THE IMPLICATIONS OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS FOR PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY

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Whether friends or foes, most contemporary philosophers are becoming more and more aware of the 'significance' of the modern analytic movement in philosophy. Therefore, attempts at clarifying this movement, and efforts directed towards realizing more vividly what it really involves, assume great value and importance. The present thesis may be generally described as a very modest attempt in that direction. It is divided into two complementary parts, with more emphasis on the second. The first part consists in a very preliminary attempt at sketching the main features of the 'linguistic' movement; the chief purpose of which is to provide some kind of background as to the general philosophic position to which belong the main contributors to the 'theological' literature we shall be analyzing in part two. It certainly is not a definitive history of the movement, nor an evaluative analysis of its general claims and achievements. Part one merely provides the 'setting', and one can very well do without it; because, for the present purpose of this thesis, we are not concerned, only, with what philosophers 'say' philosophy should be. We are more concerned in finding how they have, as a matter of fact, gone
about 'doing' philosophy. One of the modest aims of the writer, I repeat, is that this thesis may help us 'see' a little clearer what linguistic analysis consists in, through the study of the literature of this movement in the field of philosophical theology in the last twenty years or so.

I wish to express my gratitude to Professor James K. Mishalani for the valuable advice which he rendered me. My thanks also go to Professor Roland Puccetti for his help and encouragement in choosing the present subject for my thesis. I am also indebted to Mr. Edmund Tu'meh who patiently read the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions.

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W.N.N.
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PART I

THE "SCHOOL" OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER ONE

THE BACKGROUND OF THE LINGUISTIC MOVEMENT

I ought to make it clear at the very beginning that when I use the expression "linguistic analysis", I am primarily referring to the later views of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and to those contemporary philosophers who were considerably influenced by Wittgenstein's conception of, and approach to, philosophy and philosophical problems. I must emphasize, however, that no rigid and neat formulation of linguistic analysis ought to be expected, for the simple reason that such a formulation would be quite arbitrary if not impossible. For one thing the movement is still growing and developing; it has not, yet, been historicized. It is, moreover, an activity rather than a formalized procedure. Thus, it should not be imagined that Wittgenstein, or any body else for that matter, wrote a 'prescription' as to how we should do philosophy, and the linguistic analysts set out to follow this prescription! The linguistic analysts, to use one of their expressions, constitute a "family", rather than a "class", of instances. They were motivated by a variety of interests; and their 'findings' are not always identical.
Viewed from the standpoint of the cumulative philosophical tradition, linguistic analysis is, to say the least, quite 'unorthodox'. The history of its development can, therefore, be traced back to a 'reaction' against a certain prevailing view, or set of prevailing views. And while the name of Wittgenstein, quite justifiably, dominates the scene, he is by no means the only important contributor to the rise and development of linguistic analysis. G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell are two of the very first pioneers in this field. They, each in his own way, reacted very strongly against Absolute Idealism which was the prevailing philosophic mode in England in the 1890ies and which they themselves had earlier embraced. However, neither Moore, and certainly not Russell, can be safely labeled as a 'linguistic analyst' in the modern Wittgensteinian sense. We shall therefore be only concerned with those aspects of their philosophies which have led, either positively or negatively, to the rise and development of the present "school" of linguistic analysis.

Logical positivism will not be dealt with in any detail. Partly because very few, if any at all, strict Logical Positivists still do exist; and primarily since it dismisses the whole issue with which this thesis is
concerned: The problem of the possible meaning and significance of theological statements simply does not arise, for these statements are too easily declared to be nonsensical and meaningless utterances.

A. G.E. Moore: Defender of 'Common Sense'
and Pioneer in 'Analysis'

The indebtedness of linguistic analysis to the philosophy of G.E. Moore can hardly, I think, be overestimated. It was in the writings and practice of Moore that our very key-terms, 'language' and 'analysis', were first to assume predominant importance. He was struck by the strange things that the Idealists of his day, and metaphysicians in general, asserted, and thought it necessary to find out what was exactly meant by these assertions. One of his primary tasks was, therefore, to examine the 'language' of philosophers. His conclusion was that these assertions cannot be true for the very simple reason that they ran contrary to what common sense conceives to be true. The difficulty is not, Moore thinks, in 'establishing' the truth of common sense truisms, but in finding proper analyses of their
meanings. (1) He was thus led to consider the nature and significance of 'analysis'. Moore's influence can, therefore, be traced in terms of: (a) his practice, i.e., the way he dealt with specific problems in philosophy, and (b) his theory, i.e., his conception of analysis, the main function of the philosopher being to provide proper analyses.

1. Moore's Practice.

The greatest virtue of Moore is that he had the courage of appearing naive. He set out to defend common-sense (2) when common-sense very badly needed defense. The Idealists, represented chiefly by F.H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet, had set out to 'establish' ultimate truths (which would finally merge into the one Truth - the Absolute), and to make general claims as to the nature of the Universe and Reality. They had, on the one hand, a strong yearning towards system-construction, inclusiveness, all-embracing harmonies, and unifying principles; and they had, on the other hand, a 'grudge' against plurality, separateness,

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(2) Ibid., pp.192-223.
conjunction and even relatedness. They, consequently, spent great efforts trying to 'prove' that most, if not all, of what we ordinarily take for granted and consider as real, was nothing but mere 'appearances', for the only Reality was the Absolute of whom, due to our finitude, we can have no more than a 'glimpse'.

Moore, for good or for bad, seems to have been devoid of such motives. Rhetoric and paradox did not appeal to him in the least; and he constantly demanded, whenever presented with 'prophetic' utterances pertaining to things such as the unreality of time and the non-existence of material objects etc., that we should state clearly and distinctly, in plain English, the exact meaning of what we are asserting. It was consideration of such 'strange' assertions, more than anything else, that led Moore to develop his 'canon' of common-sense, and to stress the importance of ordinary language. He recounts how, when in the course of a conversation with McTaggart the latter expressed his view that Time was unreal, "this (i.e., McTaggart's assertion) must have seemed to me (as it still does) a perfectly monstrous proposition, and I did my best to argue against it." Then he goes on to say, "I do not think that the world or the sciences would ever have suggested to me any
philosophical problems. What has suggested philosophical problems to me is things which other philosophers have said about the world or the sciences."(1) Most of Moore's early writings consist in taking one or more of those "monstrous propositions", and then trying to 'translate' them into plain language by making them less abstract and more specific, and then pointing out that what these propositions assert cannot be true since they contradict plain facts and undeniable truisms. This was precisely what he did in his 'Defence of Common-Sense' and in a number of other typical articles.(2)

In the 'Defence of Common-Sense' he starts by enumerating a number of familiar and accepted facts or 'truisms' which, he says: "I know, with certainty, to be true." And, most importantly, the sense in which such propositions he knows to be true is not a peculiar, sophisticated, or special sense: These propositions are true in the ORDINARY sense of the term. "Some philosophers

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See also: "External and Internal Relations", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1919-20; Reprinted in Philosophical Studies, pp.276-309.
seem to have thought it legitimate to use the word 'true' in such a sense, that a proposition which is partially false may nevertheless also be true... I wish, therefore, to make it quite plain that I am not using 'true' in any such sense. I am using it in a sense (and I think this is the ordinary sense) that if a proposition is partially false, it follows that it is not true, though, of course, it may be partially true."(1) Moore simply wouldn't tolerate, regardless of what our motives may be, denying, in any sense, what we always know to be true. What is not certain, Moore urges, is not the 'truth' of propositions asserted by statements such as 'my body exists' or 'time is real', but the proper 'analyses' of such propositions.(2) What, according to Moore, the proper analysis of a proposition consists in, is a question we shall consider later.

'The Refutation of Idealism' is another example of how Moore tries to argue against a philosophical position, by first choosing a claim which is central to the position in question, then stating its meaning in a literal and precise language, and finally pointing out

(1) Contemporary British Phil., OP. Cit., p. 197
(2) Ibid., pp. 198, 216.
that this claim runs contrary to the 'common-sense view of the world'. A central assertion that Idealism makes is that the universe is spiritual. But while "chairs and tables and mountains seem to be very different from us, (yet), when the whole universe is declared to be spiritual, it is certainly meant to assert that they are far more like us than we think."(1) Moore does not claim to have, thus, proven that the world is not spiritual, but that the Idealist's 'arguments' by no means succeed in supporting their conclusion.

The general position of Moore which I have been trying to describe may lend itself to certain misinterpretations. I would like, therefore, before proceeding to consider Moore's notion of analysis, to make two qualifications:

First; Moore was primarily defending ordinary beliefs not usage.(2) He certainly stresses the importance of ordinary language, but does not make ordinary usage the

(1) Ibid., p.1
(2) See John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, N.Y., 1957, p. 207.
infallible standard of correctness and meaningfulness.\(^{(1)}\) Moore would 'allow', in principle at least, an addition to, or alteration of, ordinary language provided it is shown that a certain usage is inadequate and that the newly stipulated term or expression serves our purposes better. Usually, however, Moore is not 'easily' convinced of the inappropriateness or inadequacy of ordinary usage, and is quite particular in demanding to be told clearly and distinctly the exact meaning of the new term. A thorough investigation of ordinary language and its various usages would, on Moore's view, considerably reduce the number of our technical and highly abstract terms. The fact remains, however, that Moore's greatest emphasis was primarily on the truth and authenticity of ordinary beliefs rather than that of ordinary language.\(^{(2)}\)

Second; Although Moore believes that a major source of philosophical problems is the fact that philosophers, quite often, set out to find 'answers'  

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\(^{(1)}\) For such an interpretation of Moore's position see Malcolm's article: 'Moore and Ordinary Language' in The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, Op.Cit., pp.343-363.

before, first, being reasonably clear as to what the 'question' is about;\(^{(1)}\) and although he accuses metaphysicians of making very ambitious claims on the basis of little evidence; yet, he never goes to the extreme of declaring metaphysical assertions as nonsensical and utterly meaningless. It was, again, the truth of what metaphysicians were asserting that interested Moore most. Far from holding that metaphysical assertions were meaningless, Moore assumed, in most of his writings, that these assertions had 'some' meaning, though confused and deceptive. He spent considerable effort trying to pin down the different elements that were involved in particular metaphysical assertions: trying to make what is implicit in them more explicit. According to Moore, therefore, a metaphysical statement, does not assert 'nothing' (i.e., is not meaningless or nonsensical) but rather asserts too many things while still retaining the deceptive appearance of being simple. When, for example, we begin to argue about the question whether Idealism is true or not, "I think", Moore says, "we are apt to forget what a vast number of arguments this interesting question must involve: We are apt to assume, that if one or two

\(^{(1)}\) See the opening paragraph of Moore's *Principia Ethica*. 
points be made on either side, the whole case is won." (1)

2. Moore's Conception of 'Analysis'.

But is the philosopher's function only to 'correct' others, to disentangle their confused utterances? The philosopher, according to Moore, has another task which is equally important. This is the task of Analysis. And it is by virtue of the specific method of analysis that a philosopher chooses to employ, that he differs from others. This does not mean, however, that 'analysis' is completely identifiable with philosophy. The fact that Moore made significant contributions to the 'analytic tradition' in philosophy does not, by itself, quite justify the claim that he identifies philosophy with analysis. (2) Be it as it may, one can safely, I think, generalize and say that Moore, in his practice and theory, suggests that two of the important tasks that a philosopher may have are: first, that of defending the truth of ordinary beliefs; and second, that of trying to find the proper analyses of such beliefs. In one sense the 'task of analysis' is complimentary to the 'task of correction', in another it

(2) See, Passmore, Op.Cit., p.214...
is contrary to it: Complimentary, in the sense that analysis is supposed, in principle at least, to make what is implicit in our ordinary beliefs more explicit; Contrary to it, since, in the process of analysis, we have to employ methods and concepts that are not as akin in their nature to our common-sense beliefs as they are to what we are supposed to be defending common sense against.

I hope that it has become clear by now that Moore's aim was to defend what the "common sense view of the world" accepts as true and certain against the more or less abstract and sophisticated views that some philosophers have held. This, it has been said, "is a laudable aim but it has been pursued by a method of analysis which can produce paradoxes just as sophisticated as those of the Idealists." (1) We now turn to consider Moore's conception of analysis.

I have found it very helpful to use Alan White's method and terminology in exposing Moore's conception - or

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better conceptions - of analysis.\(^1\) White believes that Moore developed three, more or less distinct, conceptions of analysis. These are: (a) analysis as inspection, (b) analysis as division, and (c) analysis as distinction. In the case of the third method, though Moore practiced it considerably, yet he does not seem to have considered it as a method of analysis.

The later Wittgenstein considered analysis as inspection a fundamental misconception, and consequently, as a source of misconception. Analysis as division bears in very important respects upon Logical Atomism, and has, therefore, an important negative influence upon the development of the views of the later Wittgenstein. Finally analysis as distinction is very much affiliated with what the later Wittgenstein conceived the proper way of doing philosophy to consist in.

(a) **Analysis as Inspection**.

A fundamental presupposition of this notion is that a term names or stands for some kind of a fixed

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entity or concept;(1) and that that concept is already familiar to us though perhaps to a limited extent and in a sort of vague or implicit manner. What is to be analyzed is, therefore, already there before us; and all we have to do is to inspect it, to concentrate attention upon it, to look into it, etc.... In speaking of his analysis of truth and falsehood in terms of the relation of correspondence, Moore writes "That there is such a relation, seems to me clear and all that is new about my definitions is that they CONCENTRATE ATTENTION upon just that relation, and make it the essential point in the definitions of truth and falsehood.... The essential point is to CONCENTRATE ATTENTION upon the relation itself: to HOLD IT BEFORE YOUR MIND, in the sense in which when I name the colour 'vermilion', you can hold before your mind the colour that I mean. If you are not acquainted with this relation in the same sort of way as you are acquainted with the colour vermilion, no amount of words will serve to explain what it is...."(2)


(2) G.E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, London, 1953, p. 279 (Capitalized italics are mine, underlined italics are Moore's).
See also: Moore's Ethics, 1952, p.100
To understand what is involved in the relation of correspondence between a true proposition and the fact it expresses, we have to concentrate attention upon this relation' to 'hold it before our mind'. And analysis, in this sense, would consist in giving an account of what we 'saw' or 'discovered' as a result of our inspection. An analysis of \( x \), for example, would be the result of trying to answer the question 'What do we think of when we think of \( x \)\(^{(1)}\) Or again, "...But what sort of an entity is it? (i.e., 'My present seeing of this sense-datum' which Moore chooses to call an 'entity') That is a question which it seems too extraordinarily difficult to answer, mainly because it is so difficult to DISCOVER exactly WHAT IT IS THAT I AM KNOWING WHEN I KNOW THAT I AM SEEING THIS. But I will do my best to say what sort of an entity I think it is, and why I think so."\(^{(2)}\) In Wittgenstein's view, as we shall see, this involves an artificial shortcut and a serious oversimplification. Because for one thing the meaning of a term, he believed, is not some one fixed item - be it an entity or a concept - and that therefore

\(^{(1)}\) Proceedings of The Aristotelian Society, VII, p.204.

\(^{(2)}\) Proceedings of The Aristotelian Society, VXXI, pp. 134. (Italics are mine)
this whole business of concentrating upon, and inspecting, its meaning is futile; and for another thing Wittgenstein did not believe in 'the digging' for the full meaning of a word as if it lay hidden somewhere waiting to be discovered.

(b) Analysis as Division.

Analysis as division is simply the notion that understanding something consists in breaking it into its constituent parts. Historically, this is characteristic of the British Empiricists, especially Locke and Hume. The former spoke of 'complex ideas' as reducible to 'simple ideas'; the latter attempted, more systematically, to propound a theory of meaning whereby every expression, which expresses a 'matter of fact', is reducible to sense 'impressions' which are the ultimate data of experience. An important consequence of this position is that nothing can be analysed unless it is a complex whole, for how could it, otherwise, be broken into its constituent parts? Thus we find that certain concepts which possess an inherent 'simplicity' acquire a sense
of ultimacy in Moore's philosophy. (1)

This conception is applied and discussed throughout Moore's writings. "A thing becomes intelligible," he tells us, "when it is analysed into its constituent concepts." (2) Elsewhere we find that Moore's examination of what is called aesthetic enjoyments consists in an attempt to answer the question "what are the main elements included in such an appreciation" (i.e., the appreciation of a beautiful object.) (3) Moore did not only 'apply' the method of division very often in his writings, he, moreover, considers it as THE method of analysis. For it is, mostly, the method of division that Moore has in mind whenever he tries to talk about HIS method of analysis. The clearest, and latest, expression of his conception of analysis is found in his 'Reply to My Critics' which appeared in the Schilpp Volume in 1942, specifically his reply to C.H. Langford's article "Moore's Notion of Analysis". (4)

(1) Examples of such notions are: in Ethics, the notion of 'good' as a simple unanalysable concept, and in epistemology, the notion of 'correspondence' as the relation existing between a 'fact' and the proposition which asserts it - a notion which we can comprehend but cannot analyse.

(2) Mind, V.II, p.182.
(3) Principia Ethica, p.189.
Analysis, in this sense, may be considered as a form of definition; only, Moore would insist that it is concepts that we are dealing with, not words and verbal expressions merely: The analyst is not a lexicographer. The concept which is to be analysed, or 'defined', is called the analysandum; the concept or group of concepts in terms of which it is to be analysed are called the analysans. For an analysis to be a "correct" analysis, the expression of the analysans must be synonymous with the expression of the analysandum. It is in this sense that to supply an analysis for a concept is synonymous with defining it. And it is precisely this fact which gives rise to the so called 'problem' or 'paradox' of analysis. For if the analysans adds nothing which is not already contained in the analysandum, we cannot claim that the 'analysis' has achieved its purposes, viz. the acquisition of 'new' knowledge about the original concept, or rendering that concept more understandable and less obscure. On the other hand if the analysans adds something which is not already contained in the analysandum, then the expression of the analysans and the expression of the analysandum cease to be synonymous. As Langford neatly puts it "if the verbal expression representing the analysandum has the same meaning as the verbal expression
representing the analysans, the analysis states a bare identity and is trivial; but if the two verbal expressions do not have the same meaning, the analysis is incorrect."(1) Moore is quite aware of this 'problem'; and, as is his habit, does not refrain from admitting his inability to explain clearly and satisfactorily how analysis achieves its explanatory purpose.(2) Yet the whole endeavour is not as hopeless as it may first seem to be. The fact is that in a proper analysis one feels that the analysandum has been rendered more explicit, that some of its relations and qualities have been laid bare and brought to the foreground. This can be seen from the fact that, for example, the statement "a brother is a male sibling" is not completely identical with the statement "a brother is a brother". This is so partly because we are not defining a word or a verbal expression, but a concept. You might be able to give a verbal definition of a word or expression without any reference whatsoever to the concept involved. You might be told, for example, that,

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(1) Ibid., p. 323.
(2) Moore says on page 665 "I own I am not at all clear as to what the solution of the puzzle is." And again on page 666 "... and therefore I cannot give any clear solution to the puzzle". Ibid.
in a language which you are ignorant of, the word 'x' means the same as the word 'y', and you may remember that 'x' means the same as 'y' without knowing what 'x' or 'y' mean. (1) The purpose of analysis is not to provide a verbal definition: In analysis we are primarily dealing with concepts. In the statement "a brother is a male sibling" the analysans "male sibling" consists of the conjunction of two concepts: Male and Sibling, that are, as such, the constituents of the concept, Brother, which is the analysandum. The concepts are the same, though the verbal expressions used are different. All of this seems to have some significance for Moore; and he puts two more conditions which a correct analysis ought to fulfil. (a) "Both analysandum and analysans, must be concepts, and, if the analysis is a correct one, must, in some sense, be the same concepts"; and, (b) "that the expression used for the analysandum must not only be different from that used for the analysans, but that they must differ in this way, namely, that the expression used for the analysans must explicitly mention concepts which are not explicitly mentioned by the expression used for the analysandum." (2)

(1) Ibid., See p.662.
(2) Ibid., p. 666.
Inspite of this tentative 'way out', Moore continues to feel uneasy about the whole thing. And he admits that this is not a very satisfactory solution of the problem of analysis. Here once again Moore's influence lies in what he 'did not say' in as much as it lies in what he did say. An atmosphere of dissatisfaction was left around the whole 'programme of analysis'. There grew a tendency amongst 'analytic philosophers' to look not for the synonyms of a term, but rather for its functions, its various uses. This tendency found its clearest expression in the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein and his 'followers'.

The source of Moore's difficulties is, ultimately, his theory of meaning. For if a term 'stands for' an entity, be it an 'object' or a 'concept', and if analysis of its meaning is thought to consist in finding its synonyms, then very 'strange' conclusions are apt to follow. Such a 'programme' involves a complete neglect of dissimilarities which are quite often as important as the similarities if not more. It might work very neatly when applied to notions such as that of being a brother, but what happens when we try to apply it to a
notion such as 'good'? In the case of 'x is good' we cannot find a better term, a synonym, which would describe 'x' better than 'good'. For the 'entity' which the term 'good' stands for cannot be reduced to other simpler entities. Moore then declares 'good' to be something ultimate - an unanalyzable notion. But is it not an oversimplification to say, simply, that good is unanalyzable? And isn't the 'meaning' of 'good' better described and understood through exhibiting the different ways the term 'good' is used, tracing how it occurs in different contexts, and finding the various roles it plays and functions it fulfils? It is not, usually, by 'defining' a term that we get to know its 'meaning', but rather by finding out the way it is used. Realization of this 'fact' is, perhaps, Wittgenstein's greatest contribution to contemporary analytic philosophy.

How much in terms of 'ethical knowledge' one gets by comparing goodness with yellowness? They certainly do 'share' a certain quality viz. that of being 'unanalyzable' in the Moorian sense: if you have not seen yellow, I cannot possibly make you understand what 'yellow' means. But the dissimilarities between yellowness and goodness are much more striking and
ethically significant than the similarities. This
difference is quite manifest in the 'uses' of
'yellow' and 'good'; and though both notions may
be 'ultimate' they are still susceptible to analysis
in the Wittgensteinian sense since they have various
uses that could be described and discussed. (1)

Before turning to Moore's notion of analysis
as distinction I would like to point out another
important feature of the conception of analysis as
division. This position seems to have a certain
'view' or 'conception' of the world and reality which
is very similar to the one the Logical Atomists came
to have. So much so that one may say that Logical
Atomism consists in an attempt to carry the 'analysis-
as-division-programme' on a larger scale and in a
more thoroughgoing manner. This view or conception
of reality is sometimes referred to as the 'metaphysic
of simple elements' (2) which consists in the belief
that there exists certain 'elements' or 'units' or
'facts' — as Russell & Wittgenstein later chose to

call them — out of which everything else is composed and to which everything may, in theory at least, be reduced. Moore did not follow, systematically at least, such a 'reductionist' procedure in a manner comparable to that of the Atomists; yet, both positions seem to be quite affiliated. For what is the purpose of analysis? And once we start analysing where should we ultimately stop, if we ever do? It naturally follows that the process of analysis, i.e., the process of dividing the complex into simpler and simpler parts, can end only when we reach the 'unanlysables' — the simple elements simpler than which there are none. A 'sense-datum' — whatever that means — seems to be one such simple element of which Moore conceives. In the analysis of propositions such as "this is a hand", "That is the sun", "This is a dog", etc., one of two things of which Moore is "quite certain" is that "there is always some sense-datum about which the proposition in question is a proposition — some sense-datum which is a subject (and, in a certain sense, the PRINCIPAL or ULTIMATE subject) of the proposition in question."

Not only do these 'simple elements' exist, but there is also a certain one-to-one 'correspondence' between them and our terms. "It is then, I think, quite obvious that for every different belief, there is one fact and one fact only, which would be, if the belief were true, and would not be, if it were false." (1)

(c) Analysis as Distinction.

However we interpret Moore's 'conception' of analysis, he certainly had no dreams of a 'logical Utopia'. And this is an essential difference between him on the one hand, and ambitious logicians, who were metaphysicians in their own way, such as Russell and the early Wittgenstein, on the other hand. That is why it is of the utmost importance to distinguish between Moore's 'conception' of analysis and his actual practice. And it is no strange coincidence to find that in as much as Moore's 'conception' of analysis is affiliated with Logical Atomism, his actual practice, on the whole, is affiliated with the views of the later Wittgenstein which are, among other things, an outright rejection and repudiation of Logical Atomism.

The 'method' which is least talked about, but most practiced, by Moore, is what might be called 'Analysis as Distinction'. Actually Moore never refers to such a "method". And justifiably so. For it is of the essence of such an 'activity' or 'practice' to be characterized by an "absence of method". The underlying assumption being that every situation has its own uniqueness, its own details and peculiarities which should not be forced to fit into a method or system. The best that we can do - and that is to do a lot - is to try to understand the nature of every particular case, as it arises, by drawing distinctions, discriminating confusions and arriving at more and more clarity. And what is most important is that it is our approach, our 'method', which has to be modified and so adapted as to fit every particular case, and not the other way round. This "absence of method" which is in Hampshire's view "what is new and genuinely original in contemporary philosophy" involves "an implied acknowledgement that every advance towards great clarity about any feature of language or argument must always be partial, provisional and never final." (1)

(1) S. Hampshire, Changing Methods in Philosophy, Philosophy, 1951, p.144.
It is therefore quite arbitrary and distorting to speak as if Moore had a method called the "Method of Analysis as Distinction" which he defined and set about applying. It is simply a matter of approach, of "providing new interests"(1) of pointing out simple, but significant, aspects that have been neglected by the 'system-constructors', of relating one thing to other things in terms of both differences and similarities. This, as we have seen, is typical of Moore's writings especially when it comes to discussing the views of others. A point which Moore stresses most is that we must be sure to understand what a philosopher 'means' by his terms before proceeding to criticize or to praise him. We should try not to mix between what we mean by the terms he uses or what we think he ought to mean by them, with what he, as a matter of fact, understands them to mean. In his contribution to the symposium: "Are the Characteristics of Things Universal or Particular" which was based on a view which Stout had formerly expressed, Moore says: "I understand that what we are wanted to do is to discuss the view which he (viz. Stout) expresses by those words. We are not to

give to the words the sense or senses which we may think they ought to bear, and then to discuss whether the view or views they would then express is true or false. What we have to do is to try to discover what Prof. Stout means by them, and then merely to discuss whether the view which he uses them to express is true or false, even though we may think that the view in question is one which cannot be properly expressed by them at all."(1)

We must also be equally sure to make the 'meanings' of our own terms quite clear especially if we intend to use them in a manner different from that used by our opponent. Moore, himself, is quite particular about that. If it is an Idealist, for example, he is discussing, he tries first to state as clearly as possible and to the best of his knowledge what the philosopher meant by his terms, and then he proceeds to compare this specific usage or usages, (as it often turns out that a philosopher means different things by the same term in different places), with other usages of the term, and to point out contradictions, obscurities, and incompatibilities in the position he is considering. This is precisely what he starts by emphasizing at the

(1) P.A.S. Supple.III, p.95.
beginning of his article "Is Goodness a Quality"(1) which arose as a discussion of H.W.B. Joseph's claim that goodness is not a quality. "I want merely to discuss whether WHAT MR. JOSEPH MEANS by this sentence (viz. that "goodness is not a quality) is so."(2) After trying to 'figure out', with patience, sincerity, and as much precision as is possible, what Joseph means by 'goodness', Moore then says "this proposition (viz. that "goodness is not a quality"), if only we could discover how he is using the word 'quality', would, I think, be definitive enough to be discussed." Our next question should, therefore, be: "How, then, is he using the term 'quality'?"(3)

Moore's article on Identity(4) is one amongst many examples illustrative of his 'discriminative tendency'. "The object of this paper", he says, is "...to supply as much of this help (viz. that of reminding the philosopher of the points wherein the "truths" with which he is dealing differ) as I am able, by DISCRIMINATING THE POINTS OF DIFFERENCES between truths

(2) Ibid. p.116 (italics are mine).
(3) Ibid. p.125.
(4) P.A.S. V.I, pp.103-127.
which we express and must continue to express by the use of the word identity." And indeed there is much "help" needed there because "the greatest errors may be incurred by arguing that what is true of a thing to which such a word (viz. 'identity') applies IN ONE SENSE is also true of that to which it applies in another." (1) Here, again, we find Moore 'anticipating' an important development in contemporary analytic philosophy. For he did not always conceive of analysis as a process of equating an analysandum with an analysans, i.e., of finding a correct logical definition of a concept. This, as has been mentioned, is especially true of Moore when it comes to his 'practice' rather than to his 'theory'. For example, we find him, when dealing with the notion of necessity, abandoning the strictly logical conception of definition in favour of a more or less "linguistic" conception.

"A correct definition of necessity", Moore says, "will be attained, if we enumerate all those DIFFERENT predicates which the word is commonly used to signify: for THE ONLY TEST THAT A WORD IS CORRECTLY DEFINED IS COMMON USAGE." (2) How anticipatory this is of the later

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(1) Ibid., p.105 (my italics)
(2) 'Necessity', Mind, V. IX, p. 289 (my italics)
Wittgenstein! In another context Moore says that "the question as to the definition of these words (viz. words such as 'real' 'exist' 'is' 'is a fact' 'is true'...) is not logically relevant to the much more important question as to which of the sentences in which they occur are true and which are false"; for "......no discussion of the meaning of a word is merely about the meaning of a word. It always involves some discussion as to THE WAY IN WHICH THE THINGS OR NOTIONS, FOR WHICH THE WORD MAY STAND, ARE DISTINGUISHED FROM OR RELATED TO ONE ANOTHER."(1) The 'moral' of all of this, one may conclude by saying, is that efforts should not be directed towards 'system-constructing', but rather towards detailed analyses: the drawing of distinctions, the achievement of better understanding of the details and peculiarities of every particular instance, without attempting to subject that instance to a general rule that has arisen - appropriately perhaps - elsewhere, in another context.

(1) Some Main Problems of Philosophy, Op.Cit., p. 206. (capitalized italics are mine.)
B. LOGICAL ATOMISM:

RUSSEL AND THE EARLY WITTGENSTEIN.

LOGIC, EMPIRICISM, AND METAPHYSIC.

Our relatively 'detailed' consideration of Moore has not been, I hope, pointless. For most of the important points relevant to linguistic analysis were at least 'raised', directly or indirectly, by Moore. We have seen how notions which were destined to play an important role in later philosophical developments, such as the 'anti-metaphysical trend', the 'reductive programme of analysis' and the importance of 'distinction-drawing' in philosophical considerations, were all, with certain qualifications, present in Moore's writings. We have also seen how our key-terms 'language' and 'analysis' pervade the whole of Moore's philosophy. It is natural, therefore, that the remaining part of this chapter shall be, more or less, an elaboration of these points; and that it can be either compared or contrasted with what Moore has to say.

However, the fact that our concern happens to be in linguistic analysis — and consequently with the terms 'language' and 'analysis' — does not, mean that other aspects, which we are neglecting, of the thinking
of some of the philosophers we are considering, are, necessarily, unimportant. This is especially true of Russell. For his undeniable influence upon linguistic analysis has been mainly negative: his significance lies in the possibilities he opened, the 'ambitious' plans he set to construct - the unrealizability of which turned out to be an important factor in the development of linguistic analysis; and, for another thing, he has been so productive and his interests have been so diverse that any consideration of Russell's influence, in a particular field of study, has to leave out 'a lot'. For our present purpose, we shall deal with Russell only in connection with logical atomism. And our interest in logical atomism lies in the fact that this 'school of thought' constitutes an important link in the 'development' of the notions of 'language' and 'analysis'. The name 'Logical Atomism' was first coined by Bertrand Russell, one of the important propagators of the school. It was founded by a former student of his, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who became a major exponent of this school and wrote its 'Bible', the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Unless otherwise specified, the doctrines that shall be discussed in connection with Logical Atomism, are, on the whole,
shared by both Russell and Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*.

Logical atomism is, again, a sort of reaction against Absolute Idealism. We have, here, an emphasis on the plural character of reality, to such an extent that it can be safely said that logical atomists developed a peculiar metaphysics of their own, the metaphysics of plurality or of simple elements, as against the Monistic metaphysics of Absolute Idealism. Each metaphysics had its own bearing upon, and implications for, the notion of analysis. The Idealists had banished analysis from their system of internally related Reality, and rejected it on the ground that it involves a distortion, a falsification, of the nature of Reality. (1) For the Atomists, on the other hand, Analysis becomes the primary concern of the philosopher since it is the means of dissecting the complex nature of reality. To understand how, and by virtue of what, can analysis help us understand the nature of reality, it is essential, first, to try to understand how the atomists conceived of reality.

To do this it is essential to stress a very

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significant fact: The two major exponents of logical atomism, viz. Russell and Wittgenstein, came to philosophy through the study of mathematics and logic. This is especially true of Russell the author, together with Whitehead, of Principia Mathematica; one of the founders, together with Frege, of modern symbolic logic; an important popularizer of science and an admirer of the scientific method and spirit. We consequently find that reality in the philosophy of logical atomism is given a nature which is characteristically mathematical. And that the description and explanation of reality become something very similar to the formulation of an axiomatic system in mathematics or in logic. As Urmson puts it "the shortest account of logical atomism that can be given is that the world has the structure of Russell's mathematical logic."  

(1) That the world does have such a structure, the atomists did not try to prove. This was one of their basic assumptions, an assumption that the later Wittgenstein came to conceive of as an obsession.

In addition to the formal character which mathematical logic gave to logical atomism, it contained another important element which was empirical in nature. This empirical element is quite reminiscent of the British empiricists of the seventeenth century. For a statement to be significant and meaningful there must exist some kind of correlation between it and experience. Locke spoke of complex 'ideas' as being reducible to 'simple ideas', Hume preferred to speak of 'impressions', the atomists were more careful about their terminology and spoke of 'facts'. Reality is an aggregation of a multiplicity of independent and simple 'facts'. Their independence and simplicity suggested to Russell the label 'atomic'.

Such is reality! But what about language? Here the psychologism of the British Empiricists gives way to the logicism of the atomists, which is more reminiscent of the pythagorean adoration of number and the Cartesian obsession with formulae. And when it came to the meaning of terms and the nature of language in general, the atomists were not taken by considerations such as habit and association, but were as demanding and exacting, in terms of precision, clarity
and exactness, as a logician can be. If reality is atomistic, they proclaimed, so must language be. For language, and here is another important atomistic assumption, 'reflects the structure of reality'. And since reality, or the totality of what is real, has a certain defined and fixed nature and structure, so must its 'expression' or 'reflection' be. Evidently, therefore, not all the existent natural and formal languages can be 'true'. There is one and only one logically perfect language. And the formulation of such a language should be the philosopher's primary task. The atomists did not present a fully developed perfect language, though, of course, its main features could be found in Principia Mathematica and the newly developed mathematical logic.

An important characteristic of a logically perfect language is that it is truth-functional. There are only two kinds of statements: (a) simple statements - or 'atomic propositions', as they chose to call them - which 'express', 'mirror', or 'reflect' a corresponding simple fact, viz. an 'atomic proposition'; and (b) complex statements - or 'molecular propositions' - which 'express', 'mirror', or 'reflect' a corresponding
conjunction of atomic facts. (1) Now the truth or falsity of a molecular proposition is a function of the truth or falsity of the atomic propositions out of which it is constituted. And evidently the ultimate criterion of truth or falsity is the success or failure of atomic propositions to correspond to atomic facts. "Any significant statement is therefore either the affirmation or rejection of some atomic fact; or it affirms or rejects a conjunction or disjunction of such atomic facts." (2)

It follows, therefore, that in a logically perfect language any statement or formula expressible in it can be reduced, at least in principle, to few simple, ultimate forms which are the final determinants of its truth or falsity. "The truth-value of the complex is entirely determined by the truth-value of its components." (3)

We have seen in connection with Moore's conception of analysis as division, how the 'programme of

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(1) The atomists did not, on the whole, speak of 'molecular facts' resulting from the combination of atomic facts. Though the conjunction of two or more atomic propositions made a molecular proposition.


analysis' tended to point towards conclusions quite similar to the claims of the atomists about the nature of reality. Moore, however, for lack of metaphysical ambition - be it logistic or absolutistic - has been more cautious and careful when it came to committing oneself to such general claims as to the nature of reality and the world. While the less-reserved atomists, who were quite anxious to support their metaphysical position, fell upon analysis and considered it as something illustrative of their position, since it was through the process of analysis that we were supposed to arrive at the ultimate structure of reality. For, what else could the 'final residue in analysis' be, if they weren't the atoms - the only ultimate constituents of reality? Analysis, thus, became the motto of philosophical activity, and the 'philosopher' and the 'analyst' were completely identified.

Keeping the metaphysics of logical atomism in mind, it becomes relatively easy to understand their conception of analysis. However, it is a bit arbitrary to try to say which, for the atomist, presupposes which: their metaphysics or their conception of analysis. Actually the presupposition is mutual and the roles are
complimentary. Thus, given an atomistic metaphysic, 'reductive' analysis is apt to follow. And while, as we have already mentioned, analysis for Absolute Idealism 'falsifies' Reality, it becomes for atomism the only way to a clear and full understanding of reality. And reality cannot be fully understood unless its 'translation' into an Ideal Language has been achieved. Such a 'translation' or 'reduction' of reality into the neat forms of logic and mathematics is to be accomplished by analysis. However, before constructing the edifice of the perfect language, the atomists, as all well-intentioned constructors, had first to 'clear the grounds'. They found that "ordinary, natural languages embody and encourage the confusions of ordinary thought; only deliberately constructed and instituted languages can avoid them."(1) The confusions of ordinary speech and concepts ought to be transformed into, and replaced by, the clarity of a logical notation. Thus the interest of the philosopher - the 'analyst', I should say - should be in language for the purpose of both detecting and

solving philosophical problems. The confusion is not in reality, though admittedly reality is quite complex; it is rather to be traced to 'misrepresentations' of reality: to languages which fail to reflect, or faintly and vaguely reflect, its true structure. "Philosophical problems are in a way linguistic problems. There would be no need for philosophy if language were not inadequate."(1)

The aim of analysis is, then, to eliminate confusion. This is to be achieved by bringing back ordinary expressions nearer to the 'facts' which they are supposed to express and 'mirror': by rendering compound conceptual and logical 'constructions' less complex and abstract, and eventually replace them with objects with which we can have direct acquaintance. This kind of analysis is sometimes called 'reductive' or 'new-level' analysis, since it is not satisfied with "merely improving the form of statement without change of level", but rather "seeks to get down to the basic facts."(2) For it is these facts and only these facts which are the ultimate source of meaning and significance.

(2) Ibid., p.39.
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(2) Ibid., p.39.
This, in summary, is the main 'argument' of logical atomism. Its best and most authentic formulation is found in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. In this book two important 'implications' of logical atomism are expressed. I would like to conclude my exposition of the school by pointing them out. These 'implications' seem to follow from one basic 'fact' which logical atomism accepts and stresses. This is the notion of 'correspondence' between language and facts. And it therefore follows that "the meaning of a statement is the possible fact it depicts."(1) This was seized upon by the logical positivists and got elaborated into their famous verifiability principle of meaning. A natural — so it seemed! — consequence of such a criterion of meaning was that statements which were not 'scientific' or 'factual' in nature, especially those of religion and traditional metaphysics, were proclaimed to be meaningless, since they do not "depict possible facts". The second implication arises when the question of the status of the language of the logical atomists is raised. Interestingly enough

Wittgenstein himself was the first to raise that question. For how one would classify the statements contained in the *Tractatus* and other similar philosophical writings? The atomist is, allegedly, trying to describe the relation between language and the world. But can this relation be 'depicted'? Is it an atomic fact, or a truth-function of atomic facts? Evidently not, for the only actual and depictable constituents of reality are the atomic facts, and the relation between language and these facts is not, itself, an atomic fact nor a truth function of atomic facts. It is a mere conceptual construction which, when analysed, leaves no 'final residue', while the criterion of acceptability and meaningfulness for conceptual or logical constructions is that they should be decomposable into simple atomic facts. The statements of the theory of logical atomism does not fulfil their criterion of meaningfulness and should, therefore, be condemned as meaningless! Wittgenstein did not try to evade the issue and courageously drew the conclusion. He declared philosophy to be an activity not a theory.\(^1\) "This thisis, laid quite early like a sort of time-bomb in the

nasement of Logical Atomism."(1) With this 'tragic-tone' our discussion of logical atomism ends. It took an extreme position and acquired a suicidal nature. Nevertheless it left its mark on the history of linguistic analysis and its development. For whether the specific views of logical atomism were adopted or not, the atomists succeeded in establishing the concepts of language and analysis as central for philosophical theory and method. The attention of philosophers was drawn more and more towards considerations that were of a linguistic and analytic nature. And when Wittgenstein abandoned his former views his abandonment was in terms of a new conception of language and consequently of analysis. The problem was still 'linguistic' in nature and the 'cure' still 'analytic', in one sense or the other. Our main concern in chapter two of this part shall, therefore, be with Wittgenstein's later conception of language and analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS:

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE LATER WITTGENSTEIN.

To talk of 'the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein' involves a certain degree of arbitrariness. Because this 'philosophy' was not expressed systematically, but developed, through a period of about twenty years, in discussions and lectures that were led or given by Wittgenstein. The influence was therefore oral, direct, and characterized by the dominating personal presence of Wittgenstein. A fact which may partly explain why he has received somewhat varied 'interpretations', and why the typical and consistent Wittgensteinian is such a rare species; while those whose views are 'affiliated to', or were 'influenced by' Wittgenstein are so numerous as to justify labelling them members of the 'School' of Linguistic Analysis. Consequently, it is much beyond the scope of this chapter to try to trace the development of Wittgenstein's views since 1929, and the exact manner in which prominent, now so called 'linguistic analysts', were influenced by these views. Instead, what I shall try to do is consider the Philosophical Investigations which
was first published in 1953, after Wittgenstein's death, as the best expression of his views and, therefore, as central with respect to the position of the philosophy of linguistic analysis. Even my consideration of this book has to be partial and selective. And by no means do I claim to have done justice to the multiplicity of important and interesting points which Wittgenstein raises in his *Investigations*. This does not only, and naturally, apply to the points which I failed to consider but also to the points which I did consider.

Our main interest will be in Wittgenstein's conception of language and other related notions. In presenting these notions I shall try to include as many quotations from the *Investigations* as space permits, in an effort to supplement the sketchiness of the exposition, and as a result of my belief that no paraphrase of Wittgenstein's writings succeeds in retaining the force and character of the original.

1. **Wittgenstein's Conception of the Nature of Language and Related Notions.**

It is through the understanding of a certain 'analogy' that Wittgenstein approaches the question of
language and its nature. This analogy is his famous 'language-game' analogy. For he thought that the construction of artificial languages - that are developed in certain specific contexts to answer specific needs - may, on analysis, help us see how language actually functions. He chose to call these artificial languages, 'language-games', which should not be considered as "preparatory studies for a future regularization of language - as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air resistance. The language games are rather set up as objects of comparison which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not of similarities, but also of dissimilarities." (1)

Let us try then to understand what Wittgenstein meant by a 'language-game'. His interest was, as I have already pointed out, certainly not in games as such; for it is clear that he was drawing some kind of analogy between the group of activities that we commonly refer

(1) Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, 1953, p.506, Sec.130. From now on I shall only indicate the number of the section from which I am quoting or to which I am referring.
to as 'games', on the one hand, and language, on the other hand. We cannot, however, start by 'defining' a language-game; for the simple reason that the things or phenomena which we call 'language-games', "have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all." (Sec.65) This, however, does not mean that we cannot talk about language-games, for a strict definition is neither necessary nor desirable in most cases. That is why we find Wittgenstein introducing the notion of a 'language-game' undefined at the very beginning of his book, and then after securing a certain degree of familiarity with the notion through its application,\(^{(1)}\) he stops to consider its meaning. He says (Sec.65) "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

\(^{(1)}\) See pp. 28-30, especially sections 2, 23, 24, & 48, where (in sec.2) the example of the language used by the builder and his assistant is one instance of a language-game "for which the description given by Augustine is right", i.e., a system of communication where every word is a label for a corresponding object. In section 23 the 'multiplicity' of language-games is illustrated.
language-game, and hence of language, is: What is common to all these activities and what makes them into language or parts of language..." To this Wittgenstein replies by saying that his objective is precisely to show that language (i.e., the group of activities which we call 'language') does not have a defining characteristic, an essence, or one pervading quality. Language is "a form of life" (19 & 241). It is not something "unique" (110): it does not have the formal unity one imagines; it consists of "families of structures more or less related" (108). It was to illustrate this point that Wittgenstein drew the analogy between games and language. For, he tells us, if we consider the proceedings which we call 'games', such as: board-games, card-games, ball-games, olympic-games, and so on..., we find that they do not have any ONE thing common to them ALL. "Don't say:" Wittgenstein warns us, "there MUST be something common, or they would not be called 'games' - but LOOK AND SEE whether there is anything common to all..." He then concludes, after examining a number of the proceedings we usually call 'games', that what he SEES is "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail." (66).
Here the notion of family-resemblances assumes greatest importance. For these similarities, existing among games and analogously among language-games, can best be characterized by the expression: 'family resemblances' (67). Brothers do not usually look like twins, and sons are not mere reproductions of their parents; and yet, we usually do have various resemblances such as: build, features, colour of eyes and hair, temperament, etc., etc., existing among members of the same family. These resemblances "overlap and criss-cross" in the same way as resemblances between games "overlap and criss-cross". This should not mean, however, that Wittgenstein disregards all constancy and similarity. For, as he tells us, "if things were quite different from what they actually are - if there were for instance no characteristic expression of pain, of fear, of joy; or if rule became exception and exception rule; or if both became phenomena of equal frequency - this would make our normal language-games lose their point." (142)(1) We conclude, therefore,

(1) Wittgenstein also points out elsewhere (206, 207) that "the common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language," and if the people who talk this unknown language exhibit no "regular connexion between the sounds they make and their actions," then there wouldn't be "enough regularity to call these sounds 'language'."
that there does exist similarities and resemblances, but they are not all-prevailing similarities: they appear here but disappear there, they are shared by some but not by all, they do not 'overlap' but 'criss-cross'. Fortunately, we have enough criss-crossing as to provide the basis of a reasonable classification - a classification not into logical classes, but into the more down-to-earth-notion of families. Take the experience of being guided, an example which Wittgenstein gives (172), where we have 'similar situations' but cannot find something 'common to ALL' the experiences:

" - You are playing, with your eyes bandaged, and someone leads you by the hand, sometimes left, sometimes right, you have constantly to be ready for the tug of his hand, and must also take care not to stumble when he gives an unexpected tug.

Or: " - Someone leads you by the hand where you are unwilling to go, by force.

Or: " - You are guided by a partner in a dance; you make yourself as receptive as possible, in order to guess his intention and obey the slightest pressure.

Or: " - Someone takes you for a walk; you are having
a conversation; you go where he goes.

Or: " - You walk along a field-track, simply following it."

Another equally important factor, closely related to the notion of 'family resemblances', which the conception of language as consisting of a multiplicity of language games emphasizes and which they Ideal conception of language disregards, is the factor of "marginal indeterminacy". The notion of family resemblances was introduced for the task of replacing common essences as the basis of classification. Marginal indeterminacy, helps completing the task. According to the logician, and metaphysician, the basis for the classification and categorization of things are the common essences which things share or fail to share. According to Wittgenstein, language, and reality for that matter, is something more intricate, interfused, and living than the logician would want us to believe. The logician, by 'defining' or 'giving' a common essence avoids, or rather ignores, marginal indeterminacy - that factor which is at the basis of the intricacy and interfusion of things. Even more! Marginal indeterminacy is not only ignored
by the logician, but is also condemned as 'vague', 'imprecise' and 'inaccurate'. Everything is pressed into his logical forms and formulae; the result is suffocation of language. The logician requires everything to fit smoothly into his designed scheme. "We want to say that there can't be any vagueness in logic. The idea now absorbs us, that the ideal must be found in reality" (101). Our grounds are rendered too smooth to be able to walk on; and thus our language, our ordinary forms of expression, are crippled in the hands of the logician.

True; every language-game is played according to its own rules, but it does not, and ought not, have a set of exhaustive, unchangeable, closed-textured rules, the way a formal system has. For Wittgenstein a game is still a game though "there might be some vagueness in the rules" (100). (1) As a matter of fact there isn't such a game that for every possible move there is a

(1) Perhaps John Wisdom had this in mind when he said: "If I were asked to answer, in one sentence, the question 'What was Wittgenstein's biggest contribution to philosophy?' I should answer: 'His asking of the question 'Can one play chess without the queen?'" Mind, 1952, p.259.
rule governing it. "We must be on our guard against thinking that there is some totality of conditions corresponding to the nature of each case" (183). Can we, for example, tell precisely when are the conditions of 'fitting', 'being able to', or 'understanding' fulfilled and when they cease to be fulfilled? (see Sec. 182). And is there always a sharp distinction between what is essential and what is not essential? A definition is not always an adequate answer to these questions. For, the employment of many of our words and expressions, that is to say the games which we play with them, "are much more complicated than might appear at first sight.... and are more involved... than we are tempted to think" (182).

Wittgenstein thus conceives of language as a complex and changing thing - a "form of life". Language is not something that is given once and for all; something dead and fixed. Words acquire meaning, through their use in the language. It is "the role that the word plays in a particular language-game that gives it its meaning" (49, 50...). And a word may, and does, play more than one role in more than one language-game. That is why language is rendered artificial by the
attempt to impose rigid logical forms upon its uses and functions. Our language had served different purposes in the past, and continues to do so. There are language-games that were played in the past but may not be played again in the future. On the other hand we may, and do, play games that were never played in the past. Thus, on the whole, and in the process of language-building, old games are retained while new ones are added. Our language, tells us Wittgenstein, "can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses" (18).

2. Some Important Implications of Wittgenstein's Conception of Language.

(a) "Philosophical Problems", the result of the misinterpretation of the various forms of language.

With this picture of the nature of language in mind one can easily see how 'philosophical problems' arise. Their source is a misunderstanding of the nature
and function of our language. As Wittgenstein artfully puts it "Philosophical problems arise when language goes on a holiday" (38). They arise when we forget that words have different functions, and that the employment of the same word in different language-games is a different employment in each case. Hence, we should be aware not to be claiming more than what the nature of the case permits us; so that if a description is correct of a certain circumscribed region, it may only be partly correct of another region. It is thus that we are led to confusion by "certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language" (89); for "the uniform appearance of words confuses us ... we are not aware of their diverse functions..." (11). Moreover, it is not always the case that we have a 'circumscribed' region, unless we make it so. It is precisely such attempts at demarcating every case, at giving every word a fixed and final meaning, at subjecting everything to the rules of logic and evaluating them by the criteria of clarity, exactness, distinctness, and consistency; in short, it is the logician's passion to construct an 'Ideal Language' and to consider it as the proper language, that have led to confusion and misunderstanding. We should be mathematically
minded only when we are doing mathematics or something directly related to it; and ought not expect everything to be expressible in terms of mathematical formulae. The obsession with the notion of an Ideal Language tends to overemphasize similarities; and, consequently, a word or expression is not allowed to play more than one game, while actually, it usually plays a variety of games. When "I describe my state of mind", and when "I describe my room", I am playing two quite different language-games with the word 'describe' (290); and in each case I know perfectly well what I am doing - "We do not need a logician to tell us what a correct sentence looks like" (81).

I ought to mention, at this stage, that we must not be led to think that according to Wittgenstein it is only the logician who sins against language and the use of terms. For what Wittgenstein actually does is to proceed "to generalize what was, in the first place, a diagnosis of his own philosophical difficulties, and thus to offer - perhaps with too little qualification - a general account of the character and sources of
philosophical problems."(1) Thus philosophers in general 'share the guilt', for they have misconceived their 'proper function, and set out to find something which was not there, or that was thought to be 'hidden' because it was familiar and "always before one's eyes" (129). Philosophers in general have failed to realize fully the complex nature of language, the varied and multiple forms that it embraces. They have conceptualized it, oversimplified it, and failed to go beyond the "surface grammar" which it presents. A picture that a certain form of our language presents "holds us captive" (115); we might get obsessed by "a false appearance" produced by a "simile that has been absorbed into the forms of our language" (112) and proclaim to the world, as the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus did, that, for example, "the general form of proposition is: this is how things are." Or else a philosopher may take words such as "knowledge", "being", "I", "proposition", "name" - and try to grasp their "essence" without ever bothering whether "the word is ever used in this way in the language-game which is its original home" (116).

(b) Philosophy as "therapeutic" and factually uninformative. Analysis not of the meaning of a term but of its uses.

Such a description of the nature of language and philosophy involves two important conceptions: first that philosophy should be therapeutic, and secondly that it is factually uninformative. Consequently, the function of the philosopher - in the Wittgensteinian sense - is not to supply information, "but to arrange what we have always known." Philosophical problems can never be solved through the attainment of new empirical data, but rather through "looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: in despite of an urge to misunderstand them .... philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (109). This gives Wittgenstein his "revolutionary" - "heretic", his opponents would rather say - character. For all non-Wittgensteinian philosophers, irrespective of their differences, have assumed that they were dealing with "genuine" problems, and were asking "legitimate" questions. So much so that curiosity, puzzlement, and the insistent quest for certainty, have been conceived to be of the
essence of philosophy. Wittgenstein, on the contrary, conceived of this puzzlement as a sign of sickness and not of health. The philosopher has now to be "cured", he has to be shown not the answers to his questions, but rather that his questions should not have been posed in the first place. In other words philosophic problems are not to be 'solved' but 'dissolved'. No philosopher before Wittgenstein, that I know of, had conceived of his function as merely "curative" or "therapeutic" - though, of course, most of them had set out to 'correct' others. However, this 'revolutionary' or 'heretic' conception of philosophy and of the function of the philosopher should not, I think, be left without adding one qualification; namely that it should not be imagined that Wittgenstein thought of philosophers as a bunch of idiots who were so feeble-minded and naive as to be easily deceived and fall victims to all sorts of misconceptions, misunderstandings, and misinterpretations of language and the 'reality' it is thought to express or portray. Such a view may, perhaps, be suggested by the emphatic and final tone which characterize some of Wittgenstein's "verdicts". As when, for example, he declares, with the finality with which Hume commits metaphysics to the flames, "that what we are destroying
is nothing but houses of cards (compare Hume: "...contains nothing but sophistry and illusion") and we are clearing up the ground on which they stand" (118). But although language is proclaimed to be not guilty and "perfectly all right", yet it indirectly shares some of the responsibility. The philosopher gets lost not because he is blind, but rather because he comes across many paths.(1) For "language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about" (203). By no means, however, does this mean that language is deficient and has to be idealized or simplified. Language, on the whole, is as it ought to be: a form of life - growing, complex, and varied. This is precisely why "the problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of depth. They are deep disquietudes, their roots are as deep as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language" (111). This reinforces the position that to

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(1)"A Philosophical Problem", Wittgenstein says, has the form: 'I don't know my way about'" (123).
dismiss theological statements as utterly meaningless, because they fail to satisfy a preconceived criterion of meaning, involves a great degree of arbitrariness. Even more, the interest of the 'functional analyst, (1) (i.e., the philosopher whose main concern is directed towards discovering how language functions or "looking into its workings", as opposed to the 'verificational analyst') in "philosophically puzzling" assertions is now aroused. Thus we find Wisdom, for instance, in his article entitled "Philosophical Perplexity", saying that "it is an important part of the treatment of a puzzle to develop it to the full." And though metaphysical theories are quite often false as Moore was able to show with "horrible ingenuity" yet, adds Wisdom, "there is good in them, poor things." He, moreover, declares his intention of going still further than Wittgenstein and representing "philosophically puzzling statements" not as merely "symptoms of linguistic confusion" but also as "symptoms of linguistic penetration." (2) The very concluding remark which Wisdom throws at the end of this


article and which, as he apologetically admits, smacks of 'smartness' reads: "philosophers should be continually trying to say what cannot be said."(1) It is no strange coincidence that the article "Gods" which, as we shall see, played an important and decisive role in initiating discussion of 'theological' issues by 'analytic' philosophers, was written by none other than Wisdom.

Before proceeding to point out some of the possible limitations of linguistic analysis it may perhaps be helpful to re-emphasize, by way of summary, the main 'developments' which the notion of analysis underwent as a result of Wittgenstein's views as to the nature of language and philosophy. One's first general impression on the matter may be that the 'Russellian' Wittgenstein, the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus and of reductionism, has become more 'Moorian': more keen on making distinctions and distinguishing usages. This, however, is only partly true and has to be qualified. For Wittgenstein, though agreeing with the Moorian conception of analysis as distinction, he, nevertheless, rejected other important views which Moore held, as

(1) Ibid., p. 50.
thoroughly as he rejected his former reductionism and formalism. Chief amongst which is the name-theory of meaning which Moore held in one form or the other. Analysis consequently is no more analysis of the meaning of a word or expression, but of its meanings, its uses. And the motto, now, becomes: "Don't look for the meaning of a word, look for its uses." With the rejection of the view that for every word there corresponds an 'object', a 'concept', an 'Entity' (call it what ever you like) with which it is correlated, there goes the rejection of the view that 'understanding' or 'comprehending' is a sort of inner or hidden process of mental correlation. This latter point, though quite interesting and of grave consequences, involves us, however, in a long story into the details of which we cannot, here, go.\(^1\) For our present purpose we are interested in the 'fact' or claim that to understand the meaning of a word is "a style of behaviour, a disposition to use and respond to it."\(^2\) And hence the

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\(^1\) This thesis is discussed and developed, quite thoroughly, in Ryle's book: The Concept of Mind.

aim of analysis can no more be the arrival at a 'real definition' in the platonic-Aristotelian (and Moorrian, one may add) sense; for analysis is not of propositions or concepts that are either true or false and whose truth or falsity is determined by the presence or absence of a certain quality or characteristic. Analysis is, rather, of terms whose meanings are a function of their uses or families of uses which in turn express decisions or linguistic-recommendations. (1) We therefore should not hope for a 'final analysis' which succeeds in discovering, or better uncovering, the structure of reality; or which would end by having the word happily finding its mate, its correlative concept. The curtains are never down, and the scene is rarely the same. There is no one method of dealing with all situations. We continuously have to be adapting and readapting ourselves to different contexts as they arise. What a philosopher, to be helpful, can at most do is to 'exhibit' the various uses of terms, to 'chart their logic' — in the functional and not in the formal sense —, to bring them back to their original homes, their linguistic contexts, the

language-games in which they arose and through which they gained significance.

3. Some Possible Limitations of Linguistic Analysis.

I shall not attempt an 'evaluation' of the linguistic movement. Such an attempt would be premature; since, for one thing, it presupposes an acquaintance with the linguistic movement more thorough than the above presentation provides, and, for another, the movement itself is still 'on the go'. Many of its implications are still latent, and it is not quite obvious where it may lead. The following comments are simply designed to help us realize what one may expect of linguistic analysis. A criticism of linguistic analysts would not have the nature of falsifying or refuting their 'claims'; for the simple reason that they don't claim much. Though, of course, it is possible and sometimes legitimate, to reproach somebody for claiming too little. In this sense, one can point out as a 'limitation' of the linguistic movement, especially if considered as a suggested theory of meaning, its failure to provide what other theories of meaning claim to have provided. Only
for the linguistic analysts this 'failure' does not
indicate lack of ambition, but lack of presumption.
If the charge is that of being faithful to what the
nature of the case is, or seems to be, then they plead
guilty to the charge.

felt it necessary to dispose of what he called "the
linguistic Veto", before he went on to give his account
of natural theology. He justifiably felt that a philos-
sopher could no longer go on doing philosophy (in the
traditional sense) against the more or less predominant
mode of thinking. One might say, to quote from Max
Black, that "the weather ... is congenial to empiricists,
naturalists, agnostics; the well acclimatized have
admired the two Principia and the Tractatus and have
read a hundred pages of Hume for one of Kant. Here
rehtoric is viewed with suspicion, and enthusiasm barely
tolerated."(1) No wonder that in such an atmosphere
Paton feels ill at ease. He, therefore, struggles to
remove the 'veto' or the 'ban' which analysis, supposedly,

(1) Max Black, Ed., Philosophical Analysis,
places on 'speculative philosophy'. This 'ban', however, turns out to be the verifiability theory of meaning. We are not, here particularly concerned with Paton's attempt to clear the ground for natural theology. I have mentioned this only because it is symptomatic of a common tendency to deal with all modern analytic trends as if they belong to one and the same category - Black's analogy is carried too far, and too much talk about the 'weather' in philosophy leads people to confuse the various forms that contemporary non-traditional philosophy has taken.

Oddly enough, the objection against linguistic analysis is not that it places 'vetos'; on the contrary, what, to my mind, linguistic analysis tends to do is to make it pointless to veto anything. John Wisdom reports that when on a certain occasion he spoke to Wittgenstein of an unsuccessful philosophical discussion, Wittgenstein said to him, "Perhaps you made the mistake of denying what he said."(1) This immediately raises the question of whether the notion of a language-game is so loose and unrestricted as to lead to the impossibility of

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contradiction. Is one completely justified in playing any language-game as long as one makes it clear what specific language-game he is playing? Can we always solve disputes by saying to the disputants: "Now come, don't you see that you are playing different language-games?" And can one always evade an issue by saying: "but surely, I was playing a different, or a new, language-game"?

According to linguistic analysis the meaning of a term is not a fixed item. But what is it? "It has to be understood in a specific context", the answer comes. And if we ask whether we can have sufficient grounds for determining its meaning; "the authority is always relative," we are told, "and we can't hope for more than approximation." To repeat, linguistic analysis arose as the rejection of a theory of meaning; it, however, provided no ready-made, well formulated, substitute. And the linguistic analysts found no reason why they should; for, according to them, we should'nt try to construct a fool's paradise; and if we do, they would find no point in arguing with us. The linguistic analysts are writing "for those who are very ready to
accept down-to-earth conclusions if they can."(1) Their arguments are directed to those who share their approach. They are not claiming to have described "Reality". One has to 'see' their point in its proper context, for nothing - or at least very few things - hold in all contexts. We have to learn, it seems to live in the realm of continuous approximation and possibility. For the linguistic analyst, that ought to do.

"It ought to do." But actually does it? That depends upon the degree of approximation and possibility with which the linguistic analysts leave us; for, surely, we must also be left with some reasonable degree of certainty. In other words the notion of a language-game has to be philosophically dependable. But we find that this notion may be used, and has been used, in philosophical arguments in a very loose sense. For, in the first place, it is not always easy (and sometimes it is practically impossible) to agree as to the different language-games in which a word or an expression is employed: one can never be sure whether he has given

the right description of the actual use or uses of a term. And, in the second place, it would follow from the view that language-games are the only legitimate meaning-giving contexts, that the formulation of meaning-rules is either arbitrary or impossible. Analysis of the possible and even of the actual uses of a term can never be exhaustive. We have, therefore, to be selective in our choice; and the only standards that one may refer to are the rules of each language-game, since every game is played according to its own rules which are to be discovered within the language-game in question.

But what can one discover in a language-game? Philosophical inquiry, we have seen, is factually uninformative; therefore, what the analysis of a language-game and its rules may result in, would at most be the discovery of how people, in this specific case, have decided to use their terms. And since this decision is a matter of convention, therefore "whatever we 'get out' of our rules for using language has been implicitly 'put into' our rules when we initially 'decided' to use them."(1) Consider the following

from Wittgenstein:

"Essence is expressed by grammar. (371)

"The only correlate in language to an intrinsic necessity is an arbitrary rule. It is the only thing which one can milk out of this intrinsic necessity into a proposition. (372)

"Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (theology as grammar.)" (373).

How much, then, is playing one language-game rather than another a matter of choice? What happens to the distinction between 'correct' and 'incorrect' use of words?(1) The value of, practically, every assertion, we are told, is to be estimated in its particular language-game. Thus, we have no right to generalize. But this procedure, if carried to its extreme, becomes futile, if not absurd. The philosopher, then, has to be denied the very little that Wittgenstein allowed

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(1) A nominal definition, or a decision as to the use of words "cannot significantly be said to be true or false." See Pap, Semantics and Necessary Truth, Op.Cit., p.271
him; for one can no more even "assemble reminders" and "suggest analogies", since such reminders and analogies involve 'stepping out of context', and cannot dispense with an element of generality. An extreme Wittgensteinianism would ultimately lead us, once more, to face the unhappy choice between either absolutism or extreme contextualism.

However, the alternatives are rarely as sharp as that. What actually has happened is that this extreme form of Wittgensteinianism, especially when it came to the consideration of specific issues, got diluted and somewhat modified. The linguistic approach got less negative and less dramatic; we have seen how, in the case of Wisdom for example, it was believed that metaphysical puzzlement may turn out to be quite enlightening, and how "paradoxical philosophical theses, may call attention to what is commonly overlooked, and sometimes may even bring about far-reaching transformation in currently accepted modes of thought."(1) Moreover, in addition to 'assembling reminders', linguistic analysts have also 'presented arguments'. Such arguments,

however, are usually based on an empirical study of the use of words. And their investigations, though still of the nature of an activity rather than a formalized procedure, have become more systematic. The name "linguistic analysis" may perhaps symbolize the main features of this 'development' from the early forms of Wittgensteinianism. The dominant character of what they regard to be their subject-matter, is still 'linguistic'. "They recommend that philosophers should attend to the use of language rather than the character of the world as a whole or the nature of thought and knowledge."(1) Their investigations are, therefore, empirical in nature. But the linguistic analyst is not a natural historian: his observations are not chaotic and rhapsodic, for he seeks to discover and describe the 'logic' of terms. However, this 'logic' - the discovery of which now becomes the aim of analysis - is not formal, or reductionist, logic. Though not rigid and final, there are certain specifiable "rules of use of the expressions we employ," i.e., they exhibit a 'logic' of their own. These rules, moreover, have to be formulated "with a more complex and sensitive apparatus

than anything the formalists are prepared to admit."(1)

The philosophy of linguistic analysis seem to be entering a, more or less, constructive phase. And if some analysts still speak of 'games', this usage should not be associated with playfulness. The game-analogy must not suggest that philosophic activity is something less serious than it ought to be. Thus, 'philosophers of language' who have adopted this more positive approach, believe that the application of their techniques of analysis may be very useful in clearing conceptual difficulties existing in various fields of human knowledge. "Interested in prevention as well as in cure, they are prepared to undertake more or less comprehensive mappings of the use of words and they do not confine themselves to the relief of immediate conceptual pressures."(2) To illustrate this widening of interests among philosophers of language Quinton mentions some of their main pioneering contributions to fields such as Politics, History, Art, and Religion. I shall quote him in full.

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(1) Ibid., p. 179.
(2) Ibid., p. 179.
"...Weldon, with a formalist enthusiasm but an ordinary language method, has made a vigorous attack on traditional political philosophy (218). The attempt of political philosophers to discover a Priori 'foundations' for policies and institutions is mistaken since the foundations they offer are too vague and indeterminate to have any concrete consequences. Fruitful political arguments must concern itself with detailed issues. Grantson (184) has investigated the concept of freedom and its different national manifestations, Hart (219) the doctrine of natural rights, and Wollheim (220) and Berlin (221) the idea of equality. Hart has also insisted on the importance of the analysis of language for jurisprudence (222) and in collaboration with Honore (223) has provided an admirable example of its application there. Gardiner (224) has applied Ryle's philosophy of Mind to the problem of historical explanation, particularly in an extended criticism of Collingwood's idealist philosophy of history. Walsh (225) has also criticized Collingwood but in a more sympathetic way. Flew (226) has used Ryle's philosophy of mind in an investigation of psychical research, with particular attention to the intelligibility of its conjectures. Three collections of articles provide examples of the method in
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MacIntyre (229). Flew has brought together three useful general collections of essays by philosophers of language (230, 231, 232). Since there are as yet no general treatments of the philosophy of language of an introductory sort, these collections are the best available method of approach to the major treatises." (1)

(1) Ibid., pp. 194-5. Quinton's article is followed by a Bibliography. The numbers provide full reference to the above mentioned publications as they are listed there.
PART II

ANALYSIS: A DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE.

Our concern, in this thesis, centers around the movement in contemporary philosophy called 'linguistic analysis'. 'Movements' in the history of philosophy usually have a background, a development, and, above all, certain implications. Adopting them or not should 'make a difference' when it comes to the consideration of issues that are of vital importance to men. Otherwise philosophy becomes merely an intellectual exercise; thrilling perhaps, but of no genuine significance. It would then, simply provide us with more alternatives besides, for example, that of playing a game of chess. In Part One a formal sketch of the important features of the philosophy of linguistic analysis was attempted. But if we are to arrive at a better understanding of this movement we have to watch its principles at work. Fortunately the analysts have, recently, started showing greater interest in subjects other than logic and theory of meaning. And we are thus, gradually, becoming in a
better position to understand and hence to evaluate the 'claims' of this movement. I have chosen to consider some aspects of the excursion of the 'analysts' into the 'realm' of theology. The data are not abundant and the field is still virgin; but we do have amongst the analysts some pioneers who have tried to widen the scope of their pre-occupations and apply their methods to the problems of theology.

If considered as an attempt at systematic presentation and discussion of a theological issue or set of issues, this thesis, I am sure, is a complete failure. I am not, however, writing an essay or developing a theme in theology. For if I were, I, then, would have to deal with my subject matter in a certain order if I am eager to cultivate the virtue of systematicity with which most of the well-known theologians pride themselves. We are not here concerned with one particular issue in philosophical theology. And what, I hope, prevents the remaining part of this thesis from being a mere collection of important problems in theology that are disorderly raised but never fully discussed let alone settled, is the fact that our interest lies primarily in tracing the implications, for philosophical theology, of the general
philosophical position which I attempted to present in Part One. It is this interest in the approach of some contemporary philosophers to theological issues which provides whatever element of unity this thesis may have. I have, however, sought to guard myself against the tendency of trying to "fit" the facts into any kind of preconceived notion as to what an analyst "should" do, thereby sacrificing factuality for unity. Our search for similarities, Wittgenstein has taught us, should not make us blind to the differences. But since in any process of inductive reasoning one cannot do without a certain degree of generalization, I feel justified in describing the remaining part of this thesis as an attempt to arrive at an 'inductive definition' of linguistic analysis. To use the term 'definition' is, perhaps, to claim too much; for my 'conclusions' are little more than tentative. It is just that formal expositions or 'definitions' of linguistic analysis are, I believe, not enough to make us realize to the full what is involved in this movement. The complimentary task of providing 'functional' or 'inductive' definitions is, I think, indispensible if we are to arrive at better understanding of linguistic analysis. This is a task that has to be performed; irrespective of whether or not
I succeed in contributing anything of significance to it.
CHAPTER ONE

ANALYSIS: A CHALLENGE TO THEOLOGY

A. ANALYSIS AND THEOLOGY.

1. Our concern is in "Philosophical" Theology.

Theology is usually a later 'development' in the history of religions and religious belief. At the early stages people are so busy practicing and preaching the "truth" that has been conveyed unto them that they rarely can afford, or care, to 'rationalize' their beliefs. This is true of the 'ordinary believer' at all stages, for instead of philosophizing about his beliefs, he is content to practice them. It is not very easy, however, to decide when we are entitled to call someone a theologian. If we regard any attempt to 'think over' and 'consider' one's religious beliefs as a defining characteristic of theology, our definition would be so broad as to include more people as instances of the term 'theologian' than we are usually willing to include. Actually, we would then have very few religious people who are not theologians. So it all depends upon how 'technical' we want to be. And the term 'theology' is
certainly a technical term inspite of the fact that it has various connotations. Theologians constitute a class of thinkers who are quite limited in number, who have developed a 'language' of their own, and who are concerned with a specific kind of problems which have a common origin and nature. Theologies have at least one property in common: they involve 'thought about God'. Secondly, they almost all, employ some kind of 'methodology'. Their attempts at understanding God and what God's nature involves, are systematic and organized. If we approach God through the study of his creation and hope by the employment of our reason to arrive at a better understanding of his nature; we are, then, involved in 'natural' theology. If, on the other hand, we approach God through His revelation, or if we lean heavily on authority; our theology becomes, thereby, 'revealed' or 'dogmatic'. These, by no means, exhaust all the varieties of theological thinking. We cannot afford, here, to go into the details of any of these theologies. We have to assume, I am afraid, that we, more or less, understand the general characteristics that are signified by the use of the phrase "a theological problem". It has to be emphasized, however, that our reference is primarily to problems in philosophical theology, as distinguished
from 'other' kinds of problems in theology. And "philosophical theology traditionally concerns itself with the grounds in reason and experience for religious belief." (1) It is this sort of theology that attracts the attention of contemporary analysts. They are especially concerned with evaluating the claims of theologians who share a certain 'faith' in the power of reason and in its legitimacy in handling religious issues. Philosophical theology is a theology "which purports to establish its assertions on grounds of 'reason', that is on grounds which can be understood and assessed by any intelligent and mature person. If we can define 'religion' for the present purpose as the belief in the existence of God together with the pattern of behaviour which follows from that belief, theology will be the methodical statement and discussion of the belief element in religion, and philosophical theology will be the attempt to isolate and treat critically that

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(1) This is how Prof. Roland Puccetti uses the term, in his description of the course on "Problems In Contemporary Philosophical Theology" which he is presently giving.
element which all possible theologies have in common."(1)

It is sometimes sarcastically and deprecatingly remarked that what is thought to be most essential and genuine about linguistic analysis has always been a truism for many of the most important figures in the history of philosophy who simply did not think it necessary to make such a fuss about it. While, from the other side, some linguistic analysts try to show that many of the most important figures in the history of philosophy were, at heart, essentially linguistic analysts. We cannot now settle the issue. For the least that that would require is an examination of the philosophies and philosophical methods of such leading figures. Of course, one may remark in passing, that the 'truth' of a position is logically quite independent of the fact that somebody did or did not hold such a position. Be it as it may; I by no means contend that the following analyses of theological concepts are completely novel and

unprecedented in the history of philosophy and theology. They are 'ancient' problems and have a very long ancestry. Here again the charge of insignificance and disguised reiteration may be directed against the analysts. They do nothing more, it may be asserted, than strike familiar notes with some changes in phrasing. But I think that there is in the analytic approach to theology enough 'novelty' in terms of providing a new 'setting' for old preoccupations, and in terms of a common emphasis upon clarity and familiarity of expression, to justify an examination -- limited as it is -- of their views with respect to problems that have been traditionally discussed and rediscussed quite exhaustingly but not, perhaps, as exhaustively. The reader may fail to see anything 'new' in this approach; in that case I would have lost whatever little and modest claim to originality I have made.

2. The Analytic Concern in Theology:

Motives and Significance.

The 'motives' behind the analysts' concern in theology are varied. At the outset the interests were negative: fascinated with their new techniques, some analysts found in theology an ideal field where their effectiveness could be displayed. There seemed to be
much in theology to be "committed to the flames" and even more "houses of cards" to be destroyed. This is typical of what may be called the 'neo-verificationists' and some extreme Wittgensteinians. The very little 'meaningful' language that the formers left to the theologians, was thought of, by the latters, to embody a fundamental misuse. However, there gradually arose more positive interest in theology. And some analysts got to believe that the language of theology has a unique -- and sometimes important -- function.\(^{(1)}\) This belief is generally due to the realization of the essential 'neutrality' of analysis as descriptive and exhibitive; added to it a certain 'desire' on the part of some believers who, while convinced analysts, hope to retain their religious faith.\(^{(2)}\) In Chapter One we shall be mainly concerned with the former 'negative' approach, in Chapter Two with the latter.

It is also important to note, in this connection, that the 'analytic techniques' have not only aroused the interests of the analysts in theology; they have also


\(^{(2)}\) See H. D. Lewis, "Contemporary Empiricism and the Philosophy of Religion", in Philosophy, 1957, pp. 193
acted as a challenge to the theologians themselves and have thus contributed to some sort of 'revival' in theological discourse in the form of more vigorous discussion, elaboration, and representation of the nature of religion in general and of religious belief in particular, on the part of both analysts and theologians per se. And here again, in the case of 'theologians', the reaction has been twofold. Some of them came to realize the unhappy and serious limitations which the 'new logic' places on their traditional activities, and tried, in general, to 'do something about it'. While another group of theologians 'welcomed' this 'new logic'. (1) The fact that the application of this logic on theology results in all sorts of paradoxes and contradictions proves, for them, not the inadequacy of their faith but rather its 'authenticity' -- one does not have to present the content of his faith in logically acceptable arguments. However, the story, as we shall try to show, is not as simple as that. For what is at stake is not only the truthfulness or authenticity of religious beliefs; what is at stake is

its very meaning. And simply to fall upon 'revealed' truth will not do. Indeed the 'immunity' thus achieved is a costly one, for "the insights gained by recent philosophy so far from diminishing the need for rational inquiry within theology, have vastly increased that need. They have increased it by showing that one critical question about any kind of religious language is not whether its claims can be established by this or that argument, but whether they have been given a coherent meaning, a consistent use."(1) It, therefore, seems inevitable for the theologian to pass through the dark "night of the intellect" if he intends to speak meaningfully at all.


The Parable of the Gardener -- Flew's Version and the "Attack" upon Theology.

John Wisdom was one of the first analysts who got interested in the discussion of theological issues. His famous article "Gods"(2) has exercised great influence.

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(1) Ibid., p. 6.

(2) This article first appeared in the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1944; It was reprinted in Wisdom's Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1953, pp. 149-168.
in initiating and directing philosophical consideration of problems in theology. It is rich in suggestions; and while 'analytic' in approach, yet it does not, I think, suffer from positivistic one-sidedness. Wisdom's chief contribution in this article is, I believe his analysis of the role of 'argument' in religious belief; a point which will be considered with some detail in the next chapter. This, however, is by no means Wisdom's only contribution to the field of philosophical theology; and we shall find ourselves referring to him more than once. For the present we shall take Wisdom's famous 'parable of the gardener' and consider the way it was seized upon by what may be called the 'neo-verificationists' in theology who, through their own version of the parable, launched a severe attack on theology. Let us, first, listen to the tale as told by Wisdom.

"Two people return to their long neglected garden and find among the weeds a few of the old plants surprisingly vigorous. One says to the other 'it must be that a gardener has been coming and doing something about these plants.' Upon inquiry they find that no neighbour has ever seen anyone at work in their garden. The first man says to the other 'He must have worked while people slept'. The other says 'No, someone would have heard him and
besides, anybody who cared about the plants would have kept down these weeds.' The first man says 'Look at the way they are arranged. There is purpose and a feeling for beauty here. I believe that someone comes, someone invisible to mortal eyes. I believe that the more carefully we look the more we shall find confirmation of this.' They examine the garden ever so carefully and sometimes they come on new things suggesting that a gardener comes and sometimes they come on new things suggesting the contrary and even that a malicious person has been at work. Besides examining the garden carefully they also study what happens to gardens left without attention. Each learns all the other learns about this and about the garden. Consequently, when after all, this, one says I still believe a gardener comes' while the other says'I don't' their different words reflect no difference as to what they have found in the garden, no difference as to what they would find in the garden if they looked further and no difference about how fast untended gardens fall into disorder. At this stage, in the context, the gardener hypothesis has ceased to be experimental, the difference between one who accepts and one who rejects it is now not a matter of one expecting something the other does not expect."(1)

There are, as we shall try to see, many 'morals' to be

(1) Ibid., pp. 154-55
drawn from this parable and from the whole context within which it appears. Antony Flew was only fascinated with the 'suggestion' that theological assertions are unfalsifiable; and he concluded that they actually are no assertions at all. This became the basis for the 'challenge' with which 'analysis' supposedly confronts theology. Our main concern in this chapter is with the nature and implications of this 'challenge'. Before turning to that it would be, again, helpful to hear Flew's version of Wisdom's parable.

"Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing were growing many flowers and many weeds. One explorer says, 'Some gardener must tend this plot.' The other disagrees, 'There is no gardener.' So they pitch their tents and set a watch. No gardener is ever seen. 'But perhaps he is an invisible gardener.' So they set up a barbed-wire fence. They electrify it. They patrol with bloodhounds...But no shrieks ever suggested that some intruder has received a shock. No movements of the wire ever betray an invisible climber. The bloodhounds never give cry. Yet still the Believer is not convinced. 'But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves.' At last the Sceptic
despairs, 'But what remains of your original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?" (1)

I have quoted Wisdom and Flew in full because their 'stories' provide the setting for much of what is to come. The analogy of all this talk about gardens and gardeners to religion is evident. In both cases a certain 'hypothesis' is presented to account for some 'observed' facts. Both Wisdom and Flew agree that theistic assertions turn out not to be hypotheses in the scientific sense. But while for Flew this automatically disqualifies them and renders religious talk meaningless; for Wisdom, though religious assertions fail to function as scientific hypotheses, yet this does not make meaningful religious talk impossible. However, 'disqualifications' such as that of Flew's are not 'rash' disqualifications: they are not mere dismissals of the whole issue, for they are -- and actually turned out to be -- of great significance for theological discourse. Their position, therefore,

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demands more detailed consideration.

B. THE PARADOX OF FAITH.

1. The Significance of The Neo-Verificationists: The Gap between God and Experience.

I have chosen to refer to the above mentioned position as 'neo-verificationism' in theology. 'Neo', because while their demand for falsification (or verification) is much related to Ayer's verifiability theory of meaning, yet neo-verificationists are not thoroughgoing positivists. For they do realize the oversimplifications and limitations involved in the latters' theory of meaning. They are, consequently, more tolerant and open than the 'classical' positivists have usually been. They would hesitate more before classifying assertions as nonsensical, and would first give their opponent the chance to present his case. But the important fact remains that their primary concern is still in meaning, and that therefore the question of meaning has a logical priority over that of justification. As the 'Logician' in A.N. Prior's imaginary dialogue says, "the real intellectual difficulty for the believer or would-be believer is not the problem of proof but the problem
of meaning."(1) Therefore the value of the neo-verificationists lies in the fact that while giving the chance to the opponent to present his case, they were as insistent as ever on clarity and 'meaningfulness'. They have thus helped to intensify the 'difficulties' of the theologian instead of simply dismissing them offhand. The early positivists didn't care to listen to what the theologian may want to say. Theology was a brand of metaphysical nonsense; and that ended it. The theologian, consequently, didn't feel 'obliged' to retort, for nobody would listen. The neo-verificationists, on the other hand, were very eager and intent on listening; though, perhaps, they were not very sympathetic listeners. Instead of holding argument with the theologian to be pointless, they made a point of arguing with him. The theologian has to state the content of his faith, and to state it in such a manner that one may hope to understand it.

This turned out to be not too easy a demand for the theologian to meet. It gradually became a challenge. And "the value of this modified verification-challenge

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is precisely this, that it forces a theologian to expose the very nerve of his position, to become clear with himself (and to express to other people) on what his theology stands or falls."(1) And we can never hope to understand on what this theology stands, the neo-verificationist insists, unless we are told what may possibly cause it to fall. He who asserts that there is a gardener who secretly comes and takes care of the garden, must also be willing to specify what may possibly occur that would convince him to give up his hypothesis. If he fails to do that, then his assertion is as good as nothing. A typical question to ask the theist would be "How much should innocent children suffer, How many wars, famines and epidemics should there be, How many cities should be destroyed by earthquakes or burnt with volcanos, before you stop calling your God 'good'?"

This, of course, is the 'ancient' problem of evil; but the fact that it is ancient does not make it less significant. On the contrary, it now becomes much more difficult to 'explain it away'. For the neo-verificationist cannot be easily tricked. He would not allow

the theist to go on qualifying his assertions in the face of facts that cannot be theistically accounted for. Sooner or later nothing would be left of theistic assertions -- they will be "killed by inches, the death by a thousand qualification."(1) An assertion that is qualifiable in the face of all facts does not exclude any fact, and hence is meaningless. The trouble with religious words, as Raphael Demos puts it, is that they are too hospitable; while "a word is better known by the company it does not keep; the 'no trespassing sign' must stand on the lawn."(2) The price one has to pay for saving religious language from falsification is indeed very costly -- it is vacuity.

Suggested ways out of the problem emphasized the 'otherness' and 'transcendence' of God; and the gap between Him and experience grew larger still. Words when taken out of the context of human experience, are emptied of meaning; but we have to employ 'words' to talk about infinite God, and yet hope that finite man


(2) Article by R. Demos, "The Meaningfulness of Religious Language", in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, V.18, 1957, p.100.
would understand them. As Alasdair MacIntyre puts it, "the theist both denies that anything adequate can be said about God and yet says a great deal." (1) This is an old theological problem which the neo-verificationist, empirically founded attack helped to intensify. Talk about God involves the ascription of empirical, human, and factual qualities to a transcendent, eternal and supernatural Being. Man, it seems, is thoroughly anthropomorphich; so it is either that God has to be 'humanized', or else objective reference to Him is rendered impossible. Hence the historical importance of the subjective element in religion, from Tertullian up to Barth. The attempts to impose human conceptions for the understanding of God's nature are 'fallacious', it is claimed. There can be no objective connection, for the Barthian, between man and God. Religious talk and concepts will never make sense through subjecting them to the rules of grammar and logic, their meaningfulness is the result of a certain "illumination" conferred by God through a "miracle" or "gift" of His. "Of course we can only talk nonsense when we try to talk about God," says the Barthian Protestant in A.N. Prior's dialogue,

"-- Our language is the language of sinful men, and is utterly unfitted for such use. Of course the laws of thought and the laws of grammar, forbid to confess our faith -- we try to speak of God and it is impossible even to begin." (1) Barth is certainly not the first theologian, who not only recognizes and accepts the element of paradox, incomprehensibility, and inexpressibility in religion, but also welcomes it. A similar, but much more 'dramatized', position was taken by a theologian of the second century by the name of Tertullian. (2) He would have been very 'grateful' for any one who succeeded in 'falsifying' him, since the paradoxical and incompatible nature of religious assertions were the 'reasons' for Tertullian's belief in them. Marcion, a contemporary of Tertullian, had to reject the incarnation because he thought that it involved a logical contradiction; for he could not understand how God and His attributes could be eternal and unchangeable if we, at the same time, believed that He became incarnate in human flesh. So Marcion, out of

(2) In all what follows in connection with Tertullian I have relied on Bernard William's article "Tertullian's Paradox" in New Essays In Philosophical Theology, Op.Cit., pp. 187-211.
respect for meaningfulness and comprehensibility, chose to reject the incarnation. This outraged Tertullian, whose reaction, though may perhaps represent an extreme, is yet typical of many 'theologians' who had to face questions of the meaningfulness and comprehensibility of religious language -- paradox was not only accepted but was also welcomed. To the charge of incompatibility involved in describing God as eternal and unchangeable and yet asserting the He, at a certain time in a certain place, descended into earth and became man, Tertullian answers by saying that we should not attempt to subject God to human concepts and notions, for it is fallacious to argue "from the nature of temporal objects to the nature of the eternal and infinite."\(^{(1)}\) to the charge that it is 'unworthy' of God, being what He is, to be born and become man, Tertullian impatiently and violently retorts, answering Marcion "...Which is more unworthy of God, more shameful, to be born or to die?... Answer me this, you butcher of the truth. Was not God really crucified? And as he was really crucified, did not he really die? And as he really died, did not he really rise from the dead?... Is our whole faith false?..."

\(^{(1)}\) *Ibid.*, Williams, p.189.
Spare what is the one hope of the whole world. Why do you destroy an indignity that is necessary to our faith? What is unworthy of God will do for me... the Son of God was born; because it is shameful, I am not ashamed. And the Son of God died; just because it is absurd, it is to be believed. And he was buried and and rose again; it is certain, because it is impossible.(1)"

What can the neo-verificationist, or anybody for that matter, say in the face of this? You simply cannot 'argue' with a Tertullian.

Nevertheless, an important moral can be learnt from Tertullian: religion is essentially subjective, and hence involves an undeniable element of incomprehensibility. This fact has been accepted, in varying degrees, by many and considered to be the primary justification of 'faith'. Religion, it is said, cannot be 'proved', cannot be 'demonstrated', cannot be 'objectified'; but this does not mean that it is impossible; for we can still have -- faith. Failing

(1) Ibid., Tertullian, pp. 189-190 (italics are mine).
the neo-verificationist test does not rob religion of its authenticity and value. (1) However, for the neo-verificationist, reliance on faith will not do when the question is a question of meaning. For how can one be said to 'have faith' in x when he, in the first place, does not 'understand' x? "Faith might be a way of believing something, as opposed to believing it on evidence; but how could it be a way of stepping from what is understood to what is not understood?" (2) In religion, to repeat, the element of incomprehensibility is irremovable. That is why the believer is willing to step into the unknown by a 'leap' of faith. While the neo-verificationist will not take a single step unless he knows, partly at least, where into he is stepping. When the alternatives are a meaningful as opposed to a meaningless hypothesis, there can simply be no "choice". As Prior's 'Logician',

(1) Rudolf Otto, for example, believes that "the really important elements in religion are the aspects of faith which cannot be conceptualized"; and that "what is essential about religion is its non-rational side, the part that cannot be...put into words." See on Otto: Thomas McPherson's article, "Religion as the Inexpressible" in New Essays In Philosophical Theology, Op.Cit., pp.124-5; and Ferre, Op.Cit. p. 36

in addressing the Barthian Protestant, says "...the believing hypothesis is meaningless, and so isn't a hypothesis at all. The chances are not fifty-fifty but a hundred to nothing against belief. The 'choice' you imagine you have is illusory -- unbelief is inevitable."(1) Human reason may be, and actually is, limited. But this does not make the incomprehensible and obscure appropriate bases for belief, especially when the belief in question defines an outlook or a way of life.

A recent attempt at showing that "unbelief is inevitable" if God is to be comprehensible by human reason, is made by Professor Roland Puccetti(2) and was "inspired", as he himself says, "by a remark of Wittgenstein's in the Tractatus." This remark, as quoted by Professor Puccetti, states that "one cannot set a limit to thought," for in order to do so "we

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(1) Ibid., p.8.
(2) Professor Puccetti presented this argument in a short article entitled "Is Omniscience Possible," This article is forthcoming in the Australasian Journal of Philosophy.

should have to be able to think both sides of this limit, i.e., we should have to be able to think what is unthinkable."(1) Professor Puccetti's argument, as I understood it, may be restated in the following manner: No matter how many 'facts' one knows, it is always logically possible that an unknown fact 'f' may still exist. Let us call the proposition asserted by this statement 'P'. Now, if 'P' is true then no one can assert that "there are no facts unknown to me," for the possibility of there being such a fact, 'f', can never be excluded. But this is exactly what an omniscient being should be able to do, namely, to assert that "there are no facts unknown to me." It, therefore, follows that omniscience is impossible, and hence that God, if He is what the theist describes Him to be, does not exist. Of course the argument, though valid, cannot be true unless 'P' is accepted. And 'P' cannot be proven false unless one is enabled, as Wittgenstein puts it, "to think the unthinkable". Actually this argument and the whole approach which it typifies assume that nothing can be said to exist, and even more to be

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'understood', unless it can be assessed, in principle at least, by human reason and thinking. The theist may, if he chooses, fall upon the incomprehensible and inexpressible; he may take 'leaps', and feel proud and satisfied in having 'committed' himself. As to the neo-verificationist, he would not be bothered any more if all the theist claims to be asserting is that there is a God who is unthinkable. But of course, most theists claim much more.

The problem, moreover, is not only one of incomprehensibility derived from the unavoidable imposition of human concepts upon anything if it is to become an item of human knowledge and understanding; it is also one of incompatibility. For though one may hope, by analogy or whatever other means the theologian may suggest, to 'understand' what is it for a certain attribute of God's to be infinite; still, it seems much more difficult, if not impossible, to understand what is meant by the concept of God when all, or even some, of his attributes are taken together. It seems that we either have to modify some of our ordinary conceptions, or to modify our conception of God. In the case of the phenomenon of evil, for example, we have either to
consider it as a mere fiction, an unreality, or else to think of God as a good being who 'tries his best' or as an all-powerful being who is not always good. Usually the 'saving explanations' of the theists are directed towards a 'modification' of the notion of evil, rather than directly limiting God's power or goodness. One such typical attempt is to say that we can have no sense of 'good' if evil does not exist. In other words, the relation between 'good' and 'evil' is a relation of counterparts, like, for example, that between great and small. J.L. Mackie in an able article entitled "Evil and Omnipotence"(1) argues that if this is the case, viz. that if the existence of evil is necessitated as the counterpart of good, then we don't worship, necessarily, a 'good' God but a 'better' one.(2) And, moreover, the claims that God had to provide some evil so that greater goals and virtues could be cultivated, entails, first, that there is at least one thing which a supposedly 'omnipotent' being had to do, and, secondly it overlooks the fact that we could have managed with much less evil -- it is not only "higher"

(2) Ibid., p.204.
virtues that we have, we have as much if not more, "higher" evils. And if it is claimed that had it not been for the existence of evil, man could not have possibly been 'free'; then the same argument, Mackei believes, holds against such a claim. For here again we are supposing freedom to be one of the 'higher' goods which justify the existence of 'lesser' evils; and leaving aside the question of how much 'higher' evils still remain to be accounted for, it can still be asked "Could God not have made men such that they always freely choose the good?" if not, then surely He is not Omnipotent, for there is no "logical impossibility in (man's) freely choosing the good."(1) The failure of all suggested solutions for the problem of evil shows, for Mackei, that the theist "must now be prepared to believe, not merely what cannot be proved, but what can be disapproved from other beliefs

(1) Ibid., p.209. (Mackie's claim, it must be admitted, is very controversial. This is so because the term 'freedom' and the phrase 'to act freely' are very loose and cannot be dealt with out of specific contexts. In dealing with the same question Antony Flew tries to undermine the theistic free-will-justification of evil, by arguing that there is no contradiction between man's conduct being caused and his being free. This is a point that shall be taken later. See p. 206 ff.)
that he also holds."(1) To go back to our parable of the gardener, the trouble with theism, Flew there concludes, is that "we have given God attributes which rule out all possible saving explanations."(2)

2. The Negative 'Achievements' of The Neo-Verificationists:

(a) Religious Notions No More Considered as Explanatory Hypotheses.

(b) The Importance of The 'Referential Element' In Belief.

These, in brief, are some features of the 'analytic challenge' to theology. It is essentially a demand for meaningfulness and clarification; and its shortcomings, according to its critics, lie in its narrow and limited understanding of meaningfulness and significance. Before, however, considering the 'counter-attack' and the manner in which some theists, especially those who are themselves

(1) Ibid., p. 200. A similar position was developed and elaborated by J.N.Findlay to constitute a 'disproof' of God's existence. See p. 138.

'analysts', tried to meet this challenge, it is first advisable to try to emphasize, by way of summary, the main implications that are explicit or implicit in this attack. On the whole, the neo-verificationists are, I think, justified in at least claiming some 'negative achievements'; for in many cases, they helped theistic theologians in coming to realize what religion is not.

For one thing, religion and religious assertions were no more thought of to function as explanatory hypotheses. This was particularly emphasized, and accepted, by those 'analysts' who came to the defence of religion, or who at least still believed that religion performed a more or less important function of its own. The neo-verificationist attack would indeed be very effective if the believer regarded his assertions to be verifiable or falsifiable. But the fact, they point out, is that the believer does not, or at least should not do so. The neo-verificationist falsely assumes that theology is an experimental issue. He had therefore all the time been firing against an imaginary target. It is only when faith becomes something provisional that it enters within the range of the neo-verificationist's techniques. And faith, to be faith, is never provisional.
No believer ever addresses his God in the following manner: "Oh God, if you exist, save my soul, if I have any."(1) It would be absurd if he does. Believers do not go around testing their beliefs, finding evidence for and against them, and then either confirming or rejecting them. While this is exactly what neo-verificationism requires them to do. This demand, the defenders of religion go on to say, is unfair and unjustified. It betrays a misunderstanding of what is essential in religion. The question, here, inevitably arises: 'if this is not what religious belief is, then what is it?'

The hypothetical experimental character has been denied to save faith from becoming something provisional and to guard religion against degenerating into a sort of Pseudo-Science. But most theologians wouldn't feel happier about it if they find themselves gradually led, by this 'rescuing-manoeuvre', into some sort of extreme subjectivism -- a Tertullianism or an obscure mysticism. This may explain, as we shall try to see, why we have so many 'variations' with respect to the many suggested

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'solutions' of the problem of faith, or the many 'definitions' of religious belief. What is common to all of these 'ways out', is that they are aware of two unhappy extreme-alternatives: that of giving religious assertions the status of factual, scientific, objectivity, or of personal, mystical subjectivity. Having rejected the first alternative, the theologian must now guard against falling into the second. In other words, there is a certain minimum of objective content and reference without which religious belief cannot stand. Neo-verificationism, I believe, has been very effective in bringing such a realization. We may not 'believe' in God the same way we 'believe' in the laws of thermo-dynamics; but there can be no belief of any kind if it has no objective foundation. This is especially true in the case of religious belief, for, as A.C. Ewing rightly puts it, "if there is thought to be no objective justification for belief in God all worship of God becomes idolatry."(1) Not only that; but also most of the important religious activities such as praying, preaching, arguing, converting, etc..., would be rendered impossible, or at least arbitrary. Thus

(1) A.C. Ewing, Philosophy, 1957, p. 208.
though religion is not scientifically verifiable, yet anybody who is eager to retain his religious beliefs and have them preserve a certain status of authenticity and respectability, has to find 'other' means of justifying them. And any suggested 'justification' of religious belief — or, for that matter, of any 'position' or 'stand' or 'system' or 'pattern' — has to have some kind of 'data' or 'facts', from which to draw. Providing such data as a source for recruiting religious belief with the necessary elements of objectivity while yet escaping the falsifiability test is, for the neo-verificationist, as hopeful an attempt as trying to eat the cake and have it. Presently, we have to postpone judgement until we get somewhat acquainted with some of the suggested 'ways out' of the problem, which I shall attempt to outline in the next chapter. Our concern in this chapter has been mainly with the 'problematic' nature of religious belief which the neo-verificationists tried, dramatically perhaps, to symptomize. Since recent contributors to the literature of philosophical theology have, on the whole, either built upon or reacted against neo-verificationism in theology, it would be wise to conclude this chapter by pointing out a certain limitation which is thought to
characterize this position.

3. The 'Critique' of Neo-Verificationism.

The most general and most effective criticism of verificationists is that they have a very narrow conception of meaning. They are accused of 'defining' the meaningful and then arbitrarily excluding all instances that cannot be subsumed under this definition. The result is the elimination of all forms of language that are non-empirical in nature. Life becomes one-dimensional and loses many of its significant forms, chief amongst which is religion. We cannot, simply by assumption, rule out important human activities because the only kind of 'facts' we are willing to acknowledge are empirical 'facts'. If meaningfulness is a matter of what we are willing to "assume", then one assumption is as good as another and verificationism stands in need of 'justification' in as much as any other position does; even more, for we ordinarily have a wider conception of meaning. The verificationist veto, therefore, does not reach the theologian unless he claims scientific validity to his assertions. And the theologian, by the very nature of the case, does not, ordinarily, have such a claim, since this would defeat his own purposes. No
theist is willing to worship a God whose qualities can be exhaustively accounted for by experimental and scientific tests -- God, to be worthy of our adoration, has to be extra-empirical by nature, for otherwise our religion would degenerate into some primitive form of idolatry or animism. The demand that our God-concepts be empirically tested and measured betrays a serious misunderstanding of what religion fundamentally involves. After all, we must not forget that there are different forms, or manifestations, of Truth; and that, consequently, there are different kinds of discourse that function differently and seek, each in the manner which best suits it, to discover its own 'kind' of truth. As H.A. Hodges puts it, "the question whether religious utterances have any meaning at all, and if so what kind of meaning they have, is therefore reducible to the question, whether religious discourse can be regarded as fulfilling a real purpose in real life, and in particular whether it can be regarded as leading to the discovery of some kind of truth."(1)

(1) H.A. Hodges, "What is to become of Theology", in Contemporary British Philosophy, 3rd Series, p.218.
Thus the 'fact' that religion does serve a function, that it has been a major concern of man all through his known history, that it has developed its own peculiar vocabulary and norms, etc., becomes of greatest significance since it provides a huge source of 'meaningfulness' to face, and silence, all arbitrary attempts at classifying religion and religious discourse as meaningless. It is not astonishing, therefore, to find that the linguistic analysts, as we shall see, placed great emphasis upon this point; for didn't they revolt against all attempts at reducing language with all its varied forms into one artificial language that may properly function in a certain circumscribed region but certainly fails in expressing the many and different "forms of life" that seek to find expression in human language? Actually one can reverse the verificationist argument and consider established usage as a criterion of meaning which is more ultimate than verifiability, and then say, as Demos does, that since "religious discourse is meaningful... THEREFORE the principle of verification is not a necessary condition for meaningfulness."(1)

(1) Demos, Philosophy, Op.Cit. pp.101-2. (Capitalized italics are mine.) This position was developed by Norman Malcom to constitute an 'argument' purporting to establish God's existence. See p. 148.
However, to be fair to the neo-verificationists one should mention that they were aware of their 'assumptions'. And this awareness, as I tried to explain earlier, is what entitles them to the 'neo' prefix. The neo-verificationist admits that his 'arguments' make sense only for those who work on the same 'assumptions', and he accordingly addresses himself to those who share his 'outlook' or 'position'. And, moreover, the 'assumptions' that such a position involves do not solely center around the principle of verifiability, but are also 'diluted' with Wittgensteinianism and other affiliated 'modern' views in analysis. The classification into "neo-verificationist" and "linguistic analyst" is perhaps arbitrary. Its only justification in our case is that it has been used to distinguish two somewhat distinct modern approaches to theology: one is more demanding and uncompromising, it emphasizes the problematic nature of religion; the other is more open and tolerant which, while sometimes quite sceptical and pessimistic with regard to religious issues, tends on the whole to give the theologian some credit. This characterization, I must emphasize, does not necessarily pertain to their general philosophic position, but
specifically to their approach to theological problems. And even in the latter case it is not always easy to draw the line.
CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS: A DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE.


Let us try, at the beginning of this chapter, to trace the main developments and changes that the analytic approach to theology underwent. The 'critique' of verificationism with which the last chapter was concluded is especially relevant here. The shift, we said, may be characterized as a shift from 'neo-verificationism' into 'linguistic analysis'. Here again, the linguistic analyst's primary concern is still in meaning more than in anything else; but his approach to the question is different from the neo-verificationist's. In this respect, the distinguishing characteristic of the former is that he does not -- at least he should not -- bring with him a ready-made definition of meaning. Both positions are 'empirical' in nature and temperament. But the range of 'facts' which he is willing to classify as 'empirical' is much
wider and diversified in the case of the linguistic analyst, for he shows a genuine interest in, and respect to, a great variety of facts to which the neo-verificationist gives no attention. This change is particularly relevant to theology: now, we are in the open; gone is the time "of brashness and idol-smashing...", it has been "well spent, but it is past," and instead, the 'task' of analysis becomes now that of "examining as sympathetically and as critically as possible just how religious utterances are used to mean whatever they may mean."(1) That they are used to mean something is an evident fact; how they are used to mean it, and what it is that they are used to mean are facts that can be discovered. This is the new linguistic conception of how philosophical theology should be. It is important to note its main features.

From the very outset, what acquires great significance from the point of view of linguistic analysis, is the fact that theological, and to a much wider extent religious, language has its own established usages. People pray, worship and preach; they have learnt or

have been taught - through the use of language and certain creedal formulations - the things they believe in, and they themselves try, likewise, to communicate this 'truth' to their children and fellowmen. And in this whole process, one is usually referred to certain texts as authoritative and to certain 'events' as especially significant. This, in general, is what the linguistic analyst refers to as the 'religious context' where the religious language-game is originally played. And it is with this language, with all the processes and activities that are associated with it, that he is genuinely concerned.

At the basis of the linguistic analyst's concern with the 'religious context' lie two important 'assumptions'. In the first place, a sentence, it is believed, "has no meaning in any system of discourse to which it makes no contribution;"(1) therefore, the meaning of religious statements should be sought only in the religious context. In the second place, the linguistic analyst could hardly be convinced that what so many people have believed in for such a long time is actually

'meaningless'. The worst that can happen is that he may discover, underlying religious belief and talk, deep deceptions and misconceptions. In that case he is called upon to assume his therapeutic function; which, all the more, increases the need for a "sympathetic and critical understanding" of what goes on in religion. Thus, however it may turn out, an investigation and a 'definition' of the religious context has to be made.

However, it is not always easy to find, and still more to agree upon, the 'established usage' of a term. This is more so in the case of religion; and thus the reference to the 'religious context' is not always precise and uncontroversial. Who, therefore, determines what the 'proper' religious context is? The scriptures and, in the case of Christianity, the life and sayings of Christ? -- but who is to 'rightly' interpret these? The Church? -- but the authority of the church can always be, and has been, questioned. The theologian? -- what 'kind' of theologians are we to trust most? The 'ordinary believer'? -- I beg your pardon, this is a 'myth' that does not exist; and granted that it does, the very moment the 'ordinary believer' starts to formulate his beliefs and to explain them, he ceases to be 'ordinary'. Religious experience? -- Pray, what does that mean?
I am not trying to say that the task is utterly hopeless; it is, to say the least, very difficult and involved. The linguistic analyst is quite aware of this fact and, consequently, tries to take into consideration as many of the elements that are involved in religious beliefs and activities as possible.

The linguistic analyst does not undertake analysis of theological issues in the hope of discovering 'profound truths' or establishing a 'world view'. His greatest ambition is to understand, and render understandable, what actually goes on in religion. This absence of preconceptions and metaphysical motives makes the analyst especially qualified in assuming the descriptive task in theology. And this task has to be undertaken if one hopes to arrive at an objective and reasoned view of religion. We cannot tell whether or not we 'ought to believe' unless we are first reasonably clear as to what the belief in question involves. In other words, the task of description precedes that of prescription. And the less prejudiced and negligent we are in our description, the greater chance we have of not erring in our conclusions and decisions. Of course the ideally unbiased observer does not exist, but still objectivity and impartiality remain a virtue; a virtue which the
linguistic analysts tried their best to cultivate.

The linguistic approach to theology is, therefore, essentially neutral. It is not, necessarily, an attempt to refute, but to understand. (1) And to understand what is involved in a certain discourse one should, according to the linguistic analyst, try to discover how the important terms and key-concepts are usually used in the discourse in question. In the case of theology one has to "chart the logical grammar" of religious language, show how words and concepts there function, draw analogies and contrasts between uses of the same terms in different contexts, trace their origins and developments with emphasis upon their occurrence in the 'first-order-statements' in the religious context itself as distinguished from their occurrence in the 'second-order-statements' of theology. It is only after such an exhibitive process, after a thorough investigation of the uses and functions of religious notions, that the linguistic analyst stops to conclude and pronounce his judgement. And the differences and dissimilarities amongst the various

conclusions reached, comes as an additional proof of the essential neutrality of the method itself.\(^{(1)}\)

The analysis of religious language and belief has 'inspired' some analysts to formulate arguments purporting, in the one case, to establish God's existence, in the other, His non-existence; some found that religious language and consequently religious belief are justifiable because they serve important and unique functions of their own, and still in the case of others religious belief was disqualified on the ground that it was found to be hopelessly confused. In the case of the last 'category' we notice that the charge which the linguistic analyst levels at theology is not meaninglessness, but rather confusion and conceptual disorder. This is a more serious and threatening charge since it cannot be easily avoided on the ground that the critic has failed 'to see' the point of the believer; for those linguistic analysts who failed to find any justification for religious belief are usually, as admitted by their own opponents and critics, "sceptics with an uncommonly sound understanding of what religion

\(^{(1)}\) In the conclusion, there will be more morals to be drawn from this phenomenon as to the nature of the philosophy of linguistic analysis.
is like. "(1) Thus, even in the cases where a reasonable agreement has been reached as to what is meant by the 'religious context', the inferences that are made and the conclusions that are drawn are in very many cases not the same. Let us try to see how some of the analysts appealed to the religious context, and what were the results of such appeals.

2. The Significance of the 'Religious Context'.

(a) The Question of God's Existence Has No Meaning Outside The Religious Context;
J.J.C. Smart.

Many of the points raised in connection with the linguistic approach to theology, may be seen in J.J.C. Smart's contributions to the literature of what may be called 'linguistic theology'. In one of his articles, "Metaphysics, Logic and Theology", (2) the argument proceeds in the form of a dialogue (a method which seems to be gaining in fashion amongst some linguistic theolo-

gians) between 'White' and 'Black'. 'White' represents the linguistic analyst; while 'Black' apparently represents what may be called the 'enlightened theologian'. The latter seems to be convinced of the soundness of linguistic analysis as a general philosophical position; he has "read and admired many of the writings of Wittgenstein and Ryle and other people of that sort", and agrees that the appropriate function of philosophy should consist in "the logical investigation of the concepts"(1) that are central to many of the important subjects that are dealt with in "academic circles"; but what troubles him, being a teacher in a theological college, is whether, and how, linguistic analysis may be taught to his students. He, therefore has to be shown the value, if any, of linguistic analysis for theology. And this is precisely what 'White' patiently proceeds to do. After assurance him of the essential neutrality of the analytic techniques, he brings in some of the important features of linguistic analysis with which we dealt in Part One of this thesis; he makes a point of distinguishing the 'logic' of terms and concepts in

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(1) Ibid., p.12
the linguistic, functional sense of the term 'logic', from the traditional, formal sense of the term: "any conceptual investigation", he explains, "such as the discovery of what Ryle calls 'category distinctions', is what I am here calling logic." (1) And then, with this broad sense of 'logic' in mind, 'White' goes on to differentiate between 'metaphysical questions' and 'logical questions'. What, in brief, distinguishes the one from the other is that in the case of the former type of questions, the question itself is not clear, we do not even know "how to set about answering it", and while it is very "puzzling", yet it has the "appearance of being factual". (2) While in the case of the latter type of questions, we have "techniques for answering them, and though we may not in fact be able to answer them we know roughly what sort of answer would be required." The relevance of this to theology may be shown, Smart's 'White' points out, if we note that there are certain metaphysical questions in theology which, on analysis, either get dissolved (i.e., they turn out not to be questions at all) or else become logical questions.

(1) Ibid., p. 14
(2) Ibid., p. 15 (italics are mine).
Thus, the question 'Is the will free?', asked in the abstract, is a metaphysical question. It is, moreover, a question that often arises in the discussion of the theological problem of evil. Now, this problem reduces itself in the hands of the analysts into a question of the form: "Is there a contradiction in saying that God could have made us so that we always freely choose right?"\(^{(1)}\) Posed in such a manner, the question, according to Smart, becomes logical. Our answers may differ and we may go on disagreeing; but we have achieved one thing at least -- the question itself is no more conceptually confused. In this manner 'White' claims to have shown 'Black' the relevance of linguistic analysis to theology. In the concluding sentence he addresses 'Black' by saying: "You will be brought up sooner or later against some question of logic: some question of the sort that earlier on you felt inclined to say could not be of much importance for your students."\(^{(2)}\)

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\(^{(1)}\) Smart refers to the contributions of Mackie and Flew in the analysis of the attempt to use 'freedom' as a justification for the existence of evil. We have already referred to Crombie in the preceding Chapter. Flew will be referred to later.

\(^{(2)}\) Ibid., p. 27.
There are indeed quite a number of questions in theology where the services of the analyst are needed. Smart himself tries to be of some help in discussing an aged problem of theology, namely, the question of God's existence and the status of the 'arguments' purporting to establish His existence. (1) Before proceeding to consider the answers to the question: 'Does God exist?' we must first be sure, Smart insists, as to whether the question is a 'proper' one. In fact, the accusation that the concept of God itself is a confused and nonsensical concept, is much more threatening to the theologians than the accusation that they have failed to provide valid arguments to establish His existence. Actually very few theologians do believe that such arguments can be produced. What then, one may ask, is the point of discussing them at all? Smart replies that through the investigation of these arguments "we get a deeper insight into the logical nature of certain concepts, in particular .... the concepts of deity and existence." (2) We shall not consider how


(2) Ibid., p. 29.
Smart dealt with each of the traditional arguments for God's existence. He presented the arguments very clearly, and then quite effectively renewed the attack upon them. It can be noted how the analytic approach and techniques have greatly sharpened this attack. But what is of particular interest to us at present are the "insights" as to the "logical nature" of the concept of God and his existence, that we gain as a result of Smart's analysis.

The important moral which Smart draws from his analysis of the arguments for the existence of God is that the question of God's existence has no meaning outside the religious context. True, Smart has rejected the traditional arguments and has shown that there is no way of showing that God's existence is a logical necessity, but this certainly is no novelty in the history of philosophy and theology. What is more significant, is that Smart, in spite of this, still believes that God may be said to exist 'necessarily' in another important sense of 'necessity'. After all, logical necessity is not the only kind of necessity; and the linguistic analyst feels proud to have learnt this lesson. We no where find in the Bible, or in the sacred writings of other religions, attempts to logically prove God's existence. In religion the existence of God is
never the conclusion of an argument, on the contrary, it is the major premise out of which everything else in religion is supposed to follow. Therefore, the attempt to provide logical demonstrations of God's existence betrays, according to Smart and to many other linguistic analysts as we shall later see, a fundamental misunderstanding of what religion, and the religious context, essentially involve. "I draw your attention", says Smart, "to the language of religion itself, where we talk of conversion, not of proof." Thus, as remarked earlier, if it cannot be shown that God's existence is a logical necessity, it still can be, and it certainly is, a religious necessity; for if God's existence be denied then this would clearly "upset the structure of our religious attitudes in the most violent way." There might, logically, very well not be a God; but if there is to be a religion, a God there must be. In this sense God's existence is a religious necessity. The notion of God and his existence only arises in, and is solely defined in terms of, the religious context; and hence, "the question 'does God Exist?' has no clear meaning for the unconverted. But for the converted the question no longer arises." It is, therefore, futile to try to justify religion in terms of a priori arguments
or metaphysical constructions; such an attempt is an "absurdity born of ignorance of the logic of our language." Smart reminds us of what was said about Boyle who, in the eighteenth century, undertook such an attempt in a series of lectures: "no one", the remark goes, "doubted that God existed until the Boyle lectures started to prove it."(1)

I am not familiar with the Boyle's lectures; and the remark may very well be true in that specific case. It also may be in line with Smart's general position, in the sense that it ridicules attempts at founding religion upon 'argument' and not upon 'conversion'. But to banish argument altogether from religion is, I think, an exaggeration.(2) This, in a sense, is true even in the case of 'ambitious' arguments purporting to prove God's existence; for, as Smart himself admits, arguments such as the Argument from Design do have a great appeal for those who have a religious framework or outlook, since these arguments,

(1) Ibid., p. 41.
(2) There will be more to be said about the role argument in religious belief. See p. 171 ff.
though not valid, can still be "a potent instrument in heightening religious emotions." However, the majority are not immune to these arguments, since only very few are trained in logic. It also goes without saying that not all the logically skilled acquire this immunity. There still remain in man his felt needs and desires, and it is to these that religion appeals most. This comment may be besides the point, for in all probability Smart would consider it as quite compatible with, and even of support to his position. What he was denying was the logical validity of the arguments for the existence of God; they may very well be, and they actually are, very effective in other respects. However, one may, mistakenly, get the impression or suggestion that these arguments are of no validity at all, and that, moreover, argument in general plays an insignificant role in religion. The remark was added only in case Smart's position suggests, or is thought to suggest, such a view.

However, a more important question to consider, regarding Smart's position, is whether his analysis actually does justice to the 'religious context'. This, we shall repeatedly find, is a main difficulty involved in all appeals to such a context; for whoever may have a
certain conception of what the 'religious context actually involves would tend to disagree, in part at least, with conclusions drawn on the basis of a somewhat different conception. Nevertheless, the analysts have contributed something quite substantial in this respect, especially in view of the extreme elusiveness and complexity of the factors that are constitutive of religion. More agreement, in general outline at least, as to what is involved in religion is being reached. But still, as long as there are differences, it can always be asked whether a position 'does justice' to the religious context. (1) H.D. Lewis, for example, thinks that Smart's position does not. "Is it in any case", he asks, "quite as obvious as Smart assumes that religious speech and literature do not sometimes affirm the sheer existence of God as a matter for wonder and praise?" (2) And, more importantly, it is impossible, according to Lewis, to believe, as Smart does, "that

(1) Yet, as Wisdom foresaw, not all difficulties would get resolved even if such an agreement be reached. We may 'agree as to the facts' and still make different inferences. See p.171 fl.

(2) D.H. Lewis, Contemporary Empiricism and the Philosophy of Language, Philosophy, 1957, p.196.
the question 'Does God exist?' is not a proper question without necessarily also holding that religion and theology are nonsensical."(1) Smart believes that this is possible because he holds, as we have seen, that "religion can stand on its own feet", for it does not need the services of the metaphysician and logician to validate the principles on which it stands. But Lewis is not very proud of the way Smart wants religion "to stand on its own feet". Indeed, it would be very humiliating to religion if the belief that God exists is not a "logically respectable one". Belief in God's existence must be affirmable irrespective of how its denial would reflect on our religious attitudes. If this be not the case, namely if God's existence cannot be affirmed no matter how the believer or nonbeliever feels about it, then it cannot be said that God has an independent existence, and religion and theology would certainly crumble down for they would have no "feet" at all to stand upon.

Moreover, it is not true, Lewis holds, that the question 'does God exist' is an improper or meaningless question. The question may not arise for the believer,

but this is because the believer feels absolutely certain that God does exist, and "not because it is senseless to affirm it." And if it makes no sense for the unconverted, this does not mean that the question itself is meaningless; it simply means that the unconverted fails to apprehend its meaning. The whole thing, I believe, boils down to the question of determining which has logical priority over the other, the meaningfulness of the question of God's existence or non-existence, or the fact or state of being converted. According to Lewis, conversion is impossible unless the question of existence is, in the first place, a meaningful question; while Smart believes that the question of God's existence is meaningless unless one is, in the first place, converted. It is a question of who 'confers' meaning, and how does it get conferred. And, I believe, unless this question is first settled, the issue cannot be decided. Obviously settling it is quite a complicated undertaking. It would, however, be helpful to remember that meaning, for the linguistic analyst, is something man-made and conventional. No term has a meaning in itself and out of all contexts; for language is essentially social and public. Lewis, ultimately, is questioning the linguistic 'theory' of meaning, (if the use of the word 'theory' may here be
allowed). According to him, it appears, 'meaning' is an intrinsic quality inherent in things; it is an item that may exist independently of man, or of the users of language. (1) And thus, the question of God's existence, if meaningful at all, should retain this meaningfulness regardless of how one 'feels' about it.

Lewis, it is evident by now, represents the position of philosophers and theologians who would want to claim for their religious beliefs the status of 'logical respectability'. What he, implicitly or explicitly, is trying emphatically to reject is the belief that God is man's creation, that He has arisen and evolved in human contexts and thus has no meaning when abstracted out of all such contexts. Belief in God is not the same as belief in, say, Democracy. Democracy does not exist, and has no meaning, when isolated from all political and social conditions that pertain to man. God should not be thought of in this

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(1) I am not familiar with Lewis's general philosophical position, if he has any. He may, for all I know, hold different views. My 'interpretation' is based on very few and short remarks that he made in connection with Smart's position.
manner, for His existence is not, and should not be, contingent upon anything. Whether there be such a God or not is another question, but this is the God of religion, and it is to such a God that the pious pray. In this sense, Lewis's position does more justice to the 'religious context'. However, it can still be asked that if this is what is actually meant by God, can there possibly be such a God? J.N. Findlay believes that there cannot, and he also believes that he can 'prove' it. It would be interesting to see how he attempts to do that.

(b) The Appeal to the Religious Context to Dis-Prove God's Non-Existence; J.N. Findlay.

Smart, in rejecting the arguments for the existence of God, never claims to have proven His non-existence. J.N. Findlay does not only believe that such arguments are invalid; he also believes that their conclusion is not true. In other words he believes that the truth of its contrary can be established. His argument proceeds in the following manner. Findlay, first, makes it clear that it is the God of theism with which he is dealing. It is, therefore, very important to find out how the
term 'God' is used by the theist in the religious context. If this is carefully and successfully done, then our conclusions, if well argued, should be binding upon the theist, for he cannot, now, evade the issue simply by saying that "it is besides the point, since this is not the God I believe in and worship." What are, then, the defining characteristics of the God of theism? In other words, what are the characteristics in the absence of any of which God would cease, for the theist, to be God? As Findlay puts it, what are the attributes that the "adequate object of religious attitudes" should possess? We demand, answers Findlay, that this object "should have an unsurpassable supremacy along all avenues, that it should tower infinitely above all other objects."(1) Moreover, no theist would worship a God that "merely happens to exist, nor one on which all other objects merely happen to depend." If we want to avoid running into some form of idolatry or animism, we should not think of God as having 'come' to existence and, more importantly, though eternal and infinite, as having possibly (in any sense of the word) not existed. In

other words, God's non-existence "must be wholly un-thinkable in any circumstances. There must, in short, be no conceivable alternative to an existence properly termed 'divine': God must be wholly inescapable.... whether for thought or reality."(1) No 'God' who falls short of these qualifications, or is limited in any sense, may be worthy of our adoration, for he "would not deserve the utter self-abandonment peculiar to the religious frame of mind."(2) Having described how the term 'God' functions, or ought to function, in the proper religious context, Findlay takes his important step towards showing that the existence of such a God, if it is to be necessary, is impossible -- it doesn't even make sense, for to talk of 'necessity' makes sense only in a conventional, axiomatic system. Outside the context of such a system we are entitled to talk only of probability. We do not mould or create actuality merely by deciding to use our terms in a certain manner. Therefore, there is an essential incompatibility involved in combining the terms 'necessary' and 'existence'. Each of these concepts has arisen in a different context of its own, and to try

(1) Ibid., p. 52.
(2) Ibid., p. 53.
to force one upon the other is a fundamental misuse of language; for, clearly, our 'decisions' do not have to be binding upon reality. Such 'facts' have become, on the basis of recent developments in logic and scientific method, mere truisms. Hence, the "modern mind" and the "modern view" and the "modern approaches" (these are expressions which Findlay alternately uses) would deny the possibility of the existence of God, for if He were to exist, He would have to assume the status of 'necessary existence'. It may do only if the theist would be satisfied to believe in a God who is not related to the 'empirical circumstances' of the world and existence.

But the 'quandary' is that "the religious frame of mind... seems invincibly determined to eat its cake and have it. It desires the Divine Existence both to have the inescapable character which can, on modern views, only be found where truth reflects an arbitrary convention, and also the character of 'making a real difference' which is only possible where truth does'nt have this merely linguistic basis. We may accordingly deny that modern approaches allow us to remain agnostically poised in regard to God: they force us to come down on the atheistic side."

(1) Ibid., pp. 54-55.
If it turns out that Findlay actually succeeded in 'proving' God's non-existence, he would have then brought about a very daring and consequential undertaking. It is, therefore, important to find how much, and in what sense, did Findlay succeed in his 'proofs' or 'disproofs'. And to be able to do that we must be aware of the main elements that are, explicitly or implicitly, involved in his approach to the question. It should, first, be admitted that Findlay, though an atheist, shows a thorough and deep understanding of what theism properly involves. His characterization of the religious attitude is "one of the most fair, most understanding accounts of how the religious mind works." (1) But he is at the same time 'guilty' of condemning religious talk on the ground that it fails to satisfy some criterion of meaning which he has in mind. Findlay's verificational background is, here, evident. In the previous chapter we have seen how Mackie was led, on quite similar grounds, to almost the same conclusion: "the theist", he says, "must now be prepared to believe not merely what cannot be proved, but what can be dis-

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proved from other beliefs that he holds."\(^{(1)}\)

It is natural, therefore, to find that the same general attack which was levelled against the position of neo-verificationism, is now being levelled against Findlay's argument. Findlay, it is objected, has 'decided' to use his terms in a certain manner and he arbitrarily expects everybody to take the same decision. Actually, his argument is the ontological argument in reverse;\(^{(2)}\) it is, as G.E. Hughes calls it, an "Ontological Disproof"; since Findlay intends to argue "from the analysis of a concept to non-existence, just as the 'Ontological Proof' is an argument from the analysis of a concept to existence."\(^{(3)}\) Findlay, as we have seen, first describes the use of the term 'God' in religious discourse, attributes 'necessary existence to it', and then chooses, or decides, to use the term

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'necessary' in such a manner that it would follow -- by definition, by a pure analysis of concepts -- that God cannot have 'necessary' existence, and consequently, cannot, in the proper theistic sense, exist at all. It becomes apparent than that in as much as the ontological arguments, or other arguments purporting to prove God's existence, have an appeal only to the already religious, Findlay's argument, as he himself admits, holds only for those who believe in the truthfulness of his premises. (1) If one, therefore, chooses, to give the term 'necessary' a 'different' meaning from the one Findlay has in mind, then he can easily evade the latter's argument. And why should 'necessity' belong only to analytic statements? The theist, can after all, have his own sense of necessity, and Findlay is in no position to legislate the use of the terms for everybody.

However, Findlay's objections would certainly hold if the theist uses the term 'necessary' in the same sense in which the mathematician or logician does. In

(1) In his reply to his critics Findlay says: "...I merely wished to indicate for what classes of person I hoped that my argument would hold water, instead of claiming (absurdly) that it would hold for all persons, whatever they may assume, and however they might choose to use their terms." Ibid., p. 72.
that case it wouldn't be, on the part of the critic, a matter of arbitrary imposition, upon religious talk, of a preconceived criterion of meaning; in as much as it would be a matter of illegitimate and unjustified 'borrowing', on the part of the theist. Smart, after all, had a point when he denied God's existence the status of 'logical' necessity and held that we should be content in ascribing to Him only 'religious' necessity -- 'borrowing' is no compliment to religion, and is of no help if we want religion "to stand on its own feet."

Thus Lewis's objection to Smart seems, after Findlay's attack, to have lost much of its force. Smart may have, perhaps, been mistaken in his description of the religious context; and it may be true, as Lewis insists and Findlay emphasizes, that there are in this context undeniable claims for 'logical respectability'. In that case, the 'religious context' has to be modified in Smart's direction; for 'logical respectability', it now seems, is very costly -- it is a luxury that religious belief can hardly afford.

Findlay's argument, and other similar approaches to theology, were very effective in banishing 'logical necessity' from theological talk. Interpretations of the religious attitude and the religious context started
emphasizing, more and more, the 'authenticity' of religious belief: religion explains and justifies itself, it need not, and ought not, resort to concepts not its own. (1) It becomes evident that to avoid Findlay's conclusion one has to deny the 'fact' -- which is central to Findlay's argument -- that God is a necessary being in the logical sense of 'necessary'. This is precisely what John Hick does. Findlay's interpretation of the religious attitude, he believes, is an improper one. "The demand that 'God exists' should be a necessary truth is, like the demand that a circle should be square, not a proper demand at all, but a misuse of language." (2) Hick then goes on to show that his interpretation of the attitude of religious worship is the true one. The believer's view as to the nature of logical necessity, if he has one, is part of his logical system; it is a topic which is "purely academic and of no religious significance." We nowhere find such views displayed in religious literature, especially in the

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(1) This attitude found one of its best expressions in MacIntyre's essay 'The Logical Status of Religious Belief', in Metaphysical Beliefs, London, 1957, pp.167-211. We shall have more to say about MacIntyre.

case of "the biblical writers." Even the traditional theologians, Hick believes, did not have in mind 'logical necessity' when they used the phrase 'necessary being', what they, rather, had in mind was an 'eternal being'. Findlay argued that 'logical necessity' is involved in the conception of an 'eternal being', for the latter cannot be said to have 'happened' to exist, i.e., he must necessarily exist. Hick replies that the choice is not between a being that necessarily exist or an one that 'happens' to exist, precisely because 'necessary existence' is an absurd concept.

However, it may be, it is obvious, I think, that defending the 'ordinary believer' against the charges of Findlay is a comparatively much easier task than that of defending the theologian. Actually, if the claims of some theologians are put aside for the moment, a very effective counter-attack can be levelled against Findlay, based on the very simple fact that people, ordinarily, do worship, and that what they worship is thought to be, by them at least, an "adequate object of religious attitudes". As we have seen, this is an important premise of Findlay's, but "whereas Findlay concludes that the notion of an adequate object of religious attitudes is an absurdity", Hick now concludes "that
that of which the idea is an absurdity cannot be an adequate object of religious attitudes; it would on the contrary be an unqualifiedly inadequate object of worship." This observation expresses the main idea which Norman Malcolm, quite ingeniously, had turned into a 'proof' of God's existence.

(c) The Appeal to the Religious Context to Prove God's Existence; N. Malcolm.

We have seen how, in the case of Findlay, a neo-verificationist approach appeals to the religious context to disprove God's existence. This, again, shows that neo-verificationism is not theologically neutral; in fact, it is thoroughly committed to an atheistic position. As Findlay puts it, if you share 'modern' views, you cannot possibly believe in God. But actually, what he has in mind is just one species of 'modern'; namely, that which is still faithful to the analytic-synthetic dichotomy and recognizes no other modes or possible combinations of meaning. Norman Malcolm represents another species of 'modern', the neo-Wittgensteinian, one may say, whose position in theology provides an interesting contrast with Findlay's. Malcolm now claims that he can, on 'modern'
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views, prove God's existence, and turn Findlay's argument upsidedown. And, what is more, Malcolm's ally against his own brethren is none other than St. Anslem, the medieval theologian. What makes this attempt, for our own purpose, more significant is that Malcolm resorts, at many stages of his argument, to the views of Wittgenstein. He may have gone to an extreme; but sometimes magnifying or even caricaturing a position, may turn out to be quite helpful in realizing what that position entails and thus discovering its main assets and defects.(1)

Malcolm(2), like Findlay, makes an important

(1) Malcolm seems to have the talent of pushing a position to its extreme. He does something similar in the case of Moore's notion of ordinary language. He portrays Moore in 'Moore and Ordinary Language' in Schilpp, Op. Cit., pp. 343-368, as considering conformity to ordinary language to be the criterion for acceptability and truthfulness. Though it is generally agreed that Moore never intended to argue in this sharp and definitive manner, yet Malcolm's interpretation of Moore helped raising and discussing important questions in relation with the ordinary-language-approach. Such as: 'how much can one resort, and argue from, ordinary language?' Or 'can ordinary language be considered a legitimate criterion of meaning?'

'assumption' (though they would, both, rather call it an essential 'fact' characteristic of the religious attitude or context). It can simply be stated as follows:

"God's existence is either:

(a) necessary,

or

(b) impossible."

Now this statement, whether an assumption or a fact, is the major premise of both arguments. Findlay rejected (a) and thus established (b). It is also evident that we can eliminate (b) by showing that (a) is true, or we can assert (a) by denying (b). Malcolm, in trying to prove God's existence, uses both arguments: in the first argument, where he tries to show that (a) is true, he resorts to Anslem; in the second, where he tries to deny (b), he resorts to Wittgenstein.(1) The issues, however, is quite complicated; and it should not be suggested that the arguments are neat and simple. Malcolm is aware of the many assumptions that are involved in his attempt, and he tries his best to

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(1) Malcolm does not distinguish between these two 'arguments', but presents the whole article as a development and validation of a newly discovered 'second version' of Anslem's Ontological Argument.
justify them; otherwise, his argument, though valid, can easily be reversed. (1)

Malcolm we said, tries, first, to prove that God necessarily exists on 'ontological' basis. In other words, he attempts to show that God's necessary existence is contained in the concept of Him. It is important to emphasize the adjective 'necessary' in 'necessary existence'. For while, Malcolm holds, Anselm failed to prove the existence of a most perfect being on the ground that existence is a perfection, yet, in another version of his argument, he can be said to have proven the necessary existence of God, since necessary existence is a perfection. Kant was right in rejecting the belief that existence is a perfection, but it can still be held, argues Malcolm, that "the logical impossibility of non-existence is a perfection." (2) And God, being 'that

(1) Smart is very suspicious of arguments claiming to settle an important and controversial issue "by means of a short snappy argument." "Any argument", he says, "can be reversed." Thus if:

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\begin{align*}
\frac{p}{q} & \quad \text{is valid, then both } \frac{r}{p} \quad \text{and } \frac{F}{t} \\
\frac{q}{p} & \quad \text{must be }
\end{align*}
\]


greater than which cannot be conceived', ought to possess this perfection. He, in other words, necessarily exists.

It is evident that what is most crucial for the above argument is whether it could be shown that 'necessary existence' is a property of God. Malcolm tries to accomplish this by using the notion of dependence. "There is a definite connection in common language between the notions of dependence and inferiority, and independence and superiority." (1) If two sets of dishes are similar in all respects except that the dishes of one set are fragile while the others are not, then certainly all housewives would prefer the latter and not the former. The fragile dishes should be carefully handled, their existence is dependent on such handling; they, therefore, are less perfect. Being dependent is being limited; consequently, absolute perfection is the absence of all limitations. This is no invention of the theologian; for don't we ordinarily think of a car that runs without fuel as superior to cars that cannot do so? it is less limited, therefore it is better; it is less dependent, therefore it is more perfect. Now,

(1) Ibid., p.47.
on the same grounds we can say that a being that depends for its existence on other, external, factors, is inferior to a being that does not. And hence, a being that simply exists, is inferior to another that necessarily exists. For whatever does not necessarily exist may be dependent on other factors for its existence, and hence it is quite conceivable that it does not exist. In this case existence, because dependent, is not a perfection. While necessary existence, because it establishes God's independence, is a perfection.

Necessary existence, according to Malcolm, is not only a property of God in the same sense as unbreakability is a property of dishes, it is also a property of God "in the same sense that necessary omnipotence and necessary omniscience are His properties."(1) In other words, the very concept of God requires that he should necessarily exist. One is here, again, reminded of Kant's objection that while three-sidedness is contained in the conception of a triangle, its existence is not. We are only entitled to say that if a triangle were to exist, it would then, be a three-sided plane figure.

(1) Ibid., p.50.
Similarly we are entitled to say that if God were to exist and to be worthy of our worship and adoration, He should not have happened to exist, but His existence should be necessary. Malcolm answers that one cannot employ the conditional in a statement involving necessity. That is, necessary existence is such that it is out of question to pose the conditional any more. For once that necessary existence is a property of God, it becomes self-contradictory to deny His existence. It would be like saying: "God necessarily exists but it is possible that He does not exist."(1) Kant's whole point is that existence is not a property in the same manner as threesidedness, or omnipotence are. But, what makes all the difference according to Malcolm, is that what he is considering is 'necessary existence' and not mere existence that may be accidental. The former type of existence differs from the latter in that it has the status of propertihood. And the force of Malcolm's argument depends on whether or not there actually is such a difference.

Malcolm, it appears, failed to prove that

(1) Ibid., p.58.
necessary existence is quality, and that, therefore, God exists since necessary existence is contained in the very concept of Him. As pointed by Raziel Abelson\(^1\), Malcolm seems to depend on two analogies in his attempt to prove that necessary existence is a quality. The first analogy is with mathematics and logic, the second with empirical properties. Actually, the first type of analogy is not very clear: Malcolm fails to show, precisely, how such an analogy supports his claims. He seems to be suggesting that the notion of necessary existence is employed by mathematicians and logicians, and that, likewise, it would be legitimate to employ it in theology. It is not clear whether Malcolm draws such an analogy, but in case he does, it would be a false one. The most that it would prove is that one can construct a theological system -- analogous to the axiomatic systems of mathematics -- such that it includes the notion of necessary existence as one of its assumptions, or even implications. But certainly this is not what Malcolm wants to prove. Moreover, the employment of the notion of existence as something necessary in logic can

\(\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\) In a discussion of Malcolm's attempt entitled "Not Necessarily", in the Philosophical Review, January 1961, pp. 67-84.
be easily questioned. One can point out, as Abelson does, a well known 'fact' in logic, namely, that the existential quantifier (\(\exists\)) can be totally eliminated from logic with the only loss of some notational convenience. Thus the statement 'there exists something, an x, such that x is an F' or '(\(\exists x\))Fx', can be replaced by 'it is false that for all x, x is not an F' or '(\(\neg (x)\))Fx.' And, in the first place, the symbol "\(\exists\)" functions only "as an operator, or modifier, of a sentential function, but not as a predicate constant with a sentence ... One never writes simply '(\(\exists a\))', but rather '(\(\exists x\))Fx' where 'F' stands for a property, but not '\(\exists\)' "(1)

The second analogy that Malcolm draws is with empirical properties. The analogy here is more clear, and his claims are quite explicit, though, again, they are unjustified. Malcolm overlooks an important 'fact', of which neo-verificationism makes us quite aware, namely, that there exists an unbridgeable gap between God and experience. There seems to be something essentially wrong with analogies from experience to God, especially when the 'experience' in question is still held to be empirical in nature. Because empirical qualities — and, for that matter, all other qualities that are humanly conceivable — have to undergo a basic qualitative change.

(1) Ibid., p.70.
before they may be predicated of God. It would thus be absurd to try to shed light on the nature of God, from observations as to the nature of dishes and engines. Nothing regarding the latters can be true absolutely and permanently. The 'goodness' or 'badness' of empirical qualities is basically relative. Thus, as Abelson remarks, "independence and perpetual mobility, are only relatively desirable properties." They may be good for the low-budget housewife, but not for the manufacturer; for the motorist, but not for the gasoline industry. Surely we cannot say "that God is a perfect being for the poor but not for the rich, an object of veneration for the consumer but not for the business man."(1)

Moreover, since empirical qualities are one of the analogates, the neo-verificational demand is quite relevant. The neo-verificationist would understand what it is for dishes to be unbreakable, since he knows what to expect, and not to expect, from such dishes; otherwise he cannot hope to know what is meant by saying that some dishes are unbreakable. Empirical statements should enable us to make certain predictions. Thus if we drop a dish and it shatters into pieces we say that this dish

(1) Ibid., p.75.
is breakable, and that therefore its existence is dependent on careful handling. But what should possibly happen that may prove or disprove the independence of God's existence from everything which is external to Him? As long as Malcolm fails to provide an answer to this question his analogy remains incomplete, and even useless.

In his 'second argument', Malcolm tries to prove the existence of God by showing that He is not impossible. But it has, first, to be shown that God's existence can only be either necessary or impossible. In other words, that He cannot have 'happened' to exist. And here Malcolm is in complete agreement with Findlay: the only alternative to atheism is the belief in an absolutely necessary and perfect God. As Malcolm himself admits, Findlay's characterization of the religious attitude has "a striking agreement" with what he himself says about this attitude in expounding Anselm's proof. Yet Malcolm, while claiming to hold 'modern views' does not see why Findlay's conclusion should follow; such views would rather lead us to hold its opposite. For, indeed what a modern view requires us to do is "to look at the use of words and not to manufacture a priori theses

about it."(1) And Malcolm immediately goes on to cite what is said in the Ninetieth Psalm, where the necessary existence of God is taken for granted. Thus, in the Jewish-Christian language-game, God is conceived of as a necessary being. And "here we must say with Wittgenstein, 'this language-game is played.'"(2)

Malcolm's first argument depends upon proving that necessary existence is a quality, his second argument now depends upon showing that the concept of God is not self-contradictory, i.e., that it is not impossible. And this, as we have seen, is shown by the mere fact that the concept is meaningfully employed in a certain language-game. To demand further demonstration or proof, is not, Malcolm believes, a "legitimate demand". Why? because as Wittgenstein has shown in his Investigations, "nothing is intrinsically simple, but whatever has the status of a simple, an indefinable, in one system of concepts, may have the status of a complex thing, a definable thing, in another system of concepts."(3) The concept of seeing a material thing, Malcolm assures us, is not self-

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(1) Ibid., p.55.
(2) Ibid., p. 56.
(3) Ibid., p.59. (This is Malcolm's paraphrase of Wittgenstein.)
contradictory, but there is no way of 'showing' that it is not. The same is true in the case of the concept of God; "both concepts have a place in the thinking and lives of human beings."(1) And this is the most that one should demand. Therefore, we cannot hope, Malcolm believes, to arrive at a real understanding of a religious concept, especially if it be that of an infinite and necessary being, unless we first understand "the phenomena of human life that give rise to it."(2) What, in philosophy, gives the concept of God a problematic nature, is that philosophers, quite often, do not give enough consideration to such "phenomena of human life" that are at the basis of the belief in God. Whether people 'should' believe or not is another question; but it is important to know that they do believe, and to know why they believe. "It may be absurd for people to fall in love, but they do it." And, in very many respects, it is important that they do it. In view of such an approach to the question of God's existence and his nature, "it is not surprising," Malcolm concludes, "that many philosophers believe that the idea of a necessary

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(1) Ibid., p.60.
(2) Ibid., p. 61.
being is an absurd construction."(1)

Did Malcolm, in his second argument, succeed in 'proving' God's existence? Is it true that since the religious language-game is played, then the existence of God is not impossible, and since God's existence is either necessary or impossible, therefore, He necessarily exists? This argument seems to be valid, but its soundness can be seriously questioned. For one thing, he employs the notion of a language-game in a very loose manner. He argues from one 'kind of necessity' to another. There is an interplay and confusion of 'religious necessity' ('necessary' for an attitude, a way of life) with 'theological necessity' ('necessary' for a systematic and reasoned account of religious concepts) with 'logical necessity' ('necessary' in the sense that it tautologically follows from a certain definition or set of definitions, and hence that its denial results in self-contradiction). Actually Malcolm is more guilty in this respect, since he himself accuses Findlay of overlooking the various meaningful employments that the word 'exist' may have.(2) Nevertheless he allows himself, as we have seen, to employ two analogies designed to prove that

(1) Ibid., p.61.
(2) Ibid., p.53.
necessary existence is a property, one from mathematics and the other from empirical properties; which analogies, irrespective of the status of each when taken separately, are, when taken together, quite incompatible. (1)

Moreover, one of Malcolm's basic premises is wrongly phrased. It is not that "God's existence is either necessary or impossible", but rather than "if God exists then his existence has to be necessary." Kant was quite aware that the pious of his town were not worshipping a God that 'happened' to exist, who had accidentally come into being and may suddenly perish. But the most that this could mean was that the God in which they believed was a necessary and infinite God. It did not, necessarily, mean that he actually existed. We are thus led to Anselm, and to Malcolm's defense of Anselm; which shows that there actually is one 'argument' with two different approaches; and that the whole thing may be described as an attempt to preserve a medieval construction by replacing the old metaphysical buttresses with new linguistic ones. We have seen Malcolm retorting to this Kantian objection by saying that when it is a

question of God's necessary existence, then it is out of question to pose the conditional. What Malcolm means, or rather what he should mean, is that 'it is out of question to pose the conditional' only for the believer if he is to be a true believer. This is what studying the language-game of religious belief teaches us. We are, moreover, led to realize that God's existence is either an item of faith, or a postulate in a theological system. Malcolm's argument serves as a corrective of the tendency to overlook, or dismiss, the religious way of life and all the human phenomena that go with it, where God's necessary existence is an item of faith. Thus, it may even serve as a defense of the "meaningfulness" of religious language. But it would be presumptuous to claim for it the status of a logical demonstration. And to employ the notion of a language-game in such a demonstration, shows that either Malcolm has not learnt his lesson well, or that there is something essentially wrong with the concept of a language-game.

It should be mentioned in conclusion, that Malcolm, in common with Smart and Findlay, shows an awareness of how much can 'demonstration' achieve in religion. This, one may say, is one of the analysts'
virtues. Smart, in claiming to have undermined the logical foundations of the arguments for God's existence, does not pretend to have shown faith to be unjustified and religion impossible; nor that these arguments are ineffective in other respects. Findlay, in claiming to have disproved God's existence, admits that he does not expect his 'proofs' to "hold water" for those who do not share his position. Malcolm, in claiming to have 'revived' Anselm's ontological argument and validated it, realizes that it has an appeal only to those who "have some inclination to partake in the religious form of life," and that "it would be unreasonable to require that recognition of Anselm's demonstration as valid must produce a conversion."(1)

3. The Nature of Religious Belief.

(a) The Resort to 'Religious Experience'.

Many came to realize, on the basis of the above and other similar attempts, that religious beliefs are neither scientific theories, nor parts of a deductive or axiomatic system. Thus it is not fair to impose

(1) Ibid., p. 62.
preconceived criteria of meaning upon religious beliefs. They should not, therefore, be disqualified for failing to be empirically verifiable or logically demonstrable. This is what religion is not, but we still have to be told what religion is. Criteria of meaning should not be forced upon religious talk, but this does not justify the absence of any criterion, nor the employment of a set of confused and inconsistent criteria. Religion, in other words, must be able to provide 'adequate' criteria of its own. Discovery of such criteria, if there be any, becomes the main objective of many linguistic analysts. And exhibitive analysis of religious talk and discourse have led to a variety of conclusions as to the nature of religious belief.

C.B. Martin, for one, found that the 'logic' (in the functional sense) of theological discourse is muddled and confused. He may still have, as he was accused by many, some definite criteria of meaning in mind, but his 'exhibitive attack' on religious talk adds a new dimension to the neo-verificationist's. For, his disqualification is an 'internal' one. It is not that theological discourse fails to exhibit the 'logic' which Martin would have 'liked' to find exhibited,
it is rather that this discourse exhibits no 'logic' at all; or, even worse, that religious terms and concepts each exhibit a 'logic' which whenever it is not itself obscure and confused is found to be incompatible with the logic of other religious terms. It will not do, therefore, to accuse Martin, as Raphael Demos does, of 'Provincialism'; that is, of insisting that "the code of manners in one country should define what good manners are in another country." For, if asked what defines the code of manners in the 'other' country; what are, in other words, "the criteria for authenticating religious sentences"? Demos would answer that these criteria "are not codified, they are not even formulable."(1) But the whole point is that Martin is very sceptical about belief in "the unformulable." For him, something is unformulable because it is obscure; and, as he makes it clear in the opening pages of his book, he is not willing to believe in obscurities, nor to argue with those who do so.(2)

In the face of such demands many believers resort to what they call 'religious experience'. These

(1) Demos, Philosophy, V.18, p.103.
experiences while incommunicable, are yet self-verifying. They seem to serve the double function of supplying the theologian with some sort of 'data', while escaping the verificational veto. Religion, thus, has its own foundations; it also has very 'rich' sources of information; for God not only and simply exists -- he is also 'encountered'. But accounts of such encounters, if possible at all, have always been vague, imprecise, and confused. Religious experiences range from extreme forms of mysticism, where one cannot possibly understand their significance unless he himself succeeds in sharing them, to 'objective' forms that may, perhaps, be examined. The former mystical type of experience cannot be analyzed; it can only be had. The latter type of experience, while it has to be had to start with, can yet, within certain limits, be analyzed. R.H. Lewis, for example, is convinced that "the way forward in religious thought must be found in a fresh examination of the nature of religious experience." (1) This is to be accomplished, he suggests, by showing the peculiarities which are distinctive of religious experience, and relating them to other types of human experience, for it will not

(1) Lewis, Philosophy, 1957, p.204.
always do to fall upon "the factor of irreducible mystery in religion." Lewis, however, does very little in terms of such a "fresh examination of the nature of religious experience", more than presenting some general and undeveloped 'suggestions'. He seems to attach great significance to "our sense of contingency" which would provide part of the answer to the problem of "how the idea of a transcendent reality can be meaningful." But, as he himself admits, there is nothing 'fresh' about this attempt. It takes much more than mere suggestions to add anything new of significance -- in substance and approach -- to the notion of contingency and its relevance to the idea of a transcendent being.

The notion of religious experience has a long history. Various uses, at different times and in different places, have been made of this notion. This, in addition to its essential elusiveness, makes a comprehensive account of it extremely difficult. However, the general objection against views as to the nature of religious belief that are founded on encounters with

(1) Ibid., pp. 204-5.
(2) The views of Buber and Heim are recent instances representative of such a position.
God or religious experiences, has been that these views are extremely subjective and can 'prove' nothing; or, which is the same thing, that they can 'prove' too many things. There seem to be no way of telling whether an experience in question is actually a 'genuine' encounter with God or not. And to describe religious experiences as 'self-verifying' fails to provide any guarantee that they may not still be deceptive and illusory. (1)

One way of trying to face this difficulty is by comparing the sort of 'knowledge' of God that we arrive at through 'incommunicable', religious, I - thou encounters with the sort of knowledge of yellow that we arrive at by seeing or 'encountering' the colour yellow. Martin tries to show that this analogy is not fair, and that, consequently, it fails to establish the authenticity of religious experience. (2) For there is a whole "society of tests and check-up procedures" which is available in the case of 'knowing yellow' but absent in the case of

(1) See Ferre's analysis of the 'logic of encounter'. Ferre, op.cit., pp. 94-104.
(2) See his article, 'A religious Way of Knowing', in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, Op.Cit., pp.94-104.
'knowing God'. Though a blind man does not, by definition, have the colour sensations which a man of normal eyesight has, yet "he is well aware of the fact that, unlike himself, the man of normal eyesight does not have to wait to hear the rush of the bull in order to be warned."(1) Thus there is a number of ways by which the blind man may learn, or may be helped to learn, what are some of the differences existing between him and men of normal vision; while in the case of the knowledge of God there seems to be no way of indicating "how we are to know when someone has the direct experience of God." But if the only thing that the analogy asserts is that you have no 'knowledge of God' unless you have a 'religious experience' of God, in the same sense in which you can have no 'knowledge of yellow' unless you have 'colour sensation' of yellow, then the most that can follow from the analogy would be to re-affirm Martin's conclusion that "in order to know what religious experience is one must have a religious experience."(2) What, moreover, would follow from this is that people have now to be classified as either 'God-seeing' or incurably 'God-blind'. And that, consequently, communi-  

(1) Ibid., p.83.  
(2) Ibid., p.82.
cation between believers and non-believers becomes not only pointless but impossible. If one is to be a believer, one simply has to be born with a 'vision' for God.

(b) The Role of Analogy in Religious Belief.

The desire to avoid such a conclusion is, perhaps, the motive for Lews's 'call' for a re-examination, representation, and "better understanding" of religious experience. It has to be shown that religion is not purely subjective and a matter only of feelings. That there is, in other words, a sense in which one can 'argue' in religion. To show that this is the case becomes the task of the theologian. A task which, quite interestingly, was undertaken by a number of linguistic analysts who still thought that religion has something 'genuine' about it. They may not have added to the content of religion anything new in substance, and they rarely make such a claim. But their approach to the question of the nature of religious belief and experience has an undeniable element of "freshness" about it. What is central to the various attempts to 'justify' religious belief, is the notion of analogy. 'Justification' here is not equivalent to 'logical demonstration'; it rather consists of
relating, in terms of differences and similarities, what goes on in religion with various other human activities. After all, what in the absence of absolute criteria, would justify religion more than drawing such relations and analogies and showing that it plays a distinctive role of its own?

This approach is shown at its best in Wisdom's article "Gods", where analogies, parables, examples, and illustrations all contribute to the development of his arguments. He is convinced that it is improper to dismiss religion, as Martin and others do, as a species of confused, subjective feelings. The issue cannot be thus settled, for the question is by no means as simple as that. It is not that "theists are superstitious or that atheists are blind."(1) There are many significant facts to be observed and subtle distinctions to be drawn. There are ways of showing why certain attitudes should or should'nt be had. Attitudes such as that of the judge towards the accused, the contemplator towards a work of art, the lover towards his beloved, and the believer towards his God. Wisdom's chief merit consists in showing that there is a

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sense in which it can be said that we can, and do, argue in religion. And that the role which argument plays in religion is quite analogous to the role it plays in other domains where the element of belief is involved.

Essential to Wisdom's position is the belief that an issue, to be significant, does not necessarily have to be 'factual' in the strict scientific sense. "Things are revealed to us not only by the scientists with microscopes, but also by the poets, the prophets, and painters. What is so isn't merely a matter of 'the facts'". In courts of law it is very often the case that we have "agreement as to the facts" but nevertheless it is still argued "whether defendant did or did not 'exercise reasonable care', was or was not 'negligent'." \(^{(1)}\)

In the case of the parable of the gardener, both disputants may equally know all the 'facts' about the garden, no one, in other words, has observed anything which the other has not, and yet they may still draw different conclusions and see different 'patterns' among the facts and thus one of them would assert that a gardener does exist, the other that he does not — "the line between

using a name because of how we feel and because of what we have noticed isn't sharp."(1)

Realization of the non-factual character of religious language, is one of Wisdom's major contributions to theological discourse. Theists, thereafter, have to be more careful not to regard their assertions as experimental hypotheses explanatory of the universe. For, as we have seen, "an explanatory hypothesis, such as the existence of God, may start by being experimental and gradually become different."(2) We remember how this important moral that can be drawn from Wisdom's parable of the gardener, became the basis of Flew's neo-verificationist attack upon religious discourse. However, we must not stop here but should go further, for there are other important things, besides this, that the parable teaches us. It illustrates what Wisdom has stated earlier, namely, that "it is possible to have before one's eyes all the items of a pattern and still to miss the pattern."(3) Not all issues, therefore, are experimental; and if

(1) Ibid., p.154. Italics are mine.
(2) Ibid., p. 154.
(3) Ibid., p.153.
theological issues are not, we must not dismiss them, but should instead inquire what they are. Again, in the case of the parable, analysis of the attitudes of the two disputants only in terms of what they observe in the garden cannot be exhaustive of any of the attitudes as a whole, for if it could, then ultimately both should be found to be identical. "... with the difference in what they say about the garden goes a difference in how they feel towards the garden, in spite of the fact that neither expects anything of it which the other does not expect."(1)

Thus, realization of the non-factual character of religious beliefs, does not mean that there cannot possibly be any questions of 'right' or 'wrong' about them. This is not true only of pure and applied mathematics and logic, where it can be shown by means of "vertical arguments" that one party is right, the other wrong; it is also true of theistic issues, but in a quite different manner. The argument employed in settling the latter kind of disputes instead of being "vertical" is "horizontal": "it is not a chain of demonstrative reasoning. It is a presenting and

(1) Ibid., p.155.
representing of those features of the case which severally co-operate in favour of the conclusion." This is analogous to what happens in courts of law, where non of the arguments may succeed, by itself, to establish a conclusion; it is rather "a matter of the cumulative effect of severally inconclusive premises." (1) These all contribute to the formation of an attitude which is at the basis of the whole thing: "with the judges' choice of a name for the facts goes an attitude ..."

When the theist asserts that there is a God he is not, according to Wisdom, trying to supply us with new information in as much as he is trying to 'direct our attention' to facts with which we may be already familiar. This, indeed, is not a peculiarity of religious language only. The language of the artist and the art critic is a case in point. And there is no reason whatsoever, except mere arbitrariness and 'provincialism', to take the language of scientific discourse as the model for the evaluation of religious language, and reject all other languages such as that of aesthetic discourse. The question of whether God exists or not has little in common with scientific disputes, but is "more like a

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(1) Ibid., p.157.
difference as to whether there is beauty in a thing." (1) Therefore, the manner in which we go about showing that a work of art has or has not beauty, is quite similar to the manner in which we go about showing that the universe is or is not ruled by a supreme designer or governor. Both languages, in other words, exhibit the same logic. And this logic is such that it allows for a change of attitude or perspective. In fact, this is being constantly done in art. "To settle a dispute as to whether a piece of music is good or better than another we listen again, with a picture we look again." (2) People, thus, try to modify or even to alter the appreciation of a work of art; they try to do this by redescribing and representing it in such a manner as to emphasize, throw new light upon, and reveal significant features and patterns. In this sense one can say that the procedure does involve "a discovery of new facts;" only, one should be careful to remember that the 'throwing of light upon' and the 'revealing of' certain features of, say, a painting, is not meant in the literal sense. It isn't that these features had been physically obscured and were rendered less so, and it isn't that somebody was made to

(1) Ibid., p.159.
(2) Ibid., pp. 158-59.
see, in the literal sense, what he, in the first place, had not seen. As in the case of the dispute over the gardener, each saw what the other did, and the issue was not settled. However, we must now be careful not to rashly accuse the atheist of "blindness", or the theist of "seeing what isn't there." The issue is not as simple as that; it is much more involved and complex.

The theism which Wisdom describes is a 'diluted' theism. For, his analysis succeeds in showing that religious discourse exhibits a certain logic which is similar to other kinds of discourse, but it does not succeed in showing that religious beliefs actually do have an objective reference. In the case of no analogy of his does Wisdom make such a claim; but it is important, nevertheless, to see how, if at all, do these analogies succeed in supporting the traditional claims of some theologians to have 'proven' the existence of God. The analogy between aesthetic and religious experience is sometimes considered to support such claims. According to Martin, this analogy is as effective, in this respect, as the colour-analogy was shown to be: it holds only in so far as it proves the subjectivity of religious experience. It does not, however, guarantee the existence
of an objective reference which is supposed to be the object or source of religious experience, analogous to the 'object' which is supposed to be the source of aesthetic experience or contemplation. Having certain feelings does not, in itself, justify the inference that these feelings refer to something objectively existent, it simply shows that these feelings were, or are being, had. They may be, in other words, purely psychological and subjective in nature, as Martin suspects that, in the case of religion, they actually are. True, we do have in art different interpretations and attitudes, but these are interpretations of, and attitudes towards, an art-object which have some sort of objective existence that provides the necessary referential element. In the case of religion, however, the God-hypothesis does not correspond - in the analogy-to the art-object, but to the interpretation of this object. And thus what supplies the referential element for religious belief is not God but the 'universe' or 'life' or some segment of them. To believe in God, now, means that one believes the world to be arranged in a certain fashion. But if this is all that there is to theism, and if the theists are content in claiming that much only, then the gap between theists and atheists
would have been considerably narrowed.

Wisdom's approach is essentially descriptive, and in this sense it is typically linguistic. What matters most for him is that people do have 'religious attitudes', though these attitudes may not have an objective reference. He is not concerned with settling the question of whether a supernatural, transcendent being does or does not exist; he is, rather, interested in finding out why some attitudes are formed as if He exists, while others as if He does not. That this question is quite involved and susceptible of no single and definitive answer, is a point which Wisdom's article as a whole brings out. The fact that in religion our feelings, emotions, expectations and "picture-preferences" are all involved, or that religious beliefs (and other forms of 'belief') have dimensions that are fundamentally psychological in nature, does not explain them away but rather calls for more careful, patient, open, and thorough explanations of them. We thus realize that the dismissal of some kind of belief as unjustified or unjustifiable, is not easy at all, and most often turns to be quite arbitrary. "Even in science or on the stock exchange or in ordinary life we sometimes hesitate to condemn a belief or a hunch merely because those who believe it cannot offer the sort of reasons we had hoped
for." (1) In explaining what a certain belief involves we do not only use the techniques of showing connections and disconnections we very often discover 'hidden connections' that may result in a basic transformation of our original attitude. "Thinking to remove the spell exercised upon his patient by the old stories of the Greeks, the psycho-analyst may himself fall under that spell and find in them what his patient has found out and, incidentally, what made the Greeks tell those tales." (2) A careful and sympathetic study of religious beliefs and attitudes would give us deep insights into the nature of man: his needs and desires. With some ingenuity one can level very severe 'attacks' against religious beliefs; only, Wisdom would caution us as he did in the case of Moore's attack against metaphysical beliefs, "there is good in them, poor things."

(c) The Ethical Significance of Religious Belief.

We have seen how, in the case of Wisdom's analysis of the nature of religious belief, we were, again, led

(1) Ibid., p.163.
(2) Ibid., p.163.
to face the problem of its objective reference. As long as the object of religious attitudes is claimed to be a transcendent, eternal being, all analogies fail to provide the necessary justification. A possible 'way out' it seems, would be to give up or, at least, dilute such claims. The general nature of this type of approach to the question of the nature of religious belief, would be in line with Wisdom's analysis where the greatest emphasis is upon attitudes and not upon facts. However, Wisdom may be said to have provided a 'justification' of religious belief only in the sense where 'to justify' belief in something is taken to mean 'to find the sources and motives' for the belief in question. In this sense Wisdom's interest in the question of religious belief may be described as 'psycho-analytic'. But if to justify belief in something consists in showing its 'value', then one has to show what is the specific function of religious belief in virtue of which it acquires value and worth. The ethical function of religious belief has, quite often, been found to provide its main justification. One of the latest and clearest attempts in this direction
can be found expressed in Braithwaite's position. (1)

In dealing with the ethical component of religious belief one has to be careful and specific. The relation between religion and morality is very ancient and intricate: one cannot hope to give it its due in a short exposition. On the whole, one can say that Plato has been shown to be too optimistic. For it takes more than mere instruction and knowledge to make a virtuous man. Man seems to be distrustful of himself; and the failure of the many eager attempts to construct a secular ethics, bears out this point. Thus, it has been very often held that without religious belief moral life is impossible. While Kant did not

(1) R.B. Braithwaite, An Empiricist's View of The Nature of Religious Belief, Cambridge University Press, 1957. This book was not available to me at the time of writing this thesis. The various short accounts of, and references to, this position which I have relied upon do not seem to conflict and may thus provide a fair expression of the general character of this position, which suffices for the present purpose of this thesis. Moreover, what we are presently interested in is the position itself even though it may turn out to be different from Braithwaite's. See: Ferre, Op.Cit., pp.124 fl...; A.C. Ewing, Op.Cit., pp. 206 fl.; Martin, Op.Cit. pp.9 fl.; MacIntyre, Op.Cit., pp.184 fl.
accept God's existence as established on metaphysical grounds, yet he reintroduced Him as an indispensible 'moral postulate'. "If God does not exist", Dostoevsky asserts, then indeed "everything would be permitted."

For many existentialists, Sartre for example, God's non-existence has been found to be quite "embarrassing". There is, in other words, a very general tendency to believe that morality, to be secure or even possible, has to be sponsored by none other than God.

Braithwaite's position, however, has a 'new' setting of its own which makes it of specific relevance to our present purpose. He attempts to be an 'empiricist' and to remain 'religious' at the same time. This is impossible unless the verificationist attack can be successfully met. And to meet this attack, Braithwaite realizes that the emphasis, thereafter, should not be placed upon the objective reference of religious belief (the pursuit of which has been fruitless) but rather on its ethical content and moral value. Now if an assertion can be shown to serve a proper function, it should not be denied meaningfulness. And the fact that religious assertions, according to Braithwaite, serve an important ethical function establishes their claim
for meaningfulness. Moreover, the normative character of ethical assertions exempts them from the test of verifiability or falsifiability, without rendering them meaningless. For while a rule cannot, itself, be true or false, yet it can be obeyed or disobeyed. This fact seems to save ethical, and consequently religious assertions, from being purely emotive, for they do have important and traceable empirical implications, in virtue of the fact that they express "subscription to a policy of action." Being a Christian, for example, indicates "an intention to act in certain ways under certain circumstances."(1) Religion thus plays an important role in supporting, strengthening and reinforcing the moral sense in man. The believer is committed, or rather commits himself, to adopt the moral attitudes and values which are embodied in his religion.

But are religious assertions simply another species of moral assertions? And if not, then what is it that gives them their distinctive religious character? The answer is: stories, parables, and even myths. In the case of religion "the moral intention and policy is associated with a group of stories which give the policy

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imaginative backing."(1) The ethical content of religion is not presented in the form of codes and rules, but through stories and parables: the barrenness of formalism is overcome with the power of symbols and the vividness of images. The Bible rather than being a systematic treatise, can better be described as a 'great poem'.(2) A poem is evaluated not in terms of truth or falsity, but in terms of other qualities such as its suggestiveness and its power to communicate the poet's 'vision' with vividness and force. "Here the ifs and buts of the textual critics, the inhospitable verification tests of the philosopher have become remote, scarcely audible protests."(3) For it would not matter in the least if these stories or parables turn not to be 'true', i.e., not to have actually happened. The important thing is the example they provide, the moral they suggest, and the attitude they reinforce. Thus to be a Christian you have to 'bear in mind' the Christian stories, you do not have, however, to believe in their truth.

(2) For a detailed discussion of this point see Hepburn's essay 'Poetry and Religious Belief' in Metaphysical Beliefs, Op.Cit., pp.89-166.
(3) Ibid., p.95.
The limitations of such a position are quite obvious. In the first place its 'orthodoxy' can be seriously questioned: the believer would normally object to such an account of the nature of religious belief. This objection would lose its effectiveness and congruency only if holders of such a position are willing to give up all claims of presenting a true description of what religion actually is, or is thought to be. This is most evident in the case of Christianity where a basic distinction should be drawn between two kinds of 'Christian stories': stories told by Christ, and stories told about Christ. The latter type of stories are far more important than the former when it comes to the question of determining what Christianity essentially is. Christianity, in other words, is a religion which is more about Christ than it is by Christ. Now, while the 'parable-theory' of religion may be applicable in the case of stories which Christ tells -such as the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, etc....-, it cannot be true of the 'stories' which are told about Christ -such as the virgin birth, the crucifixion, and the resurrection-for, otherwise, very little indeed would remain of Christianity. Can we call somebody a 'Christian' if he does not believe that Christ was actually crucified? Is
it enough to make a 'Christian' of him if he 'realizes' what it sympolically means for the Son of God to die on the cross out of compassion for sinful man, irrespective of whether the Son of God was actually crucified or not? If we answer these questions, as Braithwaite must, in the affirmative, then we must admit that we are presenting a stipulative definition of 'being religious' or 'being Christian', and not a reportive one. Christ is not ordinarily, thought of as a mere symbol or relation; and if to believe in Christ means only to believe in him as a metaphor, then many people who are normally called atheists may now be labelled 'Christians'. As MacIntyre points out, one can, like Dostoevsky's Shatov in the Devils, "accept everything that Braithwaite includes in religion; but -- he does not believe in God."(1) And it goes without saying that one is free to stipulate a definition if he so desires, as long as he makes it clear as to how he intends to use his term or terms, and as long as he does not identify, or confuse, the new signification with the older ones.

However, if all what Braithwaite does is to stipulate a new definition of the notion of religious belief—a fact which he does not seem to be aware of—

(1) MacIntyre, Op.Cit., p.184-5,
then the 'adequacy' of this definition may also be questioned. For, once the ethical components of religious assertions are extracted from religious language and dissociated from all the characteristic claims of theism, they not only cease to be 'religious', they also become an inferior kind of ethics. One of the basic problems facing moral philosophy is to find objective foundations for its principles, and to avoid becoming purely emotivistic in nature. And the moral significance of religion consists precisely in the fact that it provides moral laws and attitudes with some sort of stable and authoritative (absolute, I should say) foundations to guard against, and supplement, the relativism which is typical of human values.

Religion, as interpreted by Braithwaite, can no more be of any service in this respect, since it, itself, suffers from the same deficiency and lacks the same sort of objective justification. If all that religion provides ethics with is the 'imaginative backing' of its parables and myths, then any gifted novelist or poet may as well do the job.

The force and appeal of Braithwaite's position, and all similar positions, can be found to be ultimately in their pragmatic value. It does not matter in the least
if the stories, parables, and myths that are told in religion turn out to be fictitious and illusory, as long as they are internally coherent, morally effective, and therapeutically helpful. Religion, in other words, becomes a psychology which is pragmatically motivated. A classical way of objecting to this view would be to say: "one should not believe in something because it is helpful, but only because it is true." And, anyway, it is very doubtful whether anything which is not true may turn out, in the long run, to be helpful. Unless, of course, we define - as some pragmatists and psychologists do - the 'true' in terms of the 'helpful'. Such an instrumentalist theory of truth has its own grievous limitations. For our own purposes it suffices to note that any approach to understand the nature of religious belief in a predominantly pragmatic and instrumental manner has to redefine religion in the process of 'understanding' it.

(d) The Authenticity of Religious Belief.

It would be appropriate in concluding this discussion to consider MacIntyre's position,\(^{(1)}\) since he

\[^{(1)}\] This is expressed in his essay, 'The Logical Status of Religious Belief', in Metaphysical Beliefs, Op.Cit., pp. 165-211.
seems to be aware of most of the difficulties which, as we have seen, beset the various attempts to find a 'justification' for religious belief. MacIntyre insists that any attempt to present a justification of religious belief should be preceded by a description of "how religious language is in fact used." The 'findings' of MacIntyre's 'descriptive' approach to religion are many: the basic religious notions are not employed as explanatory hypotheses, and they are also not logically demonstrable; they are not in need of metaphysical foundations, and are immune to positivistic attacks; they should not be dealt with in isolation but within the religious context as a whole.

To expect religious statements to function as explanatory hypotheses would be to force upon them a 'logic' not their own. The very nature of religion precludes such a possibility: religious beliefs cannot be hypothetical, and faith cannot be provisional. The proper attitudes of worship, prayer, and deep commitment exclude any element of provisionality, for they cannot, by their very nature, be tentative. This fact seems to be regarded as a basic 'truism' in most contemporary analytic literature on theology. We find, for example, that both Findlay and Malcolm agree on this point though
they draw different 'morals'. MacIntyre has more reasons to re-emphasize this point. Religious statements, he believes, should not be treated as explanatory hypotheses not only because they are not conclusively verifiable, but because if they were, then again faith becomes impossible. If all instances of impiety were "answered by thunder-bolts from heaven," then indeed we would all become 'believers.' (1) But then we cannot receive any 'credit' for that, because we are 'believers' who cannot help not believing. Faith, in other words, becomes meaningless, and religion loses the very important element of free commitment. In Christianity, for example, a point which Christ emphasizes most is that he who chooses to follow him, should do so freely. But if we could produce crucial experiments in religion, or "logically cogent arguments", then "we should produce the kind of attitude that leaves no room for decision; where proof is in place, decision is not." (2)

The attempt to provide religion with metaphysical foundations betrays, according to MacIntyre, a fundamental misconception of what religion essentially is. For

(1) Ibid., p.197.
(2) Ibid., p.197.
"to accept religious belief is a matter not of argument but of conversion. Conversion, because there is no logical transition which will take one from unbelief to belief."  

The metaphysician in trying to translate the vocabulary of religion into non-religious terms, exposes it to all sorts of attacks; because, in doing so, he questions the ultimacy of the criteria according to which religion is to be accepted. And a criterion ceases to be ultimate if it stands in need of justification beyond itself. "Every religion therefore is defined by reference to what it accepts as an authoritative criterion in religious matters. The acceptance or rejection of a religion is the acceptance or rejection of an authority."  

Nietzsche, though vehemently anti-religious, had a better idea of what he was rejecting than "those who have condemned religious belief for illegitimate speculative conclusions."  

He realized that a religious attitude involves acceptance of, obedience to, and humility before, authority. And if one is not willing to take such an attitude, then there is no way of justifying religion for him -- "belief cannot argue with non-belief. : it can preach to it ...  

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(1) Ibid., p.209.  
(2) Ibid., p.199.  
(3) Ibid., p.204.
it can only recount the content of its faith and offer the acceptance of its authority."(1)

Once we give up all metaphysical attempts to justify religious belief or to "replace conversion by argument", all positivistic attacks on religion would lose their point and force. For the positivist, in attacking religion, assumes that it is "another nonsensical form of metaphysics," and mistakenly identifies metaphysical argument with religious commitment. But actually, the positivist, in showing, as Hume does, the failure of religion "if judged by non-religious standards of rationality," renders religion a great service, for "in so doing he leaves open the possibility of exhibiting religion in its own terms." And religion cannot be justified in terms other than its own. There can be no 'external' justification of religious belief. This fact accounts for the shortcomings of all attempts, such as that of Braithwaite's, to deal with a religious use in isolation from the religious context as a whole. And once the 'stories' are incorporated within this context, they are no more just any kind of stories — they are authoritative stories. The 'parable-theory' of

(1) Ibid., p. 211.
religion, as we have seen, suited Braithwaite because it released him from the responsibility of providing an objective reference to religious beliefs. According to MacIntyre, this is an artificial problem, and all attempts at evading it are pointless. For one "either 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."(1)

As we shall try to see in the concluding chapter, the main difficulty with religion and with accounts of its nature such as that of MacIntyre's, arises precisely when religion is taken "as a whole"; for then it would appear that MacIntyre's alternatives are, for one thing, not exhaustive, and for another, quite incompatible. For the present, I would like to make two brief comments in connection with MacIntyre. In the first place, though very few, if any, religious people were converted by 'argument', yet, they do regard, consciously or unconsciously, religious assertions as 'explanatory' in very many important senses. For they do argue about them, and try to 'demonstrate' their truth. What is in the

91) Ibid., p.203.
Bible is true not merely because it is authoritative but also because it is, itself, true; it corresponds to what is, as a matter of fact. Being an analyst, MacIntyre is perhaps too aware of the consequences of attempts to rationalize religion, and hence he chooses to banish reason from religion altogether. However, the majority of believers do not share MacIntyre's conviction: they refuse to think of their activities and beliefs as an "exercise in the arbitrary", to use an expression from Ferre's. Belief, for them, is not a matter purely of 'decision', or of arbitrary choice. Actually for very many religious people, religion is so 'true' that they simply cannot understand why some people don't 'see.' this truth and believe it.

MacIntyre tries to establish the authenticity of religious belief and to avoid being accused of arbitrariness. He seeks to do this by drawing an analogy between religion and science. And MacIntyre is not the only philosopher to resort to such a procedure, for there are many recent thinkers who have tried in various manners to establish for religion an authentic existence of its own analogous to that of science. Hare, for example, believes that "whatever we are willing to
recognize as a 'fact' is relative to an ultimate category;\(^{(1)}\) and that, in this respect religious statements are on the same footing with other kinds of statements including those of science. According to Demos, "science, too, at a certain level, makes statements which are not empirically testable, I refer to the principle of explanation ... 'Every event is an instance of some law' is on the same footing as 'God does nothing wrong.' Thus the principle of explanation is unfalsifiable."\(^{(2)}\) For MacIntyre, as we have seen, the only way to justify a religious statement is to put it in the religious context as a whole. "Religion is justified only by referring it to a religious acceptance of authority. And this means, if you like, that religion as a whole lacks any justification." But this, MacIntyre adds, "in no way reflects on the logical standing of religious belief. Of science and morals it can also be said that one can justify particular theories or prescriptions, but one cannot justify science as a whole in non-scientific, or morals as a whole in non-moral, terms."\(^{(3)}\)

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\(^{(2)}\) Demos, _P.F.R._, V.18, p.104.
"One cannot justify science in non-scientific terms." This is no compliment to religion. The fact that every field of knowledge has its own ultimate criteria does not, necessarily, place them "on the same footing". If science presupposes the principle of explanation and religion the existence of an authentic authority, it does not follow that they enjoy the same degree of justifiability. It is one thing to say that scientific theories are never absolutely true, that they are always liable to change and improvement and even abandonment, and quite another to say, or imply, that no progress or development may take place in science. And it seems to me that the analogy between the principle of explanation and the perfect goodness of God tends to 'suggest' - if not to entail - such an implication. True, we cannot logically establish the truth of 'every event is an instance of some law' - as Hume long ago pointed out - because the failure of a law to explain the phenomenon, or phenomena, in question, has always resulted in the falsification or modification of that specific law, but never in the falsification of the principle of explanation itself. If, in other words, 'S1' states that 'for every event there is a cause' and 'S2' that 'P is the cause of q', then to refute 'S1'
we have to find not that the cause of q is other than p, but rather that p has no cause at all, which is ruled out by definition. Now, the possibility of an evil doing being attributed to God is ruled out also by definition: for God it is said, is perfectly good. Still, it is a significant observation, I think, to note that the defenders of the perfect goodness of God have been faced with the necessity of justifying their belief in the face of numerous events and facts that go contrary to it, or at least have an 'appearance' of doing so. They have always managed, one way or the other, to re-explain or explain away such hostile facts. I believe that this is not true, to the same extent, in the case of the principles of science. True, no amount of scientific progress would ever provide sufficient grounds for a proof or disproof of the principle of explanation; but still the fact that it does work, and that scientific knowledge is constantly increasing, adds to its 'credit'. While it seems to me no similar success has been achieved in the field of theology. Copernicus succeeded in providing a 'better' explanation of the observed phenomena about the planets and their motions, than any then existing theory; in this lies the value and justification of his theory.
But no body, to my knowledge, has ever been able to justify successfully the suffering of innocent children, though the attempts to justify such suffering have been at least as numerous and laborious, if not much more, as the attempts to explain the motions of the planets. Thus if innocent suffering has made one become an atheist, it is very doubtful whether any amount of theological talk may cause him to alter his position. But it is much easier to make a believer in the geocentric theory shift to the heliocentric one. Historically, the necessity has always been for religion to adjust itself to scientific discoveries, and not the other way round. (1)

I realize that I may be accused of being unfair to the nature of religious discourse and explanation. I certainly do not expect religious beliefs to yield to explanation in the same manner as empirical facts do.

(1) Except in a sense which is quite undignifying for religion, i.e., in the cases where scientists were afraid to advance their views lest that would bring the wrath of religious authorities upon them. Of course, it may be said that such 'dark spots' in the history of religion are quite alien to its 'true spirit'; but still this fact remains to be significant in at least one respect, namely, that there have been, despite all what MacIntyre says, 'some' believers who did regard their beliefs as explanatory hypotheses and sought to 'defend' them, with spectacular enthusiasm, against what seemed for them to be rival hypotheses.
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The fault, however, is not mine, since I didn't draw the analogy between religion and science. My whole point is that those who did draw the analogy are guilty of such a false expectation.
CONCLUSION

We have been concerned in this thesis with two issues that are quite controversial in nature, namely the value and legitimacy of the methods of linguistic analysis, and the adequacy of religious language and beliefs. The 'analytic issue' is, historically, so recent that it would be premature to pronounce any judgements or conclusions as to its nature, the 'theological issue' is so aged and ancient an issue that one cannot help being sceptical about the possibility of 'concluding' it. This is especially true when the approach to the problems of theology is also aged and ancient. The justification of what we have been doing in this thesis is the hope that it may turn out to be, as attempts of joining the old with the new usually are, at least somewhat 'interesting' if not also fruitful. I certainly do not hope, or claim to be able to 'settle' any of the issues pertaining either to the methods of linguistic analysis or to the nature of philosophical theology. The following comments may be described as 'inductive generalization' on both topics.
We can, first, observe that our analysis of the linguistic approach to theological questions confirms, on the whole, the general impression which our formal exposition of the movement provided. We realize that 'representatives' of this movement do not form a 'school' in the strict sense of the word, or follow a definite procedure -- linguistic analysis continues to be an activity more than anything else. We had great difficulty classifying the various contributors to the literature of 'analytic theology', for the influences were not definite nor the sources easily detectable. However, what we were concerned with most, was not how they might be classified, but what they were actually doing.

(i)

We can also observe that the linguistic analysts, in their consideration of theological problems, manifested both the virtues and limitations of their method. As analysts they have truly understood their function to be clarificatory and descriptive. And philosophical theology, to say the least, needs clarification very badly. In this respect their efforts are quite justifiable and fruitful. For whatever one's stand with respect to theological questions may turn out to be, if provided with an adequate description he would then be
in a better position to commit himself either way. It always does good to know more precisely what one is accepting or refusing.

One shouldn't, however, be disturbed by the fact that the analysts didn't draw the same conclusion. Indeed, it would be surprising if they did; and one would start suspecting that things have been made uniform. There is no way of predicting or foreseeing the nature of the findings that a linguistic investigation may render. Each analysis brings its own sort of details. These details may be confusing, but they are essential, and are of the very nature of the case. We have to learn to have respect for, and to take pleasure in, the particular; for it is only by discovering the subtleties of the details that we may hope to find, and appreciate, some sort of pattern. Thus, though none of these linguistic analyses of religious belief is, when taken alone, thorough and comprehensive, yet, when taken together, they provide a fairly adequate picture of the religious scene.

Moreover, the various types of positions and conclusions to which the analytic approach to theology led, are a further proof of the essential neutrality
of the method as such. This at once is its main virtue and defect. It is a virtue in the sense that an approach, being neutral, should dispense with all sorts of a priori notions and preconceptions. A philosophical investigation should not strive to make the real, but to discover it. Criteria, rules, and standards tend to 'define' the subject-matter of inquiry, in the process of 'explaining' it. They are, by their very nature, a voting 'in favour' of one thing but not the other. A neutral approach, therefore, has to be characterized by an absence of rules and norms. 'Being neutral' tends to involve 'being too hospitable'. It is in this sense that the main virtue of the linguistic approach is liable to become its main defect. We had a chance to comment on this point in the concluding section of Part One. We, there, saw how the notion of a language-game may be used in such a manner which would render it either too loose or too arbitrary: loose enough as to result in the impossibility of contradiction, or, which is the same thing, to justify contradictory conclusions; and arbitrary to the extent of legislating the meaning of a term on the basis of few instances of its use. Our analysis of the literature of linguistic theology bears out this point.

The manner in which Malcolm, for example, claims
to have provided a 'proof' for God's existence, and Flew to have 'settled' the question of the freedom of the will on linguistic grounds, indicates how the notion of a language-game may lend itself to misuse. The former employs the 'ordinary-language argument', the latter the 'paradigm-case argument'. Both arguments may be regarded as offshoots of Wittgenstein's game-language analogy; for all they need is to be able to say "this language-game is played." This, automatically, becomes their major premise. We have seen how, for Malcolm, the fact that God is thought of, by the pious, as necessarily existing shows that He is not impossible, which leaves us with only one alternative, namely, that He, being what He is, must exist.

Flew's analysis of the free-will-justification of evil provides a perfect example on how the analyst, instead of making us aware of the complexity of the case, may tend to over-simplify it. He expects us to believe that the fact that 'this language-game is played' settles the issue. The decisive step, according to Flew, is to show that one can always freely choose the right thing.

Or that, in other words, an action can both be 'free' and 'determined'. If this could be established, then surely God can no more be excused for creating evil on the ground that man cannot, otherwise, choose between right and wrong, and that, therefore, he cannot be a free moral being. And this, Flew points out, can be established by the very fact that we can produce paradigm-cases where an act, though causally determined, is yet said to have been freely chosen. That things are caused does not preclude the possibility of acting freely.\(^1\) According to Flew's conception of Freedom, we are entitled, in the absence of external pressure and the presence of more than one alternative, to call an act 'free'. When Murdo chooses to marry Mairi and not Jane or Alice, there being "no question of the parties 'having to get married', and no social or parental pressure on either of them," we are provided with a paradigm case of what is it to act freely. "Happily", this case "is scarcely rare."\(^2\)

But it is one thing to say that there is a sense in which one may be said to be both free and determined,

\(^{1}\) Ibid., p.151.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p.149.
and quite another to legislate this use as the only use of the term 'free'. Certainly there are many acts which we do in ordinary life which may be rightly and legitimately described as 'free', in the sense that nobody 'forced' us to do them, and that, moreover, we were provided with two or more alternatives. One is 'free' to take the elevator or use the stairs, to carry his umbrella or to leave it, to have a coke or a beer, etc.

We constantly use the term 'free' in these, and similar, contexts and know fairly well what it means. But Flew should be aware of the fact that it is always possible, even in such paradigm cases, to add another characteristic as defining of the meaning of a term in such a manner as to render it inapplicable in contexts where it originally was. There are contexts where one hesitates to call an action 'free' as long as it has been 'caused' by external or internal causes. (And, any way, is drawing the distinction between a cause or 'pressure' in terms of 'external' or 'internal' as easy as Flew seems to assume?) There are many examples on the use of the term 'free' that one may, here, also give. And there is no reason what so ever why these should not be thought of as providing paradigm cases of a different kind.
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One such classical example would be the following: An official accepts a sum of money from another person and allows him to break the rules in return. No body 'forced' him to accept the bribe (no threats or guns); and he certainly was provided with at least one other alternative, namely, that of refusing to break the laws with the enforcement of which he has been trusted. According to Flew his action satisfies all the requirements of 'being free'. Now suppose this man is brought to trial and that we discover, in the course of investigation, that he had a large family to support, and that one of his children had fallen sick and his life was seriously threatened if he were not provided with the necessary medical care, and that, moreover, the father had in vain tried to secure the necessary amount of money through legal means ..., if we discover all of this, would we still call the man's act a 'free' act? Of course Flew can 'decide' to call it 'free'; but this wouldn't help the judge very much. As for the defence attorney, he has his own definition of a 'free act'. He would try to prove that the defendant 'had no other choice', 'could not help it', 'was driven to do it', and that, therefore, he should not be held morally and legally responsible. This is surely an acceptable sense of what it is to
'act freely'. And the most that Flew succeeds in proving is that "in one sense of freedom, our freedom is consistent with our action being caused or determined." (1) But when the theologian appeals to the 'freedom of the will' to justify the existence of evil, it is other cases that he has in mind, namely, cases where man morally makes himself. If the concept of Divine Justice is to have any meaning, man should be master of, and hence responsible for, his own destiny -- not the colour of 'mairi's eyes, or even one's own glands.

I am not trying to suggest that the theistic justification of evil is feasible, or that evil, with all its abundancy, can be accounted for as the unavoidable price of freedom and moral responsibility. I am not trying to start polemics and raise controversial issues in what is supposed to be a concluding chapter. I am simply trying to point out how, in some cases, an analyst may defeat his own purposes. When an issue is complicated - as the free-will-issue certainly is - the analyst is called for to point out its complications and guard us against possibilities of confusion, rather than oversimplifying it. Linguistic analysis was not a reaction

against a specific criterion of meaning in favour of another criterion. It was a call for a no-criterion in meaning.

(ii)

What can we, on the basis of the foregoing analyses, generalize as to the nature of theological discourse itself? We have seen that the major preoccupation of the analyst has been to arrive at a better understanding of the issues involved in theological discourse. But actually what has happened, on the whole, is that religion has been redefined in the process of being described. For though we have achieved little in terms of proofs or disproofs, yet 'theology' is not left as it traditionally had been. Theologians, hereafter, have to become much less ambitious and give up many of their claims, or else they have to assume the burden of finding new justifications capable of standing in the face of the 'new logic'. Gone are the old days when philosophical theology "had only to unfold its argument to command the assent of all honest and intelligent people ... today ... when theology unfolds its argument it is at once challenged to show what right it has to talk in that way at all."(1)

It may be said that the analyst—especially the neo-verificationist—is attacking a man of straw. Theologians, nowadays, do not have the same old ambitions, for they realize their limitations and do not depend on the analyst to tell them what their proper function should be. But still, if we give up the old claims, what does remain of philosophical theology? In the absence of logical respectability and all formulative criteria of significance, what is left for religious language to express except a mere subjective feeling, a desire to believe that life and man 'matter', and a desperate urge for assurance? The theologian insists on playing a game whose rules are not only undefined, but are also indefinable; he chooses to refer to facts only when they support his position, and twists or modifies facts to the contrary. There is in the language of theology an intermingling and confusion of language-games, which provide it with a 'manifold logic' and render it extremely

(1) This is an exaggeration. For there are traditional theologians; and most of the rest have merely changed their tone, assumed an appearance of modesty but have essentially stuck to the same old claims as strongly as ever. They have all the vices of their predecessors, but lack their honesty and courage.
loose and twistable. The elusive nature of the language of the theologian while exposing him to attacks which may be directed at him from different angles, acts at the same time as a safety-valve which provides him with escaping outlets in crucial moments when he is being 'cornered'. "Like the bridge player who, when his ace of hearts is trumped by a jack of spades, cites the rule of poker that any ace beats a jack."(1)

Religious language is related, quite intimately sometimes, to various other forms of language, but is never identical with any. It functions as a great poem or myth, as a moral and social regulative principle, it answers human needs for neatness and harmony, for safety and salvation; for significance and value. Modern man, it is said, suffers from being dissected by the various specialized sciences each claiming to provide an explanation of his nature in its own terms. Religion, it is hoped, may restore to man his unity and identity by blending all these various elements and approaches into a comprehensive whole. But we have to be careful lest this 'blending' turns out to be 'confusion'. For in religion there is a constant change of the frame of

reference. Concepts that have arisen meaningfully in
one context, are employed in quite different contexts.
This, to some extent, may perhaps be legitimate, as
long as these terms or concepts still obey some kind of
rules. What happens is that in this process of shift-
ing of meanings and interplay of language-games, we lose
trace of the original meanings of the terms without being able
to provide ourselves with substitute meanings. And if
one is eager to retain his faith he usually is not
willing to give up too easily. In all probability he
ends up with some sort of 'interpretation' of the
language of religion. How different and varied these
'interpretations' have historically been, is a point
that need hardly be made.

Ordinarily one can hope to understand the mean-
ing of a language in one of two ways: either by reducing
it into another form or forms of language that are more
familiar, or by finding the distinctive features and
functions in terms of which it may be understood and
appreciated. The analysts in their descriptive approach
to the language of religion, though hoping to find its
distinctive features - if it has any - have almost always
ended up in reducing it into one other form, or a
combination of other forms, of language.
We can find this clearly in MacIntyre's attempt to present a coherent view of religion as a whole. But while each of his points is cogent and well taken when considered in isolation; yet they all fail to make a coherent whole. Thus if religion is regarded as a hypothesis, then faith becomes something provisional, which is contrary to the proper nature of religious attitudes. If, however, it is regarded not as a hypothesis, i.e., as something established and demonstrable, then faith would lose its point since it can no more be the result of free choice and commitment. The belief that God exists becomes something very similar to the belief that the earth is round or that the square root of nine is three. In short if faith is not demonstrable, i.e., if it is a hypothesis, then it is impossible, if, however, it is demonstrable it negates itself. (1)

Moreover, if religion is taken as a whole it is found to involve too many incompatible elements, and if each of these elements is taken in isolation then it loses what seemed to be its distinctive 'religious' force

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and is found to be one species or another of poetry, or metaphysics, or morality, or crude science, or fiction, or history, or psychology, or even — as in the case of Islam — as providing civil laws and rules and constitutions regulating social, political, economic, and legal aspects. All of these typical human activities can better be carried out, if we are willing to do so, without the services of religion.

Actually the attempt to argue in terms of "mutually exclusive alternatives" is of no service to religion. On the contrary it is very effective in exposing its defects and shortcomings. For the fact that we cannot justify everything we believe in, does not render the demand for, and the attempt at, justification improper. We should give up the habit of constantly thinking in terms of proofs or disproofs. Thus, though verificationism forces us to give up ambitious theological claims, yet it does not render the 'phenomenon' of religion less significant. Linguistic analyses illustrate how symptomatic of human nature religion may be shown to be. Religion may be thought of as a great human epic or drama. The independent insights which it embodies will continue to be significant items for the psychologist, sociolo-
gist and anthropologist. Who know, perhaps we may dis-co-ver
that man, after all, is essentially a worshipping animal.
In this respect Wisdom is quite aware of how significant
'Gods' may be.

The feeling that he is being psychoanalyzed may
make the theist feel ill at ease. He would not, con-
sequently, welcome Wisdom's approach to the subject of
religious belief. From the 'analytic' point of view, this
approach, I think, remains to be the best possible of
approaches. There is an intentional blurring of sharp
distinctions, of neat arguments, and absolute procla-
tions; we must learn in each case how much to expect,
for if we are too demanding in our expectations we may
end up with accusing our opponents of being either 'blind'
or 'superstitious'; which is rarely the case.

What does linguistic analysis teach us? A very
simple fact: things are rarely 'this or that', they are,
most often, 'more or less'.

For many theists, that the logic of religious
statements is confused, inadequate, and improper, is not
something which they only admit, it is something which they
expect. We cannot hope, they believe, to have an
Usually it is such theologians who accuse the analysts of attacking a man of straw. Their 'logic' is not that of demonstration and evidence; it is a logic of 'leaps'. Man is finite and limited and can hope to communicate with the infinite and absolute only by taking a 'leap of faith'.

As for the analyst, the fact that we cannot hope to have complete certitude does not justify taking leaps. The theist according to him does exactly what a finite being should not do: he claims to be in possession of a religion where the whole indubitable truth is embodied. It is certainly justifiable, and even unavoidable, to act on partial evidence. But it is essential to realize that it is on partial evidence that one is acting, and not to assume an atmosphere of infallibility. Indeed it is a virtue for man to be aware of his limitations, for he can in no other way hope to surpass them. True, man will always remain finite and limited, but this fact should not be something to lament, but rather must act as an effective initiative for action.

There is 'mystery' in the unknown. In this sense, we have always been, and probably shall continue to be, engulfed with the mysterious. This is what gives human knowledge its value and worth: the feeling of culmination,
of fulfilment, of subduing the mysterious, is at the essence of all human achievements. In religion everything seems to be final and finished, and once the 'leap of faith' is taken man's role becomes insignificant; for now he is in the presence of the Truth.

Nietzsche is certainly a great dramatizer, and the analyst is the last person to take him literally. But, curiously enough, they meet in this one respect: nothing seems to deserve man's complete and unconditioned trust and obedience. Nietzsche did not want to acknowledge his limitations; the analysts were too aware of them. Man, they insist, must be willing to reconsider his assumptions and beliefs whenever the need arises.

The analyst wouldn't object to taking 'leaps', if you choose. He is most aware of their inevitability. We are constantly betting on the unknown. For we cannot afford, in this short life of ours, to suspend our decisions and actions until we are provided with full evidence. However, when an analyst 'takes a leap', he does not expect to find himself in the presence of the Absolute or God.

The analyst has presented the problem of religious
belief and provided 'descriptive aids' for its solution. Actually, he does not have much more to say. And if these analyses prove to be of no aid to the theologian, this only indicates that religion, as it stands, is hopelessly incoprehensible. The theist who still insists, after all descriptive attempts of religion have been made, that it is not only this or that, but that there is 'something more' to it, then he must be willing and able to supply this 'something more'.

There is the unknown, the mysterious; and there probably always will be. Of this, both theists and atheists are aware. The former insists that it should be included in our beliefs; the latter is not willing to include, as defining of his beliefs and attitudes, something he knows not what. To do so, for him, would be absurd.
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