

ON THE IMPLICIT

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Introduction

There are teachings of the Church which do not appear in Scripture — not in so many words, not in any similar words — nor in the early strata of tradition. In order to be able to maintain that these teachings have been revealed, and yet also maintain that divine public revelation closed with the age of the Apostles, theologians have made use of the notion of the implicit. Later teachings are said to have been implicit in earlier ones, indeed in something believed or done from the beginning.¹

Unfortunately, theological efforts to clarify implicitness, catalogue its modes, or explain its relation to explicitness, have not been very satisfactory. At odds with each other, these efforts have been increasingly outdated by progress in linguistics and philosophical analysis.² Catholic concern with the topic of doctrinal development has also taken new directions, to which the issue of implicitness has been less central. Nevertheless, the implicit remains a category which few theologians would be willing to abandon completely. The purpose of this essay is to examine afresh, in its full generality, the notion of implicit information.

The term 'information' will be used non-technically in what follows. No familiarity with Shannon's theory of information is presupposed, for example, since it covers ground

¹ A. Michel, "Explicite et implicite," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* V/2, s.v. A less tendentious summary is Herbert Hammans, *Die neueren katholischen Erklärungen der Dogmenentwicklung* (Essen, 1965), especially pp. 18-21 and 119-164. Also É. Dhanis, "Révélation explicite et implicite," *Gregorianum* 34 (1953): 187-237.

² Those who wish to come abreast of recent developments in these matters, especially those who have a philosophical interest in linguistic topics, will be well served by two recent textbooks from Cambridge: J. Lyons, *Semantics* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), 2 vols., and Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (1983).

quite remote from our topic. People often say that one or another kind of thing, especially a proposition, “conveys” information, or that a message “contains” it; and I shall say the same. These are convenient figures. They do not indicate that I think information is a commodity shipped in various amounts in various packages.

In limiting the topic to implicit information, I shall be dealing with one case of implicit belief (*fides implicita*) but setting aside two others.

The case with which I shall deal is the case where one stance of belief is said to contain a further stance of belief implicitly, because the object of the one is said to contain the object of the other informationally. It arises when a later dogma is said to have been believed implicitly by those in possession of an earlier dogma or practice, precisely because the later dogma itself was implicit as information in the earlier. For in this case there is a critical appeal to sub-surface information, made by some theologians and open to criticism by others.

By contrast, there are two cases of implicit belief which I set aside, because no question of such information arises. Here they are.

(1) An uneducated Catholic is said to have “implicit faith” because he or she wants to believe “whatever the Church teaches,” without knowing the details of it. This is simply a case of open-ended commitment. The pious but catechetically uninstructed person has an open-ended commitment to accept whatever he or she learns to be a teaching of the Church, but this commitment does not contain any of the as-yet-unlearned teachings themselves as implicit information. It rather contains the principle that there exist (or may come to exist) teachings which, if encountered, will have what it takes to trigger the commitment. It also contains an affective element. The unlearned but pious Catholic is in love with persons — God, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, a patron saint. When one is in love with someone, one is hungry for information.

(2) Men and women of the Old Testament, who expected God to visit and redeem His people through a Messiah, are said to have had “implicit faith” in Jesus. This case is more complicated than the first. It has an affective element: the pious Jews long for the promised deliverance and “watch” for signs that it is happening. It also has the element of open-ended commitment: the Jews are committed by covenant to wait upon the Lord and accept His future acts. But at bottom it is a case of their believing in a vaguely described future event, that is, expecting that a vague and general description (‘God visits and redeems His people’ etc.) would come true — would be fulfilled by some event; such belief *cannot exclude but does not include* further, more specific details of that event. Hence the event itself, when it comes, may be recognizable somehow (by signs, by grace) as the expectation’s fulfillment (so that a continuity of faith is secured), yet that vague description itself, with which the expectation was lived, does not in any sense “include” the specifics as implicit information. At best, one may say that the very stance of “having an expectation” includes the principle that specifics will be

forthcoming.

Of these two cases, the second is more fundamental, in that generically described, and hence partly unpredictable fulfillments of expectation are also involved in any open-ended commitment, whether it is a commitment to believe things or not. But the two cases are at opposite poles as to the nature of what is generically expected. In the first, one starts with beloved Names and Faces and hopes in vague terms for information about them. In the second, one starts with beloved information and hopes in vague terms for the Name and Face it promises.

An important reason why these cases came to be confused with the informational case is that theologians made ambiguous use of words like 'specification', 'determination', and 'object'. The particular fulfillment which a vague expectation actually got was called a determination of its object. Its status as a particular falling under the reference of a vague description was thereby lost. The talk shifted effortlessly to genus-and-species, and from thence to necessary inclusion: the determinations of an object are its species, the species are included necessarily in the genus, etc.³

With extraneous matters set aside, the topic of implicit information divides into three cases, depending on the nature of what is said to convey or *contain* the implicit information.

- In the first case, it is a sentence or proposition, *P*, which is said to contain the implicit information that *Q*.
- In the second case, it is rather someone's *act of saying P* in these or those circumstances which is said to contain something implicit.
- And in the third case, it is neither a proposition nor a speech-act but something more removed from language, such as a gesture, practice, or institution, which is said to contain it.

The three cases are quite different and present unequal levels of difficulty to the analyst.

³ For historical discussion of these topics, see J. Beumer, "Der theoretische Beitrag der Frühscholastik zum Problem des Dogmenfortschritts," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 74 (1952), 205-226; R. M. Schultes, *Fides implicita. Geschichte der Lehre von der fides implicita in der katholischen Theologie* (Regensburg, 1920).

PART ONE

The Implicit in Practices and Speech Acts

To begin with the easiest case: a gesture, practice, or non-verbal ritual is a case of standardized action. Such action contains information on two levels. One level is often called its “meaning.” I see a Buddhist monk in a temple ceremony, doing some-thing odd with an incense-stick; afterwards, I can ask him either:

What were you doing?

or

What did that gesture mean?

The two questions would be equivalent. Either would elicit an answer which describes the practice in terms of the standard intention with which one is supposed to do it, in its normal context of performance (in this case, in Buddhist worship, rather than in a play, rehearsal, spoof, or demonstration). In this same sense, the “meaning” of the practice of having a server hold a paten under the chin of each communicant is “to prevent particles of the Eucharist from falling to the ground.”

In close relation to this case, an institution or organization may be looked at as a set of practices. Its life consists of actions patterned and concerted into routines. Hence an institution may be said to have a similar sort of “meaning.” It emerges when, upon asking what the institution is, one gets an answer in terms of the purposes it exists to serve, especially those intended by its founder, or those nowadays suitably intended by one who joins it. Each office within an organization has such a “meaning,” too, consisting of the purposes of its exercise and thus suitably intended by its incumbent.

So, one level of information “contained” in practices and institutions is simply the information which will be given by a description disclosing the standard, intended ends

which these practices or institutions are ways of achieving.⁴ Calling this kind of information “implicit” in the gesture, practice, or institution is a little unusual, perhaps, but not likely to be controversial.

There is another level of information in them, however, which should also be called implicit, and which may be controversial. I refer to an implied *claim* to the effect that *those conditions obtain without which the practice or institution would be pointless, useless, or insincere* (either in general or on some occasion). Having a server hold a paten at Mass does not “mean” that the host is the sacred Body of Christ, but it would be a pointless practice (or an insincere mummery) unless the host were thought to fulfill some such condition, which would make preventing even small particles from falling a worthwhile thing to intend.

For those who carry on the practice, such point-giving conditions may lie near the surface of consciousness, as explicit beliefs associated with the practice's “meaning.” But they need not be conscious at all. Christian history seems to furnish cases of doctrinal development which involved a difficult search for the point of practices already lived. Thus, it was a primitive practice not to repeat Christian baptism; and this abstinence was pointless, surely, unless baptism's effect was felt to have some life-long quality; but it took some centuries before this point was brought out in the form of an explicit doctrine about the baptismal character.⁵ Also, the early practice of referring disputes to the Roman See, one might argue, was pointless unless that See enjoyed a primacy of jurisdiction — even though such a belief was not articulated (and certainly not in that vocabulary) in the early centuries of the Church's existence.⁶

These two levels of information, then, seem to yield an adequate account of what theologians can mean by saying that some claim is “implicit” in a gesture, practice, or institution. (Whether the theologians are right in what they say is, of course, another matter.)

⁴ By extension, even a natural institution like the family can be said to have a “meaning” of this kind, such as the goods or purposes which are achieved by family life, and which one therefore ought to intend (or at least ought to avoid excluding from one's intention) in discharging family affairs.

There is a similarity, of course, between what I am calling the “meaning” of practices/institutions and what was traditionally called their *finis operis*.

⁵ See standard accounts of the history of sacramental doctrine, such as Pierre Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments* (St. Louis: Herder, 1910).

⁶ A classic discussion is John Henry Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1878 ed.), chapter iv, section 3.

*

It is less quick work to say what is meant, in theology or in daily life, when the sort of gesture we call a speech-act is said to carry implicit information. Though some such acts are strictly ritualized or socially standardized, most are not. And in any case, speech-acts are more complicated in their capacity to carry information than other forms of human action.

Thanks to their oral or written product, speech-acts wear on their sleeve, so to speak, the meaning of that product, which is lexically coded information, presented under semantic conventions. This product is a sentence or proposition; I shall say that it is “imbedded,” as a cognate object, in the speech-act which produces it. But the present concern is with different information — the information conveyed by *performing* the act of producing that product. This performance, after all, is subject to its own conventions (not semantic but pragmatic ones, as linguists call them), thanks to which the performance can be seen as a certain sort of move, ploy, initiative, or artistry.

Admittedly, a line between the meaning of what is said and the meaning or point of saying it is not always easy to draw. Among linguists, the line between the fields of semantics and pragmatics is therefore debated; among philosophers, obscured.⁷ As the distinction is essential to my purposes in this essay, I shall take a moment to defend it.

To see that a speech-act's performance carries a pragmatic “meaning” of its own, distinct from (but not independent of) the semantic meaning of its linguistic product, consider just two examples.

- (1) A colleague asks me abruptly one morning,
“Did you put on that tie voluntarily?”

The words he has said do not themselves mean that my neckwear is incongruous (Gilbert Ryle to the contrary), but the fact that he has said them stings me to rejoin,

- “Why? What's the matter with it?”

I respond not to his question in its verbal tenor but to the fact that his asking it would be pointless, so far as I can see, unless he thought my tie reprehensible.

(2) Can a consistent atheist curse? The curse-formula, ‘God d—n it!’, doesn't exactly assert that God exists, but it presupposes that He does, in that, semantically, the formula

⁷ Levinson, *Pragmatics*, pp. 1-35. Both Gilbert Ryle, “Ordinary Language,” and J. L. Austin, “A Plea for Excuses,” show a strong tendency to collapse semantic and pragmatic meanings together, under the ambiguous slogan that meaning is “use.” Their two essays, otherwise priceless, are reprinted in V. C. Chappell, ed., *Ordinary Language* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964). Ryle's work first appeared in *The Philosophical Review* 62 (1953); Austin's, in vol. 57 of the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, after which it was printed again in his *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford, 1961).

calls upon an agent called “God” to do something. A non-existent cannot count as an agent. Therefore, a consistent atheist ought not to utter such a formula. But by social convention, the performance of uttering curse-formulas of this kind is simply a way of expressing keen displeasure (a sinful way of doing so, in the opinion of most non-atheists, but leave that aside). The social convention which assigns meaning to the performance of the act, and hence is pragmatic, permits a consistent atheist to curse, while the semantic convention, which assigns meaning to the terms of the curse-formula, forbids him to do so. Therefore it is clear that the two conventions (and the two kinds of meaning) are distinct. Granted, they are not independent. The semantic meaning of ‘God d—n it!’ is what makes it usable as an expression of displeasure. But they are distinct (and hence it is a nice question which one prevails, when they conflict).

Now, there is more to a speech-act than its sheer occurrence plus its said (or written) product. There is also the manner of its performance (in a harsh tone, in stilted diction, in a foreign accent, in falsetto, in allusion) and the timing or placement of its performance (abruptly, incongruously, late in the game, early in the game, as a prelude, climax, afterthought, or repetition, in response, in symmetry, in antithesis) among the relevant set of previous speech-acts and other circumstances. To appreciate the differences introduced by these factors, consider the following trilogy.

- A metro-bus is approaching the Pentagon on a quite pleasant day. A stranger sitting adjacent on the bus turns to me and says in a normal tone, “Nice weather today.” What he has said (the product) does not mean, “I wouldn’t mind starting a conversation with you,” but the *fact* that he has said it in this setting carries this meaning, by convention, as a pragmatic implication (among many others, *e.g.*, that the stranger thinks the current weather agreeable, expects me to share his view, supposes I understand English, *etc.*).

- But now suppose I have gotten off the bus at the Pentagon and that I am a journalist here to interview an assistant Under-Secretary of Defense about European troop deployments; he, after an especially touchy question, replies in an arch tone, “Nice weather today.” This time the performance of saying these words “means” that my question is not to be answered, thanks to another convention by which a sudden shift to the topic of the weather is a signal to drop the previous topic.

- And now suppose that a few minutes later the same assistant Under-Secretary goes to the Capitol, to be interrogated on the same subject by the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. This time the Under-Secretary’s act of saying, in response to the same question, in an even and determined tone, “Nice weather today,” is by the same convention (but in the changed circumstances) recognizable as a defiance, a refusal of the Executive to cooperate with Congress.

Thus, in these three cases, performances of the same behavior (namely, the behavior of producing linguistic products which are sentence-tokens of the same sentence-type and which also happen to convey the “same proposition,” if the weather remained constant all

morning) acquire *as performances* a different pragmatic “meaning,” including a different “point,” in their different circumstances and modes of rendition.

The present concern is to see whether the distinction between “explicit” and “implicit” can be drawn within this meaning conveyed by the performance itself. I shall argue that it can, and that the clue to where to draw the line emerges if one looks for another element (not the proposition) common to the three cases. The “point” of the performance, as was just said, was not common to them. So what other common element is there? It is something which I wish to call the “explicit pragmatic meaning” of a speech-act. Parallel to what I called the “meaning” of a gesture (as opposed to its point), it is tied to the overt linguistic behavior of saying the same words in all three cases. To develop this idea, let us return to the idea of “standard intention,” which was invoked in discussing gestures and practices.

The explicit in speech acts

A speech-act is an act of saying something. Its explicit pragmatic meaning will be a *part* of the standard intention with which one is supposed to do that act. One may borrow from action theory the fact that an intention normally embraces two parts, so to speak: an end and a means. The means is ordered to the end as a way of achieving it. So it is typically a performance of some kind on the part of the agent. In the case at hand, the performance of *saying something* is chosen as the means — whether it be ordered to a conversational end (to start a chat, contribute to one, change its direction), a social end (to please a friend, make an acquaintance, annoy an enemy, keep the party rolling), an argumentative end (to make a point, challenge one, clarify it, amend it, concede it, refute it), a political end (to persuade opponents, frame the issue, confuse the issue, “put the cat among the pigeons”), a literary end (to achieve a form, round out a period, set up a metaphor, pack in an allusion), or whatever. When a stranger sits next to one on the bus, turns, and observes nonchalantly, “Nice weather today,” *part* of the standard intention with which he is supposed to do that is a social or conversational end (to signal that he wouldn't mind having a conversation), but this end is not the part in which I am now interested; I wish to focus rather on the means part of this standard intention, because this is the part of the act's meaning which the performance of the act bears “upon its face,” *explicitly*, in its very capacity as a means. In other words, if one's phatic or graphic behavior is one of producing the sentence *S*, then, in baldest terms, what I propose to call the explicit pragmatic meaning of one's act will be TO SAY *S* or TO COMMUNICATE *S*.

One should also borrow from action theory, however, the fact that ‘end’ and ‘means’ are elastic and movable terms. What stands as a means *vis-à-vis* some ulterior end can switch roles and be taken as an end in its own right, so that towards the achieving of it another and more immediate “means” can be chosen. One thus gets chains of intention like this:

[I contract my finger] in order to [squeeze the trigger] in order to [fire the gun] in order

to [shoot the rabbit] in order to [have some dinner] in order to [live well] in order to
 . . .

Exactly where along that chain one wants to draw one's main caesura, so to speak, between what one thinks of as one's means and what one thinks of as one's *immediate* end is not always the same. It seems to vary with the context in which one poses to oneself the means/end question. Commonly, I should draw the main caesura between shooting the gun and killing the rabbit, because everything previous to the former is just mechanically involved in "firing a gun," and everything subsequent to shooting the rabbit can be viewed as a further description of what the achievement means to me. But other contexts are possible. When one is in the first, blundering stages of learning to shoot, for instance, it is natural to think of the finger pressure as the means to the desired end of getting the apparatus to go off, beyond which the death of the rabbit might appear as an ulterior end for which one had hardly dared hope.

Matters are the same, and worse, with speech acts. Consider a chain like this:

[I pronounce syllables in a certain physical way at this time] in order to [say *S* in a French accent upon the heels of Jones's remark] in order to [ask the rhetorical question which *S* conveys as a response to Jones's last point and as a playful comment on Jones's Gallic sympathies] in order to [contribute charmingly to the conversation] in order to [keep up the conviviality of the moment and enhance my standing with the company] in order to [win and keep friends] . . .

Again, where one puts the main caesura between means and immediate end seems to vary with one's point of view as an agent, or perhaps with one's mode of analysis.

Suppose we take the point of view that what really counts as one's means in a case like this must be something which one can literally "do." Is "asking a rhetorical question" something I literally do — or is it a construal of what I do, something implicit by prag-matic convention in the fact that my question would be pointless, in the circumstances, if construed as a straight-forward request for information? Is "asking a question" some-thing I literally do — or is it again a construal, something implicit by grammatical con-ventions in the fact that I combine words in a certain syntax? Is "combining words" something I literally do — or is it, too, a construal, implicit by fixed conventions in the fact that I pronounce syllables in a certain physical way?

In everyday use, the verb `do' is elastic enough to cover all of these links in the chain of intention, and that fact poses a difficulty for the theorist. Perhaps there is a deadly literal sense of `do' in which all we ever do in a speech act is produce noises. But if we push matters that far, we lose sight of our topic. The noise-making sense of `do' lies on a level of brute facticity on which the very ideas of linguistic communication or speech-action cannot be formulated. One has to climb up to a less brute level of facts in order to grasp what we intend to do, and do "do," when we say something. The explicit prag-matic meaning of a

speech act must be taken to lie on a less than totally brute level.

But how *unbrute* may the explicit be? That is what is hard to say. There is a very fuzzy line between the part of pragmatic meaning which belongs to language-competence and the part which lies beyond that and belongs to social sophistication. One does not want “explicit” pragmatic meaning to wander across that line, because it should be a meaning even rubes can gather. The following remarks will take a conservative approach.

It was suggested above that, when one says *S*, the explicit pragmatic meaning of one's act is, in baldest terms, TO SAY OR COMMUNICATE *S*. Fuller descriptions become available when one takes into account the sentence-structure of *S*, the seeing of which is a basic part of language-competence (well short of social sophistication) and thanks to which the means part of the standard intention will be TO STATE *S*, TO ASK *S*, or TO ISSUE THE COMMAND *S*. More descriptions become available when one takes into account the more obvious manners of saying *S*, thanks to which the means part of the intention will be TO SHOUT *S* or whisper it, TO SING-SONG *S* or issue it in a normal tone, TO ASSERT *S* BOLDLY or suggest it with hesitation, TO RATTLE *S* OFF or drag it out. Still different descriptions become available when one takes into account the placement of the act in the series of its predecessors (*e.g.* TO REPEAT *S*). I think we can allow all of these to be explicit.

Enormously many further ways of describing speech-acts seem to include information about their standard end or the speaker's particular end. These descriptions go beyond the act's explicit meaning; they serve rather to reveal its “point,” which is no longer something explicit in the act's performance but something we have to use pragmatic conventions (which may be local, refined, or for some other reason not known to everyone) to infer from its performance — something implicit. This is why the point is often lost on children, foreigners, and boors.

The implicit in speech acts

One is thus returned to the real topic of interest in these pages: that which is *implicit* in speech-acts, in the fact, manner, and placement of their performance. My remarks on this subject, now that I have finally gotten to it, will be easier to follow, if I start by laying down at least a sloppy proposal for a definition. I propose that what a speech-act contains “implicitly” is just the *claim* that *those conditions obtain without which the performance of the act, including its manner and placement, would be pointless or contrary to the conventions of honest conduct* (either in general or on this occasion).

Notice first of all that this proposal builds upon the notion of explicit pragmatic meaning. That which has or lacks point is precisely a thing like ASSERTING *S*, SHOUTING *S*, REPEATING *S*.

Notice secondly that the proposal centers upon the notion of point, which may wander at liberty across the line between language-competence and social (not to mention literary) skill. For the “point” may be any end which can be figured out on the basis of (which

includes the conscious flouting of) conventions (linguistic, social, or artistic) governing the saying of *S* in the manner exhibited in the circumstances at hand. When one sits down next to a stranger, a convention governing the act of making remarks about the weather allows one to figure out that an offer to start a conversation is being made, when the stranger makes an observation on that subject; the convention makes that offer a recognizable end of so observing. By contrast, in the same circumstances, there is no convention governing an act of saying something like this: "My niece is looking for a husband." Confronted by such an opening declaration, one is disconcerted; one sees what I have been calling the "explicit pragmatic meaning" of the act, but one is at a loss to see the end; the pointlessness of blurting out such a sentence to a perfect stranger leads one to regard the speaker with suspicion. Is he unhinged?

Notice thirdly that the proposal uses the word 'point' in preference to the word 'end' in order to avoid confusion with the *internal* intention of the speaker. Perhaps the stranger who sat next to me on the bus and praised the weather didn't actually intend (inwardly intent) to signal a willingness to converse. He thought I was his contact in an espionage operation and was using words pre-arranged for that purpose. Or perhaps he spoke only out of a grudging, niggardly politeness, as I shall discover if I try to follow up. Perhaps the stranger who started suddenly talking about his niece had precisely a convivial intent but happened to be, like many people consumed by their private sorrows, inept. And perhaps the colleague who asked me whether I had put on my tie voluntarily had no aesthetic objection to the garment, but harbored the secret intention to test Ryle's theory of the meaning of 'voluntary'.⁸

Let me add a further remark about this difference between the "point" of saying something and the speaker's actual intention in saying it. Those of us who have had experience with college students and other semi-literate persons have seen abundant examples of the difference. The speaker's intention is often in conflict with the dictionary meaning of what he or she says, hence necessarily in conflict with the normal point of *saying* what he or she says.

"I'm afraid I must be reticent on that subject," says the co-ed.

The implication is that she has some reason to show taciturnity. Perhaps she has a quiet personality, or a sore throat. Perhaps the subject is painful to her, or its airing would betray a confidence. Otherwise there is no point in announcing a commitment to reticence. But it turns out to be the case, all too often, that the student intended nothing of the kind. She supposed that 'reticent' was a synonym of 'hesitant'. She meant to imply only that her

⁸ What was discussed traditionally under the odd label of 'external intention' has much affinity with the things I have called explicit pragmatic meaning and "point." Chapter vii in Pourrat's work (above, note 2) details an interesting controversy over external intention in the 16th century.

opinions were unformed on the subject — a condition consistent with volubility.

In terms of action theory, we should have to say that there was a conflict (not exactly between her intention and her performance, as in slips of the tongue, but) between the performance *required* to execute her intention and the performance she believed would execute it: the speech-act which she intended to perform (and thought she was performing [the act of saying that she had to be hesitant]) was thus not the act for which she turned in a performance. Whereupon it is not surprising that the implicit content of the latter should differ from what *would* have been implicit, if she had performed what she ought.

The moral to be drawn, it seems to me, is that speaker-intention cannot take first place in an account of what is “implicit” in speech acts. The primary place belongs rather to the body of facts and conventions which objectively give “point” to saying this or that. In second place, however, as a conscious using and playing upon such facts and conventions, speaker-intention has great importance. Clues to this intention are what we use to decide whether or not some remark was a “knowing” one: a studied insult, a deliberate parody, a conscious *double-entendre*, an unobtrusive hint.

Fourthly, notice that the proposed definition ends with a real alternative; ‘pointless’ and ‘contrary to the conventions of honest conduct’ are anything but synonymous expressions. Saying what one knows to be false, or what one expects will mislead, is often not pointless at all; but it is usually contrary to the conventions of honest conduct.

Just usually? My caution is explained by the case of mental reservation, which requires one to pay attention to the kinds of situations in which speech-acts occur. Perhaps the most common kind (for those of us who are not “big people” in the world) is a situation of straight-forward cooperation. The speaker is acting *in propria persona* (not in an official capacity, not as a character in a play, not even as a defender of his own worldly interests); the speaker is just “being himself” and acting for some mutual benefit with his audience or addressee (whether it be a very informal, unfocused benefit, such as passing the time agreeably, or a highly specific one). In that kind of situation, a speech act whose explicit pragmatic meaning is TO ASSERT *S* (and not just to suggest it) would be pointless unless (and hence carries the implication that) the speaker really thinks *S* is true. The act’s point and its honesty hang together. But there is another kind of situation, also common enough, where the speaker and his audience or addressee are on an adversarial footing. In that kind of situation, a speech act whose explicit meaning is to ASSERT *S* would rather be pointless unless (and hence carries the different implication that) the speaker thinks that *S* serves his purposes, puts his case in an advantageous light, deflects potential lines of attack, withholds aid and comfort from the enemy, *etc.* In the adversarial situation, then, since saying *S* no longer carries the implication that one thinks it straightforwardly true, it is more difficult to determine whether the conventions of honest conduct are being broken (unless the speaker is put under oath), and the act’s point is largely independent of its honesty.

Fifth and finally, one may notice that the definition does not require that the speaker or

author be aware of all the point-giving conditions which he is fulfilling by saying what he says. One may poetize inadvertently; an off-the-cuff remark may become the “perfect note” on which to end the discussion. More important is the case of artistic “point” in literature. Critics find in an author's work depths of meaning and elegances of design which the writer himself may not have planned or noticed. The proposed definition gives blanket permission for exegetes and literary critics to press the questions dear to them: ‘Why does he choose exactly this word here?’, ‘Why does she work the theme of *ennui* into the Prologue?’, ‘Why is this incident narrated in this place?’ ‘Why are the topics taken up in just this order?’ *etc.* The author does not have to have harboured an answer in order for these questions to be rightly pressed. How *far* they ought to be pressed is another matter. The nature of the genre at hand, the quality of the author's talent, and the critic's own good judgment must answer that.

Theological examples of speech-act implicitness, of course, abound. ‘Your sins are forgiven’ doesn't mean semantically that the speaker has divine authority, but the fact that Jesus said it to the paralytic carried this pragmatic implication for certain of his Jewish listeners (Mark 2:1-12). An historic and hotly controversial example is John 15:26, where Christ describes the Paraclete as “the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father.” According to Patriarch Photius the Great, the fact that the divine Teacher said only this much — the Teacher whose very mission was to reveal the Trinity — carried the implication that the Spirit does not also proceed from the Son.⁹ Another controversial example is the address of Jesus to John and Mary at the foot of the Cross: “Woman, behold thy son;” “Behold thy mother” (Jn 19:26-27). Was the point a practical provision of elder-care or a solemn designation of the Virgin as Mother of the Church?

More generally, my fifth remark, about authorship, artistic point and literary criticism, illuminates a peculiar aspect of religious exegesis. The hypothesis of a divine Author, responsible for the whole body and design of canonical Scripture, presents the religious exegete with an Author of limitless talent Who is nevertheless orchestrating the finite talents of human authors. The result must be an *Opus* open to conflicting standards of interpretation.

■ By one standard, it is a plurality of human products, expressing human authorial intentions in a diachronic order (a long history) of literary acts, each of whose “point” ought to be accessible through historico-critical methods.

■ By a second standard, it is one divine product, expressing divine authorial intentions

⁹ St. Photios, *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Studson Publishers, 1983), p. 71. Aquinas acknowledges the force of this sort of argument by making it the first of the objections which he will face in *ST* 1, q. 36, a. 2.

in a synchronic order of literary acts.

An exegete working by the first standard simply does not confront the same “critical object” as an exegete working by the second.¹⁰ An exegete working by the first standard can use other literary experience to judge how far to “press” his text for meaning; an exegete working by the second, cannot. For with God so many things are possible, that even the methods of Alexandrian exegesis could yield what He intended. Both standards now seem to be admitted in Roman Catholic circles; but as the terms of their co-existence (a hermeneutical *détente*?) are still under negotiation, I shall withhold further comment.

¹⁰ For the important concept of “critical object,” see Mortimer R. Kadish, *Reason and Controversy in the Arts* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1968).

PART TWO

The Implicit in Propositions

Chapter 1

What Counts as a Proposition

There remains the case where information is said to be implicit in a natural-language sentence or proposition itself, which is a product of speech-action — a product distinct (but not necessarily separated) from the speech-act in which it is imbedded. It is here, I believe, that the greatest philosophical difficulties lie.

Not the least of them is the antecedent difficulty of saying what one means by a proposition. The following remarks may be useful as a guide to this featureless (because over-trodden) terrain.

'Proposition' and 'sentence' are terms which are usually interchangeable in everyday life — a fact which, despite its vulgarity, ought not to be forgotten. For since it is only in a specialized use that 'sentence' and 'proposition' split apart as contrasting terms, they ought to denote, anterior to that split, things having something important in common. And this seems to be the case. Both sentences and propositions are somehow things-which-mean, since to understand either, or understand the one *via* the other, is to know "what it means." Both are things which somehow get a truth-value, since 'true' and 'false' are evaluations of either, or of one *via* the other, and I can often know what either means without knowing its truth-value. Against this common background, the specialized talk of propositions arises where there is a need to distinguish something sentence-like from something that is "merely" a sentence. The beginning of wisdom hereabouts is to recognize that more than one such need arises.

Sentence vs. proposition within *la langue*

When I encounter sentences of a language I do not understand, such as Tagalog, I experience them as mere strings of marks or sounds. So considered, a sentence is called uninterpreted. Hardly ever, and only with great difficulty, can I experience in that purely

physical way the sentences of natural languages I do understand. For them, I have internalized a system of interpretation which automatically orders the marks or sounds I encounter to “what they mean.” This system, proper to each language or dialect, operates on several levels at once.

- It makes a selection from an array of periods (so as to bring archaic rules into play or current ones).

- For that period, on a morphological level, the system's rules group marks or phonemes into word-building and word-relating functors: stems, prefixes, suffixes, infixes, declensional elements, conjugational elements, adverb-makers, conjunctions, articles, etc.; and these in turn are grouped syntactically. So considered, a sentence is called “parsed.”

- Then, on a semantic level belonging to the same period, the system assigns to the formed elements or “terms” of the sentence — “words” and “phrases” forming “subject” and “predicate” — some standard senses (in their descriptive or predicate capacity) and standard ranges of designation (in their referring or subject capacity) — the sort of information that appears in dictionaries and in a competent speaker's “feel” for how a word or construction might be (or might have been) used.¹¹ So considered — I mean considered on this first semantic level — a sentence may be called minimally interpreted.

It is crucial to note that, when there is more than one standard sense or range of

¹¹ There is a shade of difference between designation and reference, well explained by Lyons (see above, page 5, note 2), which need not concern us at present. What matters is the looser distinction between sense and reference as classically stated by Gottlob Frege. See “On Sense and Reference” in Peter Geach and Max Black, eds., *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege* (Oxford, 1970), 56-78.

The role of sense and reference in sentence-structures is a complicated topic, because there is more than one kind of structure. But in a simple and common kind of case, the effect of putting a subject-phrase **s** (e.g. ‘the cat’) and a predicate-phrase **F** (like ‘on the mat’) together into a sentence (‘The cat is on the mat’) is, very roughly, to apply a sense of **F** (“resting on a flat cushion or floor covering” or perhaps “about to lose a fight”) to a referent of **s** (this feline, perhaps, or that black boxer over there). Some entity that **s** might stand for is thereby described as **F**-ish in one of the senses of **F**. The phrase **s** may also have descriptive force of its own (as in our example); when it does, this force limits the range of what **s** may refer to and of what **F** through **s** is being applied to. The force of the sentence is not just that something is being called **F**-ish but that something falling in the range of the **s**-ish is being called **F**-ish.

The abstract language system itself includes a structure of syntactical categories which requires a combination of **s** and **F** to be grammatically tolerable. ‘Tree the of but is’ will not wash. But in the natural languages, at least, the system does not include a structure of ontological categories. Nothing abstractly linguistic requires the range of **s** to be ontologically compatible with the descriptive force of **F**. That is why the natural languages allow those sentences to arise which shock us out of stock descriptive habits — living metaphors. Because the shock is in us, not in the system, however, one can say no more about metaphors at this stage. They will return below.

designation assigned to the terms (as there often is), the minimally interpreted sentence will offer a collection of “likely” readings surrounded by a fuzzy-edged penumbra of remoter possibilities. As a convenience (and not entirely as a convenient fiction), we can think of this offering as a disjunction. For example, the sentence-type,

‘He is rather green’,

as minimally interpreted, offers in current English the (at least) three-part disjunction,

‘He is rather green-colored, or he is rather envious, or he is rather inexperienced . . .’

How much ambiguity exists (how many disjuncts the system posits) at the minimum level of interpretation depends upon the period selected (if the system selects no period, there may be many more disjuncts, some now obsolete or archaic) and upon the structure and wording of the sentence-type in question. Ambiguity decreases in sentences so worded that their several parts, as minimally interpreted, dis-ambiguate one another. Thus, in

‘He is rather green at log-rolling on this kind of issue’,

the mention of a skill dis-ambiguates ‘green’, and the mention of issues dis-ambiguates ‘log-rolling’. Thus it is on this level that a language itself (*la langue*) begins to emerge as a matrix of possible structures, each of which is a sentence-type minimally interpreted. These latter make a first candidate for the “proposition,” as opposed to the merely parsed or uninterpreted “sentence.”

Next, one can use a relation, sameness-of-minimal-interpretation, to form equivalence classes of these sentence-types — classes whose members may be drawn from any language; and each such class forms a second candidate for the honor of being a proposition.

Out of each such class, furthermore, one can select a representative sentence, which (still under minimal interpretation) seems to say with ideal completeness what any member of its class says; and this representative may figure as a third candidate. Thus the disjunctive sentence exhibited above would ideally represent (to speakers of current English) the equivalence class (under minimal interpretation) of which ‘He is rather green’ is a member, and the translations of this disjunctive sentence into other languages would ideally represent the same class — I mean the class to which the *English* ‘He is rather green’ belongs — to their speakers.

To be sure, none of these candidates is very familiar. One prefers to think of propositions as being more definite claims, fixed in their truth or falsity. Minimally interpreted sentences and classes of such sentences usually fail to satisfy these preferences. Still, it will emerge that there is a use for them.

Sentence vs. proposition in *la parole*

More congenial and more popular candidates for propositionhood arise, when a lin-

guistic system ceases to be looked at in this highly abstract way and begins instead to be thought of as a sub-system imbedded within a socio-cultural community of users of the language and its sentence-structures.¹² Within this larger system, actual occasions of use make *contexts* emerge, and minimally interpreted sentence-types are used in all sorts of context-supported ways, some standard or conventional, some highly creative, so that *statements* emerge.¹³

What the context needs to provide, in order to turn a minimally interpreted sentence-type into something amounting to a statement, that is, into something which can be evaluated for truth or falsity, depends again upon the structure and wording of that sentence-type. Some of them seem to need nothing but what standard rules of the language itself already provide. Thus,

`As of June 13, 1983, radio station WETA in Washington, D.C., broadcasts at 91.5 on the FM dial'

is as clear in sense and reference as it can be, provided only that what is going on is not some sort of code but current standard English; it is a statement already in what may be

¹² Ryle, in the essay cited above (page 11, note 4), conducts a vivid polemic against all talk of "using" a sentence. One uses words to make a sentence, as one uses ingredients to make a cake. Each ingredient has a stock use, not the sentence (or the cake). Perhaps there is a strong sense of 'have a use' in which Ryle is right. If so, it is irrelevant to mine. In my sense, one can use a thing which has no use. Here is a garden weed. It has no use. I paste it in the middle of my *avant-garde* collage. I used it.

¹³ The branch of linguistics which concentrates on the use which users make of sentences is again pragmatics. It is not at all the case that we leave pragmatics behind, then, when we turn from speech-acts to propositions, even though the topic of propositions belongs traditionally to semantics. For pragmatic considerations may be essential in determining the full semantics of a sentence-type as actually used on some occasion. Yet that full semantics (or "full interpretation," as I shall call it), once established, remains distinct from the pragmatic meaning discussed for speech-acts. These matters will become clearer as we proceed.

There is, though, a deeper point. If, in a sense, we never get past pragmatics, why start off considering a language as an abstract system in the first place? Why add the users as an afterthought? Aren't there even parts of the abstract system, such as pronouns, demonstratives, persons and tenses of the verb, which make no sense without the users? To get ontological about it, doesn't the truth boil down to the fact that every actually occurrent piece of language is just an artifact of some person, and isn't "the system" just an abstraction from these artifacts? The only answer to these questions is a series of counter-questions. How could the artifacts be pieces of "language" without the system? How could they be "artifacts" if there were no grammar? Who would make them, if they had no meaning? Without the system, there is just no explaining how persons get to be speakers, nor how they behave as speakers. The system is some sort of cause; and since when is a cause an abstraction from its effects? Let us settle for saying that the thing is a dilemma, a chicken-and-egg affair. One may start from either end of it. Tradition says *causae* are *invicem causae*.

called “standard” context.¹⁴

Most sentence-types, however, do not include dates; they allude to time only *via* an indexical feature of their verb(s), called the tense. Hence most sentence-types need more than “standard context”; they need to get from their immediate context of production a specification of this indexical feature, something establishing the time to which they are pegged — that is, the time for which they are to be interpreted as holding good.

For example, the ‘is’ in

James Earl Carter is President

would have a clear time peg, if this token sentence served as the headline on a copy of the November 7, 1976, “Final” edition of the Boston Globe. But isolated from a date-contributing context, a sentence of this type could be true for some times, false for others; and the token presented above is a naked example, devoid of context, so that one cannot tell which times to think of. Therefore, in order to turn this sentence into a claim whose truth can be evaluated, you (the reader) have two alternatives.

One is to take the present tense of the verb ‘is’ seriously, peg it to the time at which you read this page, and hence judge the resulting statement false. In other words, you are supplying a date from your context of consideration — the context in which you read and

¹⁴ My approach to the topics of context, standard context, and statement, is much indebted to Leonard Goddard and Richard Routley, *The Logic of Significance and Context*, vol. I (London: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), especially pp. 21-119. No formal definition of ‘context’ is attempted in this essay. A context parameter *C* appears in most of the definitions which I do attempt; it may be taken as an undefined primitive. In the bulk of the essay, however, a certain approach to the problem of context emerges. It may be useful to summarize it here.

Context is a pragmatic notion, used in connection with things that “mean,” that is, convey information. A context is always of a thing *x* which can have a meaning (a practice, a speech-act, a sentence, *etc.*) and for someone’s doing something with *x* (performing it, uttering it, understanding it, considering it, *etc.*).

A context for performing or uttering *x* (or contemplating doing so) is a context of production.

A context for understanding, “hearing” or otherwise decoding *x* is a context of consideration.

The two may or may not be distinct. At the time you are speaking to me in a conversation, your context of production and mine of consideration are identical; when I remember later what you said and reflect upon it, I do so in a new context of consideration distinct the original.

Context can be taken descriptively or prescriptively. Descriptively taken, what is in a context of *x* for someone is whatever he finds available and helpful for his doing what he wants to do with *x*. Thus, if *x* is a sentence which you just said, and what I want to do with *x* is understand it, then the “context of *x*” for me is whatever I find available (in your words, in our setting, in shared memories) and find helpful to my understanding *x*. Prescriptively taken, what is included in this context is whatever I ought to find available, because it’s there, and ought to find helpful, if I know what I’m doing. By sprinkling occurrences of ‘ought’ and ‘not’ around, with a generous supply of quantifiers, one might be able to develop from these remarks such further notions as adequate context, deficient context, appropriate context, and bogus context.

consider the sentence-token rather than the one in which it was fabricated by its producer (who, I confess, was me).

The other alternative is to discount your own present, ignore the tense of `is', treat the missing time-peg as a blank, and cover the blank with a variable. You thus get

James Earl Carter is President at t ,
with the `at t ' standing in for a missing date or other time specification. Supplying a variable like this is rather close to what people do mentally in raising the question, when? You don't know how to replace this variable with hard information, because you don't know when I put together the words on these pages. You could try to get my time of composition into the picture by thinking

Someone says at t , "James Earl Carter is President"
and then using the `is' inside the quotes as a tip that the speaker thinks that the time when he speaks (represented by the t outside the quotes) is a time when the sentence inside the quotes is true. But this strategy brings you no closer to a truth evaluation, because you don't know whether the time was really ripe for saying `is' or not. So, your more sensible course is to dispense with the problem. Leave my time out of it, except for the one thing you do know about it: it was prior to your present. This much you know, because my composition exists. Rather, go back to

James Earl Carter is President at t
and bind the variable with a quantifier. You thus get

As of some time t , James Earl Carter is President at t ,
which has a smoother paraphrase as

James Earl Carter has been President at some time,
in which the perfect tense crops up just because the sentence-token you have been working on (to get it ready for a truth-test) was composed by me in what is now past time for you. The unparaphrased result of binding the variable sounds unidiomatic, but it is arguably still English and, more to the point, is certainly a true and complete statement. So is the paraphrase. For it is the great service of bound variables to make complete statements possible in the absence of any definite referent or "value" for the variable.¹⁵

Thus the two alternatives make the original sentence (here is a framed copy of it),

`James Earl Carter is President'

¹⁵ One may also quantify universally over the time variable: `As of all times t : . . .' We don't happen to have this option in the case at hand, because the subject matter is too ephemeral. But in abstract matters, generalizations, maxims, or proverbs, universal quantification over time is a standard option. I shall have more to say about quantifiers below.

amount to two different statements, one saying that he is President as you read this page, the other saying that he has been President at some time. Which alternative you adopt is normally settled by what you are doing with the original in your context of consideration, and what you are likely to be doing with it is heavily influenced by its producer's context of production. Do you read that Carter is President in a student composition sub-mitted last week? Mark it wrong. Do you read the same in an undated political memor-andum of possible historical importance? Mark it true, and hope for more such sentences to help you date the document. In this essay the reader had a choice, but only because I set up one of these wretched "pedagogical" exercizes in which the "example" was left naked of context, so that you could not tell what you were supposed to be doing with it.

Next, above and beyond the business of time (which has nothing to do with period, remember; I can talk about Carter's election in Elizabethan diction), some sentence-types need to get from their context of production another piece of help, a specification of the sense of their predicate. Perhaps the subject needs no help. Such is typically the case when the subject is a proper name or a natural-language quantifier.

'Someone is green',
for example, becomes a complete statement as soon as (given a settlement of the time issue) the context selects one of the three disjuncts we saw before, *e.g.* 'inexperienced'; the 'someone' itself, thanks to the great service of bound variables, needs no further specification.

Other sentences, because their predicate happens to be unambiguous, need a specification of the reference of some term occuring in them — often the subject, but not necessarily so.

'He was a President of the United States'
becomes a statement as soon as the context pegs it to a time and specifies who is referred to by 'he', while

'Lapsang Souchong is my favorite tea'
is a statement when it is clear which speaker is referred to by 'my'.

Still other sentences need contextual help of every kind. For example, the sentence-type,

'The number seven is green',
might be used in what would seem to be the obvious way, *i.e.* to attempt a statement about the successor of six in the system of natural numbers (perhaps in order to illustrate an absurd or pseudo-statement about such an entity); whereupon the reference of the subject would be clear, the sense of the predicate wouldn't matter, and the time issue would not arise, since we should automatically take the 'is' as holding for all times. But this odd-looking sentence might also be used to make a perfectly sensible statement on March 17,

1995, by a member of the Block Beautification Committee, who is alleging the current color of the house at 7 Prospect Street in New Haven, Conn.

Thus one and the same sentence-type may acquire, on different occasions when a token of it is used, different predicate senses and different referents for its subject or designating terms, all pegged to different times. On some occasions of such use, the context will be deficient; it will not provide all that we have been asking for. But on other occasions it will. When it does, the sentence-token actually used will have acquired by its context just one package of reference, sense, and time; and that package will be a complete one. *So considered, the well-contexted token may be called a fully interpreted sentence or "statement."* This is a fourth candidate for propositionhood, as opposed to the uninterpreted or just minimally interpreted "sentence."¹⁶

¹⁶ Let the reader beware of confusing 'statement' so used with the same word used as the name of a type of speech-act. We are not now interested in the deed of saying but in the fully interpreted thing which is said. Let the reader also beware of confusing those "circumstances of production" which form the context of the sentence (and so affect the full interpretation of what-is-said) with those "circumstances of production" which form the context of the act of saying-it/shouting-it/repeating-it (and so affect the point of doing so).

For the theory of statements which I have just been presenting, the *double-entendre* poses an interesting puzzle. If propositions are wholly definite in sense and reference, a *double-entendre* must correspond to two of them. If a good candidate for the honor of being a proposition is the statement which a sentence-token *S* amounts to in its context-of-use, *C*, then a *double-entendre* can only grow out of a situation where *S* could amount to the statement that *P* or could amount to the statement that *Q* (*P* and *Q* being quite different, though not usually inconsistent), because *C* supports either.

The last clause is important. If the context does not support, say, *Q*, then *Q* is just a disjunct (or a particularization of a disjunct) in the sentence-type which ideally represents *S* under minimal interpretation — a disjunct which *C* does not select, but which the hearing of the token *S* might cause someone in *C* to think of anyway (*e.g.* simply because he has a dirty mind). But almost any sentence composed of common words is open to some such perverse hearing. So we shall speak of a *double-entendre* only where *C* supports the second interpretation.

Now suppose the context does support either. Does it follow that there are non-deficient contexts in which there is no answer to the question, "What is the statement which *S* amounts to"? No. My reason for saying so will be developed more fully below. For now, it suffices to say that, if the context supports *S* amounting to *P* or *S* amounting to *Q*, then the context supports *S* amounting to the statement *P-or-Q*. This is a routine kind of ambiguity, however. It is not yet a *double-entendre*.

When we see a case of ambiguity which has an element of humor in it, especially if the humor emerges by seeing both sides of the ambiguity together, we may decide to secure or ratify the joke by holding onto both sides. We decide that the statement which *S* amounts to in *C* is *P-and-Q* (or perhaps *P+Q*, where the '+' is one of the non-standard conjunctions recently under investigation by linguists and logicians). This decision makes *S* a double-entendre in *C*. If the speaker foresaw that his saying *S* would/might have this effect on us in *C* and intended that it should, the *double-entendre* was deliberate.

Whereupon, again, one may form inter-linguistic equivalence classes of such contexted tokens, classes based this time on sameness-of-full-interpretation, to make a fifth and very popular candidate. Its popularity is due to the fact that it explains how a token of 'Snow is white' and a token of 'Die Schnee ist weiß', each in an appropriate context, can amount to the same proposition: the full interpretation of each can be the same, so that they belong to the same equivalence class of statements. This candidate is popular, too, because, if the members of an equivalence class of statements have a truth value, they all have the same one and keep it forever.

If one is still dissatisfied, one can use this last type of equivalence class as a springboard to further candidates. Each such class can be identified with a parade- or paradigm-member, *e.g.* the English sentence which is so worded as to avoid all contextual (or indexical) short-cuts, so worded as to date itself and to indicate, for each of its parts, the sense and referent shared by all members of its class in the absolutely clearest way that standard English usage will allow. This paradigm sentence can then be exhibited as the proposition (sixth candidate). For example, a token of the sentence-type here framed

'That station broadcasts at 91.5'

might occur in a context in which people would say that "the proposition" it conveys (in English) is the sentence-type we saw above, namely

'As of June 13, 1983, radio station WETA in Washington, D.C., broadcasts at 91.5 on the FM dial.'

If that move from an equivalence class of statements to its representative or paradigm member (in a given language) seems a step backward, one can focus on the purported reality itself to which full interpretation orders every member of such a class; viewed in its intra-mental existence as something intensional, *e.g.* a "nexus of concepts" (or "state of affairs," as some writers use this term), this reality becomes a seventh and all-too-traditional candidate for propositionhood; viewed in its extra-mental existence (or nullity) as a "fact," "bit of the world" (or "state of affairs" as other writers use it), it provides a modern, eighth candidate (though a quite eccentric one, since a bit of the world is neither a thing-which-means nor a thing which gets a truth value but, quite the contrary, what is meant and what gives a truth value).

Sentence vs. proposition from a third angle?

Finally, there is a sense in which everything we have been saying about propositions so far has been said from the point of view of the hearer or interpreter of sentences — what *he* understands as the minimal interpretation, what *she* needs from the context to reach a full interpretation, *etc.* It is time to switch around to the point of view of the speaker. It is time to look at the entire socio-cultural-*cum*-linguistic system as something in which the individual speaker has learned to participate, and which he is now able to use for his own

purposes, to carry out the exercises which Austin has taught us to call illocutionary or perlocutionary acts.¹⁷ Now, insofar as such acts involve intentions which go beyond the sheer intention to say something, they are of no concern to our present topic; they belong rather to the previous topic of speech-acts. But insofar as the speaker's intention is or includes (as his means) the sheer "saying" of something — in the sense of the communicating of some idea rather than the utterance of certain syllables — it becomes possible to make this intended idea (I mean, the one I intend to say, not the ones I intend to insinuate by saying it) a ninth candidate for the honor of propositionhood. After all, this intention is also something which stands in contrast to a sentence, because the latter merely "expresses" it. This intended idea is another all-too-traditional candidate, especially when little or no distinction has been recognized between it and the seventh candidate mentioned above.

I have already indicated a reason to disqualify this new candidate. What a speaker meant to say and the meaning in what she did say are often different "things," and one ought to reserve the term 'proposition' for speaking about the latter. But now some further remarks are in order.

Please observe that a famously over-worked verb, 'to express', has only now made its appearance. Before we turned to the perspective of the speaker, sentences occupied us as linguistic structures, abstract (as structures of *la langue*) or contexted (as exercises of *la parole*). Now they occupy us as the realizations of intentional actions. As linguistic structures, sentences *mean* the things to which the system of interpretation (with or without contextual support) relates them, but they do not express those things. As the *opera operata* of human actions, sentences *express* the intentions of speakers but do not mean them (as is clear in those cases, at least, in which the sentences express incompetent intentions and so fail to mean what the speaker intended they should).

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the speaker's intention has something important to do with what sentences mean. There will be no going forward until we have clarified it.

So far as the present writer can see, the power of the speaker's intention to affect his sentence's meaning emerges on two different levels. On the first, I can resolve to appear to be speaking a certain language (say, English) while actually using some sort of code. Only so can I coherently intend

'The number seven is green'

to refer to whatever I like or to assert whatever I like.

On the second level, my intention is really to speak the language I appear to be

¹⁷ A competent and helpful synthesis of Austin's work is Mats Furberg, *Saying and Meaning, A Main Theme in J. L. Austin's Philosophy* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971). This work had an earlier edition under the title *Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts*.

speaking; and on this level the power of my intention to affect sentence-meaning is limited to the space between minimal and full interpretation. On this second level, *pace* Humpty Dumpty, I cannot make

`The number seven is green'

mean that what I am talking about is red (because I cannot affect the standard array of senses that are pre-given in minimal interpretation), but I can make it mean that what I am talking about is inexperienced. And I cannot make the subject-phrase refer to the natural number five (because I cannot affect the standard ranges of denotation that are pre-given in minimal interpretation), but I can make it refer to the recruit who is marching seventh in the file of this platoon (or anything else numbered with a seven by some convention) instead of the abstract entity normally designated by `the number seven'.

I have an important power to shape sentence-meaning, then, according to my intentions. But observe what it takes for me to exercise this power, on either level. I cannot do it simply by thinking, intending, or having it in mind that `green' should now mean red, or inexperienced, or that the other words should now refer to this recruit. I must *do something overt*. By making certain ostensive gestures, or by building upon previous remarks, I must *create a context which secures or supports* this particular choice of sense or this assignment of reference (or, more radically, institutes this particular code). Otherwise, I may have used the sentence intentionally to make a statement about whatever I pleased, but I haven't made it mean any such thing. My intended use remains undiscovered (a failure at statement-making to anyone but myself).

In a word, the role of speaker-intention in affecting the meaning of a sentence is indirect. Outside the peculiar situation of solitary, inner soliloquizing (upon which pastime certain philosophers seem to have relied too heavily for their views of language), it is not the intention itself which affects meaning but the competent, uneccentric, rule-governed expressions of the intention; they are what do the specifying of meaning — and why? — because they are what build a context.

If these remarks are correct, recognition of the role of speaker intention does not lead one to a new, ninth candidate for propositionhood; rather, one is led back to candidates four, five, or six, to contexted statements or classes thereof.

The only way to avoid this conclusion (so as to secure a ninth candidate of this kind) is to maintain that what proposition is on the table, in any given situation, is just exactly what the speaker meant to put there, because `proposition' means the speaker's pro-posal. This move amounts to saying that `proposition' is not the name of a semantic notion (to which pragmatic considerations contribute), in the last analysis, but a pragmatic one (to which semantic considerations contribute).

Two considerations make this move disturbingly plausible. First, as soon as someone gets to be "the speaker" (uncontestedly), the pragmatic meaning of the fact that he "has the

floor" is that he has been yielded the initiative. He gets to pick or shift the topic. He gets to found or develop the context. *Via* this empowerment, the speaker's intentions are able to get expressed; and once expressed as context, they have the powers we have conceded already. Secondly, in every situation of cooperative communication, what we want to get at is what the speaker intended to say; so we make what he did say, if it was faulty, yield to his intention, in proportion as this latter is clarified. In friendly situations, in other words, what the speaker meant is the very thing we want to get on the table.

In light of these considerations, it is undeniable that propositions are speaker-generated. Yet I reject the move to an ultimately pragmatic conception of propositionhood, because it ignores or obscures an important distinction. What the speaker meant to generate is one thing, and what he did generate is another. If this distinction is unimportant in friendly exchanges, one should remember that not all situations are friendly. Communication is called upon to occur in adversarial situations as well. In between, there are neutral situations. Nobody is hostile to the speaker, perhaps, but nobody is granting any friendly assumptions either. We are sizing him up — perhaps to see how well he performs at turning out sentences which mean what he ought to intend to express, in order for his intention to match what we, as accomplished and clear-headed judges, are hearing.

For my purposes, the neutral type of situation is paradigmatic. It forces into the open the fact that there are three entities to be considered: the speaker-intention, the hearer-understanding, and the proposition actually put on the table by the rules applicable to the speaker's performance.

Any of these three entities is interesting to think about. What is a speaker-intention, for example, psychologically? What entities are intended in it (in the other sense of 'intended')? For present purposes, however, I don't care what it is or involves, any more than I care what a hearer-understanding is (which can also be mistaken or incompetent); what I care about is that such things not be confused with what a proposition is.

Take an analogy. Imagine that scales of justice are evenly balanced between the speaker's claim (to have the proposition on the table be what he meant) and the hearer's claim (to have it be what he understood). What the speaker meant is not in question, nor what the hearer understood. What is in question is what proposition is on the table. The judgment of the court could go either way, because either claim could be faulty. The central piece of evidence is an exact quote. Standard grammars and dictionaries are also evidence, as are testimonies from linguistically expert witnesses, and a series of exhibits marked 'Context'. The law by which the court is bound is the system of rules composing *la langue* and giving point to *parôles*. But the assumption which legitimates the court and its proceedings is quite simply this: that there exists hidden in the conjunction of law and evidence a Right Answer. It, whatever it is, is the proposition on the table.

The job of the court is to find it, not invent it. Judgment for either claimant is a finding that what the claimant deposed he meant (for the one claimant) or deposed he understood

(for the other) corresponds better to the Right Answer (perhaps perfectly). After all, one or the other usually matches it; both usually do. That is why only a tiny minority of claims arising out of linguistic practice have to be pressed in this court.

Is the court legitimate? Aren't there cases where the Right-Answer assumption is a fiction, where the system really doesn't yield an answer? I'm sure of it. I'm sure that *la langue* with its pragmatic penumbra grows, like its analog, with mere due process validating essentially creative decisions. (What other kind of decision is possible, when the court confronts a living metaphor?) But it doesn't follow that there is never a Right Answer, much less that the Right-Answer assumption should be abandoned. For if we abandon it, the system will devolve into will, will into power, power into appetite. The life of Humpty Dumpty is nasty and, as the nursery rime reminds us, short.¹⁸

Beyond doubt, a major source of error hereabouts is the polite convention whereby people allow the speaker to extend his native authority to declare what *he* means into a further authority to declare (within broad limits) what his utterance means. The hearer's personal response — "I take your word for it that by *S* you meant *SN* here" — readily deteriorates into the impersonal judgment that *S* means *SN* in this context, thanks to what the speaker intended — which last gives encouragement to biased courts and (at the limit) to

¹⁸ Perhaps this is also the right point at which to set forth the differences between the analysis I have been presenting and the influential position of H. P. Grice, upon which Levinson's work relies significantly.

In a nutshell, Grice distinguishes speaker-meaning from sentence-meaning. By the latter term, he denotes substantially the same as what I denote by "the sentence under minimal interpretation." He then attributes to speaker-meaning all of those final specifics of time-peg, reference, and sense which I include in "the sen-tence under full interpretation."

I agree that these specifics are typically speaker-generated: they attach to this token of the sentence by virtue of the fact that this speaker has uttered it in this context. Hence I have no strong objection to Grice's dichotomy — so long as it is taken to allow this further discrimination, as need arises, between speaker-generated meaning and speaker-intention.

The fact that the speaker says the sentence *S* in this context, in these circumstances, should allow me, the hearer, to see what statement *S*-so-used amounts to (the speaker-generated meaning) and yet should also allow me to see sometimes that this statement is unlikely to have been the one which the speaker intended to make, so that I can offer him an alternative sentence *SN* ("Don't you rather mean to say *SN*?"), so as sometimes to get an answer back from him ("Oh; I suppose so, yes," or "No, you are quite mistaken; I meant what I said," or "Well, I ought to have intended to say *SN*, come to think of it, but the fact is that I stupidly intended to say *S*; my apologies," or the like) which clarifies his intention for me (in all cases) and perhaps for him (in the first case) or yields repentance and amendment (in the third case).

As the every-day quotations in the last paragraph illustrate, the term 'speaker-meaning' has the disadvantage that it hardly invites this further discrimination. It rather invites confusion between the statement which *S*-so-used amounts to and the statement which its user intended to make. Hence I have avoided Grice's terminology.

Humpty Dumpty.

It is time to conclude with a chart.

Sentence	Proposition
S uninterpreted	S minimally interpreted (candidate 1)
S minimally interpreted	the equivalence class $\{S_m\}$ to which S so interpreted belongs (candidate 2)
S minimally interpreted	the ideal member of $\{S_m\}$ (candidate 3)
S minimally interpreted	S fully interpreted (the statement to which this token of S amounts in its context) (candidate 4)
S fully interpreted	the equivalence class $\{S_f\}$ to which S to interpreted belongs (candidate 5)
S minimally interpreted	the ideal member of $\{S_f\}$ (candidate 6)
S fully interpreted	concepts of the things to which all members of $\{S_f\}$ are ordered (candidate 7)
S fully interpreted	the very things to which all members of $\{S_f\}$ are ordered (candidate 8)

I hope that the reader has found in the above list at least one candidate for propositionhood which suits his taste. My own taste tends toward the fifth one for a good many purposes, but not for all. Indeed, I am inclined to think that the upshot of these remarks is this: one cannot make do in philosophy with just one candidate.

On the present question in particular, when one speaks of one proposition's being "contained" as implicit information in another, it is not at all clear that the containing proposition and the contained one can both be of the same kind. It seems sensible to suppose that what "contains" and "conveys" information, after all, is an interpreted sentence (candidates 1, 4, or 6), whereas the very information conveyed, when considered as a proposition, would be something more abstract (like candidates 2, 5, or 7) or at least more enlightening (like 3 or 6). More importantly, the way in which I have set up the list of candidates forces into the open a distinction between interpretation and explicit information: between the full interpretation of a sentence and the amount of explicit information which it conveys. For if

'The number seven is green'

and

'As of March 17, 1995, the house at 7 Prospect Street is green'

can be the same in their full interpretation (*i.e.* say the same thing about the same object), the fact remains that there is more explicit information in the latter than there is in the former. One thus has to

reckon with the fact that there are more and less “informative” ways of saying the same thing about the same object. There are good senses of ‘proposition’ in which there are more and less informative *versions* of the same proposition. But I shall leave these points alone for now.

Chapter 2

A Logical Start

Good order demands that one first set down the criteria which a satisfactory theory of propositional implicitness ought to meet. In compliance, I shall assume that an acceptable theory must do the following things.

(1) It must keep this case clear of the speech-act case; it must define a relation among *things said* (not among the acts in which they are said, nor between the one and the other) so that one can say that a proposition is implicit in *another* proposition.¹⁹ Typically, this relation must be many-to-many. After all, multiple propositions, $P_1, P_2 \dots P_n$, are said to be implicit in a single, given proposition, P_0 ; yet P_0 need not be the only proposition in which P_1 or P_2 is implicit.

(2) The theory must allow for a line of demarcation between the implicit and the explicit. Thus, if P is a given proposition formulated in a period of language L , we presume that a mere repetition of P itself, or whatever can be seen by applying to P the ordinary rules of L for paraphrase and synonym substitution in that period, is already “explicit” in P , not implicit.

(3) The theory must allow for a line of demarcation between what is really implicit in a given proposition, P , and what is not. An acceptable theory must not allow every proposition, nor any inconsistent with P , to be implicit in P (unless, of course, P itself is inconsistent or is so odd as to “say everything,” including its own negation).

(4) Finally, for theological purposes, the theory will hardly be attractive unless it supplies intuitively sensible grounds for the transfer of certain predicates of propositions. I

¹⁹ One may also wish to say that one command or question is implicit in another, or that a certain proposition is implicit in a command or question, etc. I leave commands and questions aside until later.

have in mind a case like this: if P is a proposition which has been “divinely revealed,” and the theory says that Q is implicit in P , the theory's grounds for saying so ought to make it very reasonable to say that Q has been “divinely revealed” also (albeit implicitly). The same will go for such other predicates as ‘definable by the Church’ and ‘believed by the Church’.²⁰

*

If these preliminaries are agreeable, I should like to begin with a logical theory of the implicit — I mean with what *should* be called a logical theory. For what often goes under this label is really something else, such as a theory according to which the information “implicit” in the proposition(s) composing a message is whatever else is necessarily true, given the truth of the message itself and our knowledge of what the message is about. I shall deal with that theory later, in several forms. It is better to begin with a more precise theory. It says that the “implicit content” of any proposition or set of propositions will be all that can be derived therefrom by the rules of formal logic alone. Still more precisely put: if $\{P\}$ is a non-empty set of propositions, a purely logical theory will say that there are no points implicit in $\{P\}$ except those which are the conclusion of at least one logical derivation, so constructed that each line of the derivation is either a member of $\{P\}$ or else is justified by a rule of logic applied to a member of $\{P\}$.²¹

I insist on this more precise way of putting the matter, because this is what one ought to mean, if one speaks of a “logical” theory. Certain theologians have claimed (or been alleged) to have a logical theory of the implicit or even, indeed, of doctrinal development. They have not. They or their interpreters have mis-named their views. The mistake is understandable, because there is a genuine difficulty about distinguishing purely logical from other grounds of inference outside of strictly formalized systems. I shall try to show,

²⁰ The standards set to govern the transferrability of these predicates might be different for each. For example, if the standards set for transferring the predicate ‘... is divinely revealed’ are stricter than the standards set for transferring ‘... is definable by the Church’, one gets a result similar to the (pseudo-) Suarezian position, in which the “formal implicit” is a stricter notion than the “virtual implicit,” the former is required for transferring revealed-ness, while the latter alone delimits what the Church can teach, and the resulting difference between the two is covered by the famous *fides ecclesiastica*. On the real Suarezian position, see Juan Alfaro, “El progreso dogmatico en Suarez,” in *Problemi scelti di teologia contemporanea* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1954), pp. 95-122. This volume is no. 68 in the *Analecta Gregoriana* series.

²¹ For the exact notions of logical derivation and logical proof, see for example Donald Kalish, Richard Montague, and Gary Mar, *Logic, Techniques of Formal Reasoning*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 40.

however, that a really logical theory is so narrow that no theologian would wish to hold it.

Unfortunately, I cannot begin that task without detailing an odd problem arising from the modern shape of logic itself. The medieval scholastics did not have to worry about the possibility that a purely logical theory could be too broad or liberal, but modern theologians must worry deeply about that.

The basic move of a logical theory is to identify 'is implicit in' with 'is implied by' in the sense of some logical doctrine of implication. But this part of logical doctrine was revolutionized in 1910, when the *Principia Mathematica* of Whitehead and Russell established and popularized a sense of implication which is purely truth-functional. The new sense of implication, often called material implication and symbolized by the famous hook, \supset , was defined to hold between any and every pair of propositions, P and Q , unless it happened to be the case that P was true but Q was false. In other words, it was defined by the following truth table:

P implies Q

t	f	f
t	t	t
f	f	t
f	t	t

One can readily verify that this table yields results which have been called the "para-doxes" of material implication: these say that a false proposition implies anything (*i.e.* if P is false, then it is always true that P implies Q) and that a true proposition is implied by anything (*i.e.* if P is true, then it is always true that Q implies P). What is worse, one can see that the following alternative turns out to be tautologically true:

either P implies Q or Q implies P (or both).

Thus as soon as one accepts a logic based on purely truth-functional connectives, such as material implication, the basic move of a logical theory of the implicit will yield the preposterously liberal result that, for any arbitrarily chosen pair of propositions, one of them is implicit in the other. Indeed, it will yield the result that every true proposition is implicit in every other true one.

There are metaphysical systems (like Leibniz's) in which this last result is accepted, but on a quite different ground. In such systems, every truth is held to be somehow relevant to every other, deeply connected in meaning or being with every other. But the oddities of material implication have nothing to do with such a metaphysics. They result purely and simply from the decision to make 'implies' a truth-functional connective. If one drops that decision, some or all of the "paradoxical" results disappear.

Since the 1920s, the logicians who have been dissatisfied with material implication have been showing how to drop truth-functionality without losing formal rigor: they have introduced the various systems of strict implication, relevant implication, or entailment —

that is, systems in which the truth or falsity of ' P implies Q ' can no longer be computed from the truth-values assigned to P and Q themselves.

From the point of view of a theory of the implicit, should one follow the example of these logicians, or should one accept material implication, "paradoxes" and all?

The answer depends, I think, on whether one wants to retain any connection between 'is implicit in' and 'is implied by'. If one is willing to let these two relations drift totally apart, so that logic no longer has anything to do with implicitness, then one may as well stick to material implication in one's logic, since it will no longer be able to over-bloat one's theory of the implicit. Or if one is willing to allow the fact that P implies Q to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for saying that Q is implicit in P , then also one may retain a material sense of 'implies'.

But all the theories of implicitness that have had a classical or traditional status in Catholic theology have rather wanted the logical fact that P implies Q to be a *sufficient* condition for the hermeneutical fact that Q is implicit in P ; they have only quarreled over whether other conditions might also be sufficient. One can continue in that tradition (and make good sense of it) only if one is prepared to do two things: take over one of the stricter (non-truth-functional) implication-relations and stipulate that it is this stricter relation (not material implication) which is a sufficient condition for implicitness. Such will be the course adopted in this essay.

But which stricter implication should one take over? Fortunately, there is no longer any question but that a well-behaved system of logic can be constructed in which all the paradoxes connected with material implication (and with the Lewis versions of "strict" implication) disappear. This is the system **E** ('E' for 'entailment') of Alan Ross Anderson and Nuel D. Belnap.²² Henceforth, the reader may take all my talk of one thing's logically implying another and construe it in the well-defined sense of entailment in **E**.

A good case for this choice can also be made from a traditional Thomistic angle. I presume that if one thing is logically involved in another — *i.e.* implicit in another by pure logic — then the two things are not really distinct. Cajetan says that two things can be really distinct and yet inseparable (*e.g.* in his Commentary on the *Prima Pars*, q. 28, a. 2, section xi). It follows that inseparability is not a sufficient condition for logical implicitness. Well, inseparability is exactly the notion explicated by the Lewis systems of strict implication; in all of them, ' P strictly implies Q ' means 'not possibly (P and not- Q)'. Hence Thomistic *logical* implicitness (the relation which one thing or point has to another

²² See their *Entailment, The Logic of Relevance and Necessity* (Princeton University Press, 1975; and for a splendid introduction to the entire issue of strict and relevant implication, in which many systems are surveyed and evaluated in a way helpful to students, see Charles F. Kielkopf, *Formal Sentential Entailment* (University Press of America, 1977).

when it belongs to the formal *ratio* of the other) must require a still stricter implication relation, and the best candidate for this is the entailment relation of **E**.

Lastly, a good case for selecting **E** can be made on intuitive grounds. The sense of logical implication which is allowed to be a sufficient condition for implicitness ought to conform to our intuitions about "what follows." It may be the case that we sometimes use 'if . . . then . . .' in the sense captured by material implication (*e.g.* "if Belnap teaches at Fordham, I'll eat my hat"); but if and when we do, we make no claim that the consequent "follows" from the antecedent. Lewis's notion of strict implication will also yield cases which violate our sense of "what follows" (*e.g.* "if roses are red, the square root of two is irrational," which counts as a valid strict implication simply because the consequent is a necessary truth, and necessary truths are "inseparable" from any truth at all). Only the entailment relation of **E** will never disappoint us in this way. What a proposition entails will never exceed what we intuitively take to "follow" from it.

To return to the subject, the point I am now in a position to argue is this: a logical relation of implication which is tight enough to serve as a sufficient condition for implicitness is too narrow to stand alone. It cannot do justice to what people ordinarily take 'implicitness' to mean. In order to make this case, I suppose I ought to select some famous theological example. But they are all complicated or overly specialized. The interests of generality and perspicuity recommend proceeding with more mundane illustrations. Please look indulgently, therefore, upon the following.

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston.

English-speaking Americans, at least, hear (1) as "saying" or "implying" a great deal. They would take it for granted, I believe, that (1) contained at least the implicit information that

(2) Curley is a talented politician,

and perhaps even

(3) Curley is an Irishman.

Now assume that what is implicit in a proposition is all that follows from it by the rules of formal logic alone. On this assumption, is (2) or (3) implicit in (1)? Certainly not. By the most liberal logic in the world, (1) implies nothing but trivialities like these:

Someone is the mayor of Boston
 There is at least one mayor of Boston
 There is at most one mayor of Boston
 If anyone is mayor of Boston, he = Curley
 Curley is the mayor of someplace
 Someone is the mayor of someplace
 etc.

If there is a common feature to these valid entailments of

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston,

it is this: they tend to contain less information than (1) itself. Inevitably so. For all logically valid derivations are deductive, and a validly deduced conclusion cannot contain more information than was present in the premiss(es).

Now, surely, the central reason for theologians, or anyone else, to appeal to the "implicit" is to indicate some dimension of a proposition in which more information is contained than appears on its explicit "surface." It seems inevitably self-defeating, therefore, to handle such surfaces as the premisses of a logical derivation, from which one hopes their implicit content will emerge.

Is this to say that there cannot be a satisfactory theory of the implicit which is purely logical? An answer will emerge in due time. Before handling so large and general a question, one ought to resist a temptation. When one is challenged with the fact that

(2) Curley is a talented politician

does not "follow logically" from

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston,

one is tempted to say something like this: "Well, of course, it doesn't follow from (1) all by itself, but it follows from (1) plus other premisses logically connected with (1) as a matter of common knowledge." In other words, one is tempted to claim that the inference,

Curley is the mayor of Boston;

therefore, he is a talented politician,

is an enthymeme, whose missing premisses are excusably absent because of their immediate connexion with the premise given.

Suppose one is next challenged to produce these absentees. One might exhibit the following:

(1a) Boston is a large city

(1b) The mayor of Boston is an elected official

(1c) Every elected official of a large city is a talented politician.

For, indeed, when these three points are added to (1), they yield (2) as a valid deduction.

I have two criticisms to make of this move. First, none of these newly supplied premisses has any logical connexion whatsoever with the original one. They do not emerge from any logical derivation so constructed that each line of it is justified by applying a rule of logic to (1) itself; hence they are no more "implicit" in (1), by the rules of formal logic, than (2) itself is. Nor will it help to suggest that the new premisses, if not tied "logically" to (1) in the formal sense, are nevertheless tied to it "necessarily" or "by definition." For even if this suggestion were germane (which it isn't), it suffers from evident falsity. No necessity compels Boston to be a large city; it is free to shrink. Nor are mayors necessarily elected officials. So, in fact, (1a)-(1c) are not necessarily true, even given (1), nor are they

true by definition. Hence their recent absence remains unexcused.

Secondly, when I hear that Curley was the mayor of Boston, I am quite sure he was a talented politician. The enthymeme theory requires me to have deduced this from premisses I was so sure of, that only the one I heard needed mention. This is most unlikely on two grounds.

The first ground is that

- (1a) Boston is a large city,
- (1b) The mayor of Boston is an elected official, and
- (1c) Every elected official of a large city is a talented politician

are propositions which I may never have formulated before, and none of which may have occurred to me in the discussion at hand, until after I was called upon to justify my initial “leap” from Curley's being mayor to his being talented. How can my certitude of the talent have been caused by deduction from propositions which hadn't occurred to me?²³

The other ground is this: it is most unlikely that my certitude of the talent followed from a certitude, conscious or subconscious, of (1a)-(1c), because, as a matter of fact, I am not at all certain of

- (1c) Every elected official of a large city is a talented politician.

At least, I am not certain of it on second thought. Bosra is a large city. For all I know, it has an elected mayor who owes his position to the fact that his name was the only one on the ballot, plus the fact that his incompetent politicking within the Baathist Party resulted in his losing a bid for a more desirable post. Perhaps his mayoralty of Bosra is a step towards the Iraqi equivalent of Siberia. So it occurs to me to amend (1a) to read

- (1aN) Boston is a large American city

and to amend (1c) in the same way, so as to get a proposition restricted to a political system I know something about, namely,

- (1cN) Every elected official of a large American city is a talented politician.

Whereupon it occurs to me that many elected officials of such cities, themselves un-talented and unrespected, owe their position entirely to the fact that their names were

²³ Of course, one or more “things” represented by (1a)-(1c) may have been stored away in the back of my mind somewhere, as things of which I was sub-conscious and which somehow caused (2) to pop into my mind, upon my hearing (1). But this possibility is quite different from saying that I deduced (2) from (1)-(1c). It is only to say that I arrived at (2) by a psychological process which one or more “things” represented by (1a)-(1c) had something to do with, unbeknownst to me. Having thus arrived at (2), I may have responded to challenge by formulating the absentees and then deducing (2); but it doesn't follow that I deduced (2) in the first place, nor that the deduction of (2) “portrays” my original mental process. Perhaps the deduction of (2) simply justifies retroactively what I had arrived at in some other way.

somewhere near the bottom of an otherwise popular ticket. In other words, 'elected official' does not suffice as a middle term. So I am tempted to amend (1b) to read

(1bN) The mayor of Boston is an elected official who heads the ticket,
so that (1cN) can become

(1cO) Every elected official of a large American city who heads the ticket
is a talented politician,

of which I may feel fleetingly certain. Or it may dawn upon me that Dennis Kucinich, if not Jane Byrne, is a counter-example.

In sum, the weakness of the enthymeme theory is that, when I try to deduce

(2) Curley is a talented politician

from absent premisses "tied in" with

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston,

it turns out not only that the absentees are difficult to formulate and of dubious reliability but also (and more importantly) that they are *logically independent* of (1), so that neither they nor the conclusion reached with their aid can be "implicit" in (1) at all, given a purely logical theory. For if being implicit in a proposition *P* is a matter of being logically deducible from *P*, and yet (by definition) no point logically independent of a proposition is logically deducible from it, then it follows that no point logically independent of *P* is implicit in it. (And it would not be logical to doubt the previous sentence, because it was a syllogism in the second figure, in the mood called Camestres.)

Now, cured of the enthymematic temptation, one might return to the general question of whether a "purely logical" theory of the implicit is possible at all. It will prove more useful, however, to postpone this question once again. It will be easier to face it, after one has acquired some feel for what an alternative might be.

Chapter 3

A Semantical Start

Logic and grammar are not the only disciplines which deal with pieces of language and their meanings. Let us look again at the common-sense conviction that

(2) Curley is a talented politician

is implicit in

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston,

and let us ask ourselves what accounts for this conviction. Above all, we need to ponder what accounts for our feeling that (2) is implicit in (1) alone, without the aid of absent and, as it turns out, all too dubious, additions.

I should like to propose that what went wrong in the starts toward a logical theory was that they were looking for a logical solution to what is in good part, at least, a semantical problem.

- Pure logic concerns the connexion of one piece of language with another, according to rules governing formal terms and features of those pieces of language.

- Semantics, by contrast, concerns the relation of material terms in the language to what is outside the language, *i.e.* to the purported reality which a piece of language is "about" and which it therefore "brings to mind" when apprehended.

The term 'semantics' has undergone a considerable change of meaning over the last 30-40 years in academic circles. It used to mean a concern with the finer nuances of usage. Popular disdain or distrust of what was then called semantics is still reflected in sayings like, "The difference between them is just a matter of semantics," or "Don't try to trick me with fancy semantics." The new sense of the word, however, with which I fear the general public has never caught up, is the one I have indicated above; it is now standard in philosophical writing. Herewith an observation about it.

The fact that material terms in human language refer to things outside of language and

describe aspects of them is perhaps the most important single fact about language. It accounts for the transparency of language. When people exchange sentences in a conversation about this or that going on in the world (and their mental states are also things going on in the world), it is a distraction to pay attention to the sentences themselves. The sentences are not there to *draw* attention but to *direct* it. They are there to fill our attention with other things. They present chunks of the world and in so doing efface themselves before those chunks. In a word, it is the function of language to carry us outside of language, into the things which the language is about. *It should not be shocking, therefore, to suggest that the implicit information which language conveys is out there, in those things — because, paradoxically, what the language is doing is presenting those very things.* It matters immensely, of course, that the language does present them, and how it does. Information is not just things. But neither is it the ghost of things, laid in language after the sad departure of things. Information is presented things.²⁴

It seems reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the rich, implicit dimension of

²⁴ A decision to pursue the notions of “meaning,” “proposition,” and “information” along the lines of semantic reference, and hence along the lines of presented things, runs counter to the so-called structuralist or semiotic strategy, which hopes to account for all cases of meaning by appealing to contrasts of element with element (sound with sound, morph with morph, word with word) in some established system of elements.

At the level of full interpretation, where speaker-intentions competently expressed in supporting context may direct the finite, system-given possibilities of designation present in a sentence towards infinitely many different things, the structuralist strategy has no chance of accounting for the meanings which arise in statements without positing some master Grammar of the Real, capable of “generating” all possible contexts and hence all possible speaker-intentions.

The strategy even runs into trouble at the minimum level of interpretation, because the strategy's key concept of “paradigm” (defined as the set of terms $\{tN\}$ which could replace a given term t in a sentence S and which, because they each contrast with t , provide by a kind of eliminative recursion the “meaning” of t in S) provides a set which is uselessly vast, if syntactic categories alone determine what can be in it. In order to get a useful set of alternatives to t , one must limit the “paradigm” to terms which would make S come out a “likely” sentence, a sentence somebody would be likely to say because, given common contexts, it would be true. But then presentable things, manifesting a real structure of ontological categories, become, *via* pragmatics and truth, independent factors constituting the “paradigm,” rather than dependent factors constituted by it.

Still, the structuralist way of looking at things may be valuable at other levels of linguistic organization, may point to sub-conscious patterns, and may yield interesting analogs to language in other areas of human behavior. A friendly but judicious (and for once readable) assessment is Philip Pettit, *The Concept of Structuralism: A Critical Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). An impressive effort to put certain structuralist/semiotic ideas to work in Christian exegesis is René Laurentin, *Les Évangiles de l'enfance du Christ* (Paris: Desclée, 1982), now in English as *The Truth of Christmas beyond the Myths* (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's Publications, 1986).

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston

is exactly this *res ipsa* which the mention of Curley and Boston politics brings to mind. More fully stated, a semantic theory of implicit and explicit would go something like this.

What is *explicit* in (1) is purely a matter of English usage, *i.e.* what any speaker of the language would apprehend of (1), no matter how little he knew of the place and person referred to. Thus the explicit content amounts essentially to the dictionary sense of the predicate, 'mayor of', as affirmed of someone (named Curley) and some place (named Boston). By contrast, what is *implicit* in (1) is the very reality presented by the terms of (1). The reader has been assuming that this reality is the famous Curley, up to his tricks in the famous Boston. I could have been playing a trick of my own, however. I could have been thinking of a hamlet called Boston, Virginia, which (for all I know) once had a mayor named Curley, too. Now, that would not have been fair; it would have been a violation on my part of the rules of standard context, which govern this essay (and any other piece of expository writing) until they are superseded by a context of the author's own making. It is a rule of standard context to take proper names as referring to their most famous bearers, and the reader has been following it automatically. But I mention the possible trick at last, in order to make vivid this fact: to move from the explicit to the implicit is to move from considering a form of words (*i.e.* from a sentence minimally interpreted) to considering the things which the words, in their context, are understood to present. It is the move which John Henry Newman called "realization."²⁵

We now have before us the makings of a theory with two components. The first is a definition of 'explicit' based on standard sense and designation ranges, as provided by minimal interpretation; the second is an account of 'implicit' based on reference (and descriptive force specified by reference) in full interpretation. It will be useful to put the first component into official form, before wrestling with the difficulties of the second.

Defining the explicit

In one sense, it is stupid to seek a definition of the explicit. Here is a sentence, *S*, freshly said. What is explicit? The object *S*. No more, no less. In this sense, the pro-

²⁵ Newman's best-known discussion of "realization" or concretizing apprehension is in connexion with problems of assent; see *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (London, 1870), pp. 9-11, 19-27, 75-80, etc. But the notion is important throughout his works (especially *Loss and Gain* and the sermons on *Difficulties Felt by Anglicans*).

Newman's use of 'realize' was not a personal innovation, moreover, but a touch of old-fashioned diction. For a collection of late 17th and early- to mid-18th century texts in which 'realize' means to penetrate more deeply into an object of thought, going beyond an initial description so as to bring the thing described vividly and clearly before the mind, see the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *s.v.*

positional issue of explicitness connects seamlessly with the speech-act issue. The explicit pragmatic meaning of a speech act is “to deliver” its product somehow. Ask it, state it, shout it, croon it — the act plunks down its product in front of us. If the product is *S*, then *S* is what is explicit — a sentence-token reproducible by exact quotation, as other products are by photograph.

But one can still ask *what information is explicit in S*. When I hear a person say *S* in some sensible context, I take in at pell-mell speed all of the linguistic data delivered in *S* and match it almost instantaneously with gobs of contextual data, so that my mind has turned *S* into a statement before I am fully conscious of what is going on. By the time I am in possession of *S*, my mind has arranged *S* into an optimal pattern of reference and sense with the available points of context, a kind of *Gestalt*. That pattern or “heard statement,” however, is not just *S*, nor is it always the pattern intended by the speaker, as I may learn to my sorrow. His next remark may imperil my pattern. “But I thought you said *S*,” I protest. “I did,” he says. “But then don’t you mean . . .?” And before long (if my mistake was not wholly my fault, or his) an ambiguity emerges in *S*. The ambi-guity is in the plunked-down product as a disjunction of the information which is in the product — in it precisely in the product’s capacity as explicit.

To capture this sense of the information in the explicit *qua* explicit, it is useful to have a definition. Here is what I have in mind:

(D₁) If *S* is a sentence of a period of the language *L*, then what is explicit in *S* is all that which, on the basis of standard dictionaries, grammars, and usages of *L* in force for that period, is part of the interpretation of *S*, or is the same in interpretation as *S*, independently of any further information as to what the terms of *S* are being used to refer to.

This definition is the first of a pair. Its companion will add the benefit of a context. (D₁) dispenses with that benefit because it is designed to capture an utterly minimal sense of the explicit. It says that what is explicit in a sentence (independent of context) is exactly what I have been calling up till now its “minimal interpretation,” which already included the standard options for synonym and paraphrase. In terms of the list of candidates for propositionhood, (D₁) has the effect of saying that the explicit information of *S* is a proposition-candidate of the second or third kind (an equivalence-class of minimally interpreted sentences or an ideal representative of such a class).

To illustrate the idea, suppose that *S* comes to us devoid of any context whatsoever, like a fragment of a message on a potsherd, or like an example left un-erased upon the blackboard by a recessed Latin class. It is still the case that the sentence says something, in a distinctive sense of ‘says’ familiar to every school-boy in the Classics.

Consul populum ad bellum pugnandum non praeparavit

There it sits. It says something in a grammar-book-and-dictionary sense, which is *L*-specific. If I don't understand it, I know that I should get my Latin grammar and dictionary, and I know that by using these two tools intelligently, I should be able to figure out "what *S* says." But this latter, one would think, is exactly "what is explicit in *S*." As soon as one admits that something is explicit even in a context-less sentence, and that this explicit meaning is what can still be figured out about such a sentence, (D_1) is vindicated for such sentences.²⁶

But suppose I can take a sentence as more than minimally interpreted in *L*. Perhaps *S* comes to me in its whole context, so that time-peg, reference, and sense are clear and definite throughout. Or perhaps only part of the context comes along with *S*, so that while its sense and reference are clear, the time is not, or *vice-versa*, or any combination thereof. What now is explicit in *S*?

Before I offer the companion definition, I must sound a note of caution. One is tempted to think that what is explicit in a sentence in a decent context is the very statement it amounts to in that context. But take care. The major utility of building up contexts in the first place is to spare the speaker the trouble of making the full stock of information explicit in his every sentence. A context which makes it clear that 'The number seven is green' refers to the house at 7 Prospect Street spares him the trouble of moving that heavy piece of information around in his mouth. Since the referent is provided elsewhere in the context, it can remain unmentioned (implicit) in this particular sentence. Similarly, a context making it clear (or correct to assume) that

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refers to James Michael Curley and to the largest metropolis of Massachusetts, spares us the trouble of making all of that explicit in (1) itself. So one must be cautious. The explicit is a trickier notion than it seems. Yet it would be idiotic to embrace the opposite error, that context makes no difference at all to what is explicit. The plunked-down product is not like a stone with flaws in it. Its ambiguities are informational disjunctions, not physical lines of fracture, and are therefore sensitive to the context in which the product is delivered. The following should capture a middle ground.

²⁶ What (D_1) captures is close to one's intuitive sense of the matter but slightly different. Whereas (D_1) says that what is explicit is a whole string of disjuncts (and string is an over-simplified figure; for syntactically complicated sentences, the disjuncts would branch into a veritable tree), one's intuition would say that what is explicit is one or another of the disjuncts. One thinks this way because, by ingrained habit, one thinks of the sentence as said by somebody. No one would say *S* and mean the whole string. He'd mean one or another of the disjuncts. So, inspecting the specimen sentence *S*, one says, "It could mean s_1 ," [pause] "Or it could mean s_2 ," [pause] "Or it could mean . . ." But (D_1) says it means $s_1 \omega s_2 \omega . . . \omega s_n$. I think (D_1) is right; the string *is* what it means, *S* itself, independent of arm-chair guesses about an unknown speaker and his probable meaning in his likely situation. The hungry mind will reach for its pattern; but if there is no context, there is no pattern.

(D_{1a}) If *S* is a sentence of a period of the language *L* in a context *C*, then what is explicit in *S* in *C* is the remainder of what is explicit in *S* by (D₁) after removing therefrom whatever the features of *C* render, by any applicable convention, ineligible as an interpretation, or part of the interpretation, of *S*.

Intuitively, what the context is doing to the explicit as such is knocking out one or more of the options posited in the minimal interpretation of *S*. It is shortening the string (or pruning the tree) of disjuncts, and thereby rendering *S*-explicit-in-*C* more informative than *S*-explicit-alone. The pruned interpretation is more informative because, with disjunction, "less is more." By shortening the string of options, the context focuses the force of *S*-explicit and allows one quickly to match that focused force with available points of reference, in a pattern likely to have been what the speaker intended. The focused force is not the whole pattern, as already said; it is not one's "heard statement," nor is it the best statement which *S* can be taken to amount to in *C*. But the focused force is central to the pattern, because it is exactly the information which would not have been there in *C* without *S*-explicit. This focused force is what (D_{1a}) is designed to capture. As soon as one admits that what is explicit in more-than-minimally-interpretable sentences is just the segment of their minimal interpretation which the context didn't spare the speaker the trouble of making explicit, (D_{1a}) is vindicated for such sentences.

A route to the implicit

If the reader is satisfied that the team of (D₁) and (D_{1a}) does its own job plausibly, it is time to view it in another regard. A definition of the explicit, if one is travelling towards its companion notion, the implicit, ought not only to lodge one comfortably in its own quarters but ought also to send one on one's way refreshed, routing suggestions in hand. In fact the (D₁)-team, in conjunction with the remarks made so far, naturally suggests two routes to the implicit.

To appreciate the first of them, go back to the supposition that *S* comes to one devoid of context, and suppose further that *S* is something like

'He is rather green',

whose minimal interpretation leaves the referent of 'he' totally unknown and leaves the sense of 'green' indeterminate. In such a case, one simply cannot go from considering the form of words, 'He is rather green', to considering what else one is led to know of the reality to which *S* refers, because one has no idea what that reality is. Nevertheless, one can handle the form of words itself in a logical manner. The conjunctions and other formal features which give a sentence logical entailments are already explicit in it. One can at least derive those entailments (however trivial) and reckon them as implicit content. It is sometimes supposed that we can reason logically only from a good candidate for

propositionhood, such as a statement. Not so. If I had mentioned Boston, Virginia, a long way back, so as to set up a context in which 'Boston' and 'Curley' were referentially dubious, none of the above tokens corresponding typographically to

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would have been a statement; and yet the little list of entailments I exhibited some pages back would have remained sound. In the same way,

'He is rather green'

logically entails (by the rules of existential generalization and double negation) that

It is not the case that nothing is rather green,

and it seems innocent enough to say that the latter is "implicit" in the former. My previous remarks against a logical theory of the implicit, after all, were not aimed at denying that the logical consequences of a sentence are implicit in it; they were only aimed at denying that such consequences could plausibly capture the full range of the implicit in a familiar and typical case. I have left open, for the moment, the question of whether there can be any interesting case in which logical entailmenthood is the necessary and sufficient condition for implicitness. But I had no dream of denying that such entailmenthood is a sufficient condition.

One should recall, too, that the formal terms and features of *S* are not the only terms of *S*-explicit from which one can reason. The present example contains the material term 'green'. Without deciding whether it means color, envy, or inexperience, one can reason about each of these possibilities. Anything literally green is colored. Anything envious has a passion. Anything inexperienced lacks a skill. These points strike one as necessary truths. Often called "analytic," they are not matters of formal logic, because they do not present connexions based on formal features of a sentence. They present connexions between material terms of the language. Yet they do not present synonyms. 'Colored' is not a synonym of 'green', nor a paraphrase. So these analytical connexions are not explicit in *S* by the (D₁)-team. They have a certain metaphysical interest, yet one would hardly call them theoretical achievements of any particular metaphysical school or tradition. Most of them seem to belong to language competence (perhaps as rules reflecting the elementary metaphysics of any competent speaker). In memory of Carnap, I shall call them meaning postulates. Every language has many of them; whether all natural languages have the same or closely similar meaning postulates is an interesting question (debated in connexion with relativism) into which one need not enter. What matters for present purposes is that these postulates are premises to which one can conjoin *S*, in order to get conclusions by the formal-logical rule of instantiation:

$$\Box x (Fx \supset Gx) \ \& \ Fy \supset Gy,$$

which says that if everything is a certain way, this is. Thus, if a meaning postulate says that

anything envious has a passion, and if S says that “he” is envious, then it follows logically that “he” has a passion. If S is saying that “he” is literally green, then from another postulate one gets the conclusion that he is colored. It is certainly harmless to call such points (or a disjunction of them), which I call analytical entailments, implicit in S . Here is a definition which puts formal and analytical entailments in their place:

(D₂) Let S be a sentence of L in context C (possibly vacuous); let P be the proposition explicit in S in C , and let Q be a proposition distinct from either; let $\{L_i\}$ be the set of meaning-postulates of L , and let E be any intuitively acceptable system of formal logic: then, if Q is the conclusion of at least one logical derivation from P or from $P+\{L_i\}$ under the rules of E , then Q is implicit in S in C relative to E .

What “follows logically” from a sentence or body of sentences is what can be derived from it in some logic, and since what can be derived may be more or less extensive, given the system of logic adopted, (D₂) recognizes that a sentence’s logically implicit content is relative to a given system of logic. Since the present topic deals with the normal handling of natural-language sentences, (D₂) limits the choice of logical systems to those which conform both to formal requirements and to the ordinary intuitions of “what follows” (including what follows by instantiation). Some such intuitions are part of linguistic competence, but E is not; it is a sophisticated artifact, in which explicit rules and axioms replace intuitions, and in which theorems of great complexity, no longer intuitively obvious, are contained. Yet one assesses the value of E in part, at least, by how well it does “justice” to one’s intuitions. Since systems rendering this debt yield very many similar results, the relativity here conceded will not prove very irksome.

(D₂) also preserves the distinction between the implicit and the explicit by requiring that Q be a proposition distinct from S or P . That way, the logical fact that a proposition implies itself will not lead to the claim that a proposition is implicit in itself. The harvest of points analytically true, given P , amounts to something interesting when S comes in a context. For then the explicit content of S is narrowed to a focus. As a definite sense is approached, the analytical truths connected with that sense come to the fore.

Another route to the implicit

Next, to appreciate a second and properly semantic route to the implicit, to which the (D₁)-team also points, look again at what was just done to the context-less example,

‘He is rather green’

in order to get from it the entailment that

It is not the case that nothing is rather green.

The rule of double negation was applied to

'Something is rather green',
 obviously; but where did this come from? One must have assumed that the original 'he' referred to a definite person or thing (perhaps Curley, or Curley's chameleon) — an assumption one had every right to make, by the way, because the rules of English require every occurrence of a personal pronoun to have a proper antecedent. One must have assumed further that this 'he' could be construed as a place-holder for a proper name of this antecedent, so that the logical form of 'He is rather green' could be schematized as

Gy

— another assumption one had every right to make, thanks to the rules of English grammar. And finally one must have assumed that the logical rule of existential generalization

$Gy \vdash \exists x(Gx)$,

which says that if this object is a certain way, something is that way, could be applied to 'He is rather green', so as to yield as a valid consequence

'Something is rather green.'

There are influential views of logic, however, according to which these last steps are illegitimate. According to these views, the particular quantifier commits one to the actual existence of something. Whereupon, in order for

$Gy \vdash \exists x(Gx)$

to be valid, the logical place-holder for a proper name, *i.e.* an "individual variable" (like the 'y' in this formula), has to be so defined that we are guaranteed the existence of what it would name. And since we do not know whether 'He is rather green' is talking about something existent or not (for perhaps the sentence is a fragment from a conversation about Alberich's attitude toward Wotan), we cannot apply the above logical rule to it.

Fortunately, these views of logic have been in retreat for almost thirty years. The so-called free-logics of Van Fraassen and Hintikka showed how to re-admit vacuous names, and the substitutional theory of quantification showed how to salvage the rule of "existential" generalization in existentially vacuous contexts.²⁷ Thanks to these developments, there are now systems of symbolic logic which, besides being formally in order, do better justice to one's intuitive reasoning processes. In these logics one is free to admit different

²⁷ Jaakko Hintikka, "Existential Presuppositions and Existential Commitments," *Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1959) 125-137; Bas C. van Fraassen, "The Completeness of Free Logic," *Zeitschrift für mathematische Logik und Grundlagen der Mathematik* 12 (1966) 219-234; with Karel Lambert, "On Free Description Theory," *ibid.* 13 (1967) 225-240. For substitutional quantification, a serviceable introduction is now available in Susan Haack, *Philosophy of Logics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), chapter 4. For a more advanced discussion, see Saul Kripke, "Is There a Problem about Substitutional Quantification?" in *Truth and Meaning, Essays in Semantics*, ed. Gareth Evans and John McDowell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

particular quantifiers, some existentially committed, but others not (like the 'someone' in 'Someone was believed to be the head of the Greek pantheon'). And once one possesses an existentially non-committal quantifier, as the ' $\exists x$ ' used above was meant to be, one is free to derive 'Something is rather green' from a totally context-less 'He is rather green.'

Now, to resume the travelling: (D₂) allows one to reason logically from minimally interpreted sentences, and the digression just made shows how and why this reasoning can be done: it shows the central role of non-existential particular quantification. With this tool, one can plug a hole in one's knowledge of what a sentence is about with a bound variable any time one pleases and reason logically from the result. The reader will recall what was done with the missing time information in the sentence about James Earl Carter as President.

Well, if one can plug one hole that way, why not plug them all? For then, by the great service of bound variables, one can tease a statement out of virtually any sentence at all, no matter how vague it may be under minimal interpretation — *i.e.* no matter how vague its explicit content. For example, one may convert 'He is rather green' into the following rather artificial but perfectly readable object:

As of some time t , for some party x (known as "he"): x is rather green-colored at t , or
 x is rather envious at t , or x is rather inexperienced at t .

Observe that to manufacture this object, one runs through the disjunction of (tenseless) predicate-senses, putting variables at the appropriate places in each disjunct, and then quantifying over them all, being careful to include at the introduction of each variable any information which the original sentence provides about its possible values (*e.g.* that a value of x must be a "he").

I now propose to give this curious sort of object a name and a use. *I propose to call it a statement-frame.* For it is at once a statement (though an absurdly general one) and a frame upon which to build less general statements. For each particularization of this frame will either knock out a disjunct or replace a bound variable with a proper name or definite description. When all the disjuncts are gone but one, and every variable has been thus replaced, the result will be a maximally particular statement buildable upon this frame.²⁸ And I propose to think of the context as furnishing the building supplies. For instance, if we encounter 'He is rather green' in a context C_1 , which makes it clear that the issue is the political naiveté of a freshman Senator soon after the 1978 elections, though we aren't told which Senator, it is natural to think of the context as furnishing "the particulars" wherewith to build the following particularization,

²⁸ I realize that a given frame may have lawful or predictable connections to ampler frames, in which there are more pluggable holes. I shall deal with such amplifications in a moment.

For some male, newly-elected Senator x : x is rather inexperienced as of 1978

on the above-given frame. A richer context, C_2 , which also provided the Senator's name, would build a maximally particular statement on the same frame.

Arrival by the second route

And now finally to the destination: for a given sentence S in a given context C , (D_{1a}) defines what is explicit in S , while (D_2) allows one to deduce the statement-frame for S ; whereupon the difference between the [amount of information provided by the] statement-frame and the [amount of information provided by the] best particularization of that frame which C allows one to make is a minimal measure of what is semantically implicit in S in C . (This difference reduces to zero when what is explicit in S is already a statement in standard context, or when the context is too poor to furnish any further particular.)

In other words, whenever a sentence S comes to one in a context which serves to indicate the reality which S is about, one can say that what is semantically implicit in S is at least as much information about that reality as the context of S provides and the grammatical framework of S accommodates. This is the clear and simple way of saying what I have been hauling up the machinery to say more rigorously.

Before putting the machinery to work in another definition, it will be well to relax slightly the requirement of grammatical accommodation. One does so by looking at the issue of amplification.

Suppose the sentence S is about a certain object or event e , and suppose the context of S provides some information about e which cannot be accommodated within the statement-frame of S . This sort of thing happens often enough. Perhaps S is 'He is rather green', and it comes to us in a context which makes it clear that the time of the 'is' is the spring of 1928, when the "he" in question is Mayor Curley, and the sense of 'green' is given by 'envious', and when the object of the mayor's envy is a chap named Smith — Al Smith. This last piece of information finds no pigeonhole for itself in the statement-frame of S , as that object was constructed above. Nevertheless, it would seem idiotic to claim that this piece of contextually given information is therefore banned from being implicit in 'He is rather green' in this context. After all, the English sentence 'He is rather green' is being used here as a cute replacement for 'He is rather envious', and this latter sentence is a lazy man's shorthand for something more complete. Linguistic competence alone ought to pronounce absurd the idea of being envious, without its being *of* somebody, or of being envious of somebody without its being *over* anything. Properly speaking, 'envious' is a three-place predicate:

x is envious of y over z .

A formalized language would never allow one to use this predicate at all without

supplying its full complement of holes or “places.” English, however, is more lenient. English accepts ‘He is rather envious’ as a complete and well-formed sentence (which is why I have accepted statement-frames which are formalistically incomplete, such as the one I manufactured above for ‘He is rather green’). Yet it seems reasonably clear that English accepts such a sentence only as a convenient abbreviation, implicitly to be completed like this:

He is rather envious [of somebody over something].

So there can hardly be much objection to adopting the following policy: where the statement-frame for S is formalistically incomplete in some regard, a statement-frame which is ampler solely by virtue of being more complete in that regard may always be used instead as the frame for S , and any particularization of that ampler frame which the context makes possible may be reckoned as implicit in S .

Henceforward, then, by an “amplification” of a statement-frame \underline{S} for a sentence S , I shall mean only those frames which are ampler in the way just mentioned. And I shall introduce the symbol $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ to stand for the best particularization of the best amplification of the statement-frame for S which the “particulars” furnished by C , the context of S , make possible. The symbol is an ugly one, but it is defined so as to stand for an in-tuitively attractive idea: the pattern or *Gestalt* which the mind reaches for, spontaneously, when S -explicit is plunked down amidst available points of reference. $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ is not a psychological entity, however; it may be isomorphic with psychological entities (the speaker's intention, the hearer's understanding), and we hope it is; for then communication is going well; but in itself $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ is a rule-generated semantico-pragmatic entity. It is an artifact of “the system.”

If these clarifications are agreeable, this second route to the implicit terminates in a third definition.

(D₃) Let S be a sentence of L in context C ; let P be the proposition explicit in S in C , and let Q be a proposition distinct from P ; let \underline{S} be the statement-frame for S , and let $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ be the best particularization of the best amplification of \underline{S} which C makes possible: then, if Q is explicit in $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ or follows logically from $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$, then Q is implicit in S in C .

The utility of this definition is that it captures a *defensible minimum* of what may be said to be implicit in a sentence semantically, that is, *via* the reality which the sentence is about. For people will say that a sentence holds at least this: as much implicit matter as its own context is able to hang upon its logical bones.

Chapter 4

Two Theological *Divertimenti*

1. *Il Cimento Hermeneutico* in Three Movements

Definition (D₃) is nevertheless a shocking affair. When its technicalities are decoded, it is seen to be saying as follows. For any sentence in its context: the statement to which that sentence amounts is implicit in it, not explicit. “Absurd!” one may well respond. “In a decently furnished context, we hear sentences as statements; we read them as statements. What in the world, besides minor-league puzzles, is so wrong with saying that what is *explicit* in a sentence in context is the statement being made?”

Oddly enough, this question has a compelling answer, furnished by the history of theology.

Every Bible-thumper and proof-texter is convinced that the statement he wants to argue from is nothing less than explicit in some sentence of Scripture. Tell him that he is reading-in, and he flips to another sentence and starts over. Lost on him is the care which a serious scholar takes just to read a sentence with historical accuracy (issues of period) and then to explore what its context is (not just adjacent verses, but the design of the book, the theology of the author, the givens of his culture) before venturing a judgment on what statement is being made. The space between sentence and statement — between the explicit and the *right* pattern of reference and allusion — is the large and troubled space of exegesis.

How large a space it is, seems to have been forgotten for centuries on end even in great theological schools. When the scholastic manuals were presenting theological method as a deductive enterprise, starting from revealed statements and descending to theological conclusions, the whole effort of exegetical ascent, starting from sacred sentences and striving to reach revealed statements, was lying forgotten. When the old apologetical manuals were presenting OT texts as pat statements, clearly foretelling Jesus Christ, the

struggle of the nascent Church to find mere sentences to suggest a dying Messiah (or for that matter a resurrected one), and the extent to which new statements were deduced from the old sentences, by supplying Jesus as the new referent, and the extent to which the whole pattern of what was and was not prophecy was thereby re-arranged, was lying forgotten.

The authors who thus underestimated the space of exegesis are safe targets today. But the space is also a troubled one, and the previous three chapters provide some insight into the source of its troubles. These chapters have introduced and defended the view that statements arise only in context. If that is true, it should not be surprising that a quarrel over statements will be typically a quarrel over the context, and that sometimes, at least, a quarrel over the context is over what counts as a legitimate one. Such is the case in theology today. The most important battles over which statements are in Scripture have turned out to be part of a larger war over what contexts are legitimate. In that war, which is multi-lateral, two extreme movements have imperialistic ambitions.

One of them is led by historical exegetes. Their movement assumes that context is a parameter closed by immediate circumstance and historical contiguity. The parameter becomes a temporal perimeter. With each portion of Scripture enclosed by such a historico-cultural perimeter, starting with the oldest strata of the Pentateuchal tradition, extracanonical sources are enclosed as well; the two together become the context-of-production for any Scripture sentence *S* datable to that perimeter; each later perimeter is allowed to enclose only historically plausible (unlikely to have been forgotten) parts of earlier ones, and *no earlier perimeter is allowed to contain anything arising in later ones.*²⁹ The result? What used to be called a “canon” dissolves into a series of largely unrelated statements contained in historically related documents. This is the imperialism of the historical context-of-production. Every later context-of-consideration is rigidly tyrannized: it may find no new or enlarged statement in *S* except on penalty of misinterpretation. The possibility of a synchronic context-of-production, spanning the centuries, does not arise, because only a divine Author could use it; and the talk of such an Author is homiletics, they say, not historical exegesis.

Athwart the imperial ambitions of this movement there stands a fact that is awkward for those exegetes who receive their salaries from Christian institutions. Christianity is exegetical nonsense unless some synchrony is secured: unless later parts of Scripture (but especially Jesuanic actions) are allowed to fulfill, point-up, and give statement to earlier

²⁹ This restriction has been explicit since Schleiermacher: “Everything in a given text which requires fuller interpretation must be explained and determined exclusively from the linguistic domain common to the author and his original public,” quoted in E. D. Hirsh, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 200. Acceptance of the restriction by historians is symptomatic of the idea that the ideal historian would be one who chronicles each event just as it happens. For a critique, see Arthur Dan-to, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge University press, 1965), c. vii, “History and Chronicle.”

parts, the NT's exegesis of the Old is flatly illegitimate, and so is the apostolic tradition based on it.

Therefore a more moderate party among the historical critics is prepared to concede (or hope) that later events can bring some enlargement to the statement which a sentence *S* amounts to in its own perimeter. But vagueness (not to say evasion) sets in, when one asks how this enlargement is possible. To see why, consider just the simplest kind of case.

Suppose the original author was talking about the subject s at time t_1 , and that what he had to say about it was F, and that the cases (occurrences, instances) of s with which he was familiar were *a*, *b*, and *c*. Suppose later history serves up at time t_2 a new case *d* of s, more intense somehow (more terrible, more glorious, more famous, more infamous) than any of the cases with which the author was familiar, and confirming more clearly than ever the truth of saying F about cases of s. Then one is dealing with a history-given expansion (from t_1 to t_2) of the set of things which s designates or to which people might properly make it refer. If one asks whether the new referent *d* is included in "what the author meant," one exposes an interesting ambivalence in how people speak of authorial meaning.

In one sense, people do consider his meaning bounded by his his-torical awareness; but in another sense, they do not. For as any teacher knows, modern examples are often the only way to show students what an ancient author "really meant." A later interpreter of the original author, trying to capture what he meant and yet also familiar with case *d*, would often be stupid (pedantic, unengaged in reality) to leave *d* out of his interpretation. Orwell wrote with horror about totalitarian practices. He knew of Hitler's camps and Stalin's purges. But he knew little of GULAG and nothing of the killing fields of Pol Pot. Should not we, who do know these cases, see them included in Orwell's indictment, as a malign epiphany of all he was talking about? By the same token: if the prophets proclaimed cases of divine visitation, shouldn't another Epiphany be counted into what they were talking about?

Unfortunately, the answer is less clear than the rhetoric of these questions makes it seem. The legitimacy of the enlargement depends upon whether or not the "conceptual rule" by which the interpreter is collecting cases under the label s is the same as, or congruent with, the rule by which the original author was collecting them. In the case of Orwell, it is easy to be confident of one's ground in this regard. At greater historical distance, after large shifts of civilization, it can be difficult or impossible to be confident. Frankly, in the long and "shift"-filled history of Israel's religious concepts, I fail to see how anyone can be confident — unless, precisely, the shifting frameworks are ordained to one another, as successive or complementary contributions to a synchronic design. But then the designer will have to be God, and the appeal to Him will be exegesis, not homiletics.

Hoping to profit by this difficulty, a second movement is in the field, championed by more recent hermeneutical theorists, who secure synchrony in a new way. Canonical sentences are not messages from a dead past, they say, but semantic parameters, to be

closed in each new situation of hearing. Context becomes the hearer's horizon of awareness and concern. In order to emerge as meaning-event within this horizon, *S* must intersect with the hearer's categories. Exegete-theologians step forward as facilitators of conceptual encounter; and since the hearer provides the horizon, it is largely *S* which must be helped. The result? What used to be called a "canon" becomes a catalyst for the hearer's self-interpretation, and what used to be called a "message" becomes the hearer's address to himself in borrowed language. This is the imperialism of the context-of-consideration. Every historically discoverable context-of-production is rigidly tyrannized: it is allowed to yield no statement uncongenial to the hearer without being accused of archaism, myth, or ideology. The human producer of *S*, who no doubt had his own ideas about what was myth and what wasn't, is given no standing to resist, because he is not in the horizon; only *S* is.³⁰

The possibility of a synchronic context-of-production does not arise, because only a divine Producer could use it, and He (if not a myth or artifact of interpretation) is an object of conceptualization within the horizon, not a giver.

Standing athwart the imperial ambitions of this movement is another stubborn fact. Christianity self-consciously continued the OT faith in a divine self-revelation to man, by claiming that this revelation came to fullness in the events of the NT and in the definitive message which those events delivered or made intelligible. Therefore Christianity is incoherent as a religion, unless its gospel is somehow the address to us of Christianity's God. If He "speaks" (publicly/categorically) only through this or that past event, document, author, or redactor, the fact remains that this human vehicle, precisely with its original conceptual framework, is what God chose. The same is true of the human faculties of Jesus. To ignore the human authorial intentions and conceptualizations embodied in the vehicle (so as to handle the text, or Jesus, on one's own terms instead) is therefore to ignore or discount a divine preference. A "hearer of the Word" who does this seems to have struck an inattentive posture.

Granted, God-speaking is not thereby reduced to silence. For, with a little dialectical dexterity, one can claim that the forcible capture of the text in the hearer's categories is identically and simultaneously a divine capture of the hearer in the text's renewed categories. One can pretend that the situation of God-and-hearer is like one of those situations of perceptual ambiguity, where figure and ground suddenly reverse roles, as in an Escher

³⁰ This and other points in this paragraph are made forcefully against Gadamer and others by E. D. Hirsh, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (see previous footnote). Important parts of Hirsh's case had been published separately in the *PMLA* (September, 1960) and in the *Review of Metaphysics* (March, 1965). I think that there is no conflict between Hirsh's emphasis on authorial intention and mine on the context-of-production, because we should both agree (1) that the author/speaker makes his intention tangible by expressing it, (2) that these expressions do much to form the context-of-production, and (3) that literary interpretation is pragmatically a situation of friendly cooperation with the author/speaker. We want to hear him; in consequence, what he intends is normative.

drawing. Or to be homey about it, one can pretend that God is a spiritual tar-baby, Who seizes in being seized. No, the problem with hearer-imperialism is not necessarily that it silences God, but that it makes His speaking curiously pointless. It lends Him a self-referentially silly message. It makes Him say, "My message to you in the following text [insert text] is whatever you feel it means." Compare, "This is my commandment: do as you please," or better yet, "Here is my special self-disclosure: I am anything you conceive me to be."

In conflict with both these movements, there exists a third. It is championed by those who take seriously a synchronic context-of-production. It is the context founded by God-speaking, Himself outside of time, marshalling the entire canon over time but as one context in time. The adherents of this movement are traditional theists, in retreat in many churches and severely embarrassed by the failure of their party, when it was ascendant, to appreciate the size and complexity of the space of exegesis. But at least they tried to do justice to both kinds of context on the human level. In Catholic circles, many of those in the third movement are neo-scholastic theologians, much in retreat since the second Vatican Council, embarrassed by challenges to their metaphysic from many quarters (historical consciousness, empirical science, other metaphysics). But if they fused Aristotle with divine Revelation too confidently, at least they had the decency to consider their metaphysic a set of independent premisses, not a hermeneutical pre-condition for the possibility of apprehending the Biblical witness!

This *divertimento* will have served its purpose, if it has convinced the reader of the main point: the statement to which a sentence amounts in its context should not be considered explicit in that sentence, even given its context. Rather, as an achievement of respectful and accurate "hearing," the statement is a first step beyond the explicit, beyond (D₂), into the implicit, as (D₃) provides.

2. *Fuga Scolastica* on the Theme 'Auribus Percipe'

The recent mention of the neo-scholastics makes this a good point at which to touch base with the manual scholastic tradition. (D₂) and (D₃) capture a part (but only a part) of what the manualists were trying to specify under the label "formally implicit." The manualist strategy was to draw a distinction between

- what one could get out of a sentence *S* by the every-day processes normally involved in grasping what somebody says, and
- what one could get out of *S* only by supplying further, independent (*e.g.*

metaphysical) premisses.

What could be gotten in the first way was “formally” implicit; what could only be gotten in the second was “virtually” implicit.

Their strategy has a clear affinity, therefore, with the contemporary distinction between “linguistic competence” knowledge and “encyclopedic” or “background” knowledge. What the recent scholastics seem to have been after (in part at least) was the distinction between what one could get out of a sentence *S* of language *L* simply because one was a competent speaker of *L* hearing *S* clearly in a helpful context (the formally implicit) and what more one could get out of *S* because one happened to figure out a lot about the sub-ject matter *S* dealt with (the virtually implicit).

Still differently stated, the manualist strategy turned upon the difference between what one could *hear* in a message (even though it wasn't explicit in the message), and what one could come to know, given a message.

Moreover, these scholastics had a strong theological motive for invoking this kind of distinction. Revelation was “God speaking”; man's response was therefore “hearing” with assent. Man could *believe* God saying whatever man could *hear* God saying. The scope of faith was bounded by the scope of the hearable. Now, when a speaker (say, God) utters *S* in context *C*, (D_3) captures what we should often say we “heard” Him saying. But as soon as we have to bring in facts not in evidence in the context, as soon as we have to reach into background knowledge in order to get out of *S* the idea that *Q*, then we have not only gone beyond the limits of (D_3), but we have also crossed a common-sense frontier between what we heard Him say and what we didn't hear but figured out from what we heard Him say. Where hearability bounds faith, the figured-out cannot be an object of faith.

There, of course, was the sore point. Plausible as the basic moves of the scholastic manualist strategy may have been, it was painfully obvious that the Church had been defining new objects-of-faith, transgressing the apparent bounds of the hearable, with insouciant regularity, ever since the *homoousion* of Nicea. So, to meet the facts of the case, Suarezians and certain later Thomists devised ingenious but conflicting standards for saying when a figured-out inference wasn't really figured out at all but was a harder case of hearing. Hence the curious typology of syllogisms and inferences — improper *vs.* proper, interpretative *vs.* substantive.³¹

What is vulnerable in this determined effort can be brought to light by inspecting an easy example presented by A. Michel.³² He claims that the general proposition,

³¹ The details are amply exhibited by F. Marin-Sola, O.P., *L'Evolution homogène du dogme catholique*, 2 vols. (Fribourg, 1924)

³² See the Introduction, footnote 1.

The Pope is the Vicar of Christ,
contains as formally implicit information this point current at his time of writing:

Pius X is the Vicar of Christ.
His motive for so claiming, of course, is that his contemporaries were supposed to believe this latter with divine faith, and so must have been able to “hear” it in the general dogma. Yet one would have supposed that the particular status of Pius X was no better than “virtually” implicit in

The Pope is the Vicar of Christ
since it seems to be inferred *via* the premise

Pius X is currently the Pope,
thanks to which ‘the Pope’ serves as middle term. Michel claims that the implicitness is formal without explaining how.

It is not hard to see what his grounds would have to be, though. He would have two choices.

The first deals with determinables and their determinations. It is part of linguistic competence to know that certain determinable descriptions (‘Pope’, for example) have certain determinations (‘modern Pope’, ‘recent Pope’, ‘current Pope’), and it is arguably part of linguistic competence also to know that what holds good for the determinable holds good for its determinations. So if one hears tell that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ, one ought to know that one is being told that the current Pope is the Vicar of Christ. Next, Michel might think that individuals are ultimate determinations; then, by pursuing this method one step further, one should finally know that one is being told that Pius X is the Vicar of Christ. But this idea is false. Individuals are not ultimate determinations. Even in Michel’s day, the relation between Pius X and ‘current Pope’ was not that of determination to determinable but that of referent to definite description.

Which brings us to the second of Michel’s options. ‘The Pope’ is a commonly used definite description, he might argue, whose referent in his day was Pius X; and it is certainly part of linguistic competence to know the reference of common terms. This last I grant. But there are “terms” and there are “terms.” Knowing the reference of some frequently-used terms might be part of linguistic competence, while knowing the reference of others might not be. I should guess that there are millions of people who know what ‘the Pope’ means, without knowing who he currently is. Are they deficient in their command of English, or just uninformed as to Catholic affairs? I have heard plenty of times the phrase, ‘the head of General Motors’; I know what it means, but I forget who he is. I’m not sure I ever knew. I am weak on business news, I think, not English usage. So Michel’s case collapses.

Other cases are admittedly puzzling. Can I know what ‘the Mass’ means, without knowing what goes on in one? A Fundamentalist rails at me about the idolatry of the

Popish Mass. Do I think he knows what `the Mass' means?

The larger point at issue, really, is whether one can maintain — can police — a frontier between the knowledge involved in linguistic competence and the knowledge composing our background. The modern effort (since Chomsky) to wall off the one from the other has proven just as controvertible as the neo-scholastic effort was to wall off interpretative from substantive inferences, and for just the same reason. Knowledge of meaning not only involves knowledge of the world but grows with it.

Still, it is not my contention that the neo-scholastic strategy was wrong because it presupposed a non-existent frontier. There is a frontier hereabouts; in fact, two. But they aren't walls. I have used one frontier already to inclose the explicit, in (D₁). It is the frontier between what is in the dictionary and what is in the rest of the world, so to speak. It is too porous for Chomsky's purposes, no doubt: facts emigrate from the world-at-large into successive editions of the dictionary as Mexicans enter Texas. Some even leave again. But the frontier exists for my purposes; it is important, and it is independent of context. The trouble with the scholastic manualist strategy is that it wanted another frontier, similarly separating hermeneutic from general knowledge, and similarly independent of context, but running somewhere through the middle of the implicit. This is what I think cannot be had. (D₃) is what can be had, and it is context-bound. Let me explain.

After (D₁), (D₃) is a second frontier between knowledge and knowledge. It allows what is otherwise background knowledge to become language-competency knowledge on a temporary, context-by-context basis. This is a sensible thing to do, because background knowledge of all kinds gets loaded into a context — by the locale of a conversation, by previous remarks in the conversation, by earlier pages of the book, earlier works of the author, whatever. Once it is inloaded, parties to the context are competent, if they can use this cargo to “hear” what is being said in new remarks; incompetent if they can't. Applied to Michel's example, (D₃) will rule in his favor wherever Pius X has been mentioned as Pope in the context in which

The Pope is the Vicar of Christ
has been said or heard; otherwise it will rule against him.

(D₃) is at once more liberal than the manualist formal-implicit (because it allows any kind of knowledge to be inloaded) and more restrictive (because it is context-bound, and because it deals mainly with problems of reference and sense-selection, rather than the theologically more interesting problems of metaphysical re-description). So I do not offer (D₃) as an alternative to the whole neo-scholastic strategy, but only as an alternative first step. (D₃) is supposed to set a minimum for what is semantically implicit in a proposition, no more. It will allow one to make future definitions, in which the implicit reaches farther, beyond the grammatically accommodatable points contextually given, into the further holdings of encyclopedic knowledge and objective reality.

However, there will be no getting round the fact that these future definitions will plant

the implicit in what is *knowable*, given a message, not in what is hearable in it. Precisely in so doing, the further definitions will respect the referential transparency of language, its capacity to present things, not itself.

And ironically, the further definitions which I shall propose will do consistently what the scholastic manualist tradition itself did inconsistently. What amazes one about that tradition is how, when push came to shove, it torpedoed its own starting strategy. After launching the distinction between formal and virtual implicitness, and sailing as far as they could go on it, the manualists admitted another one — out of desperation — between what is formally implicit *quoad nos* and what is formally implicit *in se*. This nuance allowed what was virtually implicit *quoad nos* to be formally implicit for a better-informed hearer, especially the Ideal Hearer who is the Church, or the Holy Spirit who guides the Church. The very nature of the formal implicit was thereby subverted. It ceased to be a matter of what was comprehended in linguistic competence, even with the help of contextual inloading, and became a matter of what is included in perfect cognition.

Wouldn't it have been better to admit that from the start? St. Paul said that faith came from hearing. He didn't say it *was* hearing.³³

³³ Faith is more like consenting to be informed. In a final irony, this whole fugue could have been avoided, if the Suarezians and later Thomists had paid attention to the pre-Reformation Thomistic commentator, Thomas de Vio, known as Cajetan. The very first article in Thomas's massive *Summa Theologiae* asked whether man needed a "further learning" (*doctrina*) beside the physical and philosophical disciplines. He said that we did, because God had assigned us to a goal beyond our understanding — Himself. To reach Him, we need revealed information and hence a "sacred learning" (*sacra doctrina*) beyond the natural human sciences. In his commentary on this article (sections v and vi), Cajetan asked whether this talk of a sacred "learning" meant the faith or meant theology — meant what God formally revealed or what He virtually revealed — meant (in still other words) what we *heard* God saying or what we didn't exactly hear but *figured out* on the basis of what He had said. In an answer to which his successors seem to have been deaf, Cajetan said that it meant either indifferently. "I should say that 'sacred learning' is not being used here to mean the faith as it is distinguished from theology, nor to mean theology as it is distinguished from the faith; rather, it is being used to mean knowledge revealed by God (whether formally revealed or virtually) insofar as that knowledge has what it takes to be called teaching and learning, abstracting from whether it has what it takes to be called 'believed directly' or 'inferred scientifically.' For the knowledge we need for salvation is a 'learning' and a 'teaching' just because we receive it from God teaching it, as it says in John 6:[45] . . . And this is what Aquinas says is necessary for salvation in the conclusion we are talking about. And since such knowledge is a revealed teaching *independently* of whether we just believe it or draw out more from it scientifically — hence *independently* of whether it is formally revealed [*i.e.* revealed in itself] or virtually revealed [*i.e.* implicit in what is revealed] — it is wrong to descend into those differences here."

In other words, the key for Cajetan (and for Aquinas, as Cajetan read him) was that "God revealing" is not just a speaker but a *teacher*. Faith in Him revealing is consenting to be *taught*, to acquire a new *learning*. Well, a point *Q* is "taught" either in case (a) the teacher himself has said *Q*, so that in believing him we credit *Q* directly, or in case (b) the teacher has said *P* and we have figured out that *Q* is implicit in his message. Since a

point's being taught is thus independent of whether it is directly credited or figured out, the whole divine message as subsequently developed, the whole set of dogmas, can be a revealed *doctrina* regardless of whether some part of it was taken directly on faith (and so started as *fides quae*) or whether that part was figured out from other points believed (and so started as *theologia*).

Cajetan and the present writer are therefore agreed: what is (a) implicit in what God says and (b) definable by the Church as an object of *fides divina et catholica* is all that we can come to know, given what He says. The distinction between formal and virtual attaches to the act of God teaching (*revelans*) and marks, roughly speaking, the difference between saying and rendering knowable; it does *not* attach to the implicit dimension of His message. It does not mark a difference between some high-grade zone of the implicit (where points are “formally implicit” and so definable as revealed) and a low-grade zone (where points are only “virtually implicit” and not so definable). That whole classification of “the implicit” was a mistake. Hence there was never any need for the odd maneuvers whereby the later Thomists tried to rescue points from the lower zone once they were (ah, the embarrassment) defined by Holy Church.

Chapter 5

How to Go On From Here?

First steps are only that. (D₂) and (D₃) establish a minimum: what is implicit in a sentence in its context is at least the best statement it can be taken to make there, plus whatever is analytically or logically entailed by that statement. One still has to face the question of the whole. One seeks the implicit's real and full scope, and this extends up to some sort of maximum. What sort?

In particular, one has to face the fact that neither of the definitions developed so far serves to justify the conviction that

(2) Curley is a talented politician

is implicit in

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston.

One is therefore compelled to push on, beyond the combination of context and logical structure, into the larger field of "encyclopedic" or background knowledge.

This is the point at which the semantic-referential theory of the implicit poses a difficulty. The theory provides no maximum measure of implicit content, short of the total topic itself in its total reality as potentially describable. As ways of meeting this difficulty, theological history seems to show but two forms of solution. The one is epistemic and seems to have been popular with exegetes and historians, while the other is modal and seems to have been more popular with scholastic speculative and dogmatic theologians.

An epistemic cap?

The epistemic form of solution goes like this. One limits what is implicit in a proposition to people's general knowledge or belief about the proposition's topic — *e.g.* the knowledge held by some speaker or hearer of the proposition. Thus, what would be implicit in

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston

relative to me would be my personal fund of information (whether propositional or imaginal) on Boston politics. But since your fund of information is likely to be different from mine, it would follow that a token of (1) had a different implicit content for you than it had for me, even though we both encounter the same token of (1) in the same context. In a word, the idea of putting an epistemic cap on the semantic theory of the implicit seems to present one with an unpalatable choice: if the implicit is not to be the total describable (potentially knowable) reality of what the proposition is about (which seems rather too vast), it must become what is actually known or believed about that reality by each speaker or hearer, hence different for each and relative to each (which seems insufficiently objective).

Before deciding on the merits of this objection, I should like to present and evaluate two interesting ways of overcoming it.

Let the cap = the speaker's awareness?

The first way is to fasten upon a privileged speaker (*e.g.* the original author of the work containing [the relevant token of] the proposition in question) and to limit the implicit content to that speaker's belief or knowledge about the topic which the proposition presents. This move seems plausible. After all, the speaker intends to convey something. His speech act yields a proposition which reflects that intention. He may have intended to convey, suggest, insinuate, hint at, or globally refer to, a great deal. But he can hardly have intended to convey, suggest, *etc.*, what he himself was unaware of. Therefore, the absolute limit on what may be said to be implicit in any proposition is the speaker's own fund of information on what the proposition is about. I call this the speaker-awareness proposal.

There are certain purposes for which this proposal is no doubt in order. Sometimes people do mean by the "implicit" that to which the speaker might plausibly (or might possibly) have meant to allude in saying what he said. However, the legitimate purposes for which this speaker-awareness proposal might be in order cannot be stretched to cover a general theory of the propositional implicit. For it is rather clear that the proposal confuses propositions with the speech acts in which they occur. The fund of knowledge limiting the speaker's real and potential intentions is relevant to the latter, not at all to the former, except in the context-building ways already discussed. Hence, insofar as one is prepared to distinguish the case of propositional implicitness from the case of speech-act implicitness, dealt with previously in this essay, the proposal is unacceptable.

Of course, someone might agree that propositions and speech-acts are different, and yet hold that the thing in which implicit information is implicit is always a speech-act, never a proposition. It is worth showing, therefore, that the speaker-awareness proposal fails even on this view to yield a satisfactory account of the implicit.

Suppose it is common knowledge in Boston that Curley has taken bribes, but the speaker himself is unaware of the matter, being a visitor from out of town. Accustomed to

holding public figures in esteem, the visiting speaker is scandalized, at a cocktail-party of reform-minded locals, to hear disparaging remarks being made about Hizzonor. The visitor protests starchily: "Mr. Curley is the mayor of Boston," meaning to emphasize the dignity of the office. The party dissolves in laughter. Unwittingly, the speaker has only succeeded in implying that the dignity reposes upon a crook.

In other words, 'imply' is not always used of intentional action. Sometimes one implies something accidentally, thanks to knowledge held by others. Thus unwittingly a secret is betrayed; a *double-entendre* is unforeseen; one "stumbles" upon a solution or "blunders" into giving offense. In all such cases, speaker-awareness is irrelevant to speaker-generated effects.

Moreover, the speaker-awareness proposal sets no cap at all in the special case of the Bible in traditional theology. The principal author of Scripture (and the principal speaker, one might say, of the Apostolic preaching) is held to be God Himself, whose knowledge includes the total intelligibility of every reality to which His words refer. Therefore, if a proposition of Scripture, *P*, refers to an object, *a*, and an arbitrarily chosen proposition, *Q*, happens to be true of *a*, there will be nothing to prevent one's holding that *Q* is implicit in *P*. Such is the effect of positing an omniscient speaker. In order to restore a cap, one must promote the human author (or editor, or final editor) of a part of Scripture to the honor of being the person speaking in it — with grim consequences for the authority of the Bible and its unity as a canon.

Let the cap = the audience's understanding?

A second way of putting an epistemic cap on the semantic implicit has also been attractive. One fastens upon a privileged audience (usually, the original audience), and what is allowably said to be implicit in a proposition is limited to what was known or believed about the proposition's topic among the audience to which its utterance was addressed. Instead of stressing the limits of what the speaker might have intended, one stresses the limits of what the original audience might have understood or been led to think of. We may call this the audience-understanding proposal.

This time the proposal does not seem to violate the distinction between propositions and speech-acts (though it probably violates the one between propositions and the hearer-understandings of propositions). Again, there may be certain purposes for which the proposal is convenient. After all, communication is normally a cooperative process. A speaker will normally pitch his utterances to what his audience can be expected to understand; so their fund of culture, horizon of awareness, *etc.*, will become a norm for the speaker and for his speech-products. Nevertheless, the audience-understanding proposal is hardly palatable in theology, nor is it of general validity.

Theology most centrally has to deal with a canonized text, and one of the effects of canonization (like the effect of declaring a text a classic) is to disestablish the original

audience — to view the text as addressed to all audiences and all generations. Thus no particular audience's limited horizon is any longer allowed to circumscribe the text's implicit meaning.

As for the proposal's general invalidity outside of theology, it arises from the fact that the scope of "audience knowledge" is notoriously hard to ascertain; few audiences are so homogeneous as to provide one useful standard; and as soon as segments of the audience are admitted to differ in how much they know, the proposal becomes an arbitrary restriction of the implicit to the least common denominator. If one alters the proposal so as to make the most knowledgeable segment of the original audience the standard, one is being no less arbitrary. One may as well return to individual relativism.

Indeed, neither of these proposals escapes relativism. They assign a fixed content to a proposition-candidate of type 4. But one and the same proposition in the sense of candidates 1 - 3 or 5 - 7 will have different implicit content depending upon who uttered a token (or member) of it, on the one proposal, or to whom he uttered it, on the other.

A modal screen?

It is not surprising, therefore, that another form of solution altogether has held the allegiance of most scholastic theologians: not epistemic but modal. One can escape relativism and still restrict "implicit content" to manageable proportions, it seems, by saying that what is really implicit in a proposition is that alone which is either contained in the definition of its terms or contained necessarily in the realities to which those terms refer. In other words, the proposal is to use "necessity" to form the boundary of the implicit, but also to allow that necessity to go beyond linguistic usage (definition, analyticity) so as to include non-accidental structures in the real (essences, truths synthetic *a priori*, points true *per se* in the first or second mode of perseity, *etc.*).

It should go without saying that some form of this solution is the real content of the misnamed logical theories which have inhabited the history of theology. They are semantic theories supplemented by some sort of objective, necessity-related restriction. They should be called modal, or restricted-semantic, or perhaps logico-metaphysical theories.

What has made this proposal seem attractive, indeed inevitable, to many generations of theologians has been their stimulating (but not entirely well-placed) hope that Sacred Theology could be a deductive, Aristotelian science, on the model of what they took to be the great exemplar of all such sciences, Euclidean geometry. Explicitly revealed teachings could take the place of Euclid's axioms, while metaphysical definitions (embodying truths of natural reason about key items mentioned in those teachings) could take the place of Euclid's definitions. Thereupon, just as the deducing of Euclid's theorems yielded a vast body of new propositions, which are necessarily true, given his axioms and definitions, so also the deducing of "theological conclusions" could yield a large body of new propositions which are necessarily true, given the original revealed data and a set of sound definitions or

rationes.

More to the point: just as the body of Euclid's theorems could be seen as the "implicit information" contained rather amazingly in those innocent-looking definitions and trivial-looking axioms, so also the body of theological conclusions could be justified as objects of faith (I mean as actual or potential objects of *fides divina et catholica*) by being seen as the "implicit information" contained in the original objects of such faith. All theological progress, and all doctrinal development could then be seen as faithfulness to the *depositum fidei*, faithfulness protected by the walls of intelligible necessity.

Before evaluating this modal form of solution, let us take up a long postponed question. What about the example of Euclid? Doesn't that wonderful body of theorems prove that the results of deduction need not be trivial? And if, indeed, one cannot get by deduction more information than one started with, might it not be the case that one started with a lot more information than one realized? And isn't this the very charm of logically fertile axioms, that they give one more information than one realizes? And so doesn't all of this prove that there can be important and interesting cases in which "pure logic" suffices to yield the totality of the implicit?

No. Indeed not. Look carefully at a Euclidean proof. See how often it depends upon making a "construction," the ingredients for which (points, lines, planes, angles, *etc.*) are simply assumed to exist, and the procedures for accomplishing which (bisecting, circumscribing, dropping perpendiculars, *etc.*) are simply assumed to be licit — without a word having been said to that effect in the axioms. See, then, how deeply the proof depends upon insight into the entities which Euclid's terms refer to. Far from using the axioms (and definitions and postulates) plus the rules of formal logic alone, a Euclidean proof is a "thought experiment," in which one never knows in advance how many geometrical entities one will have to take into account in order to be in a position to prove anything. This is the system's semantic dimension. In technical parlance, one says that Euclidean geometry is an incompletely "formalized" system. It still bears the imprint of informal, intuitive procedures used by creative geometers, before Euclid undertook to systematize their results.³⁴ Hence the historically influential "paradigm" of Euclidean geometry, school-book myths to the contrary, does not in fact illustrate a purely logical case of the implicit.

Of course, what Euclid did not finish, David Hilbert did. A full formalization of

³⁴ On the thought-experimental character of mathematics in its creative stage, prior to the formalization of results, see Imre Lakatos, "Proofs and Refutations," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 14 (1963) 1-25; 120-139; 221-245; 296-342. On constructions and the unpredictably large number of entities to which one must advert in finding a Euclidean proof, see Jaakko Hintikka, "Kant and the Tradition of Analysis," in his *Logic, Language-Games, and Information* (Oxford, 1973), 199-221.

classical geometry was provided in Hilbert's re-axiomatization of Euclid; and it is true that in Hilbert's version, all the theorems follow from the axiom-set by the rules of formal logic alone.³⁵ Doesn't this prove that there can be a good use for a purely logical theory of the implicit? Yes; in a sense, it does. But only "in a sense." For one had better take notice of two devastating points.

The first is that such a full formalization, precisely because it de-semanticizes the system, has the result that Hilbert's "geometry" is no longer about our familiar geometrical objects; it is no longer about anything. As Hilbert himself said, where the axioms use 'point', 'line', or 'surface', they are using totally undefined terms, and the student would do just as well to think of "table, chair, and beer mug." In other words, a fully formalized deductive system is an "uninterpreted calculus," which we are free to apply to anything at all about which its axioms will come out true. Can one imagine reducing theological discourse to such a calculus?

The second devastating point is, if possible, even worse. Hilbert's feat depended upon an ingenious expansion of Euclid's set of axioms. The only way in which Hilbert could know what to put into his new axiom-set, so that it would yield all of Euclid's theorems by the rules of formal logic alone, and only those theorems, was to know in advance all the types of constructions which would have to be made, in order to prove what (he also knew in advance) was supposed to be proved. Otherwise he would have been choosing blindly. The moral, then, is this: if one has not already learned, by dealing with certain realities, the capital truths about them, and if one has not already used this knowledge to decide in advance which propositions one wishes to make re-appear as "theorems" in the deductive system one is organizing, it is both fruitless and impossible to construct the system.

Formalization should come after one has already learned the important truths about the objects under investigation; the point of formalizing is not to learn something new about those objects (though one may, in fact, crank out a few new theorems), but to learn something about the logical dependencies or independencies of the truths one already knows. This latter is an important pursuit in its own right; I do not belittle the value of a formal-axiomatic approach. But for purposes of the present topic, I insist upon the following fact: the information which appears logically implicit in Hilbert is just a re-worked form of what was semantically implicit in Euclid and his predecessors.

What has just been said about Euclid will also hold for every formal, deductive theory which has non-logical (that is, material) terms in its axioms — terms about whose meaning people have definite ideas, thanks to which they refuse to reduce them to totally undefined

³⁵ David Hilbert, *Foundations of Geometry*, trans. E. J. Townsend (LaSalle, Ill., 1902). The significance of Hilbert's work is well discussed in the article on him in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

ciphers. For in every such system, the information implicit in the axioms cannot be “purely logical” information and hence cannot be unpacked by purely logical means.

What about a system whose axioms do not contain material terms? Wouldn't pure logic suffice to disclose all the information implicit in such a system? Of course. But such a system would *be* a logic. Its theorems, like its axioms, could contain nothing but logical-constants plus variables. That is what it means to be “a logic.” So the long-postponed question has its answer: a purely logical theory of the implicit cannot be satisfactory anywhere except in logic itself — not even in mathematics, not even in set theory.

To return now to the modal solution, the remarks just made really prove nothing except that one is right to treat this solution as an attempt to secure a restricted semantic theory of the implicit, not as an attempt at a purely logical theory. One still has to evaluate the various forms of this solution. One has to speak in the plural of “forms” of this modal solution, because of the notorious differences which exist over how to construe such central terms as ‘definition’, ‘essence’, and ‘necessity’, not to mention the quarrels over such relations as ‘inseparable from’, ‘really identical to’, ‘formally distinct from’, and ‘of the concept of’. It may help to illustrate some of these differences with our present example.

The term ‘mayor’ has an accepted definition, ‘chief officer of the municipal corporation of a city or burrough’. Hence the relational predicate, ‘is the mayor of’, is defined on the Cartesian product of the set of human persons and the set of incorporated cities. So all forms of this third proposal will concede that

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston

implicitly contains the information that

Curley is a human being
 Curley is a chief executive
 Boston is an incorporated city
 etc.

However, the definition of ‘mayor’ does not include the point that a mayor is an elected official. The Lord Mayor of London is an appointed official. Therefore, in order to get even

(1b) Curley is an elected official

included in the implicit content of

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston,

it will be necessary to stipulate that ‘mayor’ is to be taken according to American usage. Are such stipulations acceptable? May it vary from place to place what is “of the concept of” a mayor? And on either answer to that question, it will surely remain the case that this concept does not contain the note of ‘talented politician’.

Now take the two proper names which occur in (1), *viz.* ‘Curley’ and ‘Boston’. Neither

has a definition, and neither of the individuals referred to (if Boston may be called an individual) can be said, as an individual, to have an essence. (For where each individual as such is allowed to have its own essence and definition, as in the systems of Leibniz and Hegel, the scope of the necessary expands to include all individuating features and thus to include the whole scope of the real — a move which defeats the point of having a restricted semantic theory of the implicit.) Nevertheless, 'Curley' refers to a human being and might be held, therefore, to convey all the necessities connected with that species, just as 'Boston' might be held to convey the necessary notes of the species, City. On this species-version of the modal screen, (1) will include the implicit information that

Boston is an inhabited place
and that

Curley is a rational animal,
I suppose, but not that he has political talent.

Alternatively, one might insist that there are some necessary truths about Curley and Boston which are not necessary truths about their species. For example, there are counterfactual claims of the form,

Curley wouldn't exist, if . . .

Boston wouldn't exist, if . . .

which are certainly not true of Man or City in general, but which may be true of these individuals. One might suggest that some of these counterfactuals are necessary truths about them. Of course, it is likely to be controversial exactly which of such counterfactuals are necessary; the issue is bound up with the lively contemporary argument over the semantics of counterfactual claims,³⁶ over "rigid designators," as some names are called,³⁷ and over the trans-world identities or counterparts of individuals.³⁸ A decision to acknowledge some such "individual necessities" will yield a broader deposit of implicit information than can be gotten from the species-version alone. Nevertheless, it seems difficult to suppose that Curley wouldn't have existed, or wouldn't have been James Michael Curley, if he hadn't been a talented politician. Ah, but perhaps he wouldn't have been mayor. Perhaps there are further necessary truths of the form,

³⁶ David K. Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

³⁷ The term was invented by Saul Kripke; see Susan Haack, *Philosophy of Logics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 58-60 and 192.

³⁸ Jaakko Hintikka, *Models for Modalities* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1969).

Curley wouldn't have been mayor of Boston, if . . .
and perhaps

Curley wouldn't have been mayor of Boston, if he hadn't been a talented
politician

is among them. But what kind of necessity is this? Political dullards do get to be mayors, *e.g.* as the pawns of kingmakers. Why couldn't Curley have done the same? One is going to need more than a few senses of 'necessity', including some rather novel ones, to pursue this proposal any further.

If the pluriformity of the modal solution is now clear, how should one evaluate the general thrust of it?

It seems to me that the modal solution is seriously misplaced as a general theory of the implicit. It is much more plausible as a criteriological consideration. *Rather than addressing the question of what is implicit, it seems to address the question of what we can be sure is implicit.* Necessary connexion (whether analytic or synthetic) is a ground for assurance. But if, in a given case, one happens to have a different ground for assurance, *e.g.* common knowledge of a contingent connexion, why shouldn't one rely upon it? Necessary connexion is thus a sufficient condition for alleging implicitness, but it is hardly plausible as a necessary condition, and hence it is not plausible as the objective boundary-marker of the implicit. The present example illustrates the point well.

(2) Curley is a talented politician

has no necessary connexion of any familiar kind with

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston,

and yet seems to be implicit in it. One's basis for assurance is simply one's common knowledge about the politicking proclivities of the Boston Irish.

Another illustration is furnished by the current controversy over the legal protection of unborn children. Those favoring such protection commonly argue that unborn children are implicitly contained within the scope of the term 'person', as it is used in the 14th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. To hold that this argument is sound (as the present writer does) is not at all the same as committing oneself to a claim of necessary connexion.

For even if one allows both ordinary usage and Catholic philosophical doctrine to guide one's construal of the *legal term* 'person', that is, even if one holds that, necessarily, every individual human being is a person, it still does not follow that, necessarily, the unborn is a person. For, alas, the theory of mediate animation is not logically or metaphysically impossible. It is just groundless, I think. More precisely stated: there are various rival rules for the correlation of scientific findings with every-day terms and legal usages; some such rules must be adopted, if scientific discoveries are to have an impact upon public policy; in terms of basic philosophical and ethical considerations, some such rules-of-correlation are better justified than others; I contend that, if one adopts the best-justified set of such rules,

then current scientific data disconfirm “mediate animation” (or, if you prefer, they confirm the less loaded thesis that the unborn is an individual human being from fertilization forward). On this view, the assurance that legal protection for the unborn is implicit in the relevant clauses of the 14th Amendment does not rest upon any necessary connection (since neither ‘The unborn child is a person’ nor ‘The unborn child is a legal person’ is an analytic or necessary truth) but rests rather upon our assurance that certain scientific data, rightly correlated with terms like ‘human being’ and ‘person’, justify the unborn’s inclusion in those terms and fail to justify their exclusion — an assurance which may be said to rest upon a rational connexion.

In sum, then, my objection to the modal solution in all its forms is that it is criteriological rather than substantive. It does not define the real scope of the implicit but simply provides a ground for being sure that something is implicit. Indeed, the two epistemic proposals are subject to the same criticism. Speaker intentions and audience knowledge (if they can be ascertained) may also serve better as grounds for confidently alleging implicitness, rather than as definitions of the implicit’s real scope.

The problem returns

So, having responded negatively to all of the approaches by which the semantic content of a proposition is conventionally capped or screened, the present writer is faced with an unsolved problem. Suppose an object **a** is referred to in a proposition *P*; unless it is restricted in some way, the semantic content implicit in *P* will be the total reality of **a** as potentially describable (that is, every truth about **a** which can be stated at all). Thereupon, any language whose descriptive resources include an open-ended supply of relational predicates (as all the natural languages do) will bring the whole universe into the implicit content of *P*. For one can always find some relation between a given object and any other object. For instance, it is a fact about Boston politics that it is conducted at a distance of 8.6 light years from the Dog Star. Is that point implicit in

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston?

If not, some sort of restriction has got to be introduced. What further sort is possible?

Chapter 6

A Braided Solution

I am going to present three unequal ideas, two intended as sufficient conditions for implicitness, the third as a necessary one. The first two yield partially similar results and partially divergent. Each is sufficiently fuzzy that the full extent of their divergence is hard to assess. Each will be a strand of a braided solution.

All three ideas build on what has been developed so far: a semantic point of departure. The semantic account of the implicit is right to this extent: in passing from the explicit to the implicit, one passes from considering a form of words to considering what else one is led to suppose of the realities to which those words refer. Yet this passage is not made blindly. It is guided

- by one's knowledge of how realities interconnect, or
- by one's expectations of interconnexion, or at least
- by one's sense of relevance.

No matter if two propositions, P and Q , are about the same object, \mathbf{a} , people will hardly say that Q is implicit in P unless . . . well,

- unless they know some law-like regularity connecting the truth of Q with that of P , so that if Q were not true about \mathbf{a} , P would not be true about it either, or
- unless they have normal expectations about the kind of situation in which P is true, expectations which include the truth of something like Q , or
- unless what Q says is at least relevant somehow to what P says about \mathbf{a} .

That Mr. Curley is a talented politician is relevant to the fact that he is mayor of Boston; it is something we expect in a big-city mayor; and, given the predictable regularities of politics in Boston, it is a fact without which he would not have been mayor. It is not just some description contained potentially in the total topic of Boston's civic affairs. Thus it differs from the fact that those affairs are conducted at some light years from the Dog Star, a fact which is not relevant to his being mayor, not part of the normal packet of expectations about mayoralty, and not lawfully connected (there being less to astrology

than meets the eye) to anyone's political fortunes. The next task, then, is to supplement the semantic theory with one or another, or some combination, of these three restrictive notes. They are the gist of my three ideas. Let us look at them in order.

Strand 1

The first idea, real connexion through some sort of law-like regularity, was close to hand in the previous chapter, which brushed past a counterfactual to which I shall now give a number:

- (4) Curley would not have been mayor of Boston, if he had not been a talented politician.

I did not pause to do (4) justice, because the theory I was considering in that chapter required (4) to be a necessary truth, and this I found implausible by any normal standard of "necessity." But what if this (4) is only required to be *true* in order for 'Curley is a talented politician' to be implicit in 'Curley is the mayor of Boston'? Then it would be possible to make counterfactual truth, however contingent, a test of implicitness.

In other words, this first idea will enable one to say that what is implicit in a proposition, *P*, is just *the claim that those conditions obtain without which it would not be true* (never mind couldn't; just wouldn't). This solution will have the added charm of giving all three cases of the implicit — in practices, speech-acts, and propositions — a similar-sounding solution.

The "wouldn't-be-true" test has a palpably restrictive effect. It blocks out of the implicit content of (1), for example, all those conditions without which (1) merely might not be true. Curley had fine eyes and a roguish charm, as a matter of fact. In an Irish political milieu, it helps to be a "handsome divil." Less favored by nature, Curley might not have been mayor. But one cannot say with any assurance that he would not have been. So these charms and graces are not implicit in (1) by this test.

At the same time, however, the "wouldn't-be-true" test is broad enough to include a good deal more than what is immediately involved in being mayor. It seems to include all those antecedent conditions which causally or decisively contributed to his becoming mayor, and it even seems to include some later consequences of his doing so. For if the historical consequences of an event, *e*, are at least those events which *e* renders inevitable or those which would not have occurred at all, if *e* had not occurred, and if some of *e*'s consequences have both these properties, then it seems clear that there are consequences of (1) such that, if those consequences were not true, (1) would not be true either.

Now at first blush it may seem implausible to say that information about events which have not happened yet is implicit in a proposition about something which is happening

now, or which happened in the past. But people do seem to accept this possibility. We hear news of some current event, and we exclaim, "This means war!" Or we look historically at the birth of a son to Mary of Modena and James II, and we say "This spelled the end of Stuart rule." A little reflection serves to justify such statements. The world is a vast tangle of on-going processes, many of them somehow interconnected. One cannot pluck out an event and describe it in a proposition without pulling some of that tangle along with it — its connexions to causes and consequences — as the proposition's implicit content.

This idea of a proposition's pulling some of the world, but not all of the world, along with it, as that which is affected by its truth or falsity, is the key to the meaning of counterfactual claims. In the protasis (the if-clause) of such a claim,

'if it were the case that P , . . .'

one posits an alteration of the actual world, but a controlled alteration, a minimal alteration; one thinks of the world as being changed just enough and only enough to make it the case that P . The result is a family of one or more "possible worlds," in each of which P is true, and whatever P pulls with it becomes true, but the rest of actuality is left as much as possible the same. Then, in case one finds that, in all of this family of mini-mally altered possible worlds, P does pull something with it, namely Q , one has a complete counterfactual claim:

'if it were the case that P , it would be the case that Q '.

So understood, each attempt at a counterfactual claim represents a thought-experiment. When P pulls Q with it because logically, or conceptually, or metaphysically, P necessitates Q , the experiment obviously succeeds. So everything which the modal solution (in all its versions) would have declared implicit will now re-appear in the counterfactual approach. But such necessitation is not required for the experiment to succeed. Causal connexions, though logically contingent, validate counterfactuals. Even statistical regularities and "truisms" can validate them. If I had pulled the page, it would have torn. If the weather were more pleasant, park attendance would increase. So counterfactual connexion is different from necessary connexion, more liberal. If accepted as the test of implicitness, it will make causality and predictable regularity the boundary of the implicit, not just necessity. It thus yields a more plausible account of "implicit" content.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to settle for this solution too quickly. Its very liberality makes it hard to apply. In more cases than one would like to admit, perhaps, one simply doesn't know whether to accept a counterfactual as true. Look:

If the earth weren't 8.6 light years from the Dog Star, Curley would not be mayor of
Boston.

One really doesn't know what to make of that. On the one hand, against the astrologers, one is certain that the position of this star did not cause Curley to be mayor, *ceteris paribus*; the star's position is not a fact by virtue of which he is mayor. But one is not so

certain, on the other hand, that it is not a fact without which he would not have been. For it might be a very remotely necessary condition. Granted, even this suggestion doesn't seem true. It seems that sidereally distant heavenly bodies could be re-arranged in an astronomical number of ways, without affecting life on earth as we know it. But perhaps they could not. There may be laws of galactic organization by virtue of which virtually every such re-arrangement would have drastic consequences for the solar system, including the re-arrangement in which everything stays the same except that Sirius is subtracted. Without being a Leibnizian hall of mirrors, the world's processes could turn out to be more interconnected than we are now in a position to suspect. Whereupon implicit content, tested by counterfactual truth, could balloon outrageously.

One begins to see, in other words, that “the conditions without which *P* would not be true” include, but also go far beyond, “the conditions which have made *P* true” (at least in an active, causal sense of ‘make’), so that a choice between them would yield different objective measures of the implicit.

Faced with that choice, one might try to defend the narrower measure. If it does matter, for example, where Sirius is, it does not matter to this or that person's being mayor (which is what we are interested in) but to the more general fact that there is an earth for Boston to exist upon. You might say that Sirius matters at best to anyone's being mayor, because it matters to there being such a place for anyone to be mayor of, but since it does not matter specifically to Curley's being mayor (but twinkles on consistently with any other election result), it should not be implicit in his being mayor. But this line of argument comes to nothing. Why should the scope of the implicit be limited to the points a biographer or a political scientist might be interested in? Philosophers and astrophysicists have interests, too. The hierarchy of being, in which high political flights are supported by underlying orders of entities, biological, chemical, descending rank on rank until one reaches the ultimate principles of physical process, dictating how particles decay and galaxies spin — is it not a grand object of contemplation? Is it not significant that the universe should manifest such unity of design, that astrophysical facts are implicit in there being inhabitable places, and therefore in anyone's being mayor of such places? And how can it even make sense to suggest that what is implicit in anyone's being mayor should not be implicit in Curley's being mayor?

No, one ought to have the courage to accept the wider measure. “Causes” and “conditions *sine qua non*” work together, after all; why shouldn't the implicit embrace them both? By any imaginable test, Curley's being mayor of Boston includes the implicit information that there is a Boston; but the existence of Boston (a) is patient of other election results, and (b) is therefore only a necessary condition of his mayoralty, which (c) rests on further pre-conditions. Having admitted one necessary condition, why not admit the rest?

The advisability of taking a more restrictive view can be re-considered later, when the

notion of relevance is discussed. For now, one ought to remind oneself yet again that one is seeking to define what *is* implicit, not what people know or care is implicit; if the former balloons “outrageously” beyond the latter, the outrage is no more than a measure of the world's capacity to surprise the ignorant.

One also begins to see, however, that the symmetry which counterfactual phraseology gives to all three cases of the implicit is a surface symmetry concealing a deeper difference. Propositions are called upon to be “true”; speech-acts and practices are only asked to have “point.” The truth of counterfactual propositions depends upon the whole complexity of the real; the having-point of speech-acts and practices depends only upon human beliefs and purposes, *i.e.* upon conventions which are vastly more perspicuous to us than the laws of nature. No wonder, then, that it seems easier to say what would make actions pointless than it does to say what would make counterfactuals false!

Now, speaking of the false, what about propositions which in fact are false? What is their implicit content? It cannot be the conditions without which they would not be true, because in fact they are not true. Can it be “the set of conditions which would be true, if the untrue proposition were true” or perhaps “the set of conditions given which it would be true”? No, because typically there is no such set. There are many sets. Suppose

‘The house at 7 Prospect Street is green’

is false; suppose the house is really white. One set of conditions “given which” it would be green includes the condition that its owner painted it so last year; another set includes the condition that the previous owner painted it so a decade ago, and it has never been repainted; a third set includes the condition that Irish rowdies did it overnight in celebration of March 17, etc. Since there is no way to choose among these sets, one will have to fall back to their intersection: the general points which appear in all of them.

The problem, of course, is that the false proposition connects with no real history; no real tangle of concrete causes and consequences is “pulled” with it. And as a result, this counterfactual idea of implicitness assigns a vastly poorer implicit content to false propositions than it does to true ones. Put it this way: if

‘The house is green’

is true, its implicit content includes rich hunks of real history, without which the house wouldn't be green, such as the paint-job which Jones did on it in 1981 under the nagging of his in-laws; if

‘The house is green’

is false, its implicit content is a tissue of generalities, such as ‘Someone painted it so at some time or other’. In other words, when a proposition is false, its implicit content shrinks to a set of general conditions without which it *could not* be true.

Should this disparity between what is implicit in true propositions, by the counterfactual test, and what is implicit in false ones count as an embarrassment for the test? Probably

not. Newman, at least, welcomed such disparity, as a witness to the fruitfulness of truth for the mind which holds it. Falsehood is “thin” and gets you nowhere. But if what you believe, in proportion as you reason upon it and try to “realize” what it is saying, leads you in many fruitful directions which check out, corroborate one another and connect with distant facts, *voilà* a splendid indication that what you believe is true.³⁹

Let us close the discussion of this counterfactual idea with an official summary:

(D₄) Let S be a sentence of language L in context C ; let P be the proposition explicit in S in C , and let Q be a proposition distinct from P : where $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ is true and it is the case that if Q were not true, $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ would not be true, Q is implicit in S in C ; where $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ is false and it is the case that, without Q , $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$ could not be true, Q is implicit in S in C .

That done, let us turn to a second idea.

Strand 2

Recent studies in human memory have been enhanced by the theory of “scripts,” originally developed in the field of artificial-intelligence research by Shank and Abelson.⁴⁰

The idea is that our memories are organized into lists of generalizations and expectations, each such list being a “script” for some kind of situation. Thus we would each have a “tennis-match script,” consisting of points generally true and to-be-expected for such a match, a “going to a restaurant script,” a “visit to the doctor's office script,” *etc.* Memory then functions against the background of these scripts. They enable us to remember the unexpected. In other words, further memories are mostly stored according to the failure of a script.

These same lists of generalizations and expectations are used in “understanding” a sentence, *i.e.* in processing the information it conveys. They are the implicit “ground” against which the sentence “figures.” Thus, when we hear

“John sold Mary a book for two dollars,”

we understand that

³⁹ See the 15th of his Oxford University Sermons.

⁴⁰ Roger Shank and Robert Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding* (New York: Lawrence, Erlbaum and Associates, 197-). I am greatly indebted to Prof. Michael Freiling of Oregon State University for bringing this seminal work to my attention.

Mary now has the book
 She didn't have it before
 John has two dollars more than he had before
 etc.

Notice carefully, however, that these “understood” points, which people would willingly call implicit, are generally valid anticipations, not causal necessities, much less logical certainties. We may call them “natural” inferences. Any one of them could be false. Maybe John sold her the book but never actually gave it to her. Maybe he sold it to her, but in actual fact it was already hers; he tricked her. Notice the function of the word ‘but’ here. It says, “Call off the natural inference.” We say, “I just ate, but [call off the natural inference] I’m still hungry.” When we are not told by a ‘but’ to suspend the natural inference, we make it. If we hear that he sold her the book [no ‘buts’ in sight], we infer that she now has it, didn’t have it before, etc. Some of these natural inferences may therefore fail the counterfactual test.

My second idea, then, is to define the implicit along these new lines. The implicit content of a proposition should be at least the set of points naturally inferrible — in another famous Newmanism, “antecedently probable” — given that proposition. A more official statement would go something like this.

(D₅) Let P be the proposition which is explicit in a sentence S in a context C , and let Q be a proposition distinct from P : then if $\text{Par}(\mathbf{S})_C$ picks out a state of affairs pertaining to an item of the kind K , and if Q is on some list V of generalizations and expectations for an item of the kind K , then Q is implicit in S in C , provided that C permits the choice of V as an appropriate list.

The word ‘item’ is used here in utmost breadth: things, events, situations, signs, numbers, structures, properties, topics — anything real or imaginary is allowed to count as an item.

Many features of such an approach call for attention.

First, the script approach connects seamlessly with the remarks in chapter 3 about amplification and about the semantic “minimum” defined in (D₃). A statement-frame which is formalistically complete and fully particularized, such as, ‘In the spring of 1928, Curley was envious of Al Smith over the national attention he was getting’, can itself be fitted into ampler frames which go on with a ‘because’ or an ‘although’ or a ‘so that’ or any number of other conjunctions which would serve to introduce causes, circumstances, or results. These further circumstances may not fit logico-syntactically into the original statement-frame, but they fit semantically into the kind of situation which this particularization of the frame presents. Where one politician is envious of another over media attention, we expect that he is envious because he wants such attention too, and because he sees the other man as a competitor, and although they were previously friends, or although they have different

ambitions, *etc.* Hence these circumstances are not only parts of the kind of situation to which the statement points but also are the kinds of parts which are so regularly and expectably parts of a situation that we have standard linguistic resources (common types of subordinate clauses) for exhibiting such parts in their relation and connexion with a given description of the situation. Hence to take these expectable parts or features as implicit information is a natural way to move beyond the semantic minimum of such information which (D_3) already defined — especially if the context supports them.

Secondly, the script approach justifies the intuitive conviction that

(2) Curley is a talented politician

is implicit in

(1) Curley is the mayor of Boston.

For the state of affairs which (1) picks out pertains to the kind of situation which we might describe as a major city's having a famous mayor. We expect the mayor in such a situation to be an accomplished politician. Our expectation could be defeated, of course. It is perfectly possible for a big-city mayor to be famously incompetent — which is why the modal approach, as we saw, could not make (2) implicit in (1). Yet such a case would be odd; it would be memorable exactly because it defeated a natural implication of somebody's being a famous mayor of a great metropolis. For this very reason, such implications belong in a proposition's implicit content; otherwise the oddity which we feel, when they are defeated, would be unexplained.

Third comes the matter of truth values. Modal and counterfactual approaches to the implicit, no matter how different in other respects, agree in this: that every proposition implicit in a true proposition must itself be true. In the script approach, this rule is violated.

The points implicit in a true proposition become those “normally” true along with it, of which some may, however, be false, as was just seen. A moment ago we saw a common example:

'Jones just ate a large meal, but he is still hungry'

is a consistent sentence. The 'but' at once concedes that the clause preceding it carries a certain natural implication and introduces something inconsistent with that implication.

This permission for a point implicit in a true proposition to be false is surely a strength of the script approach. How else explain the capacity of true statements (not to mention statements which are “true as far as they go”) to mislead us? How else explain the effectiveness of mental reservation? How else explain, indeed, the everyday employment of the conjunction 'but'?

Fourthly, the script approach braids beautifully with the counterfactual approach. The latter, as we saw, assigns richer implicit content to true propositions than it does to false ones. The script approach does not. It simply assigns to each proposition, regardless of its truth-value, a list of points “antecedently probable” and hence generally expectable in the

kind of situation which the proposition presents. Yet if the proposition *is* true, and the expectations are *not* defeated, there stands behind the proposition a wealth of concrete facts which fulfill these general expectations. For example, the sheer statement which

'The house is green'

makes (in its context) carries with it by (D₅) the implicit point that the owner wanted it painted that way, as a general expectation. But if it is also true that the house is green (and the expectation is not defeated), then the concrete fact which verifies this general expectation — say, the fact that Jones did a paint-job on it back in '81 — is also implicit by (D₄), because it would not be green, if he had not done that job. In other words, whenever our expectations, implicit by (D₅), are based upon law-like connexions, the facts which fulfill those expectations are implicit by (D₄). This hand-in-glove between the two definitions captures the novel sense of implicitness which burst upon the 19th century in Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.

Fifthly, the script approach improves upon the modal and counterfactual approaches in its sensitivity to history. After all, what is necessarily true, given *P*, is ahistorical (that is: historically invariant). What is such that, without it, *P* would not be true, is sensitive to certain sorts of historical change but not necessarily to changing cultures and expectations. But what is generally true or to-be-expected, given *P*, is fully sensitive to all kinds of historical change. The script approach thus makes the objective scope of the implicit depend upon features of an historically given culture. For scripts vary from culture to culture. The very kinds of events for which there are scripts vary. We have a "running for mayor of a large city" script; the ancient Hebrews did not. We and they are alike in having a "lodging at an inn" script, but its contents differ in the two cultures. Therefore, in order to know what is implicit in a sentence like "There was no room for them in the inn," written 2,000 years ago about a situation in Palestine, one must learn something of the conventions and amenities of that place and time.

This sensitivity to history is surely another strength of the script approach. It explains the relevance of deep historical scholarship to the sound interpretation of texts — not just the philological scholarship required for issues of linguistic period.

Just here, however, the script approach forces one to reconsider some proposals rejected earlier. Those proposals were that *S*'s implicit content should be limited to its historical speaker's awareness or its historical audience's common-knowledge of what *S* was about. How different is the script approach from these proposals?

It seems to me that the differences are three.

First, focusing on the generalizations and expectations given in a culture is different (and considerably better) than focusing on the knowledge and beliefs held by particular persons. Since propositions do convey their information within a system of culture, a certain cultural relativity regarding their implicit content is far less objectionable than an individual relativity to particular speakers and hearers. Moreover, the knowledge held by

particular speakers and audiences is rarely an attainable object of historical scholarship, whereas the conventional assumptions of a culture or epoch are the common stuff of such scholarship. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that the script idea is, in this regard, what many defenders of the other two proposals really wanted to articulate.

The second difference is more crucial. If one does redraft the other proposals, combining them, so as to fuse some points in speaker-awareness and some points in audience-understanding together into the script which was prevalent at the time of the proposition's production, one gets an exclusivist version of the script idea. This version's distinctive claim would be that, among all the available lists, *V*, of generalizations and expectations for the kind of situation which *S* presents in its context, the one and only appropriate list is the one prevailing in the cultural milieu of the author and original audience of the text containing *S*.⁴¹ The power of a text's status as "canonical," or as a "classic," to dis-establish this one list and render others appropriate also, is thereby denied. The theologically important phenomenon of re-reading or re-interpretation of texts within an on-going tradition (*e.g.* the gradual re-reading of royal psalms as messianic prophecies in post-exilic Judaism) is thereby discountenanced. One can write a history of such a tradition, of course, but one is drawn inevitably to present the *Überlieferungsgeschichte* as a *Mißdeutungsgeschichte*. By contrast, the version of the script idea which I have defined in (D₅) imposes no such exclusivity. It allows *V* to change in accordance with the historical periods through which the text continues to be received as something "current," *e.g.* as God's still-current word of promise.

Thirdly and just as crucially, the original speaker-intention and audience-understanding proposals attempted to fix a necessary condition for implicitness; as defined in (D₅), the script idea does not. It establishes only a sufficient condition. It is thereby open to alternative and supplementary tests.

Besides accommodating much of what the epistemic proposals sought to achieve, such as a sensitivity to history, the script approach also accommodates something that was positive in the modal proposal. Beyond doubt, the principal concern of scholastic theologians with the category of the implicit was to secure the *entrée* of metaphysical terms and theses into the Christian message, as entailments thereof. If one purpose of doing so was speculative (so that Biblical mysteries could be re-described in enlightening meta-physical terms), another purpose was apologetic (because the Church had in fact adopted metaphysical terms in her formulations of dogma). Both purposes required that their good results be implicit in Christian discourse; but as to how they had to be implicit, the

⁴¹ This is the natural way to read the famous dictum of Schleiermacher: "Everything in a given text which requires fuller interpretation must be explained and determined *exclusively* from the linguistic domain common to the author and his original public." The citation is from Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 200, but the italics are mine.

purposes diverged.

■ For the speculative purpose, it was sufficient that revealed truths and metaphysical ones serve as independent premisses; metaphysical re-descriptions of revealed mysteries would then emerge only in a body of deduced theory which, though highly prized, could remain “virtually” implicit in revelation and extrinsic to the object of faith. A pluralism of schools and metaphysical systems was easily tolerable.

■ But for the apologetical purpose, all the metaphysical re-descriptions which had been employed by the Church in actual dogmatic formulas had to be proved intrinsic to the object of faith, intrinsic to the revealed datum itself (“formally” implicit). A pluralism of metaphysical systems raised the spectre of dogmatic relativism.⁴²

The purposes were potentially at cross-purposes, then, and an ambivalence over the faith-status of metaphysical re-descriptions has been felt ever since. Even the current (post-Vatican II) pluralism of philosophical options in the Church — does it disqualify metaphysical re-descriptions, or does it qualify more? Does it dis-establish yesteryear's re-descriptions in order to dis-establish all, or in order to substitute new for old? Must all substituends intersect at defined points, or would some looser compatibility suffice?⁴³

It is not the duty of a general theory of the implicit to resolve these tensions, but simply to show where and how metaphysical theses allowing theological re-descriptions may arise as implicit information. The script approach fulfills this duty very well. If a proposition is about a situation involving entities of the kinds k_1, k_2, \dots, k_n , one can think of the non-contingent features, metaphysical structures, essences, *etc.*, of each of the k_i as belonging on every epistemically defensible list V of generalizations and expectations about situations involving entities of these kinds. Thanks to cultural limitations, not every applicable list will be epistemically defensible: the historical exegete is thus given a large and rightful province. But the contemporary philosopher-theologian will also have a province, if he can conquer it. His metaphysics, if correct, will give us the invariant and undefeatable portion of every applicable list which is epistemically defensible. This is exactly what a Christian wants to learn from a philosopher: what he can be sure of about God and the other mysterious entities which enter into situations with man, situations presented in the sentences of Scripture? The catch is that the philosopher cannot give the Christian a

⁴² Hence the famous encyclical letter, *Humani generis*, of August 12, 1950; see *Acta apostolici sedis* 42 (1950), pp. 561ff. and 960. An enlightening discussion of the controversies leading up to the encyclical is Giorgio Eldarov, O.F.M.Conv., *Presenza della Teologia* (Padova, 1954).

⁴³ Sophisticated standards of “comparability” between philosophical frameworks, sufficient to insure the rational progressivity of theological inquiry, are just beginning to be discussed. A stimulating contribution (though one with which I disagree) is Raymond J. Devettere, “Progress and Pluralism in Theology,” *Theological Studies* 35 (1974) 441-466.

credible answer, except to the extent that he has refuted rival philosophers. There is no room in working philosophy for an aesthetic of diversity. The script approach allows pluralism on the condition that it be gladiatorial.⁴⁴

Frankly, the present writer has no doubt that the script approach to the implicit, involving the reference of a proposition *P* to some kind of fact, event, or situation, and measuring *P*'s implicit information by a list of generalizations and expectations associated with that kind, captures the very heart of what we intuitively take implicitness to be. Any acceptable theory of propositional implicitness will have to give it the central role.

Yet I don't think it can altogether displace the counterfactual approach. One may well say that our scripts reveal what is (or was) "intuitively" implicit, but we do not and should not insist that whatever is implicit be (or have been) intuitively so. We are prepared to be surprised. We are prepared to let conceptual reasoning and causal knowledge lead us to implicit points we were not expecting. We just require that the bridge of rational proof or causal connexion to the new point from what we were expecting be sound. This willingness to let implicit content expand beyond the appropriate script or scripts, *via* non-obvious entailments and verified counterfactuals, is simply a reflection of our rational commitment to be at once logical *and* realistic.

Still, as was seen in the case of Boston's distance from the Dog Star, counterfactual truth can be extremely difficult to assess, and counterfactual claims which may be true, for all we know, can lead one into territories which one's intuitions strongly reject as beyond

⁴⁴ To be more precise, philosophical alternatives must be rivals, and hence gladiators, if realism is true. By realism, I mean the conviction that reality (what is really the case) is independent of human beliefs and conceptions of what is the case, and that even those parts of reality which are constituted by human actions and attitudes (cultures, economies, belief-systems, etc.) are independent of the beliefs and conceptions of those who study or interpret them. For if this conviction is sound, then there is just one reality, to which every philosophy must appeal and try to approximate. By contrast, if realism is false, then what is real is somehow what is real-for-us, given our concepts or beliefs. "Reality" is then a human construct, and different philosophies will yield different "realities," which cannot be rivals (having nothing beyond themselves to which to appeal), but which may be alternatives for a chooser who is panoramically educated.

There are sophisticated non-realist positions (the later Wittgenstein, Quine) within which my previous remarks on language, reference, meaning, and information would continue to make some sense; but they will make full sense only within a decidedly realist position. More deeply, it seems clear that Christian theism, with its doctrine of creation, stands or falls with "realism" in the sense just defined. To the extent that certain hermeneutical strategies simply presuppose a non-realist metaphysics, they are incompatible *a priori* with Christian theism.

My way of defining 'realism' owes much to two of Roger Trigg's books, *Reason and Commitment* (Cambridge University Press, 1973) and *Reality at Risk, A Defense of Realism in Philosophy and the Sciences* (Barnes and Noble, 1980).

the pale of “the implicit.” It is one thing, after all, for intuitions to be stretched, and quite another for them to be violated. So it is time to turn to my third idea.

Strand 3

There is some kinship between what is implicit in a proposition and what is relevant to entertaining it. By the tests defined so far, almost every proposition Q implicit in P would also be called “relevant.” It is impossible to suggest, however, that the converse would hold. There are certainly relevant points which we should not call implicit. For suppose P says that a certain gun is empty, and suppose the truth of the matter is that the gun is loaded; let Q be the proposition that the gun is loaded. Then the truth of Q is desperately relevant to the person entertaining P , but no one would dream of suggesting that Q is implicit in P . Quite the contrary! The propositions which are inconsistent with P might almost be defined as “the propositions guaranteed not to be implicit in P .” So, the class of propositions picking out facts inconsistent with P is a potentially rather large class of propositions strongly relevant to one's entertaining P but certainly not implicit in P .

However, one can remove this special class of propositions from consideration and look exclusively at the others which are relevant. Between these latter relevancies and what is implicit in P the overlap might be very large, might include points missed by the other tests, or might suggest restrictions on the other tests. So it seems worthwhile to see what can be made of “relevance.”

The task is not an easy one, because the realm of “things” between which the relation of relevance is defined is murky. Can physical things be relevant, or only facts about them? Can propositions be relevant, or only allegations? If various things can be relevant, what are they allowed to be relevant to? Other facts? Other allegations? The murk is especially thick when one is trying to keep up the distinction between propositions and speech-acts. If you have just called me a liar, both your speech-act and the proposition imbedded in it are “relevant” to whether I ought to say what I am tempted to say in my next speech-act. So it seems clear that both speech-acts and their imbedded propositions are among the things which can “have” relevance. And what both are relevant to, in this case, is clear, namely, to a decision about a speech-act. In that act which I am contemplating, a proposition will be imbedded. So there is an indirect relation between your proposition and the one I am thinking of, *via* your asserting yours and my decision whether to assert mine. But apart from such mediation through speech-acts, is relevance ever a direct relation of proposition to proposition?

I have a reason for doubting it. After all, what kind of a relation is relevance? Is it a formal or logical relation between P and Q ? A material or “content” relation? Is it even a

value-free relation? I mean, can relevance be determined independently of people's interests? The answers, I think, are no, no, and no, respectively. Relevance can turn indifferently upon material or formal considerations, because its real basis is what people are up to. It turns upon our interests.

This is not to say that relevance is a matter of whim. One cannot make one thing relevant to another by merely wanting it to be so. Claims of relevance can be criticized, and counter-claims of irrelevance can be justified. Relevance is not a matter of taste. Nevertheless, the notion of relevance (somewhat like the notion of goodness) cannot be defined independently of people's fixed and defensible interests (among which are interests in rational discourse, causal explanation, and other disciplining ends). But however defensible, or even ineluctable, these interests may be, they are still interests. Propositions don't have interests. Speakers do.

In other words, propositions can have relevance only because speakers and hearers have interests. Hence the things which propositions are relevant to can only be the *actions* through which speakers and hearers pursue these interests.⁴⁵

These actions are immensely various. Some of them do not involve producing or manipulating propositions at all. (For instance, one of the actions to which your calling me a liar is relevant is my punching you out.) But those that do involve propositions are still quite various. Besides asserting or defending *P*, I can hypothesize that *P*, suggest that *P*, throw it up for debate whether *P*, or wonder if *P*. I can also question, doubt, or deny *P*. I can just try to understand *P* by visualizing what it would be like for *P* to be the case. On a different tack, I can suggest, advise, or direct that it be brought about that *P*. Let us say that these actions are so many ways of entertaining a proposition.

Out of their diversity arises another difficulty. Some of these ways of entertaining *P* make it the case that the question before the house is whether *P* is true, but others make the question be merely whether *P* is tenable, consistent, or comprehensible, and still others make the question be whether having *P* come true is advisable. Surely the issue of whether and how some point *Q* is relevant to my entertaining *P* depends upon, and varies with, my way of entertaining it.

And here is another difficulty. We have been speaking as though propositions were among the things which "have" relevance. But consider the ways just mentioned of entertaining a proposition. To any of these ways of entertaining *P*, can another proposition *Q*, purely as a proposition, be relevant? It is hard to see how, in every case but one. That case is where I am simply trying to understand *P*; for in that case the propositions implicit

⁴⁵ These considerations have convinced the author that much of the discussion of relevance among formal logicians has been wrong-headed. A variety of their views and systems appears in Charles F. Kielkopf, *Formal Sentential Entailment* (Washington: University Press of America, 1977).

in P (by the previous tests) would all be relevant to my job of trying to visualize what it would be like for P to be true. But in all of the other cases, such as when I am asserting, hypothesizing, or recommending that P , what is relevant to my action is quite different. The fact that somebody has said that Q can be relevant, but that is a fact and a speech-act presenting a proposition, not just a proposition. And the fact that Q is true (or false) can certainly be relevant, but that again is a fact and not a proposition. So it turns out that what “has” relevance is usually a fact and not a proposition.

Well, facts, you may say, are true propositions, and true propositions are just propositions, much as white houses are just houses. But that is a grave mistake. The white house remains “just a house,” because whiteness is “contained” in it or exemplified by it. A proposition doesn't contain or exemplify its truth. The truth of a proposition remains external to its make-up, and hence a “true proposition” is not “just a proposition” but a larger entity, a “fact.”

Nevertheless, we can say that a proposition is a “relatum” of a fact, just as it is a “relatum” of a speech-act and a “relatum” of an act of entertaining it; and then we can say that one proposition, *via* its factuality, is relevant to another proposition, *via* its being entertained in some way for some reason. In other words, with a little determination, we can salvage “inter-propositional relevance” in all cases as a *product of relations*.

To make an end to these dismal complications, I am prepared to offer a definition of inter-propositional relevance which reads somewhat like an act of despair, but which may have a touch of merit for that very reason. Namely:

(D₆) Let S be a sentence of L in context C ; let P be the proposition explicit in S in C ; let $\text{Par}(\underline{\mathbf{S}})_C$ be defined as above, and let Q be a proposition: then Q is relevant to P or to $\text{Par}(\underline{\mathbf{S}})_C$ if and only if there is at least one context of consideration CN (not necessarily distinct from C) which provides an acceptable reason to entertain P or to entertain $\text{Par}(\underline{\mathbf{S}})_C$ in a way which gives rise to at least one intelligent question to which Q is the answer, or which it would be irrational to answer without taking it into account whether Q .

The messy preliminaries to this “definition” are readily explained. Any context in which a proposition is entertained is a “context of consideration” for it. Both “what S says” in the sense of what is explicit in S and “what S says” in the sense of what statement it makes in its context of production (which is only one of the statement's contexts of consideration) can be entertained in some way for some good reason. If the explicit is entertained, the statement is the answer to at least one intelligent question about it (namely, What statement is being made here?), and *vice-versa* if the statement is entertained, the explicit is the answer to a good question (*e.g.*, How exactly was that worded again?). If the statement is asserted, its own truth or falsity is the answer to an intelligent question about

it; and so Q is not required to be distinct from either. For while the direct relevance of propositions or facts to propositional entertainments is an irreflexive relation, the indirect relevance of proposition to proposition is not.

The main thrust of the “definition” is its reliance upon a typically human enterprise called rationality, which has its own norms.⁴⁶ According to these norms, it is just intelligent to see that besides its original context of production, a proposition may come up for consideration in other contexts as well (for example, in the historical horizon and *Sitz im Leben* of a later interpreter of the original text and context). According to further rationality norms, it is intelligent to see that the context in which one encounters a sentence provides good reason to entertain or not entertain, and to entertain in a certain way but not in some other way, the proposition(s) which emerge(s) in the interpretation of that sentence. Thus, if the context makes it clear that S conveys a suggestion or an ironic remark, it is wrong to entertain “what S says” as though it were an assertion or a straightforward remark.

According to these same norms, it is just intelligent to see that a proposition, when entertained in a certain way for a certain reason, gives rise to certain questions, and it is unintelligent (stupid, indefensible, frivolous, eccentric, far-fetched — our vocabulary here is rich and suggestive) to suppose that it gives rise to certain others. The former are legitimate, appropriate, good, or “intelligent” questions. Rationality norms also dictate that such questions ought to be pursued, and that our attempted answers to them ought to take into account all the information that is . . . well, relevant. Whereupon it seems agreeably analytic to take what is “relevant to x ” as being that without attention to which it would be irrational to answer a good question about x . Hence the choice of (D_6) .

Furthermore, (D_6) brings out an important way in which relevance is similar to implicitness and congenial to it. Neither can be circumscribed *a priori*. For just as history serves up new cultures, in which new conventions and expectations attach to the kinds of situations picked out by propositions, with the result that (under the script approach) new implicit content may emerge, so also history, like a long conversation, has a way of bringing up new questions, of surrounding a proposition with new and surprising contexts, with the result that we cannot tell in advance what-all will be relevant to it. As with any topic of debate or dialogue, people can know in advance certain zones of relevance; but for the rest, we must wait and see.

Now, then, to the neuralgic question. How should this definition of relevance enter into a definition of implicitness? I propose to try it out as a necessary condition. In other words, with none too much certainty, I suggest that

⁴⁶ I owe the talk of rationality norms to Germain Grisez, *Beyond the New Theism* (New York: Notre Dame University Press, 1975). It is far from being my only debt to this author.

if Q is not relevant to P , then Q is not implicit in P , which sounds plausible (and has the attractive consequence that implicitness is a sufficient condition for relevance). It sounds plausible because one would surely think that, unless Q is the answer to, or contributes to the answering of, at least one intelligent question which arises when P is entertained in at least one correct way, for some good reason, in at least one appropriate context of consideration, it is absurd to suppose that Q is implicit in P . For relevance, so defined, is as broad as the spacious, ever expanding domain of rational inquiry itself; surely the genuine scope of the implicit lies somewhere within (and wholly within) so broad a domain.

But let us check this hunch by running through the definitions (D₂)–(D₅), in order to see whether what has been declared implicit so far has the now-proposed prerequisite of being relevant.

(D₂) reckons the logical and analytic entailments of P to the implicit content of the sentence S which explicitly says that P . If any of these entailments is false, that fact is relevant to many ways of entertaining P , because it proves that P is false in the sense (or part) that carries that entailment. If all the entailments carried by a given sense (or part) are true (so far as we have checked, so far as we can tell), that fact is relevant to many ways of entertaining P also, because it tends to confirm the tenability of P in that sense (or part).

(D₃) reckons to the implicit content of a sentence in its context of production or consideration the best statement, $\text{Par}(\mathbf{S})_C$, which the sentence can be taken to make in that context, together with that statement's entailments. This statement is the answer, as already noted, to an intelligent question which arises when one entertains what the sentence explicitly says (*viz.* what statement is being made here?); hence the statement is relevant thereto. And the statement's entailments are all relevant to many ways of entertaining the statement itself, on grounds the same as those given in connexion with (D₂).

Skipping now to (D₅): it reckons to the implicit content of a statement in its context of production or consideration a list (or lists) of generalizations and expectations about the kind of situation the statement presents. Any proposition on such a list will be relevant to the task of trying to visualize that situation “concretely” (which task, interestingly enough, is an appropriate way of entertaining a proposition in any context of consideration), hence is the answer (or contributes to the answering) of some intelligent question to which an appropriate way of entertaining the statement gives rise, and hence is relevant to the statement.

We are left with only (D₄). This definition reckons to the implicit content of a false statement every proposition without whose truth it couldn't be true, and reckons to the implicit content of a true statement every proposition Q such that, if Q were not the case, the statement would not be true. Whether every item of such content is relevant, or even potentially relevant, is a question which turns largely, it seems to me, on a metaphysical issue.

If the right metaphysics of the cosmos (including human history) is something like the structure we take for granted in our every-day judgments, then the texture of reality is loose enough to allow contingencies and to allow vast numbers of things and processes to be independent of vast numbers of other things and processes, whether as causes or as necessary conditions. In that case, rational inquiry into the situation which a statement presents has a chance, at least, of being exhausted after a finite number of intelligent counterfactual questions have been answered, and hence everything implicit in that statement by (D₄) has a chance, at least, of being relevant. But if the right metaphysics of the cosmos and history is something more like what Leibniz or Hegel supposed, then everything is causally and intelligibly dependent upon everything else. In that case, rational inquiry, precisely because it is a human enterprise, conducted by persons not gifted with the knack for “infinite analysis,” has no ghost of a chance of even formulating all the intelligent questions necessary to make the (quite possibly infinite) items implicit by (D₄) relevant.

Now, an essay on the implicit is not the place to tackle the problem of choosing between these rival metaphysics. But we are forced to notice a related choice:

- either (Option A) the right “environment” for the question about the implicit is a human environment, created by the linguistic habits of propositional knowers in their interaction with the world of physical (and spiritual) things,

- or else (Option B) the right environment for the question is directly cosmologico-metaphysical.

If one takes Option B, one can drop relevance as a necessary condition, retain (D₄) as it stands, and then, if something like Leibnizianism or Idealism turns out to be true, cheerfully accept the conclusion that every proposition is implicit in every other. But if one takes Option A, relevance as defined in (D₆) has got to remain the habitat of the implicit; whereupon (D₄), the counterfactual test of implicitness, is questionable enough if Leibnizian thinking is wrong, and certainly wrong if such thinking is right.

Against those scholastics who contrasted formal implicitness *quoad nos* with the same implicitness *in se*, in order to have final recourse to the latter as to a divine standard, the present writer takes Option A. The question of what is implicit in a proposition has got to remain a question about how propositional knowers understand, a question based upon the linguistic competence and the rational interests of such knowers. To suggest that possibly infinite stretches of an unknowably complex universe are implicit in each human proposition (because God would understand it so) is simply to misuse the word ‘implicit’. It is to show forgetfulness of the very environment in which the notion of the implicit can sensibly turn up.

So I propose to amend (D₄) in a way that introduces relevance as a proviso. If Leibniz and company are wrong, the proviso probably does no harm; if they are right, it is essential. Thus:

(D_{4N}) Let *S* be a sentence of language *L* in context *C*; let *P* be the proposition

explicit in S in C , and let Q be a proposition distinct from P : where $\text{Par}(\underline{\mathbf{S}})_C$ is true and it is the case that, if Q were not true, $\text{Par}(\underline{\mathbf{S}})_C$ would not be true, Q is implicit in S in C , provided that Q is relevant to P or to $\text{Par}(\underline{\mathbf{S}})_C$; where $\text{Par}(\underline{\mathbf{S}})_C$ is false and it is the case that, with-out Q , $\text{Par}(\underline{\mathbf{S}})_C$ could not be true, Q is implicit in S in C under the same proviso.

The Braid

The present writer is now in a position to state his solution to the case of propositional implicitness.

A candidate for propositionhood, P_0 , is identified with the sentence S which, in its context C explicitly says P_1 or amounts to the statement P_2 ; thereupon any other proposition Q is implicit in P_0 in C if and only if Q is implicit in S in C by (D_2) or by (D_3) or by (D_{4N}) or by (D_5) .

Chapter 7

Conclusion

It is clear enough that the theory of propositional implicitness just developed meets the first three criteria set out for such a theory. It keeps the propositional issue clear from the speech-act issue. It maintains a line of demarcation between the implicit and the explicit. It does not allow any proposition inconsistent with P to be implicit in P , provided only that P itself is a consistent proposition.⁴⁷ And it provides a basis for distinguishing what is

⁴⁷ The reader is owed a proof of this contention, and the following sketch should suffice. Let P be either the proposition explicit in S or else $\text{Par}(\mathbf{S})_C$. Let P be an inconsistent proposition if and only if (a) $P \not\vdash \neg P$, where ' \vdash ' represents strict implication or entailment, or (b) the assertion of P in this context amounts to a statement inconsistent with what is made explicit by the same assertion. Then I contend that, if P is not an inconsistent proposition, then no proposition Q implicit in S by the above theory is inconsistent with P . Proof sketch:

Lemma 1. Assume Q is implicit in S by (D_2) . Then $P \not\vdash Q$. Assume that Q is inconsistent with P , *i.e.* that $Q \vdash \neg P$. Then, by transitivity of implication, $P \vdash \neg P$, which is contrary to the stipulation that P is consistent.

Lemma 2. Assume Q is implicit in S by (D_3) .

Sub-lemma 1. Suppose P is what is explicit in S , and Q is part of $\text{Par}(\mathbf{S})_C$ or an entailment thereof. Then if Q is inconsistent with P , a part of, or an entailment of, the best statement which $S = P$ can be taken to amount to in this context is inconsistent with P . In that case, the assertion of P in this context amounts to a statement inconsistent with P , contrary to stipulation.

Sub-lemma 2. Suppose rather that P is $\text{Par}(\mathbf{S})_C$, and that Q is part of it or one of its entailments. Then if Q is inconsistent with P , it follows by the same argument as in the previous lemma that P is itself inconsistent, which is contrary to stipulation.

Lemma 3. Assume Q is implicit in S by (D_{4N}) . Then P and Q must be true together in the actual world or else would be true together (jointly satisfied) in every possible world differing from the actual world just enough to make P true. Hence P is consistent with Q .

Lemma 4. Assume Q is implicit in S by (D_5) . Then Q is expected to be true, given P . No proposition inconsistent with P is expected to be true, given P . Therefore Q is consistent with P .

But if Q is implicit in P , it is implicit by (D_2) or . . . or by (D_3) . Ergo.

really implicit in a given proposition from what is not. (And it has the interesting corollary, by the way, that all sentences which are “versions of the same proposition,” in the sense of amounting to the same statement, contain the same total of explicit-plus-implicit information. One may find that reassuring.)

But what about the fourth criterion? As the above theory has defined ‘implicit’, does it remain very reasonable to say that, if God has revealed S in a context where it says P explicitly and amounts to $\text{Par}(\underline{S})_C$, and Q is implicit in either, then God has (implicitly) revealed Q ? I rather think it does, though with one important wrinkle.

If Q is implicit by (D_2) or (D_3) , there will surely be no objection to saying that God has revealed it, because then Q will be an entailment of P or else part of the best and fullest statement which the sentence considered as P can lawfully be taken to make (hence what we ought to “hear” in P). If Q is implicit by (D_{4N}) , there should also be no objection, because then Q will be indispensable to the truth of P , relevant to P , and hence indispensable to answering some legitimate question to which an appropriate way of entertaining P gives rise. It seems very reasonable to suppose, therefore, that Q would be part of what an all-foreseeing God has taught in revealing P .

But if Q is implicit solely by the script approach, (D_5) , then Q is just “antecedently probable,” given P , and so it could turn out to be false, given P . Hence implicitness by (D_5) is not a sufficient condition for (implicit) revelation by God, so long as one assumes that whatever God reveals (even implicitly) is true. Which assumption, of course, is not to be abandoned. So one encounters this wrinkle, which can be ironed out in either of two ways.

On the one hand, one can hold that God’s explicit revelation is so carefully and suitably worded that, for each kind of situation actually presented by each statement in it, everything implicit in that statement by (D_5) is either a natural implication which happens to be true, or else one explicitly called off by a revealed ‘but’, *e.g.* provably defeated by some other revealed truth.

On the other hand, one can hold that, for points implicit by (D_5) alone, the sacred learning simply requires an additional and independent certification of their truth, if they are to be considered implicitly revealed. It is not clear to me which of these ironings is more like Patristic or scholastic practice; each sounds plausible.

Nevertheless, I think that an adequate and fully persuasive answer to this question of whether the above theory allows for the appropriate predicate transfers, especially that of revealed-ness, cannot be offered without taking into account one’s grounds for assurance that Q is relevant, entailed, indispensable, or expectable, and so implicit. This is where the criteriological issue, onto which, as onto a kind of side-track, I unceremoniously shunted the modal or logico-metaphysical solution, re-assumes its importance (not to say, takes its vengeance). For while “necessary connexion” is not the only acceptable ground for non-obvious implicitness, it is certainly the best; and, what is more, there may be certain special bodies of discourse, within which necessary connexion is the only usable ground. It would

not be surprising if theological discourse were, in part, at least, of this kind. Parts of theological discourse refer to invisible and highly mysterious Entities, about Which, apart from explicit revelation, human beings are just not in a position to know anything but the barest conceptual/ontological necessities, and even they must be used in that gingerly way known as an analogous sense (after the *analogia entis*).

I close with three applications of this theory of the implicit, one to metaphor, one to analogy, and one to the *prima credibilia*.

PART THREE

Applications

The Implicit in Living Metaphor

The topic of metaphor has come up briefly in these pages. A theologically serviceable theory of the implicit ought to have an answer to the question of what is implicit in a living metaphor. For the Scriptures contain a large number of metaphor-sentences which were arguably living at the time of composition, and perhaps still are.⁴⁸

The sort of answer I should give is intimated in the fact that I originally mentioned metaphor in the context of what linguists call pragmatics. "To set up a metaphor" is a literary end — the end of a speech-act in which a peculiar kind of sentence is put together. How it is peculiar was hinted at on page 24, footnote 1: a subject expression s is coupled with a predicate expression F whose normal or "stock" descriptive force does not apply to the sort of things normally referred to by s. Syntactically considered, the product of this speech-act is in order; but semantically considered, it is wildly out of order.

The point of producing such a product (if it is not to conceal one's meaning, or merely to play with words) can only be to issue an invitation to suspend, revise, or expand stock descriptive habits for the subject at hand. The point of calling this product by the honorific title 'metaphor' (and intending to produce it under that title) can only be to promise that, if one follows the invitation in this case to suspend, revise, etc., one will feel something, and perhaps learn something, valuable. One will come to feel in a new way, unusual but rewarding. Or one will come to see the referent of s in a new light, or perceive the descriptive force of F as having a new energy.

In short, the metaphor is an invitation to think again about the realities to which s refers, to feel them anew along the lines which calling them F suggests, coupled with a promise that, if one tries the experiment, one will come up with something valuable.

As already said, the "something valuable" need not be anything propositional. It may be an aesthetic or spiritual experience, a disquiet, a stimulus. It can be a benefit just to feel

⁴⁸ A recent and masterful treatment of metaphor is H. W. M. Rikhof, *The Concept of Church, A Methodological Inquiry into the Use of Metaphors in Ecclesiology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1981). The American publisher is Patmos Press.

something, without going on to becatch it in words. But if we do go on, and do think of that “something valuable” as a new proposition, never thought of before by us, and not quite “sayable” before in the conventions of the language to which s and F belong, then we will have made a new brush with reality and come away from the en-counter enriched with information. (Thus metaphor is a welcome reminder that human language is not a Chinese wall between man and extra-propositional things).

Well, this new proposition — whatever it is, and never mind how one will recognize it as a proposition fulfilling the metaphor's promise, if one finds it, for that is quite another problem — this new proposition, is it “implicit” in the metaphor-producing act? Is it implicit in the metaphor-product? Let us be careful not to confuse the two questions.

As to the first, what is implicit in a speech-act is the claim that those conditions obtain, without which the performance of it would be pointless or dishonest. In a cognitive (expository or revelational) context, it would be pointless to produce this metaphor, unless the invitation it makes should be accepted, because the promise it makes will be kept, because the proposition it invites one to look for is “out there” waiting to be found. “Seek and ye shall find,” is what the metaphor-producing act implies pragmatically.

Nor is this all. As a performance of putting this odd combination of s and F together, the act implies that the prize is over this way. “Seek this way,” it suggests.

But the implicit claim that there is a proposition out there, and that it is over this way, does not amount to any precise claim about what the prize says. Hence the making of metaphors is liberating. It is opening a gate out of which the mind bounds like a beast born to the hunt. The new proposition itself (the prey) is not implicit as information in the metaphor-producing act.

What about the metaphor-product? The new proposition is certainly not implicit as information in that product in the way in which one proposition in *L* may be implicit in another proposition in *L* (taking ‘proposition’ in the sense of candidates 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8), because the original metaphor-product is not a proposition in *L* — its full interpretation breaks down in *L*. But this last is imprecise. The metaphor is not a good proposition candidate in that part of *L* which deals with extra-linguistic things. Every natural language has both a part which deals with things (an object-language part) and a part which deals with words, sentences, propositions, and other entities based in language itself (a meta-language part). What about this other part of *L*, which can be called *ML*? It is not stretching things too much, I think, to consider the metaphor itself as amounting to an instruction or piece of advice in *ML* (“See what you get by putting together s and F”), and hence as a sentence semantically in order in *ML*. Again, in a cognitive context, this instruction or advice would naturally be taken to lie within an “existential” claim:

For at least one proposition *P*: *P* is to be formulated in *L* through the revision of at least one convention of *L*, and its components will be found by pursuing this question: “What truth emerges when a referent of s is considered to be

described along the lines of F?”.

This claim can be dubbed meta-M, where M is the original metaphor-sentence combining s and F. It is the meta-statement which one can take the original metaphor as amounting to in a cognitive context. The new proposition it tells us to seek will now be a value of the variable *P* which makes this meta-statement come out true. Substituting the new proposition for *P* in meta-M will particularize its meta-statement-frame, just as substituting a name for a bound variable particularizes any other statement frame. Whereupon, by (D₃), the new proposition will be implicit in meta-M in any cognitive context in which M is used and the new proposition has been formulated.

In human affairs, not every invitation leads to success. Not every promise is kept. Not every promising invitation pans out — though we expect it to (by the script for such things).

Literature is full of bogus, failed, or disappointing metaphors. But in divine affairs, we may say that every metaphor which God composes (through his inspired instruments) is guaranteed to pan out, and guaranteed to be worded in such a way that no better wording was available to indicate how it would pan out. Thus every metaphor M in Scripture can be taken to amount to an ideally helpful meta-M.

The upshot of this position is two-fold. On the one hand, St. Thomas is right: the end of a revealed metaphor (as promise) is that its imagery yield a theological understanding (fulfillment), *i.e.* a new proposition which is not a metaphor.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the result of every theological attempt to frame this new proposition remains under the judgment of God's original metaphor. This is where I differ, perhaps, from Rikhof (above, footnote 1). The metaphors of Scripture never become dispensable. Even where the propositions we take to fulfill their promise have been defined by the Church, the metaphors hold out a divine stimulus: “Yes, but . . . keep going.” And where the Church has not defined, our best efforts must always fear (or is it hope?) for a divine rebuke. “No, my promise was richer than that.”

⁴⁹ *Summa Theologiae* 1, q. 1, a. 9 *ad* 2 and elsewhere.

The Implicit in Analogies

An analogous senses often arises in fulfillment of the promise of a metaphor. When things are compared as analogates, the descriptive conventions of a natural language are no longer being flouted. The description under which they are being compared, call it d_0 , applies under some definition to each analogate. But among these analogates, there is one which serves as the cognitive foundation for knowing the meaning of d_0 . The point of applying d_0 broadly enough to touch all the analogates is to let familiarity flow from this cognitive hub to the outlying item or items.

An item or kind of item **a** is a cognitive hub for another item or kind **b** under the description d_0 , let us say, when **a** is that (kind of) d_0 -thing which

- (1) is generally better known than the other(s), or which
- (2) a native speaker normally learns first to call by the term d_0 , so that the habit of calling **a** by d_0 then becomes the speakers' basis for understanding what is meant by d_0 when it is applied to other (kinds of) things, or which
- (3) has to be mentioned as a d_0 -thing in any plausible effort to define what is meant by calling another (kind of) thing by d_0 , or which
- (4) is a full-fledged, forthright, superior, or paradigmatic d_0 -thing, as opposed to an immature, decayed, marginal, inferior, or defective one.

These clauses are meant to be taken as distinct alternatives; each of them conveys a "basis" β of cognitive priority. The four bases listed are respectively sociological, psychological, logico-linguistic, and classificational. They are very roughly formulated, and others should probably be added.

Whenever an item **a** under a description d_0 serves on some such basis β_0 as a cognitive hub relative to an item **b** under the same description, we shall say that **a** is cognitively prior to **b** under d_0 on that basis. Needless to say, this situation does not prevent there being another description, say d_1 , under which **b** is cognitively prior to **a** on some basis. In fact, such turn-about is normal. An animal is cognitively prior to its climate under 'healthy' on basis (3), whereas the climate is cognitively prior to the animal under 'tropical' on basis (2) or (1).

Now the sheer fact that a description d_0 is applied broadly enough to touch all the analogates creates a non-natural (analogical) "kind" — the kind of thing of which d_0 can be said under one definition or another. As is the case for other, more natural kinds, we have list(s) of generalizations and expectations for items of this kind, but now they cluster around the cognitively prior analogate (which we may keep on calling **a**). By our previous definition (D₅), the propositions on such list(s) are implicit in the proposition which applies

d_0 to **a**. Let us call this proposition $D_0(a)$. They are also implicit in the propositions which apply d_0 to items over which **a** is cognitively prior under that description, such as $D_0(b)$, but with this exception: some points implicit in $D_0(a)$ may be ruled out from being implicit in $D_0(b)$. What would rule them out would be their in-consistency with any description d_1 under which **b** is cognitively prior to **a** on some basis. By the symbol $\mathbf{I}(D_0(a/b))$ let us denote the whole set of points implicit in $D_0(a)$ and hence, in the flow of familiarity, *prima-facie* transferable to $D_0(b)$. The remainder which consists of that set, minus the sub-set of its members $\{P: (P \ \& \ D_0(b)) \ \& \ \neg D_1(b)\}$, that is, minus the points which would conflict with a cognitively prior description of **b** — that remainder, I suggest, is the implicit content of $D_0(b)$. It is the set of points naturally inferable from taking **b** as analogous to **a**.

Of course, since **b** may be a vastly different (kind of) thing from **a**, the points to be eliminated because of this inconsistency are not always obvious. When we take verbs of seeing, native to the eye, and apply them to the mind, it may be hard to decide whether it is being implicitly said that the mind, too, can go blind. We can decide that the answer is yes, and thereby create a sense of 'blind', 'go blind', and cognate descriptions consistent with the better known features of the mind. Or we can decide that the answer is no. The former option, deciding that the answer is yes, illustrates how analogicity spreads from (the predicate of) an already accepted analogy to (the predicates of) the points implicit in it.

The application of terms to God in what is said to be an analogous sense presents only one unusual difficulty, it seems to me: He so transcends the usual objects of our experience that we seem to have no descriptions under which God holds cognitive priority. Hence, when we are told that there are divine Persons, and that one of Them is the Son of another, who is His Father, natural-language competency does not allow us to decide whether we have also been told (implicitly) that the divine Son has a Mother as well, that the Son is younger than the Father, that He inherits the general traits of His Father, *etc.* Some people, hearing such talk, will spread to God anthropomorphically every point implicit in calling a human child someone's son, while others, with no less linguistic warrant (but also no better), will dismiss the talk as metaphor, from which no natural, non-figurative inferences are possible. Hellenistic civilization was just one example of a culture in which this paralyzing dichotomy was felt: a traditional god-talk of myth and ritual was either used anthropomorphically or mentioned allegorically.

However, I think that this difficulty is not so final as it seems. A pagan dead-end in which gods made to the shape of our own clay are alternately spawned in religious warmth and spurned in agnostic coolness is inevitable only where the unspecialized knowledge of men and things which we call ordinary language-competence is all the light there is. And even there, perhaps, the inevitability is not total. For there are some descriptions involved analytically in the notion of a god (or at least in all normal notions of a god) like 'super-human', 'hidden yet powerful', 'controlling your fortune for good or ill', 'supreme in some perfection' (like beauty or authority, warrior-skill or wisdom), or 'in charge of something'

(like rain or the mountains, the sea or fertility). These honorifics already create, within the thinking of ordinary people, a steady pressure for the gods to rise, in their mode of being, to the highest points attainable by a culture's power of ontological imagination. The gods are everywhere immortal, therefore, and the best of them live on high. Piety tends strongly to reject ascriptions in which anything base, unworthy, wretched, low, pitiable or contemptible is said of the gods. They rise, therefore, with the culture's moral vision or else cease to be gods, living on as demons, sprites, imps, powers of earth or darkness. In extreme cases, this honorific imperative demotes all the known gods, opening a cultural vacuum for some sort of new one.

In at least two of the higher civilizations, Greece and India, the honorific imperative has been seconded by a serious philosophical endeavor, in which untutored notions of supreme, ultimate, or ideal being were criticized and improved. Bodies strong and swift ceased to hold the ontological high spots; imagination ascended to light, spirit, consciousness, or a transcendental abstraction like Being Itself or Oneness Itself. Any such partnership between a philosophical ontology and religion's honorific imperative yields a solution to the problem of god-talk. For then a credible god not only takes on the descriptions philosophically certified in the highest sort of entity but also, under those descriptions, becomes cognitively prior to mundane things on basis (4) — superior to inferior. Henceforth these descriptions determine which other descriptions can apply to a god without metaphor and, for each of these, which of the natural implications implicit in affirming them carry over to a god.

Needless to say, however, such solutions to the problem of god-talk hang in thin air until at least one and preferably two more things happen.

- One of these is a philosophical proof that one of the imaginable sorts of ideal being in fact exists because its existence is the only way to explain the rest of what we see in existence. For then god-talk gets a secure referent anchored in precisely those metaphysical descriptions which, because they have explanatory power *vis-à-vis* the existence of contingent beings, are rationally preferable to other descriptions which might seem noble or nice but lack such power.

- The other, of course, is an act of self-disclosure by the God who in fact is, set in a cultural milieu providentially prepared to make Him understandable religiously, morally, and ontologically, and accompanied by attention-getting signs sufficient to sustain the hypothesis that such a Being is speaking. For then the descriptions appearing in that Revelation, self-chosen by God, will likewise (and even more reliably) serve to determine what is metaphor and what analogy, and what is implicit in the analogies.

In the best imaginable situation, God's revelation is free to abound in metaphor as well as analogy, poetry as well as doctrine, because God has prepared in the receiving culture a philosophy of Supreme Being adequate to distinguish the one from the other. It was by appeal to both sources, revealed data and philosophical, that the Arian controversy was

won, for example. Both sides knew in advance that God the Father, being Spirit and bodiless, would have generated God the Son without sexual embrace or parturition, hence without a God-Mother. And both sides conceded that if the revelation of Sonship carried the implicit information that the Son is younger than the Father, then the analogically appropriate sense of this latter would be that the Son had a beginning in time (or with time), hence was created, while the Father was not. So the controversy could assume manageable proportions; it could focus on the single issue of whether it was tenable (given the revealed data) to hold that the Son was a creature. To that question many Biblical citations were, of course, pertinent, but so was a philosophical point: between Creator and creature there is infinite difference of nature. Thanks to the fact that commonality of nature is by (D₅) implicit in talk of fathers and sons, it quickly became evident that to make the Son a creature was to reduce the whole revelation of His Sonship to metaphor. One thereby gained a measure of the exegetical violence one had to do in order to be an Arian.

I mention all of this to highlight the point (often in danger of being forgotten, it seems to me, in philosophical discussions) that genuine problems of god-talk (problems that actually arose somewhere, I mean, instead of being invented by academics) came up in some specific religious tradition, where there were tools to handle them (honorific, philosophical, oracular, Scriptural, whatever). It is optical illusion to suppose that such problems get or need a solution in some general, logico-linguistic theory of analogy.

How Christianity Is Implicit in the *Prima Credibilia*

The present account of the implicit does not attempt to justify the most extreme case of “implicitness” advanced in standard theology. I refer to the claim that the whole of revealed doctrine is somehow implicit in the *prima credibilia*: that God exists and is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Call this conjunctive proposition *PC*. I do not believe that any informational theory of the implicit can be expected to cover this peculiar case. The propositional part of the above theory certainly does not. For neither by logic, nor by necessity, nor by semantics, common knowledge, counterfactual connexion or antecedent probability, are the major Christian doctrines “contained” in *PC*.

Nor does the speech-act part of the above theory offer any solace. For if one says that the other doctrines are contained in God's speech-act of revealing *PC*, as further points which He, already in His first acts of Self-communication to man (or to a man), intends to explicitate — well, it is hard to see how any speaker, in saying little, can be said to convey what no one is in a position to understand, until he has said more. Nor would it be coherent for the speaker to intend to do so. I may certainly have in mind certain points, around to which I intend to steer a conversation eventually; and I may certainly begin a conversation with the intention of discussing those points; but that is quite different from saying that I intend to convey those points already as something “implicit” in my opening remarks. In order for you to attribute that intention to me, I must have chosen my opening remarks in such a way that, thanks to known connexions and conventions, you could have divined from my first remarks that those further points were about to come up. And it is just such known connexions and conventions which are lacking where man first begins to hear (categorically) the word of divine Mystery.

It is much more likely that traditional theology itself intended to speak of implicitness here in some other sense. Indeed, I suspect that the intended sense may have been one of the non-informational senses of implicit faith (see above, Introduction). Then the idea would be that whoever seriously believes *PC* has the sort of vague expectation and the sort of open-ended commitment for which God's actual acts of Self-disclosure are appropriate specifics.

I am happy to observe, moreover, that the definition of relevance, (D_6), serves to illuminate this thesis about *PC* further. *PC* concerns matters of high importance to any man's plan of life and to his self-understanding. Hence entertaining *PC* in a context of religious, philosophical, or moral inquiry, as an object of earnest concern or faith, will always be an appropriate way to entertain *PC*. But *PC* refers to the two-fold reality of God existing in Himself and acting in certain initiatives towards us.

■ To the former, all revealed truths concerning God in Himself (including the Trinity) are relevant. For if I consider that God exists, it is intelligent to ask what He is like.

■ To the latter, all revealed truths concerning God's plan or economy of redemption (the creation, fall, incarnation, redemption, Church, and eschatology) are likewise relevant. For if I consider that God exists, it is also intelligent to ask what He has done; and if I consider that He rewards those who seek Him, it is intelligent to ask why I have so much trouble seeking Him, and whether He has provided any helps to make the search easier, and whether I have not already forfeited His reward through my faults, or whether there is forgiveness with Him, and whether others have found Him, and what sort of fellowship they have, who are more fortunate in that regard than I, and whether I shall ever meet them, or Him.

Thus every revealed truth is the answer, or contributes to the answering, of some intelligent question which arises when *PC* is entertained as an object of earnest concern. In other words, just to take *PC* seriously is to open oneself up to a range of fruitful questions, to each of which God has (as a matter of fact) an answer.

But if one also goes further, if one makes *PC* an object of faith, which one feels that God has already somehow given and sustained, then one's case is greatly enhanced; for then in some sense one expects answers, and expects them from God Himself. To such expectation, God has a rewarding Answer in His own Person.

