

# Russell vs Lawrence and/or Wittgenstein

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Bertrand Russell, by any reckoning, must count as a figure of central importance in British intellectual history. Many of his books continue to be reprinted, in cheap paperback editions, up to sixty years since he first brought them out. He is standard fare for first-year philosophy students and some of his essays are classical points of reference in current debates in the analytical tradition. In 1915 he was brought to Pulborough by Lady Ottoline Morrell to meet D H Lawrence. By that time Russell (1872 - 1970) was aged forty-three and had already achieved his most original and influential contributions to philosophy. Lawrence (1885 - 1930) was thirty, with *Sons and Lovers* published (Duckworth, 1913), and *The Rainbow* about to be so. Their common interest lay in opposition to the War – in which, to place the other main characters in this essay, F R Leavis (then aged twenty) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (aged twenty-six) were both volunteers, Leavis as a stretcher-bearer in Flanders, Wittgenstein as an officer in the Austrian army.

Lawrence hated Cambridge when he returned Russell's visit: "Cambridge made me very black and down. I cannot bear its smell of rottenness, marsh-stagnancy". In June 1915 Lawrence was planning lectures in London together with Russell – "he on Ethics, I on Immortality". He seemed sure that Russell was "coming to have a real, actual, logical belief in Eternity". A month later, however, Lawrence was writing in this vein e.g. to Ottoline Morrell: "What ails Russell is, in matters of life and emotion, the inexperience of youth. He is, vitally, emotionally, much too inexperienced in personal contact and conflict, for a man of his age and calibre. It isn't that life has been too much for him, but too little". Having scribbled all over a draft of what became *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1916) Lawrence concluded with the following command: "Do, do get these essays ready, for the love of God. But make them more profound, more philosophical". Splendid counsel no doubt, chutzpah indeed, from the young novelist to the great philosopher of the day (whom he thought of as already "elderly", "a learned dry baronet of fifty", when he portrayed him as Sir Joshua Malleon in *Women in Love*).

But by August 1915, as witness a famous, somewhat violent letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith, Lawrence had seen through Russell: "What does Russell really want? He wants to keep his own established ego, his finite and ready-defined self intact, free from contact and connection. He wants to be ultimately a free agent. That is what they all want, ultimately . . . so that in their own souls, they can be independent little gods, referred nowhere and to nothing, little mortal Absolutes, secure from question". There is a kind reference to Russell and his wife in a letter of 1929, the year before Lawrence died, but the relationship between them flared up and collapsed within the single year 1915. At the time Russell felt deeply attracted towards Lawrence: "Lawrence has quick sensitive impressions which I don't understand, . . . They are marvellous. I love him more and more". Lawrence had dined at high table, seated between Russell and G E Moore, having to make conversation also with G H Hardy, the mathematician, and J M Keynes. In retrospect he classed that whole Cambridge circle as "little mortal Absolutes". But to judge by the extremely harsh and acrimonious account of Lawrence which he gave in a famous set of BBC talks (*Portraits from Memory*, 1956), Russell's anger at him festered for forty years. "They all want the same thing", Lawrence had written of him: "a continuing in this state of disintegration wherein each separate little ego is an independent little principality by itself".<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence's perceptions were remarkable. In particular, in the imaginative non-fictional writings that increasingly occupied his best energies in the last few years, he kept returning to the idea that he belonged to a generation for whom "the enclosure in the ego is final, when they are hermetically sealed and insulated from all experience, from any *touch*, from anything *solid*". He understood perfectly that, for Russell and the tradition which he represented, knowledge and certainty depended, in the last analysis, on cutting off the intellect from the implications of its association with a *body*. That association was no doubt intimate, inevitable, and sometimes enjoyable, but in the all-important task of constituting the order of *meaning* it remained irrelevant. But Lawrence's real insight comes out particularly in the way that he focussed upon the notion of the Self in Russell's work at the time: "the enclosure in the ego is final" – an ego which was insulated from touch and anything solid, "free from contact and connection", "referred nowhere and to nothing" – the dream-work of those who wanted to remain "little mortal Absolutes". In these good phrases, and many similar ones, Lawrence clearly diagnosed what was wrong with Russell's philosophy. But he could not have gone any further. The philosophy had to be transformed from within, and it needed an in-

sider to do *that*.

The philosophy went by the name of Logical Atomism. In the opening paragraph of *My Philosophical Development* (published in 1959) Bertrand Russell asserted that he “adopted the philosophy of logical atomism” in the years 1899-1900. He had only one constant preoccupation throughout his philosophical career – “to discover how much we can be said to know and with what degree of certainty or doubtfulness”. In the 1620s Descartes had the very same concern. In 1905 Russell stated, in a letter to a friend, that he believed that “all things are discrete and atomic. But that is a large question . . .”. In his Lowell Lectures in 1914 – published as *Our Knowledge of the External World* – he first used the phrase “logical atomism”. This is the name for the type of philosophy that he himself wants to advocate, over against the two main tendencies of the day, namely the classical tradition (represented by Bradley) and evolutionism (Nietzsche, pragmatism, Bergson). But the lecture course on “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” which Russell gave in London early in 1918 is the best exposition. (He was prosecuted in February 1918 under the Defence of the Realm Act for making “certain statements likely to prejudice His Majesty’s relations with the United States of America”; he lost the appeal in April and went to prison in May for six months, during which he tried but failed to complete a review for *Mind* of Husserl’s *Logische Untersuchungen*.)<sup>2</sup>

The lecture course, according to the prefatory note, is “very largely concerned with explaining certain ideas which I learnt from my friend and former pupil Ludwig Wittgenstein”. Russell went on: “I have had no opportunity of knowing his views since August, 1914, and I do not even know whether he is alive or dead”. In fact it was not until February 1919 that Russell received news that his former pupil had survived the War and was in a prisoner-of-war camp at Cassino. The letter, smuggled out of the camp, was to say that Wittgenstein had completed the text that was to be known as the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. He warned Russell that he would not understand it “without a previous explanation” – indeed “without a very thorough explanation, which cannot be written”, as Wittgenstein noted in a letter to Keynes at the time.

Eventually, in a paragraph written at some point between 1929 and 1948 (*Zettel*, no 456), Wittgenstein would class Russell with H G Wells (which affords an instructive slant on what he regarded as philosophy) among those philosophers, “or whatever you like to call them”, who suffer from *Problemverlust*, “loss of problems”: “Then everything seems quite simple to them, no deep problems seem to exist any more, the world becomes broad and flat and loses all depth”. But in 1931 he listed Russell after Schopenhauer

and Frege among thinkers who had influenced him. In 1912, at any rate, when their discussions were at their most intense, the twenty-two-year-old Austrian whose English was then very imperfect simply overwhelmed his forty-year-old tutor: "My ferocious German came and argued at me after my lecture", so Russell wrote in a letter: "He is armour-plated against all assaults of reasoning – it is really rather a waste of time talking with him". On another occasion, to the same effect: "My German engineer very argumentative and tiresome". But in March 1912, when he left for the vacation, Russell wrote as follows to Ottoline Morrell (with whom he was having his famous *affaire*): "When he left I was strangely excited by him. I love him and feel he will solve the problems that I am too old to solve – all kinds of vital problems that are raised by my work, but want a fresh mind and the vigour of youth". In September 1913 Russell persuaded Wittgenstein to dictate the so-called "Notes on Logic", prompting him as a girl took them down in shorthand. This material he tried to use in the lectures mentioned above.

The details, and the extent to which Russell properly understood Wittgenstein's ideas, at that point or later, need not engage our attention here. The main lines of logical atomism may, however, be sketched as follows. This philosophy, so Russell, begins by saying, "has forced itself upon me in the course of thinking about the philosophy of mathematics, although I should find it hard to say exactly how far there is a definite logical connexion between the two". He refers to his book, *The Principles of Mathematics*, written and re-written many times in the years 1898-1902, more or less in harness with the anti-Idealist work of his colleague at Cambridge, G E Moore. There he had attempted to prove that mathematics "all comes back to logic in the strictest and most formal sense". However all that may be, the point for our purpose here comes in the following two sentences: "The logic which I shall advocate is atomistic, as opposed to the monistic logic of the people who more or less follow Hegel. When I say that my logic is atomistic, I mean that I share the common-sense belief that there are many separate things; I do not regard the apparent multiplicity of the world as consisting merely in phases and unreal divisions of a single indivisible Reality". Russell later concluded that the trouble with Hegel was that he had too much interest in "mysticism". This was what made him believe in "the unreality of separateness". According to Russell, the world, for Hegel, "was not a collection of hard units, whether atoms or souls, each completely self-subsistent".<sup>3</sup> How fair all this may be to Hegel needn't concern us here. The point is that, for Russell, by contrast, the world evidently was "a collection of hard units" – *atoms*, in the strict sense of indivis-

ible elements. These would not of course be *physical* atoms: "The reason that I call my doctrine *logical* atomism is because the atoms that I wish to arrive at as the sort of last residue in analysis are logical atoms and not physical atoms". The sort of thing he had in mind, so he says, would be "predicates or relations and so on", together with "such things as little patches of colour or sounds, momentary things".

In effect, Russell was rejecting the Hegelian emphasis on system, coherence, the priority of the whole over the parts, and interdependence (to the point of monism). He sought, in contrast, to show how any ordinary "vague" sentence could be "analysed" into its constituent parts. These would be irreducible and indivisible "atomic" units of meaning. In turn, they would refer directly to the fundamental entities out of which the states of affairs in the real non-linguistic world would be composed – or something along these lines. Put thus, of course, it may all sound mad, old hat, or an idea that nobody could possibly entertain for one moment.

In its own way, however, the idea that everything might be the result of collisions at some ineffable deep metaphysical level between enduring and indestructible "elements" is a very profound, alluring, and plausible idea that has fascinated thinkers for many centuries. After all, doesn't modern physics go in for particles? Isn't this just a "logical" version of the same world-view? And what about the "corpuscularian" philosophy of Locke and others at the dawn of modern science? Wittgenstein, certainly, felt the power of "the demand for simple things". He was to publish his own version of logical atomism in the *Tractatus*, but he was already questioning its deepest motivation. In June 1915, in the intervals of soldiering in Galicia, and at the very time when Lawrence and Russell were planning lectures together (as described above), Wittgenstein was querying the very idea of "analysis" – *Zerlegung* in his German, with a much more palpable metaphorical sense of "taking to pieces, splitting up" etc.<sup>4</sup>

Is it clear anyway that by such analysis we are necessarily going to arrive at ultimately atomic elements? Do we ever have to come to things which are "simples"? Is it in the very idea of analysis that such finally unanalyzable atoms must eventually appear? Nothing seems to speak against the possibility of unending *Zerlegbarkeit*. Thus Wittgenstein broods on the whole programme of logical atomism. "Again and again", he says, "it just keeps forcing itself on us that there *is* something simple, unanalyzable – an element of Being, in brief a thing". It doesn't go against this feeling that we prove to be incapable of making an analysis of propositions at such depth that we should get as far as identifying the elements by name; but we do nevertheless feel that *the world must*

*consist of elements*. There just is “the demand for simple things”. We want in the end to come upon that which may count as *ein Ding*: a real solid thing.

The demand to bring everything back (up or down) to *ultimates* surely lies deep in the human mind. Whether it is Russell’s atoms or Plato’s forms or one of the countless other versions there is a permanent desire to get to something ultimate, something “simple”. Wittgenstein was eventually to realise that the whole approach had to be turned round – “but with our real need as pivot” (*Phil. Investigations*, No 108). There is a remarkable passage in a recently published manuscript dictated in 1947<sup>6</sup> in which he either deliberately or unconsciously recalls the sort of phrases just quoted from the 1915 notebook. Consider the following paragraph, cited in extenso: “Instead of the unanalyzable, the specific, the indefinable: the fact that we act in such-and-such ways, e.g. *punish* certain actions, *ascertain* the facts of the case in such-and-such ways, *give orders*, make reports, describe colours, interest ourselves in the feelings of others. What has to be accepted, the given – one could say – are facts of living”. The data, in other words, wouldn’t be “hard units”, “elements of Being”, or whatever, but “facts of living”, *Tatsachen des Lebens*.

A footnote by the translator informs us that “forms of life” was a variant in the text for that last phrase “facts of living”. The passage is therefore important for settling once for all what Wittgenstein meant by a “form of life”. Clearly he didn’t mean a whole social formation or anything of the kind. He sought to focus on the endless multiplicity of almost animal reactions and initiatives characteristic of how human beings interact in community: such micro-practices as e.g. punishing, observing, commanding, narrating, etc. In the text just quoted it is as if he is telling us to abandon the search for anything more “ultimate” than the reality of human life. According to the *Tractatus*, “the world is the totality of the facts”, and that means “the facts in logical space”. But that dream-world of hard units, fulfilling the demand of logical atomism for “simples”, became life as a weave (*Zettel*, No 568): the background against which any and every action becomes intelligible is now “the whole hurly-burly of human actions”. Nobody has got the point more beautifully than Stanley Cavell:<sup>6</sup> “For Wittgenstein, philosophy comes to grief . . . in its effort to escape those human forms of life which alone provide the coherence of our expression. He wishes an acknowledgement of human limitation which does not leave us chafed by our own skin, by a sense of powerlessness to penetrate beyond the human conditions of knowledge”. But then Cavell goes on: “The limitations of knowledge are no longer barriers to a more perfect apprehension, but conditions of

knowledge *überhaupt*, of anything we should call ‘knowledge’”.

The given, that which is inescapable and ultimate, is *these forms of life*: “our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humour and of significance and fulfillment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation – all the whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls ‘forms of life’”.

The “unanalyzable”, in the sense of that which cannot be taken to pieces or split up into anything more basic, is the fact of the matter, the simple matter of the fact, *die Tatsache*, the actual reality here and now “that we act in such-and-such ways”.

Thus moving against the deep demand of logical atomism Wittgenstein necessarily turned dialectically towards something analogous to the Hegelianism which he never himself held but which Moore and above all Russell had rejected. Having started out from the base-line of Russell’s anti-Hegelian atomism inevitably Wittgenstein moved in the direction of what one might label “holism”: a sense of the priority of wholes over any number or level of parts. In the first lectures Wittgenstein gave when he went back to Cambridge in 1929 he evidently made great play with the word “system” – as e.g. in the proposition “Every symbol must essentially belong to a system”. It is very interesting to find that Moore, who attended the lectures, couldn’t understand what the word “system” meant in such a context.<sup>7</sup> The *word* was soon abandoned; but Wittgenstein was irrevocably set on a path that led him away altogether from “analysis” and “atomism”.

There are far too many issues to unravel in the space that remains. We took Bertrand Russell as the key figure against whom D H Lawrence (and hence F R Leavis) reacted. That opposition to Russell may be recapitulated symptomatically in Lawrence’s phrase: “this state of disintegration wherein each separate little ego is an independent little principality by itself”. Aimed no doubt at Russell’s social theorizings in the first place, Lawrence’s criticisms surely also grapple with something deeper and more obscure – what he might indeed have identified as Russell’s ontology or metaphysics. At the time, anyway, the philosophy of logical atomism (the world as “a collection of hard units”) was Russell’s official doctrine. The connection between the metaphysical demand for absolute simples and Lawrence’s identification of the will to be “little mortal Absolutes” seems pretty evident. The “hard units”, as Russell himself said, might in any case be “atoms or souls”. It seems doubtful if Lawrence could have carried the critique of Russell’s atomism any further than he did, in his somewhat personal and moral (even moralistic) terms. There is, furthermore, little reason to think that,



even by resorting to Michael Polanyi and Marjorie Grene, F R Leavis could have done better. But that was not the only opposition to Russell's atomism. The other adversary was Wittgenstein, but this time it was criticism *from inside* – by a philosopher, and by one who could feel the deep attractions of the doctrine of atomism.

Garth Hallett S J has wittily described a crucial series of remarks in Wittgenstein's *Investigations* (No 89 to No 108) as "The Confessions of a Logical Atomist".<sup>8</sup> This is certainly the point where he considers why logic had seemed so "sublime" – so "pure" and "transcendental", so aloof from and far above the ordinary. The logical approach seemed to explore the very essence of all things; it wanted to see things right to the bottom, without being obliged to bother with the contingencies of actual history. It sprang from a desire to understand the foundation – the essence – of everything empirical (no 89). We felt that we had to see through the surface – to penetrate superficial appearances (No 90). We wanted a *final analysis* – one single perfectly dissected form of language: "as if our customary forms of expression were, essentially, still unanalyzed" (no 91). It's as if our ordinary vague sentences didn't yet have a completely immaculate sense (No 98). Metaphors of purity, clarity, light, disembodied ideality, recur in these paragraphs (though sometimes blurred by the translation). "Here it is difficult to keep our heads above water – to see that we must remain among the things of everyday thought, and not get on the wrong track where it seems that we have to describe the ultimate subtleties, which with the means at our disposal we are again and again unable to describe" (No 106). Like any great imaginative writer Wittgenstein here is working to free us from the compulsions imposed by habit and ideal.

Exploring the syndrome from within Wittgenstein comes to the point where he recognizes that nothing less than a total reorientation of one's whole being is necessary. "The crystal purity of logic didn't come to me as a *result*; on the contrary, it was a demand" (107). "The *prejudice* of crystal purity can be eliminated only by our turning round our whole approach" (108). Of course he builds up to this remark. In the preceding sequence he criticized the notion of a logically perfect language that ought to be decipherable in our ordinary language (79-88). Prior to that he had made a thorough critique of the basic moves in the philosophy of atomism (39-64). "Names designate only that which is an element of reality. What remains indestructible; what remains the same through all change" – thus he cites his earlier self, and mocks the way in which the myth held him captive (59). What are the simple constituents of which reality is composed (47)? He relates the "objects" of which he himself spoke in the *Tractatus*, together with Russell's



“individuals” (particulars, atoms), back to the “primary elements”, *Urelemente*, mentioned in Plato’s *Theaetetus* (46). Thus the ancient dream of coming upon indefinable absolutes is traced to the father-figure of the philosophical tradition.

In the lectures which he gave in Cambridge in the early ’thirties Wittgenstein had already worked out his critique of his and Russell’s dreams of finding atomic constituents of propositions by logical analysis.<sup>9</sup> What is new, in the *Investigations* perspective, is the way that he places the illusion of logical atomism against the background of an alluring but mythical idea of *naming* (26-38). This is the notion that language is basically for naming; the myth so beautifully incorporated into the story of how the man gave names to every living creature *before* he had anyone to talk to, and before he had a name himself (Genesis 2). But most people, in our tradition at least, would, if you suddenly sprang the question on them in the dark, come out spontaneously with the notion that the words of the language name objects – what else, they would be inclined to say. This notion Wittgenstein found also in St Augustine’s *Confessions* (possibly the “most serious book ever written”, he once said). This brings us at last to the complex great myth which he sought to explore in all its ramifications in the *Investigations*: the notion, namely, that language is necessary only for communication, because there is some pre-linguistic self-consciousness, and indeed a knowledge of one’s own mental states (sensations, wishes etc) prior to and independently of one’s ability to speak. In other words: one exists prior to any life with others of one’s kind with whom one is invited to converse. That this is the little Absolute, dependent on no one else, transcending contact and community, whom DH Lawrence detected in Bertrand Russell seems plain. But the difference is that Wittgenstein was able eventually to find the roots of the myth of the isolated worldless “I” in a whole tradition that stretched back via Augustine to Plato. Even more interestingly, however, he was able to find the myth in the back of *his own mind*.

What Wittgenstein’s writings can do for one, and could have been doing since 1953 at least, is to undermine belief in “the ready-defined self, free from contact and connection”. But although Hegel was the first to attend to the essential role of the group as a mediating factor in the rise of the individual mind, it remains difficult to describe this without lapsing into some equally fantastic collectivist myth. “What we find out in philosophy is trivial”, so Wittgenstein once wrote,<sup>10</sup> “but the proper synopsis of these trivialities is enormously difficult, and has immense importance”. In fact comparison with Freud may be more to the point. “If there is anything in the Freudian doctrine of interpreting dreams”, so Witt-

genstein said,<sup>11</sup> “that just shows in what a *complicated* way the human mind makes pictures of facts. So complicated, indeed, so little in accordance with rules, is the kind of picturing that one can *hardly* call it that at all”. Wittgenstein’s *Investigations* may be read as an intercalation of Augustine’s *Confessions* with Aristotle’s *De Anima* – but *after* Freud. It is certainly an exercise in persuading the individual to acknowledge his or her essential dependence on the community. It is an exercise in getting the soul back into the body. Philosophy, as Cavell says,<sup>12</sup> “concerns those necessities we cannot, being human, fail to know. Except that nothing is more human than to deny them”. In the end, as Wittgenstein surely knew, we come to what Augustine called *amor sui*: the belief that the world and my will are one, and that I am indeed “an independent little principality by itself”. The difficulty is to understand what is obvious – when we don’t *want* to see it:<sup>13</sup> “It isn’t a difficulty of intellect so much as of will that has to be overcome”. The philosophical discipline Wittgenstein’s writings constitute includes a *moral* reorientation. To see the obvious, against the desire for fantasies, is a hard discipline.

Thus, whatever reading D H Lawrence might effect, whether or not in company with F R Leavis, there remains a *philosophical* task. It could be accomplished only by a philosopher. That philosopher surely was Ludwig Wittgenstein – more radically opposed to Bertrand Russell than Lawrence ever was because he could find the roots of Russell’s fantasies in the back of his own mind. The “no private language” argument and the “rule-following” considerations are the positive side of the case that leads to “an acknowledgment of human limitation which does not leave us chafed by our own skin”. Whether what Heidegger can “do for one” stands comparison with *this* prospect is a question that will have to remain for another day. From Socrates onwards philosophers have worked hard, on and off, to bring us to an understanding of ourselves. The difference about Wittgenstein is that he had the skills, and the courage to develop them, to voice his own deepest metaphysical temptations: “I ought to be no more than a mirror, in which my reader sees his own thinking with all its deformities, so that, with this help, he may rectify it”. Work in philosophy really *is* work on yourself – on your own perception – on how you see things – and on what you desire of them.<sup>14</sup>

1 All the quotations referring to Russell come from *The Collected Letters of D H Lawrence* (1962 edition)

2 The quotations and information come from Ronald Clark’s *Life of Bertrand Russell* (1975); the lectures on “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” are reprinted in *Logic and Knowledge*, edited by R C Marsh (1956)

- 3 Quoted from the astounding chapter on Hegel in Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (1946)
- 4 *Notebooks 1914-1916* (published 1969), p 62
- 5 *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volume I (1980), No 630
- 6 Page 61, *Must we mean what we say* (1969)
- 7 *Philosophical Papers* (1959), p 258
- 8 See his immensely valuable *Companion* to Wittgenstein's *Investigations* (1977)
- 9 See *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-1935*, edited by Alice Ambrose (1979)
- 10 See *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1930-1932*, edited by Desmond Lee (1980), p 26. "Philosophy is the synopsis of trivialities": "synopsis", at this stage at least, is obviously Wittgenstein's own attempt to translate the German idea which has become misleadingly canonized as "perspicuity" (*Investigations*, No 122).
- 11 See *Culture and Value*, edited by G H von Wright (1980 edition), p 44, a remark noted in 1944.
- 12 Page 96
- 13 *Culture and Value*, p 17 (dated 1931)
- 14 *Ibid*, same year, pp 18 and 16 respectively.

## Reviews

**BIBLICAL SEMANTIC LOGIC** by Arthur Gibson. *Basil Blackwell, Oxford. £12.00*

The dust-jacket of this book has it that "in this innovatory and controversial book Arthur Gibson brings to Biblical language insights derived from the theory of meaning expounded by logicians such as Frege, Dummett and Geach", though the author himself (p 8) tells us that "Wittgenstein's viewpoints and interests much more reflect my own in the present piece of work". An approximate count of the number of references to these writers in the book are: Frege 39; Wittgenstein 56; Dummett 67; Geach 121.

The general conclusions are:

- 1) "an analytical empiricism is important for producing an arena within which semantic conceptual questions can be formed so as to construct a route to a theory of meaning".
- 2) This "forces the need for a reassessment of the theological conclusions which have been based on views that have not taken such analytical empiricism seriously".

- 3) "Since major theological developments have been enjoyed with this inconsistent situation as warrant for them, reassessment in the perspective of the foregoing study needs to extend to some of the most basic assumptions in theology" (p 224).

Mr Gibson ends with the question: "Will this be the foundation for programmes of future research?"

There is no consideration of what Wittgenstein wrote in *On Certainty*, and it is doubtful whether Mr Gibson properly appreciated what Wittgenstein said about logic there (p 501): "Am I not getting closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language then you will see it". This does not seem to suggest that anything like a *theory* of meaning is possible, but it also raises questions about what is meant by "the practice of language". In 1944 Wittgenstein wrote to G. E. Moore about the absurdity of the assertion: "There is a