

Metaphilosophy

by Timothy Potts

The basic reason why it is so difficult in practice to give an account of philosophy's aims and method is undoubtedly that there is no agreement among philosophers themselves about what they are trying to do and how; and this means that they often find it as difficult to explain themselves to each other as to those whose home is in other disciplines. This is especially so when the philosophers in question belong to different traditions. It is well known that philosophers today fall broadly into two camps, those who belong to the English-speaking tradition of analytic philosophy which was born of a reaction against Hegel at the beginning of this century, and those who remain if not in the Hegelian, then at least in the Cartesian tradition and who are now represented primarily in France and Germany. I suppose that we may add as a third group the neo-Scholastic philosophers of the seminaries and Catholic universities, who at least until recently represented a revival of the medieval tradition, but are now being more or less absorbed by the first two groups (and especially the second) according to their physical location and that of the universities in which their staff are trained.

To each of these traditions there corresponds an attitude towards philosophical aims and methodology which may be associated with a turning-point in the history of philosophy. The neo-Scholastics, in so far as they have not been influenced by either of the other traditions, can be associated with the period when philosophy was distinguished from theology; the neo-Cartesians (if I may so call them, for the sake of a label) with the separation of philosophy from the natural sciences; and analytic philosophy with the separation of philosophy from psychology.

It was clear by the middle of the eighteenth century that the natural sciences had attained their majority, and if our older universities still boast chairs of Natural and of Experimental Philosophy, there has for long been no question of appointing philosophers to their tenure. The philosopher who above all others tried to come to terms with the growth of physical science was Kant. His immediate predecessors had tried to be scientists as well as philosophers, and even Hume advertises himself as trying to do for psychology what Newton had done for mechanics. Kant, by contrast, made no attempt to meddle in natural science, and offered a theory about philosophy to justify his departure from a tradition which went back to Plato

and Aristotle and was notably sustained by philosophers like Albert the Great, Robert Grosseteste and the Mertonians as well as by Descartes and Berkeley.

Kant's apologia rests essentially upon his distinctions between analytic and synthetic and between *a priori* and *a posteriori* judgements. I do not want to become involved in niceties of Kantian exegesis here, so I shall simply say that a proposition (rather than a judgement) is analytic if and only if its negation is self-contradictory or if it is itself self-contradictory; otherwise it is synthetic. This is a logical distinction; that between *a priori* and *a posteriori* propositions is, by contrast, epistemological, since a proposition is a *a posteriori* if it is verified or falsified by observation and/or experiment, but otherwise *a priori*. Even if they cannot be identified exactly, there is a close kinship between analytic *a priori* propositions and the self-evident propositions of Aristotle and the medieval philosophers; and similarly, any truth which the latter would have recognized as contingent would have been synthetic *a posteriori* for Kant. So far, Kant's main innovation was to assign the propositions of natural science also to the synthetic *a posteriori*: they are synthetic because neither they nor their negations are self-contradictory, and *a posteriori* because they are the result of observation and experiment. Furthermore, he asserted that philosophy was not concerned with the synthetic *a posteriori* and hence not with the natural sciences.

This already seems an improvement upon the Aristotelian picture. For in the first place, even given that self-evident premisses are used in scientific argumentation, Aristotelian 'definition' already introduces an empirical element which is hard to reconcile with the claim that such 'definitions' are necessary. But more important, the Aristotelian model of a science does not fit the physical sciences, which are far from being deductive axiomatic systems; in fact, the only plausible example is mathematics. Finally, Kant's move regularized a *fait accompli*, because it was clear then and has remained so since that natural scientists were not going to be told how to go about their business by philosophers.

In spite of surrendering the natural sciences, Kant was able to retain a field for philosophy by his introduction of the synthetic *a priori* as a third class of propositions. Although no one had formulated their status exactly before, Kant's examples (such as the principle of causality) show that these are Aristotle's special axioms under a new guise. Their justification is still assigned to metaphysics, but because of their status a special kind of argument must be deployed for the purpose. Since they are synthetic, they are neither self-evident nor can their truth be established merely by an analysis of their meaning; but since they are *a priori* they are also in a sense necessary and do not depend on particular observations or experiments. Instead, they have to be justified by a transcendental argument, which consists in showing that our experience in general

(e.g. of change) could not be what it is if they (e.g. the principle of causality) were false.

In spite of this fundamental shift in ascribing a proper subject-matter to philosophy, Kant remained in other respects within the Cartesian tradition. For like Descartes, he was concerned to justify some of our claims to knowledge as well as to delimit the scope of human knowledge, and although he does not use methodic doubt as such, his emphasis on the concept of experience witnesses to an underlying preoccupation with the problem of scepticism. Furthermore, to doubt something is to doubt whether it is true, and since propositions are what are true or false, the immediate objects of methodical doubt will be the reports, expressed in propositions, of my experiences. Thus to conclude that a certain experience *cannot* be doubted may be construed as saying that the corresponding report expresses at least an *a priori*, perhaps even an analytic proposition; for the force of the 'cannot' here, in spite of appearances, is logical rather than psychological. By contrast with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, epistemology was exceptional in ancient and medieval philosophy; the Academics and Augustine are at once largely outside the Aristotelian tradition and isolated examples of an interest in scepticism which thereafter remained dormant until the fourteenth century. The attention paid to epistemology by neo-Scholasticism is thus a mark of Cartesian influence rather than of medieval traditionalism.

It remains, however, central to the contemporary French and German tradition which I have, largely for that reason, labelled neo-Cartesianism. This is apparent in phenomenology which, although advertised as a method of philosophizing, also embodies a doctrine about the task of philosophy. The practitioner of phenomenology is supposed to practise a suspension of judgment which enables him to describe his experience in a neutral manner unprejudiced by everyday assumptions, whether value judgments or the organization of experience by means of a conceptual framework. In the light of the resulting descriptions he is then supposed to be able to stand outside the assumptions we normally make and to justify or reject them as appropriate. Whatever we may think about the possibility of this procedure, it represents, and indeed was explicitly introduced by Husserl under the guise of, an attempt to practise methodical doubt more rigorously and exhaustively than Descartes had done.

The stress on epistemology led to an unclarity within this tradition about the difference between philosophy and psychology. Since there was no empirical psychology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is not surprising that it did not go with the natural sciences into Kant's category of the synthetic *a posteriori*, and it is not wholly implausible to represent one part of the message of the *First Critique* as being that the limits of human knowledge are what they

are because the human mind is constituted in a particular way;¹ and if this is so, it follows that there is an intimate connexion between metaphysics and psychology. At any rate, the tradition of armchair psychologizing persisted among philosophers, although the empirical content of their treatises tended to increase.

The separation of psychology from philosophy was reinforced by another development which was to have incalculable results for analytical philosophy. During the nineteenth century, mathematicians had been trying to provide foundations for mathematics, and in particular for number theory. This led to a revival of logic, which had been largely dormant during the previous century, and issued in the attempts of Frege and Russell to show that mathematics could be constructed from logic. With the application of axiomatic methods came the notion of a *theorem of logic*, and it was inevitable that logical theorems should then be compared with analytic *a priori* propositions; the two are not equivalent, since the number of logical constants is (at least at present) severely limited, and thus, for instance, the analytic proposition 'Every body is extended' cannot be represented as a theorem of logic: its truth turns on the connexion in sense between the predicates '. . . is a body' and '. . . is extended'. On the other hand, while every theorem of logic is analytic, no means every theorem is self-evidently true, and considerable ingenuity may be necessary to construct a proof of it; analytic propositions thus acquired a new interest: it could no longer be taken for granted that they wore their own badges of status. At the same time, the new logicians objected strenuously to the psychologizing of logic and took pains to distinguish, e.g. propositions from judgments and what predicates stood for from concepts as mental entities.

Meanwhile the undercurrent of opposition to metaphysics in the style of Hegel was coming to a head: long before, Schopenhauer had registered his protest to the obscurity of Hegel's style and terminology, and since it was primarily in the field of metaphysics that this obscurity was exemplified, metaphysics itself inevitably fell under suspicion. Might it not be that the very problems which metaphysics set itself were meaningless, and the obscurity of much metaphysical writing merely a symptom? Further, it was now necessary to reappraise Kant's two distinctions: propositions must be distinguished logically, yet the *a priori/a posteriori* distinction seemed tainted with psychology. Indeed, it distinguished not kinds of proposition, but methods of verifying propositions—and it now began to seem that analytic propositions were verified *a priori* and synthetic propositions *a posteriori*, each because of its logical status. There was thus no longer any room for the synthetic *a priori* and hence none for metaphysics either.

Analytic propositions, by contrast, were to be verified by logical

¹This interpretation must nevertheless reckon with a passage such as B167-168.

analysis, and where it was possible to apply the new logic, a much more rigorous method of analysis was now available than hitherto. Putative propositions which were neither analytic nor synthetic were dismissed either as meaningless or as being neither true nor false, but expressions of emotions, values, etc. In its most extreme form this view led to the rejection not only of metaphysics but also of ethics and politics; what was left to philosophy was only the analytic, and therefore *the* method of philosophical enquiry was logical analysis. Philosophy's job was to sort out conceptual confusions which existed in new fields of enquiry, and having made clear what propositions in that field were synthetic, turn them over to the scientists for verification or falsification. Thus philosophy's destiny was to spawn new sciences while ever decreasing her own field of enquiry.

If philosophy is concerned only with analytic propositions, its problems will be primarily those of meaning rather than of truth, for in the last resort such propositions will be true or false in virtue of the meanings of the words which they contain, and what may be expected from a study of putative analytic propositions in which a certain set of expressions recur is an account of how those expressions are inter-related, or, if we prefer to talk instead of the concepts which they express, of conceptual relationships. On this view of philosophy, clarity of exposition is not just an optional virtue for the philosopher, but an essential requirement. There is much to be said for clarity on almost any account of the task of philosophy; any writer who wishes to communicate successfully with others and stand a chance of convincing them will do well to make sure that his readers are not discouraged by unnecessary obscurity and that he is not constantly liable to be misunderstood. And when his very topic is meaning, ambiguity and obscurity become peculiarly vicious and directly inconsistent with his professed aim.

This, too, explains the hostility of contemporary English-speaking philosophers to the use in philosophical writing of an extensive technical vocabulary. Only too often in the history of philosophy a technical term has been used as a cover for fatal ambiguities; the standard trick is to introduce it in a carefully defined context, or perhaps in a context where it is explained by an example, and then quietly to extend its application to contexts in which its role has not been explained and where it could only be understood, if at all, in a sense quite different from that of its original introduction. Two obvious examples are Aristotle's term 'form' (*eidos*) and Locke's term 'idea'; but contemporary philosophers, in spite of their objections to others on this ground, are not always innocent themselves: one might instance the recent use by a number of writers of 'referring expression'.

This outline of the three different approaches to philosophy in the context of the history of ideas has necessarily involved a great deal of

over-simplification, and in particular has ascribed an uniform view of the nature and methods of philosophy to each philosopher working in any one of the three traditions. This is of course not the case; there are significant differences of view within each tradition. But I have been trying to explain why it has recently been so difficult for philosophers in different traditions to communicate with each other. If analytic philosophers think that neo-Cartesians are largely concerned with meaningless problems, and neo-Cartesians that analytic philosophers are concerned with trivial ones, there is little hope of any dialogue between them.

In this context a recent collection of philosophical essays 'originally planned and written with a Continental audience in mind'¹ is as surprising as it is disappointing. The aim of the editors is to present 'examples of methods of philosophical discussion that have been most influential in Great Britain and elsewhere in the English-speaking world since the war'² primarily, but not exclusively to an Italian audience. However, they eschew any attempt to describe or justify the kind of philosophy, namely analytical philosophy, in question. Indeed, they write: 'We have assembled the essays that follow precisely in the belief that no purely expository survey of this type of philosophy is fruitful or even, in the end, really possible, but that the only effective way to present a style of philosophy is to present it in action.'³

Now this is in itself the expression of an unargued prejudice; many British philosophers have the fear that metaphilosophical discussions are a mere excuse to avoid actually doing any philosophy. It may well be that unrestrained indulgence in them could present dangers; but there are other occasions on which they are necessary, and this is one. Professor Charles Taylor had already drawn attention to this point in reviewing the rather abortive meeting between British and French philosophers at Royaumont in 1960; there the French philosophers wanted to talk about methodology and the British philosophers were reluctant to do so.⁴

In many ways the most interesting essay in this collection is Mr István Mészáros's *The Possibility of a Dialogue*, precisely because it is written from outside the analytic tradition while yet showing some acquaintance with it. Mr Mészáros underlines the need for methodological discussion by pointing to some of the unrecognized preferences of analytical philosophers, e.g. in the history of philosophy for the less systematic philosophers like Plato, Hume, Mill, Moore and Wittgenstein. He ridicules Ryle's attempt to account for the distinctive characteristics of analytic philosophy by pointing to the growth of specialized journals, and he rebukes analytic philosophers

¹*British Analytical Philosophy*, edited by Bernard Williams and Alan Montefiore; London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966. Henceforth BAP.

²BAP, 2.

³BAP, 3.

⁴*Cahiers du Royaumont*, Philosophie No. IV; Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1962.

for being over-impressed by the procedures of the natural sciences. Finally, he cites aesthetics as a particular field which shows up the shortcomings of a purely linguistic approach.

For the most part the other essays in the volume do nothing to meet Mr Mézáros's criticisms. There is, admittedly, one paper on aesthetics by Professor Hepburn, but as it is concerned with natural beauty it is not central to Mr Mézáros's complaint. The exception is Miss Ishiguro's article on *Imagination*, which in addition to comparing and criticizing the views of Ryle and Sartre offers some reflexions on their philosophical methods. Miss Ishiguro finds a parallel between the two philosophers in their attempts to distinguish imagining from perceiving, but when the chips are down she draws our attention to the impasse into which phenomenological description leads Sartre, while affirming her faith in Ryle's methods, if not his application of them. Finally she suggests that it is in 'sharp penetrating observations about small precise problems that the most unexpected and exciting resemblances between the philosophers divided by the English Channel can be observed'.¹

The remainder of the contributors, while they make some attempt to set their discussions within a wider context in the history of analytic philosophy, make no effort to establish connexions with the neo-Cartesian tradition. I do not want to suggest that these are unrewarding articles for readers brought up in the analytic tradition; in addition to Miss Ishiguro's article, I myself found Professor Lemmon on *Sentences, Statements and Propositions* and Dr Kenny on *God and Necessity* especially interesting and profitable. I shall also have occasion later to mention Professor Charles Taylor's *Marxism and Empiricism*, which in many respects stands apart from the rest of the essays. If this were just another collection of articles of the sort we have become used to in recent years, the various contributions would call for quite a different assessment; as it is, they must be measured against their professed aim, to present analytical philosophy to philosophers in the neo-Cartesian tradition, and in that light they are almost uniformly unsatisfactory.

Perhaps the major example of a missed opportunity is provided by Mr Pears's article on *Austin and Wittgenstein*. The question to which Pears sets out to give Austin's and Wittgenstein's answers is: how could something as superficial as the study of language lead to the solution of any of the profound problems of philosophy?

One can understand how this might seem to be the most important question to pose in an article directed towards neo-Cartesian philosophers; analytic philosophy has, after all, often been dubbed 'linguistic philosophy' both by its proponents and by its critics. Yet there is nothing new in linguistic analysis; many good examples can be found in Plato and in most philosophers since, including such 'systematic' philosophers as Aristotle. For instance, there is a

¹BAP, 177.

good case for saying that in the *Sophist* Plato is trying to show that certain propositions which Permenides held to be analytically true are not so, on the grounds of a distinction between two senses of the verb 'be', one copulative (or predicative) and the other existential. Again, the widespread view of ancient philosophers that a man can only want what is good can be interpreted as a claim that there is a conceptual connexion between wanting and the good: that if I want something, I am logically committed to describing it as good in some respect.

For all this, Pears does not succeed in illuminating the relevance of linguistic methods; he is clearly more in sympathy with Austin than with Wittgenstein, and at no point shows us why Wittgenstein thought so poorly of Austin's style of philosophizing (soon after the war, when Austin's influence in Oxford was at its height, Wittgenstein declared after a visit to Oxford that it was a 'philosophical desert'). It is not my purpose here to comment in detail on Pears's account of Wittgenstein, although I think it in many respects seriously misleading. However, as time is showing, Wittgenstein like Kant is open to many interpretations. My main regret is that Pears did not attempt to argue the case for Wittgenstein as patron of a dialogue between analytic philosophers and neo-Cartesians. He is in many ways suited to this role, for not only is his stature great enough to warrant the interest of other philosophers of whatever tradition, but in some important respects he is nearer to the neo-Cartesian tradition than to the analytic tradition as I have described it.

In other respects Wittgenstein belongs firmly to the analytic tradition, however—he always thought that traditional epistemology was misconceived; he remained to his dying day a fervent admirer of the father of modern logic, Gottlob Frege, whose influence upon his work, he said, he could point to even where others would miss it; like Frege, he wished to distinguish philosophy, even philosophy of psychology, sharply from psychology proper; and he set out deliberately to reduce concealed to patent nonsense.

In these aspects of his philosophy, Wittgenstein points to the deficiencies of the neo-Cartesian tradition, and in particular to its under-estimation of the philosophical interest of analytic propositions, the result of a neglect of modern logic. The aim of a great deal of analytical philosophy is to discover what propositions are tautologies, and thereby to plot the inter-relationship of various concepts. It is to this end that linguistic analysis has been employed as an extension of logical analysis (or even as a preparation for it) in cases where formal methods are not yet available. This has seemed a trivial undertaking to neo-Cartesians because they have thought that analytic propositions are self-evident, whereas analytic philosophy has shown that considerable investigation is often required in order to determine the status of a given proposition.

Although the interest of analytic philosophy in meaning is partly bound up with the investigation of putative analytic propositions, it has ramified in such a way as to challenge some of the basic assumptions of the neo-Cartesian tradition. Wittgenstein emphasizes in *Philosophical Investigations* that if we wish to understand the meaning of the word, we cannot rest content with an account of its truth-conditions, that is, of the criteria for its employment, but must also go on to ask what is its *point*, what purpose it serves in our language. In order to answer this kind of question, one must look at the ways in which it is typically employed within the context of accompanying human activities. Here there is at once a contrast both with Austin and with phenomenology. With the exception of what he called 'performative utterances', Austin is content to discuss linguistic examples in isolation from any particular context of human behaviour, and very often he dwells on usage as distinct from use, niceties of correct expression in English which would have been of no interest whatever to Wittgenstein. Phenomenology similarly enjoins a suspension of judgement in order to understand our experience which is the exact opposite of Wittgenstein's method. For if its conceptual framework and behavioural context must be taken into account in order to understand the meaning of a word, to try to give a 'neutral' description of the experiences (or whatever) that it is used to describe will ultimately be impossible and self-frustrating. Although, therefore, Wittgenstein was more directly concerned with specific theories about meaning such as that certain words acquire a sense for us because we use them to name inner experiences, associating word and object by a kind of inner pointing, his more general thesis about meaning calls in question, it seems to me, phenomenology as a whole. This applies also to phenomenology considered as a more rigorous method of Cartesian doubt: 'It may easily look as if every doubt merely *revealed* an existing gap in the foundations; so that secure understanding is only possible if we first doubt everything that *can* be doubted, and then remove all those doubts.'¹ It may easily seem so; but Wittgenstein argues that this is a mistaken appearance. Now these are surely issues worth discussion between the two traditions, particularly as some German writers on Wittgenstein have claimed him as a phenomenologist.

But Wittgenstein's work also points to deficiencies in the analytical tradition, in which he can be claimed as an ally by the neo-Cartesians. It is not merely that he was influenced largely by continental writers like Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer, rather than by the British Empiricists, but also that there are striking affinities between his work and that of Kant. As far as his early work is concerned, these have already received attention from Professor Stenius in the last chapter of his *Wittgenstein's Tractatus*.² But in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein

¹*Philosophical Investigations*, I, 87.

²Erik Stenius, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus: A Critical Exposition of its Main Lines of Thought*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960. Ch. XI. Wittgenstein as a Kantian Philosopher.

held that only logical theorems and their negations were necessary, and that they say nothing about the world; he denied that there are any synthetic *a priori* propositions, but left room for the synthetic *a priori* in his doctrine of what can only be shown and not said. Now Kenny notes in his article on *God and Necessity* that: 'It is being increasingly recognized that not all *a priori* truths are analytic'¹ and quotes several arguments from Professor and Mrs Kneale to this effect.² The central counter-example here is mathematics. Kant regarded mathematics as synthetic *a priori*, and since Godel's proof in 1932 that mathematics cannot be constructed from logic alone, but requires various additional assumptions, there can be no question but that mathematics is not analytic. On the other hand, it is clearly *a priori*, since no amount of observation or experiment would serve to establish, e.g. that every natural number has a successor.

It now seems possible that a by-product of modern logic will be not the elimination but the rehabilitation of metaphysics. As a result of the development of set theory, we are in a position to see the precise logical form of the special axioms of mathematics, and already certain analogies present themselves in a field traditionally that of metaphysics. For instance, if we formulate the principle of causality thus: 'Everything that comes into existence has a cause of its existence', there is an obvious parallel with 'Every natural number has a successor'. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how observation or experiment could either establish or disprove such a principle; if it is to be justified, we shall need some kind of transcendental argument to the effect that our experience of change would be other than it is if the principle did not hold. The position with regard to this example of causality which would allow us to exhibit its logical form; but there is no obstacle in principle to giving such an analysis, and this is one way in which linguistic and logical techniques can contribute to giving a clear statement of questions which it is outside their competence to answer.

It may well be that in the long run the neo-Cartesians will be shown right in thinking that philosophy's concern is not with analytic propositions but only with synthetic *a priori* ones, and that eventually the study of the former will be the province of linguistics and logic alone. But we have not reached that stage yet, and just as it was once proper for philosophers to concern themselves with questions of natural and social science, so too it is still proper for them to be concerned with linguistic and logical analysis. The reason for this is that much more work needs to be done before we are in a position to identify the synthetic *a priori* questions correctly. We now have a fair idea of what questions are empirical, but our knowledge of conceptual relationships is still far too embryonic to allow us to separate out the analytic from the synthetic *a priori* propositions.

¹BAP, 143.

²*The Development of Logic*, 637, 707.

For instance, what is the status of the proposition: 'What we primarily perceive are sense-data'? On the one hand it might be argued that this is analytic, on the grounds that its truth or falsity will be determined by an analysis of the kinds of objects taken by verbs of perception; on the other it might be argued that it is synthetic *a priori*, because it is an existential statement (asserting the existence of sense-data, at least under a condition) and would be justified or otherwise by appeal to what our experience would be like if it were not so. In this particular case, my money is on its being a false analytic proposition; but in the absence of the kind of analytical work which would settle the matter, one can do little more than place a bet.

I believe that there is evidence in Wittgenstein's later work to show that he would have supported the rehabilitation of the synthetic *a priori*. Let us consider in this connexion one of Professor Taylor's theses in his article *Marxism and Empiricism*, namely that whereas Marxists regard the kind of activities which are characteristic of a given form of society as determining the concepts available to its members, empiricists regard concepts as constructions from sense-data which remain basically static from age to age. This is one of the reasons why, according to Taylor, Marxism has not received serious consideration in Britain. Whatever may be the truth of this diagnosis, Wittgenstein was no empiricist in this matter; one of the constant doctrines of *Philosophical Investigations* is that the language of a society reflects its form of life, and the whole point of introducing language-games is that we shall only be able to understand concepts fully if we see them in the context of the activities which they accompany and make possible.

It is only a short step from this to the synthetic *a priori* and transcendental arguments, and the gap is bridged at the end of *Philosophical Investigations*:

'If the formation of concepts can be explained by facts of nature, should we not be interested, not in grammar, but rather in that in nature which is the basis of grammar? Our interest certainly includes the correspondence between concepts and very general facts of nature (such facts as mostly do not strike us because of their generality). But our interest does not fall back upon these possible causes of the formation of concepts; we are not doing natural history for our purposes.

'I am not saying: if such-and-such facts of nature were different people would have different concepts (in the sense of a hypothesis). But: if anyone believes that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones, and that having different ones would mean not realizing something that we realize—then let him imagine certain very general facts of nature to be different from what we are used to, and the formation of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to him.'¹

¹II, xii.

These 'very general facts of nature' are the kind of 'experience' to which Kant appeals in a transcendental argument, and although he makes such an appeal in order to justify a *proposition* as being *true*, whereas Wittgenstein here speaks of different *concepts*, it is clear that we need the appropriate concepts in the first place so as to formulate our propositions—a point which Kant himself makes in any case.

I can now summarize my argument by saying that the possibility of a dialogue between neo-Cartesian and analytic philosophers seems to me to rest on the former taking the analytic *a priori* seriously and the latter taking the synthetic *a priori* seriously. I do not yet see much sign of a *rapprochement*. Little has yet been done to repair the neglect of logic on the neo-Cartesian side, which is a *sine qua non* for appreciating the analytic; and while on this side of the Channel much lip-service is paid to Wittgenstein, philosophers as a whole are content with the empiricist tradition and have not yet been much influenced by his later work. The volume of essays which I have discussed provides evidence for this last assertion.¹

¹I am indebted to my colleague Mr R. M. White for his comments and suggestions on this paper.