

SCIENTIFIC AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUMENTALISM: SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON SCIENCE- RELIGION CONTROVERSY

Ibrahim Kalin

Abstract

In what follows is presented a descriptive account of the basic premises of scientific and religious instrumentalism. Since focus of the essay will mainly be the relation between science and religion, technicalities and implications of both instrumentalism for philosophy of science and philosophy of religion will be omitted. Scientific instrumentalism, as introduced here, is presented as one of the contemporary philosophies of science among other. Therefore the stance of scientific instrumentalism towards science and its implication for the philosophy of religion should not be taken as the last word about the matter. The main premises of scientific instrumentalism simply indicate the fact that science-religion controversy is a philosophical problem and should be treated like any other philosophical issue. The same holds true for religious instrumentalism. This particular view of religious belief has many points to be dealt with. For brevity's sake one can make such a generalisation at the outset that instrumentalist construal of religion and religious belief has a long story in Western intellectual tradition and it will be treated here as one of the main characteristics of the modern Western conception of religion. Reduction of religious/metaphysical truth to mere set of moral principles (Kant's 'regulative principle', so to speak) is one of the conspicuous consequences of this approach. Besides religious instrumentalism points to the notion of truth and meaning in religious belief which is one of the most crucial and controversial issues in contemporary philosophy of religion. Taking into consideration the different and competing approaches, one can speak of different schools appearing in the scheme of philosophy of religion as different attempts to account for the justification of religious belief. Within the limits of our study, however, we will confine ourselves to a particular version of instrumentalist construal of religious belief, that is to what Braithwaite calls 'an empiricist's view of the nature of religious belief. Due to the close relation between religious instrumentalism and postmodernist understanding of religion, at the end some conclusions will be drawn about the so-called postmodern theology and the concept of religion in postmodernist discourse.

It is perplexing most of the time to see supposedly two different things as being juxtaposed upon the same plane. Religion and science should be one of the best examples of this sort. In modern times they have always been set against each other to the extent that a choice between one of them has become necessary for those who belong to religious or scientific side. The main reason in this exclusive discrimination was the assumption that there could be no disciplinary or methodological relation and correlation between the two. To use Wittgenstein's analogy, they represent 'different language-games'⁹⁷ whose rules for their own games are totally different from each other. Only difference in this schema, however, is the controlling and monopolising power of science. In language-games, every discourse has to follow its rule for its game. None of them can be substituted for any other ontologically or epistemologically. Neither of them can have preponderance over the other methodologically. This means that science, as any language-game among others, cannot claim any ontological or methodological superiority over, say, philosophy or theology or more generally religion. Until recently the dominant understanding of science kept on holding exactly the opposite position and claimed an absolute supremacy in every respect over other disciplines and sciences.⁹⁸ The underlying view going parallel to this assumption was that ontologically and methodologically there could be no intersection at any level between science and religion. Classical positivist conception of science construed itself as the only valid and reliable language-game prescribing the rules of the others. Besides a lot of philosophical points which can be adduced to prove the interrelation between religion and science, instrumentalism and its reflections in religious and scientific issues offer a somewhat new perspective to the notorious clash between religion

⁹⁷ For the concept of language-games, see L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, (Basil Blackwell, 1988) 1-8.

⁹⁸ It was this scientist position that induced Husserl to develop a phenomenology which would be conducive to the elimination of the 'wrong rationalism of the Enlightenment'. At this point Husserl's phenomenology was a bold attempt to overcome the European crisis which 'has its roots in a misguided rationalism'. See his masterpiece *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (North Western University Press, Evanston, 1970) p. 290. Apart from Husserl, the other significant trend of that period to rebut the positivistic-universalistic understanding of science was Hermeneutics which was initially put forward to give back to social sciences their lost reliability against natural sciences.

and science and provide some novel strategies to solve out the cited problem. Now let us see the major arguments of the two instrumentalisms.

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTALISM

Instrumentalist view in science asserts that scientific theories are mere instruments in scientific inquiries. Theories are important and necessary as long as they perform a function in scientific descriptions of the universe. Every theory put forward in physics or in chemistry or in astronomy has a role which renders scientific explanations more adequate and -systematic. In that sense theories are indispensable for any scientific investigation. The main point in scientific instrumentalism, however, is that besides their guiding role, they have no value and function such as to reflect the phenomena as they are or to be the summary of some complicated and extensive experimental data. In instrumentalist view theories are not to be considered as summaries of experimental data derived from the factual world because this idea presupposes a relation of correspondence⁹⁹ between theory and the factual phenomena. The instrumentalist simply rejects the relation of identification between theories and physical realities. In line with these premises the idea that theories are supposed to be translatable into the language of experiment and observation is rejected and replaced with the view that the relation between theories and physical entities are not ontological or existential but instrumental, that is to say, not substantial but accidental. It is with this stance that scientific instrumentalism goes beyond the notorious distinction between observational and theoretical terms. The idea that observation is theory-dependent and theory-laden does refer in a sense to an epistemic condition... Instrumentalist position towards theoretical entities aims to undermine their ontological basis.

What underlies these assumptions of instrumentalism is the repudiation of the idea of truth and falsity in theories and science. The proponents of

⁹⁹ Correspondence theory of truth is still one of the main precepts of realism despite the fact that one can hold a realist position without adhering to the correspondence theory of truth. (For a defence of the distinction between realism and the correspondence theory, see M. Devitt, *Realism and Truth*, (Blackwell, 1991) pp. 27-30). In this context the most ambitious attempt at the beginning of this century was Wittgenstein's project to develop a 'logically perfect language' in *Tractatus*.

scientific instrumentalism like van ' Fraassen¹⁰⁰ argue that theories bear no ontological basis and reality. In contradistinction to the claims of realists, theories do not correspond to objective entities existing independently of theoretical constructions of the scientist. Since theories do not correspond to any objective ontological ground or reality, they cannot be assessed as true or false. At this point the instrumentalist is in opposition to the realist view that science (or here theory) aims at 'truth'. To the instrumentalist, the notion of truth in science either as truth in realist sense or as verisimilitude in Popperian sense should be taken out of consideration. In this respect instrumentalism appears as an extension of antirealism in that both schools deny the ontological reality and basis of science in general and scientific theories in particular. Likewise theoretical entities such as electrons, protons, etc., cannot be said to be really existing. As the name itself suggests, they are 'theoretical' entities and once the term 'theoretical' is defined in the instrumentalist sense, ontological basis and validity of theories and theoretical entities cannot be proved and justified.¹⁰¹

Although instrumentalism poses no ontological and even epistemological status and importance to theories, "some theories still can be regarded and preferred as better over others. And it is here that

¹⁰⁰ Van Fraassen's reading of scientific realism is as follows: 'Science aims to give us, in its theories, a literally true story of what the world is like; and acceptance of a scientific theory involves the belief that it is true'. (*The Scientific Image*, p. 8). The word 'belief' in the above statement renders the issue quite problematic for the realist. Instead, van Fraassen comes up with a new theory which he calls 'constructive empiricism': 'Science aims to give us theories which are empirically adequate' and acceptance of a theory involves as belief only that it is empirically adequate'. (*Ibid.*, p. 12); quoted in Michael Devitt, *ibid.*, p. 137. Smith, *The Rationality of Science*, (Routledge & Kaegan Paul, 1981), pp. 28-34; Ian Hacking, *Representing and Intervening* (Cambridge University Press, 1983) pp. 50-52.

¹⁰¹ With regard to the existence of theoretical entities, Quinton says that 'since sentences containing the names of theoretical entities do not so refer, they are not really statements at all but are linguistic devices of calculation or prediction'. *The Nature of Things* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) p. 288; quoted in Newton-Smith, p. 32. It is here that positivist element in scientific instrumentalism which we omit due to the context of our discussion displays itself without further ado. Since the instrumentalist denies the existence of theoretical entities by relying on the assumption that only the observable phenomena can be the subject matter of science, this results in a position similar to positivism.

instrumentalism differs from antirealism in its attitude towards the superiority of some theories. The lack of ontological basis does not diminish the functional validity and supremacy of some theories. They can still be considered as better not because they are approximately closer to truth but because they perform a better function just as the daily instruments and tools we use do. In a word some theories are superior to some others as long as they are 'useful' and have an instrumental function in scientific inquiries. To make an analogy, theories in science can be compared with signs and utterances in every day language. 'Every sign by itself seems dead.' says Wittgenstein. 'What gives it life?- In use it is alive. Is life breathed into it there?- Or is the rise its life?'¹⁰² Theories shorn of their function and use in scientific inquiry are dead, as it were; they are meaningful and alive when taken as our linguistic devices.

The embarrassment which the realist view of theories faces is that there may be two or more different theories which cover and explain the same domain of phenomena equally well. (Fig.1)

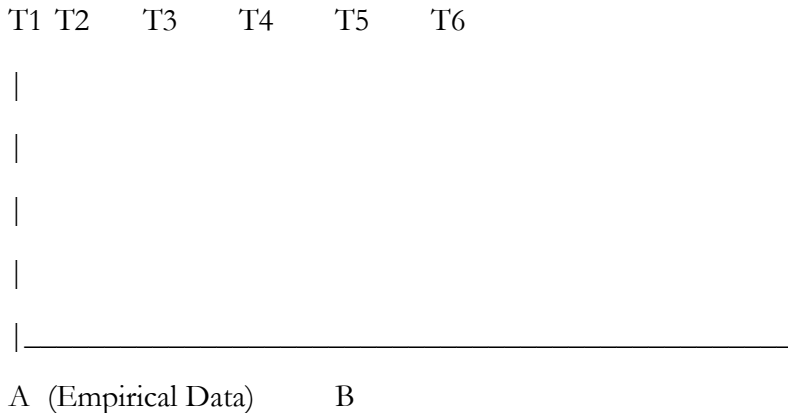


Fig. 1

¹⁰² Philosophical Investigations, (Basil Blackwell, 1988), 432. For the account of the 'flippant' philosopher of science on the instrumentalist theory of language derived from the later Wittgenstein see P. Feyerabend, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigation' in Problems of Empiricism Philosophical Papers, Vol. 2, (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 99-131.

History of science has many examples of this sort within different paradigms, to deploy Kuhn's term. At this juncture the instrumentalist argues that if theories are to be taken mere instruments for our calculations and predictions, there would be no trouble for the scientist to choose one of the opposing theories. Moreover, when taken as tools, different theories about the same phenomenon would not be incompatible with each other because neither of them have any ontological status regarding the factual world. Second advantage of the instrumentalist view is that no theory is to be considered as 'the last word' about any theoretical - or non-theoretical entity. History of science displays many cases such as the Newtonian and Einsteinian pictures of the universe in which a theory was taken as absolutely true, but with, later developments, replaced by another theory. Instrumentalist stance will prevent the scientist from facing such paradoxical and inconsistent choices.

To sum up the instrumentalist position, science in general and theories in particular are our intellectual devices for certain purposes such as calculation, classification and prediction. Theories are employed in scientific quest and in this sense they are indispensable equipment of the scientist. They are not, however, the exact projections of entities for which they are devised. Their sole significance and function is to help us understand and explain the universe better. To use Nagel's phrase, in the instrumentalist view, theories are not the projected maps of some domain of nature but the principles of *mapping*.¹⁰³ Therefore one cannot assign to science in general and to scientific theories in particular such paradoxical and odd tasks as to be a counter-argument against any philosophical, theological or moral assertion.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Nagel, E.-The Structure of Science, Problems in the Logic of Scientific Explanation, (Heackett Pub., 1979) p.139.

¹⁰⁴ Before proceeding to religious instrumentalism some points should be made very briefly about the connection of instrumentalism to the postmodernist discourse. Denial of the ontological basis of reality and the construal of any discourse as a distinct language-game are among the basic premises of postmodernism. At this juncture 'postmodern science' is, like any other discipline and discourse, a language-game without posing any ontological claim about its function and place in human society. It is here that postmodernist discourse and scientific instrumentalism get closer to each other in their stance towards science and

RELIGIOUS INSTRUMENTALISM

The basic postulation of religious instrumentalism is the same as that of scientific instrumentalism: Since the truth in religious assertions cannot be verified according to the principle of verification, any account pertaining to truth or falsity in religious belief has to be discarded. The verification principle of the logical positivists stipulates that no statement is meaningful unless it is verified empirically. Empirical verification of any religious statement or proposition is exactly of the same character as any physical or chemical experiment in that such empirical elements of verification as observation, testing, seeing, etc. are of primary importance. Once this principle of verification is accepted as the sole criterion of truth and meaning, it is obvious that no religious or moral or metaphysical statement can have meaning or 'truth-value' and therefore these statements, as the logical positivists declared, would be meaningless. It is not so easy, however, to deny the operational function of religious belief and moral imperatives in the conduct and regulation of the social life. This point refers to an empirical aspect. Therefore the only way open to an empiricist is, as R. B. Braithwaite attempts, to interpret and explain the religious truth and moral principles according to the role and function they have in the regulation and management of society.

According to the principle of verification, religious dogmas, beliefs and claims should be taken as propositions and statements with a certain empirical content if they are to be proved to be true or false. Braithwaite considers three main classes of statement which is valid for truth-value

scientific theories. To leave aside the implications of the term 'postmodern science' and the interrelation between postmodernism and such ideas in contemporary philosophy of science as those of Kuhn and Feyerabend, the following description of Leotard is worth quoting: Postmodern science by concerning itself with such things as undecidables, the limits of precise control, conflicts characterised by incomplete information, "Fracta", catastrophes, and pragmatic paradoxes— is theorising its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, nonrectifiable, and paradoxical. It is changing the meaning of the word knowledge, while expressing how such a change can take place. It is producing not the known, but the unknown. And it suggests a model legitimation that has nothing to do with maximised performance, but has as its basis difference understood as paralogy'. The Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge, tr. by G. Bennington and B. Msaami, (University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 60

testing: statements about empiric facts, scientific hypotheses and other empirical statements, and finally the logically necessary statements of logic and mathematics.¹⁰⁵ The crucial question here is whether the religious statements fall into the category of any of these kinds. Religious assertions cannot, be regarded as empirical statements because their objects (such as God, angel, hereafter, etc.) are not observable and testable phenomena. Being beyond the seen and the testable renders the impervious to empirical test unlike a chemical or biological entity. If these statements are to be taken as scientific hypotheses or empirical statements about the factual world, they must be falsifiable and refutable when the experience proves them to be false. Such a consequence obviously contradicts and undermines the very nature of religious belief which is by its nature transcendent and everlasting. The last option is to consider the religious assertions necessary like the logically necessary propositions of logic and mathematics. In this case religious belief faces a more serious problem, which is the ontological status of the propositions of logic and mathematics. According to this account following Hume and Kant, logical and mathematical propositions are hypothetical entities which, although indispensable for our understanding and regulation of the world of phenomena, do not correspond to an objective existence in the factual world. If religious statements are taken to be necessary premises like the propositions of logic and mathematics, then one has to accept them as hypothetical and instrumental entities having no claim of existence.

Within this framework religious claims have to be abandoned as unverifiable and hence meaningless metaphysical statements. But as mentioned above, religious beliefs cannot be easily discarded, because of their regulative role and power in society. At this point Braithwaite comes up with a new definition of meaning derived from the later Wittgenstein in order to save the phenomena: 'the meaning of any statement is given by the way in which it is used.'¹⁰⁶ Since 'usage' of any religious or theological statement has

¹⁰⁵ R. B. Braithwaite, 'An Empiricist's View of the Nature of the Nature of Religious Belief', in *The Philosophy of Religion*, ed. by B. Mitchell, p. 73.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 77. Meaning-use equation is one of the main characteristics of the later Wittgenstein: 'For a large class of cases—though not for all—in which we employ the

empiric content, it can be observed, tested, heard, etc. Intention of the asserter of any religious belief to subscribe to a religious or moral policy, for instance, is open to empirical testing. Intention and will of the asserter can be tested by observing what he does and what attitudes he follows. In the same way, empirical answers can be obtained from him. Hence according to this criterion which fact is reminiscent of the pragmatist approach, what makes religion and religious claims 'meaningful' is the intention of the believer regardless of the truth or falsity of these intentions and beliefs.¹⁰⁷

Since the meaning of religious statements is provided by the intention of the asserter, religious propositions are devoid of meaning unless they are associated with the object of the asserter's intention. ...the meaning of a religious assertion is given by its use in expressing the asserter's intention to follow a specified policy of behaviour'.¹⁰⁸ What is meant by the specified policy of behaviour is moral principles because the intention of the asserter to pursue a certain pattern of attitude cannot be any arbitrary and subjective behaviour. More importantly, religious beliefs and claims can have an 'empirical' content (conductive role in society) only when they are associated with a set of moral principles. Since religious statements have no truth-content and value in themselves as in the case of stories narrated by the sacred books, they are meaningful only when they are reduced to moral commands. '...the primary use of religious assertion is to announce allegiance to a set of moral principles: without such allegiance there is no 'true religion''.¹⁰⁹

word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language'.
Philosophical Investigations,

43; see also 30, 41, 120 138, 197, 532, 556.

¹⁰⁷ Reduction of the epistemological basis of religion and religious belief to the intention of the believer can be seen as an extension of the emotionist view of religion which seeks the source and justification of religious belief in the 'emotions' and 'feelings' (or to speak more metaphysically, in the 'experiences') of the believer.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 80.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 82.

As is seen so far, empirical basis and content of religious belief which is necessary for verification is provided by two elements, namely the intention of the asserter to pursue a specified policy of behaviour and the moral principles which have an empirical content such as the asserter's intention. On the other hand it goes without saying that these two conditions are observed in and shared by all religions. If this is the case for the basic religious statements, then how can the differences between religions be explained? If intention of the asserter and the moral principles which he is supposed to follow are not arbitrary and subjective, how can there be religions like Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, etc.? Now can the religious ramifications be accounted for despite the fact that all great religions share a lot in common as far as the overall moral principle and prescriptions are concerned? The answer Braithwaite gives is different 'stories' of religions. '...The intentions to pursue the behaviour policies, which may be the same for different religions, are associated with thinking of different stories (or set of stories). Hence the difference between stories which every religion maintains for its credo causes the varieties of religions. What is meant by 'story' is 'a proposition or set of propositions which are straightforwardly empirical propositions capable of empirical test and which are thought of by the religious man in connection with his resolution to follow the ways of life advocated by his religion.'¹¹⁰

Although stories have empirical content because they refer to certain events, figures, places, etc., they need not necessarily to be true. The significance of these stories which vary from one religion to another is not to account for the religious belief itself but to be instrumental and functional for the believer in his religious life.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 84.

¹¹¹ J. H. Randall takes a similar position regarding the meaning and significance of religious belief and symbols. 'What is important to recognise is that religious symbols belong with social and artistic symbols, in the group of symbols that are both nonrepresentative and nonnegative. Such noncognitive symbols can be said to symbolise not some external thing that can be indicated apart from their operation, but rather what they themselves do, their peculiar functions'. *The Role of Knowledge in Western Religion* (Boston, 1958), p. 114 quoted in J. Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, (Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 4. According

To sum up, the religious instrumentalism denies any kind of truth or falsity account in religious belief.¹¹² What is essential for religious conviction, belief and practice is not to have a 'truth-content', but to be instrumental and functional in the life of a person and society. Because of this 'use' element (at this point the 'use' can be safely substituted by 'utility' and 'pragmatics') religious statements have necessarily to be associated with a set of moral principles. Corollary of this postulation is the relegation of religion in general and religious belief in particular to a morality which has no account or claim of truth and falsity. This metaphysicsless religion and morality, as it were, is functional in the conduct and regulation of the social life. No account of metaphysics or theology should be searched for and aimed at besides this regulative function of moral principles.

The picture given above is an outcome of accepting the verificationism as the only reliable and valid criterion of knowledge. To leave aside the logical positivism which is the source of this verificationism, formation of religion and religious belief as a regulating element in individual and in

to Randall religion is 'a distinctive human enterprise with a socially indispensable function'. Similarly theology amounts to 'an imaginative and symbolic rendering of men's moral experience and ideas: all religious beliefs are symbolic'. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25. Likewise God, for Randall, is 'our ideals, our controlling values, our ultimate concern'. He is 'an intellectual symbol for the religious dimension of the world, for the Divine'. Quoted in J. Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, (Prentice Hall, 1990), p. 90.

¹¹² J. Hick classifies Braithwaite's position under the rubric of 'non-cognitive' theories of religion. (See *Philosophy of Religion*, (Prentice Hall, 1990); pp. 89-99). What is meant by non-cognitive here is to take religious beliefs and assertions as neither true nor false. Therefore religious principles possess no truth in themselves as such. Apart from Braithwaite, J.H. Randall, D.Z. Phillips and Don Cupitt hold more or less the same outlook with regard to the religious truth. For an appraisal of their views see J. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, (Macmillan Press, 1989), pp. 193-209. The same noncognitive position can be followed from the following literature which I quote from J. Hick for the sake of record: P. Munz, *Problems of Religious Knowledge* (London, 1959); P. Schmidt, *Religious Knowledge* (New York, 1961); T. R. Miles *Religion and the Scientific Outlook* (London, 1959); Paul van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*

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(New York, 1963); Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God* (London, 1980), *The World to Come* (London, 1982) and *Only Human* (London, 1985).

society can be traced back to Kant's categorical imperative. Kant's distinction between pure and practical reason and his declaration of metaphysical basis of religion and morality as belonging to the sphere of noumena, of which we can have no knowledge and in fact -no interest,¹¹³ necessitates the reduction of religion and religious belief to moral conduct. It is obvious that this deontological stance undermines the metaphysical basis of religious belief and moral principles despite the very fact that Kant aimed at a completely morality-based system. Just as the 'Ideas' in the Kantian terminology refer to necessary tools for our mental conception of the world,¹¹⁴ religious belief and moral assertions -too point to an essential function in the life of the individual and society with no claim of metaphysical existence. Therefore the religious belief is replaced by moral principles as a stereotype of the modern conception of religion. Furthermore moral values and commands fall within the scope of practical reason and the term 'practical' itself implies the, conductive and functional element. Regulative moral principles which find their justification not in a supra-subjective basis but in subject's feelings of perfection and responsibility lead to a moral system having no religious/metaphysical basis as such. In a nutshell, moral principles derive

¹¹³ Contrary to the common opinion Kant's exclusion of the realm of noumena was not a mere attempt to determine the limits of reason but rather to determine the Being and beings in the Heideggerian sense according to the precepts of reason. As Grunebaum states, 'the limitations of reason which at the end of the eighteenth century Kant compels his contemporaries to realise exclude man if indeed they do exclude him only from areas into which, in the last analysis, he no longer cares to penetrate'. G.E. von Grunebaum, 'Concept and Function of Reason in Islamic Ethics', *Orients*, Vol. 15, 1962, p. 16.

¹¹⁴ As L. W. Beck states 'Kant takes the word 'Idea' from Plato, though he does not ascribe metaphysical reality and power to ideas, as Plato often did. An Idea for Kant is like Plato's Idea, however, in being a conception for which no experience can give us an exemplar, yet a conception which is not arbitrarily constructed by the imagination. But whereas Plato thought the Ideas were objects of pure reason in a noumenal world in which the world of sense participates by imitating the ideas. Kant thought of them as necessary creations of the human mind with no known metaphysical existence. Necessary, though for what? Kant believed that they were necessary for the guidance of our theoretical knowledge and practical or moral experience, holding before us an unrealised systematic goal for our piecemeal dealings with particular problems'. On *History Immanuel Kant*, edited with an introduction by L.W. Beck, (Macmillan pub. Corn. 1963), pp. XIX-XX. For Kant's evaluation of Plato's 'Ideas' see *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by N. K. Smith (St. Martin's Press, 1965), pp. 310-311.

their primary significance and justification from the conductive and operational role in the management of society.¹¹⁵ Religion is meaningful and useful as long as it is a mere set of moral principles.

It is another application of the denial of the truth-falsity account which leads to the construal of religion as a distinct language-game. D.Z. Phillips. One of the proponents of this view, argues that the criteria of meaning in religion-should be intrinsic to religion itself.¹¹⁶ This can be carried out only when religion is taken as a language-game in the sense Wittgenstein has used the term. But here one can observe that, although the ways are different, consequence of Braithwaite's empiricism and Phillips' language-game strategy is almost the same: Any account relating to truth or falsity in religion should be relying on ontological relativism which is a corollary of the notion of language-game. Since every language-game has its rules peculiar to it, one cannot talk about a general and universal criterion of truth and falsity to verify or justify any religious or non-religious statement. As Wittgenstein' says, each language-game can be a complete language in itself.¹¹⁷ This

¹¹⁵ Regulative function is a necessary constituent and consequence of ethical values and principles. What is problematic in instrumentalist position, however, is the justification of these principles by their use and utility in social life. This is in fact is to reverse the process and make the reference point not the ethical values and principles but the management of society. It is obvious that this causes another problem of justification.

¹¹⁶ The problem of criterion is one of the distinctive features of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. For an account of this notion in Wittgenstein see P. M. S. Hacker *Wittgenstein Meaning and Mind* (Blackwell, 1993) pp. 243-266. The same issue is often taken up in the philosophy of religion. Daniel Guerriere, for example, attempts to develop a truth criterion proper to religion by defining religion as a 'remedy and salvational Power'. Account to this phenomenological approach, truth is defined as *alethia* (manifestation) in the Heideggerian sense. See D. Guerriere 'The Truth, The nontruth, and the Untruth Proper to Religion' in *Phenomenology of the Truth Proper to Religion*, ed. by D. Guerriere (State University of New York Press, 1990) pp. 75-101.

¹¹⁷ This point in fact explains the core of Wittgenstein's 'fideism' with regard to the justification of (religious) belief. For a critical account of fideistic mode of justification which we have to neglect here due to the context of our discussion, see N. Frankenberry, *Religion and Radical Empiricism* (State University of New York Press, 1987) pp.8-13; also M. C.

amounts to construing religion as a distinct world putting no claim of supremacy over other language-games. And at this point one can easily talk of 'language games as having criteria of intelligibility within them, and of impossibility rendering one language-game unintelligible in terms of criteria of intelligibility taken from another.'¹¹⁸ It is obvious that this ontological relativism whose details and implications should be taken up in an another study is destructive as far as the metaphysical basis and structure of religion is concerned.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the above considerations show, scientific and religious instrumentalism have some common points. Both discard any account of truth and falsity as redundant for the operation of science or religion. Both consider their subject, science and religion respectively, as instruments for some other purposes. And finally both are anti-realist. Leaving aside at the moment the criticism of both instrumentalism, one can conclude that scientific instrumentalism may have some useful applications especially when there is a clash between science and religion. In such a situation of clash and conflict between religion and any scientific theory, one of the strategies would be to relatives, so to speak, the science according to the perspective of instrumentalism and to consider the clashing theory in question as instrumental and provisional. Pierre Duhem (1861-1961) assumes such a position with regard to the scientific theories which clash with religion. When a theory is put against religion, he says, the best way is not to revise or change the religious belief but against religion, he says, the best way is not to revise or, change the religious belief but to take and evaluate this theory as instrumental. As far as the history of science and the demise of old theories and paradigms are concerned, this instrumentalist stance with regard to the scientific theories is quite justified. This harms neither religious belief nor scientific theory. Duhem who is famous with his distinction between physics

banner *The Justification of Science and the Rationality of Religious Belief*, (Clarendon Paperbacks, 1992) pp. 67-95.

¹¹⁸ D. Z. Phillips, 'Religious Beliefs and Language Games' in *The Philosophy of Religion*, ed. by B. Mitchell, p. 131. See also his *Faith After Foundationalisms*, (Routledge, 1988), especially part one. For a critical evaluation of Phillips' ideas see J. Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, pp. 25-36.

and metaphysics describes his interpretation of physics as 'positivist in its conclusions as well as in its origins' although he himself again expresses his belief in religion by saying that 'I believe with all my soul in the truths which God has revealed to us.'¹¹⁹ Within this context the supposed controversy between religion and science necessarily becomes accidental and provisional rather than substantial and mutually exclusive as it is thought to be.

As for religious instrumentalism, we argued that instrumentalist construal of religion and the subordination of religion and religious belief to moral conduct represent one of the parameters of the Western conception of religion. This position implies that religion as defined by the Divine revelation does not refer to an ultimate transcendent truth which encapsulates in itself all the moral principles and values but rather to a morally defined institution.

Since the consolidation of the Enlightenment as the dominant discourse of the Western- civilization the self-perception of the Western man has tended to see the religious truth as something operational and instrumental. the 'religious element' in the Enlightenment thinkers. if any, in fact points to such a religious imagination rather than to a religious truth as such. As Heidegger would say of the Nietzschean slogan 'God is dead', this refers to the oblivion and subordination of God rather than to the formulation of a mere atheism.¹²⁰

At this juncture modernism and postmodernism share a common point with regard to the statue of religion in spite of the somewhat misleading opinion that no school of thought has been as harsh and catastrophic in its critical approach to modernism as postmodernism. Postmodernist discourse places religion among the 'socially responsible institutions.' Postmodern religion devoid of any transcendental ground must be responsive to the

¹¹⁹ The Aim and Structure of Physical Theory, p. 275, quoted in F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, (Image Books, 1985), vol IX, p. 277-278.

¹²⁰ For an overall survey of the idea of 'God is dead' in the West from Luther to Heidegger, see Eric von der Luft, 'Sources of Nietzsche's "God is dead" and Its Meaning for Heidegger' Journal of the History of Ideas April-June 1984, vol. XLV no. 2, pp. 263-276.

existing human conditions and problems.¹²¹ Otherwise any theological and metaphysical reality such as God or the hereafter will have to be abandoned like any other 'metanarrative'. It is to be noted that here religion is defined by and allowed for something other than the ultimate transcendental reality itself. Religion is given meaning and justification by the role it plays in the salvation of human society. To leave aside the details and implications of the concept of 'postmodern religion', the other vital problem that comes into the picture is the ontological relativism which both instrumentalism and postmodernism share. It is true that postmodernist discourse provides a certain place for religion and it is this factor in fact that makes postmodernism attractive for many people. But it should be indicated that postmodernist approval of religion is not an ethical but an ontologically relativistic position. This means that religion is given as much meaning and justification as any other justified discourse. Within this postmodernist framework religion would be as justified and meaningful as any other language-game provided that it is responsive to the existing human condition. To be more specific, Islam is as justified and meaningful as any other religious or ideological trend such as, say, Buddhism or feminism. But again it should be borne in mind that in this framework and religion is justified and admitted not as a transcendental truth as defined by the Divine revelation but as a 'socially responsible institution'. Therefore the pluralism to which postmodernism gives rise does not designate an ethical attitude or tolerance but rather an ontological relativism. At this point one has to concede the fact that postmodernist conception of religion, just like the religious instrumentalism, is as detrimental and pernicious as modernism in its stance towards religion notwithstanding its seemingly sympathetic disguise.

¹²¹ See J.W. Murphy, *Postmodern Social Analysis and Criticism*, (Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 30; also pp. 95-98. As Murphy says 'deprived of God as an absolute point of reference, salvation must come through a transformation of society that enhances the human condition. This is what Nietzsche had in mind when he stated that the question of ethics goes 'beyond good and evil. "Ibid., p.31.