1

Introduction to *The Linguistic Turn*

The history of philosophy is punctuated by revolts against the practices of previous philosophers and by attempts to transform philosophy into a science – a discipline in which universally recognized decision-procedures are available for testing philosophical theses. In Descartes, in Kant, in Hegel, in Husserl, in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, and again in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, one finds the same disgust at the spectacle of philosophers quarreling endlessly over the same issues. The proposed remedy for this situation typically consists in adopting a new method: for example, the method of "clear and distinct ideas" outlined in Descartes' *Regulae*, Kant's "transcendental method," Husserl's "bracketing," the early Wittgenstein's attempt to exhibit the meaninglessness of traditional philosophical theses by due attention to logical form, and the later Wittgenstein's attempt to exhibit the pointlessness of these theses by diagnosing the causes of their having been propounded. In all of these revolts, the aim of the revolutionary is to replace opinion with knowledge, and to propose as the proper meaning of "philosophy" the accomplishment of some finite task by applying a certain set of methodological directions.

In the past, every such revolution has failed, and always for the same reason. The revolutionaries were found to have presupposed, both in their criticisms of their predecessors and in their directives for the future, the truth of certain substantive and controversial philosophical theses. The new method which each proposed was one which, in good conscience, could be adopted only by those who subscribed to those theses. Every philosophical rebel has tried to be "presuppositionless," but none has succeeded. This is not surprising, for it would indeed be hard to know what methods a philosopher ought to follow without knowing something about the nature of the philosopher's subject matter, and about the nature of human knowledge. To know what method to adopt, one must already have arrived at some metaphysical and some epistemological conclusions. If one attempts to defend these conclusions by the use of one's chosen method, one is open to a charge of circularity. If one does not so defend them, maintaining that

given these conclusions, the need to adopt the chosen method follows, one is open to the charge that the chosen method is inadequate, for it cannot be used to establish the crucial metaphysical and epistemological theses which are in dispute. Since philosophical method is in itself a philosophical topic (or, in other words, since different criteria for the satisfactory solution of a philosophical problem are adopted, and argued for, by different schools of philosophers), every philosophical revolutionary is open to the charge of circularity or to the charge of having begged the question. Attempts to substitute knowledge for opinion are constantly thwarted by the fact that what *counts* as philosophical knowledge seems itself to be a matter of opinion. A philosopher who has idiosyncratic views on criteria for philosophical success does not thereby cease to be accounted a philosopher (as a physicist who refused to accept the relevance of empirical disconfirmation of his theories would cease to be accounted a scientist).

Confronted with this situation, one is tempted to *define* philosophy as that discipline in which knowledge is sought but only opinion can be had. If one grants that the arts do not seek knowledge, and that science not only seeks but finds it, one will thus have a rough-and-ready way of distinguishing philosophy from both. But such a definition would be misleading in that it fails to do justice to the progressive character of philosophy. Some philosophical opinions which were once popular are no longer held. Philosophers do argue with one another, and sometimes succeed in convincing each other. The fact that in principle a philosopher can always invoke some idiosyncratic criterion for a "satisfactory solution" to a philosophical problem (a criterion against which his opponent cannot find a non-circular argument) might lead one to think of philosophy as a futile battle between combatants clad in impenetrable armor. But philosophy is not really like this. Despite the failure of all philosophical revolutions to achieve their ends, no such revolution is in vain. If nothing else, the battles fought during the revolution cause the combatants on both sides to repair their armor, and these repairs eventually amount to a complete change of clothes. Those who today defend "Platonism" repudiate half of what Plato said, and contemporary empiricists spend much of their time apologizing for the unfortunate mistakes of Hume. Philosophers who do not change (or at least re-tailor) their clothes to suit the times always have the option of saying that current philosophical assumptions are false and that the arguments for them are circular or question-begging. But if they do this too long, or retreat to their tents until the winds of doctrine change direction, they will be left out of the conversation. No philosopher can bear *that*, and this is why philosophy makes progress.

To say that philosophy makes progress, however, may itself seem to beg the question. For if we do not know what the goal is – and we do not, as long as we do not know what the criteria for a "satisfactory solution" to a philosophical problem are – then how do we know that we are going in the right direction? There is nothing to be said to this, except that in philosophy, as in politics and religion, we are naturally inclined to define "progress" as movement toward a contemporary consensus. To insist that we cannot know whether philosophy has been progressing since Anaximander, or whether (as Heidegger suggests) it has been steadily declining toward nihilism, is merely to repeat a point already conceded – that one's standards for philosophical success are dependent upon one's substantive philosophical views. If this point is pressed too hard, it merely becomes boring. It is more interesting to see, in detail, why philosophers *think* they have made progress, and what criteria of progress they employ. What is particularly interesting is to see why those philosophers who lead methodological revolts think that they have, at last, succeeded in

becoming "presuppositionless," and why their opponents think that they have not. Uncovering the presuppositions of those who think they have none is one of the principal means by which philosophers find new issues to debate. If this is not progress, it is at least change, and to understand such changes is to understand why philosophy, though fated to fail in its quest for knowledge, is nevertheless not "a matter of opinion."

The purpose of the present volume is to provide materials for reflection on the most recent philosophical revolution, that of linguistic philosophy. I shall mean by "linguistic philosophy" the view that philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use. This view is considered by many of its proponents to be the most important philosophical discovery of our time, and, indeed, of the ages. By its opponents, it is interpreted as a sign of the sickness of our souls, a revolt against reason itself, and a self-deceptive attempt (in Russell's phrase) to procure by theft what one has failed to gain by honest toil.[1] Given the depth of feeling on both sides, one would expect to find a good deal of explicit discussion of whether it is in fact the case that philosophical problems can be solved in these ways. But one does not. A metaphilosophical question at so high a level of abstraction leaves both sides gasping for air. What one does find is: (a) linguistic philosophers arguing against any *non*-linguistic method of solving philosophical problems, on the basis of such substantive philosophical theses as "There are no synthetic *a priori* statements," "The linguistic form of some sentences misrepresents the logical form of the facts which they signify," "All meaningful empirical statements must be empirically disconfirmable," "Ordinary language is correct language," and the like; (b) other linguistic philosophers, as well as opponents of linguistic philosophy, arguing against these theses; (c) linguistic philosophers pointing with pride to their own linguistic reforms and/or descriptions of language, and saying "Look, no problems!"; (d) opponents of linguistic philosophy replying that the problems may have been disingenuously (or self-deceptively) evaded.

The situation is complicated by the fact, noted in (b) above, that many of the substantive philosophical theses which for some linguistic philosophers count as reasons for adopting linguistic methods, are repudiated by other linguistic philosophers, who nevertheless persist in using these methods. There is a growing tendency among linguistic philosophers to abandon the sort of argument mentioned under (a), to fall back on (c), and to ask to be judged solely by their fruits. This tendency goes along with a tendency to say that either one *sees*, for example, that Wittgenstein has dissolved certain traditional problems, or one does not. Some linguistic philosophers who adopt this attitude are fond of the analogy with psychoanalysis: either one sees that one's actions are determined by unconscious impulses, or one does not.[2] (The psychoanalyst's claim that one's actions are so determined can always be countered by the patient's statements of his reasons for his actions. The psychoanalyst will insist that these reasons are merely rationalizations, but if the patient is good at rationalizing, the difference between rationalizations and reasons will remain invisible to him; he may therefore leave as sick as he came.) The irritation which this analogy creates in opponents of linguistic philosophy is intense

1   See, for example, Blanshard [2], especially Chapters 1, 7, 8; Gellner [5]; Mure [1]; Adler [1], especially Chapters 1, 16. Numbers in square brackets refer to chapters in LT – ed.
2   See Wisdom [9], [10]; Cavell [2] (especially the concluding pages), and also his "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy" in *Philosophy in America*, ed. Max Black (Ithaca, 1965).

and natural. Being told that one holds a certain philosophical position because one has been "bewitched by language" (Wittgenstein's phrase), and that one is unsuited for serious philosophical conversation until one has been "cured," results in attempts by such critics of linguistic philosophy as Gellner and Mure to turn the tables. These critics try to explain away linguistic philosophy as a psychologically or sociologically determined aberration.

A further source of confusion and complication is the tendency of more recent linguistic philosophers to drop the anti-philosophical slogans ("All philosophical questions are pseudo-questions!" and the like) of a somewhat earlier period, and to remark blandly that they are doing exactly what the philosophers of the past were doing – that is, trying to find out the nature of knowledge, freedom, meaning, and the like. Since these philosophers, however, tacitly equate "discovering the nature of X" with "finding out how we use (or should use) 'X' (and related words),"[3] opponents of linguistic philosophy remain infuriated. The linguistic philosopher's claim of continuity with the Great Tradition can be substantiated only by saying that insofar as the philosophers of the past attempted to find out the nature of X by doing something *other* than investigating the uses of words (postulating unfamiliar entities, for example), they were misguided. The opponents of linguistic philosophy therefore demand an account of *why* they were misguided, but they get little response save "Since they could never agree, they *must* have been misguided; a method which does not lead to a consensus cannot be a good method."

This is hardly a conclusive argument. One can always rejoin that the lack of consensus is a function of the difficulty of the subject matter, rather than the inapplicability of the methods. It is easy, though not really very plausible, to say that philosophers do not agree, while scientists do, simply because philosophers work on more difficult problems.[4] Conclusive or not, however, this argument has had a decisive historical importance. As a sociological generalization, one may say that what makes most philosophers in the English-speaking world linguistic philosophers is the same thing that makes most philosophers in continental Europe phenomenologists – namely, a sense of despair resulting from the inability of traditional philosophers to make clear what could count as evidence for or against the truth of their views. The attraction of linguistic philosophy – an attraction so great that philosophers are, *faute de mieux*, willing to stoop even to the highly un-Socratic tactic of saying "Well, either you see it or you don't" is simply that linguistic analysis (like phenomenology) *does* seem to hold out hope for clarity on this methodological question, and thus for eventual agreement among philosophers. As long as this hope remains, there is little likelihood that linguistic philosophers will change their ways.

[…]

5. Prospects for the Future: Discovery versus Proposal

I have now done all that I can, within the restricted compass of an introduction to an anthology, to answer the two questions posed at the beginning of Section 2. In doing so, I have implicitly raised certain other questions which I have not tried to answer. I cannot

3   See, for example, the opening paragraphs of P. F. Strawson, "Truth," in *Philosophy and Analysis*, ed. M. MacDonald (Oxford, 1954), and J. L. Austin, "Truth," in *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford, 1961).
4   See Adler [1], Chapter 10.

do so now, but I shall try to point out where some of the unanswered questions lie by taking up, once again, the very general question raised at the outset: Is the linguistic turn doomed to suffer the same fate as previous "revolutions in philosophy"? The relatively pessimistic conclusions reached in the preceding sections entail that linguistic philosophers' attempts to turn philosophy into a "strict science" must fail. How far does this pessimism carry? If linguistic philosophy cannot be a strict science, if it has a merely critical, essential dialectical, function, then what of the future? Suppose that all the traditional problems are, in the fullness of time, dissolved – in the sense that no one is able to think of any formulations of these questions which are immune to the sort of criticisms made by linguistic philosophers. Does that mean that philosophy will have come to an end – that philosophers will have worked themselves out of a job? Is a "postphilosophical" culture really conceivable?

The only sensible thing to say about most of these questions is that it is too soon to answer them. But it may be useful to list some of the alternative standpoints from which they might be answered. One can envisage at least six possibilities for the future of philosophy, after the dissolution of the traditional problems.

(1)   Since the single substantive philosophical thesis that unites the various branches of linguistic philosophy is methodological nominalism, a repudiation of this thesis would open new horizons. If there were a way of agreeing upon answers to the traditional philosophical questions which would not involve the reduction of questions about the nature of things either to empirical questions (to be turned over to the sciences) or to questions about language, then the linguistic turn would probably be treated as having led to a dead end. Many contemporary philosophers think that phenomenology offers such a way.

(2)   A second possibility is that *both* methodological nominalism *and* the demand for clear-cut criteria for agreement would be dropped. Philosophy would then cease to be an argumentative discipline, and grow closer to poetry. Heidegger's later essays can be seen as an attempt to do philosophy in an entirely new way – one which rejects the *traditional* problems as spurious, yet insists that there *are* problems to be solved which are not simply problems about how it would be best to talk. The fact that these problems are all but unstatable, and consequently are such that no agreement about criteria for their solution is available, would be cheerfully accepted. This would be taken as signifying the difficulty of the subject matter, rather than (as Heidegger's critics take it) the perversity of the methods employed.

(3)   Another possibility is that methodological nominalism would be retained, but that the demand for clear-cut criteria of agreement about the truth of philosophical theses would be dropped. Philosophers could then turn toward creating Ideal Languages, but the criterion for being "Ideal" would no longer be the dissolution of philosophical problems, but rather the creation of new, interesting and fruitful ways of thinking about things in general. This would amount to a return to the great tradition of philosophy as system-building – the only difference being that the systems built would no longer be considered *descriptions* of the nature of things or of human consciousness, but rather *proposals* about how to talk. By such a move, the "creative" and "constructive" function of philosophy could be retained. Philosophers would be, as they have traditionally been supposed to be, men who gave one a *Weltanschauung* – in Sellars' phrase, a way of

"understanding how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term."[5]

(4)   It might be that we would end by answering the question "Has philosophy come to an end?" with a resounding "Yes," and that we would come to look upon a post-philosophical culture as just as possible, and just as desirable, as a post-religious culture. We might come to see philosophy as a cultural disease which has been cured, just as many contemporary writers (notably Freudians) see religion as a cultural disease of which men are gradually being cured. The wisecrack that philosophers had worked themselves out of a job would then seem as silly a sneer as a similar charge leveled at doctors who, through a breakthrough in preventive medicine, had made therapy obsolete. Our desire for a *Weltanschauung* would now be satisfied by the arts, the sciences, or both.[6]

(5)   It might be that empirical linguistics can in fact provide us with non-banal formulations of the necessary and sufficient conditions for the truth of statements, and non-banal accounts of the meaning of words. Granted that these formulations and accounts would apply only to our present linguistic practices, it might be that the discovery of such formulations and accounts would satisfy at least some of the instincts which originally led men to philosophize. Linguistic philosophy, instead of being lexicography pursued for an extrinsic purpose, would become lexicography pursued for its own sake. Such a vision of the future of philosophy is put forward, though with many qualifications and reservations, by Urmson's description of the Austinian "fourth method of analysis" .... Though such a project would be related to the tradition neither through sympathy (as in [3]), nor through repudiation (as in [4]), it might nevertheless reasonably be called "philosophy" simply because its pursuit filled part (although obviously not all) of the gap left in the cultural fabric by the disappearance of traditional philosophy.

(6)   It might be that linguistic philosophy could transcend its merely critical function by turning itself into an activity which, instead of inferring from facts about linguistic behavior to the dissolution of traditional problems, discovers necessary conditions for the possibility of language itself (in a fashion analogous to the way in which Kant purportedly discovered necessary conditions for the possibility of experience). Such a development is envisaged by Strawson, when he says that the goal of "descriptive metaphysics" is to show "how the fundamental categories of our thought hang together, and how they relate, in turn, to those formal notions (such as existence, identity, and unity) which range through all categories." A discipline of this sort would perhaps emerge with very general conclusions, such as "It is a necessity in the use of language that we should refer to persisting objects, employing some criteria of identity through change."[7]

---

5   Sellars [6], p. 1.

6   Goethe said that if you had science and art you thereby had religion, but that if you had neither, you had better go out and get religion ("*Wer Wissenschaft und Kunst besitzt/ Hat auch Religion/ Wer jene beiden nicht besitzt/ Der habe Religion," Zahme Xenien, Neuntes Buch*). Substituting "philosophy" for "religion," I suggest that this expresses the view of many followers of Wittgenstein.

7   Hampshire [13], p. 66. See below for a more complete quotation from this passage.

Positions (1) through (6) may be associated respectively with six names: Husserl, Heidegger, Waismann, Wittgenstein, Austin, and Strawson. This is not to say that any of these men would embrace one of these alternatives without many qualifications and restrictions, but rather that those who opt for one of these alternatives often cite one of these six philosophers as a good example of the sort of philosophical attitude and program which they have in mind. For our present purposes, it would be impracticable to take up (1) and (2), the Husserlian and Heideggerian alternatives. Whether orthodox Husserlian phenomenology is in fact a presuppositionless method offering criteria for the accuracy of phenomenological descriptions is too large a question to be discussed. All that can be said is that linguistic philosophers are perennially puzzled by the question of whether Husserlian methods differ, other than verbally, from the methods practiced by linguistic philosophy – whether, in other words, a phenomenological description of the structure of X is more than an Austinian account of our use of "X," phrased in a different idiom.[8] When we turn to "existential phenomenologists" – heretical disciples of Husserl, among them Sartre and the Heidegger of *Sein und Zeit* – we find that linguistic philosophers are tempted to assimilate such efforts to the sort of proposals for an Ideal Language mentioned in (3). This temptation extends even to the work of the later Heidegger. A Waismann-like view of philosophy as "the piercing of that dead crust of tradition and convention, the breaking of those fetters which bind us to inherited preconceptions, so as to attain a new and broader way of looking at things"[9] is able to welcome even such quasi-poetic efforts as Heidegger's "Bauen Wohnen Denken." Once philosophy is viewed as proposal rather than discovery, a methodological nominalist can interpret both the philosophical tradition, and contemporary attempts to break free of this tradition, in equally sympathetic ways.

If we restrict ourselves to alternatives (3) through (6), which all adhere to methodological nominalism, we can see that (3) and (4) share a common ground not shared by (5) and (6). Both (3) and (4) repudiate the notion that there are philosophical truths to be discovered and demonstrated by argument. Waismann says that "To seek, in philosophy, for rigorous proofs is to seek for the shadow of one's voice,"[10] and Wittgenstein that "If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree with them."[11] What difference there is between these two positions lies in Wittgenstein's apparent feeling that philosophers' attempts to "break the fetters" by inventing new, specifically philosophical, language-games are bound to result only in exchanging new fetters for old. Whereas Waismann thought that philosophical system-building had, and could again, crystallize a "vision," the mystical strain in Wittgenstein led him to strive for an "unmediated vision" – a state in which things could be seen as they are, without the mediation of a new way of thinking about them. Such a difference is not an appropriate topic for argument. It must suffice to say that Waismann and Wittgenstein share the view that philosophy, apart from its critical and dialectical function, can be *at most* proposal, never discovery.

The view that philosophy should aim at proposing better ways of talking rather than at discovering specifically philosophical truths is, of course, the direct heir of the Ideal

---

8   See Downes [1], and the articles by Chappell, Turnbull, and Gendlin in the same issue of *The Monist* (XLIX, No. 1). See also Schmitt [1], Taylor [2], and Ayer [10].

9   Waismann [2], p. 483.

10   Waismann [2], p. 482.

11   Wittgenstein [1], Part I, Section 128.

Language tradition in linguistic philosophy. There is not a great difference between the metaphilosophical pragmatism of an article like Carnap's "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology" and Waismann's vision of philosophy-as-vision. In contrast to this attitude, which contemplates with equanimity the lack of a strict decision-procedure for judging between alternative proposals, the Oxford tradition of Ordinary Language analysis has tended to hold out for the view that there are specifically philosophical truths to be discovered. Hampshire says of Austin that

> Since it was a constant point of difference between us, he often, and over many years, had occasion to tell me that he had never found any good reason to believe that philosophical inquiries are essentially, and of their very nature, inconclusive. On the contrary he believed that this was a remediable fault of philosophers, due to premature system-building and impatient ambition, which left them neither the inclination nor the time to assemble the facts, impartially and cooperatively, and then to build their unifying theories, cautiously and slowly, on a comprehensive, and therefore secure, base.[12]

Such a view, which serves as the point of departure for much contemporary work, suggests that lexicography, pursued for its own sake and apart from its critical function, will in the end give us something rather like a traditional philosophical system. The body of truths about how we speak, ordered by a complex but precise taxonomic theory, will present itself as a *Weltanschauung*. The claim that this is the *right* world view will be based simply on the fact that it is the one built in our language, and is therefore more likely to be correct than (to quote a phrase which Austin used in another context) "any that you or I are likely to think up in our armchairs of an afternoon."[13] Insofar as Austin had in mind a model for such a system, the model was Aristotle. Like Aristotle's, such a hypothetical system would not consist of answers to all the questions posed by philosophers of the past, but would instead dismiss many (if not all) of these questions as ill-formed, and would proceed to make distinctions which, once explicitly recognized, would free us from the temptation to answer these questions. It would thus accomplish the critical aims which were, for Wittgenstein, the sole justification of continued philosophical inquiry, as a by-product of a search for truths. *Pace* Wittgenstein, it *would* be "possible to question" these truths, but such questions could be answered. They could be answered in the same way as a theorist in any other empirical science answers questions about the truth of his theory – by pointing to its superior ability to account for the facts.

At the present time, this Austinian alternative – (5) above – is (in English-speaking lands) the most widespread conception of what the philosophy of the future will be like. Its strongest rival is neither (3) nor (4), but (6) – the Strawsonian view that we need not restrict ourselves to a theory which accounts for our linguistic behavior, but that we can get a theory about language as such – about any possible language, rather than simply about the assemblage of languages presently spoken. Such a project, which suggests that the study of language can lead us to certain necessary truths as well as to an Austinian empirical theory, holds out the hope that linguistic philosophy may yet satisfy our Platonic, as well as our Aristotelian, instincts – the instincts which impelled Wittgenstein

---

12   Hampshire [6], p. vii (Reprinted below.)
13   *Philosophical Papers,* p. 130.

to write the *Tractatus*. It is far from clear how exponents of this project hope to avoid the usual difficulties arising from the gap between contingent truths about linguistic behavior and necessary truths about language as such, but the general strategy may be glimpsed in the following quotation from Hampshire.

> The argument of this chapter has been that it is a necessity in the use of language that we should refer to persisting objects, employing some criteria of identity through change: it is a necessity that the speaker should have the means of indicating his own point of view or standpoint, since he is himself one object among others; that every object must exhibit different appearances from different points of view: and that every object, including persons who are language-users, agents and observers, has a history of changing relations to other things in its environment. These truisms entail consequences in the theory of perception, the theory of mind, the theory of action … *We cannot claim an absolute and unconditional finality for these truisms, since the deduction of them is always a deduction within language as we know it. But the deduction only shows that we are not in a position to describe any alternative forms of communication between intentional agents which do not exemplify these truisms.*[14]

Hampshire seems to suggest that a language which we cannot imagine being used is not a language, and that the sort of language we can imagine being used is determined by the language we ourselves use. Consequently, we can fairly infer from features of our own language to features of anything that we shall ever describe as a "language." To put it crudely, if the Martians speak a language which does not exemplify the truisms cited, we shall never know that they do; therefore the suggestion that they do is not one which we can really understand. If we put aside the question of whether Hampshire's "truisms" are in fact true, there remains one obvious difficulty: philosophers are constantly doing something which they describe as "sketching a possible language" – a language which does not exemplify some or all of these truisms.[15] Unless some criteria are developed to test the suggestion that such languages could not be used by someone who did not already know a language which embodied the truisms in question (that such languages are, in Strawson's phrase, "parasitic" upon ordinary language),[16] the strategy will not work. Granted that the limits of the language a man can speak are, in some sense, the limits of his thought and his imagination, it seems nevertheless that our language is so rich that we can pull our imagination up by its own bootstraps. Thus, the difficulty presented to traditional Ordinary Language philosophy by science-fiction-like examples of exotic linguistic behavior remains a difficulty for a project such as (6).

14   Hampshire [13], pp. 66–67. [Italics added].
15   As an example of such a language, consider the "canonical notation," characterized by an absence of singular terms, which Quine develops in *Word and Object*. Another example to be considered is the language which Sellars suggests might come into existence if people stopped thinking of themselves as *persons*, and began thinking only about, say, molecules and their behavior. (See Sellars [6], especially pp. 32–40.) Sellars has Hampshire-like reservations about the possibility of such a language (see pp. 39–40), but the basis for these reservations is not clear.
16   For this notion of "parasitism," see Strawson's "Singular Terms, Ontology and Identity," *Mind*, LXV (1956), 433–54. See also Quine's dismissal of Strawson's point as irrelevant in *Word and Object*, p. 158 n., and Manley Thompson's "On the Elimination of Singular Terms," *Mind*, LXVIII (1959), 361–76. For another example of the use of the notion of one language's being "parasitic" on another, see Wilfrid Sellars, "Time and the World-Order," *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, III, especially Sections 1 and 9.

It is, however, far too soon to pass judgment on this project. It is presently exemplified by only a few documents – notably Strawson's *Individuals* and Hampshire's *Thought and Action* – and can hardly be said to have had a fair run.[17]

This brief sketch of some possible futures must suffice. The only moral that may be drawn, I think, is that the metaphilosophical struggles of the future will center on the issue of reform versus description, of philosophy-as-proposal versus philosophy-as-discovery – the issue between the least common denominator of (2), (3), and (4) on the one hand, and the least common denominator of (1), (5), and (6) on the other. We have seen, in the course of the preceding sections, a certain oscillation between these two metaphilosophical alternatives. Once the linguistic turn had been taken, and once methodological nominalism had taken hold, it was natural for philosophers to suggest that the function of their discipline is to *change* our consciousness (by reforming our language) rather than to describe it, for language – unlike the intrinsic nature of reality, or the transcendental unity of apperception – is something which, it would seem, *can* be changed. But it was equally natural for philosophers to resist abandoning the hope that their discipline could be a science, an activity in which the principal criterion of success is simply accurate description of the facts. Ever since Plato invented the subject, philosophy has been in a state of tension produced by the pull of the arts on one side and the pull of the sciences on the other. The linguistic turn has not lessened this tension, although it has enabled us to be considerably more self-conscious about it. The chief value of the metaphilosophical discussions included in this volume is that they serve to heighten this self-consciousness.

A final cautionary word: an important (although, I believe, inevitable) defect of this anthology, and of this introduction, is that they do not adequately exhibit the interplay between the adoption of a metaphilosophical outlook and the adoption of substantive philosophical theses. This interplay is exceedingly complex, and often subliminal, and the relations involved more often causal than logical. I have discussed the degree to which linguistic philosophy is "presuppositionless," but I have not tried to discuss the more difficult topic of how changes in the vocabulary used in formulating substantive theses produce changes in the vocabulary of metaphilosophy. Nor do I know how to do this. I should wish to argue that the most important thing that has happened in philosophy during the last thirty years is not the linguistic turn itself, but rather the beginning of a thoroughgoing rethinking of certain epistemological difficulties which have troubled philosophers since Plato and Aristotle.[18] I would argue that if it were not for the epistemological difficulties created by this account, the traditional problems of metaphysics (problems, for example, about universals, substantial form, and the relation between the mind and the body) would never have been conceived. If the traditional "spectatorial"

17　For criticisms of (6), see Black [4] (reprinted at pp. 331–39 below); Julius Moravscik, "Strawson and Ontological Priority," in *Analytical Philosophy, Second Series*, ed. R. J. Butler (Oxford, 1965), pp. 109–19; Burtt [1]; and Mei [1] and [3] and Price [1] (on whether Ordinary Language philosophers need study Chinese).

18　These difficulties exist only if one holds that the acquisition of knowledge presupposes the presentation of something "immediately given" to the mind, where the mind is conceived of as a sort of "immaterial eye," and where "immediately" means, at a minimum, "without the mediation of language." This "spectatorial" account of knowledge is the common target of philosophers as different as Dewey, Hampshire, Sartre, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein.

account of knowledge is overthrown, the account of knowledge which replaces it will lead to reformulations everywhere else in philosophy, particularly in metaphilosophy. Specifically, the contrast between "science" and "philosophy" – presupposed by *all* the positions (1) through (6) which I have described – may come to seem artificial and pointless. If this happens, most of the essays in this volume will be obsolete, because the vocabulary in which they are written will be obsolete. This pattern of creeping obsolescence is illustrated by the fate of the notions of "meaninglessness" and "logical form" (and by my prediction that their successors, the notions of "misuse of language" and "conceptual analysis," will soon wither away). The notions which the metaphilosophers of the future will use in the struggle between philosophy-as-discovery and philosophy-as-proposal almost certainly will not be the notions used in the debates included in the present volume. But I do not know what they will be. The limits of metaphilosophical inquiry are well expressed in the following quotation from Hampshire.

> The rejection of metaphysical deduction, and the study of the details of linguistic usage, are sometimes supported by the suggestion that all earlier philosophers have been mistaken about what philosophy is, about its necessary and permanent nature. This is an inconsistency. If we have no final insight into the essence of man and of the mind, we have no final insight into the essence of philosophy, which is one of men's recognisable activities: recognisable, both through the continuity of its own development, each phase beginning as a partial contradiction of its predecessor, and also by some continuity in its gradually changing relation to other inquiries, each with their own internal development.[19]

19   Hampshire [13], p. 243.