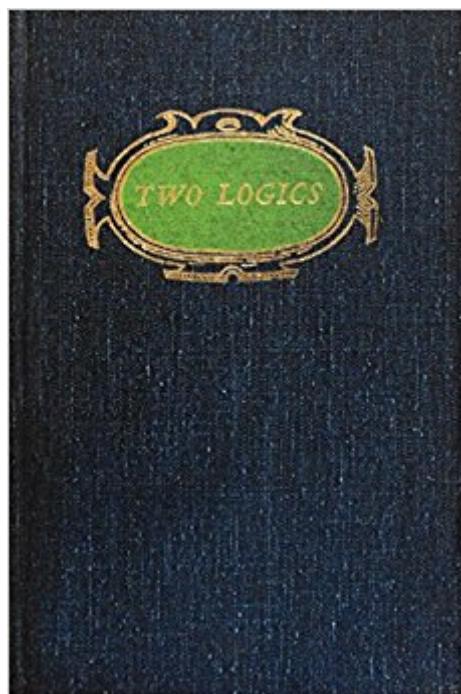


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Two Logics: The Conflict Between Classical And Neo-Analytic Philosophy



Synopsis

Introduction: the battle of the books renewed -- A logic that can't say what anything is -- Alternative logics: a what-logic and a relating-logic -- The what-statements of a what-logic: why they are not analytic truths -- The what-statements of a what-logic: why they are not synthetic truths -- The disabilities of a relating-logic: the fallacy of inverted intentionality -- The world as seen through a relating-logic -- A what-logic and its supposed commitment to essences and substantial forms -- Induction as conceived by a relating-logic and a what-logic -- The picture of the world derived from the inductions in a relating-logic -- Deductive explanation: a likely case study in surrealism? -- From deductive explanation in general to historical explanation in particular -- A short digression from history into ethics -- Conclusion: epilogue or epitaph?

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If one is to properly review Henry Veatch's Two Logics: The Conflict Between Classical and

Neo-Analytic Philosophy, it would perhaps be wise to either read and re-read the work so as to fully appreciate the argument or admit a singular reading results in something like an attempt to swallow a moderately sized pond (say, the Mediterranean Sea) in a gulp or two. Hyperbole aside, working through the book leaves the reader with a profound understanding that neo-analytic philosophy ("relating-logic", in Veatch's terms) is utterly incapable explaining what even the most basic things in the world are; at the same time, he will also find himself fully aware that the argument(s) proposed are themselves rooted in much deeper concepts. Perhaps that is as it should be. Analytic philosophy is over a century old and claims such logical giants as Kant, Hume, Frege, Russell, and the likes. We simply cannot think that anyone, even Veatch, could dispose of such a deeply thought out system in a mere 260 pages (however dense they may be). Still, the basic thrust of the book is well presented, defended, and taken: analytic philosophy may well explain how we can think about the relationships we find through observation, but it can never have anything to say on what anything actually is. And while that may be just fine for scientists--indeed, their craft should have little to concern with the nature of things and more with their interrelations--it would hardly pacify the normal human being living in a normal world. We "normal people" have the audacity to ask what things like love, justice, sunrises, and colds actually are. If anyone has ever spent time with young children, they are aware just how quickly and often the question "What's that?" is asked. Thus, Veatch would have his reader conclude that the old fashioned Aristotelian subject-predicate form (a "what-statement") of "x is such and such" is just as valid today as it was when Aristotle first asked "What's that?", and this regardless of what Russell et al. have to say. "Of course," we would likely reply, "For how else could we answer the question?" And the answer, which Veatch so forcefully argues, is that nothing else does in fact work. Modern logic, while it may have its uses in the sciences, is simply incapable of talking about what anything is, and incredibly, is mostly disinterested in the question. So why not leave science to relating-logicians and real life to us what-logicians? Apparently, the relating-logicians have decided that the rest of us only think we know what we are talking about, when in fact we don't, at least not on their understanding of things. And in light of this criticism, Veatch, pen in hand, takes takes even the imminent Kant to the woodshed. In general, he begins by examining the essentials of analytic philosophy as a whole, namely, analytic and synthetic statements. Concerning the former, Veatch demonstrates that analytic truths are not, as supposed, simply ones in which the predicate is involved in the subject, but further that analytic truths are nothing more than linguistic realities, completely independent, unrelated, and unimpressionable by the real world. That is, while analytic truths may be necessary truths in the sense that to deny them is to be self contradictory, they are certainly not necessary

truth about the reality. And so they, "in all strictness would appear able to be truths only about the concepts or the words that we use, and never about the things or objects which we use our words or concepts to signify. (87)" In this way, Veatch shows that what-statements cannot be reduced to analytic truths in a Kantian sense. But can they be reduced then to synthetic truths? Again, Veatch answers in the negative, for the simple reason that, by definition, synthetic truths are not necessary truths whereas what-statements are. Thus, what-statements are more than analytic truths, for they are statements about the real world, yet they are also more than synthetic truths, for they are about what a thing is and not its qualities or characteristics. In the process of this latter discussion, though, Veatch sets up a most useful tool that will recur later in the book, that is, the dual criteria of truth for a what-statement. On one hand, he notes that such statements are necessary in that to deny them would be self-contradictory. Additionally, though, he observes that such statements also require the usual procedures of verification and falsification. Put differently, in a what-statement, necessary truths are not sufficient to make them true about reality! They must be both "self-evident and empirically evident." (105) And on reflection, we believe this is exactly how things should be. From here, Veatch moves on to the heart of his book, or better, of his argument, namely, the fallacy of inverted intentionality. By appealing to the Scholastic distinction between first and second intentions, he argues that when the relating-logician actually attempts to make a statement about the real world, he goes further than confusing the use with the mention; instead, he has spoken about a first-level intention using the language and concepts of a second-level intention. And that, Veatch says, he simply may not do! By way of example (one among several), Veatch lays before the reader the distinction between men and the word by which we refer to the concept, "men." Now, in relating-logic, we can only speak of "men" and not men themselves, and so far as that goes, it is fine and well admitted. But the moment the relating-logician begins speaking of "men" as if men, he has, at least, confused use with mention. That is, since "men" is a purely linguistic concept with no bearing on reality--indeed, one in which reality has itself no bearing upon--then there can be no direct correlation between the two at all. But to this, the relating-logician will simply argue that it is not they who are confusing use with mention, but we simpletons who do so. For, when we wish to speak of men, we are actually speaking of "men," whatever else we may believe, and it is only our own error to think that we are talking about something in the real world. Here, we can only imagine the joy with which Veatch must have composed his rebuttal, for at long last he is able to point out what he sees to be the underlying problem in the whole enterprise of relating-logic. Far from dispelling the fallacy, he charges his opponents with committing the more subtle fallacy of inverted intentionality. In short, the argument is that, in defining truth statements as merely linguistic and thus

separating them from any connection to the real world, they have put the cart before the horse by implying that things are related by virtue of their linguistic rules, rather than the linguistic rules expressing the way in which things are actually related. Thus, to use Veatch's example, something cannot be both red and green at the same time, not because there is a grammatical rule to the tune that "red" and "green" are mutually exclusive, but just the opposite: there is a grammatical rule that "red" and "green" are mutually exclusive precisely because something cannot be both red and green at the same time! So he asks, "Take away the impossibility, and what would be the point of the rule?" (121) In this way, it is seen that the relating-logician actually is making statements of the first intention--that is, about how things really are--all while he thinks he is only referring to his grammatical rules. This, of course, puts the whole of relating-logic in quite a predicament. For it cannot claim to say anything about reality, and the moment it tries to, it immediately falls into an inverted intentionality. With this weapon crafted, defended, and refined, Veatch moves through the rest of the book dealing with neo-analytic philosophy with all the delicacy of trial-blazer wielding his faithful machete. Every time the relating-logician attempts to comment on anything Veatch would say regarding reality, he promptly finds himself cut down, the trail-blazer moving on easily from paragraph to paragraph. Thus, whether the relating-logician seeks to discuss induction, explanation, historical explanation, or even ethics--the remaining subjects in the book--he is immediately reminded that anything having to do with such realities is simply off-limits. Veatch is therefore perfectly content to allow relating-logic its full reign within the realm of its closed language game. But he will have nothing to do with the rules of those games somehow being insisted to apply to and determine the nature of the real world. With all this in mind, one can only marvel that Veatch did not insist on going just a bit further. Why, once you have the enemy encircled, not go in for the kill? But we aren't allowed to see that spectacle. Instead, he contents himself with relegating relating-logic to the realm of the hard sciences, while claiming the real world, especially the humanities, for what-logic. Never mind that science actually does wish to describe the way things actually are. But would it not be well to simply refine what-logic in light of the advances of relating-logic? Surely, what-logic is capable of speaking in the second intention just as well as the first; so what true advantage can relating-logic claim over our own? Perhaps this argument is simply outside of the scope of the book. The original purpose was simply to show that two different logics, in fact two different kinds of knowledge, exist, and one of those (what-logic) is just as useful now as it always has been. To this end, Veatch accomplished his goal magnificently. And in this view, the criticism offered may turn out to be no criticism at all. If we wanted him to do more, then we may simply be asking for another book (or at least an essay) on a related subject matter. Regardless, since we

know what we want, perhaps we are well equipped, thanks to our tour-guide and trail-blazer, to go and get it.(Loss of one star due only to reading difficulty)

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