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Problems with Realism and the Context of Logical Positivism

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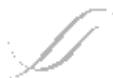
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Logical Positivism

NAOMI ZACK



In 1914, after Charles Peirce had died, his widow gave or sold his voluminous unpublished papers to Harvard University, where they were haphazardly stored in a room in a library. When C. I. Lewis gave up his tenured position at Berkeley to return to Harvard in 1920, he was assigned an office in the room containing Peirce's papers. After reading through the material over several years, Lewis realized that he, like Peirce, was a "conceptual pragmatist." (Murphey, III–II3) This realization shaped Lewis's subsequent work, particularly *Mind and the World Order*, which was published in 1929. In this way, Lewis helped rescue Peirce from obscurity, if not anonymity.

When I was a graduate student at Columbia University (1966–1970), the first time I heard of C. I. Lewis was in 1969, when Sidney Morgenbesser suggested I write my dissertation on his epistemology. I followed Morgenbesser's advice, but from February 1970, when I got my PhD, until the fall of 2004, when I taught an author's course on Lewis at the University of Oregon, I had not thought or written about Lewis. My students at Oregon, like me in 1969, had not previously heard of C. I. Lewis, but they were enthusiastic about his ideas and the class was a success. Several months later, I was struggling to pick up the threads of Lewis's contribution to American Philosophy, while preparing six hours of talks for the Summer Institute in American Philosophy scheduled for July 2005, at the University of Oregon.<sup>1</sup> More or less out of the blue, Peter Hare sent me Murray Murphey's manuscript, *C. I. Lewis: The Last Great Pragmatist*.

Murphey does not tell the reader how long it took him to research and write this comprehensive intellectual biography but its breadth and depth of context suggest a commitment of decades. Murphey, who says he "had the privilege of listening to C. I. Lewis lecture," has, by

expending the kind of labor that Lewis was unable to devote to Peirce, rescued Lewis from obscurity, if not eventual anonymity. Readers of American Philosophy now have a substantial scholarly reference for Lewis, which is rare in its thoroughness and intellectual care. This is a magnificent gift, more than some of us deserve.

As I've related, my own engagement with Lewis's thought has been desultory. And in light of my dissertation title, *An Evaluation of the Epistemology of C. I. Lewis*,<sup>2</sup> and its through-going critique of Lewis's notion of sense meaning from the standpoint of logical positivist meaning and verification criteria, my present approach may appear a-historical or anachronistic. I am interested in how Lewis's epistemology can be understood as his realism and idealism appear today, after the demise of logical positivism and the instability of the "linguistic turn." I think we can learn something profound from Lewis about the connection between language and the world. However, interpretation and criticism should come after someone [else] has painstakingly and legitimately completed the exegesis. I am confident that Murphey's exegesis will provide the lingua franca for future C. I. Lewis studies. I believe that it is a sound exposition, close to Lewis's texts and the texts he accepted for setting the important questions of philosophy and the terms of debate. I think that Murphey understands Lewis as he wanted to be understood, which is to say that the C. I. Lewis vehicle now has a designated driver (not that Lewis was not an accomplished driver in the literal sense, as Murphey describes the Lewis family's vacations in the 1930s, although we don't know why Lewis and his wife drove in separate cars (Murphey, Biographical Note III.))

Lewis worked on a series of philosophical problems that were integral to the thought of the logicians, idealists, realists, philosophers of science and pragmatists of his time, and it is difficult to draw sharp boundaries between his metaphysics and epistemology or even between his moral theory and logical theory. By the 1960s, the logical positivists had drawn the whole of philosophy into questions of verification and on that basis it was possible to focus on "Lewis's epistemology." But when Lewis developed his mature ideas in the 1920s, his shift toward pragmatism, and the theory of knowledge he developed as a pragmatist, was less a move from metaphysics to epistemology than an empiricist refinement of his Roycean idealism.

Except for Murphey's evident enthusiasm for the progression of Lewis's ideas as a logician and logical theorist (which he treats separately throughout the biography), in the chapters dealing with Lewis's work before the positivist challenge, he wisely does not attempt to focus on Lewis's epistemology, apart from his overall philosophical development from idealism into pragmatism and his positive contributions to pragmatism itself. Moreover, Murphey does a lucid job in the chapters dealing with Lewis's earlier work, beginning with his dissertation (Murphey, chapter I), in showing how Lewis's core notions of the *a priori* and *the given* set the parameters of his thought throughout his career. Murphey explains how Lewis was influenced by Whitehead's philosophy of science and Keynes's theory of probability

during the time he wrote two articles that articulated what were to be the major themes of *Mind and the World Order*, namely, “A Pragmatic Conception of the A Priori” and “The Pragmatic Element in Knowledge” (Murphey, Chapter 4). And Murphey’s exposition of the key concepts and themes in *Mind and the World Order* (Murphey, Chapter 5) sets the stage for the development of Lewis’s theory of meaning in the chapter on *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (Murphey, Chapter 7).

Murphey’s contextualized account of Lewis’s philosophical development supports a view that the interesting epistemological question raised by Lewis need no longer be the logical positivist inspired question, “How do we know?,” but the one inspired by Lewis’s own [unstated] referential theory of meaning, namely, “What, which exists outside of our knowledge, is our knowledge about?” Indeed, on the first page of the chapter on AKV, Murphey claims that Lewis explicitly reacted to challenges posed by positivism. Murphey cites Lewis’s claim in his 1933 Presidential Address to the American Philosophical Association that “the central question of philosophy had changed from ‘How do you know?’ to ‘What do you mean?’” (Murphey, 251.) But even Lewis’s own formulation of the shift that he was getting ready to address presupposes a focus on epistemology that was absent in the idealist-realist debate which was so foundational to Lewis’s philosophy as recently as the late 1920’s, and culminating in *Mind and the World Order*. Furthermore, as I hope to show, when Lewis spoke of meaning, he was apt to have connotation rather than reference in mind. At any rate, in light of Murphey’s work on Lewis’s complete intellectual development, it may now be neither anachronistic nor a-historical to consider Lewis’s realism, together with its attendant solipsism, along the lines I would now like to suggest, which draw on a philosophical tradition somewhat parallel to Lewis’s.<sup>3</sup>

Lewis is critical of idealists in a way that implies he is a realist, as do his frequent references to the immutability and brute fact nature of the given. However, it is not clear what he is a realist about, because ordinary or naive realist assumptions and assertions are strikingly missing from his account. In *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, Lewis refines and makes more precise the epistemological and ontological claims of *Mind and the World Order*. One way in which he does this is to distinguish among four different *modes* of meaning. Because these distinctions are so commonly attributed to Lewis as a starting point for criticism, we should get them in his own words.

- (1) The *denotation* of a term is the class of all actual things to which the term applies.
- (2) The *comprehension* of a term is the classification of all possible or consistently thinkable things to which the term would be correctly applicable.
- (3) The *signification* of a term is that property in things the presence of which indicates that the term correctly applies; and the absence of which indicates that it does not apply.

- (4) Formally considered, the *intension* of a term is to be identified with the conjunction of all other terms each of which must be applicable to anything to which the given term would be correctly applicable.<sup>4</sup>

Taking the example of “apple,” existing apples would be its denotation and possible and thinkable apples, its comprehension. The signification of “apple” is the essence of apples, the necessary and sufficient attributes of something that make it an apple. But the intension of “apple” is complex because it is both the linguistic definition of the term “apple” and what Lewis calls “the criterion in mind” by which it is determined whether or not the term “apple” applies or fails to apply in any particular instance.<sup>5</sup> There is thus an important difference between the first three kinds of meaning, which concern language and concepts that can be expressed in words or other symbols, and the sense meaning part of intension. Lewis makes it quite clear that sense meanings are prior to language and foundational for it:

The original determination of analytic truth, and the final court of appeal with respect to it, cannot lie in linguistic usage, because meanings are not the creatures of language but are antecedent, and the relations of meanings are not determined by our syntactic conventions but are determinative of the significance which our syntactic usages may have. Once we have penetrated the circle of independent meanings and made genuine contact with them by our modes of expression, the appeal to linguistic relationships can enormously facilitate and extend our grasp of analytic truths. But the first such determinations and the final tests must lie with meanings in that sense in which there would be meanings even if there were no linguistic expression of them, and in which the progress of successful thinking must conform to actual connections of such meanings even if this progress of thought should be unformulated.<sup>6</sup>

For Lewis, sense meaning works to connect on one side, the linguistic order and the a priori system of concepts at any given time, with, on the other side, the ineffable, brute reality of the given. As Murphey puts it, “Lewis’s theory of sense meaning has the virtue of tying concepts to sense experience” (Murphey, 270).

For Lewis, perfect sense meaning exists if one can correctly apply a term under all imaginable circumstances, and it is possible to “grasp” sense meaning perfectly but fail to grasp linguistic meaning. Sense meaning is more important for knowledge than linguistic meaning and it is required when: verifiability is a test of meaningfulness; empirical difference is required to prove differences in meaning; operational significance is a standard for precise and acceptable concepts. Sense meaning is a matter of imagery and imagination, even for general terms, and Lewis claims that nominalists are mistaken in holding that we do not entertain general meanings. Lewis relies on Kant for a fuller explanation of how nominalists are wrong:

A sense meaning, when precise and explicit is a schema; a rule or prescribed routine and an imagined result of it which will determine applicability of the expression in question. We cannot imagine a chiliagon, but we easily imagine counting the sides of a polygon and getting 1000 as a result. We cannot imagine triangle in general, but we easily imagine following the periphery of a figure with the eye or a finger and discovering it to be a closed figure with three angles.<sup>7</sup>

Lewis insists that the imagined operation is not sufficient to count as sense meaning without the imagined result, which is what determines the applicability or non-applicability of the term having the sense meaning. Because conditions of applicability vary greatly and the determination of applicability is contingent, the criterion of applicability must be formulated hypothetically: “If such and such conditions are satisfied, *then* the finding so and so will determine applicability or truth.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it is not necessary that the conditions of applicability should ever be fulfilled for a term to have sense meaning. In a manner strangely evocative of Plato, Lewis wrote, “The fact that there are no centaurs has no bearing on the meaningfulness of ‘centaur’: we should recognize a centaur if we saw one; and that fact proves the term to have sense meaning.”<sup>9</sup>

Many of Lewis’s even sympathetic critics have been puzzled by his notion of sense meanings, because of the difficulty in incorporating non-linguistic entities into analytic meanings (or indeed, perhaps into any meanings). Some writers, such as A. J. Ayer, in his section on C. I. Lewis in *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, written in 1984, wonder whether all terms do have sensory images associated with them. Ayer registers difficulty with forming an image of sweetness, even though he can assent to the analytic proposition that sugar is sweet. He also wonders about images for definitions of moral terms or theoretical terms such as ‘meson’ or ‘photon.’ But Ayer suggests that a bigger problem for Lewis is his failure to explain how words operate as signs, because images only help us if they can function as signs.<sup>10</sup> This failure, according to Ayer, has to do with Lewis’s insistence on the ineffability of the given, which I will discuss in a moment. Considering the difficulty of imagining images for the kinds of terms Ayer mentions, I think Ayer is failing to do justice to Lewis’s insistence that what we imagine is a series of actions that we can take and some expected result in given experience. It is on this point that Lewis’s pragmatism is often not taken seriously, because the image need not be visual, but could be kinesthetic or otherwise felt, imagined as a sound, smelled, or whatever else is allowed by our senses. It is these non-visual images that pragmatically get us into and about the world. They are images of our actions, and knowledge, even the most abstract analytic a priori knowledge, is always in the service of action for Lewis.

It is on this ground of our action that Lewis could both succeed in incorporating non-linguistic experience into meaning and using an ineffable

given as a foundation for the linguistic and symbolic order. However, his project could work only if we abandoned the requirement that either meaning or sense data verification is something that we can be sure about via the same linguistic terms used to describe knowledge which falls under what Lewis calls denotation, comprehension, signification and definitional intension. We would have to allow for the existence and epistemological importance of non-linguistic or pre-linguistic apprehensions. And that means that we have to allow that something necessary for knowledge occurs in perception before we describe our perceptual experience.

Now to return to Ayer's claim that images help us only if they function as signs. Ayer does not think that images of the given can function as signs, because like the given, they would be ineffable according to Lewis. Ayer does not accept that the given is ineffable, and contra Lewis, he insists that it, and not its relations to other givens, is a sign of an objective property.

Ayer describes himself seated under a tree and looking up at qualia that he interprets as green leaves. According to Lewis he cannot describe a quale as "green" because that confuses it with the physical leaf and we should not describe quales in the same way that we commonly describe real objects. Ayer is not disturbed by such a violation of common usage and suggests that we are entitled, and perhaps obligated, to describe the quale the leaf presents, as "green," or "green looking."<sup>11</sup> Now insofar as predictions and verifications are sentences, then descriptions of what is predicted or verified would have to be in words, and Ayer is right. However, I think he is missing Lewis's main point about the ineffability of the given, which is that it is something to which we compare our descriptions in words. In strong terms, Lewis's ineffable given is his answer to Berkeley's idealism whereby Berkeley began from the premise that all we ever know is our ideas. Lewis was trying to draw attention to that part of our experience that we grasp, but do not yet have ideas or words for, because we don't know if the ideas and words to which we are already committed will apply to it. Lewis's view of reference here is something like the experience of a beginning biology student who is not yet sure that what she is seeing under the microscope is the phenomenon described in her lab workbook. She could if pressed describe what she is seeing in words that compare it to ordinary objects (e.g. "a cigar-shaped transparent mass in the right upper corner of my visual field") but her assignment is to find something under the microscope that can be accurately described by a specific term in biology.

Of course we do not go about our ordinary lives like beginning biology students trying to correctly identify items first viewed through a microscope, or more precisely, being required to observe that to which some terms would correctly apply. This suggests a major problem with Lewis's admittedly abstract notion of the given as pre-linguistically identifiable but ineffable. He is open to the charge of confusing the situations in which languages are learned or perhaps deliberately constructed in special fields, with the ordinary ease of the linguistically competent practitioner. Lewis could counter

that the givens which do not easily fall under descriptions for the beginner remain the same givens for the competent practitioner, although by the time competence is achieved, which it has been in most of normal experience, it becomes an abstraction to identify the given as such. Moreover, Lewis could say that our usual practice of not noticing the given as such does not disqualify it as a subject for reflection, much less prove that it is not always present as a condition for our expectations, actions, linguistic competence, and other components of being in the world.

As Murphey is aware, Lewis does not explicitly repudiate idealism, although Murphey does not draw out the effect this has on what Lewis thinks of as his own realism, particularly from the perspectives of different empirical philosophical traditions. Instead of repudiating realism, Lewis claims that idealists are not interested in the question of whether thinking creates sense data but are instead interested in these two questions: Can there be an apprehension of a real object without a construction of the mind?, and, Is the existence of sense data evidence of a mind-independent reality? Lewis is throughout explicit that thinking does not create sense data, which is the question of interest to him. And, he does not think that there can be an apprehension of a real object without a construction of the mind. Yet, he hedges on whether the existence of sense data are evidence of a mind-independent reality, because he thinks that sense data are independent of the mind but does not credit them as signs or evidence of a *reality* independent of the mind.<sup>12</sup> Thus: "There is, in all experience, that element which we are aware that we do not create by thinking and cannot, in general, displace or alter."<sup>13</sup> And, "The real object, as known, is a construction put upon this experience of it, and includes much which is not, at the moment, given in the presentation."<sup>14</sup> The reality of objects for Lewis is a matter of judgment, based on antecedent a priori commitments to what counts as real in a certain category. The categories, e.g. mind, physicality, are not independent of all experience but at any time in which they are applied to an experience or a segment of experience, they are independent of that experience or experience segment. What Lewis calls "the common world" that human beings share is social, because it is the result of their agreement to a priori principles about the categories of experience and their observably similar behavior in applying those principles to their own individual experiences of the given.

The realist—anti-realist question for Lewis is whether he takes himself to be talking about how we know about our common reality or about the existence of that common reality itself. If his claims are always read as epistemological then he could be correct about how we know about a common mind-independent world and the matter of whether such a world exists as the naive realist thinks it does, could be left open. However, Lewis's insistence that our criteria for the reality of physical objects are no different than our criteria for regularities of events, and his placement of those criteria beyond empirical investigation at their points of application, suggests that he means to be taken literally in a metaphysical sense that the a priori and

the given are all that there are in any ontological way that could make sense to philosophers. If what counts as a physical object depends on our a priori principles for applying an analytic definition, it would seem to be implied that without such principles we have no reason to believe that the world is divided into objects, or that things are individuated. Moreover, Lewis nowhere says that without our principles we could have no knowledge of an individuated world which would nonetheless exist independently of us. It may not be a huge problem if individuation is in the mind, when the subjects are continuous stuff-like things or expanses of things, such as sand, water, distance or temperature. Here we resort to mainly quantitative standards of measurement such as pounds, gallons, miles and thermometers. But it is a problem bordering on absurdity if Lewis is committed to claiming that the individuation of living things, including human beings, depends wholly on antecedent a priori decisions. For Lewis, our categories, although subject to change, do reflect our deep interests, many of which we have reason to believe are widely shared. But the notion of shared interests either fails to be relevant to the a priori nature of the categories brought to experience, or it forms those categories in a way that presupposes realist individuation on at least an animal level. If individuation is presupposed for the existence of animals, so that animals such as we can have interests, then there already is in the background for Lewis a mind-independent real world containing things whose individuation is also real and mind-independent. The reality of that background would presumably not be dependent on our a priori categories for reality. That Lewis has so little to say about reality in this sense, as a factor in realist-idealist philosophical differences, is at first sight puzzling, although it might be explained by his refusal to consider a causal theory of perception. A causal theory of perception might have appeared to him to be inimical to his pragmatic, inter-active theory of knowledge. A comparison with Bertrand Russell's naive realism is instructive on this point.

In *The Problems of Philosophy*, first published in 1912, and certainly accessible to Lewis, Russell claims that philosophy is an extension of common sense and he apparently has no problem in philosophically accepting the common sense confidence in the existence of a physical world independent of minds. The philosophical problems arise in justifying our knowledge of this world. According to Russell, we have direct knowledge by acquaintance of sense data and universals. Because science is an extension of common sense and science tells us that sense data are caused by properties of objects in interaction with media and our organs of perception (in which the brain would be included), there is no difficulty in accepting that sense data, which are subjective, are in large part the effects of things in the world, which are objective. Furthermore, sense data can be described in ways comprehensible to many observers and these descriptions are ultimately the foundation for our shared empirical knowledge.<sup>15</sup> I submit that this naive realist view, although not necessarily Russell's theory of descriptions, and probably minus his Platonic

notion of universals, remains the view of educated common sense almost a century later. The question then is where does Lewis's depart from it and what can we say about his justifications for those departures?

First of all, Lewis does not begin with the naive realist assumption of an objective world, although he retains a partial idea of objectivity in his claim that there is something of which the mind is aware that is not created by the mind. However, despite the brute unalterability of Lewis's mind-independent given, it lacks two other components of naive reality: it includes hallucinations, dreams and perceptions subsequently judged to be in error and it is not formed into objects such as tables and chairs, much less living beings. The inclusion of what could be generally called illusions in the given makes it similar to a stream of consciousness and indeed Lewis repeatedly says that for a being who could not act in the world, there would be nothing beyond a stream of consciousness, passively experienced.<sup>16</sup> According to Lewis, both veridical experiences and individuated things in the world are the result of the application of a priori principles to the given and the constant testing of such application through action. This raises the question of how the being with a priori principles and a stream of consciousness could become an entity capable of action if it were not antecedently at least implicitly known by that being that there was a world in which it could act and that it had a body or was a body, capable of such action. Historically, and this is the kind of example to which Lewis occasionally resorted, humankind has not approached the world with ontological minimalism. Rather, the history of humankind has been a process of recognizing that more and more things believed to exist in the world are products of the human mind, for example, deities, spirits, vital forces. We have historically approached the world with the assumption that it, and human beings, are independent of the minds of human beings. The question is thus whether Lewis is justified in showing that a large part of this naive realist assumption is mistaken.

It is difficult to see how Lewis could be justified in disabusing us of the naive realist assumption. Indeed, his attempt to do so must depend on the naive realist assumption in one way and may depend on it in a second way. First, for an interactive theory of knowledge, Lewis needs to assume that there is at least one antecedently individuated actor and an antecedent physical space in which action takes place. This is a double epistemological requirement. The actor would have to have at least implicit knowledge of his or her own body and an external world in the naive realist sense, and Lewis, the theorist, would have to have implicit knowledge about the actor's implicit knowledge.

The second way in which Lewis might need to assume naive realism is ontological. Is the world which the actor implicitly believes to be both mind independent and divided into objects, real? Or, is the assumed world and the individuation of objects within it, mind independent? Lewis's answer would appear to be "No, the world and object individuation is not real in the sense of mind independence," because what counts as an object is determined by relations among the given, which are antecedently postulated and a priori, and

what counts as real is similarly determined by analytic a priori criteria, appropriate to the category in which it is real.

It is awkward for us to talk about what is real in this way, after generations of reiteration of Kant's widely accepted claim that existence is not a predicate, and the removal, post-Russell, of existence to existential quantifiers in logic. But, in the generation when Lewis learned philosophy, realism was a live subject. Much of the debate then involved constructing the correct philosophical theory to account for ordinary experience and disproving absolute idealism, the later enterprise made redundant by extreme logical positivist or logical empiricist theories of meaning. Nonetheless, at the time he wrote, Lewis's action theory of knowledge could have introduced some new elements in the realist-idealist debate. Along with his interactive theory of knowledge, he might have evoked the factor of *presence*. As we go about our business in ordinary life, we take it for granted that what we accept as real objects have a presence to us as entities or things, which is more than our experience of their sensory qualities. It seems to us as though the sensory qualities of things are perspicuous as qualities of things. Not only do we experience things as being what they appear to be but, more simply, we experience them as being. I am stating an intuition here, which was perhaps best captured by Russell's empiricist forebears who were also not at all bothered by assumptions that naive realism is true. Thus in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke wrote that our simple ideas of existence and unity "are suggested to the understanding by every object without, and every idea within. When ideas are in our minds, we consider them as being actually there, as well as we consider things to be actually without us; which is, that they exist or have existence."<sup>17</sup> Concerning our knowledge "of the real, actual, existence of things," Locke claimed:

we have an intuitive knowledge of our own existence; a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of a God; and of the existence of any thing else, we have no other but a sensitive knowledge, which extends not beyond the objects present to our senses.<sup>18</sup>

And to allay any lingering doubts about the presence of an external world, as something veridically given in perception, he proclaimed, with the exasperation characteristic of him:

He that sees a fire, may, if he doubt whether it be anything more than a bare fancy, feel it too; and be convinced, by putting his hand in it; which certainly could never be put into such exquisite pain, by a bare idea or phantom, unless that the pain be a fancy too: Which yet he cannot, when the burn is well, by raising the idea of it, bring upon himself again.<sup>19</sup>

There is as well David Hume's famous dictum: "The most lively thought is still inferior to the dulllest sensation."<sup>20</sup>

For both Locke and Hume the philosophical questions were What do we know? and How do we know? Lewis, by contrast, is not too worried about

what we know because he is content to leave the answers to that kind of question up to scientists. But neither, strictly speaking, is he all that interested in how we know, because the given is not foundational for him in that generalizations made from it can build up to knowledge. He is rather, a thoroughly twentieth-century philosopher in that his main interest is in how language and the symbolic order connects with what is outside of it, but which it is nonetheless about. That is, Lewis is concerned with meaning, in the sense of reference, more than epistemology, exactly because he does not hold that the given is foundational for knowledge. Lewis doesn't accept the ordinary world as that with which language connects, because he thinks that what we take to be that world has already been formed by language and symbols. What he does accept as the other term for language is a pre-linguistic something which at any given time is itself ineffable but which, in combination with other ineffables supports hypotheses about action, action which produces further ineffables that confirm the hypotheses. This is important because regardless of what our words and symbols become associated with or refer to, that *what* is something that is not words and symbols. Lewis's contribution is thus to gesture to that of which we are aware but of which we cannot speak. This is the important difference between Lewis and Ayer, because Ayer insists that the given is describable, which draws attention away from it as the non-linguistic something. For Ayer, as theorists, philosophers and scientists, once we describe a thing, we need have no more concern with the thing itself, except as a source of further descriptions. All of our work takes place within the linguistic and symbolic order, and it is no accident that for Ayer and other logical positivists, it is statements, sentences and propositions that provide meaning and verification.<sup>21</sup>

The last point could occasion the following criticism of Ayer by Lewis: If you accept that there is something extra-linguistic, then descriptions of that given in sense data terminology is an example of the process whereby reality is constructed by connections among what is given. To describe sense data either amounts to a reification of a mental event, which is a mistake from even a naive realist perspective, or it suggests that the process of connecting givens is at work. When givens are connected in the way that sense data descriptions require, the process of applying principles of physical reality has already begun. The claim I am ascribing to Lewis's answer would have to be that the given is not a mental event.

Lewis was thus unique among Anglo-American philosophers in identifying the pre-linguistic something to which language is attached. He may have been mistaken in making that pre-linguistic something so minimal as to exclude the objects of ordinary reality, but he protected its mind-independence by insisting on its ineffability. If he sanctioned this ineffability, it may have been the only way in which he could resist reifying mental events, because descriptions of the given would probably collapse into descriptions of mental events.

Of course, by the time Murphey deals with Lewis's response to positivism, hundred pages into his account, he has followed Lewis into the logical positivist thicket from which few believe he could have succeeded in extricating himself insofar as they assume that his notion of the given is meant to be an incorrigible foundation for knowledge. And, Murphey does not take up the issue of Lewis's realism in the context of English empiricism, as I have done, because he presents him, as I said, in his own terms, which was within the American idealist—moving-into—pragmatist tradition. This is altogether appropriate for an intellectual biographer.

However Murphey does end his book with this note of optimism:

Now that Positivism is dead, behaviorism is defunct in psychology and dying in philosophy, now that the French disease is fading into bad memory and the linguistic fetishism that has plagued philosophy is beginning to ebb, perhaps it is time to study again the work of the last great Pragmatist." (Murphey, p. 407)<sup>22</sup>

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#### NOTES

1. Naomi Zack, "The Mystery of C. I. Lewis," 4 papers, Summer Institute in American Philosophy, University of Oregon, July 15 and 16, 2005.

2. Naomi Zack, *An Evaluation of the Epistemology of C. I. Lewis*, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1970.

3. The discussion following is a substantial portion of Paper # 4 from my Summer Institute in American Philosophy talks. (Note 1, above.)

4. C. I. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, La Salle, Ill: Open Court, 1962, p. 39.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 43–4.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

10. A. J. Ayer, *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, New York, NY, Vintage Books, Random House, 1984, pp. 99–100.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Clarence Irving Lewis, *Mind and the World Order: Outline of a Theory of Knowledge*, New York, NY: Dover, 1956, pp. 36–49.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–9.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

15. See Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959, chapters I, II and V, pp. 7–26 and 46–59. (First published in the Home University Library, 1912.)

16. Lewis, *Mind and the World Order*.

17. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, Book II, Ch. VII, S. 7, p.131.

18. *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. III, S. 21, pp. 552–3.

19. *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. XI, S. 7, p. 663.

20. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Eric Steinberg, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993, p. 10.

21. See A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, New York, NY: Dover Publications, Introduction, pp. 5–26

22. Regarding this “French disease,” I take it as his text implies that Murphey does not share Lewis’s commitment to eugenics, which he traces to his early twentieth century Progressivism. Murphey takes note of Lewis’s white supremacism, but he thinks that his racism is tempered by a compassionate belief that although members of non-white races may not be equal to whites, they are entitled to the same moral consideration, because they are “sentient beings.” (See Murphey, 249.) If the work of the last great Pragmatist does get the attention Murphey thinks it deserves, it will be necessary to systematically examine Lewis’s ideas about race, as well as his ideas about women that may have caused his wife, Mabel, so much acute grief during the early years of their marriage, and apparently thwarted her hopes for fulfilling and creative work of her own, over a lifetime. (See Murphey, Chapter 2). I began such an examination in Paper 4 of my Summer Institute in American Philosophy lectures at the University of Oregon in July, 2005, “Lewis’s Idea of the Good Life and His Apparent Racism and Sexism.”