MEANING MEANING

A COURSE IN PHILOSOPHICAL SEMANTITCS

by Géza Kállay

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Chapter 1: Introduction: the meaning of meaning.
Rationalists versus romantics, logicians versus animists

1 Meanings of the word *mean* in Collins Dictionary

One way to find out about the meaning of a word is to look it up in the dictionary. *Mean* as verb (going back to Old English *meanan*, 'intend') is given the following meanings in *Collins Dictionary*:

1. DENOTE, CONNOTE, SIGNIFY, REPRESENT VALUES ("IN ITSELF"), e.g.

1. *What does the word "mean" mean?* (metalingustic use, word. expression, gesture to be explained)
2. *Does a nod mean 'yes' in Hungarian culture*? (interpret)
3. *These examples hopefully explain what the word* mean *means*.
4. *'Made in Britain' still means a lot for customers.*
5. *These red spots mean chicken-pox* .

2. INTEND, e.g.

6. *I did not mean to hurt you* (intend)
7. *But what do* you *exactly mean by 'meaning'?*
8. (Kill your brother-in-law!) *What do you mean?* (what are you thinking about? what do you refer to? what is you intention? 'I beg your pardon?')
9. *Does she drink? Heavily, I mean.* (further explanation)
10. *This is a waste of time. I mean, what's the point?* (clarification, justification, re-phrasing)
11. *This is Robert de Niro… Sorry, I meant Al Pacino.* (self-correction; aim: precision)

3. SIGNIFY SERIOUSLY (expressing IMPORTANCE), e.g.

12. *That person means a lot to me.*
13. *The lecture starts at 12 and that really means 12 a.m. sharp*.
14. *Go out, or I call the police. I mean it!* (serious, important, obvious: how it is to be understood)

4. DESTINE, DESIGN (usually passive + *for*), e.g.

15. *He is meant to be a great linguist.*
FORETELL, PORTEND
16. Dark clouds mean rain.

5. PRODUCE, CAUSE, INEVITABLY LEAD TO
17. *The railway strike will mean heavy traffic delays.*
18. *Trying to find another job would mean moving to another city.*

Mean as a Noun
See also the Noun *means* (1) 'the medium, method, instrument used to obtain a result: *a means of communication/transport., etc.*; (2) 'resources/income': *a man of great means,* see Shylock: "My meaning in saying he [Antonio] is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient[=of adequate wealth]. Yet his *means* are in supposition. [= yet his resources are in doubt]" (*Merchant of Venice,* 1.3.13-15). See also: *by means of* (=with the help of); *by all/no means*, *by no manner of means* (= definitely not). *Means* (meaning) as 'instrument'.

Mean as Adjective
Mean as Adjective meaning 'humble, poor, shabby, in low spirits' (e.g. *He rose form mean origins to high office, He felt mean about letting her know the secret*) [coming from Old English *gemaene*, ('*common*')] is irrelevant here.

A first 'definition' of meaning

In the first approximation, we may talk about *meaning* when there is a sign (a signifier, e.g. some linguistic unit: e.g. word, sentence, etc.) to be interpreted leading to something else (a signified, a person, object, etc. 'behind it'), so meaning is bound up with signs denoting something, referring to something: then the sign is seen as meaning something 'as it is', without an agent (with intention) behind it. But what is 'behind' a sign may be the speaker's (real) intention, too: meaning is also bound up with what one thinks, wants to say, etc. A book title by Stanely Cavell plays with this meaning of *mean* : "Must we mean what we say?"

But look at the 'definition' above: there is the word 'intend', which can hardly be explained without knowing the meaning of meaning. And of course *all* the words in the definition presuppose our knowing their meaning. The definition of *meaning* is circular: you already have to know what it is in order to explain it, it relies on itself.

Ogden and Richards: the meaning of meaning

First attempt to collect as many meanings of meaning as possible: *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism* (1923) by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards. One of the key innovations of the book is the differentiation between three separate dimensions:

- The conceptual domain - thoughts that are in our minds
- The symbolic domain - words and symbols that we use to communicate with others
- The real world - things in the real world that we refer to in our thoughts and with symbols

This later also became known as "Pierce's triangle." As with all theories, there are severe ontological and epistemological commitments behind this approach, e. g : there is a 'separate' world that can be known independently of language. But can we do that? Are thoughts separate from words/sentences, etc., and are words, etc. only tiny 'boats' with which we 'send' our thoughts to the others? But is it not possible that words (sentences) always already have some influence on our thoughts? That they 'shape' our thoughts? Can we step into this triadic relationship as if its three factors were separate? And if they are not, where should we start?

The first document on how names refer: do names denote beings 'correctly'?

Plato's *Cratylus* (composed ?430-425 B. C.) is the first work – in a dialogic form, a dialogue written relatively early in Plato's career – to be devoted entirely to language. The participants are Hermogenes (who belonged to Socrates' inner circle) and Cratylus, presumably devoted to the views of Heraclitus. Heraclitus held that 'everything is in flux', preferring to point at things with his fingers, claiming that the use of a significant name would suggest that the thing named had a relatively permanent character. The gialogue revolves around the folowing question: are names significant by nature (*physis*), by virtue of some intrinsic appropriateness of the verbal sign to the thing signified? Is there a natural bond between word and thing? See onomatopoeia. There is a natural "rightness" of names which is one and the same for everyone. But then why don't we all speak the same L? – Socrates asks. Socrates is called to act as a judge: he makes fun of both sides, but more of Cratylus.

Hermogenes's view: arbitrariness

Hermogenes is also an extremist: words are significant only by convention (*nomo*s), by arbitrary imposition, social usage. It is a matter of chance what something is called (see Saussure and our modern linguistics). Socrates: do we have a separate word for each thing? Surely not. And: if a name is the ultimate part of a statement, a *logos*, a sentence and statements may be true or they may be false, we must say this also about their parts. Every part of a true statement must be true, and since there will be true and false statements, so

there will be true and false names. But – Socrates argues – names are not 'false', they may jut happen to be bad instruments (e.g. when I call something something else than the common name).

If Hermogenes is right and names are arbitrary, is the reality (*ousia*) of the things in the world arbitrary, too? If a thing's name is just whatever somebody likes to call it, is the *thing* named also whatever one thinks it to be? If objects have some determinate and real character, independent of our fancy, should that not be "mirrored" in the name? Why is a weaver called a weaver? Why is "housemaid's knee" the name of the inflammation of a nerve in the knee? There *is* 'motivation' in L to call certain things this or that (see also metaphors). Were then once all words metaphors? And can't I express my *relationship* with a certain person by calling her or him by another name than he/she has?

Cratylus's view: the natural bond between word and world?

Behind Cratylus' view there is the conviction that names do or should express something of the 'nature' of things. They capture something of the things' "soul" (animism, taboos: whose name should or should not be uttered: 'you-know-who", "that-who-shall-not-be-named": both 'names' ironically saying something about the "nature' of the person, or at least of our relation to her/him).

Cratylus argues further: a word is either the right name of something, or it is not the thing's right name, there is no further alternative. There cannot be an "intermediate" rightness here. If you call a thing by the name of something else, you are not speaking of the thing in question at all (to say "Hermogenes" when you meant 'Cratylus' is trying to say 'what is not', and that is impossible). You cannot say *nothing*. You must mean something and you must "enunciate", utter something. If a man does not use the "right name", he is making a "senseless noise" ("sounding brass"). You cannot make a statement that is significant but false at the same time. Cratylus plays with the Greek word *einai*: it means "to be" but also "to be true". Socrates explains: to say "what is not" is not to say something meaningless but only to say something that means something *different* than the real facts. "What is not" may mean "blank nothing" but also "what is not" in the relative sense of "what is other than" some given reality. This way all the violent paradoxes would be 'true' provided they mean something. So: L does not inform us about realty in their mere form (sounds, etc.), it does not even tell us what exists (it is a mistake to mix up being [mere existence] and truth).

Instead of a natural bond: motivation behind names.

If there is 'motivation' behind the name (in sound or in meaning), the 'perspective' the name represents is only *one* possibility to see the thing (see Hungarian *table* going back to Slavic *statj* 'to stand', German *Tisch* is derived from Greek *dyskos* ('round'), English *table* is derived from Latin *tabula* ('plank'): each name has a 'perspective' on the 'real object' but this is a metonymic relationship: none of the perspectives will prove 'better' than the other and none of them will "exhaust" all the characteristics of the thing =the real table)

Names (Language) and reality: epistemology and ontology come in. Particulars and Universals

So is L totally to be separated form reality? But L does have "something to do with reality"; even if we say that L is arbitrary, we have to maintain that it is one of our fundamental means to get to know reality. And do names, particular names (this chair) and class-names (the chairs in this room) 'reflect' "concepts" in the mind? Knowledge, it seems, must have a universal element. Universal: in the sense that I already know the 'general features, characteristics of something" (as other people know these, too), in order to recognise/identify the particular, the individual: I can only select/distinguish and call a particular chair "this chair" among other

chairs and other objects because I have a general 'concept' of chair, i.e. I know the general properties of chairs by virtue of which I look at a particular one and realise that *that* chair here and now subsumes within the general class CHAIR. So it seems the word *chair* can mean a class (the general, the universal) and a particular chair at the same time. But does the *class* (the sum of the 'general' features) have reality, i.e. does it exist as real 'entity', as a thing? Or is it merely conceptual? Are concepts 'real'? (Plato: in order to leave classes out of the reach of human folly and mere opinion, cerates Forms, the famous Ideas, out of classes to which particulars belong).

Realists versus Nominalists: are concepts real or are they there to aid signification?
Nominalists:
The problem comes back in Medieval times as the Realist-Nominalist debate. How do names apply to the things named? Nominalists: particulars have characteristics which resemble each other, I 'distil' these from the things, I recognise the resemblance and on the basis of that I apply the same name. Nominalists accept that we can only know which things resemble if I *already* know the common property they all share, and the common property is expressed by a universal term (a name of a class). But the universal term for Nominalists have no separate reality of its own. It is not an entity, it is not a universals in the sense that it is e.g. 'in the mind of God' or in a separate, Platonic realm.
Realists:
Realists claim that if universals are not real then the whole world is not real, then all knowledge depends on my unstable and necessarily arbitrary categorisation ('social reality' behind naming, common agreement, social consensus is historical, culture-bound and therefore subject to change, so it is unreliable, too, it does not provide real knowledge that would be permanent). If there is no norm 'outside', how do I know that I have the right categories/universals? The universal for Realists becomes like a thing in itself, in which particulars inhere ('live').

Where *are concepts (universals?)*
The debate is centred around the question: *where* are the universals, the shared characteristics of certain things? Take a ball and a wheel: they are both round. But can't I argue that the roundness of a wheel and the roundness of a ball are two different cases/sorts of roundness in general? What 'ties' them together? Is roundness *in* the ball and the wheel (in the objects themselves) or rather in my mind and then I 'project' the roundness into them? Can I *see* the 'roundness' as somehow 'separate' form the things that are round (either in the thing or in my mind)? What does it mean that e.g. Plato and Socrates are both *men*, i.e. they each have their own individual characteristics which are nevertheless the same sort/kind? How do we say that Plato and Socrates are alike *and* different?

Thomas of Aquinas an early form of phenomenalism
Thomas of Aquinas claims that the universal is a signifying function: it is 'real' as a means of signification' (roughly: as a 'part' of L or thought) but it is not 'real' as a separate entity; the universal concept is *by which* we know, not the known in itself (we have no direct acquaintance with it, we use it as an instrument). This is the doctrine of intentionality: each thought has two aspects, as act (of the mind, thought) and as object (thing in the world). A single mental act of conception can intend a general characteristic as shared by a plurality of numerically distinct individuals. What is intended is the object of the conception. For a true Realist this is absurd: how can I have certain knowledge if I do not know what I know by (if

the concept is at least partly the product of *my* mind)? Or shall we say that knowledge with certainty is an illusion?

Rationalists *versus* Romantics

The debate, in a totally different form but still involving much of the natural vs. arbitrary, Nominalist vs. realist controversy lingers on into the period of romanticism. With Descartes it seemed that reason had won priority over everything: true knowledge is the ultimate aim of philosophy and this can be obtained by the right method of conducting the mind. Language for a while becomes again subservient to thought; in rationalism L expresses thought unproblematically. This idea is shared by Immanuel Kant, too: reason can criticise (show the limits) of all things, including itself, i.e. reason as well. But in 1784 Johann Georg Haman (1730-1788) wrote *Metatcritique of the Purism of Reason* in which he argues that e.g. reason and experince, form and content, etc. cannot be opposed and separated because thinking depends on L and L is a mixture of both experince and reason, form and content, etc.. If we start from L (and not reason as separate from L) then the authority of reason is over and L, which is more like an organism than a formal system, comes in with its obscurity, ambiguity, uncertainties and this shows the collapse of the illusion of true and certain knowledge. This will be echoed throughout Romanticism, up to Heidegger and after, and will make its reappearance in the post-modernist debate. L *can* be fashioned according to the shape of logic, which will not tolerate ambiguities (like mathematics does not either). L, for example is full of irony, logic or maths is not (I cannot say that 2+3 are 4 because '3' ironically means also '2' this time). But living L is far from being logical; it behaves 'logically' if it is *made* to be 'logical' (if it is 'criticised'). A further argument in Romanticism was: the primacy of reason will make people forget faith: faith is precisely irrational, it is believing something we have NO proof of, which is not true in a logical sense. We have to give up the view that the main aim of a human being and, thus, of philosophy is to say true things about the world: logical truth *is* truth in some sense but that is at best the truth of science. The primary goal of philosophy might (also) be to show not how a human being knows but how she/he *is* (his or her existence), how she/he can see what is beautiful, etc.; so are we primarily 'knowers', or e.g. aesthetic beings? How about the truth of being? about the truth of art? Art, literature will not convey 'factual' truth but therefore logic is incapable of describing much of what is human.

The "linguistic turn"

It is a shift in the perspective on L which will bring about a fundamental change in philosophy: truth should be sought in e.g. poetry, rich poetic L, which is 'higher ranking' than factual L. It is precisely the 'chaos' of poetic L, with its ambiguities, its meanings running in several directions at once, its uncontrollability that we may get a true picture of what is human. We are controlled by L and not the other way round. The famous 'linguistic turn' occurs in Romanticism, after Kant already and the postmodernist debates testify to the fact that we are still the heirs of Romantic culture. Romanticism involves a radical reinterpretation of *truth*: truth is not 'correspondence to facts' or 'the internal agreement (non-contradiction) between sentences in a closed system' but truth should be looked for in certain representations of being human: truth reveals, 'shows itself' on certain occasions in e.g. poems, in works of art, L *is* all we have to understand ourselves, it is far more than (true, correct) thought and we should embrace L and ourselves with all the emotions, uncertainties, ambiguities etc. that are there in L and us.

Signifier and signified

The debates all through the history of thinking about L boils down to roughly this: if there is a signifier (a sign) and a signified (a person, a things, etc.), then how are they *bound/related*? The Rationalist answer is this: there is the world, then we get to know the world with thought and then there is L to represent these thoughts and, thus, the world. Behind this there is the assumption that, ultimately, the signifier comes 'later' to the signified, somehow from the 'outside', so the signifier can happily be arbitrary but must belong to an order which lies underneath all linguistic ambiguity and variety: there is a universal grammar (the chief candidate is logic), the 'backbone', the 'skeleton' of all Ls. The skeleton of universal reason reflects the inherent order of the world, guaranteed by God, by reason itself, or by human social consensus. The other view (the Romanticists, the animists) claim that L is non-representational in the sense that L does not reflect a pre-ordered universe: L, and especially the varieties of natural Ls, provide only aspects, interpretations of, perspectives on 'reality', which is not there independently of L; reality is constantly forged by, interpreted by, even created by L because there is no reality that would exist 'over there' as a pre-given order which the mind, our reason would comprehend first and then would merely be represented in L. Thus, the signifier and the signified come into being *together* and the signified becomes what it is under the pressure, the influence of the signifier. L, with its natural 'chaos', shapes even reason, since we have no other way to get to the world, or thought, or whatever than through L. The signifier does not necessarily represent what is 'factual' and 'real' but what we, humans are, with our various perspectives and with the various perspectives the rich varieties of Ls already contain: we project these into the world. So the signifier does have a 'reach' into reality but it is not reflective (providing mirror-images) but dynamic: it makes reality *appear* in this or that way. For Romantics, logic is at best only *one* possible way of representing the world and this is by no means necessarily the 'real/true' way. In fact it can hardly be in the eyes of the Romantics because it is a *reduced* way from the start (it ignores lots of other things, e.g. emotions, it concentrates on the 'essence', the 'backbone' of reality). For Rationalists any deviation from facts, from truthful statements is a pitfall, therefore whatever falls outside of factual L is misleading, e.g. 'fanciful metaphors' will leas us astray, meaning should be described in terms of truth and falsehood.

> *So the question might be reduced to this: is L reason-based or image-based?*

Chapter 2: Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell: Early theories of reference

Gottlob Frege (1848-1925):

–professor of mathematics at the Univ. of Jena, "father" of (symbolic/mathematical) logic and analytic philosophy
–main goal: to lay a purely logical foundation of arithmetic with the help of set theory

Frege's significance:

(1) the "semantic turn" in philosophy: Frege originally wanted to find a 'status' for numbers, i.e. to clarify what they are. But he did not ask how they *exist* (an ontological question) or how we are *aware* of numbers (how we know them: an epistemological question) but: *how are **meanings** conferred on numerical terms?* Ancient questions of ontology and epistemology become questions about the meanings of sentences (i.e. semantic problems). *The semantic turn in philosophy is precisely turning epistemology and ontology into semantics.*

(2) the "context" principle: instead of the *word*, the sentence becomes the basic unit of semantic analysis: words have meaning only *in* sentences (in "contexts"). The **concept**- or

relation-expression (predicate) in the sentence (e.g. **is, take, is taller than**) is by its nature incapable of standing "alone": it *must* be filled by *"arguments"* ["vonzatok"] according to the argument-place(s) the predicate expression requires, otherwise the predicate cannot get interpreted (**Al* **is**.[1] *Al* **is** *a great actor*, etc.; **Michael* **took.** *Michael* **took** *the dagger*. **is* **taller than** *Al. Bob* **is taller than** *Al.*) There is no longer the query how the parts of sentences adhere to one another (how words are "glued" together): this is a matter of predicates and their argument-places because the starting point is that predicates are incomplete without their arguments; arguments are not attached to the predicates "afterwards".
(3) Differentiating between **sense** ('Sinn', 'jelentés, 'értelem') and **referent** ('Bedeutung', 'jelölet') in the article *Über Sinn und Bedeutung* (*On Sense and Reference/Nominatum*) (1892) both on the level of names and sentences.

Frege's starting point: identity and difference
Frege's stating point is identity and difference. What do we mean when we say that A=B, e.g. that "the morning star is (=) the evening star"? We do not want to say either that the signs used on the two sides of the equation ('=', '*is*') are *physically* the same (that is clearly not true either in writing or in speech) or that their meaning (sense) would be the same; "the morning star is the evening star" is not a tautology (like e.g. "a bachelor is an unmarried man" or "the morning star is the morning star" *is* a tautology but tautologies are uninformative and trivial, though always necessarily true). "The morning star is the evening star" is non-trivial and informative: it can be a great astronomical discovery when somebody realises that the "star" (in fact the planet Venus) she can see in the morning is in fact the same as the "star" she can see in the evening. She realises the sameness (identity) of the *object* (the thing) the two names ("morning star" and "evening star") refer to.

Sinn and Bedeutung: names
Frege called the *object/thing* the name refers to Bedeutung (unfortunately another word for 'meaning' in German), and what the name itself means (the *way*, the perspective in which the name gives the object to us, the descriptive content that in effect gives the L-user the means to pick out the referent) the name's *sense*.
Certainly, I can give/describe anybody or anything, e.g. Aristotle, the person, in various ways: 'Plato's student', 'the tutor of Alexander the Great', 'the author of the book entitled *Metaphysics*', 'the philosopher I (=G. K.) like far less than Plato', etc. The senses of these expressions are like 'paths', modes of presentation through which I can get to the thing/object (the Bedeutung).

Sinn and Bedeutung: sentences
Frege extends the distinction between sense and reference to sentences (strictly speaking: propositions because the word 'sentence' is usually reserved for structures occurring in natural Ls): the sense of the sentence for him will be the 'thought the sentence expresses' but he does not mean here 'mental image' or some 'subjective fancy' (there is nothing 'psychological' in thought for Frege) but something that exists *objectively* (that can be the 'property' of lots of minds). Frege distinguishes between something being *actual* and *objective* and something can be objective ('real') without being actual (without being 'really, factually *there*'): e.g. the Equator is not actual (it is not a 'product' of Nature, it is not there as a 'line' in the sand, it is a man-made thing) but it is objective (it is a useful device in cartography, for navigation etc. and lots of people think it is real). The *Bedeutung* of a sentence (proposition) will be – surprisingly, Platonically – "The True" or "The False". This

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[1] ' * ' of course means that the sentence (proposition, statement) is unacceptable (cannot be interpreted).

of course means that all true sentences and all false sentences will have the *same* Bedeutung: Truth or Falsity, respectively.

Names/terms without referents (Bedeutungen) in sentences

What happens if I put a name in a sentence which has no referent (Bedeutung)? Since both the sense and the Bedeutung of a sentence is made up of the sense and the Bedeutung of its components, if a word does not have a Bedeutung, the sentence may not have a Bedeutung, either. Frege's example is: *Odysseus deeply asleep was put to shore in Ithaca*: here the name "Odysseus" has no referent (Bedeutung) in the real world but – Frege argues – here it does not matter because we know we are listening to an epic, a work of art and we are fascinated by the euphony of the L, the images and emotions evoked and also by the *sense* of the sentence: here the sense is enough. So the sentence has sense but no truth-value (it has no Bedeutung): it is neither true, nor false but it is only turning to scientific considerations that we are worried about truth. "Whether the name 'Odysseus' has a reference is therefore immaterial to us" – Frege writes – "as long as we accept the poem as a work of art". Here he adds a footnote: "It would be desirable to have an expression for signs which have sense only. If we call them 'icons' then the words of an actor on stage would be icons; even the actor himself would be an icon" (*On Sense and Reference*). (Today lots of philosophers would say that the sentence *Odysseus deeply asleep was put to shore in Ithaca* is true in a "possible world".) Please note that for Frege truth is something like scientific truth (i.e. concerned with facts) in *this* world, i.e. the world we ordinarily and scientifically know as "our world"; he is not interested in truth in the artistic sense.

Complex sentences

The rest of the article is concerned with complex sentences; many of them are products of what we today call 'sentence-embedding'. E.g. the simple sentence *Al Pacino is Robert de Niro* is clearly false but if I put a sentence (clause) before it containing what we today call propositional attitude expression (Verb), then the *whole* (complex) sentence can be true: *Some people believe/think/are under the impression* etc. *that Al Pacino is Robert de Niro*. Please note that in the case of complex sentences like e.g. conditionals the principle that the Bedeutung of a sentence is the Truth or the False has far-reaching consequences and Frege is aware of that. Look at Frege's example: *If the sun has already risen by now, the sky is heavily overcast.* Now suppose that both sentences (clauses), namely: *the sun has already risen* and *the sky is heavily overcast* are true: then the whole (conditional) sentence is of course true. But if only truth counts, then I can put *any* sentence (clause) in place of either of the clauses provided that the sentence is true and then I still get conditionals that are true, although from the point of view of content (sense) the sentence sounds absurd: e.g. (spoken by me who is writing these lines): *If the sun has already risen* [T]*, then my name is Géza Kállay*[T]. (Frege even says that the relation in conditionals is posited in the way that it is enough if the second, the consequent sentence is true to make the whole conditional true. So the sentence: *If my name is not Géza Kállay*[F]*, then we are in the room named after Professor György Bencze*[T]" is true but *If Barack Obama is nominated to be president* [T]*, then Republicans have less chances to win the elections* [F] is false, provided the second clause is false, although content-wise the two clauses making up the conditional are much closer to each other).

The interdependence of sense and Bedeutung

Sentences can have sense and no Bedeutung but sense and Bedeutung are far from being separate.

A sentence is made up of constituents (expression, name, term, word) and the meaning, the semantic value of a constituent will precisely be that which contributes to the determination of the truth-value of the sentence in which the expression occurs: e.g. it is by virtue of the above sentence containing the name *Odysseus* that the sentence will have no truth value. And, in turn, I can only grasp the sense (the thought) of a sentence if I apprehend how it is determined as true or false. But *what* determines that a sentence may be true or false or neither? It is very seldom that a sentence would show "in and by itself", i.e. by virtue of its sheer constituents that it is true or false. Sentences which show by their sheer constituents that they are true or false respectively are tautologies [see above!] and (self-)contradictions. Tautologies (sometimes called "analytic truths" in philosophy) are always true: e.g. *It is either raining or not raining*; the sentence does not say anything about the world (to be precise: it allows both situations to obtain in the world) but it is necessarily true. In turn, contradictions like *It is raining and not raining* are necessarily false (one could argue that if only very few drops are coming from the sky one can say: 'It is raining and not raining' but then the meaning is something else: 'there is too little rain coming down to call it really rain', so strictly speaking it *is* raining). The contradiction, on the other hand, allows neither situation to obtain and again does not say anything about the world. But how do I know whether sentences which are not tautologies or contradictions are true or false? For Frege truth *itself* is indefinable (the definition would inevitably be circular since in order to make the definition true (to know that the definition is right, correct, it fits), I have to know what truth is, I rely on what I should define, the definition 'begs the question'). For Frege, truth is an intuitive concept in us which we apply to certain cases (facts in the world). What determines whether a sentence is true or not? Our (knowledge of) *reality*: because I *know* that Odysseus is a fictitious character in Homer's epic I do not attach truth-value to the sentence. Or I look out of the window to see whether it is raining or not in reality and then I judge that the sentence *It is raining* is true or false. Please note that the situation I compare the sentence with need not obtain physically ('in reality'); it is enough to know (hypothetically, so to speak) what circumstances *should* obtain, what conditions (e.g. drops of water coming down from the sky, the pavement wet, etc.) should be satisfied to make the sentence true. Hence the definition of meaning of sentences coming into semantics from logic: *the meaning of a sentence is the knowledge of the truth conditions of that sentence: under what circumstances the sentence would be true or false*. More precisely: a sentence's meaning is its property of representing a certain situation in a certain way; a sentence's meaning is its mode of representing its truth conditions (under what/which circumstances it the sentence would be true or false).

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)
–inventor of the logical-analytic method
–a Liberal aristocrat (he was Lord Russell, often imprisoned for his pacifism and for standing up for human rights)
–studies, from 1890, mathematics in Trinity College, Cambridge, England
–from 1893 he studies philosophy under J. M. E. McTaggart, the idealist philosopher
–1895: he wins a six-year prize fellowship to Trinity College
–by 1897 he breaks with idealism chiefly under the influence of his friend and colleague, G. E. Moore (a student of the classics), later the champion of reasoning form 'common sense', forerunner of 'ordinary language philosophy', author of *Principia Ethica* (1903) (a highly influential book)
–in 1909 Russell publishes *Principia Mathematica*, written with Alfred North Whitehead, the book wishes to provide a foundation for mathematical logic
–in 1911 he gets acquainted with Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose thinking will be highly influential on his own

–Russell also worked on epistemology (which for him was the theory of perception), political philosophy and the history of philosophy extensively, these topics are not treated here.

Russell's starting point: negative existentials
Russell encountered the problems Frege did mostly via different routes: his main worry was negative existential sentences like *Macbeth does not exist.* (see the riddle of non-existence in Greek philosophy). How can I predicate of somebody or something that he/she/it does not exist if it must exist in some sense if he/she/it is talked about? The question can be answered in various ways.

(1) everything mentioned/talked about in some sense *is*: it has *being* but not necessarily existence. So Macbeth as Shakespeare's character has being but not existence.

(2) We differentiate between degrees of existence. We say: Macbeth did exist as a historical figure (as e.g. Julius Ceasar did), there was a Scottish king under that name (see Holinshed's Chronicle, written in 1587). But when we refer to the character in Shakespeare's play, then he only exists in Shakespeare's thinking and in our thoughts when we think about the character and thoughts are also real.

(3) We apply 'Occam's Razor': William of Occam was a 14th century Nominalist to whom the following principle is attributed: "the number of existents (existing persons/things) should not be unnecessarily increased"; a principle should be found with the help of which we can clearly tell what exists and what does not. So we have to find a way to eliminate Macbeth as Shakespeare's character from the real world.

Russell held all these positions at one time of his life. He saw the difficulty of (1) in the problem of interpreting the difference between *being* and *existence*. And *where* are the persons/things with being? In the head? In the human mind? (That was the position of Russell's contemporary, Meinong, too)[2]. If everything in some way or another is, then we will also have an unwanted proliferation of beings from Pegasus to the Golden Mountain, and also of idealist philosophical notions like 'the Absolute', 'the Nothing', or expressions with very uncertain referents: e.g. 'the will of the people'. Position (2) after all operates with a psychological explanation but that is very shaky concerning reality. I may think whatever I please: that there are ghosts, there is a Golden Mountain, etc.; it is very hazardous to give the question of existence over to the individual psyche for decision.

(3) looked, around 1900, the most attractive to Russell but what is the principle? He wanted to find a method in the new logic he was working on; since he, like Frege, also thought that the rules of logic were objectively true and stable, he wanted to find an unambiguous solution there.

"On Denoting" and the gap between language and logic; the idea of a perfect L
"On Denoting" (a highly influential article in the journal *Mind* in 1905) is Russell's first exposition of his solution. Here he starts to emphasise *the major discrepancy* between the grammar of natural Ls (like English, German, etc.) and the grammar of logic, something Frege also noticed. Russell thought that a logically perfect L could be found "under" natural

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[2] That the debate is absolutely not over can be well illustrated by quoting two eminent logicians of today. K. Donnellan in an article called "Speaking of Nothing" (*Philosophical Review,* 83, 1974, pp. 3-31) writes: "such statements [*Robin Hood does not exist*] seem to refer to something only to say about it that it does not exist. How can one say something about what does not exist?" (p. 3). Wayne A. Davis in his recent book *Nondescriptive Meaning and Reference* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), answering Donnellan, asks: "Where is the puzzle? We can obviously think about Robin Hood, as we are doing now. Since we can think about him, we can talk about him. In particular, we can say that he did not really exist. The mere fact that we are thinking and talking about Robin Hood does not prove that he exists, […] meaning and related concepts have *intentional* objects, which must be objects of thought but need not exist in reality. Speaker reference is one of these related concepts" (p. 181). Davis is clearly going back to Meinong.

Ls that would coincide with the *essence* of natural Ls: in a logically perfect L each term would be carefully defined before it is introduced into grammar and hence would be unambiguous, and only logical operations would be allowed. But logic is not seen as the representation or the analysis of *thought*: it is the analysis of the puzzles, the inconsistencies, the "errors", the normal imprecision and common ambiguities *natural languages* produce and the representation of how all Ls "should" refer to the world. Logic was seen as a chief candidate for *universal grammar*: this is the revival of the idea of the Janzenists at Port Royal in 17th century France or the position of Leibnitz that there is a "deep structure" mirroring the structures of true reality under all of the natural Ls.

Denotation *versus* description

In "On Denoting" Russell claims that there are proper names (Walter Scott, the King of France etc.) and denoting phrases (e.g. a man, the revolution of the earth around the sun, etc.) only in the grammar of natural Ls; in logical grammar there are only *definite descriptions*. Proper names and denoting expression give us the impression that each of them stands for an object (a person or thing) which Russell calls not "referent" (Frege's Bedeutung) but *denotatum*. But where is the denotatum of the denoting phrase e.g. "the present King of France" when we know that there is no king sitting on the throne in France? Russell's solution is to claim that proper names and denoting phrases are concealed (covert) *descriptions* in logical grammar: the proper names and denoting phrases in the grammar of natural Ls should be treated as definite descriptions in logical grammar and descriptions in logic can be treated with the help of variables and quantifiers and various logical operations (informally: we should 'translate Nouns into sentences').

The analysis of the inner logical structure of a proposition

So *the present King of France* (a Noun-phrase in English grammar playing the role of the subject of the sentence) becomes:
 (i) "For at least one x" or: "For some x" or: "There is an x who" [this is the so-called existential quantifier in logic and x is a variable]
(ii) "x is a present King of France" [this is the 'soul' of the operation: notice that this expression does not 'point at an entity' but *describes* x *as* a (present) king (of France)]
To explain: *For some x, x is a present King of France* does not 'directly' state that 'there is a King of France' but says that there is somebody who can be described/characterised *as* the King of France. The general form of existential statements in logic will not be: "x exists" (that is stating existence 'directly' and then at best we could look for the denotatum (the referent, the Bedeutung of x again) but "the so-and-so exists" or: "x with this or that characteristic exists"; (i) gives the scope of the future characterisation (to how many variables the characterisation will apply) and then (ii) attributes some characteristic(s) of the variable in the form of a statement.
[Informally: even in English the *is* in
x is a present King of France
is not an existential predicate as in the sentence: "x is" but a *copula* which has nothing to do with existence: it simply links the subject (*x*) to the subject complement (*a present King of France*)].
This way we can, so to speak, 'eliminate' the monolithic entity *the present King of France* denoted by a Noun-phrase having turned it into a statement which claims that 'there is someone with the characteristic of being a (present) king (of France)'. Now about a Noun-phrase we cannot ask whether it is 'true' or not but about a statement we can. And the statement: 'there is someone with the characteristic of being a present king of France' is *false*.

But we are not ready with the inner logical analysis of the initial sentence: *The present King of France is bald.*

We have to make *a present King of France* unique (we want to express: there is not just *a* King of France but there is one and only one King of France). This can be done in logic by using the logical operations called universal quantification (read as: 'for *all* y', where y is a variable), the biconditional (read as: 'if *and only if* this or that, then this or that' and often represented by "iff" ('if' with double 'f')) and equation (as in mathematics, expressing total identity):

(iii) "for all y, iff y is a present King of France, then y=x" which means: for all variables, if and only if the variable can be characterised as a present King of France, then y is identical with the variable in (i) and (ii), namely x. We attach (iii) to (i) and (ii) with the help of a logical operation called conjunction, namely *and* (in logic the sign of 'and' is usually '&')

Finally, we have to use conjunction again and attach the former predicate in English grammar (*is bald*) to (i), (ii) and (iii), indicating that it has become a separate statement and its subject is the same as the 'subject' of (i), (ii) and (iii):

(iv) x is bald.

So we get:

For some x, x is a present King of France and for all y, if and only if y is a present King of France then y is identical with x, and x is bald.

Now there is a law in logic: if one (or more) of the members (propositions, statements, 'sentences', 'clauses') of a conjunction is false, then the *whole* conjunction will be false. And we have found (ii) false, so we can safely say that the statement *The present King of France is bald* is false.

The significance of Russell's theory of definite descriptions

Please note that Frege would have said about the sentence *The present King of France is bald* that it is not false but has only sense and no referent (Bedeutung): it can refer neither to 'the True', nor the 'the False' (it is neither true, nor false) because the expression *the present King of France* has no referent (Bedeutung); the sentence is similar to *Odysseus deeply asleep was put to shore in Ithaca* (although the name Odysseus refers to a fictitious character). Russell, however, claims that it is false. Frege in "*Über Sinn und Bedeutung*" anticipates this possibility but claims that – contrary to Russell's later idea – we do not 'tacitly' ('silently') *state* in the sentence 'that the so-and-so (an x who is the King of France now) exists' but we , when uttering the sentence, assume (suppose 'beforehand') that such an entity exists: we *presuppose* its/his existence. If we actually stated its existence then the sentence would have two possible negations: 'The King of France is not bald' or: 'the expression/name "the King of France" has no referent (Bedeutung)'. But we do not negate such sentences like this: *both* the assertion *and* the negation presupposes the existence of a Bedeutung for the name "The King of France". For Russell this is not a good solution because this

– introduces a 'third value' into logic (neither true, nor false)

– this is practically withdrawing into the position that 'everything exists', as it is hard to tell what the difference is between stating (committing ourselves to) the existence of someone or something or presupposing the existence of someone or something. Now Frege could argue that he did *not* say that e.g. the present King of France really exists: Frege also subscribed to the later on widely held view that L itself will not let us know what actually exists and what does not; L represents things as if everything existed and he attributed the fact that when speaking we thus have to presuppose the existence of everything we talk about to the natural imperfection of all natural Ls. Russell and later logicians claimed that we have to rely on empirical data (on experinece through the senses) to decide whether something exists or not, but Russell wanted to say that we should start the empirical

enterprise by first turning the proper name into a description and look at the statements thus gained. Then, falling back on our direct experince coming through our five senses independently of L and comparing what the sentence states and what is there outside in the world (in reality), we can decide whether the statement is true or not.

– So Russell claimed that with Frege's presupposition we precisely cannot get rid of fictitious entities, products of our fancy, constructions in idealist philosophy like 'the Absolute', 'the Nothing' etc.

The later great popularity of Russell's theory has precisely to do with the third insight. E.g. Rudolf Carnap, eminent member of the Vienna Circle thought to have 'eliminated' the metaphysics of Martin Heidegger by subjecting Heidegger's sentences to logical analysis. Take the sentence (my example): *Nothing fills the empty air*: the sentence is ambiguous between 'there is nothing (no entity) to fill the empty air (the air is really empty)' and 'The nothing comes to fill the empty air (the air is not empty because the Nothing fills it)'. The first reading can easily be represented in logic and it is the case of a simple negation, roughly put as: 'It is not the case that for some x, x fills the empty air'', whereas the second reading 'personifies' Nothing, it treats Nothing as a proper name and thus creates the impression that it stands for a denotatum/referent/Bedeutung and then philosophy is led astray by language: I will be looking for the entity 'behind' "Nothing", treating it as a 'real thing' and I might draw all sorts of philosophical conclusions with respect to the 'behaviour/activities, etc.' of Nothing (as Heidegger, according to Carnap, actually did). Then philosophy will be filled with bogus, mysterious terms creating the illusion that they represent realities whereas 'in reality' I mixed up simple negation with a product of my imagination. 'In reality' for Carnap there is no such thing as 'The Nothing' that "threatens us, that overwhelms us, etc." and philosophy (like the natural sciences) should deal with the physically real things in the world whose existence can be proven. But no one can prove the existence of something existing only in his or her imagination (should the person cut his head open?), and the rigorous analysis of natural languages with the help of logic will remind us in how many ways we can deceive ourselves about what is real. The transparent logical structures underneath natural languages can 'see through' the imperfections and the deceptive qualities of natural languages.

Please note that philosophers like Russell and Carnap will have great difficulties when dealing with such traditional branches of philosophy as ethics or aesthetics: ethics usually has 'the good' and aesthetics 'the beautiful' as their respective basic categories but *where* are they? They will not be found as facts or things 'in he world' to be empirically proven to exist. They can be "eliminated" just like 'the Absolute' can be eliminated and thus philosophy will be reduced to logic and epistemology.

<u>Russell's Paradox: a fatal blow on the universal validity of the laws of logic?</u>
In June, 1902 Russell wrote a letter to Frege; this did not directly concern Frege's semantic theory but the validity ('the ontological status') of logic in general. Russell discovered a major contradiction in the theory of classes/sets [halmazelmélet] which occurred when Frege developed elementary logic into set theory. Russell's discovery is also known as "Russell's paradox": suppose that R is a subset whose members are not members of themselves, i.e. their defining characteristic is that thy are not identical with themselves. But how about R itself? Can R be identical with itself? Can R belong to R at all? Can R be a member of itself? The paradox is that R will be a member of itself *when it is **not** a member of itself*: when I want to "put" R into itself, i.e. I want to make R identical with itself then I find that R only 'accepts' members that are *not* identical with themselves but I would precisely like to "put" R into R, too, I want to make R identical with itself. The 'price' R would have to 'pay' in order to become identical with itself is that it should become *not* identical with itself.

In a less abstract way: there is a barber who shaves everybody in the village. This is the set ("group") whose members are shaved by the barber, i.e. they are the set whose members do not shave themselves. Now suppose that the barber shaves himself. Is it true that he belongs to the set whose members are shaved by the barber? Yes, because he shaves himself (the barber the barber, himself himself). Is it true that he belongs to the group whose members do not shave themselves? No, because he shaves himself. So I find that the barber, by virtue of being the one who shaves everybody, belongs to a group where he does *not* belong by virtue of shaving himself, and this group is the *same* group just as much as the barber is the *same* person. The barber belongs and does not belong to the set/group at the same time.

(This is the problem of self-referentiality: please note that when a speaker says e.g.: "here everybody steals", (s)he usually speaks from the perspective assuming that (s)he is *not* in the set of "everybody". Proof: ask him/her: "So what have *you* stolen?". Or: if a hangman hangs himself, is he still a hangman?)

Frege felt Russell's criticism was devastating. Frege strongly believed that the basic structure (the logical structure) of L and the basic structure of reality were the same, so the truths of logic were universal, i.e. valid under all circumstances and all times. One of the truths of logic seems to be the law of non-contradiction: a sentence cannot be true and false at the same time. But in Russell's paradox we seem to encounter such a case: the barber is and is not a member of a set at the same time. Are the laws of logic universal if logic itself is able to produce such paradoxes?

Chapter 3: Problems of Referentiality and alternative views to Frege' reference and Russell's denotation

The central question: how do names (referring/denoting expressions) and sentences refer?

The reductionist view

This is attributed to John Stuart Mill (1806-1879) and to some extent to Saul Kripke (see Chapter 4). Mill in *A System of Logic* (first published in 1867) claims: "proper names are not connotative [i.e. names should be taken in the way that they do not make the designating/referring person 'associate' any of the attributes of the thing or person the designating person designates]: they [names] denote the individuals who are called by them; but they do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to the individuals" (8th rev. ed., London: Longman, 1961, p. 20). For Mill, the meaning of a name is exhausted by its role of designating its bearer. But what is the *meaning* then? The 'existence' of the person (thing)? This seems to be the only possibility provided that for Mill existence is not an 'attribute'. Mill does subscribe to the Kantian view that existence is not a predicate, a description, i.e. when I say about a thing that 'it exists', I am not describing the thing the way I do when I say: 'it is brown, round, heavy, nice, etc.' But if the meaning of the term is its designation and nothing else and that 'nothing else' can be nothing else than its existence (at least in the ontological sense of 'exist', i.e. stating that 'in the world we consider ours, the thing/person is a piece of reality'), then the sentence *Robin Hood does not exist* would be tautologous, just as much as *Barack Obama exists*, while *Robin Hood exists* and *Barack Obama does not exist* would be logical contradictions. But they are not.

Existence as a predicate? Descartes and Kant

Descartes (and before him, e.g. Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas of Aquinas) wished to derive the proof of the existence of God by claiming that we can describe God in many ways: that God is *omnipotent*, *perfect*, etc., and once we said *perfection* is an attribute of God, it would be absurd to deny God's existence, since the concept of perfection *includes* the concept of

existence: if somebody is perfect, how could he *not exist*? Perfection and non-existence are incompatible (they produce a logical contradiction). But Kant showed that I can imagine lots of beings as perfect and that does not guarantee their existence: the mere fact of attributing perfection to somebody will not tell us whether that somebody is *really* perfect: first *that* has to be proved but for that we first have to *presuppose* the existence of the person in question (as Frege later on says: existence is a presupposition; in fact he takes that from Kant himself). What we use in presuppositions cannot be stated or claimed about the being in question, i.e. existence is not a predicate (the sentence: X *is* cannot even be represented in logic: only the sentence "X *as* a so-and-so is" can be represented). So the presupposition of existence precedes everything else.

How Frege and Russell conceived of reference/denotation (reconstruction form Lect. 2)
How do names refer/denote? How do they 'get' to the bearer of the name? Frege gets to the referent (Bedeutung) through the *sense* of the name but what is sense? A cluster of attributes and beliefs about the person or thing denoted. Russell says that reference takes place through description: I state that there is somebody or something who/which is describable as the so-and-so and this may prove false. If it is false, then it is not true that there would be a person or thing who/which would satisfy/fit the description. So what is false is not that the thing or person *exists* but that the thing or the person does fit into *the class/set* of those who are describable as e.g. 'at present being a/the King of France'. Both Frege and Russell work with descriptions, i.e. they denote/refer through some attributes/description.

Where do/does descriptions/sense/attributes come from?
But where do descriptions/attributes come from? For Frege, they are meanings (the sense) we know or believe about the person or thing; for Russell they are descriptions we attribute to (associate with) the thing or person, rightly or wrongly. Neither of them thinks that designation/reference would decide about the mere existence (being) of the thing/person: Frege thinks we presuppose the being of anything or anybody we talk about, whereas Russell imagines the relationship in a logical function: there is a logical proposition with a predicate (X *can be described as a/the King of France here and now*) and the question is whether there is a person that can be put in place of the variable X, satisfying this particular description.

But on what is Frege's presupposition or Russell's decision based? Frege sticks to meaning or sense because he thinks that this is something 'objective'; he insists that the sense of a name (e.g. 'the morning star') is something all speakers share and that the sense of a sentence (e.g. the sense of "The morning star is the evening star") is the 'thought' all speakers share, too: it is the thought "of many people". Frege thinks the thought is something 'objective'. Russell on the other hand thinks that I have to decide, going from case to case whether the description is satisfied or not but he obviously takes the description to be meaningful.
Frege claims, then:
-I have to know the meaning (sense) of the name to decide whether I "arrive at" a thing or a person in reality; + I have to know (somehow) the thing designated to decide that the referring act was successful.
-in the case of sentences I have to know the meaning (sense) of the sentence to know whether I arrive at 'The Truth' or 'The False': I have to assess if the situation described in the sentence is the case or not. Ultimately, I have to rely on my knowledge of reality.
Russell claims, then:
I have to know the meaning of the description and I have to *know* (somehow, directly?) the thing/individual inserted in the place of the variable in order to decide whether the

thing/individual fits the description. How do I know this? (e.g. that X can be characterised as "the so-and-so"?). Here, again, my knowledge of the world, of reality will be the ultimate test.

Reality? Thoughts? Beliefs?
For *all* name-theories (theories of reference) it is a task to answer one of the thorniest questions of the philosophy of L: *how are names tied to reality*? *Reality* in both Russell and Frege is taken to mean our everyday reality consisting of persons, and objects like chairs, tables, apples, etc. and the reality science describes with more refined tools. I learn about this from other people (at home, at school, etc.) through language, through my perception but in 'what form' is what I have learnt in me? In the form of thoughts and beliefs? Does the 'knowledge content' of my thoughts and beliefs decide then what exists or not? How can one guarantee that these 'contents' will be the same in everyone? How can one guarantee that we perceive the world in the same way, that we form the same meanings (through thoughts and beliefs) alike? If the 'forum' to decide whether something is meaningful or not will ultimately be reality, either we have to say that we have a means to get to reality through other means than perception, thought and L, or we have to say that we fall back on a theory of perception, knowledge and language to decide how 'contents' of perception, thoughts (beliefs) and L are formed in us and we also have to clarify the relationship of these three. If we say that reality in us is always in the form of thoughts, beliefs, meaningful sentences (thought, etc. has already somehow 'sucked up' reality), then we make our theory of reference/denotation depend on sense (Frege) or on the degree of fit between a description and somebody or something described (Russell). So, ultimately, reference will depend on contents of perception, thought and belief in us.

The fate of thoughts, perceptions and beliefs
But unfortunately we may have very different thoughts, beliefs and perceptions. As it was stated (Lecture 2) I can give Aristotle in many different ways (each way representing my 'pieces/items' of knowledge or belief about Aristotle): that he was Plato's student, that he was the tutor of Alexander the Great, that he wrote a book entitled *Metaphysics*, that I do not like him as much as I do Plato, etc. This will make designation/denotation/referring highly ambiguous because others may not share any of these 'contents' (beliefs, thoughts, etc.). And if others do share some of them, which will be the *right* or the *privileged* one through which I 'get to' the thing or person in this or that *particular* case? But if sense is so uncertain, how can it be claimed that sense *determines* reference? Frege's theory has been called "loose descriptivity" because he does not segregate sense and reference (see their interdependence in Lecture 2): sense is the mode of representation and it is in virtue of its sense that a term has its reference.

Thus, to understand a term (e..g. Aristotle) is to have possession of knowledge sufficient to identify the referent. Now is this knowledge given in the sense of the term? Frege does use the information given in the sense for the identification of the referent. But I may know lots of other things about Aristotle than what I enlisted above and an Aristotle-expert even more; *how much* do we have to know for successful reference? Out of several items of knowledge/ descriptions which is the most significant? Even worse: what I know about the person called Aristotle are *contingent* [nem-szükségszerű, véletlen] facts about the world, since there is nothing necessary about anybody's existence (that he was born, etc.) We can easily imagine a world where there is/was no Aristotle. Then, again, reference is based upon nothing *definite*. Frege e.g. speaks as if everybody knew who Odysseus was: he relies on a shared 'European' knowledge. But there is absolutely no guarantee that everybody shares this knowledge and especially that each person will activate the same piece of knowledge (information) *as* sense. *Even when a speaker's belief involving a name succeeds in identifying*

a person, the name may not refer to that individual. Knowledge about a thing/person starts to get mixed up with sense (meaning) [or is sense something personal?] *Which* of the descriptions will give the sense of the *name*? Frege accepted that several descriptions will refer e.g. to Aristotle, so the senses will be *ambiguous*. But can that be tolerated in logic?

Hilary Putnam's claim **(Hilary Putnam: "Mind and Reality",** *Philosophical Papers,* **Vol. 2., Cambridge: CUP, 1975, pp. 223-227)**
Putnam tried to show that *no internal state* (e.g. beliefs, knowledge, etc.) *of the speaker* (the one who uses the referring expression) is able to determine (successfully and necessarily bring about) reference. He uses the famous 'Twin-Earth' argument. Suppose that behind the Sun there is an Earth exactly like ours: to each and every thing, person, etc. there is a corresponding thing, person, etc. Now there is Oscar on our Earth and twin-Oscar on Twin-Earth. Suppose that they both voted for Regan, i.e. 'This-Earth-Reagan' and 'Twin-Earth-Regan', respectively. Both Oscars will say, while having the same or different beliefs about their respective Regans: "I voted for Regan" and they will both be telling the truth, while they voted for *two different* persons. The beliefs of the respective Oscars will be immaterial with respect to the truth of their sentence: no internal or intrinsic qualities of the Oscars (mental images, associations, feelings) are sufficient to determine the referent of Regan (as no internal state *in itself* can make anyone e.g. the Godfather of anyone): successful designation (like a successful relation with anyone) must depend on something else.

This is to prove that we do not designate through beliefs, and, thus, meanings (sense) are not 'in our heads'. But the example only works if there is an omniscient philosopher ('narrator?') who (form a third planet? form a nowhere-position?) can look into the heads of the respective Oscars and is in acquaintance with both worlds: one on Earth and the other on Twin-Earth. The argument carries an artificiality which hardly makes it convincing.

The problematic bond between sense and reference
What backs up my association of the sense of a term with its reference (my 'connecting them'?) In the sense (which I know) there is nothing to guide me to the reference (e.g. there is no natural bond between the sense and the reference.) Frege simply seems to have duplicated the problem of meaning in order to solve a puzzle of identity (A=B) but this way I have not moved forward: I have to explain how I associate, bring together sense and reference.

One of the problems is that the difference in sense that does *not* lead to differences in reference should be irrelevant to truth conditions. But this is not the case. The change in names (referring expressions) can not only change the meaning but also the truth value of the sentence, i.e. the substitution of one name with another with the same referent can change the truth value, too. E.g.
Michael believes that the main actor in the third part of the film-series "Godfather" *is a great actor* .
Al Pacino is the most influential actor in his generation.
Now *the main actor in the third part of the film-series* "Godfather" happens to be Al Pacino but the sentences fail to entail that Michael believes that the most influential actor in his generation is a great actor: the mode of reference should also be taken into account (since Michael may not know the name of the actor in the third part of *Godfather*), and also the fact that the first one is a 'belief-sentence'.
Or: George Eliot and Mary Evans were the same person. Now if someone does not know this, then for him/her what is true among his or her beliefs of George Eliot, will be false of Mary Evans (and *vice versa*).

The solution of Peter Strawson (Oxford philosopher, 1919-2006)
Cluster of descriptions
Peter Strawson claimed we have to face that the name is not tied tightly to one description/item of knowledge/item of belief (there is no 'a privileged one'): there is a *cluster of descriptions* for each person/thing and that cluster expresses the sense of the name and determines its reference. The name refers to the person/thing, if any, that most (but not necessarily all) of those descriptions denote: there is a *functional* association between the name and the cluster of descriptions. So a cluster of descriptions bears the burden of reference, not one description: there is nothing to be done: the speaker *knows* that the name refers to the object most of these descriptions denote. But we have to select a description that defines the name. So every change of belief about the bearer will change the meaning of the name: if not the same clusters will select the bearer, the name will simply be ambiguous. The selection of the description will be a matter of the situation, the event in which the referring takes place.

Reference-'borrowing'
To make this clearer Strawson also introduces the idea of 'borrowing' references. Suppose I am at a party. I heard e.g. Michael refer to a person named Joey Zaza but that is *all* I know about Joey Zaza, i.e. Zaza lives among my thoughts as "the person Michael referred to with this name" (and I must of course know that Joey Zaza is a *name*, most probably of a man – this is some 'background knowledge' about name-giving, the world, etc.) But I can still successfully refer to Joey Zaza e.g. talking with Michael later on if I say: "the man you called Joey Zaza" (of course I rely on Michel's knowledge of the person and his memory: Michel should remember that now part of his knowledge about Joey Zaza will include that he mentioned Zaza to me). Strawson's point is that the 'knowledge, belief' in me for successful reference can be *the name itself*: the 'cluster' may consist of a single term, coinciding with the name (and supplemented by a capability of referring at all and to understand that the other has referred but that is acquired when we learn L.). I may even borrow form 'my former self' (as if my former self were Michael): I tell someone: 'oh, the person I mentioned to you yesterday, what's his name?'. Strawson ties reference to an *event* (almost a 'strory') surrounding the person (the 'story' can be as 'minimal' as: "the person you mentioned yesterday") yet this is more relying on pragmatic than semantic considerations.
But: the problem remains: if reference is a matter of an event, reference is still ambiguous. Strawson thinks we should face this.

The causal theory of reference (Keith Donnellan (1931–), Prof. Emeritus, University of Calif., Los Angeles): "Proper Names and Identifying Descriptions" (In: Davidson and Harman (eds.), *Semantics of Natural Language*, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1972)
In this theory, the definition of designation (referring) runs like this:

'Macbeth' designates Macbeth (the person) in virtue of standing in relation R to him and R is a causal relation.
That is, the cause of my 'Macbeth-talk' determines the reference of Macbeth. Note that here the speaker does not have to "associate" this *R*-relation with Macbeth; this is a causal relation which the speaker accepts just as much as the hearer. The term refers to whatever it is causally linked to in a certain way, and causal links relate the speaker to the world and to each other in general. Here we may talk of 'causal grounding' i.e. reference-fixing through causal means. Even Strawson's 'reference-borrowing' is causally explained:
Donnellan talks about "formal or informal dubbing": ('dubbing' here comes form *dub* in the sense of 'to invest with a title, name or nickname', cf. dubbing as the ritual of investing someone with knighthood by the ritual of tapping him on the shoulder with a sword):

Donnellan claims that dubbing takes place in the *presence* of the object/person that will from then on be the bearer of the name (as if the name was a 'burden'), and the witnesses to this dubbing will be in a *casual* relationship to this (this is the reference-grounding process). So the *sense* of the name will be the name's *property* that designates the bearer by a causal link between name and bearer. If the name is 'empty', i.e. there is *no* bearer (e.g. *Robin Hood*), then there will only be a *purporting*, an intending, a wishing to designate an object by such a causal link.

How about those people *not* present at the dubbing? They will 'borrow' the name and they will be causally linked to the *use* of the others (who were present at the grounding-process; others will be part of the causal chain through several transmissions, of course). The chains will be 'designating-chains' called *d-chains*. E. g. I found a kitten and I name it "Nana": that is a grounding act and my friends when visiting me will borrow that name from me and will also call the kitten *Nana*.

The advantage of this theory seems to be that through the theory of 'grounding' and 'borrowing', beliefs or knowledge *about* the person is eliminated: since the causal link exists independent of anything else (as a kind of 'initial baptism', or in the form of borrowing), I do not have to know of, or believe about the person/thing designated anything at all; I will not 'select' from among my items of 'thought- or belief-contents' to designate but I rely on the causal link which I either create or accept from others. I will gain competence with names: competence with a name will be my ability that I gained in grounding or borrowing. So 'underlying' the names Mary Evans and George Eliot, there will be d-chains of different types. Knowing that they were the same person means that one knows that the d-chains are the same (this part is like Frege's sense-reference distinction).

Yet if I have a name in a novel, play, etc. so I think of Macbeth as the product of Shakespeare's imagination, shall I say that there is a causal link between the name and the bearer through Shakespeare's grounding? But *whom* am I designating? Surely not the *actor* as a flesh-and-blood being. Rather: the imaginary *character* (whom the actor personifies). But how is identity established between the actor and the character? And if the causal link can be established also between the name and an imaginary character, then it can be established between all names and everything/everybody, and then again 'everything/everybody exists'. If I say *Robin Hood does not exist*, I am saying, according to Donnellan, something like this: 'The name "Robin Hood" has an underlying purported/intended causal network but in fact the network is not grounded in that person/object". But that it is not grounded must be *known* (believed, etc.): knowledge about the person/object comes in. Besides: *what* makes both the speaker and hearer know what the 'right' causal relation will be? In the case of grounding I can suppose a direct perceptual confrontation with the bearer of the name (e.g. I give the name Nana to the kitten in the presence of my friends who can physically see the kitten). But how do I know *where* the grounding *in the physical object* (kitten, person, etc.) took place for the witnesses of the naming-event, i.e. *where* exactly they hooked their causal link between the bearer and the name? No feature of the kitten will 'by its nature', and especially not 'necessarily' *cause* the name Nana for the kitten (there are more obvious causal links with nicknames, e.g. someone may be called the "Hairless Mexican" *because* he is bald and he is from Mexico.) Donnellan tries to eliminate features of the physical kitten linked to ('associated with') the name because then some people will remember the kitten through e.g. the feature that it is white, others on the basis that it has longer ears than usual, etc. He says that we establish the casual link between the name and the *whole* of the object/person. But then how do we *remember* the link? And *what causes* links in general?

Chapter 4: Saul Kripke and rigid designators

Introduction
In the first part of the film-series *Godfather*, one of the last scenes is a baptismal ceremony in a (Catholic) Church. The Godfather is Michael Corleone, the baby is baptised 'Michael', too (and in the meantime one can also see scenes of murder one after the other: Michael Corleone is 'settling family matters'). Now the *real* child baptised (yet in the film in all earnest, with the appropriate ceremony) when the film was shot was not a boy but a girl, *namely* the director's, Francis Coppola's daughter called Sophia Coppola (later on reappearing in the role of Mary Corleone, the Michael Corleone's daughter in *Godfather III*). There are thus two 'possible worlds' in which Sophia Coppola is called 'Michael' or 'Mary', respectively. The gist of Kripke's argument can be illustrated thus: although Sophia Coppola may have been born as a boy (it is not a necessary fact of this world that she was born as a girl) and she indeed my have been baptised even 'Mary' (or anything else) in *this* world, she *is* Sophia Coppola in *all* possible worlds, and that name carries her identity.

Saul Kripke (1940--   )
Kripke is one of the most influential logicians and philosophers of L today. He was a child prodigy: he wrote his first philosophical essay ('A Completeness Theorem in Modal Logic') at the age of 16, and during his sophomore year at Harvard (BA in mathematics) he already taught a graduate course in logic at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where e.g. Noam Chomsky works). He has worked at Harvard, then at Rockefeller University, New York, and full time at Princeton University (since 1977). On 20, 22 and 29 January 1970, he gave three public lectures at Princeton University which were tape-recorded and transcribed almost verbatim by Gilbert Harman and Thomas Nagel (two professors of philosophy at Princeton) and subsequently published under the title *Naming and Necessity (NN)* first in 1972 (Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman (eds.) *Semantics of Natural Languages*, Dordrecht: Riedel) and then, in 1980 under the same title as a separate little book (Cambridge: Harvard UP)[3]. Kripke added explanatory footnotes, a Preface and an Appendix (in all the three partly answering his critics, too) to the 1980 edition but the basic argument has remained the same.

Kripke's significance:
Kripke (besides some influential articles e.g. on *truth* and the *first person singular pronoun*, '*I*') has practically written only two books: one is *NN* the other is on Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (henceforth: *PI*) entitled *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: an Elementary Exposition*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982; this latter is also a series of (informal) lectures with promises that the argument would be made more rigorous, technical etc. (not fulfilled so far), and still he is one of the most often quoted philosophers of the past three-four decades. There are already five monographs on him (the most creative of which is Scott Soames: *Beyond Rigidity: The Unfinished Semantic Agenda of Naming and Necessity*, 2002; Soames was one of Kripke's colleagues at Princeton) and thousands of articles. Kripke came forward with
– some new and surprising theses about the meaning and reference of proper names
– trying to show that so-called 'natural-kind names' (such as *heat, gold, water, mountain-lion* (Kripke's example is *tiger*, etc.) are much closer, in their meaning and reference, to proper names than philosophers had thought (I will not deal with this).

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[3] My page references will be to the edition from 1980.

- defending some metaphysical notions of necessity and possibility (with respect to truth) dating back to the logic of Aristotle and the Middle Ages
- defending (Aristotelian, Medieval) essentialism (discarded by such philosophers as Wittgenstein or Heidegger), i.e. Kripke thinks that it makes sense to characterise people and things as having some unalienable characteristics/features/properties: the negating of these creates logical contradictions. The most likely candidate for an essential property is that of identity: Saul Kripke is identical with Saul Kripke, and not with e.g. Ludwig Wittgenstein or Al Pacino, etc., so not with *anybody else*. But other candidates for essential properties are, with respect e.g. to Saul Kripke is that he *is a human being*, that he *has a brain*, that he *has a body made up of molecules*, and that he *is mortal*. (By way of contrast think of the tale, *The Wizard of Oz*, where the Tin Wood-Man wants a *heart*, the Scarecrow some *brains*: these wishes sound so absurd [of course they work very well in the tale] that e.g. having a heart and a brain seems to be *essential human* characteristics indeed. Could any human being say in earnest: 'I can walk and talk but I have no brain and heart' ?). Persons and things of course have accidental (contingent) features, too, e.g. for Kripke the facts that he taught at Harvard once, that he has a beard, that he gave lectures on naming at Princeton, etc.
- the suggestion that later on became known as '*externalism*' in semantics, i.e. that the meaning of a person's sentences and the contents of his/her beliefs are – at least – *partly* constituted by facts totally outside of oneself (a view also held by Wittgenstein in *PI*).

Kripke against the description-theory of names (against Frege and Russell)

The description-theory of names (Frege, Russell, Strawson, Searle) holds – as we saw – that the meaning of a name (e.g. *Aristotle*) for a speaker at a certain time is given by a description (e.g. 'the tutor of Alexander the Great', 'pupil of Plato', etc.), or a conjunction/cluster of descriptions (several of these descriptions, see Donnellan's d-chains) that the speaker associates with the name (believes/knows about the person). E. g. John R. Searle in 1958 (*Mind*, 57, 166-73) wrote: "any individual not having some of the properties ['the tutor of Alexander the Great' etc.] could not be Aristotle". So if the description(s) give(s) the meaning of the name, then the name and (one of) the description(s) can be exchanged *salva veriatate* i.e. without affecting the meaning and the truth value of the sentences, e.g. *Aristotle was a great philosopher. The tutor of Alexander the Great was a great philosopher*, i.e. the two sentences are synonymous. Thus, if the description determines/fixes the referent of the name, then
- the speaker must believe (at a certain time) that the description applies to a unique individual
- if the description does apply to a unique individual, then the individual is the referent of the name
- if the description does *not* apply to the individual, then the name has *no* referent
- the speaker knows (or is capable of knowing) that if the bearer of the name (e.g. the 'real Aristotle') really existed (or, if we talk about a now-living being: the bearer of the name exists), then e.g. the sentence: *Aristotle was the tutor of Alexander the Great* (and even: *The tutor of Alexander the Great was the pupil of Plato*, etc.) expresses a *necessary* truth. But this is exactly what Kripke will challenge.
A truth (expressed by a sentence/proposition) is necessary if and only if (= *iff*)
- it is true given the way the world (our 'real world as we know it') actually is, and
- it would have been true, had the world been in any other possible state/way it could have been in (roughly: if the history of the world would have been different, e.g. if Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire had won the First World War. This, of course, is

difficult. where is the limit to the possible ways the world could have been in? How about: 'if there had not been human beings on earth'? Was it a necessity that humans populated the world? Was it necessary that Greek (Roman) and Biblical culture have become the culture of Europe? etc. And concerning our (the individual ego's) personal world: can we imagine (at all) what we would be/would have been if our parents were/had been different? If we had been born in another country? If we had not met certain people we actually have met? The problem seems to be precisely that if we have decided to do this or that, e.g. to go here or there, then we cannot live 'another life' where we did not go where we did. And especially it is hard to imagine our life as differing in *only that* particular incident, other things 'remaining the same'. At the same time we intuitively feel, it seems, that everything could have been otherwise, even within the realm of rational, well-known possibilities: I need not imagine phantasmagorias in order to see my life or our world as 'flowing' in a very different way than it actually does. If we did not have this capacity, we would not be able to e.g. change our lives or to respond to changes. Kripke, as we shall see, heavily builds on the actuality of what really happened, which truly often appears to us as a kind of 'necessity': once something has happened, it has happened and period. See further at the discussion of 'possible worlds').

But isn't it possible that the world could have been in a state in which Aristotle *did exist*, yet he never met Alexander and/or never went to Athens to study with Plato? (One who does not like Aristotle may even say the world that way would have been a better world). So the problem is that while *Aristotle was Aristotle* is a necessary truth (a tautology), e.g. *Aristotle was the pupil of Plato* is not. So the truth of the sentence has been changed *with respect to necessity* when we replaced the proper name 'Aristotle' with the description: 'the pupil of Plato'. Kripke claims that *none* of Aristotle's actual accomplishments (as we know and believe them) were necessary conditions of his existence; even his very name, 'Aristotle' was not a necessary condition for his existence: he could have been named otherwise (see the Sophia-Michael-Mary problem above).

So, Kripke claims:
- a proper name is not a definite description (a cluster of descriptions) in disguise
- our successful referring to persons and objects/things in the world is not *determined* by our knowledge or beliefs about them

So Kripke's problem is that the descriptive theories stemming from Frege do not work to explain how we pick out referents (denotata). Kripke charges Frege with using the word *sense* in his theory in two senses: (1) Frege takes the sense of a referring expression to be its meaning (e.g. the meaning of the referring expression, *the morning star* is precisely: 'the morning star'; and (2) Frege also takes sense to be the way in which the *referent* (Bedeutung) *is determined*. But in order to know *how* the referent is determined we should have to discover a *further link* between the sense (=Sinn) and the referent (=Bedeutung). But, as Kripke argues, there is nothing in the sense that would *determine* the referent (would provide the link). Donnellan tried to provide a *causal* link between sense and referent but that 'cause' is social (it is a result of communicative activities, i.e. the common agreement between language-users as developed in a tradition of co-operation through history) and therefore it is also arbitrary: there is nothing *necessary* about a certain sense being connected to a referent. So these theories do give some explanation but they give the impression that
- referring is a loose, social activity based on tradition, which sometimes works, sometimes not
- so a name does not refer to anything *necessarily*
- this gives the impression of an *ad hoc* character to the existence of (literally) *everything*. Since we can obviously be referred to, as much as everything in the world can be referred

to, this way the existence of the whole world and our existence will gain an arbitrary or even *ad hoc* character. Kripke would like to tie existence to something other than our knowledge and beliefs about the world, or ourselves, or other people.

Rigid designators

For Kripke, proper names should be treated as *rigid designators*, i.e. as absolutely unambiguous referring terms which, once used, will fix the identity of the person, or of the thing in the world and in all possible worlds once and forever. A rigid designator is something one can never 'lose'. The term is in a necessary relationship with the thing/person designated. This is a 'causal theory' similar to Donnellan's in as much as the *very naming* (the calling of something or somebody something) and *nothing else* (e.g. knowledge or belief) is the *cause* of something or somebody having this or that name. But for Kripke, this cause works not socially (through tradition) but with the force of logical necessity[4], i.e. once the name has been used, it has been tied to the thing or person irrevocably and only *with respect to that* can we call the thing/person something else (by another name), give him/her/it in descriptions, associate beliefs and knowledge with him/her/it. *Before* the naming act (sometimes an 'initial baptism'), we of course may have used another name: to *that* extent names are arbitrary (e.g. Aristotle's parents could have called their son something else, e.g. 'Plato' or 'Alexander') but once they have given *that* name, Aristotle is *necessarily* Aristotle. Hence the definition of rigid designators:

For a term X to be a rigid designator is for it to designate the same (identical) object (including persons) in every possible world where the term designates at all.

Possible worlds

Now this definition depends much on the way we conceive of 'possible worlds'. The introduction of the concept of 'possible worlds' is the feat of especially David K. Lewis (see e.g. 'Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic', Journal of Philosophy, 65, pp. 113-126, 1968). Lewis thinks that similarities across possible worlds determine counterpart relations between people and things. Example (mine): The role of Michael Corleone was given, when they stated to shoot the first part of the film Godfather, to Al Pacino. Now let us suppose that Robert de Niro, another great actor was also auditioned for the role. I can easily imagine a situation where the role was in fact given to de Niro and I can say: 'de Niro might have been given the role'.

Counterfactuals

In logic e.g. De Niro might have been given the role of Michael Corleone (spoken in the situation described above) is called a counterfactual statement to indicate that the situation implied by the sentence (that de Niro played Michael Corleone) is contrary to the real facts in the world since in actuality it was Al Pacino who got the role. The counterfactual situation can be formulated in a proposition with a truth value: de Niro played the role of Michael Corleone, which proposition in our actual world will be false. So I can say 'yes, de Niro might have got the role' and add: 'had he acted better at the audition, etc.', i.e. I can "supplement" the facts "from" the possible world that would have been – in my judgement – sufficient for a certain situation/case to obtain; in a way I am giving the truth conditions for the sentence: De Niro got the role of Michael Corleone.

Lewis: Counterparts

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[4] For how Kripke sees the difference between Donnellan's theory and his own see Kripke's "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference" In: Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling Jr. and Howard K. Wettstein (eds.), *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979, pp. 6-27.

Now for Lewis, there is a possible world in which de Niro has a counterpart who actually played the role of Michael Corleone (there is, so to speak 'another film' called Godfather I, directed by a 'counterpart Coppola', the role of Vito Corleone (Michael's father) in Godfather I was played by a 'counterpart Marlon Brando', etc., cf. Putnam's 'twin-Oscars'). But – according to Kripke's understanding of possible worlds – e.g. at the time of the shooting of Godfather I, Robert de Niro could not care less whether someone else, no matter how much resembling him, would have been victorious in getting the role in another possible world; he was not bothered by the problem whether a person resembling him got the role in a possible world but he was bothered (and he and nobody else was bothered) that he did not get the role. For Kripke a possible world is not a "distant country" that we are coming across or viewing through a telescope it is not like other dimensions of a more inclusive universe which can be given only by purely qualitative descriptions.

Therefore the identity or the counterpart relations are not established in terms of qualitative resemblance. For Kripke, a possible world is given in the descriptive conditions we associate with it: possible worlds are stipulated (we create them), they are not discovered e.g. by powerful telescopes. Thus, there is no reason why we cannot stipulate that the real Robert de Niro (the one that in our world did not get the role) did get the role in a possible world: we can stipulate a possible world thus that it contains the real ("our world") Robert de Niro, so he is also part of the description of a possible world (just as much as the real Al Pacino, the real Coppola, the real Marlon Brando, etc. can be). Just one incident/event happened differently in the possible world: de Niro won and Al Pacino lost. We can point to the man called Robet de Niro in our world and ask what might have happened to him, had events been different. Kripke explicitly says: "when we specify a counterfactual situation, we do not describe the whole possible world, but only the portion which interests us." (my emphasis, NN, p. 49).

To this Lewis could object that things do not happen isolated: if even one thing is changed, then that world is no longer ours because the whole world has been changed; this is why he claims that even the characters (persons) of the possible world only resemble the characters of our world. Lewis thinks that any changes in the real world will also involve identity changes (especially if someone is not 'replaced' by someone else e.g. in a role but for example a person simply does not exist in the stipulated possible world, while in ours he or she does exist), and the resemblance is necessary in order to be able to still identify the person. Kripke thinks that (personal) identity must be kept in all possible worlds as well; the exactly same person in a possible world can go through other adventures than he/she actually does in our world. Kripke's worries concern especially the lose concept of 'resemblance': to what extent should 'our' de Niro resemble the de Niro in the 'possible world'? (cf. Kripke, NN, pp. 44-45)[5]. To give this a positive formulation, i.e. to see the situation from the winner's side: although the man called Al Pacino might not have won (might not have been given the role), it is not the case that he might not have been Al Pacino (though he might no have been called 'Al Pacino').

The idea of rigidity and the problem of essentialism

[5] The difficulty is precisely the 'passage' going from events we take to be facts of our world to events we can imagine as ones that might/may have happened (as facts?). Do we conceive of the event that might have happened as something that was possible to happen (but did not), which, according to us, ought to have happened (but did not), or must have happened (but did not) or as one that actually happened (i.e.: do we have to play a kind of 'film' in our imagination in which this or that actually happened as a fact)? To answer these very difficult questions would mean a lot to understand the nature of our imagination, our volition, our wishes (a kind of 'subjunctive mood'), our ability to 'create'; in short: our modal attitudes to the world. To think about this problem don't forget cases when we say: 'If I lost her/him (this or that person), the world would be totally different'; or: 'Since I met her/him, the world has become quite different' and the like.

Kripke's rigidity thesis has often been charged with bringing back the old (Aristotelian and Medieval) idea of essentialism, namely he was charged with claiming that somehow I have to know 'beforehand' the essential properties of an object of person in order to 'tie' to those the rigid designator: the rigid designator is so to speak 'hooked on' the essential properties (qualities, 'parts') of an object or person.[6] But Kripke only claims that there must be essential properties of a person or object but he does not require that I should be able to 'notice' or 'know' or in any way be 'acquainted' with them before using a name.

Kripke thinks it is wrong to suppose that I identify (point out, fix, refer to) objects or persons through a bundle of abstract qualities I am already in possession of, and which bundle is a complete set which represents in me the concept of e. g. 'table-ness' which I then, subsequently, apply to certain concrete (particular, unique) objects to identify one as e.g. a particular table. (As to how I came into the possession of the bundle, i.e. the concept, there are various answers in philosophy: an empiricist, i.e. someone who derives knowledge from experience, will say that I have 'abstracted' this bundle of qualities form several previous tables I have been acquainted with; a rationalist, who distrusts direct experience might even claim that I was born with the concept or God has put it in me, etc. But here we are not concerned with the origins of concepts). Kripke claims we should not conceive of an object as being behind a bundle of qualities and especially not as the object being nothing but a bundle of qualities or being identical with the bundle of qualities. The object does have all the qualities I later may notice, get to know, describe, etc. and of course nothing exists without qualities[7] but the object "should not be identified with the set, or 'bundle', of its properties, nor with the subset of its essential properties." (NN, p. 52). But then how can I identify the table (here or in a possible world) if I do not have the properties? Don't I identify everything through its properties? Kripke's point is that I first have a particular object in front of me, I have an it: "I have the table in my hands, I can point to it" (p. 52) and then I may ask what it is like, whether it is of this or that colour, shape, surface, etc. and what it would be like, e.g. in a possible world if it were not brown but green, etc. but I have to retain the it, i.e. a kind of identity which will tell me that when I am looking for the qualities of the object and imagine the object in other possible worlds I am still talking about it and nothing else. It is always the unique and particular it I have first and everything else will be 'hooked on' this it. What I hook onto the it (the qualities, e. g. that this table is brown, smooth, etc.) will be qualities the particular table shares with other tables. But the particular table in front of me will have a particularity, a uniqueness which the object does not share with anything else: this is what makes the object that very it, and this is what the table retains in all possible worlds as well: that is something necessary about the table. (That very it: this is hardly communicable, because language always gives us the general concepts: even when one says that, or talks about 'uniqueness', one uses, always already, a 'general concept' in a way). It is the particular it which 'carries' the rigidity of designation when one utters referring to a particular table as 'table'. So even the essential properties of the object are irrelevant with respect to 'fixing the object' for the sake of reference.

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[6] It would indeed be better – I think – to call the properties Kripke talks about unique (and not essential) properties to avoid confusion; to my mind Kripke's theory is a (unique) theory of uniqueness, not of essentials in the old Aristotelian sense but I cannot go into that. I can only say here that to me it seems that with Kripke's theory we can give voice to the insight that the much debated differences between people and things are precious and valuable differences: we can celebrate that nothing and nobody is the same as another and we need not be disturbed or even angered by this fact (as often philosophers have been). Kripke preserves precisely human and 'thingly' uniqueness in all possible worlds – that is the major significance of his 'modality' to the world and other people.

[7] But see the significance of the metaphor Robert Musil uses in his famous novel (also in the title): *A Man Without Qualities.*

One of Kripke's examples: 'Hesperus' (='the morning star' – in fact the 'evening star')
Kripke uses the name 'Hesperus' to designate what Frege called the 'morning star' (for the 'evening star' Kripke uses the name 'Phosphorus' and all these four names designate the planet Venus). Now what happened, Kripke asks, (cf. NN, pp. 57-58) when somebody first saw Hesperus and he fixed his referent by saying e.g.: 'I shall use "Hesperus" as a name of the heavenly body appearing in yonder position in the sky'. Well, he fixed the referent of 'Hesperus' by its apparent celestial position. Does it follow that it is (part of) the meaning of the name 'Hesperus' that the heavenly body had such and such a position in the morning sky (at such and such a moment?) No, Kripke answers, because e.g. the heavenly body may have been hit earlier by a comet and then it would have been at a different position in the sky. But Kripke claims that in such a counterfactual situation we wish to say that Hesperus would not have occupied the same position and not that it would not have been Hesperus.. "The reason is – Kripke writes – that 'Hesperus' rigidly designates a certain heavenly body and 'the body in yonder position' does not" (NN p. 58). It could have been the case that a different heavenly body or no heavenly body at all might have been in that position but no other heavenly body might have been Hesperus (though another body, not Hesperus, might have been called 'Hesperus').

Two possible objections
Of course, several objections are possible, I single out two:
It might be argued that this way certain names in a L are 'destined' to be the names of somebody even – so to speak – e.g. 'before' the person was born. Kripke denies that a L would already "contain […] a name for every object" (NN, p. 49). Demonstratives (this, that etc.) or free variables (see Russell), can also be used as rigid designators of unspecified objects, i.e. according to Kripke, the 'nature' (the word-class, meaning, etc.) of a linguistic item will not 'prescribe' its use.
It has been suggested that the simple fact that two people can have the same name refutes the theory of rigid designators. But as in L in general, these are cases of homonyms for Kripke, i.e. the names are distinct words (like bank: where we keep our money and bank: the side ('shore') of a river) which uses phonetically the same sounds to name distinct objects, so they count as tow distinct names. Distinctness of referents will be a sufficient condition for uniqueness of names (by the way, even classical description theorists like Frege or Russell tended to speak, for the sake of simplicity, as if names had unique references). Anyone can call his or her kitten 'Aristotle' but the reading of the name, i. e the truth conditions given for the sentences in which the respective homonyms occur (e.g. Aristotle [the philosopher] wrote the book entitled Metaphysics and Aristotle [the kitten] liked up all the milk from the floor) will be different.

Conclusion
Kripke holds that names are not shorthand expressions for descriptions, so names and descriptions are only seemingly on the same level; names and descriptions cannot be exchanged unproblematically: while descriptions do have meanings, names do not. While descriptions can (with more or less success) refer, names designate in the sense that they grant the *identity*, with the force of necessity, to a thing or person. And with respect to identity, existence is trivial: *of course* something exists if it has been given some identity, so in naming we should not bother about existence but identity. Kripke's theory is both widely used and hotly debated especially because it has implications with respect to the widely-held relativity concerning truth and existence; Kripke does imply that there is something necessary about our existence, the existence of things and even the world. Naming, through rigid designation, becomes almost an 'act of creation': for Kripke there is no presupposition of existence (as in

Frege) or even stating the existence of something by telling that it exists *as* the so-and-so (as in Russell) but beings (persons, things) will 'come about' somehow through the naming action: once something/somebody is (rigidly) given a name, it/he/she *has* existence in and through the name and thus, through the identity he/she/it has. Kripke seems to evoke a kind of animism, not in the sense that the name would mystically 'contain' e.g. an object's most secret but real property but in the sense that the object becomes what it is, i.e. it gains *identity* (its uniqueness is somehow established) in and through the very naming activity which it can never lose. It is not appropriate to say, it seems, that this uniqueness is a property, since neither identity, nor existence is a predicate, an attribute, or a property. Further, it seems it is not right to say that things would not exist without our having names for them but it seems to be true that for us, humans those things exist which we can talk about. And it seems to me to be appropriate to say that 'rigid designation' is not something general: on the contrary; if I say *this table*, *this person*, etc. or I call out the name of a person (his or her *proper* name), then the rigid designation will somehow 'express' the unique kind of *is* (being) in which the named or pointed at person or thing *is* (happens to be). The rigid designator somehow carries, in the act of naming, the existence, the being which is unique to *it* (the thing), or to *him, her* (the person) and nothing else. (Somehow in the way Banquo's ghost always appears when Macbeth utters the name 'Banquo'). One thing is certain: for Kripke, existence does not depend on knowledge about the person or thing designated.

It seems to me to be true that we conjure up the world (we call the world into existence) by giving certain names to beings (*beings* taken here in the most general sense) and by learning the names of things, always in concrete situations. This way we do not only fix the floating beings for a while to be able to talk about them (we do not, so to speak only 'touch' things with names to communicate *what* we are talking about): we also grant identity to the beings around us so as to be able to recall them. To talk of identity in terms of knowledge (to say that we *know* the identity of this and that) is a confusion to me: identity is more fundamental and more necessary than any piece of knowledge we have learnt or may or will learn about a being. In naming we somehow 'lend' some of our being to a being, we 'grant it existence'. We of course can refer to things through pieces of knowledge and beliefs (which can be true or false) but existence has, strictly speaking, nothing to do with truth. Of course it can turn out that something we thought (knew, believed) to exist does not in fact exist but then our *knowledge/belief of* its existence was wrong (false, untrue); existence, through identity, precedes everything else.

So the problem of naming (referring, denotation, designation) can be summed up as follows: the problem is that when we refer, several things are happening at the same time ('together'). We

'point at', 'single out', 'touch' the thing and make it public to others (as our topic)

'fix' the thing so as to give it some stability in the flux of other things

'grant' it identity and, thus, existence

we describe the thing (we communicate our knowledge or belief about the thing, we go into its 'content') if we use descriptions as referring expressions; with certain names we give to people or things we can even communicate our emotional relationship with them

Descriptions do communicate something of the meaning of things; the rest are there as pre-requisites of being able to mean at all.

Chapter 5: W. V. O. Quine: ontology and meaning

Quine's significance

Willard Van Orman Quine (1908-2000), known to his friends (ironically for Hungarian speakers) as "Van", was one of the most influential American philosophers. He got his BA in

mathematics and philosophy in Oberlin College, then he studied at Harvard, his tutor was Alfred North Whitehead, the co-author – with Bertrand Russell – of *Principia Mathematica* but in the 1930s Whitehead was already engaged in 'process thought', a complicated metaphysical theory. Quine wrote his Ph.D. on the *Principia* and then spent the academic year of 1932-33 in Vienna, Cambridge, Prague and Warsaw (also briefly in Hungary), studying logic with Alfred Tarski in Poland and getting acquainted with what became known as the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle. He made friends with Rudolf Carnap, one of the most eminent members of the Vienna Circle, who at that time was working on his influential book, *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt* (*The Logical Structure of the World*). When, after the 'Anschluss' in 1938, Carnap had to leave Vienna and went to teach in the United States, Quine helped him a lot to feel at home and they had a fascinating series of correspondence on logical syntax and semantics.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Quine is the founder – together with emigrant members of the Vienna Circle – of modern logic in America. Quine in the 50s turned out to be an ardent *critic* of logical positivism and dealt extensively with semantics and ontology. He taught at Harvard for almost 70 years, he travelled all around the world; some of his most eminent students were Donald Davidson, David Lewis and Gilbert Harman. His most important books are: *From a Logical Point of View*. Harvard UP, 1953, (henceforth **FLPV**, the three articles presented here are in this book, page numbers below will refer to the second edition: New York: Harper and Row, 1961); *Word and Object*. MIT Press, 1960; *The Ways of Paradox*. Harvard UP, 1966, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*. Columbia UP, 1969 and *The Philosophy of Logic*, Harvard UP, 1970. *The Time of My Life* (Harvard UP, 1986) is his autobiography.

Quine's relativism: theories are relative to one another
– *we always employ* whole *theories*
– *knowledge and existence are relative to the theory adopted*
– *theories can be compared but our choice between them will be according to practical considerations*

Quine advocated *epistemological* and *ontological relativity* (so our knowledge and our sense of 'what there is', 'what exists' is relative to something from the very start). For Quine what we may know and our sense of what *there is* (existence) is relative to the *theory* we employ when we want to know and decide about existence. No sentence can function outside of a system, a body, which is always already a theory, even when it is very simple. A sentence cannot function outside of a system because if it does, it has no meaning: it is the system (the "theory" itself) within which the sentence functions that gives the sentence meaning. We cannot get 'out of a theory' of some kind to gain knowledge and to decide 'what there is' and the whole theory will decide what counts as true or false knowledge and what there is or is not. We cannot decide truths of the world or nature from a foundation of e.g. clear and distinct ideas standing independently of a theory and we cannot count on sentences expressing 'primitive', 'basic' or 'elementary experiences' on which we can 'later on' build our theory: the 'clear and distinct ideas' or 'elementary experiences', 'primitives', etc. are always already *part* of a theory. This does not mean we are born with theories: we learn them from others when we learn to speak and behave (for Quine using L is a form of behaviour) but the understanding and the use of a sentence, the interpretation of experiences, etc. will immediately involve a whole range of other meaningful sentences and other experiences which are part of a system we may not grasp, as a whole, immediately but which is somehow 'around' the individual sentences, experiences, etc. we encounter.

Theory as a (rigid) system
Each and every sentence or experience we encounter is already a *part* of a whole; nothing can 'dangle' in thin air or in a vacuum, unrelated to others. Now if we apply a theory, no matter

how simple or complicated, to the world, the theory will decide both what there is and what we may know (so to speak: 'beforehand'); even that we are 'here' and 'there is the world' (i.e. our position *in* the world, our very relation *to* the world, i.e. where we envisage ourselves to be) is *part of* the theory. If we approach the world e.g. with the theory of modern physics or with a theory derived from mythology (e.g. a system about Homeric gods), then the respective theories will be the measure of what counts as a real being and what we may know with certainty. "Our acceptance of an ontology is […] similar to our acceptance of a scientific theory, say, a system of physics: we adopt, in so far as we are reasonable, the simplest conceptual scheme into which the disordered fragments of raw experience can be fitted and arranged". ("On What There Is", **FLPV,** p. 16). The success of the theory depends on its inner consistency and the feeling of our satisfaction as to how much has been explained (the explanatory power of the theory) and there is no independent and external *absolute* norm to which we could compare the theory to decide whether it is good or bad. The 'most certain', because the 'most manageable' for us seems to be to rely on distinguishing between various (material) objects around us, activated neural receptors, observe the behaviour of people as to their understanding of the sentences (e.g. I say: 'please, close the window' and if the Other does close the window, I assume she has understood the sentence) but

1. there is nothing *a priori* (knowledge before experience, knowledge before starting to get to know the world) on which I could rely to get to know the world
2. I will never have absolute evidence that the Other has understood my sentence
3. thus there is no guarantee that I am on the right track
4. thus a theory concerning Homeric gods is just as good to get to know the world as a theory based on quantum physics, depending on what we wish to achieve: there is no principled reason (no *a priori* consideration) which would suggest that e.g. relying on material objects is the best way to provide, in the external world, the 'backing up' for our establishing the truth of sentences and thus to understand them. We do use 'state of affairs', 'cases' made up of alleged material objects to decide about truth and, thus, about meaning, we do 'interrogate' reality by relying on what we experience (see, hear, etc.) but this is 'simply what we do'; there is nobody to tell us that this is the 'best way' or a good way at all. Definitely it is not a privileged way.

Quine's Homeric gods

As one of the most often quoted, to many philosophers shocking passages runs, containing Quine's famous "Homeric gods": "As an empiricist I continue to think of the conceptual scheme of science as a tool, ultimately, for predicting future experience in the light of past experience. Physical objects are conceptually imported into the situation as convenient intermediaries – not by definition in terms of experience, but simply as irreducible posits [something we hypothesise to exist] comparable, epistemologically, to the gods of Homer. For my part I do, qua [as] lay physicist, believe in physical objects and not in Homer's gods; and I consider it a scientific error to believe otherwise. But in point of epistemological footing [from the point of view of grounding epistemology in anything] the physical objects and the gods differ only in degree and not in kind [one is not 'more real' than the other from the point of view of knowledge, i.e. epistemology]. Both sorts of entities enter into our conception [conceptual filed, thinking] only as cultural posits. The myth of physical objects is epistemologically superior to most in that they can offer more efficacious [effective, successful] than other myths as a device for working a manageable structure about the flux of experience" ("Two Dogmas of Empiricism", **FLPV,** p. 45)

The impossibility of a 'neutral' standpoint

Suppose we rely on empiricism to lay the foundation of our method of investigation. Fine and good but our sensory receptors (eye, ear, etc.) are always already 'things' we identify (we assign a role to) on the basis of a theory where they serve as already a *part* of *that* theory.

Otherwise we could not identify e.g. our eyes as physical objects, as conveying information to our brain, as organs we can use while experiencing, etc. That when we start thinking we necessarily 'give ourselves over' to a theory remains hidden from us because we have to start somewhere and we treat the staring point as an isolated point of departure, so as something seemingly 'neutral', a sort of 'first primitive'. Yet we realise there is no real 'basis' which we could start from because if there were, and something could stand 'isolated', we could not proceed, we could not go on, since to proceed is to see connections. And how could we see the connections if items (elements, 'primitives', 'first principles', whatever) were not *related* to one another, i.e. if they did not form a system? But the system is not pre-established in the sense that somebody or something would have arranged it for us beforehand (as a lot of presents to be found under the Christmas tree before we go into the room on Christmas Eve – that would mean that there *is* something *a priori*): what we see *as* e.g. things in a certain order (as being connected 'so-and-so') in the world and the theory we apply come about 'at the same time'. The cardinal tenets of natural science are already themselves findings of natural science. Sensory receptors (our contact points with the external world) are themselves physical objects belonging to the ontology of natural science; the evidential relations are virtually enacted in us in the learning-process which is always learning a whole theory.

A (brief) discussion of Quine's relativity

To some extent, we are inevitably and indeed victims of an inherited world-view, various theories, these theories already 'deciding' what we will find. But, interestingly, theories cannot *totally* close down our scope of inquiry because then why would we proceed for something else, even for 'more', why would we devise new theories? Is it our uncertainty that urges us on? Or do we move within the same 'grand theory' from the beginnings of humankind and just rename items in this grand theory, this renaming giving us the impression that theories are different? Quine does not think that choosing one theory over the other would be a virtual step. He thinks that we take one theory rather than an other because the theory we have chosen is, first and foremost simpler, more 'practical' than the other while giving account of roughly the same amount of data: the theory chosen simply fits our purposes better, i.e. it is more suitable from a pragmatic point of view. So Quine does not say that we are 'locked up' in a theory. No, we are able to compare theories and discard this or that theory. But when we approach phenomena in the world to explain them, we make use of the *whole*, of the totality of the apparatus, even if we think we have applied this or that 'part' of it. Within the system of explanation (theory), there will always be tools we locate more centrally with respect and relative to the phenomena we are to explain but always the whole of the theory will be involved and that is to be evaluated, to be kept or discarded..

"On What There Is" (**FLPV,** pp. 1-19) Quine's essay originally from 1948, in the *Review of Metaphysics*)

The problem

Suppose that McX maintains there is an entity called 'Pegazus' and I say there is not. How can I deny the existence of something when, at least provisionally, I have to say that what I claim to be non-existent is an *entity* called Pegazus, so it 'exists' in some sense? In, at least provisionally, admitting that there is something I later on wish to deny the existence of, I seem to commit myself to McX's ontology and he may catch me in a self-contradiction: 'you have just *admitted* the existence of the thing you are talking about; true, in order to deny its existence but at least for a while you accepted its existence, so we shared an ontology'. This seems to put the one who *rejects* the existence of something in a predicament of eternal disadvantage: (s)he seems to be unable to discard a being as non-existent without self-contradiction, without *first admitting* that the *non-existent* entity, in some sense, *is*. "Nonbeing must in some sense be, otherwise what is there that there is not"? (pp. 1-2).

Solution 1: Pegazus as a mental idea

I can say that McX confuses Pegazus, the 'thing' with the 'idea of Pegazus': I am denying that the 'real' Pegazus exists and not that his 'idea' (his mental entity) exists (and for a while I, too, admitted that I also entertain Pegazus as a mental entity in my mind). The problem is that thus we reduce ontology to a division between the visible and the invisible: Pegazus as a piece of reality will *not exist* through the claim that no one has ever seen it (properly speaking: a token of it, an 'individual example of the quality of 'being Pegazus'). BUT:

1. there is no guarantee that one day someone (I, McX, somebody else) will not see one
2. there are lots of invisible things (right now and in principle) I would not like to give up the existence of (how about *the bread I am going to eat after the lecture*? or 'abstract entities' like *redness, extension, love, sin, friendship* etc.?)

So McX, my opponent can be subtler and claim that all invisible things, including Pegazus, exist on the grounds that they are 'unactualized possibles' (p. 3). Pegazus does not have the special attribute of actuality, my opponent says, or: 'it does not exist in space and time' as, say, a person exists (as a physical being and as we commonsensically talk about existence).

This ontology allowing 'unactualized possibles', Quine argues, will be a disorderly one simply because then we will not be able to tell how many things exist at all. Take, for instance, a possible *fat* man in the doorway. Then take a possible *bald* man in the doorway. Are they the same? Or are they different? How many *possible* men can there be in the doorway at the same time? If they are all unactualized, as many as I want (even in the same space and at the same time). And I will not be able to tell the difference and the sameness between them because if they are unactualized, the criterion of identity (whereby I distinguish between things) will not be applicable to them. Here Quine applies a criterion of *meaning*: I will not be able to talk about the unactualized possibles 'now in the doorway' *meaningfully* because I, envisaging them 'in the doorway' and 'being there now' and as 'being bald or fat etc.', am giving them some actuality (in fact identity). The universe containing unactualized entities will be an overpopulated one where neither the number of entities can be given (even in principle), nor will I be able to tell what something or somebody *is*: i.e. I cannot identify anybody as *this* or *that* and thus the idea of existence will become meaningless. (Please note that Kripke also operates with the concept of identity but he will deny that identity (on which existence depends) would in any way be an *attribute* of anything. For Kripke, not only existence is not a predicate but identity is not a predicate, either).

Solution 2: adopting the Fregean principle and Russell's theory

The Fregean principle

Quine tries to clarify the disagreement by claiming that differences over ontology is a difference in conceptual schemes and – without explicitly referring to it – he applies that Fregean principles which says that conceptual (epistemological) and ontological questions can be translated into *semantic* controversies over words. If we clarify how certain words in a natural L behave and what their role and function (meaning, grammar) is, we will get closer to the problem and we can decide about it. This does not mean – as it does not in Frege, either – that ontological problems would be *purely* linguistic in character. It is carefully observing what e.g. a *name* does as opposed to a *pronoun* and how they refer and what they refer to which will give us a clearer idea on ontology. The supposition is *not* that L will 'tell us' what there actually is. As Quine says: talking about Naples, or calling a city Naples is different from seeing Naples; *seeing* Naples is not a linguistic act (or just in a very roundabout way, as much as anything else we do). The supposition is that our ontological puzzles and pitfalls occur because we treat L as a neutral tool: we misunderstand the nature and the categories of L; the 'surface' grammatical structures of a natural L hides some important distinctions we should make (hence the name 'analytic philosophy': philosophising starts with analysing structures and meanings in L).

The application of Russell's theory

Quine applies Russell's (already studied: see **Lecture 2**) theory of descriptions (which Quine calls 'the theory of singular descriptions') to resolve the controversy with McX. Russell shows how we can meaningfully use seeming names without supposing that there are entities 'behind them'. Such descriptions as 'the present King of France' or: 'the author of *Wawerly*' [i.e. in fact Sir Walter Scott] or: 'the winged horse that was captured by Bellerophon' [i. e. in fact Pegazus] are treated as fragments of the whole sentence in which they occur. E. g. the sentence "The author of *Wawerly* was a poet" as a whole will be explained as meaning: 'Something (or: somebody, but, strictly speaking, we do not yet know we are in pursuit of a person) wrote *Wawerly*, and was a poet, and nothing else wrote *Wawerly*' (the third clause is there to show uniqueness, expressed in the original phrase by the definite article *the*). The descriptive phrase "the author of Wawerly" demands the burden of reference: we would 'naturally' look for a person, object (referent, Frege's Beduetung) 'behind' it (this is what McX does, too), whereas in the translation: 'Someone wrote *Wawerly* and was a poet and nothing else wrote *Wawerly*' the burden of objective reference (reference to an object, Bedeutung) is taken over by 'someone' but 'someone' is *not a name* but what logicians call a *variable* (a bound variable of quantification, to be precise. See the 'X' in **Lecture 2** when Russell is discussed). Such variables are: *something, nothing, everything* etc., they are called general pronouns in natural-L grammars. Variables are not names (and they are especially not names specifically of the author of *Wawerly*); these variables are meaningful and they refer to entities *generally*, with – as Quine admits – "a kind of studied ambiguity peculiar to themselves" (i.e. he admits they are ambiguous according to their nature but this is their role in L and this ambiguity can be checked, controlled since this is what we expect from them). "The author of *Wawerly* is not" is translated as: "Either each thing failed to write *Wawerly*, or two or more things wrote *Wawerly*". In the case of Pegazus, we make a description out of the name, e. g. (see above): "the winged horse that was captured by Bellerophon", and then we translate using bound variables: "Bellerophon captured something and that something has wings and nothing else was captured by Bellerophon and nothing else has wings". *Pegazus is not* becomes: "Either each thing failed to have been captured by Bellerophon and to have wings, or two or more things were captured by Bellerophon and have wings". Now the point is that I no longer quarrel with McX about *entities* but about *the truth of statements*: "each thing failed to have been captured by Bellerophon, each thing failed to have wings; two or more things were captured by Bellerophon; two or more things have wings". Depending on our theories, McX and I can treat these sentences as true or false (e.g. "Either each thing failed to write *Wawerly*, or two or more things wrote *Wawerly*" will, in our world, be false, since in fact Sir Walter Scott did write *Wawerly*) but this procedure will show that we are no longer hunting down entities, we do not have to treat them as 'unactualized possibles' but we make clear that we are stating sentences corresponding to facts (state-of-affairs, objects already in a certain arrangement) against the background of a certain world. If in our ordinary world it is true that some horses have wings (if our world, *in general*, admits horses having wings) and if our world allows that such a horse was captured by Bellerophon (whom we can also give in a description, of course) then we can say that Pegazus *is* (exists, there is Pegazus). But existence will become a matter of truth and falsity, not a matter of imagination or positing or attributing existence (By the way: our imagination need not necessarily result in untruth, e.g. I can imagine that right now in New York there is a pigeon sitting on the arm of the Liberty Monument and this may happen to be true).

The difference between naming and meaning and what 'really' exists

The moral of the story above is that there is a difference between *naming* and *meaning*: some names may not be significant. And thus we can distinguish between the *meaning* of the word Pegazus and the alleged *object* named Pegazus.

Thus Quine claims that the *only* way in which we can involve ourselves in ontological commitments is by our *use of bound variables*. This is tantamount to saying that nothing else exists but what falls within the referents of general pronouns such as *something, anything* and the like. (Quine said about them that "they refer to entities generally" and "with a studied kind of ambiguity" (**FLPV** p. 6). Does that mean that whatever exists, it exists generally and ambiguously, even if it is a 'checked ambiguity'? Quine will lean towards this view). The use of alleged names is not a criterion of existence; whatever we can say with the help of names can be said in a L which does not use names at all. So *to be*, according to Quine, *is to be in the range of reference of a pronoun.* "Pronouns are the basic media of reference; nouns might better have been named propronouns" (**FLPV**, p. 13) [i.e. it is not the case that *pro*nouns are, as their Latin name suggests, standing *for* nouns but pronouns are standing for nouns, thus pronouns are in fact *pro*-pro('for-for')nouns]. "The variables of quantification, 'something', 'nothing', 'everything', range over our whole ontology, whatever it may be; and we are convicted of a particular ontological presupposition if, and only if, the alleged presupposition has to be reckoned among the entities over which our variables range in order to render one of our affirmations true" (p. 13). We may, e.g. say that *some actors are talented* without committing ourselves to recognising (committing ourselves to the ontological conviction that there is) either 'actorhood' or 'talentedness' as entities. *Some actors are talented* means that some persons ('things, entities') that are actors are talented. In order that this statement to be true, the persons (the set/class) of persons over which the bound variable 'somebody' ('something') ranges must include some talented actor, but need not include 'actorhood' or 'talentedness'.

"Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (Quine's essay originally in the *Philosophical Review* in January, 1951, **FLPV,** pp. 20-46)

This essay is a classic like Frege's 'Über Sinn und Bedeutung" or Russell's "On Denoting". The 'two dogmas' were the ones held especially by the members of the Vienna Circle: (1) there is a fundamental difference between *analytic* truths (grounded in meaning independently of matters of fact) and *synthetic* truths (grounded in matters of fact of the world); (2) verificationism (which Quine calls here 'reductionism'): each meaningful sentence is equivalent to some logical construct (i.e. natural L sentences can be fully translated into logical propositions containing logical terms) and the terms of the logical construct (proposition, 'sentence') refer directly to *immediate* experince. Quine will 'deconstruct' both 'dogmas' on the grounds that meanings, once they rely on truth-value and thus on 'evidence' from the external world, are *indeterminate* and *underdetermined*: there is never enough data from the outside world to back up the content of a sentence completely. The essay shocked analytic philosophical circles because it was realised that if Quine is right, the foundation on which logical positivism was erected collapses.

A priori and a posteriori; analytic and synthetic truths

The essay starts with the characterisation of analytic and synthetic statements. Since Kant, it has been customary to distinguish between *a priori* knowledge: this is supposed to be true knowledge gained independently of experince, e.g. it is enough to know the meaning of the words and be familiar with the structure of the sentence to know that the sentences: *The brown table is brown,* or : *Aristotle is Aristotle*, or: *It is either raining, or not raining* are true ('in themselves'): these are so-called *analytic truths*. We know that these sentences are true *a priori*. Yet these sentences do not convey any information about the world (about 'what the case is' or 'state-of-affairs' in the world) yet they are necessarily true, i.e. true under all circumstances (in all possible worlds), they are tautologies. All mathematical and geometrical truths have for a long time been considered to be *a priori* truths (but Kant thought there is *a priori* knowledge which is *not* tautologous, but we will not go into that here). As opposed to *a*

priori truth, there have been, again since Kant, sentences recognised as expressing *a posteriori* knowledge, i. e. knowledge gained through experience (the five sensory organs). A sentence describes a situation (a state of affairs) and then it is to be *verified*: one checks, with his or her sensory organs, whether that state of affairs really obtains in the world or not (whether that happens to be the case or not), i.e. whether the sentence is true or not: e.g. *It is raining now. The table in front of me is brown. Aristotle was the pupil of Plato.* These are sentences conveying information about the world, and their truth-value is thus relative to the world and our perception ('positive' [confirmed] experience).

The indeterminacy of meaning

It is arguing with the help of the indeterminacy of meaning that Quine challenges analicity. It is analytically true that e.g. *Unmarried men are unmarried men.* or *Bachelors are bachelors.* But there is another type of analycity, e.g. *Bachelors are unmarried men* where one of the terms is supposed to be a *cognitive* (and not 'poetic') synonym of the other (Quine explicitly says: "Now let us be clear that we are not concerned here with synonymy in the sense of complete identity in psychological associations or poetic quality; indeed no two expressions are synonymous in such a sense" (**FLPV,** p. 28)). But then analycity is founded on synonymity in *language* and even if we talk about cognitive synonymy, we make our analycity (our *necessary* truths) depend on meanings in language. But meanings, also in the cognitive sense, keep changing, so not even definitions (made up of words, of course) will be able to preserve the *necessary* quality of analytic truths. Moreover, and even more seriously, we know that two linguistic items are synonymous by making an appeal to analyticity: two terms are synonymous if we can change one for the other (e.g. *bachelor* for *unmarried man* and vice versa) without changing the truth and the meaning of the sentence (i.e. they are exchangeable *salva veritate*). But how do we know the two sentences are true? Because the two terms are synonymous. The definition of analycity is based on linguistic synonymy and synonymy on analycity. Quine claims that this is not a complete case of circular argumentation because we can check synonymity by appeal to the behaviour people when they hear the two terms (e.g. *unmarried man* and *bachelor*) and that is some 'external evidence' with respect to meanings. But behaviour as a test is also indeterminate (and underdetermined) with respect to meanings: the behaviour of people also consists of signs to be interpreted, so we may any time go wrong in our interpretation of human behaviour. Besides (this is my addition), it is very hard to judge the synonymity in terms of behaviour when it comes to words meaning such abstract 'concepts' as *love, affection, charity, infatuation* and the like. We do not have the sufficient amount of certainty to claim *necessity* ('necessarily true') in the logical sense for analytic statements. Quine claims that we cannot treat synonymity as a purely semantic rule of a L (which would have nothing to do with the external world): the factual content of the sentence (the 'fact of the world' grasped in the sentence) will inevitably play a role, too: something of syntheticity (the *a posteriori*) will come into the picture whether we like it or not. We should abandon the view that there are single sentences, each sentence corresponding to some empirical data which will individually 'verify it'. It is here that the idea of system and theory comes in: truth is established, *never* to a 100%, by comparing whole linguistic and other semantic (meaningful) systems to the world. No sentence, even in a scientific theory, is immune to revision: this means that one or some of the sentences in the system/theory may prove to be false or nonsensical but this will not result in the total collapse of the theory; the sentences in question will be adjusted and re-adjusted but always with respect to the other sentences of the system/theory; the whole system will put the false or nonsensical sentences 'right'. [8]

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[8] Those interested might also like to have a look at: H. P. Grice and P. F. Strawson, "In Defense of a Dogma," an answer to Quine (*The Philosophical Review* (1956)). Strawson and

The Problem of Meaning in Linguistics (originally a lecture at Ann Arbor, in August, 1951)**,** in **FLPV,** pp. 47-64.

The indeterminacy of translation

 Much of what Quine says here is no longer valid because he of course examines the linguistic model of the time when the lecture was given and e.g. Chomsky started to have an effect on linguistics only from the early 1960s. Quine evaluates the so-called 'descriptivist' model of American linguistics (based on Bloomfield, Bloch, Trager, etc.). But here Quine introduces his later favourite idea about the *indeterminacy of translation.* Suppose that a linguist has to describe the L of a hitherto unknown tribe. There are excellent methods to do this. Yet no method will be able to tell the linguist whether a member of the tribe calling out 'Gavagai' and pointing to a rabbit will actually mean: 'This is a rabbit' or 'Here runs a rabbit', or 'I want to catch that rabbit for dinner!' or: 'How long the ears of the rabbit are!' etc. With the careful comparison of other sentences containing (this way, or in one form or another) *Gavagai* with the original 'Gavagai', I can of course clarify the meaning better and better but there will always be *another* and an *equally legitimate way* to translate any sentence of any L into the sentences of another L. If we define meaning as 'that content which remains unchanged when we translate from one L to another', we precisely *confirm* that translation is indeterminate, since each sentence will have several possible and valid translations and they may even contradict one another (to *some* extent at least). Quine does not claim that we 'cannot translate' or 'there is no meaning'. He claims that with respect to meaning (the description of meaning, paraphrase, interpretation, etc.) there will remain an uncertain residue; in meaning, some elements *will* be in focus, while other items will remain blurred and obscure: meaning will never be totally unambiguous and sharp especially because *no* empirical data (information we gain from the external world, through observing others' behaviour etc.) will

- ever condition, in an absolutely straightforward way, anybody to use this or that expression
- ever be in *absolute* correspondence with the linguistic items (words, sentences, etc.) in question.

There is no language which could determine its own ontology, i.e. determine totally to what its terms refer. Words, sentences, etc. refer 'roughly': this is very much the Frege-Strawson-Searle line, as opposed, almost totally, to Kripke's.

Chapter 6. Donald Davidson: Truth and Meaning

Davidson's significance

Donald Davidson (1917-2003) is one of the most influential American philosophers after Quine and Kripke, also outside of the USA. In 1939, the year of his graduation from Harvard, Davidson met Quine, which resulted in a life-long friendship and Davidson giving up his

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Grice argue not so much against the indeterminacy of meaning – their position was close to that and they were far from logical positivism. They rather thought Quine was attacking a 'strawman' (so his criticism was trivial), since the analytic-synthetic distinction – precisely *within* a theory, namely logical positivism – had very clear meanings and those adhering to the theory of logical positivism could make very good and practical use of them. Thus it was not a "dogma" but *analytic* and *synthetic* were technical terms without which no philosophy can function. The same indeterminacy applies to *all* philosophical terms (like *fact, truth,* etc.), so Quine's attack was unjust and against tenets of his own.

career in literature and the classics (especially Plato) and turning to problems of ethics and logic. They often read and criticised each other's work before publication and though they agreed on basic metaphysical tenets, they worked in related but basically different fields of analytic philosophy and they often disagreed. (Quine considered Davidson his best and most original student ever and Davidson often said at the beginning of a lecture that 'all he knows he learnt from Quine'). Davidson worked and taught at Queen's College New York, then at Stanford (1951-1967), Princeton (1967-1970), Rockefeller (1970-1976), the University of Chicago (1976-1981) and from 1981 until his death at the University of California, Berkeley. All his books are collections of essays and he did not publish, as an average, more than one or two (relatively short, tersely composed) papers per year but almost all of them have become classic pieces offering significant contributions to widely-debated topics. His most important three collections are *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 2001), *Inquiries into Truth an Interpretation* (2nd ed., same publisher and year) and *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (1st ed., same publisher and year). As the titles indicate, he worked on problems of agency and action (ethics), knowledge (epistemology), eminently on the problem of meaning and truth (the philosophy of language) and the subjectivity-objectivity problem (the 'mental' versus the 'physical', the philosophy of mind). His theory on *metaphor* is also very significant, that will be the subject-matter (with other theories of metaphor) of Lecture 10.

Davidson arrived, in the early 60s on the philosophical scene when in analytic philosophy linguistic meaning was placed central stage while being in urgent demand for *a systematic theory of meaning*. Related to the general problem of meaning, the question of reference (especially of names) was the number one issue (cf. Lectures 1-4) and though that was a relatively richly elaborated area of semantics (of linguistic semantics based on symbolic/formal logic – often called 'formal semantics' – it is still the most well-worked out field), philosophers (and, from the 70s, linguists) were very much in need of a comprehensive semantic theory (see further below). Davidson provided the framework of precisely such a theory

– defining what a theory of meaning for a L could be at all
– how such a theory should be constructed,
– what kind of evidence is sufficient for its acceptance and
– what philosophical (metaphysical, ontological and epistemological) implications this acceptance involves

this, in general, are the demands towards a theory of meaning.

Davidson relied on the work of the Polish logician, Alfred Tarski,[9] who was trying to provide interpretations of different *formal* languages, e.g. the L of logic; it is important to note that Tarski says as early as his introduction that with respect to "everyday L" (which he also calls "colloquial language"), not only the definition of the concept of truth is totally hopeless but the consistent use of the concept of truth, in harmony with the laws of logic, is impossible, too. In the middle of "Truth and Meaning" Davidson quotes Tarski's pessimistic remarks about natural Ls being – in Davidson's words – perhaps "too confused and amorphous to permit the direct application of formal methods" (p. 228). In natural Ls we do encounter semantic paradoxes because of the ambiguities of the terms. Yet Davidson was precisely after meaning in *natural* Ls such as English but he did not wish to "reform" natural Ls to make them capable of semantic description, nor did he wish to define truth with the help of e.g.

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[9] See especially his "The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages", In *Logic, Semantics, Meta-Mathematics*, trans. by J. H. Woodger, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956 (2nd ed. 1983) first in Polish in 1933 In Hungarian: "Az igazság fogalma a formalizált nyelvekben", ford. Máté András és Ruzsa Imre, In Tarski: *Bizonyítás és igazság,* szerk. Ruzsa Imre, Budapest: Gondolat, 1990, pp. 55-244.

English; he wanted to define *meaning* by *relying* on the intuitive human notion (concept) of truth.

"Truth and Meaning" (originally in *Synthese,*17, pp. 304-323, 1967)[10]
The task and the emergence of linguistic semantics
Davidson assumes
−   that speakers of a L can effectively determine (tell, paraphrase) the meaning or meanings of any of the expressions in their L
the task is:
−   to show how this is possible.
To give an account of what has become known as "semantic competence", the semantic theory will have to rely on something which is not only the ability of this or that individual speaker (we are not interested in the 'idiolect' of a highly competent speaker, e.g. a gifted poet who regularly uses rarely used expressions, or coins such expressions herself), or of speakers of this or that L (e.g. a speaker of Hungarian or English) but on something which applies to all speakers of any of the Ls of the world. In other words our semantic theory should be universal enough. Davidson – prompted by work done in logic, especially by Frege and Tarski – finds the foundation on which a theory of meaning can be based in human beings being able to tell whether something is true or not. Thus, Davidson assumes that a normal human being is capable of applying her or his notion of truth to events, situations, etc, in the world (in 'reality'); i.e. he or she is capable of telling (deciding) whether a sentence characterises a situation, event, etc. correctly or not. (Where this ability comes from is another matter). Truth seems to be 'universal' enough to serve as the basis of a semantic theory and Davidson does not see any other alternative.

It is clear that in an article only the basic principle can be given and attempts can be made at its justification; it is also clear that only some very small *segments* (portions, parts) of a natural L (here English) can be semantically described and even that in a rather sketchy way. To describe the various meanings of all phenomena occurring even in one natural L is an enormous task, therefore it is customary that linguists spend a life-time describing one phenomenon, they deal with e.g. the semantics of negation, imperatives, counter-factuals, etc., the phenomenon often identified through certain, more tangible syntactic properties. The problem is that through the detailed description of a phenomenon in L, the theory employed often undergoes certain changes as well and it is a further task to harmonise the various approaches employed by linguists. To see this clearly, it is instructive to quote what difficulties Davidson, at the end of his article in 1967, thinks his semantic theory will have to face: "we do not know the logical form of counterfactuals or subjunctive sentences, nor of sentences about probabilities and about causal relations; we have no good idea what the logical role of adverbs is, nor the role of attributive adjectives; we have no theory for mass terms like 'fire', 'water', and 'snow'; nor for sentences about belief, perception, and intention, nor for verbs of action that imply purpose. And finally there are all the sentences that seem not to have truth values at all: imperatives, optatives, interrogatives, and a host more. A comprehensive theory of meaning for a natural language must cope successfully with each of these problems". (p. 232). This looks a frightening list but in the past 40 years much has been done to remedy the situation (not necessarily on the basis of Davidson's theory, of course). It is also clear that Davidson sees linguistic semantics (the semantics of natural Ls, formal semantics) as growing out of syntax and logic (philosophy). In the article in a footnote Davidson hopefully refers to the possible future co-operation between "transformational

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[10] Here references are to the following edition: Steven Davis and Brendan Gillon, *Semantics: A Reader*, Oxford: OUP, 2004, pp. 222-233.

grammar" (Chomsky) and "formal semantic methods", p. 233). As to e.g. counter-factuals, probability, causal relations, belief, perception, intention etc.: these are age-old problems in philosophy, too. The systematic semantic description of a natural L based not on ad-hoc but rigorous and consistent principles that can be checked by everyone cannot be isolated from logic (philosophy) not only because the first theoreticians (e.g. the philosopher Davidson) recommended – precisely for the sake of rigour – the semantics of *formalised* languages (such as logic) to serve as the basis of semantic descriptions of *natural* languages but also because, in their own way, philosophers, even from the earliest times, often encountered *semantic* problems in L in their genuinely *philosophical* endeavours. After all, Frege wished to solve the riddle of mathematical-philosophical identity (a=a, a=b) and ended up analysing sentences like *Odysseus fast asleep was put to shore in Ithaca* (and please see further in Lectures 1-5). From Frege on, in circles of Analytic philosophy, under the influence of thinkers like Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, Rudolf Carnap, Gilbert Ryle, Ludwig Wittgenstein, John Wisdom, J. L. Austin, Geoffrey Warnock, John Searle, H. P. Grice, Peter Strawson, Elizabeth Anscombe, Peter Geach, Max Black, Hillary Putnam, Gareth Evans and many others, lots of philosophers were expecting solutions to their *philosophical* problems from the careful analysis of meanings in natural languages and to a greater or lesser extent making (informal) use of the findings in logic. So, around the late 60s, early 70s, emerging linguistic semantics, logic, together with the philosophy of language, and British-American "ordinary language philosophy" shook hands, *all* parties extending their hands at the same time (but of course also hotly debating the precise subject-matter and methods of semantics).[11] What follows is *my interpretation* of Davidson's article, trying to make a difficult text as transparent as possible, while of course also wishing to remain faithful to his basic ideas.

Solution 1: staring form the referent (the truth value) *of sentences*

One possibility is to follow Frege's example and separate meaning and referent (Sinn and Bedeutung, in Rudolf Carnap's terminology widely used in contemporary semantics: **intension** [meaning, Sinn, intenzió] and **extension** [referent, Bedeutung, extenzió]). But for Frege, *what* sentences refer to is not a 'case/situation' or 'description of a state of affairs' (or only in a very roundabout way, namely when we *have to involve some 'piece' of reality* in order to *decide* whether the sentence is true or not). For Frege the referent of a sentence is its truth-value *itself:* a quasi-Platonic entity: 'The True' or 'The False' (see Lecture 2). But this way, Davidson argues, we must say that all true sentences, having the *same* value (namely: Truth, or 'The True', or 'Falsity', or 'The False') are, in one way or another, synonymous. Now this is surely intolerable at least in a semantic description of natural Ls: we do not wish to say that e.g. *Snow is white* and *Grass is green* are synonymous in any way, only on account that they are both true. (Of course, snow *can* become filthy if it has been on the ground for a long time and grass *can* turn yellow if it is scorched by the sun – but this only shows that 'reality', in the description of the meanings of sentences, should be taken into consideration in a more complex and refined way).

Solution 2: starting form the meaning (Sinn) *of sentences*

We start out with the formula: 'S(entence) means M(eaning)', where S is replaced by the structural description of the sentence (the 'syntax' of the sentence) and M is "replaced by a singular term that refers to the meaning of the sentence" (p. 224). (Here Davidson's use of the word "refers" sounds confusing, since this use *does* involve a theory of reference. Moreover,

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[11] For example, at the University of California, Santa Cruz, linguistic semanticists and philosophers have their meetings together and, since in the past decade the borderline between syntax and semantics has also become less sharp, even those working on syntactic problems are present. It is, on the other hand, sad that practically nowhere in the world linguistic semanticists (not to mention those dealing with syntax) and people dealing with literature speak professionally to one another.

it is not clear what he means by "singular term", but he is abandoning this solution anyway). So suppose, Davidson argues, that "we have a satisfactory theory of syntax for our language, consisting of an effective method of telling, for an arbitrary expression, whether it is independently meaningful (i.e. a sentence)[12], and assume as usual that this involves each sentence as composed, in allowable ways, out of elements drawn form a finite stock of atomic syntactical elements (roughly words)". Davidson puts this proposal forward to admit himself that "knowledge that of the structural characteristics that make for meaningfulness in a sentence, plus knowledge of the meanings of the ultimate parts, does not add up to knowledge of what a sentence means" (p. 224). So Davidson seems to me to say that *even if* we had a "pure" syntactical (structural) description of sentences telling us not *what* the sentences mean but whether they are meaningful *at all* + we had a dictionary (a 'lexicon') that would give us the meaning of the individual 'words' (Davidson says "ultimate parts"), we would not be able to tell what the sentences mean. ("Ultimate part" is of course problematic, perhaps the term 'morpheme' would be more appropriate but Davidson nowhere uses it. Further, there are phrases (idioms) like e.g. *kick the bucket*, which may mean 'die' but that meaning is given by the *whole* of the phrase, so either such phrases are "ultimate parts" as well, or they just prove what Davidson wishes to claim, namely that the meaning of a structured unit of L (sentence, phrase, whatever) cannot be foretold on the basis of knowing its structure + the meaning of the individual words making it up. This is of course further complicated by the fact that *kick the bucket* may mean *literally* what it 'says', namely that (a person) kicked (with his foot) a bucket (e.g. full of milk in the cowshed). But Davidson does not dismiss the idea of '*grammar (syntax) + words (lexicon, 'dictionary entries') giving the meaning of sentences*' on grounds of phrases like *kick the bucket, take it with a pinch of salt* ('be cautious when you consider this or that')*, go to hell* ('vanish' — or should that be taken literally?) etc., but on grounds of so-called 'belief-sentences' (a phenomenon also noticed already by Frege, see Lecture 2): *The Earth is flat* is false (according to our present-day *knowledge*, but please note that this already involves 'knowing something about reality'). However, *John believes that the Earth is flat* might be true or false and neither the syntax of the sentence, nor the individual semantic 'description' of the individual words (i.e. the giving of the 'content' of each word from a dictionary) will be able to tell me whether *John believes that the Earth is flat* is true or not. The problematic element is of course *believe* but even if I give the meaning (the 'dictionary entry') of this unit as, e.g. 'entertains the idea, rightly or wrongly', this will not tell me what *John* believes, i.e. whether *he* entertains this idea or not. I could treat the 'belief of John' as a 'piece of reality' and perhaps could apply behaviouristic 'tests' (showing attitudes of John with respect to the flatness of the Earth) to find out what John *actually* believes but no dictionary (lexicon) will tell me what John happens to believe (it is hard to imagine a dictionary where the meaning of words like *believe, know, think* etc. are 'tied' to each person in the Subject position). It is a further complication that dictionaries also contain *syntactic* information about words, e.g. that they are *verbs* or *nouns* etc., and sometimes that contributes to their disambiguation (cf. *bear*: Noun [=the animal], as in *The bear ate the honey*; and *bear*: Verb [=to carry, tolerate, etc.], as in *I cannot bear this burden.*)

Solution 3: Davidson's proposal

The theory will do its work if it provides for each sentence *S* in the L a *matching sentence that gives the meaning of S*. In other words, we have to give the *translation* of S (in the L we are describing, e.g. English–> English or in another L, e.g. English–>Hungarian, etc.) So

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[12] Davidson claims: "The main job of a modest syntax is to characterize *meaningfulness* (or sentencehood)" (p. 224, emphasis original).

Davidson relies on Quine's *radical translation theory* (which he will rather call the theory of *radical interpretation*). The formula requiring this translation will be:
(T) *S* is *T* iff (if and only if = biconditional) *P*

e.g. 'Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white,
or e.g.: 'Snow is white' is true if and only if *a hó fehér*[13]
or e.g.: '*A hó fehér*' is true if and only if snow is white.
or e.g.: 'Schnee ist weiss' is true if and only if snow is white.[14] etc.
So *S* is occupied by a sentence of the object language and what replaces *P* is treated extensionally, i. e. we say: the sentence in the object L is true if and only if it happens to be the case in 'the real world' that snow is white. We have made use only of two logical categories: one is the (intuitive notion of) truth supposed to be present in all representatives of humanity and the logical operation of the biconditional which is supposed to put a (radical) constraint on the theory. The constraint is the set of the *conditions* of truth for the sentence. "To know the semantic concept of truth for a language is to know what it is for a sentence – any sentence – to be true, and this amounts to, in one good sense we can give to the phrase, to understanding the language" (p. 226). Please note that relying on truth conditions involves the 'reference' (extension) of sentences: we in fact 'translate' sentences to the external ('worldly', 'physical') circumstances that are sufficient to make them true. This way, the theory is rather an 'empirical theory': 'Snow is white' *is* true if and only if snow is (happens to be) white. Now this sounds trivial enough yet Davidson celebrates his theory precisely because "the theory reveals nothing new about the conditions under which the an individual sentence is true" and "it does not make those conditions any clearer than the sentence itself does" (p. 226). But then what is its merit? While giving the known truth conditions of each sentence, we have to realise that the words making up the sentence recur in *other* sentences, too. Through the external truth conditions, slowly an systematically, all the words of the L (contained in sentences) will get interpreted and thus only in the context of *language* will a sentence (and, thus, a word) have meaning (this is following in Quine's footsteps: only a system as a *whole* will assign interpretation to anything, only with respect to a theory will anything make sense, see Lecture 5 and further below at the Principle of Charity and the coherence theory of truth).

Possible counter-arguments
A fundamental question is: to what extent should what stands in the place of S and the place of P be related? How do I know that a piece of L (e.g. "Snow is white" as now uttered by me) is, in any way, *related* to a piece of reality e.g. the states of affairs in the external world which, through (physical) perception or otherwise, 'tell me' ('testify to the fact' that 'here, there is snow and it is white'? The answer is that the Davidsonian theory does not *explain* our ability to use L but it *models* our already acquired ability to use a L. It would be possible to construct a theory of meaning where e.g. the truth conditions of the sentence "Snow is white" is given thus:
'Snow is white' is true if and only if grass is green
on the grounds that grass *is* indeed green, so it is also a true fact of the world. The 'content' of S and P need not be related in any way; one could indeed devise a theory where the only requirement is that whatever fills the P position should be a true fact of the world. So we could also have: *'Snow is white' is true if and only if the person writing these lines is called Géza Kállay*, *'Snow is white' is true if and only if Barack Obama is a candidate for Presidential elections this year in the United States,* so only the truth-value would count. But

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[13] For those not speaking Hungarian: the Hungarian sentence 'a hó fehér' means in English 'snow is white'
[14] The German sentence *Schnee ist weiss* means in English: 'snow is white'.

this is precisely the proposal Davidson excluded in Solution 1: a semantic theory cannot just be based on true facts of the world that are unrelated to the content of the sentences (the content of S) in the object L (in the L we wish to describe semantically) because the mere concept of (any) truth does not exhaust the meaning of a sentence. This becomes clear if we imagine a speaker who has any doubts about the colour of snow or grass (or about who is writing these lines, or about who are running for the Presidential position in the US this year, etc.).

The Principle of Charity

Or imagine a situation where – as Quine's example ran – the object L is that of an alien tribe and a linguist is trying to describe the meaning of the sentences in the alien L (the e.g. English-speaking linguist is in fact translating the alien L into English). The linguist will try to "construct a characterisation of truth-for-the alien which yields, so far as possible, a mapping of sentences held true (or false) by the alien onto [English] sentences held true (or false) by the linguist" (p. 227). The linguist will find that (s)he is caught in the web of what Quine called 'radical translation': there will never be absolute guarantee that the mapping is successful and the linguist will be unable to separate what the alien means from what the alien believes. "We do not know what someone means unless we know what he believes; we do not know what someone believes unless we know what he means" (p. 227). "There may in the nature of the case always be something we grasp in understanding the language of another (the concept of truth) that we cannot communicate to him" (p. 228). The linguist will apply what Davidson calls the "principle of (maximal/optimal) charity (of understanding/interpretation)": the linguist will do everything to bring the meanings and beliefs of the alien as close to his/her [=the linguist's] own meanings and beliefs as possible; the linguist will try to 'explain' the meaning, the behaviour etc, of the alien with respect to facts as benevolently as (s)he can, even with a fair amount of 'idealisation': "we maximise the self-consistency we attribute to [the alien]" (p. 227). 'Surely, the alien meant/must have meant this' – the linguist will keep saying to him/herself, trying to find as much evidence as possible. The Principle of Charity is something we apply, also in speech communities speaking the *same* L, to one another all the time, otherwise we could hardly communicate; we – unless we are e.g. in a court-room questioning a witness as lawyers of the prosecution etc. – usually aim at an optimal 'reconstruction' of the meaning(s) of the Other's utterances. This, of course, is not that easy: obviously, there is a difference between understanding the *sentences* of another person and understanding the *other person*. One seems to be capable of understanding someone even though (s)he does not understand the Other's sentences (especially when the Other is not talking at all) and one can understand the sentences of the Other but be incapable of understanding *him* or *her*. Think, for example, of the following, thoroughly valid possible objection/claim to an interpretation: "But I really do not like that you see negative things in my utterances, which I did not want to put in". If this claim is true, the interpreter can only apologise profoundly.

The advantages of the theory: extending it to evaluative sentences

Frege and Tarski made massive contribution to the semantics of everyday L (natural Ls) by working out a formal theory (a theory in logic) to handle natural L sentences containing pronouns like *all, every, each, none* etc. (cf. the appreciation of this by Quine, in connection with Russell; Quine claimed that such pronouns are our ontological categories, too: what exists, what 'there is' for us can be characterised through such general pronouns; when we relate to the world through L we 'quantify' over beings (things, persons) in this manner, see Lecture 5).

But how about so-called evaluative sentences (sentences often encountered e.g. in ethics or aesthetics but of course in everyday parlance, too), such as *Al Pacino is a good actor* or *Stealing from another person is deplorable* ? *Al Pacino is a good actor* cannot be translated as

Al Pacino is an actor and he is good and how do we establish the truth value of an evaluative sentence (involving emotions, private taste, etc.) at all? To say, as the formula goes: '*Al Pacino is a good actor* is true if and only if Al Pacino is a good actor' will lead us nowhere because for some people the fact that Al Pacino is a good actor is not like grass being green or snow being white. Here Davidson suggests that we remind ourselves that truth is not only truth with respect to the external world (the correspondence theory of truth: sentences should be true with respect to the world, i.e. they should represent facts of the world truthfully) but also with respect to other sentences in the L and used by the speaker in question. In cases of evaluative sentences we compare the evaluative sentence – as in the case of the alien – to other sentences used by the speaker (even to the beliefs of the speaker, if we have access to them) and we require consistency: we assume that the speaker uses his/her sentences 'in harmony' with other sentences from the point of view of truth, i.e. the speaker will not contradict him- or herself, at least not all the time (the coherence theory of truth: at least within certain sub-systems within the whole system, the truth-value of sentences should not be contradictory with respect to the truth-value of their own and of certain other sentences, e.g. that 'follow' from them[15]). This is nothing else but applying the Principle of Charity again. If the person says *Al Pacino is a good actor* but with the same breath he says *Al Pacino is a bad actor* then we may suppose he does not know the meaning of the terms he uses (and not only because we ourselves believe that Al Pacino is 'in fact' a good actor)[16]. To make this clearer: formalised Ls such as logic describe the world assuming that the truth of the sentence (statement, proposition) is somehow 'God's truth'; Frege was very honest with his Platonic proposal that the referent of each true sentence should be 'The True': he wished to make this fact about logic obvious. In everyday L we use 'in fact', 'obvious(ly)', 'clear(ly)', 'is true', 'is dubious', etc. far more loosely (informally); 'behind' sentences there is are always 'us', living human beings with true or false or mostly confused beliefs. So the question rather is: to what extent do we make our (confused) beliefs play a role in the description of the meaning of sentences? Davidson found it a good idea to make use of the 'objectivity' of logic in the interpretation of sentences because he – please see above – was not after the meanings of this or that individual speaker (having this or that belief, etc.): he assumed that sentences in a L can be treated, for a semantic description, 'in isolation' and 'objectively' precisely to the extent the speakers of a community *agree with respect to the truth* of at least *some* sentences, i.e. to the extent they hold *some* sentences to be true (from which they gain or 'generate' their concept of truth), to the extent they *share* beliefs. An other formulation of the Principle of Charity could be: 'people (I, anybody) can be wrong but not *all the time*': A speaker knows the meaning of *Al Pacino is a good actor* not by virtue of necessarily believing that Al Pacino is a good actor but by virtue of being able to characterise Al Pacino and others as actors and holding some of them to be good or bad actors, i.e. knowing what it *means* for at least some people to be good actors, knowing under what circumstances we can apply the predicate *is a good actor* to someone. And knowing under what circumstances we can apply predicates, terms, etc. is, for Davidson, knowing the truth conditions of predicates, terms etc. A semantic description can be 'objective' to the extent we, speakers of a L and human beings in the world

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[15] E. g. If I say: *John's children are bald*, it 'follows' from the sentence that John has children (strictly speaking *John's children are bald* presupposes that John has children. Similarly, if someone says *The girls were wonderful, too*, the sentence presupposes that somebody *else* (of course, strictly and logically speaking, not necessarily me) was wonderful as well. There is a difference between logical (semantic) and pragmatic presupposition. For example, if I tell someone: *If you cut my grass, I will give you ten dollars*, pragmatically the person I am talking to will interpret this as a biconditional: 'I give you five dollars *if and only if* you cut my grass'. Logically (semantically), this is just a simple conditional, i.e. logically speaking he may understand me saying that I will give him ten dollars even if he does not cut my grass.

[16] Of course we may assume that he is joking, pulling our leg, quoting somebody, has gone mad etc. To describe this would be a part of pragmatics.

agree in truths. Disagreements, misunderstanding will pop up when and where we do not agree in truths. It would be nice (or horrible?) if there were an 'omniscient narrator' patting us on the shoulder all the time, letting us know: 'yes, the sentence you have just uttered is true'.[17] Alas, there is no absolute norm of truth external to us.

Semantics and pragmatics

To the extent we can be 'objective' in the description of sentences (to the extent we can apply logic) we talk about (linguistic) *semantics*. The more we have to rely on not general but particular circumstances, emotions, individual and not shared beliefs, etc., we will be on the grounds philosophers and linguists have called *pragmatics*. Of course pragmatics (taking into consideration the context of a sentence to a greater or lesser degree) will also try to set up models, types of situations, typical cases etc. as context, so it also tries to be systematic but that is not always easy. (The question always is: how *much* of the context is relevant as to the interpretation of the sentence, how big a 'slice' of the context should be taken into consideration?) Many thinkers (including Davidson, Quine, and lots of others) admit or even claim that there will always remain some indeterminacy with respect to meaning ('meaning in L is underdetermined') but this is not a tragedy: we are to describe L with precisely *that amount of indeterminacy,* not an 'ideal' L. We are after the 'faithful' characterisation of our 'imperfect' communication, with all its pitfalls, not after a 'perfect' method of interaction. Yet we have to start out with the assumption that circumstances are optimal, competent speakers are in the best possible position to assess situations, etc. And this is where thinkers of the rival, Continental (French-German) tradition (such as Jacques Derrida) will strongly disagree: the indeterminacy of meaning should not be tolerated and suppressed wherever that can be done: indeterminacy should even be celebrated. The question is the starting point: do we claim that we basically understand each other, or do we rather claim that we do not, that we end up in mazes of signs (signifiers), that there is basically – to put it pointedly – chaos and misunderstanding in us and the world? In serious thinking this cannot be a matter of 'taste' but the question is whether arguments count for those who think the world is a heap of chaos at all.

Pragmatics in semantics?

Towards the end of his article Davidson tries to meet the challenge that "the same sentence may at one time or in one mouth be true and at another time or in another mouth be false" (p. 230). This is, at least to some extent, can be compared to the problem of 'demonstratives' (also called 'indexicals') in logic. Not only 'here' and 'there' and time adverbials like 'today', 'now', 'yesterday' 'a minute ago' count as 'demonstratives' but, strictly speaking *all* the (personal) pronouns ('I' in e.g. 'I am wise', etc.), the 'time' shown on the Verb (i.e. the *tense* of the Verb, e.g. I *write* him (every day) –I *wrote* him (yesterday); aspect (I write him (every day) – I am writ*ing* a letter to him (now)); modality (He is in – He *may* be in, translatable into statement + adverbial: He *is possibly* in), etc. etc., so everything that ties an utterance to the context to a greater and lesser degree. (Think of relatively 'demonstrative-free' sentences like *All men are mortal*). So some "pragmatic" considerations i.e. that sentences may contain specifications that make their truth-value relative to the (immediate) circumstances will pop up on a very elementary, basic level of interpreting sentences and we wish to save as much for 'objective' semantics as possible.

We may turn demonstratives to our advantage, for example we may point out systematic correspondences (in some cases) between the Simple Present and general pronouns (*every* (day)) that are likely to occur in such sentences as well, etc.. But we can also refine our logical axioms.

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[17] Sometimes in novels narrators play that role and sometimes philosophers pretend they can play this role in their philosophical system. And think of drama where there is absolutely no omniscience: there characters have to negotiate the truth of their utterances among themselves.

Truth as a relation between a sentence, a person and a time (place)

Davidson thinks that at least certain 'demonstrative' ('indexical') elements can be built into the general truth-formula: 'S is true iff P'. For example 'I am tired' becomes:

'I am tired' is true (potentially) spoken by person X at time t if and only if X is tired at t, or 'That book was stolen' becomes:

'That book was stolen' is true as (potentially) spoken by person X at time t if and only if the book demonstrated by X at t is stolen prior to t.

This is to view truth as a relation between a sentence, a person, and a time (and further factors, such as place, may be included, as needs be). Ordinary logic still applies as usual but only to sets of sentences relativised to the same speaker and time. Further logical relations between sentences spoken by different speakers and at different times may be articulated by new axioms. Corresponding to each expression with a demonstrative element there must be a phrase that relates the truth conditions of sentences in which the expression occurs to changing times and speakers. This will obviously not 'eliminate' demonstratives, for example 'the book demonstrated by the speaker' cannot be substituted for 'that book' *salva veritate.* But this is precisely not our goal. Our goal is to a give systematic description of demonstratives (and other elements) in a natural L.

Criticism of holism

As we saw, both Quine and Davidson have a holistic theory of truth: truth (for Davidson beliefs, too) is always relative to a system as a *whole*. Yet – as for example Michael Dummett[18] argues – this gives problems as to how L is learnt: holism gives the impression that one learns a L 'at one go', the 'whole' at the same time as if the learner could swallow it and full stop, whereas L-learning obviously goes step by step, on a trial-and-error basis, with an enormous amount of 'misunderstandings'. (See Wittgenstein attributing great significance to the 'margin of error' in L-learning). A further point made by Dummett is that by Davidson's appeal to (true, shared) beliefs, he is unable to separate meanings from beliefs and the original goal of relying only on truth gets obscured by what people 'entertain as ideas'. Davidson thinks this is inevitable.

Chapter 7 Ray Jackendoff's Conceptual Semantics

Ray Jackendoff (1945-), one of the founders of **Conceptual Semantics,** majored in mathematics at Swarthmore College, then he switched over to linguistics and the cognitive sciences: at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) he studied under Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle. He taught at Brandeis University from 1971 to 2005, then joined Tufts University (Boston) in 2005 and presently he is Professor of Philosophy and Seth Merrin Chair in the Humanities. With Daniel Dennett, he is Co-director of the Centre for Cognitive Studies at Tufts. His main research has been in the field of the relationship between human conceptualisation and linguistic meaning. He is a descendant of the "Chomsky-" or "generative-school": he is committed to the existence of an innate Universal Grammar and he considers not so much logic but psychology as the chief resource to understand the human mind. His most important books are: *Semantics and Cognition*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976; ***Semantic Structures*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990;** *Languages of the Mind*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992; *Patterns in the Mind: Language and Human Nature*. USA: Basic Books, 1994; *Foundations of Language: Brain, Meaning, Grammar, Evolution*.

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[18] Michael Dummett: "What is a Theory of Meaning?" In: S. Guttenplan (ed.) *Mind and Language*, Cambridge: CUP, 1975.

Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Besides he is a classical clarinettist, performing with various Boston orchestras. (e-mail: ray.jackendoff@tufts.edu).

"What Is a Concept, That a Person May Grasp It?" [19] (originally in *Mind and Language*, 1989, 4, 1-2, pp. 68-102; appears also in Jackendoff (1990) as a chapter, much of what follows below is taken word-for-word from Jackendoff's text).

Goals: to understand human nature through human conceptualisation in the world-view proposed by generative grammar (especially as in Noam Chomsky: *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use,* New York: Praeger, 1986).

Concept: for Jackendoff: a species of information-structure in the brain, "a mental representation that can serve as the meaning of a linguistic expression" (p. 325). As Chomsky (1986) distinguishes between E-language (External-L, L seen as external artefact) *versus* I-language (Internal-L, L as a body of internally encoded information), Jackendoff speaks of E-concepts (concepts spoken of as existing independently of who actually knows or grasps it: as we talk, e.g. about 'the concept of literature in New Criticism') versus I-concepts (concept as 'my' concept, as a private entity within one's head, which the mind is able to 'grasp', perhaps even a product of the imagination that can be conveyed to others by means of L, gesture, drawing, i.e. means of communication, cf. for example the game called Activity). Since *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965), the first full-fledged version of transformational-generative grammar, Chomsky has been explicit about being interested in I-language, and Jackendoff deals with I-concepts (and thus with I-Semantics), too. The underlying assumption is that linguistic expressions are related to concepts but this relation is investigated always already with the underlying tenets of generative linguistics.

Conceptual Semantics as and extension of the basic tenets of generative linguistics:

Generative linguistics maintains that L is creative: speakers of a L do not simply 'remember' a finite number of sentences (as if they were learning full sentences from a conversational handbook) but know the *rules* of their L, on the basis of which they create and understand an infinite number of new sentences they have never heard before (e.g. have you heard the sentence: *I have an unmarried pair of shoe-laces*? Still you understand it, it is grammatical from the point of view of the rules of E syntax, semantically (as far as standard compatibility rules go) it is rather odd: a piece of nonsense, a metaphor, etc. – that is a matter of debate).

Jackendoff claims that corresponding to an infinitely large variety of *syntactic structures*, there must be an indefinitely large variety of *concepts* that can be invoked in the production and comprehension of sentences. As syntactic structures are mentally encoded in terms of a finite set of primitives and a finite set of principles of combination that collectively describe/generate the class of possible sentences, there must be and indefinitely large variety of concepts that can be invoked in the production and comprehension of sentences. The repertoire of concepts are not encoded as a list but as a
- finite set of mental primitives and
- a finite set of principles of mental combination

that collectively describe the set of possible concepts expressed by sentences. This Jackendoff calls the "Grammar of Sentential Concepts': he thinks concepts are arranged and organise themselves in the inner mental apparatus in the same key as syntactic items do.

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[19] In Steven Davis and Brendan S. Gillon (eds.), *Semantics. A Reader*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 322-345.

Lexical concepts

Lexical concepts such as *dog* are also creative concepts in the sense that when we encounter a rich variety of objects (e.g. in the street), we will be able to judge which are dogs and which are not. The hypothesis is that we do not have a list of all the previous dogs we have encountered in life before (so much information could hardly be contained in 'our heads' – this would be a too flattering picture of the human brain) but we have a *finite schema of dog* which we compare with the mental representation of arbitrary new objects (In the street: people, articles of clothing, cars, etc., and among them: dogs).

Two problems

This is, roughly, as John Locke (1632-1704) conceived of concepts in his classic *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690): the meaning of a word is a concept in the individual's mind. With the theory of meaning relying on individual conceptual schemas the problem has always been – and Jackendoff acknowledges this, of course – that internalised conceptual schemas differ in people (my 'dog'-schema may differ form yours), and it is then impossible to tell whether we understand one another or not: the same word may evoke a different concept in the Other's mind. We of course cannot 'open' one another's heads to compare schemas: the only way to compare concepts is through L but L contains only meanings again. We may describe our schemas but that will also be through linguistic meanings, subject to the same problem. Jackendoff's reaction to this is the same as Locke's: he claims we have evidence that we more or less still understand one another and he tries to minimise the difficulties potentially or really caused by this variety.

Another classic objection is that new objects pop up all the time in our surroundings which we cannot judge clearly, or – simply – we 'don't know what to say' ('It is a sort of a dog and sort of a wolf?')[20]. Jackendoff, however, does not think that this would be a threatening challenge to the internalised schema, either: there is, of course a potential degree of indeterminacy in the lexical concept (*dog*) itself, in the procedure for comparing the lexical concept with the mental representation of novel objects, or both. (Cf. the indeterminacy emphasised by Quine in radical translation and Davidson in radical interpretation, though, as it will become clear below, they differ from Jackendoff's position). But for Jackendoff this comparison will remain rule-governed all the time (it will not be arbitrary) and to maintain the principle of creativity, we have to pay the price of having to put up with indeterminacy.

Language acquisition and the innate Universal Grammar

Over the past forty years or so, generative linguists have been unable to fully determine the syntactic rules of even the English L, yet of course every normal child exposed to English masters the grammar by the age of roughly 10. This paradox proves for Jackendoff the central hypothesis of generative linguistics: the child comes to the task of L learning equipped with an *innate Universal Grammar* which narrowly restricts the options available for the grammar (s)he is trying to acquire. Similarly, one is able to acquire an infinitely large number of often

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[20] Or cf. a dagger floating in the air, a rare phenomenon. And Macbeth asks: 'Is this a dagger, which I see before me?' (II; 1;33) It is in fact very instructive for mentalists such as Jackendoff what Macbeth asks here: '…or art thou but / A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?' (37-39) How about hallucinations which the mind produces? We may have a word (a lexical item) for them (e.g. 'floating dagger', Lady Macbeth will talk about 'the air-drawn dagger' (III; 4; 61) but on purely mentalistic grounds, i.e. when we have no 'way out' to reality (the world) how do we differentiate between concepts corresponding to linguistic items and hallucinations for which we can also invent linguistic items? Should we treat (inner) hallucinations as we treat inner concepts? But then we end up again having to claim that 'everything exists', yet then what is 'real' and what is not? How can I distinguish between a ghost-dagger and a real one? If I 'only turn inward', I can hardly ever (Macbeth will compare the hallucination with the real dagger on his side).

highly complex concepts, each on the basis of rather fragmentary evidence (think of such complex concepts like *prosaic, justice, belief, love*, etc.). Lexical concepts, Jackendoff claims, must be encoded as (mostly unconscious) schemas rather than lists of instances. As in syntax, it must be hypothesised that the innate basis for meaning consists of:
– a group of primitives and
– a set of generative principles of combination that collectively determine the set of lexical concepts.
It follows, then that
– most or all lexical concepts are *composite*, i.e. they can be decomposed in terms of the primitives and principles of combination of the innate "Grammar of Lexical Concepts".

The reconstruction of the process of understanding
When we understand sentence S (when we recover its meaning), we place S in correspondence with concept C, which has an internal structure which is derivable from the syntactic structure and the lexical items of S. So Jackendoff whole-heartedly subscribes to the idea of *compositionality*. (The real problem has always been what Jackendoff calls "placing" S "in correspondence with" C: what is this correspondence based *on*?) On the basis of C, one can of course draw further inferences[21], i.e. construct further concepts that are logical entailments[22] of C. One can also compare C with other concepts retrieved from memory (one asks oneself: 'Do I know this already?', 'Is this consistent with what I believe?') and with conceptual structures derived from sensory modalities ('Is this what is going on?', 'Is that what I am looking for?').

Two rival models for the description of meaning
Form the above it is clear that Jackendoff does not 'close down' the 'external world' for the speaker; the very idea is absurd so he does talk about 'sensory modalities' and perception ('channels' through which we experince the world). At the same time Jackendoff openly claims he does not wish to deal with what he calls E-concepts (external concepts), i.e. with the semantic system associated with the world. Thus, one can only conclude that in his view what is external only backs up the internal system and does not play a role in the description of meaning: Jackendoff maintains that what is 'valuable' from the external has already been internalised by the human mind.

Rival Model No. 1: Model-Theoretic (or Truth-Conditional) Semantics
The exponents of this theory are precisely Frege, Tarski, Quine and Davidson (see Lectures 2-6). Both Cognitive Semantics (Jackendoff) and Model-Theoretic Semantics are *formal* systems yet Model-Theoretic Semantics deals with E-concepts instead of I-concepts and does not place S with a concept C but it wishes to map S with P relying on truth (cf. Lecture 6), it wants to explicate – in Jackendoff's interpretation – "a relation between L and reality independent of L-users", and "the truth-conditions of sentences can be treated as speaker-independent only if both reality *and* the L that describes it are speaker-independent" (p. 326, emphasis original). It is true that Model-Theoretic Semantics treats reality as something that can be known (and thus checked) independently of L but it is not quite true that it would be

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[21] Inference is the derivation of a proposition (the conclusion) from a set of other propositions (the premises). E. g. *All men are mortal. Socrates is a man.* – these are the premises. Here it necessarily follows from the premises that *Socrates is mortal* (=conclusion).
[22] Entailment is the relation that exists between two propositions one of which is deducible from the other. E.g. from the sentence *Bill climbed the mountain* it is deducible that Bill *moved* (because *climbing* is a species of *moving*). Thus, *Bill climbed the mountain* entails *Bill moved* (in logical terms: *Bill moved* will have to be true if *Bill climbed the mountain* is true).

speaker-independent; Davidson does rely on the beliefs of speakers and says: "We do not know what someone means unless we know what he believes; we do not know what someone believes unless we know what he means" (p. 227)[23] and beliefs are truly 'in the head'. Of course it is another question whether they are shared, 'social' beliefs (in a kind of 'collective consciousness') or individual, idiosyncratic ones. Clearly, the debate is about the famous 'Inner-Outer Problem:' what is inside of the human mind already and what can we rely on independently of the human mind? It can be maintained that there is a 'reality' existing independently of the human mind but a moment comes when somebody starts to perceive it. This is one of the most crucial issues with such influential thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Edmund Husserl, Russell, Quine etc. and sometimes semantics forgets (perhaps has to forget) about the enormous difficulties encountered here to move on. In Model-Theoretic E-Semantics the semantic principle sounds something like: "Sentence S in Language L is true iff condition(s) so-and-so is/are met in the world"; in Conceptual I-Semantics the same looks like thus: "A speaker of Language L treats Sentence S as true iff his mental representation of the world meets conditions so-and-so". The difference is perhaps not sot great, since one can claim that when E-Semantics says: 'iff certain conditions are met *in the world*" they assume, too that what is in the world takes the form of a mental representation in the head – otherwise how would we *know* about what is going on in the world? Reality is not at one's disposal in any 'raw', unmediated way. The conceptual structure in Conceptual Semantics is definitely and openly seen as the form in which speakers *have already encoded* their construals [=the result of their mental construction] of the world. E-Semantics is about how the world *is*, I-Semantics is about how the world *is grasped*. The real difference is that I-Semanticists such as Jackendoff's does accept evidence from scientific psychology to be taken into consideration when building a theory, whereas E-Semanticists claim that the intuitive notion of truth is enough to be relied on when interpreting the meaning of sentences.

Rival Model No. 2 : Cognitive Semantics
Another rival theory to Conceptual Semantics is Cognitive Semantics (sometimes also called Cognitive Grammar). The chief exponents of this approach are George Lakoff (e.g., with Mark Johnson: *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980 and *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), Ronald W. Langacker (chiefly: *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, Volume I, Theoretical Prerequisites, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987; *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, Volume II, Descriptive Application, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991; *Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991; *Grammar and Conceptualization*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1999); Gilles Fauconnier: (*Mental Spaces*, rev. ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994; *Mapping in Thought and Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.) We will not deal with Cognitive Semantics in this course, it however should be mentioned that it shares with Conceptual Semantics that they are both concerned with mental representations of the world and its relation to L and with the encoding of especially spatial concepts and their extension to other conceptual fields. Yet they differ in the facts that Cognitive Grammar
1. abandons the autonomous level of syntactic representation
2. is less committed to rigorous formalism (as opposed to both Conceptual Semantics and Model-Theoretic Semantics)

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[23] Donald Davidson: "Truth and Meaning" In : Steven Davis and Brendan Gillon, *Semantics: A Reader*, Oxford: OUP, 2004 (pp. 222-233), p. 227.

3. makes far less use of psychology, whereas Conceptual Semantics makes contact with relevant results of especially perceptual psychology
4. it does not share the commitment of Conceptual Semantics to the hypothesis of a strong innate formal basis for concept acquisition

Jackendoff – who in a footnote says that "Fodor does not believe a word of" his paper – also compares Conceptual Semantics with Jerry Fodor's "Language of Thought Hypothesis" and "Internal Realism" (see especially Fodor: *The Language of Thought*, New York: Thomas Crowell, 1975; *Psychosemantics*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987 and *Concepts*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) – Fodor has nothing to do with Cognitive Semantics. But we shall not deal with Fodor here, either.

After placing the conceptual level in the mental information structure (i.e. the "grammar") in language (the gist of which is that there are phonological, syntactic and conceptual formation rules, producing phonological, syntactic and conceptual structures, each containing sets of correspondence rules linking the three levels), he turns to three subsystems within conceptual structure. The first involves the major category system and argument structure; the second the organisation of semantic fields; the third the conceptualisation of boundlessness and aggregation.

The major category system and argument structure:
Instead of a division of formal entities into logical types as constants, variables, predicates and quantifiers (as Model-Theoretical Semanticists do), Jackendoff argues that the major units of conceptual structures are *conceptual constituents*, each of which belongs to one of a small set of major ontological categories (practically conceptual "parts of speech"): *Thing, Event, State, Place, Path, Property,* and *Amount.*
–   Each major syntactic constituent of a sentence (except for epenthetic *it* or *there* e.g. ***It is raining***, *There is a bird in the cage*) corresponds to a conceptual constituent in the meaning of the sentence. e.g. the structure of *John ran towards the house,* is: *S* (the whole sentence) corresponds to an Event-constituent, the N(oun) P(hrase)s, *John* and *the house* correspond to Thing-constituents, the P(repositional) P(hrase) *toward the house* corresponds to a Path-constituent. The matching is by *constituents* and not by (traditional grammatical) *categories* because an NP can express, besides a Thing, an Event (*the war*), Property (*redness*); a PP can express, besides Path, Place (*in the house*), Property (*in luck*), S can also express State (*Mike is here*), etc.
–   Each conceptual category is allowed to rely not only on linguistic input but also on sensory (e.g. visual) output, e.g. ***That** is a robin* points out a Thing in the environment, ***There** is your hat* points out a Place; *Can you do **this**?* accompanies the demonstration of an Action, *The fish was **this** long* accompanies the demonstration of a Distance.
–   Each conceptual category has some realisations in which it is decomposed into a function argument structure; each argument is, in turn, a conceptual constituent of a major category. The traditional 'predicate' is a special case of this, where the major category is State or Event. E. g. in *John is tall* the sentence expresses a State, the arguments are Thing (*John*) and Property (*tall*). *Adam loves Eve* is also a State but both arguments are Things, etc. Thing can have Thing as argument (*the father of the bride*), Property may have a Thing as arguments (*afraid of Harry*) etc.
So the main idea is that formation rules (here represented by →) decompose e.g. the basic conceptual constituent Entity into basic feature complexes such as Event, Thing, Place etc. + an argument structure feature (symbolised here as F) allows for the recursion of conceptual structure to make an infinite class of possible concepts:

```
                    Event
Entity    →         Place
                    Thing
                    F (<Entity1, <Entity2, <Entity3>>>)
```

Organisation of semantic fields

The formalism for encoding concepts of spatial location and motion can be generalised to many semantic fields. There are lots of Verbs and Prepositions that appear in two or more semantic fields, forming intuitively related paradigms.

E. g.

Spatial location and motion:

The bird *went from* the ground *to* the tree.

The bird *is in* the tree.

Harry *kept* the bird *in* a cage.

Possession:

His uncle's inheritance *went to* Mike (The money went *from* Mike's uncle *to* Mike) .

The money *is with* Mike.

Mike *kept* the money.

Both sets of sentences contain *go* (with prepositions *from* and *to*) expressing a change (to the extent that *go* and *change* are sometimes interchangeable as in *The light went ! changed form green to red*) and the respective terminal state is described by the corresponding *be* sentences. The *keep* sentences denote the causation of a state that endures over a period of time.

The generalised underlying conceptual paradigm – defined within the State/Event ontological category – can be give as:


```
                    (FROM)
(event GO) ,   path    (TO)

(state BE) ,    place (      )

(event STAY),  place (      )
```

The inference rule will be:

At the termination of [event GO] [X]   [path TO [Y]],

it is the case that [state BE [X],   [place AT [Y]]

Aggregation and boundlessness

There are aspects of conceptual structure which display a strong featural character but which are not expressed in so regular a fashion in syntax.

E. g. (1) *Mike slept.* (2) *Mike ate sandwiches.* (3) *Mike ate the sandwich.* (4) *Mike ate some sandwiches.* (5) *Mike cycled down the road.* (6) *Mike cycled 5 kilometres down the road.* These are all grammatical sentences. Yet if we prefix them with the time adverbial *for hours* (placing a measure on an otherwise unbounded process) or *until noon* (placing a temporal boundary on an otherwise unbounded process), sentence (1) and (2) will remain grammatical, (3) and (4) will become ungrammatical, (5) is still grammatical and (6) is ungrammatical if we wish to say that how far Mike got is 5 kilometres but grammatical if Mike was down the

road (as a spot, a place) and he cycled 5 kilometres there (e.g. in a circle). If an event is already bounded somehow (as *Mike ate the sandwich* expresses a temporally already bounded 'one', definitive event on account of the definite article before *sandwich*) it will not tolerate further bounding by temporal adverbials such as *until noon*. *Some* still results in bounding 'by itself', so it will not allow any further bounding, only the indefinite plural *sandwiches* will tolerate bounding. Notice that *Mike cycled 5 kilometres down the road until noon* is grammatical under the interpretation that he was 'bicycling around' at the same spot because this reading carries an iterative [gyakorító] aspect ['délig biciklizgetett'], and that allows bounding, whereas the 'covering of distance' concept will not allow boundness.

Certain semantic-grammatical schemas will support, others will exclude each other and the virtue of Jackendoff's model is that
– it can show regular correspondences between syntactic and semantic constituents
– the semantic interpretation may provide explanation for syntactic behaviour.

Further parallels have been observed between bounded/unbounded events/processes described by VPs and the count/non-count (mass) distinction with respect to NPs, plurals or non-count NPs and repeated events expressed by VPs, etc.

Some problems adherents to semantic compositionality have to face
Problem 1
In the mock-trial scene of *King Lear* in a God-forsaken barn, the Fool, acting as a 'judge' pretends to see Goneril, Lear's eldest daughter sitting on a joint-stool and tells to the in fact empty stool: "Cry your mercy [= I beg your pardon], I took you for a joint-stool" (III; 6; 51). It is easy to find semantic features making up the concept of *woman* and that of *stool* and tell one from the other but how should we represent, with semantic features, *chair* and *stool*? Should we introduce the semantic feature [+/- has-a-back]? (as stools usually do not have backs, though cf. certain bar-stools). In principle it could be done but then 'has-a-back' would have to be treated as a semantic primitive, but a very odd one, since it is obvious it is a composite of 'back' and 'possession'. (Compare the elegant distinction, e.g. of *fox* and *vixen* with he help of binary opposition, the latter given the wide-ranging semantic feature [+ female] and that is it.) The same problem is with e.g. distinguishing *duck* and *goose*, shall we say, with respect to goose [+ bird; + water-fowl; + **long neck**] (as geese have longer necks than ducks)? That last feature is a composite, too, not a primitive. This raises the issue of how far 'down' one has to go to reach primitives. Jackendoff proposes that such concepts, i.e. lexical concepts representing physical objects should receive, besides their phonological, syntactic and conceptual structures, a three dimensional (3D) model-representation, an 'image of stereotypical instance" (p. 339). (Think of this in terms of a dictionary. If we hear the name of a strange animal or plant in a foreign L, the lexical entry may provide a description but it still will not prevent us from mixing e.g. plants up because they differ so little. So if anything helps, it is a drawing; the 3D model is like a hologram). *Running* and *jogging*, *throwing* and *tossing*, i.e. verbs very 'close' in meaning are also distinguished along 3D lines.

Problem 2
A second area where a single feature analysis fails concerns the domains with a continuous range of values and not a discrete one. Here belong e.g. temperature words (*hot, cold, tepid, cool, warm,* etc.) and the domain of colour words. The problem is that *hot* or *red* cannot be exhaustively decomposed into discrete features so that we may distinguish them e.g. from *cold* and *yellow*, respectively. Such a percept by Jackendoff is analysed in terms of its relative distance from focal values. A percept whose value in colour space is close to focal red is categorised, of course, as red, if the value lies midway between e.g. focal red and focal yellow will be categorised with more contextual dependence: here e.g. physiologically determined

salient values and the number and position of the colour values for which a L has words will have to be taken into consideration. (More and more 'pragmatic' features have to be taken in).

Philosophical implications:
In the rest of the article Jackendoff argues against Fodor but that is not our concern here. One of the merits of this approach, Jackendoff claims, is that through studying I-concepts and mental information structures always in harmony with syntactic structures, we gain insights into classic philosophical problems, too via the systematic description of L. Such questions are: what are the ontological categories (a truly Aristotelian question) and do they have themselves an internal structure? What sort of fundamental functions are there that create Events, States, Places, Paths? To what extent are semantic fields related, how do they parallel and exclude one another and how is this related to human thinking and imagination? Is it possible that beneath the surface complexity of natural L there is highly abstract system, comparable to an algebraic pattern that lays out the major parameters of thought? Is this abstract system universal? How are conceptual systems learnable? etc. Jackendoff started out as a linguist but now he is a professor of philosophy.

Chapter 8: Ludwig Wittgenstein on Meaning: The Tractatus

The significance of Wittgenstein
There are plenty of anecdotes about Wittgenstein (26 April, 1889-29 April, 1951), for example that during his classes in Cambridge, England his students had to sit in deck-chairs to listen to his lectures in a relaxed bodily position; that he swept his floor with the old tea-leaves from his tea-pot to make his very puritanically furnished room completely dust-free; that in movies he sat in the front row totally absorbed in the Westerns he liked so much etc., and it is true that Wittgenstein resisted, as much as he could, all institutionalised forms of an 'academic career'. It is also true that unlike with lots of other thinkers, his life is an *integral part* of fulfilling his philosophy:[24] one cannot understand his life without his philosophy and his philosophy cannot be appreciated without knowing at least something about his life.

   He was born in Vienna as the youngest of eight children, his father was one of the wealthiest businessmen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, his mother had great artistic – especially musical – talents. He studied in a secondary-school emphasising maths and the sciences ("Realschule") in Linz where a school-mate of his was Adolf Hitler but they did not have any contact. Wittgenstein decided to study aeronoutics, i.e. the ideal flight of aeroplanes in Manchester, England; he wished to become an engineer but, being also interested in the philosophical foundations of mathematics and logic – he had read Frege earlier – started to study Russell's and Whitehead's *Principa Mathematica* (first volume in 1910). He went down to Cambridge to see Russell in 1911, and Russell, deeply impressed by Wittgenstein's exceptional talents, offered him to stay. Wittgenstein started to work on the philosophical foundations of logic but, in 1914, he had to go home and became a soldier in the 'K und K', the army of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, fighting the First World War through. Once in a deserted town he found a bookshop the owner of which did not escape and there were three books in the whole store; one of them was Tolstoy's *Tales*, which made a deep impression on Wittgenstein – from that time on he had a strong belief in God. Besides Tolstoy, his favourite authors were St Augustine (especially the *Confessions*), the Danish philosopher and theologian, Sören Kierkegaard, and Dostoyevsky, especially *The Brothers Karamazov.* Wittgenstein became a prisoner of war in Italy in 1918 but by the time he was released he had

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[24] The most detailed and reliable biography on Wittgenstein, also treating his philosophy is Ray Monk, *Wittgenstein: the Duty of Genius.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1990.

completed the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (Logische-Philosophische Abhandlung)*, one of the most curious philosophical works ever written. Nobody wished to publish it, finally it came out in German in 1921, and in English in 1922 in C. K. Ogden's translation but with Russell's Introduction (which Wittgenstein thought was a total misinterpretation of his work; quite soon their friendship came to an end.). After attending a teacher-training college, Wittgenstein became, in 1922, a village schoolteacher in Lower Austria (Otterthal, Trattenbach, etc.) but he tried to teach higher mathematics to ten-year olds; the parents complained and he quit in 1926. He worked as a gardener in a monastery, then, with Paul Engelmann, he built a house for one of his sisters, Margaret (it is known as the Stonborough-house, in the Kundmanngasse, Vienna) and finally returned to do research and teach in Cambridge (Trinity College) from the January of 1929. He got the PhD degree for the *Tractatus* but afterwards he published practically nothing, yet kept on writing, mostly in German, leaving thousands of pages of manuscripts and typescripts behind and he gave his very unusual philosophical classes every quarter (of course, in English). From Research Fellow he became, in 1938, Professor of Philosophy in Cambridge and, as a consequence of that, a British subject, largely to help his sisters out of Austria after the "Anschluss", the German occupation of Austria (the family was three-quarters Jewish). He never lost contact with Vienna: he spent all his holidays there and in the 30s he had regular conversations with some members of the Vienna Circle, especially with Moritz Schlick. During the Second World War he kept teaching in Cambridge but also did voluntary work in a hospital. He made an attempt at publishing some of his notes under the title *Philosophical Investigations (Philosophische Untesuchungen)* in 1946 but the book, finally edited by his students, only came out (in German and English) posthumously in 1953, not receiving much attention until its second edition in 1958. It is also a very unusual book: it is a series of numbered remarks, notes and observations and lots of philosophers – including Russell, Karl Popper, Rudolf Carnap, Whitehead – thought it was totally useless. In 1947 Wittgenstein quit his professorship and spent long months in Ireland and Norway; near Bergen he had earlier built a hut for himself in the mountains and from 1913 he regularly visited Norway in the summers to write in complete solitude. In 1948 he spent some time in the United States (at Cornell University, on the invitation of his former student, Norman Malcolm). In that year he was diagnosed with cancer but kept on writing practically until his last day. After his premature death at the age of 62, his students and literary executors, Elizabeth Anscombe, Rush Rhees and Georg Henrik von Wright published all the material he had left behind in German and English. (A searchable "Complete Works', including Wittgenstein's notebooks, typescripts manuscripts and the English translations of his work are available on CD Rom since 2000, published by the Bergen Wittgenstein Centre and OUP). Since the early 60s some 40 000 pieces have been published on Wittgenstein; it is generally agreed that, besides Martin Heidegger, he was the most influential thinker of the 20th century, and although he has mostly been referred to as an "analytic philosopher", it is very hard to name a "school" where he belongs.[25] His most important philosophical principles (as far as I can see) were:

– that one has to be genuinely interested and dedicated to a problem (*any* problem one is fascinated by) in order to attempt a solution: no question is interesting unless it is a 'matter of life and death', and it has no use unless it has some bearing on the person's personal life, i.e. unless one learns something also about him- or herself

– that one often has to start from scratch, and look at a problem as if (s)he were looking at it for the first time

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[25] A highly reliable introduction to Wittgenstein's thought is Robert Fogelin, *Wittgenstein,* The Argument of Philosophers series, 2nd ed. , London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987. A useful reference-book is: Hans-Johann Glock, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*, Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

– that to understand another position (or even one's own), one first has to ask why the person sticks to it with such stubbornness.

This also means the 'Wittegensteinians' – like myself – have no 'theory of meaning': they think that the problem of meaning has not yet been settled and they are more interested in the *problems*, the difficulties raised or implied by any theory rather than clinging to a theory with the help of which they would describe meaning. This does not mean that one cannot appreciate and respect the results of approaches with a theory; it rather means that one is more interested in the philosophical background (the overt or covert assumptions of a theory) than in the practical applications of the theory.

Meaning in the *Tractatus*

When Wittgenstein published the *Tractatus*, he thought that he had found the solution to *all* important philosophical questions (and added that this also indicates how little had thus been achieved). The *Tractatus*, like all complex works, has lots of interpretations[26] and since the 90s we have been witnessing to a '*Tractatus*-Renaissance'. What follows is, of course, my interpretation.[27]

The *Tractatus* is concerned with the relationship between language (treating language as a manifestation of thought) and the world, i.e. reality. One of the disturbing things about the *Tractatus* is that it starts with a description of the world (the Universe) and it is hard to identify any 'speaking voice' behind this description: it is as if a god were talking, announcing pieces of wisdom about the logical structure of the world and what follows from such a world-view. The whole book 'announces' in fact only *seven* statements (central theses); those are, quoted form the *Tractatus*, in **bold type** below**,** and after that my attempted explanation follows[28]. But Wittgenstein, apart from the 7th statement, gave an – often enigmatic – interpretation to each of his main thesis himself, attaching the interpretation to the respective main thesis using a decimal numbering which indicates the relative importance of this interpretation with respect to the main thesis. So e.g. 1. is the main theses, 1.1. is the most important interpretation of 1.; 1.11 is an interpretation (explanation) of 1.1 but, this way, also an interpretation of 1. and so on. The seven statements also show the crystal-clear structure of the *Tractatus*: it goes from the world to sentences (propositions) and then back to the world in front of which we stand in silence.

1. The world is all that is the case.

Whatever happens to obtain in the world as a kind of situation is a 'case' in the world (the Universe in the sense of 'logical space').

2. What is the case – a fact – is the existence (Bestehen: 'fennállás') of states of affairs.

A fact is whether a state of affairs, a certain situation obtains or not. Therefore when I say: e.g. 'There is *no* beer in the fridge' this is a negative fact: a state of affairs is denied to obtain but this is still a fact. But *no* does not stand for a 'thing', it expresses a relation to the state of affairs, to the situation under description.

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[26] Namely 1. the logical atomist reading (Russell, in the 1920s) 2. the logical positivist reading (the Vienna Circle: Carnap, Neurath, Schlick, in the 1930s) 3. the metaphysical reading (Anscombe, Stenius, in the early 1960s) 4. the ethical reading (Engelmann, Toulmin, in the early 1970s) 5. the so-called 'therapeutic reading': reading it as already foreshadowing the ideas of *Philosophical Investigations* especially that philosophy is a therapy against the 'bewitchment' of our thinking by certain patterns of language (Cora Diamond, Peter Winch, James Conant, Juliet Floyd, etc., from the late 1980s onward). Mine is a blend of 4, 5 and 6.

[27] The best book I know on the *Tractatus* is Eli Friedlander, *Signs of Sense: Reading Wittgenstein's* Tractatus, London and Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2001. See further the previous footnote.

[28] I quote from the David Pears and Brian McGuinness translation: Ludwig Wittgenstein *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London: Routledge, 1961, which is in many ways better than Ogden's.

Facts are composed of objects in a *certain* relation. Objects (represented in sentences by words) are always already in a certain relation with other objects *within* facts: there are no objects 'floating alone' in the World. There are no *a priori* facts, i.e. nothing tells an object with which other object(s) it should enter into a certain relation (in *which* fact it should participate) but an object must be in a certain relation with *some* other objects in *one* fact or the *other*. Objects will be joined by logical structure in facts.

3.   A logical picture of a fact is a thought.

We picture facts to ourselves in our heads, in the form of thoughts. Please imagine a thought as a snap-shot, a photograph, with various 'participants' (objects): people, trees, houses, etc., they are in a certain configuration, relation to one another.' A thought (a picture) is totally expressed by a sentence (proposition, 'Satz'= 'sentence' in the original text). A sentence is composed of words; each word corresponds to an object in the world (reality) except for logical constants (*no/not* [symbolised in logic as '~'], *if...then* [often symbolised as '–>' or with the 'horse-shoe'], '*or*' [symbolised as '*v*'] etc. – logical constants are our *relation* to the world, they do not stand *for* 'things'/objects). The meaning of a proposition is *what* it represents: namely a possible state of affairs or situation; an arrangement of objects which may or may not obtain, depending on whether the proposition is true or false. *This is often called the 'picture theory' of meaning.*

Facts in the world, thoughts (pictures) in the mind representing these facts and sentences expressing thoughts (pictures) in language *share* the *same* logical structure. (There is not only isomorphism between fact, thought and sentence: their logical order is the *same*).Thus, the logical structure itself cannot be expressed, it cannot be put into language (there is no 'further' language to do that, i.e. there is no language with which we could step 'between' language and world to compare their structures), yet logical structure puts itself on display, it shows itself, it makes itself *manifest*. One only has to look at a sentence or a fact or a thought and (s)he will *see* that logical order (structure). In other words, we can 'mirror' the structure of, say, a thought *in* a sentence, or the order of the sentence *in* a fact but we cannot express that order (structure) *itself* in language or in thought or in anything (we cannot "whistle it", either): we will *see it* (*in* the representations) but we will not be able to express it (an idea several logicians contested, especially Rudolf Carnap; Carnap tried to argue that there is a meta-language in which we are able to talk about logical structures).

4.   A thought is a proposition (sentence) with a sense.

There will be three types of propositions in language: propositions about the facts of the world; these propositions can be true or false (they can describe states of affairs, i. e. cases that obtain or do not obtain).

The second type of possible propositions is *tautology* (analytic truth, *a priori* proposition) (e.g. 'It is either raining, or not raining'), it will be true under all circumstances, it admits all possible situations in the world, it does not say anything about the world, from its mere constituents and their logical relations (structure) it can be seen that what the tautology says is true under all circumstances.

The third type of possible propositions is *contradiction* ('It is raining and not raining'), it is true on *no* condition, it admits no possible situations in the world, it does not, therefore, represent any possible situation, it does not say anything about the world, either. From its mere constituents and its logical relations (structure) it can be seen that it is false under all circumstances.

Tautologies and contradictions *lack sense* (they are, in German, 'sinnlos') but not *nonsensical* (in German: 'unsinnig'): they do not communicate any valuable piece of information about the world (about 'what the case is') but we can understand them in themselves, without reference to the world.

5. A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions.

From elementary (atomic) propositions we can build more complex ones with the help of logical operations such as conjunction ('and', symbolised by '&' in logic), disjunction ('or', symbolised by 'v' in logic, the conditional (also called 'material implication') symbolised as —> or the 'horse-shoe',), etc, and we can give the truth of these operations in truth tables (truth tables are Wittgenstein's invention in the *Tractatus*, later widely used in logic), e.g. the truth-table of conjunction will be:

p	q	&
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	F
F	F	F

which means that a conjunction (the joining of two sentences by 'and'='&') will be true if and only if both p and q are True, otherwise False. So the truth of the proposition 'It is raining, and the clouds are grey' will be a truth-function of the elementary propositions in the conjunction: 'It is raining' + 'the clouds are grey'.

6. gives the general form of a truth-function (the logical notation is unimportant for our purposes), wishing to say that we have to apply the various logical operations like conjunction, disjunction, the conditional, and negation to elementary (simple, atomic) propositions to get more complex ones as a result. To analyse a sentence is to apply these operations in the opposite direction: we cut up a complex proposition into elementary ones and tell whether what they describe in the world (what they 'say') obtains in the world or not (are true or not). If the proposition does not correspond to anything in the world (it is neither true, no false), and it is neither a tautology, nor a contradiction, it is nonsensical and should be discarded (it is not about a fact of the world).

7. What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.

No explanation, further interpretation is given to sentence 7 in the *Tractatus*. The above 6 points imply that all ethical or aesthetic propositions (often involving value-judgements) are nonsensical. The problem with them, Wittgenstein implies, is that they appear in the 'form' of 'normal' propositions (i.e. as if they were about facts of the world) but what they record are not facts that could obtain, or do obtain, in the world. Moreover, it follows (and Wittgenstein himself draws this conclusion) that *all the propositions in the* Tractatus *itself are nonsensical, too* since they are not tautologies or contradictions and they do not state possible facts of the world. The sentences of the *Tractatus* make an attempt at the impossible: they try to talk about the shared logical structure of world, of thoughts and propositions.

"My propositions [in the *Tractatus*] serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me [please note: strictly speaking *not* the sentences of the *Tractatus* but *me*, the author] eventually recognises them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it).)" (6.54, the last entry in the *Tractatus* before 7).

The world (the universe) of the *Tractatus* consists of facts in logical space: this is a factual world, without emotions, values; a world even without ordinary human beings. The only 'I' that appears in the *Tractatus* is the 'transcendental subject' who realises that the limits of his/her language are also the limits of his/her world, who gets, this way, to the limits of the world and can see the world as a *whole*, as a *limited* whole. The aim of the *Tractatus* is thus to draw a limit to thinking and to language.

What is 'beyond' the limits of language?

The question is our relation to what is 'beyond': to the unutterable, the unsayable, the ineffable (a 'ki/elmondhatatlan'). Wittgenstein does not imply that what is 'beyond' is

unimportant. On the contrary, he shows how little language is capable to capture if it remains only factual ('logical'): it leaves out precisely what is human, what has something to do with values. One could put it this way: what is 'beyond' factual L is *so* valuable that it cannot be talked about, the logical structure of language does not allow it, and it is also the logical structure of language that does not allow us to talk about that very logical structure.. Perhaps this is what we see when we have climbed up the logical ladder used as a metaphor in 6.54. But what we may see when we 'throw away the ladder' is that there *must* be, with the force of logical *necessity*, a logical structure permeating language, thought and world, otherwise we would not be able to talk about even what we can talk about. But we can only point towards this *must*, we cannot 'thematise' it: it only *points towards* a realm, a territory where the most valuable ('meaningful') things for us are.

What are these 'valuable things'? Shall we try the impossible and speak about what cannot be spoken about? One could say the *Tractatus* consists of two parts: one is on what we are able to achieve with the help of logic, the other is the part Wittgenstein never wrote because he simply *could not* write it, since it precisely falls into the territory of the ineffable. In the territory of the ineffable we find 'real ethics', a kind of personal ethics, something we consider to be our 'goal' in life, who and what we find is worth living for. In traditional ethics we have sentences which tell us what we should or should not do but about these we can always ask: 'but what if I do not do it?'. In the territory of the ineffable the 'principles' that operate are neither true, nor false: if they were, there could be disagreements about them. We are not in an agreement-disagreement, true-false relationship with the realm of the ineffable, in other words we are not in a *knowing* relationship with it, this is not a factual world. We cannot *know* it: but we do have an *attitude* to it and in it. As we said that we cannot put logical structure into words, into human language but there *must* be a logical structure that puts itself on display, which shows itself, we can say: we cannot put the principles of 'real ethics' (these principles being in the realm of the ineffable) into words but there *must* be such a realm which points towards what we *must* do, and this *must* borrows its force from logical necessity. We cannot talk about this: we can call it vocation, something which we know is right, something we have to do, something we are here for on earth, something we put on display, we show, we *act out*, 'incarnate' in and through our lives. Wittgenstein's chief insight, in this respect, in the *Tractatus* seems to be that how things *are* (what our factual L can describe) has *no bearing on the meaning of my life*. What governs my life has nothing to do with facts; it is so precious, it is so much in my personal 'deep structure' that it cannot be talked about but it can be *done*. Perhaps this is why, after the publication of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein decided to become a village school-teacher: he felt, at least at that time, that he could act out his personal 'real' ethical principles in small villages of Lower Austria teaching children. At the same time, this gesture can also be interpreted as one of the whims of Wittgenstein, and he had plenty of those.

Non-linguistic 'meaning' in the *Tractatus*
Of course, all this can be called nonsense: here we are talking about something Wittgenstein several times says we cannot talk about. But he does not mention the ineffable to belittle it: in the *Tractatus* he implies that what *really **means*** (in the sense of 'significance') *the most for us* falls outside the limits of language, it is beyond the sayable, so it precisely has *nothing to do with linguistic meaning*.

Think of a language (as opposed to factual language) in which each and every word of mine is conveyed to the Other with a manual letting the Other know what I, the idiosyncratic speaker, the unique personality mean by each word (as the meaning of that word 'lives' in me, carrying *my* world: my emotions, feelings, etc.). That would be a 'perfect' language but it is precisely that language we do *not* have: the language we have can only represent the general,

it will always operate on the level of 'general understanding', on the level of 'we mean by this or that what most people mean'.

The significance of the *Tractatus*

The effect of the *Tractatus* was tremendous: the members of the Vienna Circle (a group of thinkers in Vienna most active between 1929 and 1936, e.g. Moritz Schilck, Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, etc.) studied it sentence by sentence for years (and drew the conclusion that what is beyond factual L is nonsense and *not* worth dealing with, so there is e.g. no possibility for an ethics or aesthetics); the *Tractatus* introduced the truth-tables into logic; Wittgenstein also makes a sharp distinction between propositions and names (Frege did not, remember that he tended to treat propositions as names whose referent was The Truth or The False) and at certain points the *Tractatus* also foreshadows the idea that the meaning of word or proposition is its use (e.g. 3.326). However, the view of meaning in the *Tractatus* is still mentalistic (although thought is *not* the meaning of a proposition, a proposition is an expression of a thought that, like the proposition, also mirrors reality) and in the *Tractatus* we do find a version of the referential conception of meaning (Frege, Russell, Davidson, to some extent Kripke).

Chapter 9: Meaning in Philosophical Investigations (PI)[29]

Over the 30s Wittgenstein realised that what he presented in the *Tractatus* was not wrong but only *one* possible way of looking at language. PI investigates not only the relationship between language and world, but language as an activity, as social interaction, as a personal relationship.

Semanticists usually mention three things about PI: 1. that there meaning is *use*; 2. that language is seen as consisting of an infinite number of *language-games* 3. that Wittgenstein thinks that no general theory of meaning is possible: the various games in L (seen as more or less independent 'islands', sub-systems within the larger system of L) follow rules of their own (more precisely: *speakers* participating in the various games follow the rules of the particular game in question) so no over-arching rules, applicable to 'L as such' is possible (as nothing can be given an over-arching definition: sooner or later exceptions will pop up and either the definition which would satisfy potentially *all* cases will be too general and, thus, meaningless, empty, or counter-examples will be artificially suppressed).

These three 'theses' are not entirely incorrect yet only with important qualifications. We need qualification concerning PI because it *is* a very peculiar philosophical work: it does not contain any 'doctrines' and no complete 'arguments' with a definitive 'conclusion'; it is a series of ideas, reflections and even confessions about our philosophical failures in the form of numbered paragraphs. There are at least four 'speaking voices' discernible on the pages of PI: the logician; the one who only uses his 'natural common sense': the 'man-in-the-street'; the 'behaviourist'; and 'the mentalist', who thinks that meaning is a thought/concept in the head. PI does not finally decide about any of the positions: it is an experimental book, which is especially interested in why a certain position is sometimes so vehemently defended by somebody: why a picture sometimes 'holds us captive'. PI is an invitation to thinking: it contains questions Wittgenstein was preoccupied with all through his life but it is the *method* of approaching and dealing with a problem which is interesting; the book does not so much contain the results but the *process* of thinking and one can learn a great deal from it in that respect, no matter what one wishes to investigate. Therefore to 'reconstruct' doctrines from PI

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[29] The best, relatively easy introduction to PI I know is: Marie McGinn: *Wittgenstein and the* Philosophical Investigations, London and New York: Routledge, 1987; the most insightful, but more difficult is: Stanley Cavell: *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality and Tragedy*, Oxford: OUP, 1979.

is, I think, a loss rather than a gain; if the 'curves' (the digressions, the desire to hear a plurality of sometimes conflicting voices all the time) are 'straightened' out, and attributed solely to Wittgenstein's peculiar 'style', then the spirit of the book will be damaged. Very crudely put: PI is not for learning 'theses' but for inspiration. Therefore, it is very difficult to 'teach it'; the tone, the attitude is very close to Wittgenstein's 'style' as a teacher in Cambridge and lots of members of his audience (including G. E. Moore) complained that it was very hard to see what Wittgenstein was 'driving at', what he wished to get across. Nevertheless, below I have to present some of the ideas of PI in a rather dogmatic fashion since it is in this form that semanticists deal with them.

Meaning and use

Quite precisely Wittgenstein says in § 43[30] "For a *large* number of cases – though not for all – in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (emphasis original). When meaning is not use can be when meaning is in the 'FORETELL, PORTEND' sense: e.g. *Dark clouds mean rain* (see Lecture 1). Further qualifications occur in *PI*, where Wittgenstein shows that meaning and use do not always coincide.

– *use* might be taken in a broader sense than *meaning*: if we use the word 'use' in a broad sense, then it will include e.g. how frequently an individual or a group of people use an expression, e.g. a person might frequently use in Hungarian the exclamation 'Nocsak!' (roughly: 'What the heck!') but that is not part of the meaning of the expression.

– *meaning* might be taken in a broader sense than *use*: the *intention* of the speaker, various *private* (pleasant or unpleasant, etc.) *associations* of the speaker with a linguistic expression (often called 'connotation'), and the *effect* the linguistic expression makes on the hearer (called perlocutionary act in speech-act theory) may be included in the description of the meaning of an expression. Here one wishes to make a distinction between semantics and pragmatics, claiming that intention (the illocutionary act in speech-act theory) and the perlocutionary act are already part of pragmatics. Perlocution is especially difficult to grasp: suppose I repeatedly tell somebody: 'Kill your brother-in-law!'. Even if he, each time he hears this utterance, regularly stands and gapes at me, this does not mean that the meaning of my utterance was 'Stand there and gape!'.

The criterion is how *general* the description of the meaning of the expression is supposed to be: the more I take the *particular* situation and the context into consideration (the more I 'tie' the expression to the actual, concrete circumstances), the more I will take pragmatic factors into consideration. The more I wish to describe how large groups of people use the expression, the more I will describe 'general use' and the closer I will get to semantics. 'Use' may include even idiosyncratic uses (e.g. that for a while I choose to use the word 'table' for the object *chair*) but nobody wishes to include that into the description of linguistic meaning. Yet the idiosyncratic uses of expressions gain great importance in theories of metaphor: a so-called 'poetic' metaphor (e.g. "The smokes are briar' – T. S. Eliot, i.e. 'smoke is a rose with long, thorny stems') should remain comprehensible for at least *some* people (though for many it may remain nonsense), yet it is clearly a deviation from normal uses, from general rules governing the uses of expressions in L. Because of the idiosyncrasies, some semanticists exclude metaphor from the description of meaning proper (i.e. from semantics in the strict sense), e.g. Donald Davidson (see later, in Lecture 11)

The positive side of the use theory of meaning

In PI at certain places Wittgenstein insists that a sign becomes meaningful not through being associated with an object (either with the reference, the 'real object' of the expression in the

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[30] According to common practice, I refer to PI according to paragraph-numbers (e.g. § 43), using the following edition: Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984.

external world, or with a mental object, a 'concept' in the mind) but through having a *rule-governed use*. Linguistic expressions should be thought of as we think of tools in a tool-box : we apply what seems to us to be the best for our purposes but there will be rules, shared by a community prescribing which expression is the most suitable for which purpose.

Language-games

The large system called language, at the same time, consists of larger and smaller sub-systems and certain expressions will be 'at home' more in one system than in another. A subsystem is called by Wittgenstein a language-game, such as: giving orders and obeying them; describing appearances of an object, giving its measurements; constructing an object from a description; reporting an event; making up a story; play-acting; making a joke, telling it; translating from one L into the other; lying to somebody, and many more (cf. § 23). (A language game is not what later philosophers such as Austin or Searle call a 'speech-act' but some *typical* speech-acts occur in various L-games.) In fact for Wittgenstein the potential number of language-games is infinite. Certain problems (misunderstandings) may occur when we use an expression in a language-game where it is not really 'at home'. E. g. I may wonder how I can ever know whether the Other is *really* in pain when he says 'I have pain'. But I have to realise that in this game *have* is not in the same use as in, e.g. *I have a house, I have a car. Have*, in the game about pain, is not present in the sense of 'ownership': I cannot sell pain, but I can sell my house to you, I cannot lend my pain, though I can lend my car to you. *Feelings* such as pain can be talked about in terms of *having* (in German or in English) but the riddle occurs when I keep thinking about the feeling of *pain* in terms of an *object* like *car* or *house*: then I may wish to *know* your pain and then I wonder how I can ever do that. We will never get to *know* the Other's pain (we should *acknowledge* it, instead), as it is also odd to say about my own pain: 'I know I am in pain'. I am *in* pain but this is a far 'closer' relationship than one which could be described as a 'knowing' relationship (pain is far closer to me: it *is* in a certain sense, *me*, identical with me). But if I am not aware of the language game in which I use *have* in this or that sense, all sorts of riddles (even philosophical ones) may occur, such as: 'how can I know the Other's pain?' Is the word *pain* part of the 'private language' of the Other? (See the problem of 'private L below: "(s)he certainly knows what the word *pain* refers to 'inside' of him- or herself, but I can never, so for a person the meaning of *pain* is forever a private meaning." This position is contested by Wittgenstein).

Rule-following

Uses of signs, of linguistic expressions are like uses of everyday objects such as the use of tools, objects (see above, so: spoons, chairs, hammers, whatever). I learn the rules of language as a child together with learning all sorts of biological-physical and social activities, such as eating, walking, talking to people, behaving at a party, etc.; using the L is part of my other social activities. Learning a L is not like learning history, physics, etc.. Learning a L is learning a *skill* like learning to ride a bike, drive a car, etc., things I cannot 'forget'. In learning L, I do not learn 'pieces of information' but 'ways in which I employ movements, postures, gestures, activities, etc.' In learning my first L (mother-tongue), I also learn 'the world', 'in practice', so to speak. E. g. a child falls in the street, bruises her knee. Adults run up to her, help her to stand up, the child is crying, the adults ask: 'Does it hurt?' 'Oh, my poor little girl!' 'Are you in pain?' etc. The child learns the use of the words *hurts*, *pain* and others within this 'dramatic' situation, together with other modes and ways of reacting in such a situation. Speech, and thus the use of L is always a *part* of a larger system of rule-governed activities. For a time, the child may apply certain words strictly bound to certain situations, then, by analogy, she may extend the uses to other situations, and for a time, obviously, she might be right or wrong (she may call, e.g. all things covering the head a 'cap' instead of differentiating between hat, hood, kerchief, etc.). Learning a L for Wittgenstein does not presuppose anything 'innate' (i.e. a L-learning capacity born with the child, as e.g. Jackendoff

or Chomsky supposes, cf. Lecture 7); it is done on a trial-and-error basis and especially the scope (the 'largeness') of the meanings of expressions is far less certain and fixed for Wittgenstein than generative linguists suppose. They are constantly 'in the making', their boundaries are 'negotiated' by the users in constant practice.

Rules (the rules governing the uses of linguistic expressions but also the rules governing our other (social) activities, e.g. walking, eating at an elegant dinner-table, etc.) become so much 'part of us' that we follow the rules 'blindly'; we seldom reflect on them, we just follow them. So if I am asked: 'how do you know that the meaning of the Hungarian word *kés* is 'knife' in English?' I can say: 'well, I speak Hungarian (and English)', i.e. I know the rules not only I but also others follow when using the words *kés* and *knife* in Hungarian and in English, respectively. But the paradox is that if I can (and I do) obey a rule, I can also disobey it, I can deviate from it (cf. idiosyncratic metaphors, for example). The 'certainty' of meanings for Wittgenstein is based *solely* on my expectations that others will react in and to situations the way I and others *normally* do, that you will do what I would do, as part of our common, ordinary practice in handling affairs, doing things etc. We simply *trust* the others in all our activities, including the use of L. Meaning is based on the communal, more or less harmonious way people participate in activities: it is based on social norms, on tradition, on an inherited culture (so, in some sense, it is 'historical'): on a shared *form of life*. Meaning is of course, in some sense, in the 'head': I have recorded lots of situations in which I and others have reacted this or that way to an utterance. But meaning gets constructed not inside of me but *outside*: in our everyday practices, interactions, co-operations: meaning is, first and foremost, *external*, not internal. If I want to learn the meaning of an expression I should see how people *react* to an expression but this is still not a behaviouristic approach to meaning because there is *no one-to-one correspondence between a meaning and a person's behaviour with respect to it*. (If somebody points to the wall, I may think he means 'wall' but she may well be pointing to its colour, the cracks of the wall, etc.) I might always be wrong in 'reading' his or her reactions and lots of reactions are possible to a particular meaning. Deviations may always occur: no one can guarantee that one will react the way I expect him or her to react. Understanding an expression means: I know how to go on with the expression, misunderstanding is the opposite, or going in another direction than the Other expects me to.

Wittgenstein against mentalism (conceptualism)

Wittgenstein, especially at the beginning of PI, describes situations which imply that meaning is *not* identical with the *concept* in one's head (cf. Jackendoff for the opposite view, Lecture 7). Suppose, Wittgenstein says, I send someone shopping (§ 1), and I tell her: 'Bring me five red apples'. Now when in the store she tells this sentence to the shop-keeper, what will happen? Will the shop-keeper open a dictionary 'in his head', go to the section called 'fruit' and from among pears, plums, apricots, etc. pick out *apple*? Then will he go to the section of numbers 'in his head' and, starting from 1, stop at 5? And will he, similarly, from a colour-table containing, besides red, yellow, blue, green, etc., put a 'mental finger' to 'red' and stop there? This is not likely because the above account misses an important question: *what tells* the 'mental finger' to stop at this or that particular colour (fruit, number) rather than at the other? If I say that the mental finger stops where it does because the shopkeeper knows the meaning of 'apple', 'five' and 'red', I have not explained anything because I want to know how and why the finger stopped *there* and not somewhere else. In other words, in the above account we still need to explain the *link* between hearing the word (sign) e.g. *red* and the mental image, the concept of red in the shopkeeper's mind. The meaning is not the concept itself, it is the *link* (the 'pointing finger') *between* the word (sign) and the concept. Talking about meaning we often say: 'The hearer hears a word and then associates this or that mental image/concept with the word.' Wittgenstein asks: but what *tells* the hearer to associate this or that with the word rather than something else? The concept itself is not in any kind of

'natural' connection with the sign, e.g. there is no natural bond between the sign *red* and the 'colour red' in one's mind (red can be called *rot, rouge, piros, vörös* etc.). Wittgenstein claims that meaning is not the concept: if I explain meaning with the concept, I am trying to explain meaning with itself, or, in other words: I have only pushed the problem of meaning further; now I have to explain how a concept comes about and how the connection, the link is established between concept and sign (word, linguistic expression, etc.). Wittgenstein answer is: look at the use of the sign in everyday life, that will *show* the sign's (the linguistic expression's) meaning. That this use gets 'coded', 'recorded' in the form of something we may even call a concept in the mind is another matter (it is like remembering anything else). But it is the dynamic and flexible rule, the rule-governed use (in fact the 'us**ing**' in innumerable possible situations) which gets coded, not an 'entity', a fixed (even 'Platonic') object.

"There is no 'private-language'"

Thinking that meaning is the 'concept in the head' may also lead to the position that since everybody's concept (meaning) is in his or her head, and since that concept might be different with respect to everybody and there is no other way to 'compare' our respective concepts in our head than through the meanings themselves, all meanings are private. A good example could be the following. Somebody keeps a diary and whenever he has a certain feeling, e.g. the feeling of pain, he puts a certain sign, e.g. *S* into this diary. Nobody else knows what *S* stands for, so it is his private sign and thus, the meaning of *S* is private, referring here to the person's pain. But Wittgenstein points out that while of course we can always use any sign for any purposes (so we can put, privately, all signs to the most idiosyncratic uses), our very ability to use a sign (any sign, including *S*) is *not* private: the person using sign *S* is able to use thousands and thousand of other signs and he has learnt this from his speaking-community; he used *S* by analogy, 'on the basis' of other signs, so his very ability to use any sign, even the most idiosyncratic one, remains, willy-nilly participating in a communal activity. So the *reference* of *S* may be idiosyncratic, it can remain a 'secret' (private) forever but the *use* of the sign (the ability to use a sign, whichever, at all) will remain a non-private, communal (shared) activity, a participation in a form of life. So, in this sense, there is no 'private language'.

Wittgenstein on names in PI

Wittgenstein also deals with the meaning of proper names in PI (esp. §79). Some of his insights are:

– the meaning of a proper name cannot be identical with its bearer (if Mr. Black dies, the meaning of the name does not die with him)

– the meaning of a proper name is not a *single* description which its bearer, if there is one, must uniquely satisfy. The name 'Moses' can be given in various ways, i.e. different people associate different descriptions with the name 'Moses' ((1)'the one who led the people of Israel out of Egypt', (2)'a character in the Old Testament' (3) 'who put down the ten commandments') but all these (contrary to Frege) are not the various meanings of the name 'Moses'. Suppose that 3 people (No. 1-3) hold (1), (2) and (3) about the bearer of the name 'Moses', respectively, i.e. person No. 1 (1), No. 2 (2), No. 3 (3) and they do not hold any other. Then should we say that when they hear the sentences e.g. *Moses was a great prophet*, they understand something different by this sentences because they 'substitute' different 'contents' (namely, (1), (2) and (3), respectively) for the name Moses in the sentence *Moses was a great prophet*? Wittgenstein suggests no: we may explain a name through a description but the description does not function as a definition: if it turns out that one of the descriptions e.g. 'the one who led the people of Israel out of Egypt' does not apply to anybody, or is false, we do not conclude that the person did not exist but would supply an alternative description.

– Thus, though Wittgenstein does not, as Kripke does (see Lecture 4), claim that 'Moses' would be a 'rigid designator', Wittgenstein certainly implies that no description, however precise or complex, will capture what we mean by 'Moses', since – as Kripke also claims – any of the descriptions associated with the proper name could be discarded under certain circumstances; all descriptions contain contingent pieces of knowledge about the barer of the name which could have been otherwise. Giving descriptions, Wittgenstein says, is only *one* way of pointing out somebody or something; we may use ostensive definitions ('*This* is the Castle in Buda', standing, e.g. on the Pest side, pointing towards the Castle), or we may introduce ourselves ('I am Géza Kállay'). Elsewhere, namely in his 'Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough' Wittgenstein says that proper names have a great significance for the *identity* of the bearer[31] (cf. again, Kripke!).

Chapter 10: Theories of Metaphor: from Aristotle to Davidson and Paul Ricoeur

Why did God have to send
His message figuratively? (Blaise Pascal)

I. The first approach to metaphor: Aristotle

A possible way of approaching a phenomenon we wish to understand is to go back to its 'origin', to the 'source' in which it first occurs. The first -- by no means systematic or comprehensive -- account of metaphor we know is in two of Aristotle's (384-322 B.C.) works: the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* (most probably composed during his most mature period, when he was teaching in the Lykeion in Athens betw. 334-323 B.C.). In both, metaphor is not distinguished on the level of *discourse* or *sentence* but on the level of words (*lexis*), even more specifically, on the level of *noun* (or *name*): metaphor is something that happens, typically, to the noun. Further, Aristotle. defines metaphor in terms of *movement*: metaphor is "the application of a strange (alien, *allotrios*) term either transferred (displaced, *epiphora*) from the genus and applied to the species or from the species and applied to the genus, or from one species to another, or else by analogy". (1447b)

Thus, metaphor is the transference of a name from one domain to another (carrying a word from one place to another), it is a trans-*position* which results in applying a name to a thing which is alien (*allotrios*) to it, as opposed to its ordinary, current (*kurion*) name(s) (if it had a name before: Aristotle remarks later that one of the 'advantages' of metaphor is that through the act of transference, we can give a (single) name to a thing which previously was only circumscribed, his example is (*Poetics,* 1457b): "there is no word for the action of the sun in scattering its fire" but you can say, relying on the analogy which exists between the sun scattering its rays and the ploughman sowing his seed: "*sowing* the god-created fire" ["The sun is sowing" -- 'The sun is shining']). For Aristotle, then, there are four possibilities according to which transference may happen:
-- application of a strange term either transferred from *genus* to species {in Hung.: "nem>faj"}, e.g. *Here stands my ship*, since riding at anchor is a species ('a subclass') of the genus 'standing', OR:
-- from species to genus. e.g. *Indeed ten thousand noble things Odysseus did,* since *ten thousand* is here understood as 'many' and *ten thousand* is a species of *many*
-- from species to species: here Aristotle's example is very difficult to understand: "Drawing off his life with the bronze" (where *bronze* most

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[31] 'Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*', In Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Occasions,* eds. by J. Klagge and A. Nordmann, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993, pp. 125-126.

probably means a knife) and "Severing with the tireless bronze" (where *bronze* most probably means a cupping-bowl ('köpölyözés'). Here, acc. to Aristotle, *drawing off* ['to cause a liquid to flow'] is used for *severing* ['to to separate, to divide'], and *severing* for *drawing off*, and both are species of 'removing'. (A less "Greek" example might be: *This food disagreed with me -- I cannot digest this argument,* where *disagree* is used for *digest* and *digest* for *disagree* and both are species of '(not) to accept'). These, for us hardly comprehensible examples are most probably from various tragedies, since they occur in the discussion of diction in tragedy (what kind of language the poet should use).

Finally, there is a forth type of transfer (difficult to be distinguished from the *species-to-species* shift): transfer by analogy or proportion, e.g. *the evening of life*, where *old age* is related to *life* as *evening* is related to *day,* i.e. the fourth term of the analogy is related to the third in the same way as the second is related to the first. In the *Poetics,* it is only here that A. refers explicitly to *resemblance*. However, in the *Rhetoric* (which most probably was composed after the *Poetics*, since it takes the definition of metaphor for granted), A. also introduces a parallel betw. metaphor and simile (comparison) but he subordinates simile to metaphor, e.g. he says (1412b): "successful similes are in a sense metaphors". In the *Rhetoric,* metaphor is among the "virtues" of lexis (words), achieving, together with other means, the major goal of rhetorical speech: persuasion. Among the virtues of metaphor (*clarity, warmth, facility, appropriateness* and *elegance -- "urbane style",* as Aristotle calls it) *liveliness of expression* is also mentioned: "metaphor sets the scene before our eyes" (1410b). It is here that A. talks about the instructive value of metaphor, about the pleasure of understanding, which follows metaphor's surprise.

II. Some riddles around metaphor

In A's account we may recognise some elements (and major problems) of the theory of metaphor that will keep returning.

(1) The problem that the very 'definition' of metaphor is *itself* metaphorical (the word *metaphor* goes back to Greek *metapherein* ('to transfer') > *meta* ('with, after, between, among') + *pherein* ('to bear'), the definition of metaphor returns to itself. Is there a non-metaphorical standpoint from which the phenomenon of metaphor might be assessed? The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger and the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida will keep asking this question. Heidegger, in *Der Satz vom Grund* (p. 88) argues that "the idea of 'transfer', and of metaphor rests on the distinction, if not the complete separation, of the sensible (*sinnlich*) from the non-sensible, as two self-sufficient realms". H's point is that it is the separation itself which created the problem but this outlook (this way of arranging phenomena around us, this sort of 'metaphysics') is so fundamentally grounded in our thinking that all the explanations we shall be trying to give for metaphor will always already carry this separation within themselves as well, so they will themselves inevitably be metaphorical: we shall be trying to cure the illness with the illness itself. H. claims that our 'metaphysics' (our approach to 'what there is', to 'beings') accepts as 'real' those things which are present (which we can see, touch, etc.), whereas the 'unseen' but still, in another sense existing, is talked about as the 'distant', 'the far-away'. Now this distinction *is* the separation on which "the metaphorical" depends; metaphor is a 'natural state' for our thinking to such an extent that we shall never be able to go 'beyond' it, to see it 'better', to have a look at it from 'another perspective' -- all our explanations for metaphor will thus be circular. Derrida (in *White Mythology*) will also argue that the language with which we describe the 'conceptual', the 'unseen', the 'abstract' (for example, the concept called 'metaphor') is so much saturated with the 'physical', the 'down-to-earth' (cf. the very word *concept*, which originally is 'to take in', [or, for that matter, cf. Hungarian *fogalom*, which has to do with 'clutching, grasping' in the physical sense]) that any explanation we pretend to be taking place on a 'general' and 'abstract' level will, in fact, heavily rely on the physical and thus, on the

metaphorical. To simplify: both philosophers claim that one of philosophy's illusions is that it can reach a level of abstraction where we can 'get rid of' metaphors; since, however, our thinking is metaphorical through and through (thinking, in a sense, *is* metaphor itself), we can only offer further metaphors to explain metaphors. Both Heidegger and Derrida represent the view that 'everything is (or at least one day was) metaphor', therefore metaphor, which is the main source of ambiguity in language, will constantly dismantle (deconstruct) our most cherished, 'abstractly and unambiguously defined' concepts in the sense that the metaphorical 'core' of the concept (its 'original meaning') will sometimes start a 'small revolution' against the 'plain' concepts we think to be unequivocal; metaphor will make an 'unambiguous' concept ambiguous. H. and D. belong to that tradition which teaches that even plain (ordinary) language was once 'poetry', that language is not reason but image-based (see Lecture 1) .

(2) Since Aristotle discusses metaphor when he talks about poetic *diction*, metaphor becomes (especially later in rhetorical handbooks and in stylistics) a 'figure of speech', a trope (repeated by later), a mere ornament, replacing an ordinary (literal) expression to make speech more 'picturesque'. For a long time (practically up to the 1930s) metaphor was indeed "dormant" in stylistics -- its immense significance for human thinking and especially its heuristic value (that it guides discovery, that it is perhaps the *only* way to discovery) was realised and generally accepted only around the middle of the 20th century.

(3) Since, in the *Rhetoric*, a parallel is established between metaphor and simile, metaphor will often be treated as an "elliptical or abbreviated" simile (*brevior similitudo* -- Quintilian: *Institutio Oratoria,* Book VIII, 6), a collapsed comparison from which *like* or *as* has been omitted for convenience or to heighten the effect of the expression. But how to account for similarity in, e.g. *The song is you*? Do I here *liken* you to the song? Or can we select the appropriate simile to the metaphor "I have just been in hell"? We can, of course, say "Where I have been was *like* hell" but still the simile cannot rest on *direct* acquaintance with hell on the one hand and direct acquaintance with another place, on the other. The metaphor rather depends on the system of 'commonplace attributes' we associate with the word hell, grounded in our cultural tradition. Or, if I say *Richard is a gorilla* and I mean that Richard is nasty, mean, quarrelsome, etc., then I do not mind that ethnologists confirm that gorillas 'in fact' are shy, timid and gentle. Metaphors (at least sometimes) work through similarities *as* cultural stereotypes rather than through 'real' similarities. Or take the sentence *You have become an aristocrat* said to someone having received promotion: he is not *like* an aristocrat but his new *status* or *condition* is like that of being an aristocrat. Thus the major question is: how does similarity work in metaphor? This brings up the following, genuinely philosophical issue: do I look at the two things (e.g. Richard and the gorilla) one after the other and, when I perceive some similar features, I connect the two? And, most importantly, do I (can I?) perceive the similarities independent of language? Or is similarity rather *created* in the very act of connecting them in the sentence? And if it is, shall we, especially in constructions of identification (such as X *is* Y), see *some* similarities even if 'in fact' (in 'reality') there are not any? Shakespeare, in *Troilus and Cressida* (Act III, Scene 3, lines 145-150) makes Ulysses tell Agamemnon:
Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion.
Zsákot hord hátán az Idõ, uram,
S morzsát koldul a feledésnek.... (trans. by Szabó Lõrinc)
Had we been able to perceive any similarities between beggars and Time before we met Shakespeare's metaphor? And do we see these similarities now?

(4) Since Aristotle discusses transference in terms of shifts between genera and species, a further question arises, which, as in (3), also has to do with the relationship between

language, the (extra-linguistic) world ('reality') and thought. Aristotle account presupposes that things, even before language would start its metaphorical operations, are in already classified systems (genera, species, etc.). So when Aristotle says that we 'borrow' a term e.g. from the domain of species and use it as a genus (when we say *ten thousand* instead of *many*) he has to take it for granted that one is able to specify both the place of borrowing and the place of application. The problem here is that metaphor is often precisely the device to create *new* domains -- they are employed to blur the edges of already existing categories. Paul Ricoeur says (in *Metaphor and Symbol*, p. 52): "a metaphor is an instantaneous creation, a semantic innovation which has no status in already established language and which only exists because of the attribution of the unusual or the unexpected predicate." So is there a pre-existing order in the world? Is it when this order is set up that language (and metaphor) may start its operation? Or is that order created by language itself? (If the latter is true, can reference to 'reality' be used to explain metaphor?).

(5) Aristotle also makes a distinction between the strange (alien, *allotrios*) and the ordinary (current, generally accepted, *kurion*) application of terms. Thus the road is open to interpret metaphor as a kind of *deviation* from the norm, as the *violation* of common usage. The *Rhetoric* will also talk about the pleasant *surprise* we feel when we encounter metaphors. Jean Cohen (*Structure de Language Poétique*) claims that metaphors are not only *pertinent* but they are *impertinent* as well: in the first place, metaphor shocks, because there is kind of semantic explosion. Another way of putting this (Ricoeur, *Metaphor and Symbol*) is to say that the two terms in a metaphor are like a reluctant pair of lovers, who are yoked together by the syntax of a sentence and finally one gives in, creating a stormy union. In theories of metaphor, the element of tension, shock or surprise are accounted for in basically two ways:

(A) tension is interpreted as existing between the two terms in the sentence, e.g. *Sally is a block of ice* the tension has to do with the fact that under the literal interpretation of the whole sentence, the sentence is simply *false*: this tells us to go to another 'plain' (into another domain) and look for another interpretation, where the sentence is no longer false and means something like 'Sally is frigid'. Here the problems are:

a) there are sentences which are plainly false and we would not like to call them metaphorical, e.g. *Budapest is in the United States of America.*

b) there are negative sentences, e. g. *The work of art is not an egg,* or: *Life is not a bed of roses,* which are true literally but -- at least in a certain sense -- are metaphorical.

c) it is not enough to take note of deviation: not all of them will produce *good metaphors*, e.g. is the sentence *The number 13 is dangerous* a metaphor? If it is, is it a good one? Or: *I have an unmarried shoelace.* (?)

Surprise, created by the pertinence of metaphor, plays an important role in the *interaction* view of metaphor (Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*). There is a tension between the two terms e.g. *Sally* and *ice* in the sentence *Sally is a block of ice* and they get 'reconciled' and, finally, united in a *new* meaning as the terms mutually 'recognise' what they have in common. To explain this process, we analyse the terms, first independently, into semantic features, e.g.

Sally: + ANIMATE+FEMALE+BLOND+TALL +UNEMOTIONAL+RESERVED, etc.

ice: INANIMATE+COLD+MIXTURE OF OXYGEN AND HYDROGEN+HARD, etc. but when the terms are yoked together, only the common (or at least the cognate) elements will mutually select one another and take part in the 'reconciliation'.

(B) other metaphorical theories will argue that the tension is not (or not only) between the two terms in the sentence but between the 'old', literal meaning and the 'new', metaphorical one. This, first of all, presupposes the ability to clearly distinguish between literal and metaphorical meaning. This is usually not without problems. For John Searle, for example, meaning is literal (in *Meaning and Expression*) when, against a background of commonly shared assumptions, the meaning of the sentence and the intended meaning of the person who

utters the sentence, overlap. But what is the relationship between the literal and the metaphorical meaning? Does the metaphorical *retain* some elements of the literal? For Ricoeur, for example, this is the prerequisite of the functioning of metaphor: the metaphorical will constantly 'reach back' to the literal and will create a *new* meaning on the 'ruins' of the old one: one cannot appreciate time seen in terms of an old beggar if one does not know what a beggar 'usually', 'generally' does. Now is there a genuinely new meaning or should we rather speak of the extension of the meaning of *beggar*?

Donald Davidson (*What Metaphors Mean*), for example, is of the opinion that there is no 'connection' between the literal and the metaphorical because there is no such thing as 'metaphorical meaning': "metaphors mean what the words, in their most literal interpretation, mean, and nothing more." "Metaphor runs on the same familiar linguistic tracks that the plainest sentences do. What distinguishes metaphors is not meaning but use -- in it it is like assertion, hinting, lying, promising or criticising". Then what have metaphorical theories been talking about since Aristotle? Davidson claims that they describe the *effects* metaphors have on us. Metaphors do not have a specific, or separable, or distinguishable *cognitive content*: the common mistake is to read the contents of the thoughts metaphors provoke in us into the metaphor itself.

(6) Aristotle also talks about metaphor coming to our aid when we need a single term for a thing that has hitherto been described trough circumlocution, i.e. in a clumsy, roundabout way (cf. *Sowing the god-created fire.*) Metaphor is able to fill a semantic *lacuna* (gap). Yet this leads to the substitution view of metaphor: if it can replace a lengthy description, then this surely works the other way round, too: it is possible to paraphrase metaphors, without any loss in meaning. Sometimes this might be true: *Richard is a gorilla* may not be saying much 'more' than 'Richard is nasty'. But could we paraphrase the following poem by Emily Dickinson?

My life had stood -- a Loaded Gun --
In Corners -- till a Day
The Owner passed -- identified --
And carried Me away.

Will the following paraphrase do: 'My life was one of unrealised but readily realisable potential ["a loaded gun"] in mediocre surroundings [corners] until such time [a day] when my destined lover [the owner] came [passed], recognised my potential [identified] and took [carried] me away'. Of course not.

(7) Finally, Aristotle notices that metaphor is able to depict the abstract in concrete ('tangible') terms, it can carry the *logical* moment of proportionality (cf. metaphor by analogy, the 4th type) and the sensible moment of figuratively. Hence, later on, in Heidegger, Derrida, Ricoeur or Stanley Cavell celebrate metaphor as the vehicle of discovery: in (through) metaphor, the invisible appears through the visible, we can see, e.g. inanimate things *as if* they were in a state of *activity* (think of the dagger Macbeth can see before him, perspiring blood). Metaphor is the means to dismantle the dead, thing-ly, categorical, fixed character of objects, ideas and concepts by making them *do* something, by almost forcing them to perform actions. Metaphors do not *describe* reality: they *create* it, they *animate* it. And by showing (at least sometimes) the alien in terms of the familiar (through something we can *relate to*, especially because of the physical closeness present in the almost 'tangible' scene metaphor sets before our eyes), metaphor can make us feel at home in the world. Metaphor is *seeing* (something) *as*: metaphor brings us into a proximity with things which, for example in their abstraction, seem to be distant; metaphor is thus able to tell us *how* we are in the world. *Seeing as* becomes *being as*.

Chapter 11: Martin Heidegger on language and meaning

Heidegger's (1889-1976) significance

If Wittgenstein is a philosopher who practically read nothing of the Western philosophical tradition, Heidegger, another major influence on European thinking in the 20ᵗʰ century is one who read practically everything, yet incorporating the thought of especially the Pre-Socratics (Anaximander, Parmenides, Heraclitus), Plato, Aristotle, the Medieval Duns Scotus, Kant, the German 'idealists' (Schelling, Hegel), the Hegel-critic Kierkegaard (from whom he borrowed the significance of the experience of 'Dread' or 'Anxiety' (*Angst*)), and his immediate predecessors (Nietzsche, Dilthey, Brentano and his tutor and professor, Edmund Husserl) highly critically: while learning a lot from them, he 'digested' (in a way: 'deconstructed', 'destructed') the European philosophical tradition. Heidegger was one of those who claimed that we should start again from scratch: everything should again be reconsidered and re-evaluated in philosophy. He was a major influence on the so-called Continental (German-French) tradition of philosophy: French phenomenology (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Lévinas, the latter developing his own ethical ontology in constant opposition to Heidegger), French existentialism (Jean-Paul Sartre), French deconstruction (Jacques Derrida) and German hermeneutics (Hans-Georg Gadamer). Behind several schools of literary criticism (the phenomenological, the hermeneutical, reader-response-criticism, deconstruction), so practically behind all that are not based on history (new historicism, feminism, Marxism, cultural materialism, post-colonialism, and several semiotic schools are history-based), we, of course among others, find, in one way or another, Martin Heidegger in the background.

Today, especially in Anglo-Saxon (English and American) philosophy it is Heidegger's Rectorship at Freiburg University in 1933-1934 and his membership in the German National Socialist Party which is most frequently mentioned. It is just as much a mistake to overemphasise this and to judge or 'back-read' his philosophy from this point of view as to remain silent about the fact that soon after Hitler came to power in 1933, Heidegger undertook the Rectorship at Freiburg and was a member of the Nazi party between 1933 and 1945. Later he claimed he had wished to prevent spreading anti-semitism and the burning of books at his university (and to some extent he was successful) and it is true that he immediately resigned when he saw he was obeying orders 'from above' (he was only Rector for nine months). On account of his party-membership, he was not allowed to teach between 1945 and 1951 and he received no salary. In 1951 he was rehabilitated as Professor Emeritus at Freiburg, and taught, quite regularly, until 1967. Otherwise, his career was relatively uneventful: except for the five years he spent at the University of Marburg as 'extraordinary [not fully tenured]' professor (1923-1928), his life and professorship is associated with Freiburg: first he studied theology there between 1909 and 1911 in the Jesuit seminary, then he switched to philosophy and completed his doctoral dissertation on Duns Scotus by 1916. During World War I he worked behind a desk and between 1919 and 1923 he was senior assistant to his former professor, Edmund Husserl but he was already teaching, too with a tremendous influence on his students. A major turning point was 1927 when his first major book, *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*) was published, making him famous all over Europe. His Freiburg years started again in 1928 (he got the 'ordinary', fully tenured professorship of the retiring Husserl) and he remained faithful to Freiburg University, in spite of several invitations also to Berlin, all through his life. He composed much of *Being and Time* already in a little hut in Todtnauberg on the edge of the Black Forest – he liked to work there most, in almost total seclusion. His other books are mostly based on his lectures and seminars, treating major figures like Plato, Nietzsche, Kant, Schelling, or the Pre-Socratics, as well as problems of truth (*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* , "On the Essence of Truth" 1930), of art (*Der Ursprung*

des Kunstwerkes, "The Origin of the Work of Art", 1935), of language and poetry (*Bauen Wohnen Denken*, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 1951), of technological society (especially *Die Frage nach der Technik* "The Question Concerning Technology", 1954) and of philosophy and thinking as such (*Was heisst Denken?*, "What Is Called Thinking", also translatable as 'What Calls Us to Thinking?' 1954).
What follows is largely based on chapters of *Being and Time*.

Experince *versus* Language

One thing to bear in mind when one deals with phenomenology (and, to some extent) with Continental philosophy as such) is that there meaning (often called *Sinn, not* in Frege's sense of the word, meaning 'sense' or rather 'significance' here) is generated by not directly by language but *experience:* it is what we 'go through' that is significant. For Heidegger, the problem of the 'existence of the external world' is a pseudo-problem: he claims we do not experience isolated and immediate sense-data (such as 'redness', 'roundness' ' whiteness', etc, when we experience e.g., a red ball with white spots, we do not 'construct' the object from isolated sense-experiences, this a totally artificial attitude) but we experience *wholes* like a red-ball-with-white-spots, always within the horizon, and against the background of other objects as wholes, like e.g. a garden with tress, bushes, perhaps with some garden furniture, maybe other toys, etc, i.e. in situations in which we can easily orient ourselves. We experience, first and foremost, i.e. as *primary experience* our world as a *human* world (a kind of 'life-world', i.e. the world we inhabit as ordinary, everyday beings) in which we identify and use objects ('things') easily: as objects *for* us, as objects always already with some significance and meaning for us. For example, we identify a *ball* in the garden we may *play with*. Heidegger claims that several problems of philosophy in the Western philosophical tradition arose from trying to understand objects 'in isolation', as not always already as part *of* something *in* a certain given context, while it is precisely the context that bestows meaning on things, which allows us to interpret things *as* this-or-that. But this, after all 'everyday', attitude to the world is not only important to understand the world (in a way, we 'understand', i.e. interpret for ourselves things, situations, people, etc. all day long) but also to understand our own being: our understanding of the world is indicative of our *way* of being and it is our attitude, disposition to the world that shows the world in such-and-such a manner. Heidegger uses the German term *Dasein* to refer, and also to characterise, our being: *Dasein* is a composite of *da* [meaning both 'here' or 'there' in German] and *Sein* [which is the word for 'being']. So *Dasein* is 'here/there-being', trying to communicate that we are always already in a *here-* or *there*–position in the world, as already positioned, in a concrete situation, at a certain place, as a particular personality etc. *Dasein* (usually not translated into English by translators of Heidegger, and given back as 'itt-lét' or 'jelenvalólét' in Hungarian) is always our *human* way*, the *'how'* of our being in the world*. Much of the first part of *Being and Time* is a characterisation of *Dasein*.

Objects/things *Zuhanden* and *Vorhanden*

Heidegger thinks that since Plato much of the Western metaphysical (ontological) tradition, i.e. the philosophy dealing with the problem of *being* (what does it mean *to be*?) has gone astray because both philosophers and 'ordinary people' have adopted a wrong attitude to both the world and to the human being: form Plato on, things, including ideas, just as much as human beings have been treated in isolation, as 'objects' of scrutiny and understanding. The general pattern of this attitude has been: I wish to understand the world around me containing objects: I stand *here*, and *there* are the things *opposite* me; in German one of the words used for *object* is *Gegenstand*, which literally means 'opposite-standing'. This attitude suggests approaching objects from the outside, as just lying 'over there'. This is an 'I-do-not-have-

much-to-do-with-them' attitude: things observed from a distance e.g. for theoretical observation. This attitude Heidegger calls the *Vor-handen* (literally: 'before-the-hand') attitude to the world. If objects are *Vorhanden*, they are either 'just there' or they are subject-matters for external scrutiny. Then things are on the same level: thy do not have more meaning than the one they *share*: that they are *just* objects, nothing more; there is nothing to distinguish them for one another except for superficial, outward characteristics: they are in an overall neutral state. Yet we may look at things, objects primarily seeing what they are *for*: we may, in the first place see their function, 'duty' in a smaller or larger context, as they themselves are 'expressive' not just of their properties but what kind of role they play in our lives. This attitude is called by Heidegger the *Zuhanden* (literally: 'to-the-hand') attitude: if something is *Zuhanden*, we either see the object in terms of what we may use it for, or we are actually using it *as* part of an activity (we are not merely gazing at it). If I see a hammer (Heidegger's example) lying on the table, I may identify it as a hammer, I may examine its head, its handle: then it is *Vorhanden*. If I see it as the tool I need to drive a nail into the wall, or I am actually driving a nail into the wall *with* it, I relate to it *Zuhanden*. In use, in the *Zuhanden* attitude we sometimes 'do not even notice' the object: it is so natural that we make use of it, it fits into the whole activity so naturally that we start to 'observe it' only when something goes wrong, for example the handle of the hammer breaks. In such cases we do not mind the outward appearance, we need *another* hammer because it is the function, the role we are interested in: you may hand me whichever hammer you want if it works, and then it loses its *mere* object-like, neutral status. In our everyday activities, in our dealing with, and handling things, we use things in a most matter-of-fact way, we experince them as they naturally 'slip into' our hands, and thus 'lose sight' of the things since they are part of the normal course of events; in a way they become 'part of us'. (E.g. do we mark whether the bus we get on is well-washed or not? If it is not strikingly filthy so that we cannot see through the windows, we don't mind; we wish to ride, to get to our destination with it – my example). Or take statues and paintings in a museum. They are of course very usefully collected there but they have been removed from their normal, natural environment (their age, their background, their context which supports them and give them significance): they occur in so large a number that we can hardly do anything else but treat them as pictures hanging on the wall and statues standing there: they might all become mere objects of gazing; it is precisely their *meaning*, their significance that can get lost. However, if we find a painting in a context we can relate to, the picture will 'stand out', it will be given the chance to show its true meaning. Heidegger claims that the Western philosophical tradition tended to approach most of the their concerns *Vorhanden*, and thus lost sight of both how things are positioned in the human world and how human beings are positioned with respect to the world of things. Meaning gets generated only in a larger context, against a background, as *human* experience. Heidegger criticised technological society on account of treating everything as merely dead things, machines turned on and doing their job; the more machines we have, the more we are prone to take up the *Vorhanden* attitude and treat even human beings as machines, as 'dead', and we become machines ourselves. So for Heidegger, identifying, observing an object, being able to list its qualities (as e.g. empiricism does in philosophy) is still disregarding their (and, thereby, our) *being*; unless we turn towards objects trying to find their significance for ourselves, everything remains in a dull, grey, and boring sameness.

Boredom and anxiety: the cradle of nothingness (mostly based on "What Is Metaphysics?", Heidegger's inaugural   lecture at Frieburg becoming ordinary professor)

According to Heidegger, it is impossible to talk about *being* without trying to understand its direct opposite: nothingness. *Nothing* is not a *thing*, not a metaphysical 'entity' (not a

'concept', not an 'idea'); it is just there, constantly challenging, doubting and annihilating what 'there is'. If it were an object, we could deal with it but it envelopes, overwhelms and covers us; it 'takes us': it is very real, yet it belongs to its characteristics that it cannot be properly grasped. At one point Heidegger says: the nothing cannot do anything 'better' or else than *nothing*: 'the Nothing nothings', it annihilates all the time.

These were the claims, even on the level of the language Heidegger uses, that angered Analytic philosophers especially, for example see Rudolf Carnap's article "The Elimination of Metaphysics through the Logical Analysis of Language" (1930), where Carnap argues that Heidegger treats Nothing as a person (as a kind of bogey-man), whereas *nothing* is a variable, expressing simple negation: *Nothing is outside* does not mean that Mr. Nothing is outside but that 'It is not the case that there is an *x* which would fit into the set (class) of things that are outside' (see Russell's and Quine's treatment of negative existentials and non-existing things, Lectures 2 and 5). Sentences like 'Nothing nothings' are pseudo-sentences; such structures intended to be metaphysical claims have no meaning whatsoever; the are not false but nonsensical.

Heidegger does claim that negation in logic (or in natural languages) gets its possibility and strength from the phenomenon of Nothingness but he of course does not think that Nothingness would be any*thing* (or any 'person') because for him Nothing is not an entity. We can encounter *nothing* in various *experiences*: in the absence of those whom we love, in the 'ontological gap' which exists between what we wish for and what we actually achieve (think of a present somebody prepares for someone else and it turns out that it actually *hurts* the Other), or imagining what would be the case if there was no world, no Universe at all.[32] As Leibnitz, the early 18th century German mathematician and philosopher put it: 'Why is there anything rather than nothing?' It is only in the face of Nothing, both for Leibnitz and Heidegger, that we can appreciate that there is *something at all,* that there is a world.[33] Nothingness is an experince we also come across in genuine boredom, depression: when we feel that *nothing* matters, everything is the same because it is *all the same* what we do or say. In nothingness the world recedes to the same dull greyness and insignificance: nothing 'slips' into our hands, nothing 'shakes hands with us'. With a wordplay Heidegger liked so much and so often made use of, we could even say that when nothing (not even one thing, anything) 'shakes hands' with us (e.g. everything slips out of our hands, we do everything wrong), we shake hands with Nothing(ness) (itself). Still another way of encountering nothing is in *Angst* (translated as Dread or Anxiety); this is not being afraid of this or that particular thing, e.g. tomorrow's exam, or that you might hurt someone you would like to the least: these are very real threats of life but here fear gathers into a focus and at least has a *reason*. But in *Angst* there is just fear, permeating everything (as small children fear the dark, loneliness); if *Angst* has any 'object', then it is the fear *to be* – to be what a person as a personality should become.

In boredom, absences, in what we lack and in *Angst* genuine Nothingness visits us: there we encounter genuine meaninglessness as well. For Heidegger it is an inseparable part of our being, that it is 'held out into nothingness'; it is this way, (in the 'light' of Nothing, which is rather darkness) that we understand what being is.

Being-in-the-world: having been *thrown* into the world

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[32] Perhaps it is not an accident that when we are desperate because of something we feel 'it is the end of the world'. On the one hand, the world, to a great extent, is *us*, on the other we feel that if this or that traumatic could happen at all, then the world *should* come to an end.

[33] Wittgenstein says something similar in the *Tractatus:* "It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists" (6.44), emphasis original.

That our general approach to things, persons, to the whole world is *Vorhanden* is not just the description of an attitude: it is expressive of how we, human beings are *in* the world, it is indicative of our way of being. (Every morning we ask others: '*How* are you?' but this question may not only refer to health: it may ask the *way* somebody stands, *is* with respect to other beings). So our relationship to things around us *is* our being, or at least part of it. We tend to treat objects and persons in a neutral manner (often as if they were dead) because we wish to dominate the world: as if we 'owned" the world and we were masters of being, everything in our firm grip.. Consequently, we have (for Heidegger since Plato) forgotten the question of being: what it truly means; the question has to be asked again. We of course have some idea of what being is: without a certain amount of pre-understanding we would not even be able to put the question itself. And the question is very difficult to ask, since we have to reflect on being while already being *somehow* in the world (it is like rebuilding a boat 'under ourselves' while riding in it on the sea at the same time). The problem is that believing to be masters of being we lose sight of our true predicament. We rather find ourselves as having been thrown into the world: we did not ask for our being in terms of life, we were brought to the world and we often feel that everything important has been decided well before we were born. We find a certain situation we should cope with but we feel lost. Our *Dasein*, i.e. we, being-in-the world would rather disburden ourselves from *authentic* being: we treat ourselves as 'just being here' as we treat objects lying on tables, as persons we pass in the street. Our inauthenticity takes various forms and it can be found in various realms of our lives. One place where our authenticity and inauthenticity is particularly at stake is *language*.

Instead of Logos (authentic language): *Gerede* (idle talk, inauthentic language) (this section is again based on *Being and Time*)

We are curious: if there is an accident in the street, we gather and gaze at the sight. But this is not authentic interest: we want sensations, but when our curiosity is satisfied, we run on, always for a new 'big' or even 'bigger' event', and so on, on and on. This inauthentic being, just superficially touching the surface of things without craving for real understanding is called *Das Man* by Heidegger. (*Mann* is 'man' in German but it of course stands with the masculine definite article: *der. Das*, the neutral definite article is *definitely* chosen by Heidegger to communicate: being (a) Das Man is a neutral state. And he spells *Man* in the expression with one 'n' to express that here *Man* is used as in the German expressions like *Man sagt...* which is roughly equivalent to: '*one* would say….', so it is a neutral general pronoun anybody and everybody can fill.) *Man* is the emptied out form of *Mann*, of the human being for Heidegger. *Das Man* touches everything superficially but he also touches everything superficially with his language. Authentic language, one that would bring the true understanding of the phenomena (of the things, persons, etc. around us) to us is called *Logos* by Heidegger, borrowing this Greek word which can mean 'language', 'speech', even 'the hidden, authentic principle of being' (and many other things) in (Ancient) Greek. The opposite of *Logos* is *Gerede* ('idle talk, chit-chat', as opposed to *Rede*, 'speech' in German), a heap of words that rather hide the being of phenomena instead of revealing what they truly are. For instance, if we talk about death, we often say: 'well, *everybody* has to die one day'. But we fail to notice that this commonplace, this cliché is typical of our being: death is one way of non-being and we try to avoid facing death (the fact that we will not be one day) by giving, instead of ourselves, 'everybody' over to death. Yes, 'everybody' may indeed die, we gladly bury 'him' or 'her' every day but we are not concerned with our personal non-being, I am not concerned with my personal death. One way of our being is constant avoidance: avoidance of that which would truly constitute our being, i.e. we treat our being with a *Vorhanden* rather than a *Zuhanden* attitude: we treat our being as a 'given' we have to 'survive' somehow, rather than asking what we are here *for*. *Gerede* takes mostly the form of

gossip: we say 'it is rumoured' (in *passive* voice), 'people – always generally! – say this and that' but this way we immediately get rid of the responsibility of using words of our own and we need not be interested in the authenticity of the source: '*who* said that? well, everybody, anybody: *Das Man*, it does not matter', I, the speaker do not have to stand up for my words. *Gerede* reflects how, in general, people understand things amidst their everyday activities. This average understanding will always already know what things are and will bring anything outstanding, truly original or great onto the same level of neutral commonplaces. *Das Man* in Gerede will always know 'better', Das Man will not be impressed, or moved, or enthusiastic, or genuinely surprised: Das Man will try to show that anything original has always been known, it is just as boring, everyday and unworthy of attention as anything else. But Das Man is not telling lies, that is the problem: it tells the 'truth', it tells sentences that correspond to facts but it is the *initial attitude*, the attitude of treating everything *Vorhanden* that is at fault; in a way *Das Man*, with its Grede is constantly and continuously 'in the wrong, in error' on account of its relation to the world; Das Man understands nothing of the true significance of the world. For Heidegger, truth as 'correspondence to facts' is not enough: we tend to forget that treating something as a 'fact' is expressive of an attitude and it is the attitude which matters. On the one hand, we tend to treat lots of things as simply 'facts' not worrying about them any further, without trying to understand them. On the other hand, truth is more than correspondence with a given state of affairs. Truth, as the Greek word *aletheia* suggests is the phenomenon 'coming to the open', 'disclosing, revealing itself', in and against its background and context. (*ex-sitere* in Latin literally means 'sticking out'). Truth is letting out phenomena form their hiddenness, their 'closedness' and giving them a chance to show their 'face' in 'disclosedness'. Behind the metaphor of 'showing their face' there is Heidegger's conviction that things will turn 'towards' us if we relate to them in a *Zuhanden* attitude: they will show their meaning. So for Heidegger our attitude conditions the meaning of things (including words, language) around us; meaning is the function of our being, meaning is inseparable from the way we are to-the-world, from our being-in-the- world, from *how* we are, and things will become more meaningful if we allow them to 'come forward and speak for themselves',

A change of attitude: being-towards-death
How can one become an authentic being, how can one gain understanding? Very simply put Heidegger thinks a human being should reckon with his or her temporality. The only *certain* thing is – as the old saying goes – that one day we shall die and be no more (Heidegger does not take any 'after life' or 'heaven' into consideration – he is totally concerned with being on Earth). And the human being is the only being on Earth that knows about his/her finitude: we have an experience of time because of our awareness of our death; we 'step into time' precisely *when* we become aware of our finitude. If we 'run forward to our death' i.e. if we imagine for a moment that 'we are not', each and every moment we may still spend on Earth may gain significance and meaning. The human being may get into a new relationship with the world where things are *Zuhanden*, i.e. they get disclosed and become animated and thus, alive.

Language and art
After *Being and Time* Heidegger tried to understand being not from Dasein but he tried find 'places', 'occasions' where being gets out of its 'closedness' (hiddenness) and reveals itself. From the early 30s he started to include poetic pieces (especially the poems of Hölderlin) and the interpretation of works of art (such as Van Gogh's famous painting of the pair of peasant shoes) into his philosophy: he claimed – following in the footsteps of such German philosophers as Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer or Nietzsche – that works of art and especially the language of poetry are not only relevant for the dealing with philosophical

problems, i.e. poetry and art in general cannot only *inform* philosophy on philosophy but poetry and art are privileged 'places' where Truth gets revealed and beings 'come out' from their hidenness.

Language

In the lecture "Language" (In *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*) Heidegger claims that it is not only us who speak (language is far more than a 'tool' for communication) but *language speaks* as well. As opposed to this, the general view on language, according to Heidegger, is the following:

1. language is the audible expression and communication of human feelings. These feelings are accompanied by thoughts. Consequently,
2. language is taken to be an utterance. There is something internal in us (feelings, thoughts) which externalises itself in language.
3. language is always a presentation and representation of the real and the unreal.

This view will dictate a kind of theory for language, and all the questions concerning the description of language will be subordinated to these principles but Heidegger quarrels with them.

For Heidegger, it is poetic, metaphorical-symbolic language in which not only humans speak (which humans use) but which also starts to speak itself. He reads Georg Trakl's poem, *A Winter Evening* as an example; for our purposes the first stanza will be enough.

The first stanza runs as follows:

Window with falling snow is arrayed,
Long tolls the vesper bell,
The house is provided well,
The table for many laid.

The language of the poem is very simple, even primitive. "Yet – Heidegger writes – "the snowfall brings men under the sky that is darkening into night. The tolling of the evening bell [vesper] brings them, mortals, before the divine. House and table join mortals to the earth. The things that are named gather to themselves sky and earth, mortals and divinities. […] This gathering, assembling, letting-stay is the "thinging of things", which means that these simple objects get their thingly character through the names. But they are in *language* and not 'in reality': we are aware we are reading a poem, we are aware of the difference between language and the thing itself. Yet the names of the objects ('window, snow, bell, table', etc.) enter into a relation and that *relation* will keep up the differences just as much as making it possible to overcome the differences by interpreting the text on a symbolic level. The objects, in *this* combination, in this arrangement ("gathering") become expressive of the relation between the divine and the mortal, the sky and the earth, all set before our eyes through the naming of these *simple* objects. Meaning gets generated in the relation of names (words), and the relation is still one of difference: the sky is just the opposite of earth, the divine of the mortal. Yet language starts to *speak* in the sense that it is able to show up and reveal, in this relation, something of how simply and intimately the differences lay out, "situate" the human being in the world.

So words first name objects, then the relations of these simple, everyday objects are shown, then the names, by virtue of reminding us of the difference of name and object, poem and reality, gain symbolic significance of indicating that we may see symbols, 'objects that speak' even in our totally ordinary surroundings and it will be the arrangement of objects that will show a place for (will "situate") the human being, and this place, this relation to objects through language will be indicative of the human being's *being*.

Appendix

Meaning and Identity
(Lecture in BuPhoC, 23 April, 2008)

"It is my belief that here we are concerned with what
I have referred to elsewhere as the nature of identity."
Tom Stoppard: *The Real Inspector Hound*

It is easy to understand why anyone concerned with linguistics, logic, literature, so language in a broad sense shudders when it comes to the problem of *meaning* (here *meaning* taken to mean 'anything that may have significance for a human being'): sooner or later meaning will involve mammoth ontological and epistemological problems, i.e. questions of 'existence', of 'what there is', and what and how we can know about, and of, the world. When in the late 1880s Frege laid the foundations of a new logical semantics, he was soon hailed as consciously turning (for some: reducing) traditional epistemological and ontological problems into genuinely *semantic* ones.[34] All of a sudden age-old riddles of philosophy looked as if at least some of them could be solved through some semantic, especially logical analyses of language: several previous philosophical questions looked as pseudo-questions, i.e. as sheer nonsense that had led the mind astray, while it was through the operations of semantics, more specifically through logical syntax and semantics, and studying the grammar and the meanings of natural human languages that thinkers hoped to gain insight into the workings of human thinking and into what there *really* is in the world.[35] Syntactic and semantic theories were supposed to *decide* philosophical questions, while of course there were major steps forward in logic and mathematics, independently of the analysis of natural languages.

Thus, on the one hand semantic theories had to 'confess' (thematise) their ontological and epistemological commitments, while epistemology and ontology looked hopefully, even yearningly at semantics on the other. This is why no serious semantic theory can say: 'I do not have an ontology and epistemology' – it will inevitably have one, even if its ontology is a version of naive realism, or if its epistemology is unclear.[36]

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[34] For more on this cf. Michael Dummett: "Gottlob Frege" In A. P. Martinich and David Sosa (eds.), *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy*, Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 6-20.

[35] For especially Chomskyians from the late 60s the royal road to human thinking is psychology but philosophers such as Frege, Russell, Husserl, Wittgenstein and Heidegger at the beginning of the 20th century all wanted to free themselves from the shackles that bound them to psychology.

[36] Further, this is why the 20th century has often been called the century of language or of 'the linguistic turn'. What is significant – even for our present purposes – is that it was not only Analytic or Anglo-Saxon philosophy that expected "salvation" from language, and especially the study of meaning: the Continental (German-French) tradition of thinking soon caught up, for example, Martin Heidegger around the middle of his *Being and Time* felt the need to give an account of language and later on turned to the interpretation of poetic texts (such as Hölderlin's) to describe what he meant by *truth*; one of the "fathers" of hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer famously said: "What is intelligible from being (existence) is language". One could even argue that the "linguistic turn" happened not in the analytic tradition in the last decades of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century with Frege, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein and others but some hundred years before, in German Romanticism after Immanuel Kant, in the works of such thinkers as Haman, Humbolt, Herder, Novalis and others, whose influence proved inspirational in the Continental line of doing philosophy. It is all the more discouraging that representatives of the Analytic and the Continental school still talk very little to each other, one of the lines of division being their relation to what extent a theory of meaning could or should be formalised and

Taking my clue from the interrelatedness of semantics, ontology and epistemology, I will examine, in a non-formalised manner, one of the central tenets of any system concerned with meaning: the phenomenon of identity, or more precisely, the phenomenon that human beings are capable of comprehending what it means that *a = a*, or *a is a*, i.e. that something or somebody is identical with itself, herself, himself. In a way it may be wrong to call this a 'problem', since identity looks perhaps the only *unproblematic* part of all semantic theories on which theoreticians have precisely tried to build: the identity relation is a so-called 'analytic', i.e. necessary truth which is supposed to hold true under all circumstances. Consequently, the interpretation of an analytic sentence e.g. that *Shakespeare is Shakespeare*, or that *Bachelors are unmarried men* remains curiously 'within' the boundaries of language: it is enough to know the syntactic (logical) structure of the sentence (proposition) and the meaning of its constituents to see that it is necessarily true: one does not need any information coming from the world (one does not have to compare the sentence with reality) to see that the sentence is true. Yet, and as a result, we pay a heavy price for the certainty of analytic truths: they do not convey any useful piece of information about the world; analytic truths are tautologies, tautology defined by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* as being "unconditionally true" (4.461). Tautologies are "not pictures of reality" (4.462), they "admit *all* possible situations" (4.462), a "tautology leaves open to reality the whole – the infinite whole – of logical space" (4.463).[37]

The riddle that there are identity statements which do report valuable pieces of information about the world was noticed by Gottlob Frege in his famous article published in 1892, *Über Sinn und Bedeutung* (*On Sense and Reference/Nominatum*).[38] Frege's by now well-known riddle was: what do we wish to express with an identity relation the general form of which can be *a = b*, when the two parties on the left and the right hand side of the equation are even *visibly* different? To say, as Frege's example goes, that 'the morning star' *is* 'the evening star', that the morning star is identical with the evening star, or, as Kripke later put it, that Hesperus and Phosphorus are identical, sounds at least strange, since we surely neither wish to communicate the identity of the signs themselves (we can *see* or *hear* they are not identical), nor do we wish to produce a tautology. Frege's celebrated solution was that when we say 'the morning star is the evening star', we say nothing else than that the two descriptions, *morning star* and *evening star* refer to the same external object in the world, namely the planet Venus. Of the planet Venus several names or descriptions are possible (one of these is precisely 'the planet Venus', or 'Morning Star', or 'Phosphorus', or 'Evening Star', or 'Hesperus' but even, under the right circumstances, 'the star I saw yesterday in the sky') and with identity statements like the above we wish to establish that they have the same referent, they refer to one and the same thing. Frege called the referent or thing, or object i.e. *to* which I refer 'Bedeutung', while the content of the descriptions like 'morning star' or 'evening star', i.e. the content of that *with* which I refer he called 'Sinn'.[39] So the sense of a

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whether the language of poetry, fiction and drama should be taken into consideration in a theory of meaning at all. But I will not go into that here.

[37] Throughout, I quote the *Tractatus* according to the following edition: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by the David Pears and Brian McGuinness, London: Routledge, 1961. My references, as it is the custom, are to paragraph, and not to page numbers.

[38] There are of course several editions, the best I know is: Gottlob Frege: "On Sinn [Sense] and Bedeutung [Reference]" In: Michael Beaney (ed.), *The Frege Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, pp. 150-180.

[39] It is often pointed out that although Sinn is very close to English 'sense', Bedeutung is a rather unfortunate term since it means precisely 'meaning' in German, while Bedeutung in Frege's use of the term in fact means the object itself But the root of the word Bedeutung is *Deut*, *deuten auf* means to 'point at', *deuten* 'to explain', *Deutlichkeit* 'clearness', and Frege uses Bedeutung in a more literal sense, which might be translated as: 'that which has been clearly, unambiguously pointed at, and thereby explained from the point of view of what we are talking about'.

description is the 'road', the 'path' 'on' which I get to the object (and there are several ways to get to something, or somebody, as there are several ways, e.g. to get to Budapest).

Bertrand Russell, in the early years of the 20th century, worked out a similar theory,[40] though without explicitly dividing meaning into sense and reference. Russell agreed that, besides proper names, we refer to objects and persons with descriptions such as: 'the other side of the moon', or 'the present King of France'. Based on the theories of Frege and Russell, it became customary to give reference by way of descriptions but soon various problems arose.

A description (the sense, the meaning of the referring expression) was claimed to pick out the object or person from among all the others unambiguously: descriptions may also function as names. Therefore, from Frege on it was claimed that a description *determines the referent* (the Bedeutung). Yet how is determination possible? There is nothing necessary in giving an object or person through this or that name or description. Nothing has a 'natural' or 'right' designation, if it had, we would not bother about naming, it would be automatic and we would all speak the same language (this is a dream-world Socrates fancies, more in terms of a parody, in Plato's dialogue, *Cratylus*). A description is nothing more or less than a piece of knowledge or belief about the object, for example my knowing that there is a star which appears in the sky both in the morning and in the evening, and I may use both descriptions to refer to it. But, first of all, successful reference may occur through an imprecise or even false piece of knowledge. The morning and evening *star* is an excellent example because Venus is not a star but a planet, yet who cares, if we all know what we are talking about. Several philosophers and semanticists, including Strawson[41], Searle[42] or Donnellan[43] claimed that like everything else in language, naming is also based on convention. They added a few very useful refinements to Frege's and Russell's theory: e.g. Strawson pointed out that we *borrow* descriptions from each other. There may have been an 'initial act of baptism' but from that moment on people simply follow the practice of the name-giver in applying the same name to the referent in an imitative and repetitive manner. Referring – like many other things in language – occurs along the lines of a social chain. Even further, we might know very little about a person named and still can successfully refer to him: a single expression we have just heard about him, e.g. 'the boy with the empty champagne glass', also exhausting all our knowledge about the person with the same stroke, is enough for successful reference under the right circumstances. Further, Strawson and others held that although it is true that various people may know different things about a referent – for example, a Shakespeare scholar has, say, a hundred and twenty ways to refer to Shakespeare while ordinary people three or four – we usually fix referents in fact through *clusters* of descriptions, and that will ensure determining the referent more or less unambiguously. We will always look for, in terms of knowledge, the common denominator when referring to people and if, talking about Shakespeare, for example the expression 'member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men' will not work, we will resort to 'the Swan of Avon', or the 'the author of *Hamlet*', etc. What we know about Shakespeare might be given in the form of clusters of descriptions which we measure against the descriptions of others. Strawson, largely following the pragmatic approach to

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[40] See especially Bertrand Russell: "On Denoting", anthologised all the time. See e.g. In A. P. Martinich (ed.), *The Philosophy of Language*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 212-220.

[41] See especially Peter Strawson: "On Referring" (anthologised several times, e.g. A. P. Martinich (ed.), *The Philosophy of Language*, Fourth ed., New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 228-242 and Chapter 3 in Peter Strawson: *Individuals,* London: Methuen, 1959.

[42] E. g. John R. Searle in 1958 (*Mind*, 57, 166-73) in "Proper Names" wrote: "any individual not having some of the properties ['the tutor of Alexander the Great' etc.] could not be Aristotle" .

[43] See especially Keith Donnellan: "Reference and Definite Descriptions", In A. P. Martinich (ed.), op. cit., pp. 247-259.

language introduced by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*, envisaged referring as a language-rule following, convention-based activity. Keith Donnellan and others, to ensure the determination of reference through description, insisted on supposing a causal relationship between description and referent, yet this causal nexus is also based on convention.

And then came Saul Kripke, in 1970, with a series of lectures at Princeton entitled *Naming and Necessity*[44], which put the problem of reference into an entirely new light. Since it remains true that every semantic theory will imply epistemological, as well as ontological questions, Kripke offered some real challenges to philosophy, in a – to my mind – highly original way.

Kripke's main objection to descriptive theories was on the level of both epistemology and ontology. On the level of epistemology – ontology will be discussed later – he claimed that none of the items of knowledge, given in the descriptions, are necessary facts of our world. The problem is not that items of knowledge, true or false, or even on an *ad hoc* basis, could not do the job of referring – Kripke is very much aware that this is done all the time. The real problem is that descriptive theorists treat proper names on the same level as descriptions, in other words they regard the proper name 'Shakespeare' to be exactly synonymous with 'member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men' or 'the Swan of Avon', or 'the author of *Hamlet*' But suppose that Shakespeare never became an actor and playwright, suppose he was not born in Stratford, suppose he was too lazy to write *Hamlet*, and still we would be able to successfully refer to Shakespeare with the name 'Shakespeare'. Of course, *William Shakespeare* could have been named otherwise by his parents, e.g. 'Christopher', or 'Ben', even 'Voldemort', though this last one is not very likely. The fact that Shakespeare *happened to be named* William is, in itself, not a necessary fact of the world. But once his name was decided on, the name, as Kripke puts it, *rigidly* designates[45] (refers to) the person called William Shakespeare: there is a *necessary* relationship between the name 'William Shakespeare' and William Shakespeare, the person, while all we can *predicate* of Shakespeare and thus give also in the form of descriptions (that he wrote *Hamlet*, etc.) could have been otherwise and thus are contingent facts of our world.[46] However, after the naming process had taken place, that William Shakespeare is William Shakespeare is *not* a contingent fact of the world, since this sentence expresses that William Shakespeare is identical with himself. Thus, for Kripke, only *Shakespeare is Shakespeare*, that is, only a genuine identity statement is an analytic truth, and thus a necessary truth in the strict logical sense. *Shakespeare is identical with the author of* Hamlet is not an analytic and thus, a necessary truth.

The problem, then, with the proponents of the descriptive theory of reference, such as Frege or Strawson is that they treated proper names and descriptions as synonymous. Here, of course synonymy is meant not as poetic, or rhetorical, or stylistic synonymy but as strictly cognitive synonymy. Poetically, no two expressions will ever be totally synonymous.[47] But Kripke's claim is that not even cognitively will a description of somebody and his or her proper name be synonymous because the criterion of cognitive synonymy is that you can change the two terms – the description and the proper name – in the same proposition, i.e. in exactly the same context *salva veritate,* i.e. without changing the truth value of the proposition. But while *Shakespeare is Shakespeare* is a necessary truth, *Shakespeare is identical with the author of* Hamlet is not.

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[44] My references are to the following edition: Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

[45] Kripke, op. cit., p. 48 and *passim*.

[46] Cf. e.g. Kripke, op. cit., p. 62.

[47] On the problem of synonymy cf. especially Willard Van Orman Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" In Quine, *From a Logical Point of View,* New York and Evaston: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1963, pp. 20-46, especially p. 28 on cognitive synonymy.

This is of course difficult, and needs further refinement. The sentence 'Shakespeare is not Shakespeare' can make perfect sense in certain contexts: for example, imagine a scholar who, after having done serious research on Shakespeare's life and work, arrives at the conclusion that everything there is in books, documents, etc. about Shakespeare is wrong, he was mixed up with somebody else from the start (this claim, as it is well known, has been made more than once). That scholar, going up to the pulpit at a conference might start his revelatory lecture by telling his audience: 'Ladies and Gentlemen, Shakespeare was not Shakespeare'.[48] But the scholar will precisely wish to communicate that all items of *knowledge* and *beliefs* humankind has so far associated with the name Shakespeare is false and not that Shakespeare, if there was such a person, is not identical with himself. The scholar will wish to say: Shakespeare did not do this or that, did not write the plays attributed to him, etc.; e.g. somebody else did. It will be some kind of *knowledge* the scholar will challenge, not that a person was not identical with himself.

Thus, Kripke pays special attention to identity, treating the name as somehow being 'expressive' of the identity of the person or thing; the name as rigid designator is something the designated person or object simply cannot 'lose' but is attached to each object or person with the force of logical necessity. We may understand what the force of logical necessity is if we look at the definition of necessary truth: a proposition is necessarily true *if and only if* (=iff) it is true given the way the world (our 'real world as we know it') actually is, and it would have been true, even if the world had been in any other possible state it could have been in.[49] This is difficult again because who could precisely tell what possible state the world could have been in? Is it, for example, a possible state of the world that there are no human beings in it? That there is no language in it? These are clearly metaphysical (ontological) questions I will not go into here. Kripke's definition of rigid designation claims identity for something or somebody in *all* possible worlds, whatever possible worlds may be: *for a term X to be a rigid designator is for it to designate (refer to) the identical (the same) person or object in every possible world where the term designates at all.*[50] I just note here that "in every possible world" sounds to me very much like "the whole – the infinite whole – of logical space" tautologies leave open in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*; more on this later.

The concept of possible worlds was introduced not by Wittgenstein but by David K. Lewis[51], yet Kripke does not conceive of possible worlds the way Lewis does.[52] Instead of going into lengthy comparisons, I will give an example. Suppose that for the role of Michael Corleone in the film *Godfather*, two actors competed, Al Pacino and Robert de Niro. Actually, i.e. in our world it was Al Pacino who got the role but this is a contingent fact of the world that he did; it could have been otherwise, so there is a possible world where the role was played by Robert de Niro. Kripke's point is that Al Pacino remains Al Pacino, through the rigid designation of his very name, even in the possible world where Robert de Niro played the role. In the possible, alternative world not somebody 'similar' to the real Al Pacino did not get the role (as Lewis thinks); Kripke's proof is that Al Pacino could not have cared less about a 'similar' Al Pacino not getting the role; it would have been the *real*, *this*-world Al Pacino

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[48] As tautologies like 'Shakespeare is Shakespeare' can also be expressive of something else than identity. E.g. somebody enthusiastically tells me about an excellent *Hamlet*-performance he saw and I may respond: 'Well, Shakespeare is Shakespeare', meaning something like 'Shakespeare is still (one of) the best playwright(s), so what did you expect?' These uses of tautologies are in the 'Boys will be boys' category.

[49] This is based on Scott Soames' very useful reconstruction, Scott Soames, "Saul Kripke on Naming and Necessity" In *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century,* Vol. 2, *The Age of Meaning*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, (pp. 333-456), p. 338. Cf. also Kripke, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

[50] Cf. Kripke, op. cit., pp. 102-105.

[51] See especially David K. Lewis, "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic", *Journal of Philosophy*, 65, pp. 113-126, 1968.

[52] Cf. especially Kripke, op. cit., pp. 44-47.

who may have mourned not to have been given the role and would have envied Robert de Niro for playing Michael Corleone.

Let us suppose even further that after the auditions somebody, say Marlon Brando (who played Michael's father, Vito Corleone in part 1 of *Godfather*) starts to lecture to de Niro under what conditions he would have been given the role: 'If you have paid more attention to your partner', 'if you had tried to please the director a little bit', 'if you had studied the script more carefully', etc. Then Marlon Brando would in fact be giving (at least some of) the truth conditions that would make the sentence 'Robert de Niro succeeded in getting the role of Michael Corleone' true in our 'real' world. But would Marlon Brando, lecturing to de Niro have said: 'if you had tried to please the director a bit, etc., *and if you had been identical with yourself?*' No, Brando would have taken for granted that de Niro is identical with himself, both in the real world and in the possible world where de Niro got the role.

As Brando, lecturing to de Niro would not have added: 'you would have been given the role *had you existed*', either. That is also taken for granted. I think – and this is now my interpretation of Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* – that Kripke's whole theory about rigid designators revolves around the idea that *identity is not a predicate.* It is an age-old insight (though still contested, of course) that existence is not a predicate. It was relying on this thesis that Immanuel Kan't demonstrated why Descartes' (and, previously, several other philosophers') ontological argument about the existence of God was at fault: they treated existence as a predicate, i.e. as an attribute, a quality we may claim *about* a being.[53] Descartes' argument was that if we have the concept of God in our minds and we see in that concept that, for example, God is perfect, then it would be absurd, i.e. a logical contradiction to say that he does not exist: the idea of perfection includes or implies existence. But Kant claims that we cannot treat the predicate *exits* on the same level as, say, *is perfect*. If I characterise, for example, my neighbour to you and say that he is ninety years old, he has white hair, he is six feet tall, he likes apricots, and so on, shall I add, somewhere: 'and oh, by the way, he *exists*'? Not at all, you and I have taken for granted that it only makes sense to give the attributes of someone because the person talked about exists and thus existence will not be given among the attributes. In a sense, in a way, *everything* we talk about, we mention exists, we may call that 'mention-existence'. Imagining the existence of something is also a kind of mention-existence: I can imagine, Kant says, that there a hundred thalers in my pocket; from the act of imagination there will not – unfortunately – be hundred thalers in my pocket.[54] One of Kant's fundamental insights was – and Frege and his followers whole-heartedly agreed as well – that from the logical structure of language we cannot tell what exists and what does not because language will endow everything with what I call mention-existence. Looking at the logical structure of language, or the meanings in language, or the grammar of language, or at anything in language will not decide for me whether the things I talk about exist in reality or not. Bertrand Russell put this insight in the following way: "In one sense it must be admitted that we can never *prove* the existence of things other than ourselves and our experiences. No logical absurdity results from the hypothesis that the world consists of myself and my thoughts and feelings and sensations and everything else is mere fancy."[55] No wonder that lots

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[53] Cf. "'*Being*' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing", Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Trans. by Norman Kemp Smith, London and New York: Macmillan and Co. Ltd and St Martin's Press, 1956, p. 504 see also pp. 500-507.

[54] "My financial position is, however, affected very differently by a hundred real thalers than by the mere concept of them (that is, of their possibility). For the object, as it actually exists, is not analytically contained in my concept, but is added to my concept (which is a determination of my state) synthetically; and yet the conceived hundred thalers are not themselves in the least increased through thus acquiring existence outside my concept" (Kant, op. cit., p. 505).

[55] Bertrand Russell: *The Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford: OUP, 1976, p. 10

of philosophers, e.g. George Berkeley decided that the material world is only my idea but I will not go into that. The important thing to see is that existence is not a predicate and nothing in language decides whether something does exist in the external world or not.

Therefore, from Kant's argument against Descartes it does not follow that 'God does not exist'. What follows is that with the existence of God (and perhaps with the existence of anything) we are not in a knowing relationship: God's existence is something we cannot decide about on the basis of knowledge. One of the fundamental problems of Western philosophy has been that it put knowledge on the highest pedestal and philosophers tended to discard things we cannot know. But we are not only knowing beings; we are also believing beings, feeling beings etc.

How about identity? Kripke claims that to deny that people or things are identical with themselves is a logical contradiction.[56] This sounds difficult but only until we think of identity as one of the 'properties', 'qualities' 'attributes' of a thing, i.e. until we think about identity as if it were a predicate, something we state about an object. But why is it proper names that – as Kripke claims – are most likely to become rigid designators? I may also put the question this way: why was it proper names through which Kripke encountered the identity–problem? Because proper names are more typical of naming *particular* beings (persons or things) than other words. Particularity is one of the most important 'features' or 'characteristics' of identity: feature or characteristic is, I admit, not the most fortunate term because identity is something, as it will become perhaps clearer below, that cannot be analysed any further. Let us say that particularity 'goes along' with identity: identity is always particular. But the problem is that, on the one hand, practically anything can be a carrier of identity. On the other hand, the fact that a proper name is expressive of identity is often shrouded, veiled by several factors.

Practically anything can be expressive of identity because unfortunately anything can be used as a proper name and, thus, become a rigid designator: Kripke at one point acknowledges demonstratives like *this* or *that*[57] as potential rigid designators. Very confusingly, even descriptions like 'the Avon of Stratford' or 'the author of *Hamlet*' can be used as proper names (precisely this confused Strawson and others). Further, genuine proper names may sound or look like descriptions: we may think of the great Native American chief, Sitting Bull or the chief of the Blackfoot tribe, The-One-Who-Carries-The-Pot (Viszi-A-Kondért Nagyfőnök), or in *Harry Potter* the evil magician, Voldemort is also called You-Know-Who and even He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named (a nice rigid designator for Kripke!), and even Voldemort is a 'speaking name' for those who know some Latin. It is also very true that e.g. John Smith is the name of lots of men in the English-speaking world: one (relatively common) proper name may pick out several individuals. These factors all give less chances to us to see Kripke's point but he does not insist on this or that form of a name; what he insists on is that there is a point when, with a rigid designator, which is *often* a proper name, we give expression to the identity of a person or thing.

The Kripke-thesis runs as follows (although not with Al Pacino but with Richard Nixon): proper names like Al Pacino are rigid designators, for although the man (Al Pacino) might not have been several things (he might have not become an actor etc.), it is not the case that he might not have been Al Pacino, i.e. identical with himself.[58] He of course might have been called something else, had his parents called him otherwise or had his father's surname been something else, or had we another culture where children do not usually inherit their father's surname[59]. Kripke's point is that we need something which is expressive of the necessity of

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[56] Cf. e.g. Kripke, op. cit., p. 53.
[57] Kripke: op. cit. p. 49.
[58] Cf. Kripke, *ibid.*
[59] Illegitimate children usually inherit their mother's surname but Al Pacino was not an illegitimate child.

the identity of a thing or person, once that thing or person has been identified. And again it might even be a contingent fact of the world that we identify things and persons through names.[60] But it is precisely identity itself, more precisely that an object or person is identical with itself which I need in order to attribute anything to it at all, to describe it, to give it qualities.

It has often been suggested that Kripke thinks rigid designators are somehow anchored in essential properties of things, that in a proper name, earlier than the naming, some essential properties of the named object or person are 'dormant' or, later than the naming, some essential properties 'get coded' in the name and Kripke thinks it is through being attached to essential properties that a rigid designator becomes rigid.[61] But Kripke openly denies this:

> *Some properties of an object may be essential to it, in that it could not have failed to have them. But these properties are not used to identify the object in another possible world, for such an identification is not needed. Nor need the essential properties of an object be the properties used to identify it in the actual world, if indeed it is identified in the actual world by means of properties.*[62]

Rigid designators (often proper names, with the above qualifications) do not 'name' or 'grasp' a 'bundle of properties' in persons or objects. Objects or persons do have properties, of course, essential and accidental, i.e. properties without which they would not be what they are, and properties without which they would remain what they are. But identity – like existence – is not an attribute, or quality, or property of a thing or person we may predicate of it or him or her, either essential or accidental. If it were – and this is Kripke's ingenious insight, I think – it would be a piece of knowledge or belief *about* the thing or person, with respect to which we may be right or wrong and thus it would be a contingent fact of the world that could have been otherwise. Yet that something or somebody is identical with itself, himself, herself is a necessary fact of the world (and of all possible worlds as well). As we are not in a knowing relationship with existence, we are not in a knowing relationship with identity, either. That 'identity is not a predicate' does not mean of course that I cannot use *identical with* predicatively. That identity is not a predicate means that identity is not something I *attribute* to a thing or person as being among the other properties I *know*, rightly or wrongly, about the thing or the person. Or I 'know' identity in a very special sense, as I know that something 'cannot and could not be otherwise'.[63] But I suggest we reserve *know* to cases where we *can* go wrong. And *Shakespeare is identical with Shakespeare* is not such a case because the denial of this sentence is a *logical* contradiction (unless one means it as the scholar means it on the pulpit but that was discussed above). That *Shakespeare is Shakespeare*, or *Shakespeare is identical with Shakespeare* is, thus, not stating a fact about the world. It is a tautology, an analytic truth. And, as Wittgenstein said in the *Tractatus*: tautologies are "unconditionally true", they are "not pictures of reality" (4.462).

Here is another example, based on Kripke,[64] to explain identity. I have *this* table in front of me: this is a particular table. Now let us not ask: what could *a* table be in a possible

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[60] Which implies, again, the non-negligible metaphysical questions asked above: is humans using language a contingent fact of the world as well? Would we have a concept of identity if there was no language, would we bother about it at all? This is tantamount to asking: is a world without language a possible state in which the world could have been (a possible world)?

[61] E.g. cf. Scott Soames, op. cit., p. 336 and pp. 347-354.

[62] Kripke, op. cit., p. 53.

[63] As, I think – following Wittgenstein – that it is wrong to say that 'I *know* I am in pain', or 'I *know* I have hands'. These are 'closer' to us than we could 'know' these, we are somehow 'one' with pain or our hands.

[64] Cf. Kripke, op. cit., pp. 47-51.

world? We are talking about *this* table. I can physically grasp it, I can refer to it but I am not grasping or referring to an abstract 'it': I am referring to *it* here and now. Could this table be red in a possible world? Of course. Could it be in another room (and here 'another room' is taken as a 'possible world')? Of course. Being red or being in another room are all attributes, qualities *of* an object. But it would still be *it*, *this* particular table which could be in another room or could be red, so could be in a possible world; even in the possible world I would be talking about *this* table. Here this *it*-ness, *this*-ness is expressive of the table's identity, something it cannot lose. The table *must* retain its identity in all possible worlds because it may change as many of its qualities as we like, we will still need identity, expressed as '*this* table' or '*it*' *which* has qualities, whatever these qualities may be. Otherwise *what* has changed? The problem is that *what* is notoriously ambiguous. To the question: *what* has changed, I can answer both: "the table" or "the table's colour". But it is *it*'s colour that has changed, and – here is Kripke's point – by *it* I can not only mean 'one or other qualities of the table that have remained unchanged' but *it* can also refer to the table's *identity*, which is not one of the attributes. But let us suppose that I change all the attributes of the table: I cut it up into pieces, and make part of the floor of this room from it. Have I changed, with all the attributes, the identity of the table as well? If I say yes, then *what* is it all the attributes of which I have changed? I have changed the identity of *the table* which was so-sand-so, and have created a new identity I am expressing with another name, *namely,* 'floor', which again has all sorts of properties. Of course we identify things, so *this table*, too, through its qualities. But, for Kripke, these qualities are not the bundle that *gives* the thing identity. Qualities rather 'hide' the fact that there is 'something', perhaps 'in' the object which is separate and strictly different from all qualities and makes it identical with itself. What is that 'something'? It sounds as if we were looking for the 'soul' of the object, which 'flickers' inside like a candle, making the thing what it is. But *what* makes an object what it is, is still not its identity: it is its essential qualities. Yet essential qualities are still qualities and identity is not a quality. Identity is something the object will have until I call it by the name I have learnt about it. The name – as we saw – in its form, as a part of language is arbitrary with respect to the object. But it is precisely with respect to the thing's *nature*, qualities etc. that a name is arbitrary: it is true that there is nothing in the nature of the thing that would predestine that the object should be called this or that. Even motivated names, e.g. metaphors will carry a fair amount of arbitrariness. There is motivation behind calling the lowest part of a mountain the *foot* of the mountain but there was nothing necessary about metaphorical extension going *this* way: perhaps the 'saucer' of the mountain, or the 'sole' or 'toes' of the mountain would also do. There is nothing necessary about seeing, even by a whole speech-community, some analogical relationships which can become the basis of metaphors. If a boy is named after his father, we can see the motivation pretty clearly but the decision is not a necessary one: the parents could have decided otherwise, nothing *compelled* them to name the boy after his father with the force of necessity.[65] (Human will is free but I won't go to that.) And the same name can be used to fix the identity of several people (this follows from the thesis that names are arbitrary). The name is not expressive of the thing's nature: it is expressive of its identity (perhaps this is exactly why names are arbitrary). The name fixes the thing for us so that we may identify it as such and such, yet for Kripke identification comes 'first' and 'then' comes the list of attributes. Of course, to speak about what comes 'first' and 'later' is not a historical, chronological account: identity is so notoriously difficult to talk about because all these happen in 'one moment': the naming and the possible realisation, on our part, of the thing's attributes. As for Kripke, this fixing, this designation, this naming (not only in the act of

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[65] The problem of rigid designators involves the problem of free will and determinism, too but here these cannot be dealt with.

baptism[66] but also when I use a name for reference later on) and the identification of the thing comes about in the same moment as well: one cannot be without the other. Once an arbitrary name has become the name of the object, it necessarily fixes its identity, or else I use a different name because I have – or I think I have – identified a different thing.

Then *what* is identity? What is that 'something' which is perhaps 'in' the object as its 'soul'? Identity is so hard to grasp – in fact, to *identify* – because it is not a thing; if it were, we would have a firm grip on it and get to know it. Identity is a referential relation we seem to take for granted when we use a name. Identity, I would like to claim and this is again purely my claim, is part of our logical attitude to the world.

To make this clearer I would like to point out some significant similarities between Kripke's conception of logic, and that of Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, although Kripke has often been used to repudiate Wittgensteinian insights.[67] Among other things, the very term *rigid* designator points towards some affinity. Both Kripke and Wittgenstein seem to hold that it is logic, or, more precisely, the logical structure of language which contains some fundamental, unshakeable, unalterable, unconditional truths with absolute and necessary certainty, yet these truths are precisely not facts of the world and not facts we 'know' because in the world nothing is unalterable; in the world everything could be otherwise, could be true *or* false and thus these 'absolute' truths are not part of the world. For Kripke, it seems to me, such an unalterable truth is that things and persons are identical with themselves, for Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, among other things such an absolute truth is that there is a logical structure (logical form). Wittgenstein even says that the logical structure of language and of the world cannot be talked about, it remains in the realm of the ineffable, the unsayable, the inexpressible but this does not mean that there is no logical structure as it is not the case that what cannot be talked about would be unimportant; on the contrary: it is what we hold to be most precious that lies in the domain of the ineffable. Logical structure is not something we can put into words and further analyse or interpret with language, either.[68] I interpret Wittgenstein's logical structure in the *Tractatus* as our very *attitude* to the world, to the world around us, it is our constant and unalterable way in which we *relate* to the world. To put logical structure, i.e. our logical relation to the world into words in order to, for example comment on it we would need another standpoint than the one we have, a standpoint from which we could see and scrutinise our attitude. But this attitude is a *part* of us (it is a pair of irremovable spectacles everyone has on their noses, as it were): we always already relate to everything with this very attitude, we cannot get, so to speak, 'before' it to then comfortably compare, from the 'outside', as it were, this attitude and the world as two independent factors. I would like to interpret Kripke's notion of identity as part of the logical attitude Wittgenstein, I think, talks about: epistemologically, we do not have a hold, a firm grip on identity – I mean identity *itself*, the *very relation* that e.g. a person is identical with her- or himself – because we are not in a knowing relationship with it: if we express it, we express it in a tautology, leaving the whole of logical space open; identity is not something we could analyse any further because it is something with respect to which we analyse everything else. Thus, it appears to us as tautological, and, hence, as trivial but trivial things appear to be the most evident for us;

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[66] Cf. Kripke, op. cit., p. 96.

[67] E.g. cf. Scott Soames, op. cit., pp. 13-15.

[68] Cf. "Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able tot represent it – logical form. I order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world. " (*Tractatus*, 4.12) "Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them. What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent. What expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language. Propositions *show* the logical form of reality. They display it. (4.121) "What *can* be shown, *cannot* said" (4.1212) (emphasis throughout original).

they *literally* 'go without saying'. Ontologically, however, it is an unshakeable part of our being in the sense that it is, so to speak, a part of our primary, instantaneous relation to the world we always already take for granted. Thus, identity is not 'in' the things or persons but rather 'in' us as part of the way we logically relate to the world. 'Such 'things' as identity can be put on display – in the form of tautologies – but cannot be further analysed and – as Wittgenstein proposes in his "Lecture on Ethics" – we can only resort to similes and allegories to *illustrate* them.[69] I propose that our relation to identity (which is a relation itself) is similar to being absolutely determined or convinced about something, 'somewhere deep down inside', for example in our 'guts', something which will never and nowhere change in us, come what may; this is why I consider rigidity in the term *rigid designator* such a fortunate metaphor.

I think with identity Kripke revived something very significant in philosophy. He revived, among other things, the Kantian insight that with lots of things we are not in a knowing relationship and the Wittgensteinian insight about the nature of necessary or absolute truths: that there *are* such truths yet they can only be necessary if they are not reached by language which could thematise, interpret, or analyse them because if they are, they cease to be necessary truths, since language can only thematise things about which we may disagree, which can be true or false. (Let me make this clear: a tautology does not thematise (or interpret or 'analyse') identity; it expresses it, it puts identity on display). And, at the same time, and very curiously, these ineffable truths are the ones on which we build when we relate to the world, for example when we wish to get to know the world, when we talk, when we do anything.

As a closure I would like to speculate a little about identity; most of these ideas will sound weird (as perhaps the previous ones also sounded weird), not offering much argumentation and asking questions Kripke dealt with, if at all, tangentially. The best is if they are treated as indices of the various directions I would like to go with the problem of identity and, of course, meaning; the two are inseparable.

1. *Identity and existence (being)*

I take it to be a wonderful gem of wisdom that the Old Testament author, whoever he was, put this sentence into God's mouth when Moses asks about God's name: "I am that I am", a tautology.[70] I take this to be expressive of the insight that, first of all, the *name* of God is nothing else but He stating His identity with Himself, which is, at the same time, a necessary truth. Second, if God is the Lord of creation, i.e. that He is the source of all beings – as I think the Old Testament author believed this to be the case – then identity *is* being, and also the source of being. I do not wish to raise theological issues, I am merely asking: is it possible, now philosophically, that identity *precedes* being, that is, existence, as the Biblical author implies? When philosophers, such as Heidegger, wrestled with the problem of being, they insisted that the problem of being should be understood from being itself. Yet could it be that, following the Kripkean and Wittgensteinian path, we could approach the question of being through identity?[71] It seems to me that identity includes the question of being and not the

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[69] Ludwig Wittgenstein: 'A Lecture on Ethics", In Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions, 1912-1951*, eds. by James Klagge and Alfred Nordman, Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993 (pp. 37-44), p. 42.

[70] "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say to them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus, 3: 13-14).

[71] At one point, Kripke says something very interesting: "Once we've *got* the thing, we know that it existed" (op. cit., p. 29).

other way round, or let us put it this way: when we identify something then, with the same stroke, we grant it being as well, identity being the 'source' of being, as it were. Perhaps our most fundamental, non-predicative but logical relationship with the world is not being, but identity (which is a not a predicative relation, either).

2. Identity as personal identity

How does Kripke's insight that the name is expressive of the identity of a particular thing or person relate to personal identity? Paul Ricoeur, who wrote a whole book on personal identity, distinguishes between identity in the sense of *sameness* and *selfhood identity*. Sameness is e.g. that I consider myself to be 'the same' as I was yesterday; Ricouer calls this *idem*-identity. Selfhood-identity, called *ipseity* by Ricoeur is to mean that I am an autonomous, unique self precisely not identical with anybody else, not completely even e.g. with my yesterday's self, so this is the self which is capable of changing. It is *ipseity* which is capable of recognising him-or herself in the Other too; it is the self as *ipseity* who realises that his or her identity is, at least partly, given in other people, as if others were 'mirrors' of the self. [72] Ricoeur – who otherwise was one of the few Continental philosophers who built insights coming from the so-called Analytic, Anglo-Saxon tradition into his thinking, too – does not mention Kripke in this book but he does use Strawson's theory of identity and even the *Tractatus* appears at one point.[73] Yet I do not think that some of Kripke's and Ricoeur's insights would not be compatible; they might even be mutually fertilising. Much depends on to what extent we interpret Kripke's *rigidity* in designation, i.e. his insistence that the name is expressive of an identity the person cannot lose in any possible world to be also expressive of his or her uniqueness. And here it is precisely not the 'bunch of essential qualities' of the human being 'as such' which is in question; Kripkean identity, I think, can be interpreted precisely in terms of *personal* identity in the sense of uniqueness, identity being expressive of the fact that each and every personality is a non-repeatable, separate being different from everyone else and it is in this uniqueness that congenial character, individuality in which the self is true precisely to him- or herself is anchored. This leads me to another question.

3. Granting identity on the basis of personal identity (selfhood)

Could it be that names are expressive of identity because, in one way or another, we *grant* identity to everything and this granting is based on our awareness of our selves? Let me put it this way: when we grow conscious of things around us, i.e. we are able to *reflect* on things, we are also capable of reflecting on our selves. When we become aware of the world, we also become aware of ourselves and *vice versa:* gaining self-consciousness surely goes hand in hand with growing conscious of what is 'outside of us'. I know this is a very difficult question and I will of course not go into it. But provided the above account is not too incredible, I would like to ask: is it possible that we grant identity to persons and things around us using ourselves, our identity, as a 'model'? Granting identity might be further described as acknowledging the Other as a being and that he, or she, or it is a unique personality. Let me illustrate this in terms of a credit transaction: granting identity to the Other is like giving the Other a cheque which is already signed by me but the figure, the amount he, she, it can have access to has been kept blank: he, she, it can write there *any* amount. The space for the amount is not filled in because I do not have access to the *content* of his, or her, or its uniqueness but with the handing over of the cheque I grant, I acknowledge that he, or she, or it *is* unique. (As I am far from 'knowing myself' but I am aware that I am unique, I am like nobody else.)

4. Self-identity and lending one's identity: identification with fictitious beings

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[72] Paul Ricoeur: *Oneself as Another*, Trans. by Kathleen Blamey, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 2-3.
[73] Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 53.

What happens to my identity when I read a novel, watch a play or film, etc, and, as we say I *identify*, more or less, with one or more of the characters? Let us take the perhaps crudest case: when an actor (here I will stick to a 'he') personifies somebody on the stage. The age-old question is: does the actor, lending his identity to, say, Hamlet, lose his personal identity *while* he is Hamlet because for three hours he is not, say, Lawrence Olivier but Hamlet? And how about the identity of Hamlet himself, the role, the role being, after all, first and foremost a text? But the text implies movement, postures, gestures, etc., so is then Hamlet all these, ceasing to exist when he is not personified? Or is Hamlet's identity anchored in the text and/or the person reading the text e.g. at home? Or was it Shakespeare who gave identity to Hamlet when he *named* him Hamlet? But we know that Hamlet already existed in Danish chronicles: was it Saxo Grammaticus, author of "the first connected account of the hero whom later ages know as Hamlet"[74], in his *Historia Danicae* who *really* identified Hamlet with, in fact, not the name 'Hamlet' but 'Amleth'? However, Saxo wrote his piece at the end of the 12th century but it was only published for the first time in 1514. Does Hamlet have an identity from the end of the 12th century, from 1514, or from 1600 when (roughly) Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*?[75] Or is naming a fictitious character a different business than naming a real being? But what if Saxo still considered Hamlet to be a historical, i.e. 'real' figure?

From the point of view of the actor we may perhaps claim that if we treat the stage or drama as a 'possible world', then, on the basis of Kripke's famous dictum we should say that the person personifying Hamlet does not lose his identity while he is Hamlet; he will remain e.g. Lawrence Olivier in all his roles. But how does his identity, now in the sense of uniqueness, relate to his interpretation of the role? Will his uniqueness be the 'core' of Hamlet's identity? I think acting differs from granting identity in that acting is also *lending* identity. But how is that done? And does not the author, or even the viewer, or reader lend *some* of his or her identity to Hamlet?

Philosophers often like to treat the problem of fiction, acting etc. as something totally different from everyday life, hence willy-nilly implying that what happens in fiction, on the stage etc, cannot inform the questions we are concerned with in real life and, thus, in philosophy. I do not think this would be true. At least some of the things that happen in fiction and at least some of the ways in which we relate to fiction may help us to genuinely philosophical insights and are applicable in everyday life, too. Now let us consider the question from the point of view of the author. The author, of the fictitious character named Hamlet, whoever he or she was, did, I claim, exactly the same thing we do when we name a real person. When the – arbitrary – name 'Hamlet' became the name of Hamlet, the name became expressive of Hamlet being identical with Hamlet. Yet – and here I think there is some benefit for philosophy from fiction – the case of the author naming a fictitious character makes it more *obvious*, the case of the author displays more *perspicuously* what we do in 'real life'. We say the author *creates* his characters, hence the author creates their identity, too. But do we not do exactly the same thing with 'real-life' characters as well? I offer the following analogy: if I child is taken from an orphanage, it is obvious the child was adopted. But is it not true that parents have to adopt even their 'natural' child (and, as a matter of fact, the child his or her parents)? Fiction, in this analogy, plays the role of the orphanage: fiction only sharpens, magnifies or amplifies what the case in 'real life' is. I think we do not only see ourselves, as in a mirror, in the Other. We are also creators: creators of the identity of the Other, including fictitious characters.

Identity seems to me to be a battlefield where ultimately only questions remain standing. One last of these: is the author of a text identical with his text? Am I identical with

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[74] Harold Jenkins (ed.), William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, The Arden edition, 2nd series, London and New York: Methuen, 1982, p. 85.

[75] The data are from Jenkins, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

the text you have heard? Am I identical with the text's *meaning*? I would say no; the text may be *typical* of the author but not identical with him. But here is a very short text which, even for Kripke, is expressive of my identity; here it is, with all my gratitude for your having invited and listened to me:

Géza Kállay