

TA51, Response 6 (to Moore and Muller)

COMMENSURABILITY OF THE WORD AND CRUCIFIXION by Glenn C. Wood 10
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Response to Moore's C1 and Muller's C2 response to Moore, TA 51: (with indirect reference to B. van Fraassen's review of Feyerabend's work TA31).

<1> I obviously treated Mr. Moore's essay with what some might think was an impoverishment of nonacademic emotional abundance. I was attempting to bring us back to the field of reality where there can be a commencement of communication more relevant to currently real situations. Commensurability certainly is amenable to critical here-and-now existential situations that are wholly human and an at hand.

<2> The emotive use of language in the first response to Moore and the second response to Muller was not intended to be obfuscation, but was intended to break the catalytic movement of abstract concepts into concrete concepts (like cement affects the hardening process in concrete as it sets), like the emotional drain on Jesus to the abstractness but concretion of "incarnation" speculations. I would put less emphasis on what seems to me an over emphasis on a need for several Western languages and some workable knowledge of Latin and Greek stated by Fraassen of Feyerabend. If one is preparing for foreign mission fields there's no question about the need to know the language. If there's no hiding behind language by philosophers seeking after wisdom together, one needs only be proficient at translating meanings but not necessary several languages.

<3> I'll try to handle my language handicap though while bowing to the gracious patience of those who if wanting to could leave me in the dust of linguistics unknown to me. If people have a mind to communication and are awestruck and guilt-ridden enough, emptied of rationalizations, the cipher language is heard like it was as indicated by the physician Luke in Acts chapter two when though people were gathered from many nations they were able to understand the gospel message proclaimed. Commensurability was ripe for picking in the epiphany of the crucifixion event.

<4> Jaspers in Philosophical Faith and Revelation talks about what it means for revelation to become a cipher. Cipher is brought into this discussion here because it's referred to as a language of sorts by Jaspers, and in view of all the fragmentation of mental calms and discombobulating of states of emotional securities affirmed to be going on now. There is undoubtedly some need for something near to a revelation to bring about some stability, though the difficulties with science and religion are bothersome but not to the point of despairing to religious faith. I have some difficulty identifying with that alleged lamentable situation, but maybe that's because I'm not in the disparate mental

health state or institutional environment or reading enough abstract stuff. It's good someone is doing the latter. Again, perhaps something akin to revelation is needed as a commensurable ground for the restoration of concepts. Poetical, or emotively charged language may be beneficial if it points to the Transcendent and Ineffable.

<5> Because religion has been occasionally mentioned as something that needs resolving, and because the discussion is stepping one foot lightly for mankind in the field of reality to the abstractionists chagrining; it seems proper to mention Jaspers comment about what would distinguish philosophy from theology. "... [T]he theologian would be distinguished from the philosopher by the potency of his unfoldment of the cipher." (p. 340 see 51 biblio.)

<6> The Fraassen review of Feyerabend indicates the culprit is the inadequate distorted modal of language. Language is of course inadequate regardless of its peculiar modes and regardless of how many are "mastered." So inadequate that even when assembly line manufactured, linguistic tools with acceptable definitions are used they can be modified to fit special needs. Word-tools are more a sign of things than abstract symbols; the closer we get to the wholly human situation of immediate awe-inspiring emerging events. All this is probably repetitive and said here for it provides some lead-in to thoughts about Truth, and the Logos becoming flesh, the latter being a word like "Incarnation" which is the incommensurable misuse of it's original Biblical meaningfulness. The latter "truth" is no longer commensurable with, say, the Biblical John's report that Jesus said I am the way, the truth, and the life. Here truth is not like that word used as a post-biblical manufactured tool by Heidegger, Moore, and Muller: Alethia -- if I've understood them.

<7> Alethia is Greek for truth, not essential in itself to show how only a "Greek" sign can participate in meaningfulness and meaninglessness as a spiritual or sophisticated language. I don't know why it is introduced as a substitute for the word truth in other languages unless one wants to show a Platonic connection, distract from a "Saints" misuse of Logos, and blame philosophy for what a corporealized revealer is responsible. Perhaps that is an "overabundant" guess on my part; or perhaps it is simply like the local church minister who establishes his authority by using Greek or Hebrew words rather than to elucidate in the common language. Perhaps it's like the conservative effort to retain a dead language in the worship service to preserve institutional and traditional authority rather than educate. Regardless, it is done and must be reckoned with.

<8> Anyway, alethia certainly does not mean that the language of the New Testament is "derived from Platonic metaphysics" (Moore <23>). Nor does it mean some mere abstract "doctrine" like a "purely divine force or entity, the Logos,...in history ... <23>. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (1889 Harper and Bros.) provides textual criticism, exegesis,

philology, etymology, as well as German high-critical testing toward a comprehension of the way the word is used in the passage of John 14:6.

<9> Before going further I want to wet an inquisitive taste by this quote from Karl Jaspers. He states that the "Christian" claim to exclusiveness comes from John 14:6. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Jaspers' quote is: "It [exclusiveness -- my brackets] lies in a Bible verse that does not come from Jesus..." (Phil. Faith and Rev. p. 342.) That is true on one hand, for it comes from the Bible, and it's exclusiveness is therefore conditioned by the hopefully informed minds and the wholeness of the person interpreting the verse. But the meaning also does not come from Jesus in another sense -- to be made clearer in subsequent paragraphs.

<10> Thayer gives two ways truth -- alethia -- is used in the New Testament. One he lists under its use Objectively and the other under its use Subjectively. He lists John 14:6 in the objectively-used category, as: "I am he in whom the truth is summed up and impersonated." It is not used in 14:6 in the subjective sense of "truth as a personal excellence."

<11> Thayer's handling is not quintessential though in my way of thinking, for, taken in the context of the situation, this is a most proper categorizing, i.e., objective use. Jesus had told Thomas that he, Thomas, knew where Jesus was going, i.e., that he was going to Jerusalem, in effect saying Thomas knew, or ought to know what was going to happen, that is, Jesus would be crucified. So, Jaspers could be right that the words do not come from Jesus, that the words were in a way the cipher language; that sort of language some heroes move upon but cannot adequately put in normal words without being less than understood comprehensibly.

<12> The answers Peter, Thomas, and Phillip gave showed they did not understand. To Jesus it was so obvious that if they did not understand now, they would only understand by seeing the truth in what was about to happen through the crucifixion. Jesus goes on to say, according to John, that this is something revealed to him, Jesus: "the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." There's enough in the context of this account to leave open a subjective-use interpretation in the minds of the hearers, but especially in the minds of the readers centuries removed from the emotionally charged scene (but this situational awareness is elementary hermeneutics for a remembering seminarian).

<13> Those interpreting the word truth objectively would still not have to stop disbelieving in the heavenly father Jesus referred to. For those yet wanting to see God -- the father Jesus was referring to -- the only phenomenon they would momentarily, in that conversational frame of reference, see is Jesus about to be crucified and all the phenomenal events thereafter giving vital meaning to

previous events too. If now the only thing they could understand was some carnate or corporeal limit, some visual aid, it meant they too would have to imitate Jesus if they truly wanted to see the Father, the invisible father, as was being insisted upon in the "show-us-the-father" limited understanding.

<14> Mr. Moore's scientific view of logos can be partially correct in that there is a theistic ramification (does one have to be crucified to believe in the God-the-father Jesus proclaimed?) -- though in neither an exclusive descending nor ascending corporeal sense. It could mean: Is a Jesuit going to be executed by the establishment that ordained its formation? Yes. It could also mean the Jesuit imitator of Jesus will chose to work undercover within the system, maybe even in the area of philosophy to protect it from institutionalism -- though that undercover activity seems less than forthright to me.

<15> Muller's view that the word-concept is prior in the sense of preeminence to a cipher language does not provide for the decision to go to Jerusalem and be crucified as though one simply gets carried away with euphonies -- as a Lucy type might have an impulse to not only make one noise but a symphony of noises, or get some stabilizing enforcement from rocking to an fro while impulsively and ritualistically grunting in rhythm. I suppose though that if we're referring to a Lucy type within a closed, immanent, narrow system of cosmological atop-a-pin-head dance of thought, it would be better phrased as objective grunts and grunts for the sake of subjective grunts.

<16> Jaspers also states that such an imitation of Jesus -- as God to the interpreters it seems we could say -- was actually fulfilled by many who followed the rigors of his example. Such he says was Francis of Assissi (Phil. Faith and Rev. as does Fisher). His commitment to imitating Jesus -- as he understood him -- is almost unquestionable. To me the commitment by Francis is so absolute he becomes like a god ("Saint") to others especially to an institution not so committed but can escape the creative tension in the world that comes from the cipher language of God. It should be noted here that the followers of Francis, especially the lay brethren among them, for their persistence in pursuing a life without property ownership and material gain and for pointing at the errors within the Church and the need for reform were later delivered to the Inquisition.

<17> In the Muller and Moore work about the myth of logos, something more needs to be shown. In the ninth century a monk named Ratramnus "defended the Augustinian opinion that the Word or Logos, dwells in the consecrated bread and wine, as once the Logos dwelt in the body of Christ, while they still continue, in substance as well as attributes, bread and wine." (Fisher, Ibid. TA 51 biblio.) If this was indeed the view of Augustine around the fourth century then the incarnation concept -- as symbolizing something -- in the Lord's Supper is much earlier than the understanding given by Muller and Moore: that the "incarnation" meant something absolute, theological, in the mind of the Biblical Paul. Plato

cannot be blamed for the "Saint's" (Augustine's) interpretation of the incarnation in the Lord's Supper. But neither can the Biblical Paul be blamed for the incommensurate meaning ... given ... to Paul's understanding. That authentic understanding of Paul includes the wholly willful withdrawal or pouring out -- like in an affective mental and emotional state of withdrawal due to the overwhelming drain of the most sublime reason and emotion -- to the point of sweating blood in the Garden. Those scriptural references do not mean something theological or philosophical as they came to mean during the Apostasy, or that period when the depth of sorrow and emotion began to fade replaced by whatever could be used to keep institutional liturgical facades from fading too.