

PLATE XXII



ARTHUR NORMAN PRIOR

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1914–1969

TWO years before his death Arthur Prior was asked by an Italian publisher to write an autobiographical note to supplement his entry in *Who's Who*. The paragraph he wrote reveals a lot about him, although, or because, most of it is about other people.

I am the son of a doctor in a New Zealand country town; my two grandfathers went to Australia together as Methodist ministers in 1875; my wife collaborated with me in an article on the logic of interrogatives and is now writing a historical book about canal boatmen; my daughter has had one novel published and has another coming out shortly; my son does operational research with a steel firm; one of my brothers is a heart specialist and the other a surgeon; my sister is married to a New Zealand sheep farmer. I have had a variety of occupations in my time—railwayman, dock labourer, hotel porter, newspaper reporter, school-teacher, aircraftman, professor, don. I am left wing, won't go to America again till the Vietnam war is over, and in New Zealand was president of a local council for civil liberties. I used to be a Barthian Calvinist, and have an expert knowledge of seventeenth-century Scottish theology, which I now never use, and have no religious beliefs. I like driving in remote hilltops, especially on the Welsh border, and have a sentimental attachment to the River Severn which the Thames cannot displace. As you can see in *Who's Who*, I like canal cruising, and this goes for my immediate family.

Prior was born on 4 December 1914 at Masterton, near Wellington in the North Island of New Zealand. A fortnight later his mother died of septicaemia, and he was cared for by aunts and grandparents during his father's absence as a medical officer during the First World War. He was brought up as a Methodist.

After the war Dr. Prior remarried, and the brothers and sister mentioned above were children of this second marriage. They describe Arthur as a great story-teller in his boyhood, and recall in particular a narrative of a trip to the moon which he wrote and vividly illustrated.

He was educated at Wairarapa High School until he went to Otago University at Dunedin in 1932. He began as a medical student, and had a considerable interest in organic chemistry,

but he soon abandoned the medical course and graduated with a B.A. in philosophy and psychology. He read and thought a great deal about religion, he had, as he later put it, 'figured out a sort of religion of my own'. He became dissatisfied with Methodism, finding its theology too unsystematic, and disliking its stress on the felt experience of conversion. Shortly after arriving at the university, he became a Presbyterian. For part of his course he studied at Knox Theological Hall with a view to entering the Presbyterian ministry. Its Principal was Professor John Dickie, whose *Organism of Christian Truth* Prior long revered. While at Knox he read widely in Presbyterian theology, and became very active in the Student Christian Movement; he immersed himself in Barth and Brunner and talked a great deal about Kierkegaard. R. C. Lamb, a fellow student at this time, recalls him putting his head round the door of his study one evening and saying 'Lamb, let's go on a heresy hunt', whereupon they went off to spend the evening at the home of a young woman student suspected of mystical leanings.

At this period the SCM in New Zealand had a very strong political and social conscience and Prior used to recall how in his first terms he changed from 'an unthinking young conservative' into a Christian socialist. These were the days of the depression: men were rioting, and at a physics lecture undergraduates were asked to volunteer as special police. Prior went to enrol, but found that the recruiting officers had gone to lunch. Before they returned he had had second thoughts, he did not like the idea of students being asked to beat up poor men old enough to be their fathers. From then on he moved steadily in the direction of socialism and pacifism.

At SCM week-end camps Prior came under the influence of the Revd. Alexander Miller, a Presbyterian divine later famous for advocating that Christians should voluntarily limit themselves to living on the national average income. Miller, an admirer of Barth and Chesterton, combined a strict adherence to dogma with a vigorous denunciation of capitalism and nationalism. Prior shared Miller's enthusiasms, and his scrapbooks from that period are packed with theological essays from Presbyterian journals alternating with Marxist analyses of the plight of the unemployed and the international situation. Apart from an essay on 'Theology and Art' in the 1934 *Otago University Review* his first published work I have come across consists of four letters in August 1937 written to the *Otago Daily Times* under the pseudonym 'Independent Labour' on the topic 'What is

socialism?' Their burden is that everyone must take sides in the class war. 'We must all fight either with the wage-earners for a society of wage-earners or with the profit-seekers for a society of profit-seekers.'

Miller's influence on Prior lasted for nearly a decade, but in the long term a more lasting influence was that of John Findlay, then Professor of Philosophy at Otago. In 1934 Prior attended Findlay's courses on ethics and logic. The ethics course acquainted him with the eighteenth-century British moralists, and the logic text was W. E. Johnson. Prior was always very conscious of his debt to Findlay's teaching. In 1949 he wrote: 'I owe to his teaching, directly or indirectly, almost all that I know of either Logic or Ethics.'

Findlay interested Prior in the history of logic, and introduced him to Prantl's textbook. His M.A. thesis (after the completion of his B.A. in 1935) was devoted to this subject and is described by Findlay as having defended an objectivist rather than subjectivist or formalist approach to logic. Though Prior's examination performance was poor and his thesis was awarded only a second class by the external examiner, Findlay appreciated his gifts and made him an assistant lecturer in 1937. In this year he gave courses on logic and ethics, and lectured on Keynes's theory of probability.

In December 1937 there appeared in the *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy* (henceforth *AJP*) Prior's first published philosophical paper, entitled 'The Nation and the Individual'. A nation, it argued, was not a real entity, nor was it definable in terms of individuals; it was a logical construction out of individuals. Common language, it was alleged, ignored this, and was often misleading, and the instrument of grave moral confusion. 'Common language may lead us to argue, for instance, that since an individual capitalist may be a good man, a "capitalist nation" necessarily has an equal chance of being a "good nation".'

As a student in Otago, Prior was active on the staff of student periodicals, such as *The Review* and *The Critic*, and for a time he was joint editor of New Zealand SCM magazine. Among his fellow journalists was Claire Hunter, the two became friendly and in 1937 they were married. Shortly after his marriage Prior abandoned the pursuit of an academic career and set off for Europe with his wife.

They seem to have lived a rather bohemian existence. For a time they worked (probably as unpaid helpers) for the Monte

Carlo Ballet Company. In 1938 they were in Italy and in the south of France, and worked for three months helping a friend of a friend in a café at Roquebrune. By June of that year they were in London, and from 6 to 11 July they attended the Fourth International Congress of Calvinists held at Edinburgh. Prior wrote up the proceedings for *The Covenanter*, *The London Quarterly*, *The Presbyterian*, *The Otago Daily Times*, *The Congregational Quarterly*, and *Theology*. Indeed he seems to have hoped to make a living by religious journalism, and attended a series of conferences which he wrote up in many different places. In September it was the world conference of Free-Thinkers, followed by the conference of Christian pacifists at Friends' House. He also wrote a number of reviews for theological and literary journals. For a brief time he came under the notice of T. S. Eliot and was given reviewing to do for *The Criterion*, in whose pages he likened Bonaventure to Barth. He loved to recite Eliot's lines about 'the broad-backed hippopotamus'. Other acquaintances at this period were the philosopher D. B. Partridge, the anthropologist Franz Steiner, and the writer Elias Canetti.

The late summer of 1939 was spent in Oxford, in the same lodging-house as Dan Davin, then a recently married Rhodes scholar at Balliol, who had known Prior and his wife at Otago. He remembers Prior at this time as resembling Dylan Thomas, immersed in Dante and John Knox, arguing for long hours at the 'Lamb and Flag' about pacifism and Christianity.

In spring 1939 Prior was in Paris, involved in work for Spanish refugees. In July he attended the World Conference of Christian Youth at Amsterdam. He recorded his impressions for a number of periodicals, voicing his admiration for the Barthian Christians in their fight against the Nazis, and describing the plight of the refugees from Czechoslovakia. He wrote two scholarly pieces on Scottish divines, one (for *Purpose*) on R. Riccalton 1691-1769 (the protector of 'Seasons' Thompson) and one (for *The Churchman*) on Thomas Halyburton (1674-1712), whom he described as 'The Butler of Scotland'. Both of these were published early in 1940, while the Priors were loosely attached to Student Movement House in London.

The position of Christian pacifists in England became more difficult and more challenging after the outbreak of war. A number of Presbyterian ministers, predominantly pacifists, formed a group in Birmingham to edit a small independent periodical, *The Presbyterian*. Among the contributors to it were Lex Miller (who had been in England since 1938), W. S. Ferrie (the

translator of Kierkegaard), and George MacLeod (the founder of the Iona Community, now Lord MacLeod of Fuinary). Prior served for a time as a supply minister in Birmingham and became an active member of this group, contributing several pieces under the initial 'P'. Typical was his contribution to the third issue, in March 1940, 'How to bring Christianity and Revolutionary Socialism together', which addressed itself to the problem 'how are ministers who see the necessity for radical social change really going to make an impression on their largely conservative congregations?' He insisted that 'Christian socialism is neither a sugaring of the socialist pill with Christianity, nor a sugaring of the Christian pill with socialism. It is just sound Bible Presbyterianism properly understood.' In defence of pacifism he quoted, as he loved to do, from Knox's archaic Scots 'Gif men's judgementis may have place, Jeremie was ane heretick, he was ane seditious fellow, ane seducer of the pepill. He was ane that discouraged the hartis of the strang men of war.'

In 1940 Prior spent some months as a clerk in the Examination Department of the University of London, addressing envelopes at 3s. 6d. per 1,000. But he continued his work as a journalist and writer of theological articles, writing on infant baptism in *The Churchman* and on Kierkegaard for *Student Movement*. In the August issue of *The Presbyterian* he urged that the church should go to the people in factories rather than in parishes. In October 1940, in the first of many articles on the ecumenical movement, on relations between presbyterians and evangelical anglicans, he proclaimed the Westminster Confession to be a definite advance on the Thirty-Nine Articles—but admitted that he would like to drop the doctrine of predestination to evil.

In the autumn of 1940 he left England and was back in New Zealand by November. For the next two years he held an incongruous assortment of jobs in Dunedin, Wellington, and Christchurch. He worked as a hotel porter, as a reporter for the Christchurch Press, as a teacher of French and English at Rongotai College (where his nickname was 'Gai Paris'), and as a railwayman shunting trains and cleaning carriages. He continued to write letters to the Press and review articles, taking C. H. Dodd to task about Barth in *The Expository Times*, writing of the relations between logic and grammar (with reference to Popper, Wisdom, and Carnap). He wrote a series of 'reviews' of classic works for the magazine of the Student Christian Movement: Joyce's *Ulysses*, Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, Dostoievsky's *The Possessed*, Drucker's *The End of Economic Man*.

He included in this series the work of his old Principal Dickie, *The Organism of Christian Truth*. At the same time he was defending conscientious objectors in the newspapers against the strictures of the Principal, who had questioned the compatibility of Presbyterianism with pacifism. Towards the end of 1941 Prior's own pacifism was growing weaker, but he never ceased to be eager to defend other pacifists.

At this time Prior passed through a crisis of belief, which gave rise to his first philosophical article which is still remembered. 'Can Religion be Discussed?' (*AJP* 1942) is a dialogue in which Barthian Protestant, Modernist Protestant, Catholic, Logician, and Psychoanalyst discuss the nature of belief. The neo-scholasticism of the Catholic and the fideism of the Barthian are subjected to sharp criticism by the 'logician', but the last word in the argument (save for the Barthian's final cry of 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief') is given to Psychoanalyst, who speaks of the irresistibility of the illusions of religion. 'True atheists', he says, 'are only made when believers pass through an emotional crisis which leads them near to madness, until, in the painful process of their own analysis, they see for themselves the roots of their urge to believe.'

Another dialogue of the same period, called 'Faith, Unbelief and Evil' was never published, it looks forward to *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* and its characters are Historian, Theologian, and Humanist. In both dialogues Prior manages to make the viewpoints of the participants quite sharply distinct, and yet it is clear that each of their positions is one which he had himself held or been strongly inclined, at some time, to hold (except perhaps for that of 'Catholic', which is created rather out of Barthian criticisms). The Barthian background is familiar, and in the character of Logician one can recognize the influence of Findlay. The influence of psychoanalysis was strong on him at this period. He wrote a whole book on Freud in the form of thirty-four letters sent day-by-day to a friend; and among his remains is a series entitled 'Children of the Damned' in which the religious histories of F. D. Maurice, Søren Kierkegaard, 'Rabbi' John Duncan, James Joyce, and Edward Irving, are analysed in Freudian terms, each of them seen as organizing his life and work in relation to a parent believed, or half-believed, to be damned.

The atheism of 'Can Religion be Discussed?' does not seem to have lasted very long. He continued to treasure his theological library (especially the Westminster Standards, Barth,

Rutherford, Principal Hill's lectures on divinity, and Adam Gib's *Sacred Contemplation*) with more than a mere connoisseur's interest. After a very brief pause he resumed the writing of Presbyterian articles.

During these years Prior was unhappy, lonely, and despairing. His marriage had failed, and was finally dissolved at the beginning of 1943. Most of his jobs were completely unsatisfying, and he was gradually becoming convinced of the untenability of his pacifist position. In December 1942 he joined the Air Force. He was ill at ease in uniform and never at home in barrack life. But he retained his theological and philosophical interests, and his sense of humour. A diary of December 1942 records a hilarious discussion of the Liar Paradox with an uncomprehending A.C.2, and in the Air Force latrine he drew a graffito of a man at stool drawing a man at stool drawing a man at stool . . .

In January 1943 Prior attended an SCM conference in Christchurch. Among those attending was Mary Wilkinson, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister at Timaru, then an undergraduate reading zoology at Otago University. She had heard of Prior as the *enfant terrible* of a brilliant group of theological students of the late thirties. She recalls her first impression of seeing him.

When I first saw Arthur . . . I was disconcerted and disappointed. I had imagined someone tall and elegant and incisive with hard blue eyes. And here was a small, very sunburnt person with hands like a mechanic, with black oil in the cracks, in a uniform which whilst it just passed regulations, having all the necessary buttons and all polished, yet had an air of unconquerable untidiness. He looked as if he lived in his clothes—slept in them, climbed trees in them, rolled in ditches in them. It didn't seem to go with the very hard, clear intelligence which I imagined. He also fidgeted in lectures. But he was the one person I wanted to meet at the Conference.

They met on the last night of the conference and spent the next day at the beach together, talking about God and Dostoevsky. Prior lent her Barth's *Credo* and his own 'Can Religion be Discussed?' They met again after the Dunedin term began, while Prior was staying with his relations the Brailsfords in Dunedin. In March, Prior's divorce having become absolute, they became engaged. During the engagement Prior would travel the 200 miles down to Dunedin on the overnight train, and he and Mary would browse in Newbold's, the second-hand

bookshop kept by an English ex-seaman who boasted that he had the biggest stock in the southern hemisphere with the possible exception of Buenos Aires. They would pick up books on Scottish theology and philosophy, and discuss them as they walked around Dunedin.

Arthur and Mary were married in October. Though they had very little money they were very happy. Those who knew Arthur before and after his marriage to Mary were amazed at the change which it made in him; from being depressed and almost suicidal, he became secure and serene. The Wilkinson family, who had initially been suspicious of Arthur, came to love and appreciate him once the marriage was a *fait accompli*.

While in the Air Force Prior continued to write Presbyterian theology. In December 1943 he wrote letters to prove that Presbyterianism did not involve teetotalism, and in June 1944 appeared 'A Catena of Presbyterian Answers to Congregationalism'. The influence of Freud was diminishing. 'God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands"' he wrote in October 1944, 'not even in the strange structures erected by psychoanalysts in the mental depths they have discovered.' His Christianity had always had a strong political content, and Freudian analyses of religion were inadequate to account for this. He had tried unsuccessfully to supplement Freud with Marxism at this point, reading, and being disappointed by, Engels on the family.

In September 1944 the Priors' son Martin was born, two months later Prior was sent overseas to the New Hebrides, where he remained for most of 1945. His principal theological interest reflected in his publications in that year was intercommunion. He insisted often that there was no question of uniting different *churches*: there was already just one Church of Christ in New Zealand, of which denominations like Presbyterianism and Methodism were just different traditions. This was a point to which he returned in popular theological writing for several years to come.

More significant for the future than these theological writings was a pair of articles in 1944 and 1945 in the *AJP*. In 1942 Professor John Anderson of Sydney had written an article in that periodical on the nature of ethics. Prior, in a brief paper called 'The Meaning of Good' argued that Anderson's contention that ethics was a science was incompatible with his admission that there were competing moralities. Anderson replied in the same issue, and Prior renewed his criticism a few issues later, again with a reply by Anderson. Prior's articles lack the clarity

and sharpness which characterized his later articles on ethics. But Anderson was something of a Goliath-figure in Australasia, and readers were impressed by the hits scored against him by a young writer with no professional position.

Prior was demobilized and returned to Dunedin in August 1945. He thought of applying for training as a librarian, but was encouraged by his uncle to apply for a couple of posts in philosophy departments, one being the vacancy created at Canterbury College by the departure of Karl Popper. While waiting for the outcome of the application the Priors lived on what they had saved from wedding presents: Arthur was anxious not to fall again into a rut of odd-jobbing. At the end of 1945 they learnt that the application to Canterbury was successful. The warm recommendation of Findlay and the articles in the *AJP* had weighed with the electors.

Canterbury University College was just then an interesting and diversified place, the lecture-halls were full of ex-servicemen recently demobilized, and conscientious objectors fresh from detention camps, and there was not a great age-gap between teachers and taught. Philosophy and psychology were united in a single department; the professor was the psychologist Ivan Sutherland, and Prior had the sole responsibility for the philosophy teaching. There were no other philosophers in Christchurch and Prior's friends, during his early years there, were drawn from other departments and from non-academic circles. Many were painters and musicians, others belonged to the literary group which ran the journal *Landfall* and printed in the Caxton Press the work of New Zealand poets like Basil Dowling and Charles Brasch. Friends who visited New Zealand from England remembered the Priors' household at this time as a warm intellectual and literary centre.

Though in his teaching courses Prior had to cover many topics, his interests between 1946 and 1948, as reflected in his publications, were principally ethical and historical. He continued to write theology, but from Scottish theologians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries he had been led once again to the Scottish and English moralists of the same period. The results of his researches can be seen in two papers in the *AJP*, 'Eighteenth Century Writers on Twentieth Century Subjects' (1946) and 'Adam Gib and the Philosophers' (1948), and above all in his first book, *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*, which was completed in 1948. All three works illustrate a thesis enunciated in the first: that there are hardly any major positions since taken

up by ethical writers, and hardly any major arguments put forward for or against these positions, that were not already taken up and put forward by the eighteenth-century authors whose writings were precipitated in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and bitterly attacked by the Scottish Seceder Adam Gib. The articles combined sharp contemporary relevance with out-of-the-way antiquarian information in a manner typical of Prior's work throughout his life, whether on theology, philosophy, or logic.

In *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* Prior illustrated his general thesis by detailing the eighteenth-century forbears of the twentieth-century criticism of the naturalistic fallacy, beginning with G. E. Moore. The manuscript was completed some time in the middle of 1948 and submitted to the Oxford University Press. After it had been read and praised by Sir David Ross it was accepted in November. Prior continued to add material well into 1949, in January, for instance, he sent an appendix to take account of R. M. Hare's 'Imperative Sentences'. There was some difficulty over the title. 'The Natural and the Normative', 'Duties, Facts and Feelings', 'Logic and some British Moralists', 'The Logical Basis of Ethics' were all suggested and rejected—the last because 'I don't believe there's any such thing and spend a good deal of the book in saying so'. The book was published in December 1949, and went into a second edition in 1956.

During their early years at Canterbury the Priors lived in a block of flats in Christchurch, where they made a number of friends, such as the psychologist Harry Scott and the classicist Henry Broadhead. In March 1949 they lost a great deal of their property in a fire. This was their second fire; they had only just finished refurnishing and restocking their library after the burning of their house in Dunedin in January 1946. It was not easy to replace the rare books, and all the scrapbooks and manuscripts which survive from Prior's early days are severely scorched.

Towards the end of the forties Prior's interest began to turn from ethics to logic. The logic which figures in the title of *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* is logic of a very informal kind, but in four articles published in 1948 and 1949 the logic grew gradually more formal. 'Facts, Propositions and Entailment', Prior's first contribution to *Mind*, showed considerable Wittgensteinian influence, and came to the *Tractatus*-like conclusion that 'every fact contains facts about everything, but not *all* facts'. 'Argument

*a fortiori*' in *Analysis* suggested a way of expressing syllogistically the inference 'A is greater than B, B is greater than C, ergo A is greater than C'. Two other logical articles in 1949 were predominantly historical, one a review of George Boole, whose *Mathematical Analysis of Logic* had just been reprinted, and the other an exposition and development of Johnson's *Logic of Determinables*. As will be seen, Prior's logical interests, though increasingly formal, were still very largely traditional. A student who attended his advanced logic course in 1948 could complain that it did not really qualify one to read the *Journal of Symbolic Logic*.

In 1949 Prior began an ambitious project, a Dictionary of Formal Logic. By July he had reached the middle of the Cs and sent a sample to the Clarendon Press. The publishers' readers were enthusiastic about the content, but doubtful whether there would be a demand for it in dictionary form; they suggested that a textbook would be more appropriate. Prior agreed, and worked on the book throughout 1950 and 1951. He decided to entitle it 'The Craft of Formal Logic'.

While in Canterbury, and indeed throughout their lives, Prior and his wife kept open house for his pupils. He never set up defences as teachers are so often tempted to do, and never divided his day into working hours when he was available and leisure time which was to be left private. Students were always welcome to discuss philosophy or talk about their personal and domestic problems. Arthur would cycle long distances to comfort an examinee under stress: Mary would take great pains to see that lonely students were properly fed and cared for. Several of the more intelligent pupils, such as Jonathan Bennett and Ronald Butler, went on to be professional philosophers and remained lifelong friends, but the Priors' concern and friendship was remembered and retained by many who took no further interest in philosophy after their degree.

At this period Arthur and Mary were fully engaged in the activities of the local Presbyterian community. The Minister, Robert Sprackett, was an old college friend, and his wife was a second cousin of Mary's. Arthur still sometimes wrote on matters of ecclesiastical policy, and became an elder of the church. Philosophical friends recall discussions being brought to a halt in the small hours by Arthur's remembering that he had to give out communion cards.

In August 1951 Prior visited Sydney to attend a philosophical congress, which he wrote up in the *Landfall* (1951), giving an

amusing account of the conflicts between embattled Andersonians from Sydney and Wittgensteinians from Melbourne. He himself stood outside both groups, and indeed throughout his life belonged to no philosophical school except in so far as he founded one himself. At the conference he made a number of philosophical friends—in particular John Mackie and J. J. C. Smart—with whom henceforth he loved to discuss and correspond on philosophical matters. He read a paper entitled 'The Ethical Copula', one of the liveliest pieces he ever wrote on ethics, which discusses whether 'ought' is a copula, i.e. the expression of a modality. It combined his former interests in ethics and the history of ethics with his new interest in modal logic. In the same year he published another paper about ethics, 'The Virtue of the Act and the Virtue of the Agent'. This discusses, with the now familiar wealth of eighteenth-century erudition, the question whether a man's duty is to do what is right, or what he thinks is right. After this Prior left ethics alone for five years, with the exception of a brief piece on the paradoxes of derived obligation in *Mind* for 1954.

*The Craft of Formal Logic* was finished on 6 December 1951, and Prior wrote triumphantly to the Clarendon Press. It was a long manuscript, about 220,000 words, consisting of a historical introduction and five parts. The first four parts are largely traditional, dealing with the logic of categoricals, the logic of hypotheticals, the relation between these two, and the logic of terms and relations. Part Five, entitled Modal Logic and the Logic of Logic, was the most significant from the point of view of Prior's later development. It contained two chapters, one on the relation between modality and quantity, and the other about *Principia Mathematica* and the axiomatization of truth-functions and syllogistic.

In *The Craft of Formal Logic* symbolic logic of a post-Fregean kind figures almost as an afterthought. But while writing the book Prior had grown more and more interested in it. In 1950 his attention was caught by an article of Bocheński in *Dominican Studies*. Bocheński's work drew his attention to the merits of Polish symbolism in logic and to the writings of medieval scholastic logicians. Throughout his life Prior would recommend Bocheński's *Précis de Logique Mathématique* (1948) as an excellent introductory textbook. He wrote a letter to Bocheński suggesting a shortening of certain proofs, and received a gracious reply. This was the beginning of an international correspondence with working logicians which continued for twenty years and filled

many substantial files which have now been deposited, through his widow's generosity, in the Bodleian Library.

As a formal logician Prior was initially rather isolated in New Zealand and depended greatly on stimulus by letter. His correspondence grew to be famous among his students at Christchurch. Replying to it was something of a communal event. He would rush into his advanced logic class, his trousers still tucked into socks or smeared with cycle oil, clutching a letter hot from some distant logician and invite his pupils to help him draft a reply.

The publication of Łukasiewicz's *Aristotle's Syllogistic* in 1951 was an important event in Prior's development. It provided the bridge between his previous interest in Aristotelian and traditional logic and his future symbolic work. He sent Łukasiewicz some criticisms and was delighted to receive a reply from him enclosing two papers read to the Royal Irish Academy. He reviewed the three works enthusiastically in the *AJP* for 1952. This article, and another in the same year in *Analysis* ('In What Sense is Modal Logic Many-valued?'), are the first publications in which symbols are at all frequent—the Polish symbols for whose use he campaigned for the rest of his life.

It was, and is, unusual for a scholar to take up a quasi-mathematical discipline such as symbolic logic in his late thirties. Some established logicians doubted whether Prior would ever contribute much to the subject, having entered it so late. But those with whom he corresponded were astonished at the speed with which he mastered advanced discoveries. His first piece in the *Journal of Symbolic Logic* (henceforth *JSL*) was in 1953, a review of articles by Sobocinski. Seven years after this first brief publication in its pages he became one of the journal's editors.

In 1952 *The Craft of Formal Logic* was with the publishers. A charming by-product of its composition was a small handwritten pamphlet 'First Things in Logic' written by Prior for his son Martin, then aged seven. His daughter Ann, born in December 1949 in the same month as *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* was published, was too young yet to read even the most elementary textbook of logic, but not too young to provide material for one. Chapter I, 'The figures of syllogism', begins with the following (illustrated) example:

Piggies say 'Nknknknknk'  
And Ann's toes are piggies  
∴ Ann's toes say 'Nknknknknk'.

Prior was always gifted at making friends with children, he would enter into their games with great seriousness, share (and sometimes disconcertingly modify) their fantasies, take great trouble over the invention of a story or the making of a plasticine model of a nursery rhyme. He liked to communicate with children met by chance—he would pull faces at them through the window of a stationary train, or play the game of taking off his thumb and putting it back on. Sometimes this delighted them, sometimes (to his distress) it would alarm them. He always hated the thought that age placed a barrier between adults and children—or, for that matter, between teachers and pupils.

Since 1949 Prior had had the status of Senior Lecturer. In 1952 he was given an Assistant Lecturer, Sandy Anderson. He was no longer as isolated, as a philosopher, as he had been in his early days at Canterbury. Apart from the good honours students, there were colleagues at neighbouring universities to write to, and sometimes to talk to: the visits of external examiners such as John Passmore from Dunedin and George Hughes from Wellington were eagerly looked forward to. At about this time Prior founded the Canterbury Philosophical Society, which used to meet at the large house of R. N. O'Reilly, the city librarian.

As Prior became more involved in his own professional world, he began to see less of his artistic and literary friends than formerly. On the other hand, he began to talk more with mathematicians, and at this time made friends with W. W. Sawyer.

While *The Craft of Formal Logic* was with the publishers, Prior seems to have devoted a great part of his research time to studies in medieval logic, every one of the four papers published in 1953 (and presumably written in 1952) is connected with it in one way or another. He wrote in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* on negative quantifiers ('for no  $x$ ' and 'not for every  $x$ '), developing suggestions of Peter of Spain. In *Franciscan Studies* he wrote on negative terms in Boethius, and in *The New Scholasticism* on *consequentiae* in Walter Burleigh. The fourth article, in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, heralded a new interest. It was entitled 'Three-valued Logic and Future Contingents' and argued that Łukasiewicz's three-valued logic was well adapted to the expression of statements about future contingent events, as interpreted in a certain Aristotelian tradition much discussed in the Middle Ages. It was the first mention, in Prior's writing, of the logic of time.

When, in 1952, the chair of philosophy and psychology became vacant at the death of Professor Sutherland, Prior succeeded as Professor of Philosophy, and the psychology department became independent.

In January 1953 the Clarendon Press agreed to publish *The Craft of Formal Logic*, provided that it was cut extensively. Since submitting the manuscript, Prior's own interests in logic had shifted, and he had himself had second thoughts. He immediately promised to rewrite the book, but in fact he wrote an entirely new work, which was finally published under the title *Formal Logic*. The original *Craft* remained unpublished.

*Formal Logic* was written at amazing speed. Prior learnt of the Press's decision on 16 January while on holiday at Alexandra. He wrote furiously during the remaining twelve days of his holiday, and had the whole of Part One of *Formal Logic*, consisting of much completely new material on the propositional calculus, protothetic, and quantification, typed and ready for dispatch to England by 22 March.

Prior always wrote in the grip of enthusiasm, never to a deadline or out of a sense of duty. He could work anywhere, at any hour. He would complete a long paper in a day, staying up until dawn writing in longhand lying on the floor, he would jot notes on the back of an envelope amid the noise of children playing, or scribble a proof on the margin of minutes during the droning of a committee. The writing of the first part of *Formal Logic* would have ruined everyone's holiday if he had not had an extraordinary talent for remaining involved in family life even when working hardest. He would suddenly in his writing stop to wash dishes or play with the children or invent for them one of the serial stories they loved.

In May 1953 was held the first New Zealand philosophical conference at Canterbury, which Prior organized under the stimulus of the Sydney conference of 1951. Mary and Arthur collaborated during this year in an article on the logic of questions, which was published in the *Philosophical Review* in 1955 under the title 'Erotetic Logic' (charmingly misprinted in a recent bibliography as 'Erotic Logic').

In December the family visited Arthur's parents at Master-ton. While he was giving prizes at his old school, Wairarapa High School, Mary fell ill with tuberculosis. Shortly afterwards the two children also fell victim to the disease. On Christmas Eve Mary had to go into hospital, where she remained until the following October. Rather than see the children follow her

into hospital Prior undertook to run the household with the aid of a hired nurse. The University was very considerate, and Prior was able to delegate a lot of the work to Michael Shorter, who had come as assistant lecturer in March 1954. Recalling that time, Mary writes:

During that horrid year he ran the house when the nurse was off duty, cooking the breakfast, cleaning up at night, reading to the children, arranging baby-sitters. Sanatorium visiting hours were Wednesday and Sunday afternoons, and on Sundays a baby-sitter was always necessary. Then he'd bike over to the sanatorium with parcels and flowers, and all the odds and ends one needed that weren't available at the sanatorium—like decent books. It was a hectic round, but he was amazing and cheerful, and full of stories of the children's doings and sayings, and somehow despite everything he did manage some original work.

The original work included some of the most fertile of his ideas. His work on the logic of modality, and the reading of Benson Mates's *Stoic Logic*, had led him to study the work of Diodorus Chronos, who had defined modal notions in terms of temporal notions, the possible being what either is or will be true, the impossible what both is and always will be false. It occurred to him that it might be possible to relate Diodorus' ideas to contemporary work on modality by developing a calculus which included temporal operators analogous to the operators of modal logic. Mary recalls the first occurrence of this idea. 'I remember his waking me one night, coming and sitting on my bed, and reading a footnote from John Findlay's article on Time, and saying he thought one could make a formalized tense logic.' This must have been some time in 1953, but the new ideas were incorporated in two papers of 1954: the first, 'Diodoran Modalities' early in the year (published in *Philosophical Quarterly*, 1955) and the second, more systematically, 'The Syntax of Time Distinctions' (completed in 1954 but not published until 1958, in *Franciscan Studies*). Prior had, in effect, launched a new branch of logic: tense-logic.

One of Prior's liveliest essays, 'Entities', was published in the *AJP* in 1954. It is instructive and yet very amusing, doubly so when read aloud, as he sometimes read it, in a Fife accent he had learnt from a childhood nurse.

In October 1954 Gilbert Ryle visited New Zealand. He had known, and admired, Prior's writings for several years. ('At present', he had written in 1949, 'he is doing exceptionally good digesting of what has gone on and is going on. He ought to be

stimulated into doing some of the mastication as well.') During his visit, he was impressed by Prior's rare facility for expressing himself both formally and informally, and by his ability to defend unpopular positions. He also approved warmly of what he called 'Prior's complete lack of mugwumpery'. He brought with him an invitation to Prior to visit Oxford in 1955-6 as John Locke Lecturer in Philosophy.

The invitation delighted Prior, and gave him an excellent opportunity to develop his new insights into the relationship between time and modality. He worked at his lectures and completed them in August 1955. The lectures (as he wrote in the preface) were the expression of a conviction that formal logic and general philosophy had more to bring to one another than was sometimes supposed; the work of system-builders and students of ordinary language could be related to one another very much as theory and observation are in the physical sciences. 'I must confess to a hankering after well-constructed theories which much contemporary philosophy fails to satisfy.' The programme of *Time and Modality* set very much the pattern for the work of the rest of his life.

Prior took leave from Canterbury for the whole of 1956 and decided to lecture in the Hilary and Trinity Terms.

The year in Oxford was one of the happiest of his life. The family lived in a small flat in Park Town. It was not very good for large-scale entertaining since it contained only four place-settings, but they fitted it out with enough coffee cups and wine glasses to cater for the many friends which they quickly made and never lost. One of the first of these was John Lemmon, whom Arthur met as a guest at Magdalen during his first week in Oxford. Another was Ivo Thomas, the Dominican logician, with whom he had already corresponded. Later, Peter Geach and Elizabeth Anscombe became regular visitors to the flat in Park Town.

The John Locke Lectures were held on Mondays. There was no official discussion but the lecturer soon let it be known that anyone who wished could come round on Thursday nights to discuss them. Thomas, Geach, and Lemmon were regular attenders at these sessions. Prior made himself a blackboard by painting plywood with blackboard paint and this was in constant use.

The lectures continued into the Trinity Term. As the weather grew warmer discussions moved, as often as not, on to the river, where Prior learnt to punt and talk logic simultaneously. Early

in May he went to Cambridge to read a paper to the Moral Sciences club, and met G. H. von Wright and G. E. Moore.

In London he read a paper to the Aristotelian Society, a development of the Lesniewskiań theory of definitions as universal equivalences laid down in the form of axioms. In July he attended the Joint Session at Aberystwyth and took part with D. D. Raphael in a symposium on the consequences of actions, arguing that both the truth and falsehood of determinism are incompatible with the view that one's duty is to do the action which, of all the alternatives open, will have the best consequences.

After the Aberystwyth meeting Prior returned to Oxford for a Logic Colloquium which he had arranged in conjunction with Kneale, Thomas, and others. The visitors were accommodated at Balliol through the good offices of Marcus Dick. Logicians came from all over Britain and papers were read by P. T. Geach, C. A. Meredith, Ivo Thomas, C. Lejewski, and John Lemmon. The colloquium was a great success, and was written up by Prior in an article 'Logicians at Play' in the *AJP* for 1956. In a punt at this colloquium David Meredith proposed a problem in modal logic (about implicational  $S_5$ ) which he, his cousin Carew Meredith, John Lemmon, Ivo Thomas, and Prior set about solving. They corresponded about it for a long period with Prior as editor and secretary, and the result was a mimeo'ed paper 'The Calculi of Pure Strict Implication' which circulated for some years but was not finally published until 1969 (in Hockney and Wilson's *Philosophical Logic*) after it had long been a classic in its field.

In August Prior went via Scotland to Dublin, hitch-hiking and youth-hostelling, in order to work on logic with Carew Meredith. In October and December he recorded some talks on logic for the B.B.C. They were printed in three instalments in *The Listener* in 1957 ('The Logic Game', 'Symbolism and Analogy', 'Many-valued Logics'). The Michaelmas Term gave him an opportunity to meet Michael Dummett, and also Hao Wang, his successor as John Locke lecturer. He visited philosophy departments at Keele, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, Nottingham, and Cambridge, reading papers, talking with departments, and sightseeing voraciously. At Manchester feelers were put out to see if he would be interested in accepting a chair. The family left England in December, shortly before they left, advance copies of *Time and Modality* appeared.

After the intellectual stimulation and companionship of that year Canterbury seemed quiet, indeed Prior was never again able to spend so much time with so many congenial co-workers as in that rich year of 1956. In the last two years in New Zealand Prior's most constant source of stimulation in logic was his pupil Robert Bull, who later axiomatized the calculus  $Q$  of modal logic which had been outlined in *Time and Modality*.

In 1957 the Third New Zealand Philosophical Conference was held at Auckland, and in December a UNESCO East-West meeting in Canberra, at which Prior read a paper entitled 'Contemplation and Action' (later published in *Papers on Time and Tense*) and wrote up the proceedings in a light-hearted piece entitled 'The Good Life' (*AJP* 1958). He returned to ethics in this year also in an article entitled 'Escapism: the Logical Basis of Ethics', which developed a simplified deontic logic based on a proposal of Alan Ross Anderson that the logic of obligation can be presented as a logic of escape from condemnation and sanction. This was published in a collection by A. I. Melden in 1958, and in the same year he reviewed for the *JSL* the relevant articles by Anderson. Two brief articles which appeared in the *JSL* in 1958 concerned the liar paradox of Epimenides and Peirce's axioms for propositional calculus. In *Synthese* in 1959 appeared a piece on formalized syllogistic.

During these years Prior frequently thought of the possibility of settling in England. In 1958 the University of Manchester announced its intention of founding a second chair in philosophy, in addition to the one held by Professor Emmett. He was offered the chair and was delighted to accept it. He had already met the department during his visit in 1956; and two of the members, D. P. Henry and C. Lejewski, had attended the logic colloquium in Oxford. With Lejewski, Prior shared an interest in Lesniewskian ontology, and with Henry an interest in medieval logic.

Prior said farewell to his New Zealand colleagues at the Fourth New Zealand Philosophical Conference at Christchurch in May, largely organized by Michael Shorter and Michael Hinton. The family left for England in December 1958. On the boat Prior worked at translating some chapters of Buridan of which Peter Geach had sent him transcripts. They settled down in Manchester after a miserable spring largely spent catching or chasing influenza. They made many friends in the philosophy department and among other academics, but they did not join the local Presbyterian community.

In 1960 Prior published an article entitled 'The Autonomy of Ethics'. It was a recantation, based on strictly logical grounds, of his previous subscription to the theory that ethical conclusions cannot be drawn from non-ethical premises. In two ways the article marked the end of a period. It was the last piece he published on ethics, and the last piece he ever published in the *AJP*. At the same time, in *Analysis*, he published a brief piece entitled 'The runabout inference ticket' in which, with the help of an invented logical connective 'tonk', he made havoc with some widely respected views on the nature of deduction and logical truth. The piece has been compared to Lewis Carroll's 'What Achilles said to the Tortoise' for its witty and economical way of making a point of fundamental importance.

Prior's period in Manchester was his period of deepest interest in metaphysics. Calculation with tense-logics led him to reflect on traditional metaphysical problems about the nature of time, and on connected topics such as foreknowledge and determinism, the nature of substance and existence through time, and the criteria for identity and reidentification of individuals. In treating propositions as fundamentally and irreducibly tensed he had also to explore problems of the philosophy of logic, since he was going against the dominant twentieth-century tradition of mathematical logic which treated propositions as timeless bearers of truth-values with implicit or explicit time-references built in.

Already in the appendix to *Time and Modality* and in a controversy with Jonathan Cohen in the pages of *Philosophy* in 1959 he had defended his unfashionable, though traditional, approach to tensed propositions. In 1960 he read a paper at the University of Keele 'On Spurious Egocentricity', arguing that words like 'now', 'past', and 'future' were not, as commonly held, token-reflexive. In the early sixties he wrote a number of essays on the metaphysics of time and substance. He discussed problems of identity in 'Identifiable Individuals' (1960), an essay which concerned *inter alia* creation out of nothing, which he had earlier discussed in an article in the astronomical journal *Southern Stars* (1959). In 1960 he gave a course of W.E.A. lectures at York on the topic 'In what sense does time flow?' and discussed a theory of facts and events as 'logical constructions'. This was also the theme of his Lindley Lecture 'Changes in Events and Changes in Things' at Kansas in 1962. The last paper of this series, 'Time, Existence and Identity', which was read to the Aristotelian Society in 1965, concerns a problem ('Can one

thing become two?') which he had discussed before in 'Opposite Number' in *The Review of Metaphysics* in 1957. ('Nonentities', which was published in R. J. Butler's *Analytical Philosophy* in 1962, and contrasts Russell's treatment of existence with Lesniewski's, was in fact written in 1955. He returned to the same topic, more formally, in a paper read to the Eighth Logic Colloquium at Oxford in July 1963.)

In discussing the relation between time and determinism Prior could draw on his theological learning, and he did so in 'The Formalities of Omniscience' (a paper read to a Catholic discussion group in 1961 and published in *Philosophy* in 1962) and in 'Limited Indeterminism' (a paper read at Detroit and published in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 1962), which contains a tribute to, and a discussion of, Jonathan Edwards. Most of the papers mentioned in the last two paragraphs were republished in *Papers on Time and Tense* in 1968.

In 1960 *Formal Logic* went into a second edition, which involved a revision of the two appendices and a new appendix on methods of proof. It was suggested by E. E. Dawson (Prior's colleague at Manchester, who read the proofs) that the enlarged Appendix I ('Postulate Sets for Logical Calculi') should be published independently 'as a sort of logical book of log tables'. It was a pity that it was not economically possible to do this.

In 1961 Prior was invited to attend the International Colloquium on Methodology of Science in Warsaw, and to deliver three lectures as a guest of the Polish Academy. He read to the colloquium a paper on the *cogito* of Descartes and the concept of self-confirmation, and lectured to the Academy on 'Tense-Logic and the Continuity of Time'. (The lectures were published in *Studia Logica* in 1962.) He was delighted to visit Warsaw, his admiration for Polish logic had been reinforced by correspondence and friendship with several Polish logicians. In connection with this visit he wrote an article on contemporary logic in England for publication in the Polish journal *Ruch Filozoficzny*. Later he was to contribute the article on Polish logic to the Collier-Macmillan *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

During their years in Manchester the Priors frequently took their holidays by cruising on English and Welsh canals, and especially on the Shropshire Union canal and its Llangollen arm. They would rent a cabin-cruiser, or converted narrow-boat, and invite three or four colleagues, pupils, or friends to join them. These trips brought the participants closely together. Prior liked being skipper of the small craft, he particularly

enjoyed being at the wheel in the early morning mist, with a huge mug of milky tea, while the crew were asleep and the solitude of the countryside was at its most attractive. He was always anxious to reach the turn-about point or destination as soon as possible, and prided himself on a flight of locks swiftly ascended or a record day's run. Mary, on the other hand, was more enthusiastic about exploring the small villages and learning about the life of the boatmen. Opinion was always unanimous, however, on visiting the canal-side pubs in the evening.

After two years at Manchester the Priors acquired and renovated a small cottage at Welshampton on the Welsh border of Shropshire, where the Llangollen canal approaches Ellesmere. They spent most of their vacations there, and many week-ends in term, they explored nearby Shropshire and Flintshire, and Prior learnt how to brew his own beer. Friends from several continents became familiar with the cottage, with its round table, its cane-hooded chair, its ship-like ladder, its awe-inspiring stove, the Constable scenes on the crockery and the library of ancient Pelicans, local history, and the prose works of Milton.

In Manchester Prior cycled to work every day (imitating, he used to say, the example of his predecessor Samuel Alexander). He did not learn to drive a car until late in life, but when he finally did, he drove with a zest which sometimes disconcerted his passengers. He retained as a driver a hiker-like enthusiasm for minor roads marked only on one-inch Ordnance maps.

In January 1962 Prior went to Chicago for a quarter as Visiting Professor. He found the department congenial, and enjoyed the respite from administrative duties. 'Not having to fight against time was at first very demoralising', he wrote, 'and having plenty of time to write, I wrote nothing.' He did, in fact, work on a piece which was later published as 'The Algebra of the Copula' in *Studies in the Philosophy of C. S. Peirce*.

In the summer of the same year Prior was invited to attend a colloquium on modal and many-valued logic at Helsinki. Rather surprisingly, he did not write on modal logic, but on the logic of belief. He had long been struck by the possibility of treating belief sentences in a manner parallel to that in which his calculus treated tensed sentences (taking 'it is alleged that I am having my breakfast' as analogous to 'it was the case that I am having my breakfast'). The related idea that objects of thought can be regarded as logical constructions appeared as early as 1955 in a paper entitled 'Berkeley in Logical Form'. He

put forward his ideas at Helsinki in the form of an attack on Quine's notion of referential opacity. (Indeed he often singled out Quine as a target for his criticisms of the dominant view of the nature of tensed propositions, of existence, and of belief, but he held him in great admiration and respect, which did not, however, prevent him from referring to him affectionately as 'Uncle Van'.)

The theory of belief was developed in a paper on Epistemic Logic read to an Oberlin Colloquium in 1962 and a paper on '*Oratio Obliqua*' read in a symposium at the Joint Session at Newcastle in 1963. Early in 1964 Prior wrote with great speed and enthusiasm half a dozen chapters of a projected book with the title *Objects of Thought*, which he circulated to a number of colleagues. Later he developed the work for use in courses at Los Angeles and Oxford, and continued to add to it, but never completed it. At his death it was discovered that all but one of the chapters he had projected were sufficiently advanced to be publishable, and the book is to appear posthumously.

The British Academy invited Prior to give the Dawes Hicks Lecture in Philosophy in November 1962. He chose as his topic 'Some Problems in Self-Reference in John Buridan'. Paradoxes of self-reference had always fascinated him, and he had published in the *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* in 1961 a paper 'On a Family of Paradoxes' which took its start from the Liar paradox. Buridan had interested him ever since Peter Geach had sent him the transcripts in 1955. In 1963 he was made a Fellow of the Academy. He valued his membership highly and enjoyed his regular attendance at the Academy's functions.

He continued his researches into modal logic, particularly in conjunction with C. A. Meredith. In the *Zeitschrift für mathematische Logik* he wrote on material and strict implicational calculuses in 1961, on the theory of implication in 1963. With Meredith he wrote in the same periodical on implicational S5 in 1964, and in the *Notre Dame Journal* on modal logic with functorial variables and a contingent constant in 1965.

An important part of Prior's philosophical output at this period was his contribution to the Collier-Macmillan *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. He wrote the articles on the correspondence theory of truth, existence, deontic logic, many-valued logic, modal logic, traditional logic, and negation; he was the general editor of, and one of the main contributors to, the long article on the history of logic, and the author of the logical part of the

article on Russell. His talents specially fitted him for writing encyclopaedia articles—his ability for grasping the essentials of a system and presenting it in a few lines; his lucidity and economy of expression and ability to present difficult ideas *ab ovo*. All the reviewers signalled out his contributions for special praise.

While at Manchester Prior was always active in bringing visitors to read papers to the department and to discuss philosophy with the students. Among distinguished foreigners invited were Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Saul Kripke, and Alan Ross Anderson. He enjoyed discussion with guest speakers, but often found it difficult to keep awake through a long formal lecture. In debate it was uncanny how skilful he was at discussing arguments throughout whose presentation he appeared to his colleagues to have been fast asleep. He continued for a while to attend the Logic Colloquia which followed on the one he had helped to initiate in 1956; and in March 1965 organized the first international colloquium on deontic logic.

For the last part of 1965 Prior was invited to be Flint Professor of Philosophy at the University of California at Los Angeles. On his way there he visited New Zealand under the auspices of the British Council. He and his family renewed many old friendships.

At Los Angeles Prior was surrounded, as never before, by colleagues and pupils who were enthusiasts for tense logic. As can be seen in the bibliography of tense-logic appended to *Papers on Time and Tense*, Prior had been working almost single-handed in the field for a decade after 1955. Of the items in that bibliography before 1965, all the formal items are either by Prior himself, or reviews of his book. Suddenly in 1965 tense-logic became an international industry: the bibliography lists items in 1965 by Bull and Geach in England; by von Wright in Finland; by Hamblin in Australia; and by Scott and Cocchiarella in California; and this output was increased in 1966. Under this stimulus and that of John Lemmon and Hans Kamp, Prior worked furiously, and his use of mathematical techniques became more sophisticated. While in Los Angeles he wrote, and finished on 22 December, a manuscript entitled *Past, Present, and Future*, in which he surveyed the whole field which had developed from his own initial enrichment of classical logical calculi with symbols for forming past and future tenses. Tense-logic was now presented as a discipline in its own right and not, as in *Time and Modality*, as a by-product of the search for a Diodorean modal system. He used systems to express various

assumptions about time, e.g. that it had or had not a beginning, that it is discrete and continuous. He discussed the logic of successive world-states, of measured temporal intervals, of predetermination and post-determination, and of beings which begin and cease to be. The work was predominantly formal, but much of it had important consequences for the solution of traditional metaphysical disputes about time, fate, and chance. He did not always draw these out at length, he explained his own method in Chapter Four. 'The logician', he said, 'is like the lawyer: he is there to give the metaphysician, perhaps even the physicist, the tense-logic that he wants, provided that it be consistent. He must tell his client what the consequences of a given choice will be, and what alternatives are open to him, but I doubt whether he can, *qua* logician, do more.'

The writing of *Past, Present, and Future* did not exhaust the output of this fertile period of work on tense-logic. After he had sent in the manuscript Prior continued to deluge the publisher with further material through the early months of 1966. Some of it was published in an appendix entitled 'Miscellaneous further developments', some of it arrived too late for inclusion and was incorporated in articles ('Postulates for Tense-Logic' in the *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 1966; 'Stratified Metric Tense-Logic' in *Theoria*, 1967).

Prior returned to Manchester in January 1966. At this time a fellowship at Balliol College was vacated by the election of R. M. Hare to the White's Professorship of Moral Philosophy. The election committee inquired of Prior whether he would accept election to the post. They had no high hopes, since the transfer from Manchester to Balliol would involve a sacrifice of both salary and status, and an increase in teaching if a reduction in administration. To their delighted surprise Prior accepted. His final gift to his colleagues and pupils in Manchester was the dedication of *Past, Present, and Future*.

At Balliol Prior soon made himself popular. His lifelong attention to the academic needs of individual students made the giving of tutorials come naturally to him. His undergraduate pupils were sometimes surprised to be given eighteenth-century moralists to read instead of currently fashionable texts, but throughout his life Prior had always preferred the solid to the popular. The black Nescafé which accompanied tutorials became a college joke.

Prior was at his best with graduate students, to whom he would give most generously of his time, and with whom he

always co-operated as an equal. He had a great intellectual purity, he cared simply for the truth of an idea and not at all about the authority or fashionableness of the person who proposed it. He paid as much attention to the ideas of his first-year graduates, if they were good ones, as to anything in Aristotle or Russell.

As a lecturer Prior drew large audiences and attracted many foreign visitors. He had an unrivalled ability to use the blackboard, and a gift for telling illustrations. In discussions at philosophical societies he always played a vigorous part. He had a knack of livening up a sluggish meeting by a witty remark whose relevance was not at first clear, but which could later be seen to have shifted the discussion on to a different, and more exciting, tack.

As a fellow of Balliol Prior dispatched his share of the administration briskly and without fuss. He attended college meetings regularly, but never regarded attendance as carrying an obligation to listen to all the speeches of his colleagues, especially when there were logic problems to be solved. As Chairman of the College Domestic Committee, he was well placed to meet the first mild murmurs of student unrest. He soon won the confidence of his undergraduate opposite numbers by his fairness and ability to see contrasting points of view; he was adept at deflating any overcharged situation in committee. He was, I think, happier at Balliol than he would have been at a more conservative and more tranquil college. He never moralized, despite the temptations offered by college committees, but he retained in a quiet way the strong moral and political commitments of his young days in the New Zealand SCM. At the Joint Session in Liverpool in 1966 (where he had gone to read a paper on 'Intentionality and Intensionality') he formed a resolve, with some other philosophers attending the conference, not to return to the United States so long as the Vietnam war continued. This was not an empty gesture, it meant declining many attractive invitations. He understood and sympathized with the aspirations of student radicals, but was quick to respond when he thought they were attacking things of value, such as the place of logic in the syllabus. One of the last pieces published in his lifetime was an answer in the *Oxford Magazine* to a student broadsheet circulated outside his lectures called 'A Knock at Prelims Logic'.

During the years in Oxford the Priors made many new friends. Invitations to their house were rarely to a conventional dinner

party, they would be to fly kites with one's children on White Horse Hill, or to celebrate a wedding anniversary on a converted narrow-boat, or to record the songs of boatmen in a canal-side pub. They had a knack too of finding out which of their friends was in need of help, in small or large matters, and of assisting them gaily and unobtrusively.

In the early months of 1967 the Clarendon Press agreed to publish a volume of Prior's collected papers, *Papers on Time and Tense*. It was complete with introduction in October 1967 and appeared in 1968. It was dedicated to John Lemmon, who had died while climbing in California in 1966.

In this collection Prior the metaphysician had the edge on Prior the logician: eight of the papers were informal, and only five were technical. But almost all the metaphysical papers had been published before, and only one of the logical ones. It was the hitherto unpublished logic papers which reflected Prior's most recent interests and developed the theme of *Past, Present, and Future*. Paper XI, 'Tense Logic and the Logic of Earlier and Later' defends the view that the logic of the earlier-later relation is to be embedded in tense-logic rather than vice versa. Paper XII, on quasi-propositions and quasi-individuals, pointed out that a similar reversal was possible in other areas: there were other fields in which predicates of individuals could be replaced by modalities of propositions. This was the first paper in which Prior put forward an 'egocentric' logic—a formalized language with sentences whose truth-value depends on the identity of their utterer. This idea, and other possible generalizations of the procedure he had used in tense-logic, fascinated Prior during the last years of his life, he published 'Egocentric Logic' in *Nous* in 1968, and 'Worlds, Times and Selves' appeared in *L'Âge de la Science* in 1969. He sometimes spoke as if he thought this generalization of tense-logic type procedures to selves and worlds was one of the most important parts of his work. Two of his pupils and collaborators, K. Fine and H. Kamp, are working on the papers left at his death to see whether the theories of which these articles were adumbrations were sufficiently developed for posthumous publication.

In 1968 Prior represented the University of Oxford at the 14th International Congress of Philosophy in Vienna. His own contributions were two brief pieces on imperatives and truth and the logic of tenses. In 1969 he attended an international congress on Time at Überwolfach and was to have visited Hungary had he not been prevented by ill health.

Oxford honoured Prior's international reputation, and rewarded his unselfishness in delivering both elementary and advanced lectures, by making him a Reader with effect from Michaelmas Term 1969. Unfortunately, he was never able to enjoy the remission of teaching this could have meant. In that term Prior's first sabbatical leave fell due. He had arranged, through Dagfinn Føllesdal, to spend it at the University of Oslo. He planned to give two courses there, a seminar on patterns of time, and a set of lectures on 'Worlds, Times, and Selves'. Unfortunately, his health had not been good for the previous year it had been discovered that he had angina pectoris, but he had been suffering more pain from rheumatism. The regimens prescribed for the two ailments conflicted, so that there was little he could do to lessen the rheumatic suffering. During the summer of 1969 his colleagues noticed a sudden ageing, and when first he arrived in Norway he was unable to dress himself without assistance or walk without limping. In Norway a course of cortisone brought him relief, and he was able to enjoy a trip through northern Norway with his wife. This was to end on 7 October with a visit to the University of Trondheim, but on the night before he was to deliver his paper at Trondheim he had a heart attack which was swiftly fatal. His body was cremated in Trondheim in the presence of his wife and son, a friend from Balliol, and philosophers from Trondheim and Oslo, whose obvious grief showed how quickly he could turn a colleague into a friend.

Prior's greatest scholarly achievement was undoubtedly the creation and development of tense-logic. But his research and reflection on this topic led him to elaborate, piece by piece, a whole metaphysical system of an individual and characteristic stamp. He had many different interests at different periods of his life, but from different angles he constantly returned to the same central and unchanging themes. Throughout his life, for instance, he worked away at the knot of problems surrounding determinism: first as a predestinarian theologian, then as a moral philosopher, finally as a metaphysician and logician. His methods of approach became, as he grew older, more abstract, but he sought abstraction and universality not for their own sake only, but because they threw a cooler and steadier light on the existential problems at the centre of his, and every man's, life. In his most abstract work this was, from time to time, allowed for a moment to peep out: as in the following quotation from Łukasiewicz which he incorporated in *Past, Present, and Future*

and which, at his widow's request, was read at his memorial in Balliol College Hall.

If, of the future, only that part is real today which is causally determined by the present time; . . . then also, of the past, only that part is real today which is still active today in its effects. Facts whose effects are wholly exhausted, so that even an omniscient mind could not infer them from facts happening today, belong to the realm of possibility. We cannot say of them that they were but only that they were possible. And this is as well. In the life of each of us there occur grievous times of suffering and even more grievous times of guilt. We should be glad to wipe out these times not only from our memories but from reality. Now we are at liberty to believe that when all the consequences of those fatal times are exhausted, even if this happened only after our death, then they too will be erased from the world of reality. Time brings forgiveness.

I would like to express my gratitude to the many people who have helped me in the writing of this memoir, and especially to Professor Gilbert Ryle, Professor John Findlay, Professor John Passmore, Professor Jack Smart, Professor R. J. Butler, Mr. Alan Montefiore, Mr. R. C. Lamb, Mr. Basil Dowling, Mr. D. M. Davin, Mr. J. L. Mackie, Mr. W. H. Newton-Smith, Mrs. K. Miller, and above all Mrs. Mary Prior.

ANTHONY KENNY