

accounts for the data? In Van Til's language, reasoning by presupposition and transcendental reasoning are synonymous. Such reasoning, per se, is certainly above reproach. It becomes, shall we say, *magical* reasoning only when it goes berserk, providing answers that are not posed by data. A basic competence to discern data at the level of everyday living is absolutely necessary *before* transcendental questioning can take place.

If at the outset literally *everything* is unintelligible and awaiting the questioner to come up with *everything's* rational *raison d'être* (and that is how Van Til begins inquiry), then no transcendental question can even be posed. If, to use Van Til's jargon, *all intelligible predication* is initially baffling, then *no* presuppositional strategy can even commence, for then we would be doing the impossible: asking what accounts for the intelligibility of any datum whatsoever as though knowledge of anything at all awaited the answer. In short, Van Til's transcendental question is simply too general to be meaningfully put. The question, in effect, demands omniscient viewing distance to be so much as asked while simultaneously denying the questioner any viewing distance at all. To repeat, viewing distance on data requires prior discernment and the manifest exercise of cognitive competence.

In the following analogy I liken the scoring of touchdowns to successful argumentation. The field of play is the domain of empirical data, and what may be concluded from the data is represented by the End Zone. In effect, the problem for the "transcendental" football player is how to score a touchdown without touching the turf (for the turf has reality only as viewed *from* the End Zone!). The analogy, I'm afraid, is a bit of a tease; there are points of comparison that I leave inexplicit. Without further ado, let's play some bizarre football. I call it . . .

. . . *Punt!*

Imagine a football game between opposing teams of presuppositionalists. ("C'mon, Lucy, 'just do it.' You can even call the sides the 'Linus Thumbs' and the 'Brown Blockheads'.") Let a team's offensive drive across the gridiron toward the opponent's End Zone represent the fortunes or misfortunes of trying to establish some truth-claim or other: the existence of God, or the existence of the Great Pumpkin, or whatever. A touchdown amounts to proof. The gridiron itself is a