is, " the statements we take as describing the world in which we live and move and have our being." [3] Should the metaphysician object that there are other worlds than that of science and common sense and these are what interest him, then " the onus is on him to show by what criterion his statements are to be tested : until he does this we do not know how to take them." [4] This form of objection has become rather tiring. I fail to see how it differs essentially from the thesis of *Language, Truth and Logic* that unless one " makes us understand how the proposition that he wishes to express would be verified, he fails to communicate anything to us." [5] For the moment, since the objection will return in a more traditional form, we note that common sense and scientific statements and statements about the world are made co-extensive by a tautology. For all the " definition " means is that unless a statement has the sort of verification a scientific or common sense statement has, it will not be a scientific or common sense statement. The retort can likewise be made : if the onus is on the metaphysician to show by what criterion his statements are to be tested, the burden is equally on the non-metaphysician to show by what criterion he limits statements about this world to those of science and common sense. For Ramsey's remark, finally, one might reverse Wittgenstein's saying, " the limits of my language mean the

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1. R. HARVANEK, " The Unity of Metaphysics," *Thought*, XXVIII (1953), pp.375-412.

2. A. AYER (and others), *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London, 1956), p.75.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, pp.75-76.

5. A. AYER, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York, 1951), 2nd ed., p.36.

limits of my world ", and read : " the limits of my world mean the limits of my language." We then conclude with Fr. Copleton : " Inability to find any value in metaphysics may very well be an indication of the limits of a man's world." [1]

Urmson seems to imply the same positivist objection when he recommends asking for the use of a statement and adds that if it is unverifiable, " then its job is clearly not to describe the world about us . . ." [2] Quinton is more explicit and states that analysis is " first and foremost " a rejection of metaphysics and that the instrument of rejection is the verification principle.[3] This I construe to mean the rejection of metaphysics in the " traditional " sense. Quinton had already allowed metaphysics the role of conceptual revision and is careful to situate his rejection in the current of metaphysical agnosticism which flows from the sceptics, to Hume and to Kant. The added nuance is that previous types saw metaphysics as a practically impossible task, because there were no means of determining correct answers to its significant questions, while analysis views metaphysics as theoretically impossible because its questions are so many idle words. It is not only unknowable but unthinkable.[4] If the verification principle appears to be very much alive, Quinton explains that it has always proposed to give an empiricist account of the conditions of significance, no matter what the variations of form.[5]

The same tendency to link analysis with the past has evoked some speculation on the notion of an empiricist metaphysics. Murdock calls analysis the " present-day version of our traditional empiricism " [6] and Williams admits the term and concept of empiricist metaphysics.[7] With an air of apparent discovery Pears observes that " the belief that empiricists can never be metaphysicians is a strong contemporary delusion about the history of ideas." [8] Can they be anything else? A propos of meaning and the rejection of metaphysics, Urmson justly remarks that " Nonsense is itself a very metaphysical concept," [9] and realizes the contradiction involved in trying to establish an empiricist metaphysics.[10] The escape to " conceptual revision " is inevitable. But let us turn to a third and

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1. *Contemporary Philosophy* (London, 1954), p.76.

2. *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford, 1956), p.179.

3. " Linguistic Analysis," in *Philosophy in the Mid-Century* II, ed. R. Klibansky (Florence, 1958), p.147.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *The Nature of Metaphysics* (London, 1957), p.99.

7. *Ibid.*, p.54.

8. A. Ayer (and others), *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London, 1956), p.47.

9. *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford, 1956), p.101.

10. *Ibid.*, pp.51-53.

more serious objection to metaphysics than the verification approach.

Analysts today make much of the " scandal of inferred entities " by which they understand the inference from given to other, non-given, entities. God, substance, universals, the ego are examples most commonly mentioned.[1] A metaphysic which engages in this process is called speculative, the type which Kant found to be impossible. Analysts accept the Kantian critique and would follow Russell's so-called principle of parsimony or economy : " Wherever possible, substitute construction out of known entities for inference to unknown entities." [2] The question then, is the validity of metaphysical inference as such. Analysts, like the positivists, demand to know by what right the human mind makes statements which transcend the conditions of empirical verification and yet claim to refer significantly to the real order. The positivist rejection of metaphysics, however, was too hasty and facile a response. Kant's merit, Warnock believes, was that he examined metaphysics seriously and located both its general error and its cause.[3] Kant concluded that human understanding is confined within the area of possible experience and that the metaphysical sin was precisely the attempt to transcend this limitation — a natural and inevitable illusion of reason. Hampshire finds much the same objection to metaphysics in Wittgenstein.[4] The latter insists that we cannot make meaningful statements which involve only formal concepts, since these are empty and void without the addition of empirical content. Kant too made the distinction between the formal and material components of thoughts and held that concepts without perception are empty. In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein is constant : " use ", as the pivotal notion in the determination of meaning, necessitates a return to the actual context in which we use language. Apart from this context there is mere spinning of words. Ryle, finally, credits Kants with having exposed the fallacious nature of ontologizing, i.e., of asserting the existence or occurrence of something unseen and offering as proof purely

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1. *Ibid.*, pp.42-43.

2. " Logical Atomism," in *Contemporary British Philosophy* I, ed. J. Muirhead (London, 1922), pp.363-364.

3. *The Nature of Metaphysics* (London, 1957), pp.128-132. Because they have recourse to Kant's arguments against metaphysics, R. Sokolowski justly observes that the analysts' rejection of metaphysics is for reasons that are foreign to their method. He concludes that the method is neutral or indifferent to metaphysics. (" La philosophie linguistique et la métaphysique," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, LVII (1959), pp.593, 598.) The conclusion is true but only because the method is neutral or indifferent to everything that might be said. Analysts employ the Kantian critique, then, because their method is devoid of all norms. Strictly held, they cannot form judgments about any system of thought. I would prefer, therefore, to regard the use of Kant's arguments as but another instance of the *impasse* which analysis has reached in refusing metaphysics.

4. *The Nature of Metaphysics* (London, 1957), pp.26-27.

conceptual reasons.[1] To qualify as a metaphysician, Ryle believes, one must ontologize. His own view is that to establish existence-conclusions factual evidence is necessary, " evidence got by experimental as distinct from merely conceptual investigations." [2]

Thus analysts appear to recognize Kant's critique as the real argument against systematic metaphysics. Not that they have embraced his system, for Hume is said to have had the same insight and they would maintain that Kant's conclusions are themselves subject to conceptual revision. But the issue is clear : can the empirical origin of human knowledge be reconciled with the possibility of transcending experience to arrive at a meta-empirical, trans-historical and universal truth? As the perennial problem of experience and reason, analysis loses something of its claim to novelty and the impression of a philosophical isolationism is lessened. Interestingly enough, this is the fundamental problem of existentialism as well. One centers the issue on the leap to inferred entities, the other on that from the phenomenon to being ; the same tendency is likewise present to identify philosophy with analysis or with phenomenology.[3] The reaction of both is also quite similar. As British analysts revolt against Bradley and the deductive system, so Kierkegaard, for example, objected to the completeness and finality of the Hegelian system.[4] Both would agree that reality cannot be squeezed into a system. And though neither wants to acknowledge this, there is a ressemblance between the themes discussed by the two schools. To name a few : what is language and meaning and their connection with understanding? what does it mean to believe, to intend, to feel confidence? above all, what is philosophy, its proper field and method?

However that may be, the analysts' problem is with reason and experience. This leads Fr. Copleston to conclude that " Kant's problem, namely the problem of metaphysical argument, remains the fundamental problem for the metaphysician, and . . . the modern shifting of attention to the problem of ' meaning ' has not really superseded the older approach." [5] We arrive, then, at the problem of the foundations or first principles of metaphysics. The question is a particularly urgent one for Thomists today, Fr. Dondeyne suggests, because of the analytic and existentialist critique.[6] Nor have analysts underestimated the point. Hampshire, for one, realizes that a sys-

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1. *Ibid.*, pp.144, 149.

2. *Ibid.*, p.150.

3. A. DONDEYNE, *Foi chrétienne et Pensée contemporaine* (Louvain, 1951), pp.102-103 ; 125.

4. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, transl. Swenson and Lowrie (Princeton, 1949), pp.99-114.

5. *Contemporary Philosophy* (London, 1954), p.52.

6. DONDEYNE, *op. cit.*, p.112.

tem in philosophy depends on some initial premise, obtained neither in a precisely deductive nor inductive way, and which he likens to an axiom.[1] The argument for the axiom, he observes with justice, is in the strongest sense the metaphysical argument.[2] Analysis cannot leave the question there, however, and Hampshire concedes that the choice of axioms (in reality, the "conceptual apparatus" employed) cannot be purely arbitrary, for " we are left with the problem of why some work so much better than others." [3] More fundamentally, as Bradley saw, one cannot proclaim metaphysical insight impossible except by a rival set of first principles.

It was our point to credit analysis with having focused upon this problem. That it is genuine, basic and actual requires little research. Witness the renewed interest in Fr. Maréchal's *Point de départ* and the significant amount of scholastic literature on the issue that has appeared in the United States over the past six years. Thomists including J. Owens, G. Klubertanz, J. Collins, H. Renard, V. Smith and J. Donceel have asked and disputed the meaning of metaphysics and, in particular its starting-point and content.[4] It would not be absurd to say that we may all gain some further insights from the analytic critique and statement of the experience-reason problem. Indeed, when the " scandal of inferred entities " is explained as the inference from given to *non-given* entities, one may well wonder just what kind of inference metaphysics employs. Is there a strict process of inferring or rather an explication of the implicit in human experience by reflection and analysis ? [5] The question is not new to scholasticism.

Thus while we have given linguistic analysis some bad marks, we would not consider it unworthy of the philosopher's serious attention. One can surely be grateful for its study of language and the connection and influence of language upon thinking. Little work has been done on this not unimportant question up till now. The insistence on accurate, clear and precise statements, furthermore, has shown that linguistic confusion can truly enter in some cases and has forced all philosophers to avoid ambiguity and logical inaccuracy in putting forth their opinions. Language may be an imperfect instrument but there is a certain minimum of clarity we can expect even from the philosopher. The analysts's own lucid and untortured prose

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1. *The Nature of Metaphysics* (London, 1957), pp.48-52.

2. *Ibid.*, p.50.

3. *Ibid.*, p.59.

4. Cf. R. O'BRIEN'S *The Innateness of First Principles in the Scriptum super Sententiis of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Louvain, 1959), unpublished doctrinal thesis, for an extended bibliography and a penetrating and original analysis of the question.

5. We note that the merit of Maréchal's answer to the Kantian problem consisted essentially in rendering it a false problem. On the matter of " inference," cf. also F. COPLESTON, *Contemporary Philosophy* (London, 1954), pp.68-69 and M. CHARLESWORTH, *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* (Pittsburg, 1959), pp.209-215.

is something of an example in that regard. We should add that the linguistic approach, a sort of Socratic transposition of traditional problems, can shed greater light on the exact issue and so promote an acceptable solution. Charlesworth believes, for example, that the question, " Do abstract words function in the same way as proper nouns ? " is more tractable than the question, " Do universals actually exist in reality ? " [1]

CONCLUSION

There is a negative side also and, by way of conclusion, we may summarize our findings. The historical derivation of linguistic analysis from Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein and up to the present time permitted us to form some general conclusions about its nature and aim. Analysis, we saw, purports to be a clarification of concepts, of the ways and means by which we think and communicate, and thus implies a concern with language and the uses of words. It is a negative or therapeutic process, first of all, dispelling confusion and false problems, and, secondly, a positive task of detailed and systematic research on what concepts are and why they should be as they are. We examined three points essential to this claim, the priority of method over subject-matter, the relationship between meaning and use and the question of justification, finding in all three the underlying problem of a norm, directly traceable to a refusal of metaphysics. The *impasse* and complete relativism reached thereby should cause analysts some second thoughts about the proper business of philosophy and the place of metaphysics within its structure. The new role allowed metaphysics, while an advance from the positivist dogmatic tag of " meaningless," is hardly an answer to the difficulty, because " conceptual revision " is not itself normative. In noting objections to the traditional sense of metaphysics, however, we wondered whether certain misconceptions about its proper task had obscured the issue. Metaphysicians, it was said, in claiming that the pattern they see actually corresponds with reality are led to defend their particular view as complete, exclusive and final. The misunderstanding centered on what we called the problem of partial truth and on the mistaken belief that the geometric system of rationalists is representative of the work of all metaphysicians. We observed, finally, that while the verification principle may play a subtle role, the analyst's chief complaint has to do with inferred entities. The Kantian problem thus returns, that of the metaphysical argument and ultimately of the foundations or first principles of metaphysics.

This acceptance of a genuine and fundamental metaphysical problem could form the basis of a profitable dialogue between lin-

1. *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis* (Pittsburg, 1959), p.220.

guistic analysis and scholasticism. The 1960 meeting of the *American Catholic Philosophical Association* (devoted to analytic philosophy) is already a step in that direction. Should one, moreover, regard analysis as essentially Socratic up till now, akin to the first scholastic steps of definition of terms and *status quaestionis*, with the clarity that ensues, the false problems pruned and true ones highlighted, a more enlightened form of philosophy may be expected.

Indeed, there are signs of just such an event. Histories written within the movement, such as those of Urmson and Warnock, indicate a pause and portent change. The *impasse* reached by analysis and, in particular, its lack of a positive constructive power appear to have caused second thoughts on the vaunted neutrality of its method. In a section devoted to the British Imagination, the London *Times Literary Supplement* makes this judgment :

> . . . it no longer appears that it [analysis] can, by itself, satisfy all the demands of a philosophical enquiry. Above all, it cannot, by itself, satisfy the persistent philosophical craving for generality, for the discovery of unifying pattern or structure in our conception of the world.[1]

With this, we may expect a return to metaphysics.

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1. " The Post-Linguistic Thaw," *The Times Literary Supplement*, Sept. 9, 1960, p.lx.