# MEANING AND TRUTH
# IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

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This paper deals with the interaction between truth and meaning, and the implications for development of analytic philosophy. The recent turn in analytic philosophy away from the linguistic conception of philosophy and toward a more broadly based, "post-positivistic" philosophy is seen as the consequence of the problems inherent in the thesis of priority of meaning over truth, which lies at the heart of linguistic philosophy. The process of reversal in this order of priority is described by analyzing the salient views of Tarski, Quine, Devitt, and Davidson.

I

Truth has always been at the center of philosophy conceived as man's effort to understand the world and his place in it. The aim of philosophical pursuits was seen as the discovery of truth, or truths, about the world. Meaning, or analysis of meaning, was also important in these pursuits, since truth gained would have to be expressed in meaningful language, but clearly instrumental and secondary to the primary goal of discovery of truth about the world.

One of the fundamental changes which characterize the 'revolution' in philosophy brought about by analytic philosophy in this century is the shift in the focus of philosophical activity from truth to meaning. Priority of meaning had in time become so firmly established that Ryle was able to say, in 1956, "...the story of 20th century philosophy is very largely this notion of sense or meaning," and "...meanings are just what, in different ways, philosophy and logic are *ex officio* about."[1] With this turnabout in the priority of philosophical aims, philosophy was given a new lease on life by reasserting, in response to an identity crisis that threatened to turn it into a discipline without an identifiable subject matter, its traditional position as the 'queen' of sciences. Philosophy, as a discipline concerned with the analysis of meaning, would set the parameters of all meaningful discourse, and science, as man's efforts to discover truth about the world, would be pursued within the bounds thus prescribed.

At the heart of the heady iconoclasm and continual redefinition of philosophy within the analytic tradition during the first half of this century lies this resetting of priority of meaning over truth. The 'linguistic turn' in philosophy

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[1] G. Ryle, 'Introduction,' *The Revolution in Philosophy*, London, 1950, p. 5

was thought to have freed philosophy once and for all from dependence upon empirical sciences, enabling it to reassert its traditional role as the *prote philosophia*, a discipline that defines the precondition of all sciences. It was the idea with which analytic philosophy sought to replace a defunct philosophical tradition.

There is a general agreement today that analytic philosophy as linguistic philosophy—with allegiance to the metaphilosophical doctrine that philosophy is the analysis of meanings and that philosophical questions are questions of language—has run out of steam. It is alleged that what is practised now under the name of analytic philosophy has neither a unifying metaphilosophical standpoint, a common method, nor what could be called "analytic" argumentation. Rorty goes so far as to say, "Analytic philosophy has become, in fact, a sociological description... It merely denotes membership in a certain tradition —acquaintance with certain writings and lack of acquaintance with others."[2] The demise of analytic philosophy as linguistic philosophy has in fact been the result of the logical or dialectical consequences of philosophical assumptions which formed its basis. Central among these assumptions was, as we have already indicated, the thesis concerning priority of meaning over truth. The philosophical consequences of this central thesis have shown it to be fundamentally untenable, indeed they have given impetus to the reversal of priority between these two notions, most notably in truth-conditional semantics.

In this paper, I shall attempt to trace the gradual unfolding of the dialectical interaction between these two key notions. Such an attempt is interesting because of the light it sheds, not only on the causes of the demise of positivistic analytic philosophy, but also on what remains of analytic philosophy today so that we may still speak of analytic tradition as something more than a mere sociological description. For this dialectical process unfolds in terms which are primarily "linguistic"—not in the sense of meaning analysis but in terms of problems concerning the relation between language and the world, language and culture, and language and its uses. We may paraphrase Rorty a little and say what remains of analytic philosophy is the philosophy of language.[3]

## II

The circumstance which contributed most directly to the emergence of meaning as the primary philosophical concern was porbably the state of philosophy around the turn of the century. Different schools of the idealism of Hegelian provenance which dominated the philosophical scene put forward speculative claims about the ultimate nature of the world which were at odds

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[2] Richard Rorty, 'Epistemological Behaviorism and De-Transcendentalization of Analytic Philosophy,' *Neue Hefte für Philosophie*, Vol. 14, 1978, p. 117
[3] *loc. cit.*

with the common sense view of the world. The language in which these views were advanced was so vague that internal consistency seemed the only require-ment controlling it. Since, according to the then prevailing view, the aim of metaphysics is to give a "general description of the *whole* of the universe,"[4] it would be important that we be able to adjudicate between these different claims. It was first of all necessary to know exactly what is being said in these claims about the nature of the world *before* we can pass judgement as to whether they are true. G. E. Moore was perhaps the first philosopher to make into an explicit philosophical program the demand that philosophy make clear what its doctrines mean as prerequisite for deciding their truth or falsity.

Another factor which is closely connected with this identity crisis in philoso-phy was engendered by the overwhelming success of sciences. With the increasing departmentalization of knowledge about the world, the problem of identifying the proper domain of philosophical inquiry reaches a crisis point when the mind, considered since Descartes to be philosophy's proper domain, becomes the subject of experimental psychology in the 19th century. The demise of the conception of philosophy as introspective psychology gave the questions concerning the nature of philosophical inquiry new urgency.

Bereft of a proper domain of inquiry, was philosophy to be relegated to the same limbo into which alchemy, with the advent of chemistry, had fallen? Analytic philosophy gives a persuasive and forceful answer : philosophy is not a factual science concerned with the discovery of truth about one of the domains of the world. Rather, it is a discipline concerned with the analysis of meaning of the language in which this factual knowledge is expressed. It is a second-order discipline concerned with analysis of the first-order language in which knowledge of the world achieved by special sciences is expressed. Sciences are disciplines concerned with the pursuit of truth about the world, while philosophy is concerned with the pursuit of meaning. With this simple dichotomy between truth and meaning, philosophy at once establishes itself as a legitimate intellectual discipline. At the same time, it reestablishes its traditional priority over science : philosophy, as a discipline concerned with meaning, sets the bounds of meaningful language, which in turn circumscribe the parameters of scientific inquiry. In the words of Wittgenstein, "philosophy sets limits to the much disputed sphere of natural science. It must set limits to what can be thought ; and, in doing so, what cannot be thought."[5]

If philosophy was undergoing a painful identity crisis, logic, considered just a few decades ago by no less an authority than Kant a discipline so perfect as to be incapable of any further development and elaboration, was undergoing a period of revolutionary development during the latter half of the 19th century. For many philosophers, the New Logic emerged as the model science upon

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[4] G. E. Moore, *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, New York, 1962, p. 1
[5] L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London, 1922, 4. 113-4. 114

which philosophical inquiries could be based. What then is the nature of the objects of logical inquiries? To see them as ideas or concepts was to revive discredited introspective psychology. Philosophers of such diverse tendencies as Peirce, Husserl, and Mach, who nevertheless shared a strong logical orientation, came to feel that logic is essentially concerned with the way in which language is used and understood. It was initially Frege who developed this insight into a powerful philosophical position. Logic essentially involves the use of language. As language is used to assert something, an understanding of the way in which we can understand, communicate and transmit meanings of linguistic expressions becomes essential. Such an understanding involves a correct model of the way language functions. According to Dummett, it was Frege who replaced epistemology with theory of meaning as the fundamental part of philosophy.[6]

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In the early stage of the development of analytic tradition, meaning and truth are intimately linked. Meaning of a linguistic expression, a sentence, is identical with a set of circumstances in the world which would make it true or false. Meaning is to be formed by logical reflection about these possible circumstances while truth can be decided by finding out whether these circumstances actually obtain in the world. Some philosophers, notably Russell and the early Wittgenstein, thought such a link could be found in a correspondence, or picturing, relationship between the logical structure of the language and that of the world. Others, who adhered to verificationist semantics, thought to make sense-experience the key to establishing the link between meaning and truth. But the former, ontological approach, in so far as it presupposed some unexplained ability to grasp the logical structure of the extra-linguistic reality and its correspondence with the logical structure of language, was simply "too metaphysical" for the positivistic basis. The verification approach, although more in tune with the positivistic temper of the early analytic movement, was no more successful in forging this link between meaning and truth, as the failure of numerous successive attempts to define the nature of the basic observation sentence during the 20's and early 30's amply attests.

The positivist identification of meaning and truth was the result of the anti-psychologistic extensionalist semantics to which early analytic philosophers were committed. When meaning is defined in terms of extension which, when applied to a term, is equivalent to the set of things the term is true of, the link between meaning and truth is in fact presupposed. What the failed attempts to forge the link between meaning and truth show is the essential difficulty involved in explicating meaning in terms of its link to the extra-

[6] M. Dummett, *Frege : Philosophy of Language,* London, 1973

linguistic reality. Attention once again turns to language—a primary mode of conceptualization about the world which is both theoretically and practically accessible to man. Under the influence of the metamathematical inquiries of such logicians as Gödel and Tarski, attention was focused on rules and conventions of language. The rules which constitute a given language—formation, transformation, syntactical and semantical rules of a given language—set the conditions of meaning. They do not represent links with the extra-linguistic reality. The picture that a given language gives of the world is no longer seen as being determined by the world itself. It is determined rather by the rules or conventions governing the use of that language. The picture is not determined by some ineffable relation to the world, but by a set of conventionally adopted and specifiable rules which constitute a given language, a given framework.

Some philosophers, such as Wittgenstein in his later years and "ordinary language" philosophers, simply accepted the existence of such a linguistic framework as given. Others, such as Carnap, believed that the acceptance of a given linguistic framework was predicated on pragmatic considerations concerning whether a certain framework was desirable for certain purposes. But they were unanimous in rejecting the view that a linguistic framework was to be accepted on the basis of its link to extra-linguistic reality. Acceptance of a given framework was either a matter of historical resilience (J. L. Austin) or of usefulness for certain purposes (Carnap). Since the questions concerning existence of certain entities and circumstances fall entirely within the domain of a given linguistic framework, the answers to these questions can be judged true or false only in accordance with the rules constituting that framework. Indeed truth seemed to a number of analytic philosophers to be a largely redundant philosophical category, since the linguistic framework, within which only the question of truth and falsity concerning the reality of entities and circumstances could be put, had been designed for the very purpose of talking about such entities and circumstances in the first place. During the 30's, where epistemic evaluation of a statement as to its acceptability was called for, many philosophers of analytic provenance simply replaced 'true' with what they considered to be less problematical epistemic terms such as 'verifiable', 'assertible' and so forth.

Priority of meaning over truth as the focus of philosophical inquiry was thus securely established, and entrenchment of linguistic philosophy as the *prote philosophia* complete. The task of philosophy is to discover, identify, and formulate that set of rules which together constitute a given linguistic framework. A general picture of reality is represented in these rules for formation and transformation of language. Sciences work within the linguistic framework constituted by these rules, and questions of truth and falsity about the world are decided relative to the general picture of reality as represented in the rules of language.

Elimination of truth from philosophical concerns, however, had its price. Positivists could offer no intelligible account of the way in which scientific language is linked to the extra-linguistic reality, or our experience of that world. Basic propositions or protocol sentences, from which the rest of science could be logically constructed, were left without a semantical foundation, with nothing to warrant them except their internal consistency and conventional appeal. Scientific language was in effect divorced from objective fact.

## IV

Truth wins a brief Pyrrhic victory with the appearance in 1935 of Tarski's "Der Wahrheitsbegriff in den formalisierten Sprachen." Using the technical resources of logic and set theory, Tarski gives the correspondence notion of truth a precise and literal sense without introducing other undefined semantic concepts objectionable to many analytic philosophers. Tarski's analysis of truth was seen to be neutral with respect to any particular metaphysics or epistemology. There was then no longer any reason to have qualms about using the term 'true'. In fact such philosophers as Carnap and Popper reinstated 'true' in their respective philosophical languages. Popper went so far as to assert that Tarski's theory had rehabilitated the correspondence theory of truth by supplying what was lacking in the traditional correspondence theories, namely, a precise sense of 'correspondence'.

The task to which Tarski sets himself is to give a definition of truth which is both materially adequate and formally correct. A materially adequate definition is one which captures an ordinary, intuitive notion of truth as a correspondence with reality. Thus, he proposed that any acceptable definition of truth should entail all equivalences of the following form :
  (T) S is true iff p
where 'S' may be replaced with the 'structural description' of any sentence of the language for which truth is being defined and 'p' with the translation of the sentence in the metalanguage. An instance of this T-sentence is the famous equivalence:
  'Snow is white' is true iff snow is white.
The sentence mentioned on the left side is one which is true if and only if the sentence on the right side is true. In order to understand what
  'Snow is white' is true
means, you need only to know what
  Snow is white
means. Here the non-semantical terms ("Snow is white") are already understood by us, and they are used, on the basis of the equivalence of the form (T), to explain the meaning of the semantical term ("is true"). Tarski's position is thus far clearly consonant with the linguistic thesis of the priority of meaning over truth. The conditions of truth are to be elucidated by the meanings

involved.

The requirement of formal correctness for an adequate definition of truth stipulates that the structure of the language in which the definition of truth is to be given be precise and unambiguous, and not give rise to paradoxes (such as the Liar paradox). A 'semantically closed' language, such as natural language which contains semantic predicates as well as self-referring expressions, is unsuited for such a purpose, since it is apt to give rise to paradoxes. Tarski distinguishes between the object language, O, the language for which truth is being defined, and the metalanguage, M, the language in which truth is being defined, containing as its parts the object language O, and the means to refer to expressions of O. The definition of truth for Tarski is relative to a language : not "true" *simpliciter* but always "true-in L". One and the same sentence may be true in one language, and false in another. If definition of truth can be given only when meaning of the non-semantical terms are already known, it can only be valid for the particular language for which truth is being defined. Tarski is simply taking the knowledge of the meanings of the terms of the object language at face value, and use these expressions to explicate the notion of truth in that language.

The concept of truth as advanced in Tarski's semantic conception is an explication of the relationship between the terms of a given language and the objects accepted by that language. It is a concept of truth relativized to a given language. It provides no extra-linguistic basis for relating words and things, contrary to what Popper may have thought. The question of truth is being approached as an internal question in the Carnapian sense. Tarski's procedure succeeds in providing a precise formulation of the correspondence theory of truth, if we take the linguistic framework in which our theories of the world are expressed at face value, that is, without questioning the extra-linguistic, absolute basis for the relationship between language and the world. It rescues the concept of truth from the danger of being eliminated from our ordinary, scientific and philosophical parlance by showing clearly in what sense the sentences expressing our view of the world, more particularly those of accepted scientific theories, may be true or false. Priority of meaning over truth remains intact and with it the hierarchical division of labor between philosophy and science. A language represents a general way of seeing or conceptualizing the extra-linguistic reality, and philosophy is concerned with the examination and analysis of the structure of language. Science is concerned with discovery of facts about the world as it is conceptualized and represented by that language. Clarification of the structure of language, of meaningful discourse, is then the condition for all sciences.

# V

The central conception of analytic philosophy that the meanings of words

are logically prior to the truth of statements formed from them, so that philosophy as the analysis of meaning is prior to science as the discovery of truth comes under intense scrutiny in the late 50's and 60's with the publication by Quine of a series of papers establishing essential relativity of ontology. The scrutiny had been preceded by the appearance of works by Wittgenstein, Sellars, Quine himself and others who questioned a number of key ideas in the earlier analytic philosophy such as the distinction between linguistic framework and content, the given and construction, analytic and synthetic, necessary and contingent, presaging a fundamental change in the philosophical paradigm.

The crisis comes to a head with the formulation of the thesis of ontological relativity. It is based on two interrelated theses: that of indeterminacy of radical translation, and inscrutability of reference. Quine starts with the behavioristic thesis that language is a 'social art'[7] which is acquired on the evidence of other people's overt behavior. Meanings, on this view, are property of people's behavior, not labels for some mental entities. In a situation of radical translation in which we translate an expression in a remote, hitherto unknown language into our own, we could not assign meaning to the alien's utterance on the basis of his overt behavior alone, because this will admit of more than one interpretation which would equally well accord with all observable behavior of the alien. It would be impossible to know which one of these translations was the right one. One way of putting the thesis of indeterminacy would be in terms of a manual of translation from a foreign language into one's own language. One may construct two different manuals of translation which are both acceptable because they accord with the totality of observable behavior, and yet incompatible with each other in that the respective manuals sanction incompatible translations. It would be impossible to establish that one of these manuals of translation is right and the other wrong.

Moreover, we cannot assume the alien will have an apparatus of individuation (such as plural endings, pronouns and numerals) that is the same as ours. His language may 'cut up' the world in a way fundamentally different from our own. Unless we have prior translation of the alien's individuative apparatus, we have no way of knowing whether the objects to which the alien refers are the same as those referred to by us. But there is no right or wrong way to translate this apparatus. There is therefore a fundamental inscrutability of reference inherent in radical translation. Quine pushes the thesis a step further: we can introduce referential inscrutability even in our home language. It would be meaningless to question the reference of our own home language, because we can meaningfully question the reference of terms in a language only against the background of some determinate frame of reference, or coordinate system. By questioning the reference of our home language, we are

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[7] W. V. O. Quine, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, N. Y., 1969, p. 26

in fact postulating a background language "still closer to home" than our home language, that gives the question about the reference of our home language sense. We are in fact launched on an indefinite regress of appealing to one background language after another. We stop this regress only by "acquiescing"[8] in our home language and taking its terms at face value. Questions of reference are meaningless when put in absolute terms: they are only meaningful relative to some specific, arbitrarily chosen linguistic frame of reference. Reference of the terms of language is the ontology of the language. Since reference is relativie, so is ontology.

Ontology, then, according to Quine, is multiply relative: relative to the choice of background theory and relative to the choice of a manual for translating the object theory into the background theory. It is meaningless to ask, in any objective or absolute sense, independently of some previously accepted background language, what our words really mean or refer to. On this view, there are no meanings for the philosopher *ex officio* to be concerned with. Quine rejects what he calls the museum myth of "uncritical semantics" —language provides the labels for 'meanings' as mental entities and since the labels can be switched, the meanings, the museum exhibits, remain unchanged by change of lables. For Quine, language is a part of science, an instrument of science. Quine repudiates the conception of philosophy as linguistic analysis and as such prior to science in explicit terms: "I think of philosophy as concerned with our knowledge of the world and the nature of the world. I think of philosophy as attempting to round out 'the system of the world,' as Newton put it. There have been philosophers who thought of philosophy as somehow separate from science, as providing a firm basis on which to build science, but this I consider an empty dream. Much of science is firmer than philosophy is, or can ever aspire to be. I think of philosophy as continuous with science, even as a part of science."[9]

Quine's semantic eliminativism[10] has interesting consequences for theories of truth. On the view of truth, according to which truth of a statement is a function of the reference of its component parts, the reference relations between individual terms and object of the ontology of a language are primary, whereas the truth of sentences composed of such terms is secondary in the sense that it is a construction out of these elementary reference relation. If one accepts the thesis of ontological relativity, then it is easy to see how truth becomes totally relative. Truth would be as relative and arbitrary as the ontology of the language in question is relative and arbitrary.

Hartry Field, believing that truth must necessarily be conceived in terms of reference, concludes that we must abandon the concept of truth unless we can

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[8] op. cit., p. 32
[9] Brian Magee, *Men of Ideas*, BBC, 1978, p. 170
[10] The expression is Devitt's, cf, Michael Devitt, *Realism and Truth,* Princeton, 1984, p. 36

provide a non-semantical analysis of reference. He rejects therefore Quine's thesis of ontological relativity. According to Field, a theory of primitive reference is needed if the notion of truth is to be physicalistically acceptable. What Tarski has given is an extensionally correct list of 'true' sentences but not a real definition of truth with explanatory power. He proposes therefore to give a physicalistic analysis of the referential relation. He believes that such an analysis is possible, since referential relations are not facts over and above the physical facts, and therefore must be reducible to a physical base. Thus provided with an analysis of the concept of reference, Field believes a theory of truth can be developed according to the Tarskian procedure for construction of a truth definition.[11]

Assessing the prospects for a physicalistic analysis of reference is a task that lies outside the scope of this paper. There seems however to be agreement among philosophers of physicalistic leanings that a reference relation is causal and conventional, and therefore, a causal theory of reference is the basis for a successful semantical theory. There have been a number of attempts in recent years to work out just such a theory of reference. Most systematic of these efforts is perhaps Michael Devitt's *Designation*.[12] Drawing on the ideas of Field, the early Putnam, Saul Kripke, and Keith Donnellan, giving a central role to causal theories of reference, Devitt places a semantical theory within a more global context of a theory of people, of human behavior. People produce sounds and inscriptions which play an important role in their lives. We see these items of language as being meaningful, of referring to parts of the world, of being true or false. These words express people's beliefs, hopes and desires which constitute part of the theory explaining human behavior. Devitt says:

"What semantic notions should appear in our theory of people? In my view the central notion is truth...

To explain truth we need notion of reference...

Everything that the philosophers of language find interesting and important about meaning seems well enough captured by truth and reference and what goes into explaining them. The phenomena we seek to explain do not... require any notion of meaning beyond this."[13]

## VI

The situation is very different, vis-a-vis the Quinean thesis of ontological relativity, for a theory that views truth as some kind of relation between a sentence, not the terms of which it is composed, and a state of affairs, not the

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[11] H. Field, 'Tarski's Theory of Truth,' *Journal of Philosophy*, 69, 1972, pp. 347-75
[12] M. Devitt, *Designation*, N. Y., 1981
[13] *Ibid.* pp. 68-9

objects constituting it. Questions concerning the truth of whole sentences do not automatically raise questions concerning the reference of individual terms. Thus, so long as we do not reduce the concept of truth to a function of other more elementary referential notions, the concept of some irreducible kind remains spared of the consequences of the thesis of relativity. According to Quine, the equivalence

"Snow is white" is true-in-L iff snow is white

shows that "attribution of truth (to)…'Snow is white' is every bit as clear to us as attribution of whiteness to snow."[14] Tarski has provided us with an explicit procedure for deciding truth-in-L, at least for certain formalized languages. The equivalence tells us that what it means to call the sentence "Snow is white" true, is just as clear as the sentence itself, irrespective of the problems involved with the references of the component terms of the sentence.[15] Tarski's strategy was simply to take our knowledge of the meaning of the terms of the object language as given, and use it to explicate the notion of truth. Donald Davidson attempts to construct empirical theories of meaning, or interpretation, for natural languages by reversing the Tarskian strategy. Davidson takes the semantical term ('is true') as understood and use this understanding to explain the meanings of the object language. He proposes to achieve an understanding of meaning or translation by assuming a prior grasp of the concept of truth.[16]

In response to Field, Davidson, explicitly denies the need for, and possibility of, a theory of reference for essentially the same reason as Quine's.[17] But Davidson does not go all the way with Quine's semantical eliminativist position. He proposes to retain the general, pre-analytic notion of truth that remains unaffected by the Quinean agreements for ontological relativity and make it the starting point for a semantical theory, a theory of meaning, or interpretation, of natural languages. The theory of meaning of a language can be given by specifying the truth-definition for that language. If we formalize English and give a Tarskian truth definition for it, we would have sentences of the form :

(a) 'p' is true iff p,
(b) 'Snow is white' is true iff snow is white

being an instance of it. Now suppose this truth definition is given in German, then we would have sentences of the form :

(a) 'p' ist wahr wenn und nur wenn p' (p'=the German translation of p)
(b) 'Snow is white' ist wahr wenn und nur wenn Schnee weiss ist

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[14] W. V. O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, Cambridge, 1953, p. 138
[15] This argument, with a different emphasis, is to be found in George D. Romanos,*Quine and Analytic Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 115-119
[16] Donald Davidson, 'Belief and the Basis of Meaning,' in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretations,* Oxford, 1984, p. 150
[17] D. Davidson, 'Reality without Reference,' in his *op. cit.* p. 224

being an instance of it. Given prior understanding of the notion of truth ('ist wahr'), a German speaker, even if he knows no English, would be able to know the meaning of the English sentence 'Snow is white.' He would in fact be able to formulate a sentence of the form (b), a T-sentence, corresponding to each sentence P of English, and would thus be able to know the meaning of every sentence of English.

But the German speaker must first ascertain that (b') is actually a T-sentence. Here the controlling linguistic evidence consists in finding out whether the speakers of the language hold this sentence—"Snow is white" ist wahr wenn und nur wenn Schnee weiss ist—true. The point of this appeal to what the speakers of the language hold true is of course to get at the meaning of their utterance by holding their beliefs constant. Davidson thus postulates the principle of charity and rationality. The principle of charity stipulates that speakers of other languages generally agree with us about what is the case, while the principle of rationality states that it is constitutive of having beliefs and expressing meaningful utterances that the person be rational. Since such a postulation requires an explanatory account of beliefs, desires, and other intentional psychological states, Davidson views a semantical theory within the context of an overall theory of human behavior.

## VII

Hilary Putnam, in a perceptive essay on convention,[18] speaks of "self-deception" of analytic philosophy : that analytic philosophy is non-ideological and that analytic philosophy consists of piece-meal problem solving. In retrospect, it is clear that analytic philosophy in its earlier positivistic phase had been intensely ideological, consonant with the times which have been described as the Age of Ideology. The heady iconoclasm of the early analytic philosophy was based on an extreme form of philosophical asceticism. Not only were many of the major problems which formed the staple of the tradition of philosophical thinking condemned and expelled as pseudo-problems, but also much of the classical writing in philosophy was condemned as meaningless and consigned to a figurative book-burning. The view of analytic philosophy as piece-meal problem solving seemed plausible once the linguistic conception of philosophy established itself as a new orthodoxy. We have tried to make clear in this essay that the conception of philosophy which made such militant asceticism in philosophy possible was based on the central thesis of priority of meaning over truth.

An the new orthodoxy began to be questioned within the analytic tradition, it was once again the problem of the dialectics between truth and meaning that

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[18] H. Putnam, 'Convention : A Theme in Philosophy,' in *Realisim and Reason,* Cambridge, 1983, p. 180

constituted the core of the debate. We attempted to map the general course of this debate from the vantage point of Quine's thesis of ontological relativity. What is clear from the preceding discussion is that the demise of priority of meaning has not led to the demise of philosophy as such. Philosophy has not, as Rorty erroneously concluded, degenerated into a mere custodian of the past conversation of mankind, or a particular segment of it which has been called philosophy. In a number of diverse ways which we attempted to describe in this brief paper, truth has been established, in some perspicuous sense, to be prior to meaning, and with such a reversal, a need to work out more global theories of the world, the mind, and human behavior. The question of philosophy's relation to science, which, according to the old orthodoxy, had been so clear, is answered in various conflicting ways. But that situation may simply be a reflection of the circumstance that a new orthodoxy in philosophy has not yet been established (although it is not altogether clear that such an orthodoxy would be either possible or desirable).

However that may be, what must be emphasized is the fact that this intense debate is being carried out almost exclusively in terms of the problems that form the core of philosophy of language—problems concerning the logical character of names, the nature of meanings and references, the nature of truth, and so forth. For the rest, philosophers may deal with whatever problems they think important, with whatever method they see fit—on the condition that clarity and rigor are respected. It is in this sense that we may concur with Rorty that what remains of analytic philosophy is the philosophy of language.

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