

Ayer's *LTL* is beautiful. Wrong, when wrong, with verve.

Does he tell us *why* ? Why *bother* with “analysis” ? What motivates the logical positivist ? Does it just fucking feel good ?

We expect/project the uniformity of nature, the validity of induction. We cannot deduce this principle. This expectation is apparently a brute fact. As Ayer notes, it is not irrational to trust induction when a justification of such trust looks impossible. He *circumvents* the problem by declaring it a pseudo-problem, for problems are only genuine when a solution is possible. Is this satisfying ? Yet he admirably bothers to discuss and present our strange situation. As the sculptor of his beautiful text, he shrewdly said no more than *could* be said.

Yet he speaks of what is *probable*. What can probability be in this context but an expression of expectation ? Of expectation that cannot be justified. Unless we count the *fact* that experts tend to expect to the same degree this or that outcome ?

We might also question Ayer about the normativity of logic. How are translations of sentences into “equivalent” sentences justified ? By an appeal to the *taste* of others ?

Explicative philosophy is (normative) “poetry.”

I criticize Ayer with love. Because his book is so terse and clear, it's easy to find what might be unaddressed within that book.

Wittgenstein's *TLP* is complementary. Wittgenstein's "mysticism" is, in some ways, more honest about our situation. Ayer's book exaggerates his philosophy's mastery of our situation.

We see no logical reason to trust induction. We just *do* trust induction. We can't help it. We identify such trust with rationality itself. A gaping plot hole. Does it pay to notice this plot hole? Even this question tacitly aims at the future. *Will* it pay to point out this plot hole? To answer the question is to project a law, to assume the very uniformity of nature in question.

People wallow in the mysteries of quantum mechanics, but *all* science and even the causal projections of common sense are put in question by Hume's work. They are put into question by being shown in their strangeness.

Ayer circumvents metaphysics, which is largely the point. But another option is the reading of metaphysics as metaphor or myth.

The bad logical positivist, in love with literal, uncharitably reads others as if they always intend their statements literally. Some metaphysicians intend their claims literally. I think of the odd men I've seen on forums, lost in a rigid terminology, mistaking linguistic issues for deep structures of reality, who are hard to imagine as married. If the great Schopenhauer had some of this in him, his work is mostly successful and profound. And Wittgenstein valued Schopenhauer.

I rate Carnap, who has his virtues, lower than both.

Formalistic personalities are (as you might expect) often shallow. Formal systems offer an empty certainty. The scientific formalist will build a castle of syntax and forget to “suffer” the lack of a basis for induction. The certain syntax is *built on an abyss*.

But I relate to Ayer’s decision to keep *LTL* pure. Surely he had an “esoteric doctrine,” a general sense of the meaning of the world. I’m guessing he was a jolly atheist, floating on gallows humor. A womanizer. A dazzler at the cocktail party. But an early defender of the dignity of homosexuals. A good man but no saint. Did he read Nietzsche ?

Carnap seems to have been a good man, but I find it hard to love him. I may need to read the early work on different kinds of space.

I’m trying to forge a logical positivism with the existential depth of Heidegger. Or of William James. Yet, for better or worse, I come after Bukowski and Kerouac, which is to say after the foolishly honest. Derrida played the buffoon in *Limited Inc.* Brilliant at times but elsewhere petty and indulgent.

I sometimes envy the “neurotics” who obsess over the individual expression. I can do this as a poet of fragments. I *would* do this, if I was paid like a professor. Or if I expected anyone to bother reading it. “If you write it, they will come.” But the year is 2025, and we are swamped with information.

—So you think you are a genuine artist ?

—I suspect.

—And now, let me guess, you can relate to the problem of the artist, the motivation problem ?

—Circumstance governs. How many self-anointed artists disappeared beneath the waves because they didn't get enough positive feedback to put in the work ?

—Feedback or a patron or a brother who believes.

—Yes. Now I expect this is a boring issue to those who don't deal with it. It comes off as arrogant. I say that artists are indeed arrogant. Even the ones who aren't recognized, who are therefore ridiculous in the eyes of the non-artist. Who didn't even have to accept disappearing beneath the waves.

—Or, switching to Schopenhauer's insect metaphor, had no eggs to lay in the first place.

—Yes. Which reminds me of Klages. The guy who invented logocentrism, which is word-centrism or concept-centrism, for him anyway. Now Klages indulged in some scandalous behavior with a landlady's daughter. He celebrated animal soul against human spirit. This human spirit longs for immortality.

—Needs to lay eggs.

—Yes. So Klages was influential. He had cult leader vibes. He longed for a return to pagan or even animal immersion in some lost immediacy, some lost commune with Nature. But the man wrote books. Which were against books.

—Incoherence.

—And that scandalous behavior involved what most

would consider the exploitation of innocence. A 12 year old girl. Now Wiki isn't the most trustworthy source, but somehow this claim about his behavior fits in with his lust for animal innocence. His desire to escape the desire for immortality. Which of course is used to explain the evil in the world.

—A utopian, no ?

—Another utopian. Another prophet. A pre-Heidegger in some ways. Derrida made logocentrism famous, but it seems to me that he largely identified it with phonocentrism, which doesn't sit well with me. Just call phonocentrism phonocentrism. And the accusation of phonocentrism doesn't impress me much. What does impress me is the way Derrida breaks open the subject with this lever.

—I think Derrida's work gets politicized and trivialized. And that banal reading is itself demonized.

—By the right wingish truth brigade.

—Yet you yourself are a logical positivist, a rationalist.

—Yes. But I intentionally eschew the sentimentality of truthers, which are not so far from the ordinary language types criticized by Gellner. I object to the complacency, the tribalism, the subtle appeal to the mob's eagerness to go back to the truth, reassured that only easily digestible texts are worth anything.

—Reminds me of Wittgenstein being put off by Carnap. But those in the circle who probably came off as shallow or one dimensional personalities.

—Yeah. I used to (try to) talk to one guy on the forum who was cartoonishly “analytic” in the sense of boring, complacent, rigid. Some people just don’t know how to open up. I know that I’m sometimes inspired and overflowing and maybe take up too much air. But I at least *want* to avoid that rigidity and deafness.

—I know who you are talking about. He, likes lots of those guys on the forum, was maybe afraid to take himself completely seriously.

—Because he didn’t write, didn’t put himself out there except in little comments, mostly attacking targets unworthy of someone with talent.

—Like the atheist who can think of no higher goal than chewing on the ankles of theists.

—That kind of thing. Language policing can be the lowest form of foolosophy. The therapeutic notion (inspired by Wittgenstein) is incoherent. If earnest foolosophy is waste of time, then compulsively “curing” people of this addiction is itself an even more ridiculous addiction. Imagine spending 20 years on-line addicted to playing an addiction therapist. At the least the unwilling patients are coherent, if often enough confused.

—Incoherent. Yes. We are back to the theme of carving a persona.

—And we can take this back to Ayer. *Why bother with logical positivism* ? I know why, but a naive logical positivist might ignore that issue. Or save it

for cocktail parties.

—You are implying it's a form of art.

—Yes, and art is ethical. Rationality is ethical. It's an openness toward others, but also a demand. It isn't about penises, but I connect it to a sublimated masculinity. But I'm a man, so call that my projection or bias. Now being a cool guy or a real man or whatever is also a major theme in Bukowski. Let us not even bother with neurotic excuses for what is supposed to be offensive in his work. Humorlessness towards art is common but boring.

—Bukowski's hero is Bukowski. Bukowski's concern is with the sculpting of Bukowski.

—Yes. In his work, this is explicit. But art in general is the crystallization of an image of virtue, of an ideal self. Part of my virtue, if I have any, is the image I create of what I *aspire* to be.

—I think Bukowski included tales of his own ugly habits not because he didn't see them as ugly but because he was demonstrating the virtue of honesty by doing so.

—Yes. Though goofy young men will miss that point. In the same way they read Nietzsche as the pretentious man's Ayn Rand. Nothing to be done about that. The drama of life. The ladder, the plot.

—I like this image of Ayer as a poet, who may not have understood himself as a poet.

—Right. But I, perhaps obnoxiously, do understand

myself as a poet. This womanish gossip about personality is not beside the point. It is the point. But Ayer was great. You don't have to have a theory of poetry and persona to be a successful poetic persona.

—Indeed, there's something obscene about poetic self-consciousness.

—Yes. I've compared Nietzsche to Hamlet, which is easy, since he interprets Hamlet in his first book so that the comparison is natural. But both are tormented and ecstatic with an obscene and yet seductive poetic self-consciousness.

—Infected with irony.

—Yes.