The Vorpel Blade: A Philosophical Adventure in Meaning

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THE VORPEL BLADE: A PHILOSOPHICAL ADVENTURE IN MEANING

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the Faculty of the Department of Philosophy
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Patrick C. Cely
June 1988
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Dean of the Graduate College
I have spent a good deal of my working life in such occupations as ditch-digger and I have found gross misunderstanding of philosophy by my colleagues in such fields. This has not surprised me. However, I am also well acquainted with many persons of good breeding, background, and education who also misrepresent philosophy to themselves. Philosophy is often considered obtuse and impractical. Occasionally it can be both of these, but it is not usually either of them.

I hope that the present work falls in with the usual lot, and not with the occasional lot. Indeed, I have intentionally tried to adopt a style which is at once clear, rigorous, and common. The inadequacy of the background most college graduates have in philosophy is tragic, but not nearly as tragic as the fact that it is so ill understood. In this respect I would rather be charged with the commission of a fallacy than that of obscurity.

Philosophy in its present state is an exciting field to be in because so many critical questions are being raised in so many different areas. The physician in 1980 finds himself confronted with ethical questions with which his counterpart in 1880 would never have had to consider. Questions in political philosophy assume new significance
in a world of superpowers and nuclear arms. So too with science, not since Newton have scientists and philosophers had so much in common to discuss.

Perhaps though, the most dynamic area of philosophy at present is the philosophy of language. Certainly no other area of philosophy is as critical to philosophy itself, for language is the laboratory of philosophers. Further, the problem of meaning is as critical to the philosophy of language as the philosophy of language is to philosophy. For this reason I have chosen the problem of meaning as the topic for my thesis, because it is so critical.

Whatever I accomplish herein, I do not accomplish alone. I am indebted to those teachers who have guided me, feeble and faltering though I am, through the wondrous world of philosophy. I am also indebted to those thinkers who have gone before me; I have a rich harvest to reap because of their hard labor in the field. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my many friends and fellow students. My late hours in conversation with them may have caused many a lost hour of sleep and a paper to be late a time or two, but I can count much inspiration as remuneration for the hours so spent. I have learned and am the richer for it. I hope in this work to share some of the wealth that has been so generously shared with me.

My heartfelt thanks are extended to Dr. Larry Mayhew, an impeccable scholar, without whose help I would have done nothing in this thesis but spin my wheels. Any mistakes or
errors in judgment are my own, but without him they would have been greatly multiplied.

I must also extend my gratitude to my wife. Since I am the world's greatest procrastinator and the world's worst typist, I am deeply indebted to her on two accounts, cajoling and typing.

As a final word before getting underway, I would like to acknowledge with deepest gratitude the prayers of my friends and family who plead my case before a merciful God.
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Four major accounts of linguistic meaning are considered. A referential theory of meaning as developed by Bertrand Russell is considered and rejected on the grounds of some critical observations made by P. F. Strawson. An instrumentalistic theory of meaning as adopted by Ludwig Wittgenstein is next considered and found after an evaluation by C. S. Chihara and J. A. Fodor to be inconclusive. A behavioristic theory of meaning as advocated by Charles W. Morris is considered next. Based on questions posed by L. O. Kattsoff this theory of meaning is found to be, at best, incomplete. Finally, an ideational account of meaning is considered. The traditional ideational account posed by John Locke is rapidly rejected on the basis of his theory of idea; but a theory of idea proposed by Brand Blanshard is found to serve an ideational theory of meaning quite well. Concluding the thesis is a brief summary and a prospectus.
CHAPTER ONE

MEANING AS REFERENCE

When confronted with a choice, the method for determining a selection is as varied as there are choices to be made. An old favorite for making a choice is the eeny-meny-miny-mo method; but in philosophy this and similar methods are not available. In philosophy the method is reason, and in keeping with that method this thesis aims at a reasonable choice.

The range of choices presented in this thesis represent some, but certainly not all, of the major theories and theorists of meaning. The works of Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Charles Morris and John Locke will be considered. Each of the theories as presented by these remarkable men will be measured against their critics' views, and will be found wanting in one or several respects.

When Alice was commanded to state her case in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, she received the very good advice to "begin at the beginning." This advice shall be ignored momentarily here in order to take a peek at the end. The final choice made in this essay will rest with the theory of meaning advanced by Locke, but not without
some modification.

Columbus was wrong about several things, chiefly the size of the world, and the belief that he had landed in the near vicinity of India. To his lasting glory though, he was right on his major premise--the world indeed is round. So, too, the conclusion of this essay will come to view Locke; wrong on some critical points but right in this: the meanings of words are the ideas for which they stand.

Were it not for some deeply embedded problems, the referential theory of meaning would be the only game in town. This theory of meaning appeals so much to common sense that it is perhaps the only theory entitled to claim to represent the ordinary view of meaning. This theory, as developed by Bertrand Russell, will be considered first.

The referential theory of meaning, which basically holds that the meaning of a word is the object to which it refers, (so "Venus" means Venus, "red" means red, and so on), has enormous appeal on first consideration. But as the theory is probed, problems crop up, problems which are perhaps insoluble in character. In recent philosophy one of the principal advocates of a referential theory of meaning has been Bertrand Russell. His novel solutions to the dilemmas presented by a referential theory of meaning will be examined in the following pages, as well as some telling criticisms of those solutions as presented by P. F. Strawson.

Chapter sixteen of Russell's *Introduction to
Mathematical Philosophy\(^1\) is the principal forum in which Russell lays out the solutions he wishes to pose for some nagging problems with reference and meaning. The foundation of the enterprise Russell is engaged in clearly heralds the structure to be built upon it. That foundation is, in his words, "A robust sense of reality," which is, "very necessary in framing a correct analysis of propositions about unicorns, golden mountains, round squares, and other such pseudo-objects."\(^2\) Ultimately Russell's own "robust sense of reality" leads him to adopt the position that some terms, like "unicorn," are significant, but as they occur in propositions they are meaningless. The chain of reasoning which leads him to this position is worth examination.

One of the first distinctions which he draws is between two kinds of descriptions, the definite (corresponding to "the so-and-so") and the indefinite (corresponding to "a so-and-so"). Through his analysis Russell is led to affirm in the case of indefinite descriptions that nothing is in fact described by them. "A unicorn" and "a man," as instances of the general form "a


so-and-so," are indefinite descriptions and as such they
describe no particular object—thus they describe nothing.
While it is true that there are men, e.g., Russell,
Strawson, and Wittgenstein, there is no object named by "a
man." In Russell's own words:

Nevertheless, when we have enumerated all the men in
the world, there is nothing left of which we can say,
'This is a man, and not only so, but it is the 'a
man,' the quintessential entity that is just an
indefinite man without being anybody in particular.'

The definite description, i.e., phrases of the form
"the so-and-so," present one with the opposite situation,
for they do seem to single out some particular object.
"The first man to set foot on the moon...." is a phrase
which uniquely specifies one and only one individual,
separating him from all other men. Such would also seem to
be the case with the name "Neil Armstrong." In both cases
a particular object is picked out. Russell provides this
definition:

(1) a name, which is a simple symbol, directly
designating an individual which is its meaning, and
having this meaning in its own right, independently of
the meanings of all other words; (2) a description,
which consists of several words, whose meanings are
already fixed, and from which results whatever is to
be taken as the 'meaning' of the description.

In the course of his comparison, one of the distinguishing
features he wishes to make clear is that names and definite
descriptions cannot be substituted for one another (even
when they ostensibly refer to the same object) without

3 Ibid., p. 170.
4 Ibid., p. 171.
changing the character of the propositions in which they occur. "Scott is the author of *Waverly*," and "Scott is Scott" is the illustration Russell uses to make this point.

As Russell's analysis unfolds, it becomes clear to him that a definite description functions just like an indefinite description. Neither names anything at all. Properly speaking, names can only be applied to things which in fact exist. Descriptions only seem to name something; properly analyzed they disappear altogether from the propositions in which they occur. This "seeming to name" quality of descriptions, given Russell's definition of a name, is crucial in view of the ontological entailments of naming. If "the present king of France" does name, and in fact France is not a monarchy, then there must be some kind of non-physical object designated by the description. In such an eventuality it can be seen that the population of such pseudo-objects in the universe would rapidly approach infinity—a conclusion which certainly offends Russell's, and many others', robust sense of reality.

Russell's solution is to use analysis to eliminate descriptions from propositions in which they occur. In the statement, "The first man to set foot on the moon was American," the description, "the first man to set foot on the moon" would be analyzed as (1) at least one man first set foot on the moon; (2) at most one man first set foot on the moon; (3) whoever first set foot on the moon was
American. By means of this analysis, Russell is finally led to conclude that

... what does not name anything is not a name, and therefore, if intended to be a name, is a symbol devoid of meaning, whereas a description, like 'the present King of France,' does not become incapable of occurring significantly merely on the ground that it describes nothing, the reason being that it is a complex symbol, of which the meaning is derived from that of its constituent symbols.  

The terribly vexing problems of identity which attach themselves to a referential theory of meaning as a matter of course are to be solved, on Russell’s view, through engaging in a proper analysis (as above) of the propositions in which identity statements occur. One such problem arises when one wishes to know if something, call it S, is identical with something $S'$. Thus, someone might want to know whether Samuel Clemens is the author of Huckleberry Finn. What the person making such an inquiry does not want to know is if Samuel Clemens is Samuel Clemens. Yet on a theory of identity which holds the principle of the substitution of terms salve veritate, and in which a definite description is taken as a name, the reading of the query as "Is Samuel Clemens Samuel Clemens?" is a distinct possibility. Of course Russell’s analysis of the query eliminates the definite description altogether and so the problem never arises.

Russell’s position is clear. Names have meaning in virtue of the objects they pick out. Descriptions are not

\[5\text{Ibid., p. 174.} \]
names, hence, while they may occur significantly, they have no meaning. Their significance derives from the meaning of their constituent parts. "So-and-so is presently king" names some individual, just as "France" names some country; it is in these terms that the significance of "the present king of France" is to be understood, but "the present king of France" is not to be taken as a name simply because it is constituted of names. Though Russell's analysis certainly solves problems, it is not itself unproblematic. As Strawson has demonstrated, his novel solutions are not viable.

The first item on Strawson's agenda in "On Referring" is a careful demarcation of what he calls the uniquely referring use of expressions. Although he delineates several classes of terms which typically serve a uniquely referring use, (proper names among others); for present purposes the focus will be restricted to expressions of the form "the so-and-so." Strawson's principal interest in such expressions is when they appear as the subject of a subject-predicate sentence. However, he never supposes that because an expression has a uniquely referring use that its sole use is mentioning or referring.

Consider the expression "the ball-point pen." As this expression occurs in the sentence, "The ball-point pen is  

6Like Chapter 16 of Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy, P. F. Strawson's article "On Referring," Mind LIX, No. 235 (1950): 320-344 is reprinted as Section 2.2. "On Referring" in Rosenberg and Travis, Ibid., pp. 175-195; and likewise, all page numbers cited refer to this reprint.
the preferred writing instrument of students," it does not serve a uniquely referring use. No particular pen is designated by the expression. Yet in the sentence "The ball-point pen is in the checkbook" the expression does serve a uniquely referring use. Some particular pen is mentioned by the use of "the ball-point pen" in this case.

One important consequence of Russell's dichotomy of names and descriptions which Strawson highlights is that a uniquely referring expression can occur significantly in only one of two ways:

(1) The first is that their grammatical form should be misleading as to their logical form, and that they should be analyzable, like s, as a special kind of existential sentence. (2) The second is that their grammatical subject should be a logically proper name, of which the meaning is the individual thing it designates. 7

Russell's position withers under Strawson's penetrating gaze; uniquely referring expressions fall into neither class. Clearly a uniquely referring expression may be used on different occasions to mention different things. There are ball-point pens scattered all over this author's house: the ball-point pen on the kitchen table; the ball-point pen on the desk; the ball-point pen on the night-stand; and there is even the ball-point pen under the couch. Further, when this writer's wife reads this, there will cease to be "the ball-point pen under the couch."

"The ball-point pen" as an expression is identical as it appears from place to place in the paragraph above. The

two significant differences as it appears are the different uses to which it is put, i.e., to mention different pens, and the fact that there are different "utterances" of the expression, (as opposed to "The ball-point pen: on the table; on the desk; . . ."). Insofar as "the ball-point pen" succeeds in referring to some particular pen only in virtue of the different occasions for which it is employed, it makes no sense to say of the expression "the ball-point pen" that it refers to or mentions anything. To quote Strawson, "'Mentioning,' or 'referring,' is not something an expression does; it is something that someone can use an expression to do."\(^8\)

Similarly, "The ball-point pen under the couch has blue ink" is used to assert something true or false depending on the occasion of its utterance. Prior to the writer's wife having read this it is true or false. After she has read this the proper response is not "yes, true" or "no, false," but rather, "There is no ball-point pen under the couch" as indeed, perhaps there never was. Making a true or false claim about a ball-point pen, or any other thing, is hardly possible when there is no mention or reference to a ball-point pen. Surely no sane person would attempt to refer to the ball-point pen under the couch if they did not believe there was a ball-point pen under the couch. Therefore, someone sincerely prefacing a proposal with "the ball-point pen under the couch" would certainly

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 180.
agree with Russell's analysis (at least one ball-point pen is under the couch, etc.), but their agreement with Russell's account is a far different thing from being what they are really saying. In fact, they are attempting to mention some particular pen in order to say something about it.

In the main, Strawson affirms:

It is a part of the significance of expressions of the kind I am discussing that they can be used, in an immense variety of contexts, to make unique references. It is no part of their significance to assert that they are being so used or that the conditions of their being so used are fulfilled.⁹

Russell, homing in on definite descriptions, forgot about the people who produce them. If Russell ignored the use of an expression though, the same can certainly not be said about his friend and colleague Ludwig Wittgenstein. For Wittgenstein, "use" is elevated from the humble estate in which it has appeared in these pages and is bedight in philosophical purple.

⁹Ibid., p. 186.
CHAPTER TWO

MEANING AS USE

The later philosophical writings of Wittgenstein present unique problems of interpretation. They certainly do not follow the typical format of philosophical literature; and perhaps this is one reason why even among those who are sympathetic to his claims there is no broad consensus on some fundamental issues. Some (e.g., George Pitcher) have interpreted Wittgenstein's position as a form of behaviorism, while others (e.g., Alan Donagan) have disputed this claim. Whichever way the debate is settled, one thing is certain; Wittgenstein thought that the role of words as tools employed by those who utter them was critically important.

As Leonard Linsky has observed, for Wittgenstein, "The meaning of an expression is the use (or uses) that it has in some actual language game (or games)." For the most part, the meaning of a word or expression is to be understood in terms of its use. In these terms asking for


2Leonard Linsky, "Wittgenstein on Language and Some Problems of Philosophy." Journal of Philosophy 54 (May
the meaning of a word makes about as much (or as little) sense as asking for the significance of a pen apart from its function as a writing instrument.

The notion of words as tools is intimately connected in Wittgenstein's philosophy with the role these tools play in some actual language game. Knowing how to use language is like knowing how to play a game. Learning a language is like learning how to play a game. The focus is directed towards the correct application of the elements of the game. If someone can do this, then it is said they know how to play, and that is the end of the issue. We do not inquire into the significance of an element of the game beyond its use in the game. Consider remark (31):

When one shows someone the king in chess and says: "This is the king," this does not tell him the use of that piece - unless he already knows the rules of the game up to this last point: the shape of the king. You could imagine his having learned the rules of the game without ever having been shown an actual piece. The shape of the chessman corresponds here to the sound of shape of a word.

One can also imagine someone's having learned the game without ever learning or formulating rules. He might have learned quite simple board games first, by watching, and have progressed to more and more complicated ones. He, too, might be given the explanation "This is the king," - if, for instance, he were being shown chessmen of a shape he was not used to. This explanation again only tells him the use of the piece because, as we might say, the place for it was already prepared. Or even: we shall only say that it tells him the use, if the place is already prepared. And in this case it is so, not because the person to whom we give the explanation already knows rules, but because in another sense he is already master of a game.  


3Ludwig Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations
Throughout this remark there is a studied alternation between a part of a game and its place in the game. The act of saying "This is the King; it can move like this, . . . and so on," might be described as putting the part in its place. Once this has been done there is very little, or nothing else left to do. But the act of putting the part in its place is ipso facto to give the rules for its use. Hence, for the part to have a place in a game is for that part to have rules governing its use. Naturally though, there are no rules governing every conceivable circumstance. Thus, if one were playing chess and the black king, in a Lewis Carroll-like fashion, were to jump up, march across the board, and throttle the white king, it would be pointless to look for a rule governing such an event. Like the fabulous chair in remark (80), the shout of "checkmate!" would be a fairly dubious use of the word.

Yet obviously there are appropriate conditions under which one says "checkmate!" The rules of the game determine the conditions under which checkmate is attained. When one plays in accordance with the rules, a certain move will result in conditions by virtue of which saying "checkmate!" is appropriate. When certain conditions C determine results R, then those conditions are, in Wittgenstein's usage, criteria. In the Blue Book


4Ibid., p. 38.
Wittgenstein is careful to discriminate between criteria and symptoms. He fleshes out the differences between these two terms by way of an analogy to medicine.

If medical science calls angina an inflammation caused by a particular bacillus, and we ask in a particular case, "why do you say this man has got angina?" then the answer, "I have found the bacillus so-and-so in his blood" gives us the criterion, or what we may call the defining criterion of angina. If on the other hand the answer was, "His throat is inflamed," this might give us a symptom of angina.5

From Wittgenstein's example and the discussion which follows it, a criterion is clearly a sine qua non of that which it is a criterion. That is, if C is the criterion of X, then if C, necessarily X obtains. On the other hand, if something S is a symptom of X, then the presence of S is grounds for inferring X. The principal difference between criteria and symptoms is that where symptoms are merely correlated with some X, criteria are conceptually connected to some X. A crucial observation Wittgenstein makes is that in ordinary language people may flip-flop between what functions as criteria and what functions as symptoms. He says for example, "It may be practical to define a word by taking one phenomenon as the defining criterion, but we shall easily be persuaded to define the word by means of what, according to our first use, was a symptom."6

Typically, no one criterion functions as "the criterion" of the applicability of P. Typical, too, is that P is


6Ibid., p. 25.
sometimes applied on the basis of symptoms and sometimes on the basis of criteria.

One more word about criteria. The criteria are not themselves that of which they are the criteria. The presence of the bacillus so-and-so in the bloodstream is not itself angina, but it is the criterion of angina. If however, the discovery were made that the bacillus so-and-so were widespread, but angina only appeared in persons with certain genetic predispositions in combination with the presence of the bacillus so-and-so, then a new concept of angina would emerge. Throughout the shifts and changes in criteria certain procedures can be performed utilizing the given criteria to determine if someone has angina. However, the criterion does not define itself, but only that of which it is a criterion. As Chihara and Fodor have observed,

... these operations cannot be performed on the standards themselves and hence neither standard can be said to be an instance of either the predicate for which it is a standard or of its negation. 7

This brief outline of some salient features of Wittgenstein's position follows roughly the pertinent areas Chihara and Fodor have drawn attention to; 8 for they figure prominently in the charges Chihara and Fodor level at


8 Ibid., pp. 388-395.
Wittgenstein's position. Chihara and Fodor's summary of Wittgenstein's position is:

X is a criterion of Y in situations of type S if the very meaning or definition of 'Y' . . . justify the claim that one can recognize, see, detect, or determine the applicability of 'Y' on the basis of X in normal situations of type S.9

As Chihara and Fodor develop Wittgenstein's position, certain key points emerge quite clearly. For instance, the ascription of many predicates depends on the presence of either a symptom or of criteria. But the ascription of a predicate on the basis of a symptom is only warranted if there is (or has been) some criteria on the basis of which the symptom is (was) correlated with that for which it is a grounds for inference. An inflamed throat can function as a symptom of angina only because angina is defined. The defining criteria of angina establish angina as some Y with which symptomatic predicates may be correlated. In the absence of such a relationship the question may always be raised as to why an inflamed throat is a symptom of angina.

Wittgenstein argues that in lieu of detectable criteria, it would be impossible to teach or learn the meaning of some predicates, particularly psychological predicates. In their absence what could possibly count as evidence that such predicates had been correctly applied? Therefore, Chihara and Fodor conclude, the view that the ascription of "pain" and other such predicates to other persons is unwarranted is, on Wittgenstein's argument,

9Ibid., p. 397.
"logically incompatible with the operation of the ordinary language rules for the application of these terms. . . ."10

Chihara and Fodor claim that the extension of Wittgenstein's arguments can lead to some quite implausible results. They elucidate their claims in terms of five areas; concept counting, inductive generalization, first person applications of psychological predicates, certain claims regarding memory failure, and the scientific investigations of some psychological states. Two of these areas, concept counting and inductive generalization, will be discussed.

As previously noted, new medical discoveries may result in new criteria for angina, but in such a case the old concept is scuttled and replaced by the new. Yet there would seem to be cases in which concepts would have to be grossly multiplied on Wittgenstein's line of reasoning.

Ordinarily, claiming that so-and-so had a dream is based upon the fact that so-and-so claimed, "I had this wild dream last night. . . ." But this author, having observed a two-year old child laughing and giggling in her sleep, and mumbling some of the few words she knew, later claimed that "Bethany had a dream last night." In this case, not only was no dream report given, none could have been given. Additionally, there are those cases in which, based on sleep behavior, someone is told, "You dreamed all night long" and his response is "I don't remember a thing."

10Ibid., p. 402.
The criteria that warrant the application of the phrase "so-and-so dreamed" differ from first person dream reports, to behavior with no possible report, to behavior with a negative report. On Wittgenstein's view, different concepts of dreaming must be involved since the criteria which warrant the application of the predicate do not coincide. Dreaming to one side, a Wittgensteinian approach apparently leads to at least two different concepts of sleep,

... one based upon report, one based upon nonverbal behavior. But surely, this is an unnatural way of counting concepts. Compare Malcolm's two concepts of sleep with a case where it really does seem natural to say that a special concept of sleep has been employed, viz., where we say of a hibernating bear that it sleeps through the winter. 11

Apparently inductive generalization also presents problems for a Wittgensteinian approach. The E.E.G. was developed to measure electrical activity in the brain. Only later did someone think to use it to investigate dreams. By now a new concept of dream reports may have been added to the inventory, but in that first use of the E.E.G., it was clearly neither a criterion nor a symptom of dream reports. The investigators had to monitor the machine and query the subjects to find out if there was even the remotest correlation. The gap in the Wittgensteinian account is how the expectation of such a correlation could have been rational; for,

One cannot have an inductive generalization over no

observations; nor, in this case, was any higher level "covering law" used to infer the probability of a correlation between E.E.G. and dream reports.\textsuperscript{12}

The last case mentioned is closely related to a much deeper problem for the Wittgensteinian position. The history of science is replete with examples of existential statements whose justification depends on

\[ \ldots \text{the simplicity, plausibility, and predictive adequacy of an explanatory system as a whole, so that it is incorrect to say that relations between statements which are mediated by such explanations are either logical in Wittgenstein's sense or contingent in the sense in which this term suggest simple correlation.}\textsuperscript{13}\]

Perhaps the most outstanding example of such a statement is the theory of gravitation. Since Newton's day and until Einstein's, scientist have not been entirely satisfied with gravitation, which seems to involve mysterious "action at a distance." Yet this problem has been outweighed by the "simplicity, plausibility, and predictive adequacy" of the theory of gravitation. When Newton proposed his theory he appealed to nothing like criteria or symptoms, but if anything to the schema cited above. An apple falling to the ground is neither contingently correlated with gravity nor a conceptual truth which can be inferred from knowing the meaning of "an object falling to the ground." Chihara and Fodor illustrate this argument by citing the example of the cloud-chamber invented by C. T. R. Wilson. As they state,
the relation between the Wilson cloud-chamber and the paths of charged particles does not involve a conceptual truth, i.e., "C. T. R. Wilson did not learn what 'path of a charged particle' means by having the cloud-chamber explained to him." Equally clear is the fact that taking the formation of bands of fog in the cloud-chamber "as indicators of the paths of the particles is not observed correlations between streaks and some criterion of motion of charged particles." Where Y is some predicate, and X is some state of affairs on the basis of which Y is justifiably applied (e.g., Y = gravitation and X = an apple falling to the ground), Chihara and Fodor conclude, "X need not have the form of either a criterion or a correlate." Therefore radical skepticism is not the only alternative to a system of justification based on criteria and symptoms.

Suggesting that a person can learn the meaning of terms such as "pain" in the absence of criteria is not as implausible as Wittgenstein suggests. Nor is it implausible to suggest that even children are capable of learning the meaning of terms such as "pain" on the basis of theoretical inference. On the contrary, one does not have to be around a young child who is producing an incessant stream of "whys?" and "how comes?" for very long before it begins to look as though the child is engaged in an activity very similar to that of the scientist. On this reading, "pain" is not something one learns the meaning of.

14 Ibid., pp. 409-410.
only from one's own case, but it also has a place in a wider system of belief, expectation, and intention. It is subject to modification, clarification, and expansion. In short, "pain" can start out as personal sensation and end-up as a powerful explanatory weapon in the theoretical armament of a growing mind.

In conclusion, there are consequences for adopting a Wittgensteinian approach to meaning which run counter to an ordinary view of psychological predicates. In lieu of reasonable alternatives to Wittgenstein's later philosophy these problems might be taken for the sake of the general satisfaction his theory affords, but there are reasonable alternatives. In particular, the kinds of justification which scientists employ in promoting their theories seem particularly immune to analysis in terms of criteria and symptoms. In addition, theoretical inference as a species of justification is at least plausible in other, general systems of explanation.

This section began by noting the debate on how Wittgenstein's philosophy of language ought to be characterized. In the next section an unabashedly behavioristic account of meaning will be considered.
CHAPTER THREE

MEANING AS BEHAVIOR

L. O. Kattsoff has written a brief article entitled "What is Behavior?" The question raised by the title is a portent of things to come, for there are several important questions which Kattsoff poses in the course of his analysis of some critical issues which spring from C. W. Morris' magnum opus Signs, Language, and Behavior. In the following pages an attempt will be made to flesh out the questions Kattsoff poses in order to see exactly why it is that these questions should keep Morris awake at night.

The position adopted by Morris is straightforward and simple. Signs, Language, and Behavior can be understood in terms of two major impulses. The first impulse is the desire on the part of Morris to establish a unified science of semiotic. The second impulse is his desire to demonstrate the utility of the axioms which he advances throughout the book.

Establishing a unified science of semiotic would be no


mean feat, and *Signs, Language, and Behavior* is no mean
effort in that direction. The principal obstacle which
Morris addresses in the bid for a unified science of
semiotic is the creation of a vocabulary in terms of which
the science of semiotic can fulfill its' mission. Morris
generates this vocabulary by fiat. His aim in this regard
is not to provide a descriptive terminology, but rather to
provide a functional terminology. His objective is to
articulate a set of given terms, and then to investigate
language through those terms. The most significant
decision he makes in the book concerns the character of the
terms he develops. Morris chooses to eliminate mentalistic
terms from the basic vocabulary of semiotic, and elects
instead to develop the vocabulary in strictly behavioristic
terms.

The second impulse manifests itself in Morris' attempts to show that the terms whose definitions he has
stipulated are adequate for an analysis of language. For
example, not only does he stipulate four ways in which
signs may be used he also makes the claim, "These are the
most general sign usages; other usages are subdivisions and
specializations of these four."^{3} In addition to the
special adequacy of his terms, Morris also believes the
behavioristic mold in which they are cast is adequate. He
believes that not only may all the different usages of signs
be brought under the rubric of his fourfold division, but

^{3}Ibid., p. 95.
also his fourfold division of sign usage does not require the addition of any mentalistic terms in order to successfully interpret sign use. Overall, it may be affirmed that Morris feels his twin impulses have been satisfied. He has created a precise, empirical vocabulary for the science of semiotic and his vocabulary is entirely adequate without having to employ mentalistic terms.

The first twist in the path pursued by Morris which causes Kattsoff to question the course, is the characterization of statements as informative or incitive. This characterization is part of the broader scheme mentioned above in which Morris discusses at length the use of signs. His focus is signs and "... their relation to the purposive behavior in which they are produced and which they serve." Morris further declares that, "Signs in general serve to control behavior in the way something else would exercise control if it were present." Finally, Morris categorizes the use of signs in four broad areas. They are the informative, valuative, incitive, and systemic uses.

For Kattsoff and the present discussion the two uses of interest are the informative and the incitive. The informative use according to Morris occurs when "... signs are produced in order to cause someone to act as if a certain situation has certain characteristics." If a dog

4Ibid., pp. 92 & 95.

5Ibid., p. 97
is habitually fed from either of two pans and a bell is rung when the food is in the first pan, then the ringing of the bell will function in the manner Morris describes as informative. The dog would seek food, provided that it wanted food, in the first pan even if it could not see or smell what was in the first pan. By seeking food in the first pan on hearing the ringing of the bell, the dog is 'acting as if a certain situation had certain characteristics.' By contrast the incitive use occurs when "... signs are produced in order to determine how the interpreter of the sign is to act to something, that is, to call out more or less specific responses." By contrast to the informative use, here it is possible for the interpreter to know what characteristics obtain in a certain situation, but a sign is produced in order to control behavior in spite of that knowledge. Thus the dog may know what pan the food is in, but a buzzer sounds which causes the dog to either stop or start eating.

On the level of humans the incitive use of signs might be characterized as verbal arm twisting. The aim of the incitive use of signs is to incite the interpreter of such a sign to some particular course of action. One issue which Morris never bothers to address is how the kind of persuasion involved in an incitive use of signs is not also and eo ipso an informative use. Simply stated, it is difficult to understand how someone can be persuaded

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6Ibid., p.102.
to do something, unless they are also (or have been) informed of the consequences of not doing what they are being incited to do. Although Morris does take note of this possibility, the potential it contains for creating ambiguity between the incitive and the informative use of signs does not provoke any explanations on his part.

Given these two broad categories of sign use though, Kattsoff considers the statement, "This man says that human beings are descended from more primitive forms of life." And his question in turn is "how can it be determined whether the statement is intended as informative or incitive, and how can it be ascertained whether it functions as informative or incitive?" This question actually draws the heat of its critical fire from two sources. (1) It focuses attention on the utility, or lack thereof, of the classification of use of signs as agents of behavioral control and (2) it focuses attention on how Morris responds to the absence of overt behavior even though signs are being used and understood. These two aspects of the question will be considered in order.

First, a statement like "This man says that human beings are descended from more primitive forms of life" might be used by a politician to persuade people not to vote for "this man." Yet the same statement might also be used by a biology teacher to indicate to her students which doctrines "this man" held. Significantly, in either case

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Kattsoff, Ibid., p. 99.
the intended use might have a contrary effect. So the politician might use the statement incitively yet his audience might only be informed and not persuaded at all. Likewise, the principal effect on the students might be incitive. If the students are rabid creationists they might decide to burn in effigy the man described by their teacher. As Kattsoff observes,

As a matter of fact, whether the statement is intended as informative or incitive can only be ascertained from the user (in this case the speaker); and whether it functions as informative or incitive can only be ascertained from the hearer.

The problem for Morris comes down to this: the relation between bells and buzzers as controlling agents, and the behavior of dogs controlled by bells and buzzers is relatively clear. Nothing like this obtains in the case of humans and statements. Where the intended effect of a buzzer and its actual results in the dog's behavior form a fairly tight bond, between the intended effect and actual results in humans there evidently exists a veritable chasm. Morris clearly states that signs serve the purpose of controlling behavior, but his analysis of sign uses shows how easily the relation between control and controlling agent is breached. This is a problem for Morris because his discussion takes no note of the reliability with which the species of control sought is identical to the species of control which actually results from some particular use of a sign. Behavioristic analyses in general depend for
their efficacy on a clear delineation of conditioning and the stimulus-response syndrome. A dog that occasionally sits when told "sit" has not been successfully conditioned. In this case the dog has failed to "understand" the sign. Yet, there is an understandable reluctance to take a breakdown of the informative/incitive dichotomy on the part of humans as a breach of understanding.

If Morris were attempting to classify signs according to use, this enterprise would obviously fail. The same sign could be used in any of the ways mentioned by Morris under different circumstances; and of course a classification which does not discriminate is vacuous. But this approach which Morris does not use is described here only because there are situations in which it would be useful. A dog might be trained in the following way: whistles to indicate the location of objects, bells to give commands, buzzers to tell if an object is friend or foe. So one might whistle, ring a bell, and sound a buzzer to get a dog to go to and growl at an object one hundred yards to his immediate left. Under such a system the utility of designating classes of signs by virtue of their use is evident. As an example, the sign genus "whistle" would have an informative use. This use would be reliably correlated with behavior. Whistles as such, i.e., the mere quality of the sound, would parse the behavior of the dog in terms of the genus of which some particular whistle was an exemplar.
The aforementioned kind of classification, certainly a legitimate behavioristic program, is not Morris' program. By contrast, what he is engaged in, namely the uses of signs distinct from signs so used is brought more sharply into focus. So stated, Kattsoff's question can be posed with greater vigor. Does Morris determine the function of a statement from the sign producer or from the sign interpreter? If the function of a statement is to be determined in reference to the sign producer, then Morris has a long, tough row to hoe—for in this direction Morris must certainly encounter the intentions, beliefs, hopes and expectations of the person making use of some statement. In short, there are a host of inner, mental states which Morris is going to have to consider and eliminate if he is going to preserve the behavioristic cast of his semiotics. But locating the function of a statement with the interpreter leads to the second focus of the question, namely the response of Morris to the absence of overt behavior.

There are conditions under which no overt response will be made to a statement. Kattsoff illustrates this point by noting that the statement, "This man says that human beings are descended from more primitive forms of life," might be uttered in the course of a speech, in which case the audience would be likely to continue to behave after hearing the statement as before hearing the statement, i.e., sitting and listening. In this context
Morris would rely on the concept of a disposition to respond.

Yet this being the case, the original formulation proposed by Morris for the incitive and informative uses of signs can no longer stand. As Kattsoff suggests they must be reformulated so that they are used to control not behavior, but the disposition to behave. Morris clearly affirms the principal that the use of signs is to control behavior as would the thing signified control behavior if it were present. Yet in many cases, as illustrated by Kattsoff's statement, actual and present behavior is not controlled by the use of signs. Is the motion of a student's hand who is marking "true" by the statement "George Washington was the first president of America" being controlled by a statement made weeks or months earlier in the semester by the teacher? Surely not. At best only the disposition to respond with "true" to the statement is controlled by the teacher's previous informative utterance. But in order for Morris to know how some sign functioned, he must wait and observe until some overt behavior occurs. A disposition to respond is a particular disposition to some limited range of response patterns. Certainly Morris would not want any response at all, say eating an apple, to count as the terminal behavior generated by the disposition to respond to, "This man says that human beings are descended from more primitive forms of life." The intimate link between disposition and
response, and the critical role played by dispositions in Morris' theory leads to Kattsoff's second important question, "how in a behavioristic theory is . . . a disposition to respond observed?" 9

Early on in *Signs, Language, and Behavior*, Morris states, "Any organism for which something is a sign will be called an interpreter. The disposition in an interpreter to respond, because of the sign, by response-sequences of some behavior-family will be called an interpretant." 10 According to Morris in meaningful discourse, what is significantly present when we hear and understand a sign is the interpretant of the sign. But the interpretant produces, under proper circumstances, response-sequences, which consist of overt behavior. Now, an interpretant, i.e., a disposition, is not itself the behavior in question and is not observed. Rather the response-sequence is what is observed and is in some sense the measure of what, if any, interpretant is present. This formulation leads rather naturally to a solution which frees Morris from the onerous task of following his subjects until such time as they choose to display behavior which indicates the presence of some interpretant. The solution is, in Kattsoff's words,

. . . that if in the majority of instances in which a given thing is presented to an interpreter, that interpreter responds in a certain definite way, then in those instances in which he does not respond we can assume that a disposition to respond was

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9 Ibid., p. 99.
10 Morris, Ibid., p. 17.
produced but did not result in behavior.\textsuperscript{11}

Adopting this position, though, would signal deep trouble for Morris.

Morris avers that, "... the introduction of 'idea' into the criterion for a sign was to permit us to say that something may be a sign to someone even when no overt behavior occurs."\textsuperscript{12} As a corollary to this he claims the concept of interpretant, i.e., a disposition to respond, is more scientific than the notion of idea, and is more amenable to empirical investigation. For this reason he advocates replacing, at least in formal discourse, the term "idea" with the term "interpretant."

For the problem of determining whether another person has an idea is not methodologically different from determining whether a dog has an idea. True, the other person may utter the words, 'The buzzer makes me think of food at a certain place.' But ... the reliability of this evidence can only be checked if we are in possession of some criterion to determine whether the buzzer is or is not a sign of food at a given place.\textsuperscript{13}

Morris' motivation in this respect is certainly laudable, but he has established a standard his own theory cannot measure up to. His recognition of cases where no overt behavior comes to pass now puts him in a peculiar position. Even granting that reliable behavioral criteria have been established for some sign, Kattsoff wonders in those cases in which that sign produces no overt behavior, "If anything

\textsuperscript{11}Kattsoff, Ibid., p. 100.

\textsuperscript{12}Morris, Ibid., p. 30.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 29.
is a sign which causes a disposition to respond, how is a disposition to respond observed?"14 As Kattsoff explains, a disposition to respond is not yet an actual response, and so remains, like an idea, an inner event unavailable to scientific observation. Morris may of course opt to assume that a parade of dispositions are produced in a person who attends a lecture. If, however, Morris were to remain adamant in his exclusion of, "something inside the interpreter whose nature apparently is that of idea or thought,"15 then he will be forced to admit that he cannot determine in many instances whether or not something is or is not a sign: since it is given that X is a sign when X causes a disposition to respond, Morris, being unable to observe dispositions, cannot empirically verify the presence of a disposition. Hence the status of X as a sign must remain undisclosed.

There are no doubt significant refinements which could usefully be made by Morris to his theory. As it stands, however, would appear to be something less than adequate. Morris very plainly wants to include both observable criteria and dispositions in his theory of semiotic, but he cannot have it both ways. Observable behavior alone does not allow enough of language use to count as meaningful. But the role which Morris has assigned to dispositions either jeopardizes the investigation of signs, or else

14 Kattsoff, Ibid., p. 99.
15 Ibid., p. 100.
seriously undermines his claims to have eliminated inner states, "whose nature is apparently that of idea or thought." John Locke certainly would not have approved of Morris' attempts in this direction. Contrarily, he proposed a theory of signs in which the meaning of a sign is the idea for which it stands; and to the ideational theory of meaning this investigation now turns.
CHAPTER FOUR

MEANING AS IDEA

The ideatical theory of meaning was first explicitly formulated by John Locke. He states in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, "The use, then, of words is to be the sensible mark of ideas; and the ideas they stand for are their proper and immediate signification."\(^1\) This concept of meaning has a sort of instant appeal to common sense; for people certainly do speak and use language to communicate ideas; i.e., let others know what is on their minds. Yet for this formulation to appeal to philosophical sense as well as to common sense, some explanation of an idea is needed, and this is where the ideatical theory of meaning has in the past found itself caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

In his article on meaning in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, William P. Alston has identified three areas for which the ideatical theory of meaning must provide explanations if it is to be persuasive.\(^2\) Formulating these three areas as questions the results are (1) Can thought

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\(^2\)Paul Edwards, ed., The Encyclopedia of Philosophy,
be reasonably characterized as something which exists independently of language? (2) Are people able to call up appropriate ideas in association with specific meaning? and (3) Can word/idea association be explained in non-circular terms? Here these three questions are taken to be definitive of the minimum labor which must be undertaken in defense of the ideational theory of meaning.

As is evident from the kind of inquiry dictated by the questions themselves, what the ideational theorist needs is a theory of idea, or thought, which will survive close scrutiny. A suitable theory of idea will answer all three questions at the same time. To this end Locke proposed an account of ideas which seemed to him well met for the task at hand. Yet, in philosophical circles his theory of ideas has been treated like a red-headed stepson. This chapter will examine his theory of idea briefly for two reasons; it is of great historical importance in the development of the ideational theory of meaning, and seeing where it went awry will eliminate one path along which an ideational theory of meaning might be developed.

To serve a theory of meaning, two refinements of the theory of idea as image are necessary and which Locke is quick to aver in book three of An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. First, since an image is necessarily an image of some sensible quality, there must be some relation

between every meaningful word and some sensible quality. The principle form this relation takes for Locke is historical, he says, "And I doubt not, but if we could trace them to their sources, we should find, in all Languages, the names, which stand for things that fall not under our senses, to have had their first rise from sensible ideas." Failing the strong etymological association, as between "breath" and "spirit," Locke supposes that words for sensible ideas may be expropriated in an analogical use for nonsensible ideas.

Second, since people know by intimate familiarity with their own conscious processes that there is seldom a torrent of images cascading through the mind as they speak, the immediate presence of an image may not be regarded as a necessary component of meaningful speech. For Locke the utility and significance of an expression stems from the constancy of association between an expression and an idea. The link forged between idea and expression is a bridge which is not always traversed when either idea or expression occurs, but one which is constantly present and could be traversed when idea or expression appears. So in English the term "dog" is the bridge to the idea of dogness, crossing which there is, lo and behold, an image of a dog. Further, just as one does not have to actually cross a certain bridge to know that it leads to some particular town, neither does one have to cross the bridge

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3 Locke, Ibid. p. 403 (Book III, Chap. 1, Sec. 5).
between word and image on every occasion in order to know the meaning of the term.

Even with these refinements in place the reduction of meaning to image faces several hard problems. Two such problems occur when meaning and image are examined in terms of their covariance in significant differences and similarities. Descartes first raised the problem of the chilagon to plague Locke's theory. The terms "chilagon" and "figure with a thousand and ten sides" differ significantly in meaning. Yet it would require a prodigious, nay, heroic imagination which could produce or maintain an image between the twain which varied in the same degree of significance. If the image a person had of a chilagon had even one more or one less side than a thousand, that person could not be said to know the meaning of "chilagon." Indeed, if that person's image was vague, there could be no conclusion but that his meaning too, was vague.

The reverse situation is also vexing for Locke's theory. Sameness of meaning may be accompanied by wide divergences in images people associate with some expression.4 For one person the image associated with 'peace' might be of himself lying on a haystack watching

4Alston in his article on meaning states, "The word 'dog' in its usual sense, may at one time be accompanied by the image of a collie, at another time by the image of a terrier, on one occasion by the image of a dog sitting, on another by the image of a dog standing, and so on." s.v. "Meaning," Paul Edwards, Ibid.
the clouds go by; for another person a very different image might accompany 'peace,' e.g., sitting by a fireplace reading a book. Consider also a child who is being taught the numbers one, two and three. One mother might use oranges to try and teach these numbers, and another mother may use buttons. If ever afterward the children so taught had somewhere in mind the images of oranges or buttons when they spoke or read one, two, or three, their images would certainly be very different while their meanings would certainly be the same.

Locke's theory of meaning is wrecked on his theory of idea. Though his characterization of ideas was couched largely in visual terms, even if images were arrayed in the full panoply of sensation, there would still be problems. The theory still would not pass muster in the service of semantic utility even if images were redolent with odor, and could be tasted, touched and heard. Further, if in addition to the criticisms mentioned above, Berkeley's observations of the difficulties of imaging a triangle which is neither scalene, nor right, nor equilateral, nor isosceles yet is all at once are added, then any attempt to satisfy a theory of meaning by utilization of representation will have to answer the same fundamental criticisms. Therefore if an ideational theory of meaning is to be proposed, a theory of idea as representation must

Be scuttled.

There are broad implications as well as an overall simplicity to the theory of idea as image. Where it serves a theory of meaning, it serves very well, as for example being noncircular; but where it fails, it fails completely. Therefore, the theory of ideas as images must be recorded in the book of philosophical misadventures. But, if the image must be left in that dusty tome, the ideational theory of meaning does not, as a consequence, have to be left there too—for Brand Blanshard has put forward a theory of idea, though not specifically in connection with a theory of meaning, which will serve the ideational theory of meaning quite well.

Blanshard's theory of idea is:

\[ \ldots \text{in briefest compass this: Thought in its essence is an attempt to attain, in the sense of achieving identity with, a special end of its own. The relation between idea and object must be conceived teleologically, as the relation of that which is partially realized to the same thing more fully realized. When we say that an idea is of an object, we are saying that the idea is a purpose which the object alone would actualize, a content informed by an impulse to become this object. Its nature is hence not fully intelligible except in the light of what it seeks to become. Mind, in taking thought, attempts to pass beyond its present experience to what it would be but is not yet, and so far as it has the thought of this end, it already is the end in posse. The idea is thus both identical with its object and different from it. It is identical in the sense in which anything that truly develops is identical with what it becomes. It is different in the sense in which any purpose partially realized is different from the same purpose realized wholly.} \]

\[ \text{Brand Blanshard, } \textit{The Nature of Thought} 2 \text{ vol. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940) 1:473.} \]
Blanshard's theory of idea is wide and deep, yet what is gained in this measure of taking it, is lost in the measure of simplicity and any commonsensical appeal which the theory of idea as image held. Yet what is lost in commonsense appeal, is gained in the appeal to reason. Blanshard's theory may be attacked from any of several directions, which he himself recognized and was careful to respond to. In as much as this essay is confined to a discussion of meaning, the examination of Blanshard's theory will be confined to the terms of a theory of meaning. In short, does the theory of idea put forward by Blanshard resolve the uncertainties adumbrated by the three definitive questions posed earlier?

The possibility of thought existing independently of language is answered with a resounding "yes" by Blanshard's theory of thought. Indeed, it would not be far off the mark to characterize the first 254 pages of *The Nature of Thought* as an argument supporting just this type of claim. From the outset Blanshard claims that, "The simplest form of thought is, by general admission, judgment; and perception in turn is the simplest form of this."7 His arguments that thought is a critical element of perception, cut a broad swath through both philosophy and psychology.

Blanshard finds support on the one hand through an analysis of perception from the philosopher's vantage point. Thus he notes that where sensations are simply

7Ibid., p. 51.
given, perceptions may be true or false, and the quality of being true or false is the distinctive trait of judgments. The optical illusion is a case in point; for most certainly the photons reflected from the image do not deceive the viewer; rather, due to the arrangement of the elements of the illusion, the viewer is led to make an error in perceptual judgment.

On the other hand, Blanshard has examined the work of psychologists and found confirmation of his position there, too. Blanshard argues that there is an inferential element in perception. Against this position some have argued persuasively that perception involves direct apprehension, rather than inference. Their position has certain experiments in psychology as the substance of their foundation. Even when their case seems strongest though, Blanshard finds good reasons for supposing that direct apprehension is not the unavoidable conclusion to be drawn from these experiments.

One such experiment involved subjects who gazed through a hole with one eye. The only features visible to them were an illuminated white wall and a vertically suspended thread. As the thread was gradually moved away from the subject, they detected its motion. The interesting fact is that there was no accompanying sensation of the thread growing more narrow as it moved away. Hence, some have claimed, there was no basis for inferring the motion of the thread and therefore its motion
was directly apprehended. Not so, says Blanshard:

I should have supposed that when one was looking at a thread with one eye, it would be far from easy to be sure whether the thread as sensed grew thinner or not, and that if it did, nothing would be easier than to overlook it. ¹ This indeed is the interpretation of the experiment offered by Jaensch and others; there was a sensory difference that passed unnoticed. Koffka replies that 'this removes the last vestige of plausibility from this theory. . .Since I cannot judge about something I am not aware of, the term judgment must have a different meaning from the ordinary one'; ² and it seems to him incredible that a judgment should be based on what is 'unnoticed, i.e., unexperienced.'³

¹To argue from changes in the retinal image would beg an important question as Koffka rightly points out.

²Ibid., pp. 86-7.

Blanshard makes three observations which seriously undermine Koffka's judgment. First, there is a difference between being unnoticed and inexperienced. As a particular instance, Blanshard cites breathing, which is certainly unnoticed most of the time, but it would be presumptuous to suppose that while unnoticed there had been no experience of the many sensations which accompany breathing. Secondly, Blanshard points out that the grounds of a judgment and what the judgment is about must be clearly distinguished. In terms of the experiment, the judgment about the motion of the thread, which the subjects were aware of, is very different from the grounds on which the subjects based that judgment. Sealing his case then, Blanshard finally observes the ubiquity of judgments about something when the

grounds of such judgments are not part of explicit awareness. For example, in interpersonal relationship it often happens that a judgment of character is formed when first meeting someone. Yet if pressed the person forming such a judgment cannot explain why that particular judgment was formed.

If Blanshard finds room for inference in the experiments which seem to suggest direct apprehension, his case in other experiments is strong indeed. In one such experiment apes were placed in a cage with a stick. Outside of the cage was food, but it was beyond the reach of the short stick which the ape had. However, within reach of the short stick, but outside of the cage, was a longer stick which could reach the food. Some apes would then put two and two together, as it were, and use the short stick to reach the long stick and in turn use the longer stick to get the food. Blanshard comments on this as follows:

We must suppose that as he contemplates the stick, it somehow presents itself to him in a new setting, with the short stick as a means to it, and it in turn as a means to the fruit. We need not say that there is any picture of this arrangement in his mind, or that there is anything at all in mind explicitly but the long stick that he sees; nor is it likely that without some part of the device actually before him, he ever manages to think of it. His thinking is undoubtedly thinking, but it is still anchored to sense; he cannot summon up and dismiss ideas independently of what the senses are pressing on him; his thought is perceptual thought.9

Blanshard's line of argument supports the idea that

thought is present even when language is not. Just as clearly he does not mean to exclude the kind of thought he finds in apes from humans; for he never supposes that such thought is explicit. He says for instance,

... the hue and cry against the old theory that perceptual process is quasi-syllogistic has been more vigorous than convincing. Of course the view that every time I pick up a pencil I am formulating a full-blown syllogism is absurd enough if it seems that premises and conclusion are distinctly and explicitly present. But have the holders of the inference theory ever believed that? What they have held, I take it, is this, that one can see on later reflection that three terms must have been implicitly present even though not singled out, and that the passage between them was effected in a way which, if the process had been explicit, we should have called syllogistic.  

At the same time that thought on the perceptual level is not explicit, neither is it so simple as to be rendered useless even for the most complex activities. Blanshard is careful to recognize the vast differences in capacity for thought between fish and apes, and apes and man. While thought at the perceptual level may involve nothing more complex than the judgment of how to get some fruit beyond one's reach, such thought may extend even into the most profound of human activities. Blanshard avers:

... there may be an astonishing contrast between one's authority in recognition, and one's helplessness in explicit thought. Saints are seldom distinguished as moral philosophers, yet their sense of what to do in a concrete case is probably more unerring; excellent artists have not infrequently made themselves ludicrous when they have tried to talk

10 Ibid., p. 89. On pages 95-96 Blanshard discriminates among several senses of the term "implicit" and describes his sense of the term as in, "One may be aware of something and use it as a ground without singling it out for full and specific attention."
about aesthetics.\textsuperscript{11}

Now, Blanshard's theory of idea is not so simple as to stop at thought at the perceptual level, because to stop there would fall far short of an adequate characterization of thought. His theory does include a discrimination between the tied idea and the free idea; i.e., ideas which are perceptually tied and ideas which are free from the restrictions of a presently given perception. It is the free idea which has the greatest affinity to language. Yet it would be a mistake to believe on account of this bicameral division of ideas that Blanshard's theory of idea presupposes a difference in principle between thought at the level of tied ideas and thought at the level of free ideas. In point of fact he states that

\begin{quote}
We have made no attempt to distinguish between an earlier use of ideas and the later making of judgment, for there really is no distinction; to have an idea is to judge from the very first, not explicitly or determinately, perhaps, but still to judge. . . . The growth of mind consists less in an addition of faculties and process than in a fuller and more explicit function of processes that are at work already.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Though Blanshard develops his theory of idea beyond the level of thought at the perceptual level, it may be safely reiterated that his theory leaves no doubt as to the independence of thought from language. Therefore the exploration of his theory in terms of the second question is in order: is it possible to call up appropriate ideas

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 250.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 542.
\end{flushright}
in association with specific meaning?

An inventory of several statements Blanshard has made indicate a positive answer to this question. Thus,

... a prism, once its way of diffracting light has been pointed out to a child, may always suggest this property when it appears later. But so may the word 'diffraction' suggest it; and thus whenever the child comes upon this word in his reading, or hears it in conversation, he is called upon to form the idea again.\textsuperscript{13}

The arrangement Blanshard has presented is clearly the relation required to yield a positive answer to the question. The relation envisaged is between a sensible quality and the discrete idea precipitated by the hearing of it. Just as some compound can be present in a solution, and the addition of some other compound cause it to precipitate out of the solution, so too, the word seems to Blanshard to precipitate the idea from the mists of the mind.

Much the same process can be characterized of the tied ideas which occur at the perceptual level. Blanshard adduces three elements present in the tied idea which serve as the springboard for free ideas. In his outline of these three elements a clear picture can be obtained of the fitness of such ideas in the contexts in which they occur. The three elements present are inference, discrimination, and background; all in their implicit state. Consider these elements in the following series of examples.

If one were to go into the kitchen for a late-night

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 545.
snack, and spy an orange in the fruit basket on the kitchen table, a series of implicit inferences might follow. The orange is sweet and juicy, it will quell one's rumbling stomach, and so forth. Even philosophers, considering the late-night hour, might not be aware of formulating such judgments--but that they are there and are judgments is witnessed to by the chagrin of discovering that one's wife has put a papier-maché orange in the fruit basket. In this case one has taken something at face value and found that behind the face was no personality at all! It may be said with some confidence that such judgments are distinct and appropriate to their context. What they are not, though, is explicit.

Discrimination is also present at the perceptual level. Of course discrimination in a sense is always present whenever judgment is present, for to take something as being a such-and-such is discriminating it from that which it is not. But the species of discrimination Blanshard wishes to isolate is of those ephemeral elements which make a thing or event what it is, and can be applied across a broad range of objects and states, e.g., space and time. Thus, "... we must admit that a child is already using the thought of time when at a certain hour he expects the dinner bell, when he tries to prevent the mention of bed-time, even when he cuts a corner in play."¹⁴

Yet Blanshard does not suppose that the child has

¹⁴Ibid., p. 524.
thought explicitly of time, or even could supply anything like an adequate definition if asked. What Blanshard says about space in this context illustrates the point. "We think space before we think of it, and we think of it in a matrix of irrelevancy long before we think of it pure."13 From Blanshard's examples it is clear that discrimination is present in perceptual thought. Indeed, such ideas are mastered out of practical necessity. So, once again these ideas remain implicit; the idea time is present but not the idea of time.

The third element, background, is related to the transformational character of past experience on present determination of thought. A river-wise steamboat pilot is not river-wise at birth. He learns to read the river over a period of time, perhaps reaching the point where he can pilot the boat and muse about the adventures of boys. If at some time he should leave the river and set quill to page, far from the river, to tell a tale of the adventures of boys, he would still be river-wise. In a very real sense, such a steamboat pilot sees the river differently from his passengers and indeed differently than he saw it himself when he first began to pilot. Further, whether on the river or off, his fund of river wisdom is available to him no matter what thoughts he happens to be entertaining. Blanshard summarizes his observations on background by saying, "We must thus admit a third kind of perceptual

15Ibid., p. 525.
idea, an idea that is present only in the form of a disposition.\textsuperscript{16}

Under the aegis of Blanshard's theory of thought, ideas, even at the level of perceptual thought, are not vague, indiscriminate or the results of happenstance. His line of argument suggests rather that they are determinate elements of thought, guiding action and perception consistent with their specific content.

This analysis of thought at the perceptual level is somewhat inadequate to the question of the capacity to call up appropriate ideas in association with specific meaning. Inasmuch as the inquiry is directed towards "calling up" appropriate ideas, its force is directed towards the capacity to render some idea explicit. What has been found on examination of Blanshard's theory of idea though, is that appropriate ideas may be present but not explicit. At this juncture then, a dialectical review of the terrain covered will prove helpful.

The independence of thought from language, the possibility of holding an appropriate idea in awareness, and the noncircularity of the word/idea relationship, are the problems against which the ideational theory of meaning is to be measured. The first two of these issues would be answered in a forthright manner by the theory of idea as image. Images exist independently of language and calling up an appropriate image is simply a matter of forming in

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 526.
explicit consciousness the image of a dog on hearing the term "dog." While there is no ambiguity in this account it is unfortunately an unworkable account. In Blanshard's theory of idea the hard and fast solution falls by the wayside. Thought exists independently of language to be sure, but one may have an appropriate idea (a distinct idea which functions effectively in context) and never entertain it explicitly. To this extent, and to this stage, Blanshard's theory of idea has answered the second question only in part; that is, by affirming the presence of distinct ideas. One of the principal differences between Blanshard and Locke on ideas, content aside, is that under Locke ideas have a single phase, namely the image. For Blanshard though, ideas have two principal phases, the implicit and the explicit. Accordingly then, answering the question of whether of the capacity to call up distinct ideas, whose presence is already affirmed, requires an examination of the second phase of thought in Blanshard's theory.

Thought comes into its patrimony when it is liberated from sensation. At this point it is able to range far from the confines of the given, and too, it becomes explicit thought. The proclivity of the free idea towards language was noted earlier; and the discussion of the capacity to call up an appropriate idea in association with specific meaning began with Blanshard's illustration of the word "diffraction" initiating a process in which the idea
'diffraction' is formed. But the relation between thought and language envisaged by Blanshard is not as simple as this characterization might lead one to believe. In an examination of that relationship not only will the second question be laid to rest, but the third, concerning the circularity of thought and language, as well.

In his discussion of language Blanshard leaves no doubt that thought and language mesh so well as to function as a single fabric. He says,

> It is true that a word is commonly learned by association with its object, and hence it may be supposed that when we now use words in thinking, we first form the thought of the object and this calls up the word associated with it. But the connection is far more intimate; the word and the definite meaning come together, just as sensation and meaning come together when we perceive. 17

Now, Blanshard in no sense wishes to identify idea and word, their coming together is just that—a mutual appearance.

The mutual appearance of thought and its expression is attributable to the means by which free ideas become fixed in thought. First, "... words do for the free idea what sensations do for the tied idea; they give it an anchorage in the sensible which prevents its immediately drifting off." 18 Secondly, Blanshard says,

> We have seen that in ordinary perceiving we use many ideas, of space, time, number, and so on, which are not as yet singled out from each other. If they are to be converted into free ideas, this singling out

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17 Ibid., p. 539.
18 Ibid., p. 538.
must be achieved. . . What is important is that the differences in the ideas, which at first we find it hard to grasp, should correspond to plain difference in sensation, which we find it easy to grasp." 19

According to Blanshard, conflict is the midwife of the free idea. Specifically, the conflict is between the facts of experience and perceptual expectations; and the facts of experience and felt needs. He does not characterize this process as a sufficient cause, for of course there are many creatures who experience the frustration of the defeat of perceptual expectation and most will never produce a free idea. Yet in man such conflicts do give rise to the free idea. Mark Twain wrote that a cat that sits on a hot stove lid will never sit on a hot stove lid again, but it will never sit on a cold one again either. 20 A child though, who is accustomed to banging on stove lids, but bangs on a hot one one day, might in his next encounter with a stove lid pause and consider it. The happy times spent banging away on the cold stove lid would be in contrast with the hot stove lid experience. Out of such a conflict the child might begin to, "... discriminate different features to which the rival ideas may be respectively attached." 21 Similarly, the conflict between present experience and felt need may give rise to discrete and explicit thought.

19 Ibid., p. 541.

20 Mark Twain, Following the Equator (Hartford, Conn.: The American Publishing Company, 1897) "Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar," Chap. 11.

21 Blanshard, Ibid., p. 529.
Significantly, for purposes of this essay, the birth of the free idea takes place in a non-linguistic matrix. In the linguistic matrix the free idea is captured, not created. From the tone and details of Blanshard's argument this conclusion is inevitable. This is not to claim that language cannot serve as an impetus for the development of free ideas. In such cases though, what the word provokes is an examination or reevaluation of a given experience or an already existing stock of ideas. The word becomes, in this sense, a verbal gesture pointing out where the attention should be directed. Thus, someone who has seen before the splash of colors produced by a diamond in the light, may look again when they hear an utterance like, "Note the diffraction of light by this diamond." At this point though, one may adduce that a certain mastery of language is already at work; one is building upon an established foundation.

A second point significant for purposes of this study, is that a free idea at its inception is to some degree explicit, definite, and independent. These are the three principal characteristics of free ideas which serve to distinguish them from the tied idea. Free ideas by definition are explicit and not restricted to what the senses are pressing on the mind; and conversely, tied ideas are implicit thought restricted to presently given sensation. The appearance of the three principal characteristics in the free idea is an appearance of
degree, and the development of each is to some extent independent of the other two. A child's idea of a flower might be quite explicit, but might also be virtually worthless to a botanist on account of its vagueness. Similarly, the child might think of flowers only when flowers are actually present, or his idea might be sufficiently independent of sensory cues that he can think of flowers at will.

One comment from The Nature of Thought will serve to secure the two aforementioned points. Reflecting on the experiments involving apes and their attempts to get fruit beyond their reach, Blanshard says, "That the ape in some cases actually does cross the line and use such ideas," (i.e., the free idea)

... is virtually certain,1 indeed, in the case last mentioned, if the ape, when he looked through the bars at the stick, formed a thought of the unseen fruit, and did not deal with it dispositionally through the fringe of perception, as we do with a pipe when we go for a match to light it, then he had already taken out his first papers in the republic of ideas. But though an ape does in moments attain to free ideas, his hold on them is tentative and wavering.22

1 See particularly the experiments in Ibid., pp. 279-82.

From this rumination the genesis and character of the free idea as outlined is clearly intimated. Whereas the presence of the free idea in the mind of the ape is

"tentative and wavering", in the mind of man the free idea is firmly entrenched. With the genesis and character of the free idea in mind, as well as the role played by language in capturing and fixing free ideas, an examination can be made of some statements Blanshard has made from the proper perspective.

If the mutual appearance of thought and its expression is coupled with Blanshard's affirmation that, "... we do not fully know what our idea is till we express it, and hence that idea and expression are indivisible,"23 then the stew really begins to boil. Given the tortuous path by which the present pass has been reached, one interpretation of the foregone statement which must be dismissed out of hand is that man does not entertain free ideas without expressing them; that failing the expression of a free idea man does not comprehend it.

People are occasionally surprised by what they have said, but they are not generally flabbergasted. A philosopher who sits down to write a scathing indictment of idealism is not going to have his thought revealed to him in the same sense that it will be a revelation to his readers. In Blanshard's statement a great deal of stress must be placed on the fact that we do not fully know our ideas until they are expressed. Here the proper sense of "fully" is the sense maximal explicitness. The expression of thought represents the upper limit of the explicitness

23Ibid., p. 540.
of thought, though not of course the upper limit of thought's precision. This critical difference between explicitness and precision must be kept in mind.

A vague statement can usually be made more precise. Take as examples: (a) "The trash stinks" and (b) "The trash smells like dimethylsulfoxide." The greater precision of statement (b) results from a more refined characterization of the smell which prompts the use of the word "stinks." The method of a more and more refined characterization is applicable to vague or ambiguous statements in general. Even (b) could be reformulated as (c) "The rotten potatoes in the trash smell like dimethylsulfoxide." As a statement approaches ever greater exactitude there is less and less room to question exactly what thought is being expressed by the statement. However, no amount of refinement on statement (a) can render the thought it expresses more explicit than it already is. If there is any room for improvements in the explicitness of (a), it lies in the force with which it is stated. A person with a cold may walk into a room and utter statement (a), or he may walk into a room in possession of the full powers of his proboscis and utter (a). He would be more aware of the smell in the later case than in the former. His thought of the smell would be more explicit. This change would be reflected in the first case by mumbling statement (a). In the second case, (a) might be forcefully exclaimed, perhaps with the addition of a hoot and a
wrinkled nose. Statement (a), like any statement however vague or precise, brings some idea to the awareness and by so doing effects a change in the state of the idea. The sense then in which "we do fully know what our idea is till we express it" is the sense in which a passage is effected in the state of an idea by the expression of it.

The passage of an idea from tied to free may be likened in some respects to the passage of the chrysalis from the dark chamber of the cocoon. When the hour draws nigh the chrysalis emerges, no longer chrysalis, but butterfly. The destiny of the caterpillar is revealed in a flutter of outstretched wings. The progeny of the butterfly will repeat the process, but the butterfly itself having once attained that state is fixed forever in that state. Unlike the butterfly, man's ideas may inherit their destiny as free ideas, but unless fixed there, may collapse again into the dark cocoon of the chrysalis. Hence, the indivisibility of an idea and its expression results from the fact that it is the expression which fixes the idea in a more or less permanent state. This is not an indivisibility in principal nor is it an indivisibility of identities. No, this is an indivisibility of practice. A free idea, having been fixed by some expression, is called-up by that expression.

As noted earlier in reference to the question of the capacity to call up an appropriate idea in association with a specific meaning, the presence of an appropriate idea is
an inevitable conclusion in Blanshard's theory of idea. It can now be answered whether people can call up such ideas. The answer is yes. But, as it turns out, one's use of words has that particular function. Locke was at pains to say that while people do not always have an image in mind when using words, i.e., explicitly present in consciousness, such images could be called-up. On Blanshard's theory though, whenever a person intelligently uses words, the idea is explicitly present and that presence is assured by the very use of words.

Blanshard's theory of idea answers the issue of circularity in a similar vein. By way of illustration consider a term such as "measurement." The term "measurement" helps fix and single out the idea 'measurement.' Thus, whenever we wish to ruminate on 'measurement,' "measurement" is the vehicle which brings the idea into awareness. Since on Blanshard's theory an idea is not any kind of representation, trying to form an image of something which accompanies "measurement" is worse than futile, for it is likely to be misleading. What prevents this explanation from collapsing into circularity at this point is the specific nature of ideas which Blanshard has put forward. Imagine a chemist at work in his laboratory. He picks up a beaker, walks to a nearby table, and pours some solution out of the beaker into a graduated cylinder. If he were to be interrupted in the middle of this process and asked what he was doing, he
might respond, "I am going to measure out 100 milliliters of this solution." However, if the stream of his awareness could be examined, like some kind of mental movie, one might only find a concern over the outcome of the experiment. The thought of measuring anything might be totally absent from his immediate, explicit consciousness. Yet, there is some sense in which the idea "measurement" is present, guiding his actions with elegant precision. When called upon to think explicitly of this idea though, he turns to "measurement" as naturally as a secretary would turn to the index "SCIENTISTS" to find a file on Albert Einstein.

The theory Blanshard proposes is of ideas which are not recognizable apart from language to the imagination, strictly speaking. They are however recognizable to the intellect apart from language. The meaning of "measurement" is the idea 'measurement,' and that idea is measurement in posse. The chrysalis of measurement is born in the cocoon of the mind, and its destiny is revealed in the stretching of a knotted cord.24

Familiarity with the image is perhaps universal and instantly recognizable. Familiarity with free ideas, the

24Blanshard's theory of idea has not remained unmodified since The Nature of Thought was first published in 1940. Inasmuch as these modifications do not significantly impact the terms in which the present study has developed, they have not been discussed. The interested reader is directed to the articles, "Reply to Mr. Harris" and "Reply to Mr. Bertocci" in Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed. The Philosophy of Brand Blanshard, The Library of Living Philosophers, vol. 15 (La Salle, Ill: Open Court, 1980).
recognition of them quite apart from the words which embody them, is of an altogether different order. If there is much hope at all in such an enterprise, the quest for the free idea, the hope lies in examining those cases in which an idea has come to light antecedently to any term expressing it. Blanshard observes the difficulties attending to the examination of free ideas by noting,

   . . . we have long been using such ideas before we begin to examine them for their own sakes, and then they have lost their first innocence. It is even hard to tell when a free idea has really appeared. The distinction between free and tied ideas, like other distinctions in mental growth, is one of degree. 25

Is there anyone who, going for a drink on a dog-day afternoon, would fill his glass to the brim and then add ice? Few would, simply because the addition of ice at the end of the process would cause the precious refreshment to overflow the glass and be wasted. So one day long ago, when the world was younger and many things were still nameless, Archimedes had a problem. His problem was to measure the volume of a crown without in any way defacing the crown. He was sorely vexed by this problem until he stepped into an overfilled tub. Eureka! An element of experience with which he was no doubt familiar, under the pressure of his problem, broke loose into a free idea. An idea, perhaps implicit in his every bathing experience, was singled out for full and explicit attention. He could not shout, "Displacement!" as he ran down the street, for of

course even if he had that word, it had not as yet been used to fix the idea which he did have. Obviously he must have had some words of explanation; but these could not have been new words, and their novel arrangement in sentences uttered for the very first time is no different in principle from the invention of a single term to capture an idea newly born in the world.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Rock solid refutations of philosophers of the caliber engaged with in the first part of this thesis are scarcely possible in a work of this scope. Yet when choices are to be made, some survey, however limited, ought to be undertaken. The inquiries launched into the positions of Russell, Wittgenstein, and Morris have been all too brief, but even this limited probing has produced results.

The position adopted by Russell is clearly problematic when considered from the perspective of Strawson's observations. In ordinary language situations words and expressions simply do not refer in the way Russell's theory dictate they ought to. Expressions may be used in many ways in countless situations. Sometimes expressions are used to refer and sometimes not; and even in those cases in which they are employed to mention something, there is occasionally a failure to refer which has nothing to do with any concealed existential claim of the expression.

Problems were also found by Chihara and Fodor in Wittgenstein's position. Wittgenstein believed that skepticism was the only alternative to his claims, but this was found not to be the case. Learning the meaning of
terms such as "gravitation" does not involve an appeal to criteria; and neither are falling apples simply correlated, as a contingency, with gravitation. There is at least one non-skeptical alternative to Wittgenstein's position, namely theoretical inference. Beyond this there are also consequences of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language which are, at best, extraordinary. That a person may be employing two different concepts of sleep when he says, "I was sleeping last night, and I see him sleeping now," certainly runs counter to what people typically believe about their concept of sleep.

In the final selection of alternative theories of meaning considered, Kattsoff found several problematic areas in the doctrines of Charles Morris. Where the stated objective of Morris was the elevation of semiotic to the level of empirical science, his actual methods leave this objective in a questionable position. Additionally, the special treatment of dispositions given by Morris jeopardized either his claims to have eliminated idea-like entities or his capacity to analyze as signs things widely acknowledged to be signs. In view of these difficulties it was concluded that Morris' theory is inadequate for the task he has assigned it.

With these problems in mind an examination was next undertaken of the ideational theory of meaning. The traditional statement of this theory as put forward by John Locke was found to be untenable. Locke's theory of idea as
image simply does not serve a theory of meaning. Images are too prolific and variable from person to person, and even within a single person, to serve as that factor which is more or less consistent in the meaning of words. However, the ideational theory of meaning is quite distinct from the particular theory of idea with which it is associated. In that spirit the ideational theory of meaning was reevaluated in terms of the theory of idea advocated by Brand Blanshard.

Blanshard's theory of idea was found to serve well the ideational theory of meaning. Three questions were asked of his theory of idea vis a vis a theory of meaning. All three questions were answered satisfactorily. The first question asked how reasonable it was to assume the independence of thought from language. The second question concerned the capacity to call up appropriate ideas in association with specific meaning. Finally, the third question dealt with the possibility of the circularity of word/idea association using Blanshard's theory of idea. The theory of idea proposed by Blanshard has as one of its consequences this: appropriate, specific ideas exist independently of language, and are clearly present and distinguishable from any signs which are used to stand for them.

Having said this much, the defensibility of this version of the ideational theory of meaning remains to be seen. In this respect there are at least four principal
lines of attack:

(1) Blanshard's theory of idea as such
(2) Inconsistencies between his theory of idea and the ideational theory of meaning
(3) Flaws in the reasoning by which the three questions earlier noted were answered, and
(4) The theory of meaning as proposed either poorly answers or else worsens some traditional questions which any theory of meaning ought to answer.

For the first line of attack Blanshard's own arguments are the best defense. Volume one of The Nature of Thought has been in print for some forty-eight years, and no outright flaws have been uncovered in it. This is a good omen, but philosophers are not fortune-tellers, and of course the present thesis cannot stand if Blanshard's theory of idea should fall. As for the second and third lines of attack, they have been the principal arena in which this thesis has worked itself out. In this respect this author is somewhat like a general who finds himself on the defensive. He makes the best preparations he can, certainly he fills every gap he sees, but he cannot anticipate every means of assault since the enemy is so numerous and crafty. As for the ultimate strength of his position, he must wait for the results of any and all actual assaults.

Some interesting possibilities suggest themselves immediately concerning the fourth line of attack. These
possibilities will be briefly touched upon here in order to indicate the value this version of the ideational theory might have. For example, a word, or something which is taken as a word, is meaningless if it is not a sign of any idea at all. Pseudosigns such as these are exemplified by the nonsense terms like "brillig," "mimsy," and "outgrabe" which occur in Lewis Carroll's poem "Jabberwocky." This might be taken as a definition of formal meaninglessness. There is also though, the possibility of a theoretical form of meaninglessness. That is, expressions such as "round square" may be judged meaningless on the grounds that that for which they are a putative mark are themselves incoherent. Thus, in order to be meaningful, some sensible mark must not only stand for some idea, but the idea for which it stands must also exhibit certain features; namely that it be appropriate, distinct, be internally consistent with itself, etc. Synonymy might be dealt with in a similar fashion. Words or expressions are formally synonymous when they are merely different marks which in fact stand for the same ideas. Words and expressions would be theoretically synonymous when they are used as such by some speaker. For example, a person might say, "The first branch on that tree . . . and if you look closely at that limb . . ." in which case "branch" and "limb" would be theoretically synonymous even though in

fact they are not formally synonymous.

But all of these hints and musings might raise more questions than they answer, and are touched upon only to indicate a possible response to the fourth line of attack. They are, alas, subjects of theses in their own right. The present thesis, with this vision of unexplored territory on the horizon, is now drawn to a close. The prospectus for the territory covered is one in which there may be much hard work yet to be done; as for the territory just glimpsed, it has its own perils even granting that the first part of the journey has been safely managed. So, at last, the end has been reached, and this thesis is now respectfully submitted to the faculty of the Department of Philosophy at Western Kentucky University, to the Graduate College, and to the wider community of philosophers in which it must find whatever place it may have.
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