

Letter from J.J.C. Smart to A.N. Prior, October 9, 1951<sup>1</sup>

The University  
Adelaide  
S. Australia  
9.10.51

Dear Arthur,

Thanks for your letter – it provided much pleasant food for thought. I'm sorry to hear of the flu, though. I hope that is now very much a thing of the past.

The Ryle bibliography. (I don't know what Ryle would think if he thought that people were bibliographing him!) You've missed a few things out, surprising as it may seem! I can think of (1) lecture on John Locke in Christchurch (Oxford!) published by O.U.P. Date, I think 1928. But poss. 1932 if it was the tercentenary of Locke's birth.)<sup>2</sup> (2) "Taking Sides in Philosophy", *Philosophy* 1937.<sup>3</sup> (An attack on people who boast of following such and such a school of philosophy.) (3) Critical Notice of Cornford "Plato and Parmenides", *Mind* 1939 or thereabouts.<sup>4</sup> (This is very interesting). (4) "Philosophical Arguments", Inaugural lecture 1944 (O.U.P.)<sup>5</sup> (5) Review of Blanshard's "Nature of Thought", *Philosophy* 1940.<sup>6</sup> (6) "If, So and Because" in "Philosophical Analysis", edited by Max Black, Cornell University Press.<sup>7</sup> (7) I think there was something on "About" in the pre-war Analysis (by the way. I never see the pre-war Analysis. What was "Conscience v. Moral Convictions" like?) Review of the Concept of Mind are legion, but the following are the most interesting that you haven't mentioned: Farrell: Brit. Journal of Psychology, 1950. J.L. Austin, Times Literary Supplement, 1950. Not quite so good: M. Macdonald, Philosophical Review. Also D. Mackinnon. Phil. Quarterly.<sup>8</sup>

About "All facts are relational or qualitative" being analytic. Of course it won't quite do, because J. Mackie doesn't exactly say "all f. are q. or r." But whatever it is that he does say, it is analytic. (Perhaps!) I agree that he admits negative and general facts. But still, he did say something like "all fs. are q. or r." in a letter – that's why I took him up about it. He does not admit existential facts. (A bit like Russell, who at any rate say "Soc. exists" is not a fact about Socrates, but Mackie not, I think, so clear headed about this as Russell.) I've been reading Russell's series in the *Monist* 1918, 1919, on "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" – I think (apart from PM) it is the best stuff R. has written – I'm only sorry I'd never read it before. There are a lot of Sydney like things about facts in it. Also some not so Sydney like things. I've got vague thoughts on [p. 2] facts arising out of criticism of Russell's first article in the series, and if they come to anything I'll let you know what

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: The letter is in the Prior archive box 3 at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and has been transcribed and commented on by David Jakobsen with much help from Martin Prior.

<sup>2</sup> Editor's note: Smart refers to John Locke: Tercentenary Addresses Delivered in the Hall at Christ Church, October 1932. Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Editor's note: Ryle, G., Taking Sides in Philosophy, *Philosophy* Vol. 12, No. 47 (Jul., 1937), pp. 317-332

<sup>4</sup> Editor's note: Ryle, G. Review of 'Plato and Parmenides', by Francis Macdonald Cornford, *Mind*, Volume XLVIII, Issue 192, 1 October 1939, Pages 536-543.

<sup>5</sup> Editor's note: "Philosophical Arguments", delivered as the Inaugural Lecture as Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy. It is reprinted in *Collected Papers*, vol. 2, 194-211.

<sup>6</sup> Editor's note: Ryle, G., Review of Blanshard's "Nature of Thought", *Philosophy* 1940. Vol. 15, No. 59 (Jul., 1940), pp. 324-329.

<sup>7</sup> Editor's note: Ryle's essay in 'Philosophical Analysis', edited by Max Black, Cornell University Press, 1950.

<sup>8</sup> Editor's note: D.M. Mackinnon., 'The Concept of Mind', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol 1., No. 3, April 1950, pp. 248-253.

they are. But probably they won't come to anything. Anyway I want to have a bit of a think about them as soon term comes to an end!

I like Mary's wicked theory. Wicked theories are always more fun than respectable ones!

I agree with you about Ryle on heterologicality. I think he would too. As you say "the real point is not that 'het' is non-philosophical but that it's applicability can not be determined until after something else was determined. But of course if it were a philosophical epithet its applicability could be determined right away. I also agree about your treatment of the class of all classes. I think it is neater than any I've seen. (Quite how important the "asymmetrical logical relation" business is, though, I can't feel sure.)

The treatment of achievement words is interesting. Of course Ryle likes to talk of "got it" words rather than achievement words. (You can see without trying to see. You can score a goal accidentally, etc.) Also task – achievement is a special case of a more general thing: process-result. The leaves float down the stream and reach the bridge. Arrival is the result of floating down. But of course they are not trying to reach anything! That "fork" ≠ "try to see" is, I think, an interesting and in fact not a merely verbal one....<sup>9</sup> Best wishes to Mary, and looking forward to more wicked theories!

Jack

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<sup>9</sup> Editor's note: It is difficult to make out what Smart writes here.