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# Truth and judgment

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Truth And Judgment


by


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ABSTRACT

I examine the difficulties that several philosophers of language are liable to encounter in their attempts to provide an account of the connection between truth and assertion. I then attempt to provide an account of this connection. The analysis is concerned chiefly with difficulties which consist in elucidating the conceptual connection between truth and assertion in a way that respects certain linguistic intuitions while at the same time rendering the concept of truth amenable to a semantic interpretation. The proposed view suggests one way in which we might go about meeting the theoretical demands implicit in addressing this concern, among others, demonstrating the extent to which a theory of truth should be regarded as belonging to the province of epistemology. Insofar as semantical considerations figure into such a theory, a more systematic investigation of the interface between epistemology and natural language semantics is recommended. The solution to many problems at this interface, I argue, lay in an analysis of judgment.

Preface

In what follows, I argue for an epistemic view of truth that involves an analysis of

the conceptual relations between truth and judgment. On this analysis I propose a view

that might be taken as a basis for a theory of logical form – a basis from which the

problem of propositional unity may be treated among other kindred problems. The view

is also intended to provide an epistemological basis from which we may address a

concern which sometimes takes the form of an objection to Tarski-style disquotational

theories of truth. The concern is that these theories do not tell us what it is that definitions

of truth for interpreted languages have in common. The upshot of the analysis is the

suggestion that our ordinary use of the concept of truth is an act that is explainable under

a theory of truth which has something to say about the *point* of that use.

The proposed view suggests one way in which we might go about meeting the

theoretical demands implicit in addressing this concern, demonstrating the extent to

which a theory of truth is, in a broad sense, an *epistemological* enterprise. I attempt to

show how this is so in the final chapter of the dissertation, where I offer an

epistemological treatment of some problems that are customarily understood to be the

province of philosophy of language. The claim that a theory of truth should be conceived

more as an epistemological undertaking than otherwise is a point that may be admitted

without prejudice to the contention that solutions to many of the traditional problems

surrounding the problem of truth depend crucially upon considerations having to do with

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logical grammar. In view of these considerations I have set out to examine several of those traditional problems that are now central to many recent studies in the philosophy of language and natural language semantics. These problems concern propositional unity, predication, several issues raised by the notion of truth-makers, and the problem of what has come recently to be known as 'Moore's paradox'.

It is customary to construe the boundaries between epistemology and semantics as being sharply distinct, a tendency among some analytic philosophers that has perhaps had more undesirable consequences than would be the case were the interface between these two fields more carefully and systematically explored. The bridge that links these two domains of philosophical inquiry is one that should aim at a kind of conceptual elucidation, the business of which, so I argue, it is the business of a theory of assertion to provide.

The aim of the first chapter is chiefly diagnostic. I examine the difficulties that philosophers of language are liable to encounter in their attempts to provide an account of the connection between truth and assertion. Where there is work being done to provide an account of this connection, the difficulties consist in elucidating the conceptual connection between truth and assertion in a way that respects certain linguistic intuitions while at the same time rendering the concept of truth amenable to a semantic interpretation. Such difficulties, I argue, have their origins very early in developments in analysis and the philosophy of language, and in the work of Gottlob Frege, in particular.

The second and third chapters are concerned with certain semantical considerations in Frege's work. In this discussion I aim to provide an analysis of Frege's theory of functions, and in particular Frege's treatment of identity in terms of functions

and values. I argue that some standard ways of treating sentences have, in fact, emerged from Frege's function-theoretic analysis and have had far-reaching implications with respect to the way in which the nature of judgment has come to be understood within the mainstream of philosophy of language.

From the point of view of judgment, the manner in which sentences are treated in Frege's semantics has had, in turn, further undesirable consequences, in particular his identification of the semantic role of indicative sentences with that of names and referring singular terms. The second and third chapters are in the main an endeavor to trace these consequences from Frege's later semantical views back to his theory of functions – i.e. what I regard as the source of the problem.

I there examine two widely accepted interpretations of Frege's views on assertion as they arise out of his later semantical views and theory of functions. After showing how these accounts are connected with Frege's theory of functions, I then attempt to show that the locus of what is problematic in these accounts is a theoretical consequence of construing sentences as names. Because of this fact, I suggest, the interpretations of Frege's theory of assertion have supported what I take to be radically non-epistemic conceptions of truth. Such non-epistemic conceptions have won many adherents over the course of a century thanks to Frege's influence and have come into especial prominence since Tarski's article "The semantic conception of truth" in 1944.

Further developments of Frege's ideas, as they appear in Russell's early philosophy (1903), and later as they appear in the work of Alonzo Church (1951), have tended to support the two widely accepted interpretations of assertion. Russell's own influential view of assertion is then examined, first in its relation to Frege's view, and

then later in relation to the views of John Dewey (1938). The concept of truth is primarily epistemic, on Dewey's view. In his *Logic*, he argues for in his Logic a more useful distinction between sentences and propositions on the basis of which he is then able to maintain the connection between truth and inquiry – twin notions that become divorced in the somewhat platonistically oriented views of Frege and Russell.

The fourth and fifth chapters are in large part a discussion of some traditional theories of truth. I begin with the reception of Frege's theories of judgment and reference *via* Russell's early philosophy (1903). There I argue that *via* Russell's interpretation of Frege and Frege's peculiar brand of realism may be seen to effectively rehabilitate the old problem of propositional unity. In order to show this, I attempt first an examination of Russellian propositions and then discuss Austin's "purified" correspondence theory of truth in relation to Strawson's 'performative-redundancy' view. I then argue that the difficulties attending to traditional accounts of facts, specifically to their role as truth-makers, derive from those aspects of Frege's realism which were investigated in the first chapter and which were there taken to be a consequence of his theory of judgment. The difficulties derive also from Russell's early 'absolute realism', for different, but closely related, reasons.

In chapters six and seven a distinction between primary and secondary concept of truth-value is introduced in connection with Strawson's "performative-redundancy" view. I introduce on the basis of this distinction the concept of *point of view* which, an epistemic notion of truth argued in Wiredu (1975) This concept relativizes primary and secondary occurrences of truth-value to assertions in a manner that avoids some of the pitfalls commonly associated with truth-relativism. It is further argued that the

employment of the concept of point of view affords a solution to 'Moore's paradox'. The

significance of the notion, and its application in treating this so-called paradox, lies less

in the results of the application and more in its general implications for the theory of

truth. I suggest that what is philosophically significant about 'Moore's paradox' is that its

solution confronts us with those implications in a way that discloses the necessity of

approaching the theory of truth as an analysis of the way truth and assertion are related.

Chapter I: Frege's Theory of Functions

Among the first expressions that Frege uses in 'Function and Concept' to name a mathematical function, (1) '$2x^3 + x$' is presented as an example of what "people who use the word 'function' ordinarily have in mind." (Frege 1891, 24).What distinguishes (1) from other expressions which do not name functions is, *inter alia*, that (1) "*indefinitely indicates a number.*" As such, (1) is incomplete. It is this incompleteness, which we have yet to adequately characterize, that is the essential property of all functions. What is instructive about the appearance of mathematical expressions such as (1) is that they reveal the manner in which certain linguistic expressions possessing similar syntactic form exhibit a similar functionality. It is suggested in a careful study by Rulon Wells that the capacity of mathematical expressions to exhibit functionality in just this way is in large measure a consequence of the "*method of generalization,*" (henceforth MG) one among several commitments which underwrite the programmatic aims of early Logicism. According to Wells, MG was a technique that had allowed Frege to explain concepts and relations as a species of function, a technique without which Frege would not have arrived at a functional definition of concepts.

It is interesting to note that the notions of function and concept are not (typically) discussed in connection with the more familiar stable of semantic notions that recent philosophers of language have inherited from Frege. This much was recognized as early as 1951. As R. S. Wells observes, "in spite of the current interest in Frege, the basic distinction between Function and Object, his basic distinction, has received scant

attention, the reason being that it is not so directly relevant as the notion of sense, denotation, sense, proposition, and truth-value to the semantic problems with which discussions of Frege have been most concerned."[1]

There are two general points about MG that are worth making: historically, it may be seen as an example of "cultural lag".[2] With respect to semantics, the method turned out to be, in Wells' phrase, "too productive," since it yielded "some products one would sooner not have had." Wells does not mention Frege's treatment of identity in connection with this – as Wells otherwise puts it – "uncontrolled method of discovery." It is my contention that the problem of identity is for Frege is a consequence of this "uncontrolled" application of MG. The identity problem is in some sense independent of the complications that the MG reveals with respect to his theory of sense and the problem of cognitive significance. I argue, however, that the latter complications stem largely from the former. The specific treatment that identity receives in "On Sense and Reference" is the principal example of the MG principle yielding those sorts of results one would sooner not have had. Wells explains MG as follows:

> [Before] Frege it would have been said that some but not
> all things that have a meaning additional to their sense have
> a denotation. Names (noun phrases) have denotation but
> not truth; propositions have truth but not denotation. By
> generalizing the concept of denotation to subsume truth as
> a variety, Frege makes exceptionless, and therefore
> completely regular, the proposition "All objective meaning
> other than sense is denotation" (Wells 1951, 395)

An instance of this is seen (on p.31) where Frege analyzes the sentence 'Caesar conquered Gaul' into the two parts, 'Caesar' and 'conquered Gaul', where the latter is

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said to express a one-place function and the former the argument for the function. In the passage that immediately follows, we find the following linguistic analogue:

'____ conquered Gaul'

It is said that a "complete sense" is obtained when the empty place is filled up with a proper name. Frege then goes on to introduce other kinds of mathematical expression, also said to name functions but differing from other designating expressions (explain) insofar as they contain the signs for equality, inequality, etc. ('=', '>,' and '<'). As an instance of Frege's MG all of this perhaps familiar, if not uncontroversial.

What follows these examples is a passage in which Frege reflects on the ways in which the meaning of the word 'function' has been "stretched by the progress of science," and the ways in which he believes himself to have contributed to its so-called stretching. I suggest that the function-theoretic treatment of concepts advanced within the first four pages of '*Function and Concept*' (see also *Grundgesetze* for a parallel discussion) may be seen to generate several difficulties in light of Frege's theory of assertion. Moreover, it is suggested that the crux of Frege's difficulties lay in his first attempts to extend the function-theoretic account so as to include the concepts of equality and inequality.

> In the first place, the field of mathematical operations that serve for constructing functions has been extended. Besides addition, multiplication, exponentiation, and their converses, the various means of transition to the limit have been introduced – to be sure, people have not always been clearly aware that they were thus adopting something essentially new…Secondly, the field of possible arguments

and values for functions has been extended by the
admission of complex numbers…In both directions I go
still further. I begin by adding to the signs +, -, etc., which
serve for constructing a functional expression, also signs
such as =, >, <, so that I can speak, e.g., of the function $x^2 =$
1, where x takes the place of the argument as before. The
first question that arises here is what the values of this
function are for different arguments. (Frege 1892, 28)

We then find the following examples of the function $x^2 = 1$ having been

completed by the successive replacement of x with arguments -1, 0, 1, and 2:

$$(2) \qquad\qquad (-1)^2 = 1$$
$$0^2 = 1$$
$$1^2 = 1$$
$$2^2 = 1$$

It is evident in this passage that Frege finds it unnecessary to further comment upon the

difference between expressions containing '=' and expressions which do not (such as (1))

once the examples are introduced.[3] In light of this fact, it may be suggested that such a

difference is inessential the theory of functions and its intended application; but I suggest

that failure to acknowledge the import of the difference is responsible for much of the

subsequent and widespread incomprehension of Frege's theory of assertion among his

most prominent interpreters. The suggestion should be unsurprising given what scant

attention Frege gives to the concept of judgment in the early *Begriffsschrift*.

One way to get at this difference is to raise the question of whether or not there is

a unique *kind* of incompleteness that characterizes functions, a question which Frege

seems not to have considered in the earlier work on the subject.[4] The suggestion is that in

discovering there to be an ambiguity in the notion of incompleteness (in the grammatical

sense) we are then in a better position to see how it is useful to distinguish between the two types of expression used to name functions. Further, this difference may be seen to have some interesting implications for Frege's semantic theory in general, which I discuss in a later section. Let us look at the following two expressions of distinct functions:

(i)    $x(x - 2)$

(ii)   $x > 0$

Given '2' as the argument in (i) we obtain '0' as the value of the function. This may be expressed by the following sentence:

(i*)  '$2^2 - 4 = 0$

However, if for (ii) we take '1' as the argument, then, given that the value yielded by the function is not a number, the value must be one of the two truth values. A not uninteresting question at this point is – how is this best to be expressed? It may be thought that we could write,

(ii*)  $1 > 0$

We know this to be incorrect on Frege's view since it fails to express the idea that the function yields a truth-value (in this case, 'the True'), even though we know the expression to be correct just insofar as it is *syntactically complete* (This is expressed by

the declarative sentence: 'One is greater than zero.').  Therefore, the occurrence of '1' in

(ii*) would *seem* to satisfy the function (ii) insofar as the resultant expression becomes

thereby complete. Such an interpretation would also seem to be a consequence of what

Frege has given as a definition of a function in general (*Begriff.*;*Grundgesetze*). Rather,

we might express the same idea without loss of clarity by introducing the following

phraseology:


(ii**) '1 > 0 *has the value* 'the True',


where – if (ii**) is to avail us in drawing the analogy between (1*) and (ii*) – we are to

infer that "has the value" and "indicates" are to be read in a way analogous to the way in

which "=" is read in (i*). But if this is correct, then to say that "'2(2 – 2) = 0' indicates

'the True'" amounts to saying that the sentence indicates a truth-value once the value for

the function –  given '2' as argument – has already obtained. That is, in this instance 'the

True' in (i) is indicated once the numerical value '0' is yielded for the function (given '2'

as argument). I have here attempted to express a point made by Frege in a different way,

stressing how the treatment of mathematical equality gives rise to the semantical

categories of Frege's system. Frege claims:


> I now say: the value of our function is a truth-value and
> distinguish between the truth-values of what is true and
> what is false. I call the first, for short, the True; and the
> second, the False. Consequently, e.g., what '2² = 4' means
> is the True as, say, '2²' means 4. And '2² = 1' means the
> False. (Frege 1891, 28-29)

However, we may easily see that this is not true of (ii): given that '1 > 0' is the *result* of having completed the function expressed by 'x > 0', there is good reason, *prima facie*, not to proceed to explicitly *name* the value for the function of the argument '1', (viz. 'the True') in the way that Frege has done. To give a name for the value in this way suggests that the function is in further need of completion. This is suggested because the syntactical element (here recognized only implicitly) that is contained in the meaning of the sign '>' is articulated in (i*) by what we understand to be expressed by the functional expression '= 0' – '*is* 0' – which forms the expression in (i) given '2' as the argument. It is useful, then, to observe that in (i*), '=' is a sign used in and for the *construction* of the complete expression. An expression containing two argument places, together with the relation-expression '*is greater than*' is syntactically of the same form as is any expression containing those arguments together with the function expressed by the words "is," "is the same as" and "is identical to." This much is evident given the finite form of the principal verb, "to be". The point of exhibiting syntactical completeness, however, may be generalized to apply to the occurrence of the principal finite verb in any declarative sentence. In the use of the terms "syntactical element" and "syntactical completeness" throughout, what is intended is a sense of an element or feature of language that is not wholly destitute of semantic significance. As concerns sentential structure, this element is to be taken as something that is essential to the rules of sentence formation for an interpreted language; it therefore pertains too in specific ways to specific rules governing semantic composition. It is assumed throughout the discussion that the notion of structure as pertains to sentences is not something conceptually prior to certain semantic concepts; considerations as to structure in this sense are not taken necessarily to be something that

should be wholly abstracted from semantic investigations into natural language.[5] The concept of linguistic meaning is, rather, assumed to be prior in some sense, but pursuing the question of precisely in what this priority consists would lead us too far astray from the subject of discussion.

An obvious consequence of all these considerations as to logical composition is the very plausible sense in which functions may be characterized as being made complete (*saturated*) regardless of what numbers are determined as arguments for them, and therefore regardless of the senses of the sentences that obtain as a result of completing the function. A very similar point is made by K. Wiredu's "Truth as a Logical Constant; with application to the Principle of Excluded Middle":

> To assign a truth value to a function is not to say of it that it is true or is false, for, of course, it can be neither; it is merely to supply it with a truth claim. A correlative observation is this: The type of truth value that is involved when an assertion is said to be true or to be false is not exactly identical with the type of truth value that may be assigned to a truth function, though as we shall see, there is a very close relation between them (Wiredu 1975)

We may note that not only is it the case that the *completion* of the function in (ii) occurs *in virtue* of designating '1' as argument, as expressed in (ii*); and by parity of reasoning, the same kind of completion is just as easily rendered by designating '-1' as the argument. Analogously, (i*) may be taken to be the *result* of having completed the function as expressed by (i).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (Function) | 'the capital of $\xi$' | '$2\xi^3 + \xi$' |
| (Funct.+ argument) | 'the capital of *India*' | '$2(4)^3 + (4)$' |
| (Value) | 'New Delhi' | '132' |

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As a consequence of MG, 'The capital of India' indicates 'New Delhi' in the same way in which '2(4)³ + (4)' indicates '132'. This is, as is evident by the explanations given in "Function and Concept," the model on which extending the function is based. Frege's extending the concept of function, and thereby the extending of the domain of values to include '=', leads to the following parallel expressions:

'2 $\xi^3$ + $\xi$ = 132'                                    '____ is a man'

'2(4)³ + (4) = 132' ('4' as argument)      '*Socrates* is a man'

'the True'                                              'the True'

Thus we have a doctrine according to which 'Socrates is a man' is a complex designation, given that '2(4)³ + (4) = 132' is a complex designation[6]. If we have followed Frege's reasoning this far, then we are led without too much difficulty to the related doctrine that 'the True' and 'the False' are logical objects designated by sentences *qua* complete designating expressions. We find arguments in support of this doctrine in, e.g., "Function and Concept" (Frege 1891). A sentence is not incomplete; therefore the sense expressed by a sentence is an object. This conclusion is also consistent with other of Frege's methodological principles.

Howard Jackson  reports, having studied one of Frege's unpublished papers of 1891-1892, that Frege argues "that the sense of an expression *is an object*, and since, for Frege, objects and concepts are in every case to be distinguished (a distinction made consistently throughout his writings), the sense of an expression is never to be confused

with a concept."[7] *A fortiori* what is denoted by the sense of a sentence is complete. Since the denotation of the sense of a sentence is one of the two truth-values and since whatever is complete is, by definition, an object, truth-values are therefore themselves objects; as such they belong to the realm of reference.

The results of apply the method of generalization as Frege has done reveals an ambiguity in Frege's explanation of how values, in general, obtain. In "Function and Concept" Frege states that "the *value* of our function is a truth-value," where the sense here of "value yielded" (given an argument for the function) is indistinguishable from the sense in which the expression '1>0' *names* a truth-value (in this case, 'the True').

Chapter II:  The Relation of the Theory of Functions to the Theory of Assertion


There is a philosophically interesting consequence of Frege's strategy of first

extending the concept of function to include identity, and then extending (on this basis)

his functional analysis, already applied to nominalized sentences, so as to include the

copulative sense of 'is'. This consequence is uncontroversial and is articulated succinctly

by Frege himself in *Grundgesetze*:


> ….I do not mean to assert anything if I merely write down
> an equation, but that I merely designate a truth-value, just
> as I do not assert anything if I merely write down '2²', but
> merely designate a number. (M. Furth (trans.) 1964)


The concept of '2²' as a naming expression is generalized to include sentences,

e.g. '2² = 4'.

I wish to examine now some further implications of Frege's thesis that sentences

are entities of the same logical type as singular terms. This identification of sentences

with singular terms, which was seen in the last chapter to be a direct consequence of

Frege's methodology (in particular, MG) would seem to have, in turn, some undesirable

theoretical consequences with respect to Frege's understanding of the nature of assertion.

According to V. H. Dudman, a noted Frege scholar, there are two prominent

interpretations of Frege's judgment-stroke – one attributed to Max Black and the other to

P. T. Geach. Although upon investigation it becomes apparent that the *Begriffsschrift*

account accords with neither interpretation, the extent to which the later Frege (e.g. of

*Grundgesetze*) was committed to one interpretation or the other is patently unclear. Thus,

where Frege's theory of assertion as it occurs in the context of the later semantic theory

of *Grundegesetzse* (and in "Function and Concept") is not met with incomprehension, it

is recognized by many philosophers of language to be problematic.

In what follows I try to give some indication of just how problematic that theory

is. On Black's account, the assertion sign, '⊢' was introduced to convert a mere

(complex) designation to a non-designation.[8] Such a conversion then would allow Frege

to "restore to the propositional sign its truth-claiming aspect." V. H. Dudman looks to the

following passage in "Function and Concept" in an effort to marshal textual support for

this interpretation:

> …[According] to the Black version asserted sentences are
> not names at all: the judgment stroke "does not serve, in
> conjunction with other signs, to designate an object, '⊢2 +
> 3 = 5' does not designate anything; it asserts something."[9]

Unlike Black, however, Dudman reckons the view expressed here to have already fallen

into serious error. Dudman goes on, now echoing a point made by Furth in an earlier

quoted passage[10]:

> In that passage Frege is surely over-reaching. What he
> ought to say is rather that '⊢2 + 3 = 5' does not just
> express a thought and designate a truth-value, for "over and
> above this is the acknowledgment that the truth-value is the
> true. (Dudman 1975)

On the proposed amendment, Dudman recommends a view that had in fact been

maintained by Alonzo Church. In his *Introduction to Mathematical Logic* (1951) it is

maintained that sentences are still names – whether asserted or not – though they are said

to differ from other naming expressions in their use. Church gives the following

justification for his construing sentences in this way:

> [We] shall require variables for which sentences may be
> substituted, forms which become sentences upon replacing
> their free variables by appropriate constants, and associated
> functions of such forms – things which, on the theory of
> sentences as names, fit naturally into their proper place in
> the scheme set forth in §§ 02-03. …[Granted] that
> sentences are names, we go on, in the light of the
> discussion in §01, to consider the denotation and the sense
> of sentences. (Church 1951, 24)

I cite this passage, in part because it lays out an (alleged) justification for the 'theory of

sentences as names'. This justification figures into an explanation that I give later as to

why Frege's theory of truth, despite all its metaphysical appurtenances, has nonetheless

had a strong influence among subsequent philosophers of language. The passage is of

further interest to us since it immediately follows a passage that contains both what is

later argued to be the lynchpin of Frege's theory of meaning, and the source of many

metaphysical and linguistic muddles – not the least important of which I discuss in

Chapter VI, "Moore's Paradox and the Logic of Assertion." The preceding passage is as

follows:

> This [account of sentence meaning] seems unnatural at first
> sight, because the most conspicuous use of sentences (and
> indeed the one by which we have just identified or
> described them) is not barely to name something but to
> make an assertion. Nevertheless it is possible to regard
> sentences as names by distinguishing between the assertive
> use of a sentence on the one hand, and its non-assertive use,
> on the other hand, as a name and a constituent of a longer
> sentence (just as other names are used). Even when a
> sentence is simply asserted, we shall hold that it is still a

name, though used in a way not possible for other names.
(Church 1951, 24)

This assumption leads us to the central notion underlying Frege's theory of sense:

> The sense of a sentence may be described as that which is
> grasped when one understands the sentence, or as that
> which two sentences in different languages must have in
> common in order to be correct translations each of the
> other. As in the case of names generally, it is possible to
> grasp the sense of a sentence without therefore necessarily
> having knowledge of its denotation (truth-value) otherwise
> than as determined by this sense. In particular, though the
> sense is grasped, it may sometimes remain unknown
> whether the denotation is truth. (Church 1951, 26)

The possibility of grasping the sense of a sentence without knowing whether the

denotation is truth (or falsehood) in the way Church describes implies that one may

recognize the thought expressed by the sentence to be correct (while at the same time not

knowing its denotation. The failure here to represent senses in a grammatically

perspicuous fashion leads ultimately to a kind of skepticism with respect to truth –

makingd the property of truth epistemologically inaccessible. Truth-skepticism, however,

is not so much entailed by Frege's notion of sense in itself as it is by Frege's manner of

grammatically representing it. The sense-reference distinction as typically construed,

therefore, might plausibly be seen as spurious. What we *should* want to preserve in this

distinction is the idea that an assertion and a proposition share a conceptual content;

however, as I suggest in what follows, we should want to avoid drawing the distinction in

precisely the way Frege and others have done. This commonality is what Frege expressed

in his own way by claiming that sense determines reference, and the manner in which

Frege draws the sense-reference distinction achieves this much. But the signinficance of

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*how* it is drawn is crucial to understanding it. As we will see, a good deal hangs upon the way it is drawn.

The argument that Dudman presents in favor of this interpretation (which he attributes to Geach) is at times difficult, but it mirrors in many respects the confusion into which Russell fell in his early (1903) treatment of assertion and so may warrant closer examination. I come to this later.

According to Dudman, Black's view holds that the assertion sign was introduced as a consequence of Frege's having recognized the "namehood" of sentences. It is understandable that this doctrine would then require the use of a sign which would restore to a propositional sign its "truth-claiming aspect" – particularly in light of the conceptual priority of this doctrine in Frege's later semantic theory. For Black the necessity of introducing such a device is a consequence of Frege's construal of sentences as complex designations. Let us calls this Frege's 'later doctrine'. This is essentially the conjunction of theses *(a)* an *(c)* introduced on p. iv, namely, that sentences (normally) have denotations and are of the same logical type as singular terms. On Black's view, the namehood (its semantic role of naming) of a sentence *ipso facto* deprives it of its assertoric function. As Dudman observes in this connection, "to name is not to say." I wish not to quarrel with this line of interpretation *per se*, but to underscore what it is that Dudman has so far correctly observed – viz., that this doctrine appears fully in *Grundgesetze* (Frege 1891). Thus, if the Black interpretation is at all plausible, we must be prepared to admit that Frege had *two* explanations for the introduction of the judgment-stroke. The sign was introduced in *Begriffsschrift* in 1879, a considerable time

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before Frege provided a later and separate explanation of the judgment-stroke in

*Grundgesetze*.and "Function and Concept" in 1891.

It will be useful to inquire as to whether the theory of functions, from which Frege

derives the notion that sentences rather are complex names, is independent of Frege's

early theory of assertion. In an article entitled "Frege's Judgment-Stroke" V. H. Dudman

writes:

> What are used assertively and non-assertively are alike
> sentences, and, as sentences, already have their own verbs;
> those verbs are *part of* what are being used assertively or
> non-assertively, and what is used assertively on one
> occasion cannot be the same as what is used non-
> assertively on another if they differ in respect of verb.
> (Dudman 1975, 155)

The crucial – and suppressed – premise in this passage is this: when the grammatical

rendering (the "grammatical expedient") of '— *Δ*' is used to mention or indicate, then it

cannot also be used to make an assertion. It cannot also be a "candidate for assertive

use".[11] But I think that we are entitled to ask here why not. It is assumed that the

declarative form 'a is *F*' is used both assertively *and* non-assertively; therefore we should

recognize '*is*' as "part of" what is used at one time assertively in 'a is *F*' another *non-*

assertively in 'a is *F*'. On Dudman's assumption, then, the grammatical difference

expressed between the declarative form 'a is *F*' and the non-declarative 'the circumstance

that a is *F*' is not sufficient to characterize the distinction marked by Frege's use of the

signs '— *Δ*' and '⊢*Δ*'.

There is very little textual evidence in support of the interpretation according to

which the assertion sign was conceived by Frege as merely an index of assertion.

Sometimes called the 'Geach interpretation', this reading of the assertion sign as a kind of index maintains that the addition of the vertical judgment-stroke to the (horizontal) content-stroke is intended *not* to affect the semantic role of the expression to which it attaches. Thus, the sign is not a device which serves as a grammatical functor from substantival phrases (or noun phrases) to declarative sentences. Nor is it a device that restores to complex designations an assertoric force that is otherwise vitiated simply in virtue of their naming function. It is a device which shows merely *when* a sentence is being used assertively rather than non-assertively. On this view there is no corresponding grammatical difference. Frege was simply mistaken to think that the judgment-stroke would alter semantic content in addition to serving as an index of assertion. The so-called index interpretation appears to be what Church has in mind when he distinguishes between "assertive use" and "non-assertive use" of a sentence.[12]

The initial restriction on the use of the judgment-stroke is that put forth by Russell; and it seems that others, including those we have been discussing, have followed the prescription. On Russell's view, it is only appropriate to prefix the judgment-stroke to expressions representing conceptual contents which are "in principle capable of being held true." (Russell 1903, Appendix) Both the Geach-Dudman and Russell interpretations appear to be in agreement that falsehoods are not capable of being asserted in the same way in which truths are. However, as will be shown in the next chapter, Russell does not fail to see the implication that for this very reason error becomes impossible. In an effort to escape the implication, Russell claims that assertions whose conceptual contents are incapable of being held true are to be regarded as having a primarily *psychological* status. Russell was not the only one to regard assertions in this way. Several prominent

philosophers, chief among which are Church, Geach, and Dummett, have made the same move - even if they were blind to that troublesome implication.[13]

Dudman has no good reason to claim that2) Dudman is incorrect to say that there is no explanation of why the assertion sign is not needed in *Begriffsschrift* (unlike *Grundgesetze* and *F&B*) or to claim that, whatever Frege's intentions were, §§ 2,3 of *Begriffsschrift* "embody a readily understandable slip on Frege's part." There Frege is said to have been unmindful of the fact that assertoric force is suspended ("cancelled") in truth-functional contexts. In light of what Frege actually says in these sections (2 and 3), this criticism is unjust. It is not obvious why it is incorrect to say that 'the circumstance that unlike poles attract' cannot "even be a candidate for assertive use," and that because its semantic role is to *name*, it cannot be used to *say*. Further, it does not follow that even if "the circumstance that unlike poles attract" cannot be a candidate for assertive use, a declarative sentence *cannot* be used to both name and assert.

Dudman's argument at this point is puzzling: (1) If the vertical stroke is to be an index of assertion (in Geach's sense), then we are left with no choice but to also assign to it the role of what Frege has called the 'common predicate' (that of a "verb"), "is true," or what is the same, "is a fact." This is the role it is said to have in §§ 2 and 3 of *Begriffsschrift*. (2) If the judgment stroke joins to an expression a common predicate upon an expression, then the judgment stroke cannot be *merely* an index of assertion – i.e. that is, a device to signify when a sentence is being used assertively and when it is being used non-assertively. Therefore, the judgment stroke cannot be taken as a kind of functor. Dudman observes that this is a consequence of assuming a definite description such as "the circumstance that unlike poles attract" to be an adequate rendering of an expression

'A' in '–A'. But Dudman thinks this is just why the *Begriffsschrift* account is mistaken, for Dudman maintains that the judgment-stroke "cannot be an index of assertion if it is a verb."

The problematic assumption on which this argument rests may be located in the the following passage[14]:

(A2)

> "What are used assertively and non-assertively are alike
> sentences, and, as sentences, already have their own verbs;
> those verbs are part of what are being used assertively or
> non-assertively"

Dudman then goes on to claim, "what is used assertively on one occasion cannot be the same as what is used non-assertively on another *if they differ in respect of a verb.*"

Appealing to an argument originating in Frege's later writings, Dudman concludes that any sentence containing the universal predicate (the verb) is a sentence which *itself* may also be used non-assertively.

The confusion that emerges here – a confusion that appears also to underlie Russell's difficulties concerning the nature of truth in (§§ 51-53) *Principles of Mathematics* – is one that can perhaps only be cleared up by suggesting yet another interpretation of the assertion sign.

Assuming that the verb is part of what is being used (as part of a sentence) assertively on one occasion and non-assertively on another, it may be doubted whether we should therefore assume *that which* is to be used assertively and non-assertively must be a declarative *sentence*. We have as an example of what is to be used assertively and non-assertively alike, "Unlike poles attract."[15] It may be argued that (i) the verb 'is', in

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Russell's example – 'Caesar is dead' – cannot be part of an expression used assertively if *that expression* (the declarative form) is also to be used non-assertively, for normally we do not say non-assertively 'Caesar died'.

The foregoing points, arguably may be taken to support Dudman's contention since it is compatible with the later doctrine that indicative sentences are proper names and as such are debarred from assertoric employment. Of course, Dudman's contention that Frege's rendering of '— A' as "the circumstance that unlike poles attract" in order to display grammatically the occurrence of a possible content of judgment was an "understandable slip" on Frege's part is *also* consistent with (i) above.[16]. The compatibility of these claims, it may be speculated, encouraged Dudman to think that he was on to something and therefore might be forgiven for justifying his interpretation on such slender textual grounds.

What support *is* thereby afforded the Geach interpretation seems to collapse given what I take to be another, very plausible interpretation of the assertion sign. This interpretation is perhaps closest in letter and spirit to §§ 2,3 of *Begriffsschrift*. On this interpretation, Frege made no understandable slip and did not misrepresent his own intentions at all. Contrary to Dudman's claim, Frege's use of

(1) 'the circumstance that unlike poles attract'

and

(2) 'Unlike poles attract'

as linguistic expressions for which the following symbolic expressions stand,

(1a) —A

(2a) ⊢ A

,accomplishes just what it was intended to accomplish, namely, to show that (1) *is* the conceptual content of (2); and to show, therefore, that (2) shows (1) *as having been asserted*. Thus, what has come to be known as the *common predicate* (of *Begriffsschrift*) reading of the assertion sign *is* correct. But also correct is the contention that (I) the assertion sign is, in a sense, an index of assertion. However, it must be added that this contention is not merely incidental to the *common predicate* reading. That is, we should not therefore read the assertion sign as providing an index of assertion *independently of, and in addition to,* conferring the predicate upon the participial expression. To take it as such is to regard the introduction of the assertion sign as an unnecessary accretion to an already established theory of assertion.[17]   Rather, it is *by virtue* of our recognizing the presence of the common predicate that the assertion sign may then serve as an index of assertion.

We are required to take the assertion sign as a functor which yields transformations from noun-phrases to complete sentences. Though this functor is syntactic, one may argue that the transformation itself is not *merely* syntactic: it yields both a logical and semantic transformation from definite descriptions to complete sentences – i.e. from propositional contents to truth-values. There is, then, no reason to think that what is viewed assertively and non-assertively are alike *sentences*. Therefore, (A2) must be incorrect.[18]

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This reading contradicts what Dudman takes to be the prevailing interpretation of the assertion sign, and given our earlier gloss on his argument for this interpretation, we may be inclined to regard (I) as a *reductio* in favor of the prevailing view. This would be plausible were there not good reasons, as I suggested there are earlier, for rejecting Dudman's key assumption. The assumption in question, it will be recalled, is that the judgment stroke *cannot* serve as an index of assertion if it is also to supply the verb – in these examples, the predicate 'is true', or 'is a fact'. The reason is that *sentences* are the types of entity capable of being used both assertively and non-assertively. But as *sentences*, Dudman claims, they *already contain verbs* (A2).

On a closer examination of Dudman's discussion we can begin to see where the confusion begins to set in. It would seem to be found the following paragraph, which immediately precedes his argument for his interpretation:

> Frege comes up with (1) "the circumstance that unlike poles attract" as being an expression satisfying the two conditions of (a) having the same conceptual content as (2) "Unlike poles attract," and (b) lacking assertoric force."
> (Dudman 1975)

Witness that (1) is an expression which satisfies condition (a) – *of having the same conceptual content as* (2). This implies, of course, that there is some third thing (something *like* a proposition) which (1) and (2) *share*. But a not unreasonable question might arise as to what this thing could be and in what way it is to be expressed linguistically.

In sections 2 and 3 no such thing is implied, since Frege never makes the claims that are attributed to him by Dudman in the passage in question. A careful examination of

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these sections will reveal that (1) "the circumstance that unlike poles attract" just *is* the conceptual content of (2), "Unlike poles attract." It should then be noted that (1) is taken as an unsaturated expression which is converted to (2) upon having restored assertoric force. Once the judgment-stroke is seen in this light, we avoid the need to posit the semantic *tertium quid* to which the Geach-Dudman view must be committed; for, we cannot sensibly hold that (1) has the same conceptual content as (2) if (1) just *is* that conceptual content.

I suggest that this reading is consistent with the spirit of Frege's early theory of functions, as the horizontal (or content-stroke) would then be seen to, together with the expressions to which it is prefixed, express a function. Historically speaking, this is not without a more general significance since it affords some insight into the causes of Russell's difficulties in the famous passage of §§51 and 52 of *Principles*. Before turning to this, we shall first have to substantiate the foregoing claims against Dudman's argument and question the merits of the Geach interpretation, since it would seem that that interpretation is inconsistent with much of what is implied by the proposed interpretation – viz. that assertoric force alters the semantic role of the expression to which it applies.

**Judgeable Content, Truth, and 'Judging true'**. The Geach interpretation is thought to be supported by several arguments appearing in discussions *after* 1891 (in 1896, in two published essays on Peano's system): the role of the judgment-stroke in the cited passages is taken by Dudman to be the role accorded to it in *Begriffsschrifft*, that is, as an index of assertion and not as a grammatical functor. I have argued that this is

mistaken, but it may explain in part the predominance of the Geach interpretation among various interpretations of Frege's philosophy of language.[19]

Consistent with the proposed interpretation in §1 are the views expressed in several passages of *Begriffsschrifft* which may also be taken to support the Dudman-Geach interpretation. In their interpretation of, for example, §7 of *Begriffsschrifft*, we begin what might appear to be a marked determination to divest Frege's account of the judgment-stroke of its syntactical significance:

> If the judgment-stroke is absent then, here as elsewhere in
> the Begriffsschrifft, no judgment is passed.
>
> $$\top A$$
>
> merely requires the formation of the idea that A does not
> take place, without expressing whether this idea is true
> (Geach 1965).

Then later on, "Even in section 2 the account of the judgment stroke in terms of "the circumstance that" …is counterbalanced by a passage that supports Geach's "index of assertion" interpretation:

> If the small vertical stroke at the left end of the horizontal
> one is *omitted*, then this is to transform the judgment into a
> *mere combination of ideas* concerning which the writer
> does not express whether he acknowledges its truth or not
> (Geach 1965).

Though it is perhaps not so clear how section 7 is supposed to count as further evidence of the point that section 2 is alleged to have already made, we may nevertheless see that the oversight of the syntactical distinction here between a mere combination of ideas and judgment is encouraged by a somewhat biased understanding of Frege's early theory of

judgment. This emerges most notably in the words, "concerning which the writer does not express whether he acknowledges its truth or not." The author cites this as a passage (§2) which "counterbalances" the syntactical distinction contained in the preceding paragraph. But it does more than this: it betrays an insistence upon a wholly psychological conception of judgment according to which judgment amounts to nothing more than 'veridical commitment.' On this assumption we are led to the conclusion that the cited passage *must* countervail Frege's discussion in §2 (*Begriff.*) in which the syntactic distinction is explicitly stated. However, once we drop this problematic assumption, whatever motivation we may have had for maintaining the Dudman-Geach interpretation is lost.

Supporters of the Geach view will perhaps not hesitate to point out that the force of the objection that I have raised depends upon the plausibility of taking the (above) quoted passages as meaning something other than what most Frege scholars have taken them to mean. Moreover, it would seem that pursuing the objection further would lead us into some rather thorny issues surrounding the nature of judgment more generally. The problem would then become the more general one of understanding what we do in our activity of passing judgment and how the relation of our notion of *passing judgment* – of expressing veridical commitment – is related to what we already take to be the objects that judgments are about. There may be no better entering wedge into this difficult problem than the remarks of several key passages in Frege's later writings.

"Two components in that whose external form is a declarative sentence":

(i) The acknowledgement of truth

and

(ii) The content that is acknowledged to be true:

> (a) Thought (*Der Gedanke*)
> (b) Truth-value

Frege explains that content is "split" into (a) thought and (b) truth-value, and this split emerges "as a consequence of distinguishing between *sense* and *denotation* of a sign."[20]

Note that Frege construes an 'acknowledgement of truth' in such a way that implies that what was once a component given a semantic role in a theory of judgment is now a component which is left out of account. Seen in this light it then becomes apparent how such a lacuna led various interpreters to mistakenly construe "acknowledgement of truth" as synonymous with veridical commitment. The "acknowledgement of truth" *ought* to have meant the *determination* of the sign's referent by the sense of the sign and not, as is implied by Frege, the *further* determination of a truth-value by the denotation. If we take the denotation itself to have a denotation, then we are forced to postulate 'the True' and 'the False' as logical objects. With the above passage from *Grundgesetze* we have the following development of Frege's views, outlined here diagrammatically:

Figure 1. Components of a declarative sentence

```
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   Declarative   │
                    │    sentence     │
                    └─────────────────┘
                      /             \
        ┌──────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐
        │  Acknowledgment  │    │ Possible content │
        │    of truth      │    │   of judgment    │
        └──────────────────┘    └──────────────────┘
                                   /            \
                        ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐
                        │    Thought    │  │  Truth-value  │
                        └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘
```
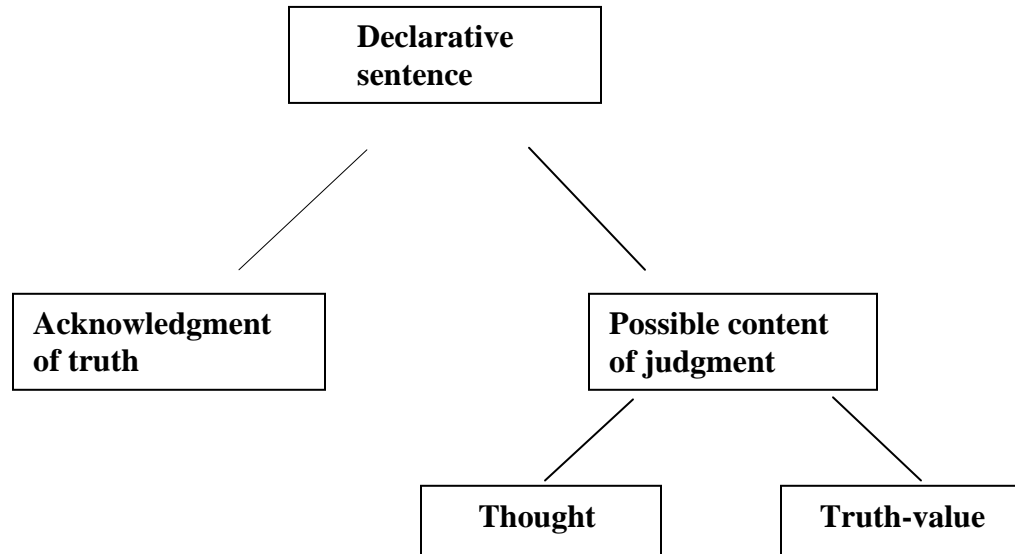
Frege's suggestion in "Function and Concept" is that there is a need to maintain a clear "separation of the act from the subject-matter of judgment," and to do this we should need to treat indicative sentences '5 > 4 ', '1 + 3 = 5', e.g., as proper names. Following Dudman's suggestion, we may take this to be a non-sequitur, and rightly so: the separation of the act from subject-matter of judgment does not entail the thesis that declarative sentences are proper names. We may, in fact, press the point a bit further than Dudman has done and claim that not only is the namehood thesis of declarative sentences *not* entailed by a commitment to keep separate the act and content of judgment, it *ought not* be entailed by this commitment. More precisely, if the namehood thesis is entailed in the way Frege claims it is, then his separation of the *act* from the *content* of judgment must then be the *wrong* kind of separation. It would appear that what I take to be Frege's

mistake in this connection was overlooked by Russell who was chiefly instrumental in bringing Frege's later semantic theory to light in anglo-american world of philosophy and therefore largely responsible for the received view of Frege's theory. Thus, while the practice of treating declarative sentences as proper names has continued in semantic theory well after *Grundgesetze*, the initial reasons for adopting that practice was lost sight of. This is an important point bearing on conceptions of truth which I discuss later in further detail. Figure 2 Semantic Content:

```
                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │   Content   │
                    └──────┬──────┘
                           │
                  ┌────────┴────────┐
                  │ Possible content│
                  │   of judgment   │
                  └───┬─────────┬───┘
                     /           \
          ┌─────────┐             ┌─────────────┐
          │  Sense  │ ·······▶    │  Reference  │
          └────┬────┘             └──────┬──────┘
               │                         │
          ┌─────────┐             ┌─────────────┐
          │ Thought │ ·······▶    │ Truth-value │
          └─────────┘             └─────────────┘
```
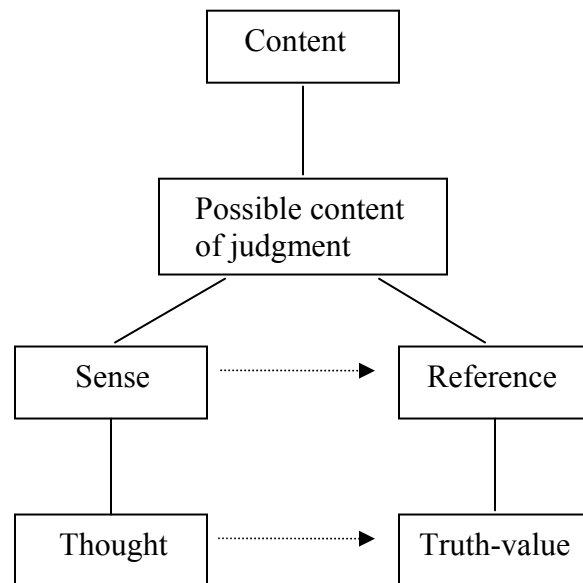
The relationships roughly pictured here, put forth explicitly in the previous passage (*Grundgesetze*), show that we are to take the thought of a sentence as *having* a denotation, in which case we must hold that a (non-defective) sentence denotes one of the two truth-values. This is a consequence of identifying the sense of a sentence with the thought expressed by the sentence. Given the view presented in *Grundgesetze*, according to which the thought as expressed by an indicative sentence inherits the structure as determined by assumed semantic principles of composition of the sense of the

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corresponding sentence, a thought stands as a *complete* entity. The structure and the

logical standing of the thought, if we are to analyze its structure in the context of Frege's

early view of assertion (*Begriff.*), exhibits this completeness by showing a 'possible

content of judgment' as having been asserted; that is to say, as having been *advanced as*

*true*. To speak of a content as having been advanced as true is simply to speak of an

*acknowledgement of truth* (*Begriff.*) the grammatical representation of which, as we have

seen, is the vertical-stroke.

Thus, if it is correct to assume that a truth-value obtains with the addition of

assertoric force to the incomplete expression – which represents a 'possible content of

judgment' – then we are said to be in possession of a truth value *given the denotation* of

the sense of a sentence. This observation is supported when we attend to Frege's

discussion of the twin notions of designtation and denotation and how they are

distinguished in section 2 of *Grundgesestze* :

> I say: the names "$2^2 = 4$" and "$3 > 2$" denote the same
> truth-value, which I call for short the True.  …Likewise, for
> me "$3^2 = 4$" and "$1 > 2$" denote the same truth-value, which
> I call for short the False, precisely as the name "$2^2$" denotes
> the number four. Accordingly I call the number four the
> denotation of "4" and of "$2^2$", and I call the True the
> denotation of "$3 > 2$" (Frege 1891, 35)

Immediately preceding these remarks, Frege writes:

> The expressions "$0^2 = 4$", "$1^2 = 4$", "$2^2 = 4$", "$3^2 = 4$" are
> expressions some of true, some of false thoughts. I put this
> as follows: the value of the function $\xi = 4$ is either the
> truth-value of what is true or that of what is false." (p. 35)
> (see also S&R)

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The true thought "2² = 4" is expressed by *designating*; that is, the truth-value (here, the True) is designated independently of our *asserting* that 2² = 4. But here, by the very fact that we are dealing with sentences, simply *because* we are dealing with expressions involving equalities and inequalities, we are liable to be temporarily unmindful of the fact that such expressions are already complete (i.e. "saturated") expressions and that inattention to their completeness has certain implications. One implication is the difficulty that Montgomery Further had drawn attention to in remarking that the notions of truth and falsehood "seem to be turning up twice over in the theory, once within the domain of individuals in the guise of the 'logical objects' the True and the False, and then again at a different level as success versus failure… of the act of asserting."[21]
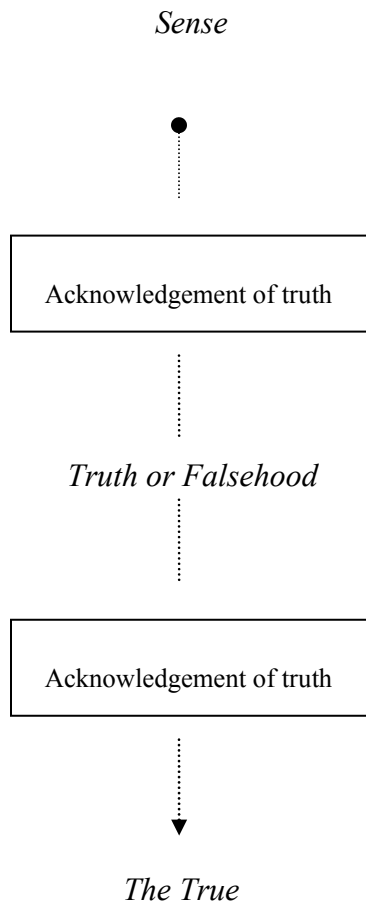
As complete, these expressions contain an occurrence of truth, unless they undergo an operation whereby they are divested of their assertoric force. Of course, Frege and others (viz. Russell and Geach) explicitly recognize that such an expression must be capable of being expressed *without* being thereby asserted. One consequence of this, however, is a very one-eyed preoccupation with the *psychological* aspects of assertion. This, in turn, would seem to be a consequence of several developments which, as it happens, span the whole of Frege's work in semantic theory: firstly, extending the function-theoretic approach to include the notions of equality and inequality; secondly, the introduction of the sense/reference distinction; and thirdly, having lost sight of the fact that the internal structure of judgment "whose external form is a declarative sentence" carries with it (contains) an occurrence of truth given by the presence of assertoric force. It is the latter that is at odds with the syntactic interpretation of the judgment stroke.

It would seem that the psychological sense of assertion may be maintained with or without the syntactic distinction: given the sentence 'Unlike poles attract'

, we may say that we assert the sentence when we wish to recognize the truth of the sentence and that we hold the sentence in consideration when, e.g., we do not recognize its truth. However, it is assumed in the *Begriffsschrift* that we are to represent the relationship between (unasserted) judgeable content and truth-value as follows Figure 3 Relation of semantic content to truth:

*Content*

●

Acknowledgement of truth

▼

*Truth-value*
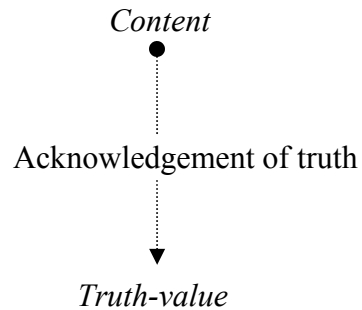
It is perhaps well known that this relationship grows more complicated Frege's later work. Thus, in *Grundgesetze* we have the following (Figure4):

Figure 4 Two levels of truth

*Sense*

●

Acknowledgement of truth

*Truth or Falsehood*

Acknowledgement of truth

*The True*


Problematically, the psychological sense of assertion according to which an

assertion is merely an expression of veridical commitment (to the sense of a sentence)

then prevails over the logical sense in the following passage from "Function and

Concept":

> If we write down an equation or inequality, e.g. 5 > 4, we
> ordinarily wish at the same time to express a judgment; in
> our example, we want to assert that 5 is greater than 4.
> According to the view I am presenting '5 > 4' and '1 + 3 =
> 5' just give us expressions for truth-values, without making

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any assertion… (Frege 1891; compare to passage in 'On Herr Peano's Begriffsschrift', viz. "with '$(2 > 3) = (7^2 = 0)$' a sense of strangeness is at first felt…for such a sign serves two distinct purposes…")

The words "we ordinarily wish *at the same time* to express a judgment" are instructive in that they imply that there are occasions on which we do not wish at the same time pass judgment, e.g., that 5 is greater than 4 when we simply write '$5 > 4$'. In case such as this we should have no need for a grammatical functor to express the content *unasserted*. It appears that the mind – upon having been given the sentence '$5 > 4$' covertly supplies the affirmative judgment that '5' is greater than '4'. In the case that we judge a content as false, this point is brought out more clearly: given the written sentence '$1 + 3 = 5$', we seem to be engaged in what Frege calls expressing a *supposition* – or rather covertly (and simultaneously) – supplying a negative judgment which we may wish to say, following Frege, designates the truth-value 'the False'. On Frege's view, strictly speaking, this is not a judgment, since in inscribing the signs '$1 + 3 = 5$', or in being presented with the sentence '$1 + 3 = 5$', we may simultaneously suspend judgment as to its truth or falsehood. In such cases it is clear that we merely feign an expression of the (unasserted) judgeable content by assertive means. We are still apt to ask what *exactly* are we doing in suspending judgment in this way, suggesting the operation is perhaps more complicated. In the next chapter I argue that an understanding of assertion in terms of a veridical commitment to sentences, where force is now conferred, now suspended only psychologically, leads to serious puzzles. These are puzzles, however, that arise out of the prominence of Frege's later views. They may be solved by appealing to the insights of his earlier *Begriffschrifft*. The prominence of his later views owes in large part to Russell's interpretation of Frege's work in *PofM*. Russell, and many who later fell under

his influence, seized on the psychological approach to assertion, thereby inheriting the puzzles and associated tangles concerning the nature of propositions and facts, and the definition of correspondence. In a certain sense, what is occurring implicitly in claiming that a sense has a denotation just is the passing of judgment – or, to adopt the language of *Begriffsschrift*, an "acknowledgement of truth" – a truth claim. It is now a simple matter to see why, given a psychological sense of assertion, Frege would vehemently deny that expressions *standing for* truth-values (i.e. what and how a given expression denotes a truth-value) are expressions of *judgments*.

Chapter III:  Frege and Russell on Assertion

In this chapter I advance a syntactical interpretation of Frege's theory of assertion

which derives from the views of Kwasi Wiredu (1975) and W. E. Johnson (1921).On this

interpretation, the expressions

> (1) 'The circumstance that unlike poles attract'

> (2) 'Unlike poles attract'

are to be taken as the grammatical forms of the symbolic expressions,

> (1a) —A

> (2a) ⊢ A

It is then argued that Frege (of *Begriffsschrift*) accomplished what he intended to do,

namely, to show that (1) *is* the conceptual content of (2) and that (2) shows (1) *as having*

*been asserted*. The semantic role of expressions may be said to be altered by the addition

of the (vertical) judgment-stroke in (2a) in such a way that requires us to either (*i*) convert

the sentence to a complex noun phrase, or (*ii*) represent the alteration by converting the

principal verb from its *finite* to its *infinitive* form. On the proposed interpretation, we may

find a solution of the problem with which Russell struggled in *Principles of Mathematics*

in finding an account of the difference between the finite and infinitive forms of verbs

that will accord with an "ultimate notion of assertion." (*PofM*) The second part of the

discussion examines Russell's problem in light of the proposed view. Suggested by this

view is a conception of assertion as a primarily *logical,* rather than psychological notion.

Russell claims in *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) that grammar brings us closer to a correct logic than do the opinions of philosophers. In chapter IV of that book he sets out to treat the nature of assertion, propositions and the terms of grammar, prefacing his investigations with the remark, "in what follows, grammar, though not our master, will be taken as our guide." (*PM*, §46) The remark is somewhat curious, since there is in so much of Russell's early work (1903) more in common with the views of Frege and of other mathematically-oriented logicians (e.g. Cantor and Peano) than there is with the work of logicians whose conception of logic cleaves closely to the categories of traditional grammatical analysis. Here I have in mind the views of the early 20th century logician, W.E. Johnson, from whom Russell claims in the preface to *Principles* to have received "many useful hints."

In what follows I advance a thesis several of the arguments pertaining to which are derived from a view of assertion advanced by Wiredu (1975).[22] On the basis of this view I argue for a syntactic interpretation of Frege's early theory of assertion according to which the two statements:

(1) 'the circumstance that unlike poles attract'

(2) 'Unlike poles attract'

are formally expressible as

(1a) —A

(2a) ⊢ A

In this construal of the vertical and horizontal strokes, as laid out in first section of *Begriffsschrifft*, Frege accomplishes what he intended to accomplish, namely, to show

that (1) is the conceptual content of (2) and that (2) shows (1) *as having been asserted*.

This way of understanding the judgment stroke – what I will call, after D. A. Bell[23], the

syntactical interpretation – is in keeping with the *common predicate* view of the

judgment-stroke of Frege's early *Begriffsschrift*.[24]  On this interpretation, the semantic

role of expressions may be said to be altered by the addition of the vertical stroke to the

horizontal (content) stroke in (2a) in a way which requires us to either (*i*) convert the

sentence to a complex noun phrase, or (*ii*) represent the alteration by converting the

principal verb from its *finite* to its non-finite form (W. E. Johnson).[25] In Frege's own

example (above) we have something like a transformation to a noun phrase with the use

of indirect speech, but there are cases, as in Russell's own example – 'Caesar died' – that

may be treated in accordance with the second option (*ii*).

So, in taking the following pair of expressions:

> (3) 'Caesar's being dead' (or 'Caesar's death')

> (4) 'Caesar died'

we have a suitable grammatical expression of the previous distinction ((1a) and (2a)),

> (3a) '—A'

> (4a) '⊢ A'

Accordingly, the judgment-stroke is construed as an operator yielding

transformations from incomplete functional expressions (typically descriptions) to

complete expressions which standardly take the form of declarative sentences. This

conception is founded on the assumption that the construal of the judgment-stroke is

*syntactical*: the interpretation of '⊢' as an operator derives chiefly from the notion of a

grammatical functor from noun-phrases to declarative sentences.

Recognition of this fact by interpreters of Frege's *Begriffsschrift*, it seems, has not been forthcoming, and in many cases Frege's own argument for the proposed account is outright dismissed.[26] The evidence to support this claim abounds. But, leaving that aside, I shall point out that there are many who simply deny the logical significance of the syntactical interpretation, prominent among them are Michael Dummett, Peter Geach, Max Black and V. H. Dudman. I shall go on to spell out some implications of what I take to be a more tenable interpretation of the judgment-stroke.

A supposed implication of the proposed interpretation is the apparent blurring of the programmatic separation of psychology and logic to which both Frege and Russell were strongly committed. But it will emerge shortly that if this is an implication of my view, then we ought, for the reasons adduced in favor it, reconsider the whether the logicist's separation of psychology and logic should have ever been attempted in the first place.

Given the plausibility of the syntactical interpretation, we can dispose of the difficulties that had plagued Russell in the early part of *Principles of Mathematics*. One of these problems was to account for the difference between the finite and non-finite forms of verbs that accords with what Russell curiously refers to as the "ultimate notion of assertion."[27] It is at this point in his discussion (§§51-53, *PofM*) that the guide of grammar affords him a way out of these difficulties. I will turn to briefly examine Russell's problem in light of the suggested view of assertion.

The main argument in §52 of *PofM* holds that "every constituent of every proposition must, on pain of self-contradiction, be capable of being made a logical subject." Russell goes on to say that "[By] transforming the verb, as it occurs in a

proposition, into a verbal noun, the whole proposition can be turned into a single logical subject, no longer asserted, and no longer containing in itself truth or falsehood."[28] What Russell finds puzzling about this possibility is that there is no ostensible difference between the proposition *as asserted* and the corresponding logical subject; or rather, if there is a difference, we seem unable to say what it could be. Thus, if we go on to ask what is asserted in the proposition 'Caesar died', we should say that the 'The death of Caesar is asserted', or simply, 'Caesar's death'. In this instance it would seem that it is 'Caesar's death' which is true or false. But it is equally obvious that truth and falsity cannot *belong* to a logical subject.

Several commentators have thus summarized Russell's argument and have further ,so it would seem, admitted that it is valid. However, here I think we are entitled to ask how Russell arrives at the conclusion that 'Caesar's death' *is true*. If we take the logical subject to be an *incomplete* entity, then while observing the distinction in (3) and (4), we should conclude that 'Caesar's death' is not the sort of thing that *could* be true or false. We may say that 'Caesar's death', as an expression grammatically equivalent to the participial expression, 'Caesar's being dead', *transforms* to a declarative sentence once pressed into assertoric use. The complex that is expressed by the verbal noun 'Caesar's death' is not the kind of entity (categorially) of which truth or falsity may be predicated. To think that it is predicable in this way would be, to borrow Ryle's term, a 'grammatical type mistake'. Sentences, relative to contexts of use, however, *are* the sorts of thing of which we predicate 'is true' or 'is false'.[29]

Double-aspect problems surface frequently in many of Russell's writings from his early realist period, specifically in connection with his attempt to address the so-called

'problem of complexes.' We may put that problem in the form of a dilemma. It is

assumed without question that we are capable of marking any distinction that is

thinkable. There is a thinkable distinction between concepts ("as such") – i.e. denoted as

*meanings* and concepts denoted as *terms*. We might, following Nicholas Griffin,

characterize the distinction in the following way: the concept 'one' denoted *as meaning*

may  be symbolized as */a/*, and the concept 'one' denoted as term may be symbolized as

*/A/*.[30] The former 'one', taken in its adjectival form, is to be understood as the concept

*qua meaning*. The latter 'one', in its substantival form, is to be understood accordingly as

the concept *qua term*. We should then expect the distinction to be at the very least

*stateable*. However, Russell has shown that any attempt to state what the difference is, or

even to state *that* there is a difference, lands us immediately in self-contradiction. On the

other hand, if we take the concept denoted as meaning and the concept denoted as term to

be one and the same concept – if */a /* and */A/* are identical – then we are destined to be

"enveloped in inextricable difficulties." (The difficulty to which Russell is here alluding

is Lewis Carroll's regress objection)

The difference between */a/* and */A/* is therefore said to consist "solely in external

relations." This, according to the Russell of 1903, is a consequence of recognizing that

the difference *cannot* be intrinsic to the nature of the terms, for in merely stating that */a/*

differs from */A/*, */a/* is *eo ipso* converted to */A/*; hence the self-contradiction. We must

then conclude that any proposition about the difference is necessarily false – and this is

unacceptable for Russell. The problem remains: it is impossible to state the distinction

with the needed precision, for we cannot hold that there is a concept denoted as meaning

that is not *also* a concept denoted as term. Yet *that* there is a distinction is undeniable.

We are told in *PofM* that the above contradiction is avoidable if we take the difference to be one that is not internal to the terms which constitute the proposition, but rather one that is external to them. The appeal to this distinction introduces a needless obscurity, but, perhaps more significantly, it is not patently obvious that we *must* not speak of the concept denoted *as meaning* and the concept denoted *as term* as one and the same concept. If we *were* prohibited from doing this in the manner in which Russell claims that we are, we should be immediately confronted with a double-aspect problem, and perhaps then forced into the position of maintaining that the crucial difference between the concepts consists solely in external relations. But since there is good reason, I think, to suppose that we *may* speak of the concept 'as meaning' and the concept 'as term' as the same concept, the "inextricable difficulties" into which we are led in not following Russell's prescription are not such as to be otherwise inescapable.

When a 'proposition proper'[31] – a proposition expressed by a declarative sentence – occurs as the logical subject of another proposition, that proposition is *un*asserted on Russell's view. But if Russell is right in saying that asserted propositions have an *internal relation* to truth, then we have the following difficulty. For Russell, propositions to which truth is internal may occur as the logical subject of a proposition. If so, we should be prepared to admit that truth is a *constituent term* of that proposition. Our difficulty here is that because the assertive force of any proposition must be withdrawn once it is made a logical subject, we cannot hold that truth is *internally* related to that proposition. We have now, because of this fact, witnessed how, in Russell's view, the "ultimate notion of assertion, *given by the verb* …is lost as soon as we substitute a verbal noun." (*PoM*) In respect of the number of terms of the two complexes, 'Caesar died' and 'the death of

Caesar' would appear to be distinct. This follows given that the complex expressed by the verbal noun, 'the death of Caesar', lacks the constituent term possessed by the proposition proper – viz. the term that is given by the *finite form* of the verb. Although the difference in its grammatical rendering is quite plain, Russell, somewhat casually, instructs us to disregard it (*PofM*, p.48). The reason for this, which remains somewhat inexplicit in these passages, would seem to be that a proposition occurring as a logical subject *need not* be rendered grammatically as the verbal noun, and so should not be so rendered. Whether the motivation springs from this observation or not, such a move, which I attempt to explain in more detail in what follows, signals a radical departure from the *Begriffsschriftt*.

On Russell's view, we may have an unasserted proposition of which a truth-value is a constituent – viz. where the declarative form figures in truth-functional contexts and in certain more complex propositions.[32] The requirement that such a proposition is unasserted, and so distinct from an asserted proposition of which a truth-value is also a constituent, combines with still another requirement that ultimately leads to Russell's difficulties in providing a satisfactory account of assertion. The latter requirement is that one and the same proposition must occur in the antecedent of a conditional statement as that which occurs in the second premise of *modus ponens*. The mistake here is to assume that we cannot grammatically represent the proposition *qua* logical subject of a proposition as a *verbal noun*. But we have found the difference – the alleged unasserted proposition is not truly *un*asserted, and to explain this we need only recognize that the difference lies in what is expressed by the *grammatical form* of a declarative sentence.[33]

Let us consider an earlier assumption of Russell's from *PofM*, namely that the distinguishing feature of a complex is that it is the type of entity that may bear a truth-value and of which we may predicate 'is true' or 'is false'. Because all propositions are, on Russell's theory, complexes, propositions are bearers of truth in this sense. When we come to consider 'the death of Caesar', however, we are reluctant to say that it could have a truth-value, even though the verbal construct denotes a complex on Russell's view. The proposition 'Caesar died' plainly does have a truth-value but it is also a complex to which truth or falsity may be *predicated*. As the distinction between internal and external relations here intimates, there is reason *prima facie* to distinguish between *two* kinds of truth attribution in addition to distinguishing *two* types of complex. Russell, however, does not pursue the suggestion further. Aside from the fact that we are reluctant to say that 'the death of Caesar' is the kind of entity that could have a truth-value, we have reason to believe, as Griffin notes, that both 'Caesar died' and 'the death of Caesar' are the *same* complex on Russell's view.

If we suppose that the proposition containing the finite form of the principal verb, e.g. that expressed by the sentence 'Caesar died', differs from the same proposition in which the verbal noun is substituted for the finite verb, then we effectively render *modus ponens* invalid.

We have then at least three inter-related problems that stem from the double-aspect problem, according to Griffin: (*a*) How can an *un*asserted proposition contain a truth-value (externally or otherwise), (*b*) How can an unasserted proposition ever be the logical subject of a proposition, i.e. a term, and (*c*) the problem of preserving the validity of the inference schema *modus ponens*. Recurring in Russell's analysis is what appears to

be the often inexplicit claim that we are prohibited from representing the logical subject of a proposition as a *verbal noun* or in some comparable grammatical form. For instance, in section 52, it is said that "by transforming the verb, as it occurs in a proposition, into a verbal noun, the whole proposition can be turned into a single logical subject, no longer asserted, and no longer containing in itself truth of falsehood. The "death of Caesar" seems to be what is asserted in "Caesar died." In which case, the reasoning goes, "it is the death of Caesar which is true or false; and yet neither truth nor falsity belongs to a mere logical subject." Because truth does not belong to a logical subject, it must be related to it in some way, and this is what Russell means when he claims that truth has an *external relation* to it. Similarly, since truth (or falsity) does "belong" to the proposition "Caesar died," it is said that truth has an internal relation to the proposition. The problem, as Russell sees it, is that "[there] appears to be an ultimate notion of assertion, given by the verb, which is lost as soon as we substitute a verbal noun, and is lost when the proposition in question is made the subject of some other proposition." This has the consequence of making it impossible to refer to *propositional concepts* (as opposed to propositions *proper*) as unasserted. What motivates Russell to make this claim is the assumption that, insofar as his theory of complexes is concerned, (*i*) ⊢ A ('Caesar died') and (*ii*) —A ('The death of Caesar') differ in respect of the verb, 'to die', and so differ in respect of a *term*. Therefore, (*i*) and (*ii*) denote distinct complexes. This is why we cannot say that they are the same; but then, as Russell explains the matter, it is difficult to see precisely how they differ. The problem leads us, in turn, into difficulties with respect to justifying *modus ponens*.

But certain insights concerning the nature of these difficulties are afforded us if we suppose that (*i*) and (*ii*) do *not* differ in respect of a term. Here, we stand to profit in following W. E. Johnson (1921)[34] and K. Wiredu (1975) in construing the verbal noun (*ii*), **'The death of Caesar'**[35], to have the same grammatical standing as the participial form, (*ii*)′ —A (*'Caesar's **being** dead'*), wherein lies what Johnson calls a "latent formal element" (*Logic*, 1921)[36]. In such a case the verbal element is a constituent in both asserted and unasserted propositions, but the verb contained in (*i*) is fully inflected, whereas it is in its non-finite form in (ii)′. We should therefore expect to find a corresponding difference in the proposition where there is a difference in the *form* of the verb. What *unites* the substantive and adjective is, in Johnson's terminology, the "characterizing tie." The occurrence of the principal verb in its finite form (the finite form of 'to be') – 'is' signifies the presence of another relation, which Johnson calls the "*assertive* tie." This marks the addition of assertive force, but it is clear that the force is added to the already existing characterizing relation.

Herein, then, lies the crucial difference with respect to Russell's view of assertion: corresponding to this added syntactic element is the *determination* of a truth-value.[37] This determination is *primary* in the sense that any assertion – any claim of *what is so* – possesses a truth-value (of either True or False). If we suppose that the syntactic element possesses no propositional correlate, then not only do we end up with a theory of propositions bereft of an account of that difference (otherwise accounted for by the assertive tie), our foundering again upon the double-aspect problem becomes inevitable. Let us note that because the verbal element is a constituent of both propositions (*i*) and (*ii*), we should not conclude that '⊢ A' and '—A' are therefore logically or semantically

equivalent. This was the point of registering the addition of the *assertive tie*. We may say that the propositional *content* (the 'judgeable content' in the language of *Begriffsschrifft*) is identical in each case, but to glibly regard the whole expressions 'Caesar died' and 'Caesar's being dead' themselves as identical is to violate the Fregean tenet to avoid (at all costs) confusing the act of assertion with what is asserted.

The problem *seems* to be that any attempt to escape such a violation comes at the price of compromising the viability of *modus ponens*: the occurrence of the second premise contains an element (that supplied by the *assertive* tie) not contained in the occurrence of 'Caesar died' in the hypothetical proposition 'If Caesar died, then he died on the Ides of March', since the occurrence of the proposition 'Caesar died' in a hypothetical proposition is *unasserted*, and so a distinct complex from the proposition 'Caesar died' as it occurs alone in the second premise. But this is a mistake, as we are misled along the way, out of neglect of the earlier syntactical distinction, into thinking that 'Caesar died' as it occurs alone in the context of an argument schema must possess the element (constituent) supplied by the judgment-stroke.

Inasmuch as a proposition may be said to possess unity, a *formal* relation obtains between its terms. In our example, '*Caesar's **being** dead*', the infinitive form of the verb constitutes the latent formal element. It is in virtue of this relation that the proposition should be seen to be essentially unasserted rather than asserted. The infinitive verb that is supposed to express this formal relation, then, *ought not* to have counted as a constituent term in Russell's analysis. Only the principal verb in its finite form can count as a term. So we may assume that 'Caesar died' as it occurs in the conditional premise of *modus*

*ponens* is, formally speaking, more properly represented by the participial 'Caesar's being dead'.

We might speculate that such a rendering of the proposition was seen by Russell, to be unnecessary, or redundant, given that the assertive force belonging to the sentence 'Caesar died' is suspended in both truth-functional contexts and where it occurs in subordinate clauses. This observation led Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, to eliminate the assertion sign altogether. In fact, assertive force *is* suspended in these contexts, but, crucially, no device was ever employed to mark the transformation.

Provided that these remarks are accurate in describing how Russell viewed the matter, he cannot be said to have been consistent: any occurrence of 'Caesar died' – where the finite form of the principal verb signifies the presence of the *assertive* tie – is an asserted proposition; which is to say that it expresses an assertion that occurs, as does any intentional act, at a specific time and place. It occurs as an episode in the cognitive history of a unique individual. Presumably, Russell did not wish to suggest that in speaking of *modus ponens* as an inference *schema* we ordinarily refer to the sentences which constitute its premises as particular dateable speech-acts, perhaps then relativized to specific speakers and contexts. We may say that 'Caesar died', as it occurs in the second premise of *modus ponens* is more properly construed as a *proposition* in Johnson's sense, to be rendered as 'Caesar's being dead', so as to make it a judgeable content. That content plainly corresponds to a proposition whose unity is only formally specified by means of the 'characterizing tie'. Symbolically, *modus ponens* is written as follows[38]:

$$\vdash p \to q$$
$$\vdash p$$

$$\frac{}{\vdash \text{ Therefore, } q}$$

To bring out the participial character of the propositional variable, we may symbolize the schema as follows, inserting the horizontal to show that it *goes with* the variable:

$$\vdash (-p \rightarrow -q)$$

$$\vdash (-p)$$

$$\frac{}{\vdash \text{ Therefore, } q}$$

In any instance of this schema, the antecedent of the conditional premise must be identical to the proposition that occurs alone in the second premise, otherwise the inference does not carry. Russell sees this to be the main obstacle to resolving the dilemma. In the scheme above, $p$ in the first premise is identical to its occurrence in the second premise. Both occurrences may be rendered as '$-p$', to which the vertical may then be added in order to supply assertive force. Thus, when given a statement like 'If the conversations are monitored, Nixon knows about it', it should be expressed using the more logically perspicuous phraseology, 'The conversations being monitored' implies 'Nixon's knowing about it'. Given this interpretation, the propositional variables may be seen to be identical and so we avoid Russell's difficulties with *modus ponens*. Rather than construe $p$ of the conditional premise as an asserted proposition (in this instance, 'Conversations were monitored'), it should be construed as a participial form; the same holds for the $p$ of the second premise. Russell's view renders $p$ as 'Conversations are monitored' even where it occurs in a hypothetical statement. In such contexts and in

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truth-functional contexts generally, assertive force is suspended. Ordinarily we do not

take the proposition to have a participial form when it occurs as the antecedent of a

hypothetical proposition, let alone as a premise that stands alone. This is unfortunate, as it

gives the appearance that the proposition possesses a constituent term – that which

Russell noted is supplied by the finite form of the verb – which it may only be said to

possess with the addition of the judgment-stroke. Otherwise the proposition does not

possess the term. On account of this appearance, a propositional variable may be seen to

represent, at once, both a proposition as asserted, viz. in the form of the declarative

sentence – 'Conversations are monitored' – *and* a proposition whose assertive force has

been withdrawn. The suspension of assertive force of a proposition is made possible in

virtue of its role in more complex propositions. It seems that direct inspection of how we

use hypothetical statements confirms this fact. But here, the double aspect issue arises.

Russell's remarks may be seen to be especially problematic when we consider

propositional variables that stand alone. A proposition that stands alone (e.g. in the

second premise of *modus ponens*) is, on Russell's view, one that possesses assertive

force. Not only do we wish to be able to assert that *p,* we also wish to say *'p'* is of the

*form* of an assertion (of a declarative form). But in following Russell even this far we

have effectively undermined *modus ponens*: just as assertive force has been supplied to

the second premise, the assertive force is *withdrawn* from the antecedent of the

conditional premise, and thus we no longer have identical propositions. The difficulty

vanishes, however, if we construe *p* as it occurs alone as a participial construction.

We have so far neglected the other side of Russell's dilemma (Griffin's third

problem, (c); Griffin 1993, 51), but I think that it will be seen that this side of the

dilemma is less central to the discussion's concerns. I will nonetheless go on to make a

few remarks about it, as it had exercised Russell considerably in the passages of *PofM* we

have been considering. There are difficulties involved in assuming the two occurrences of

the proposition $p$ to be identical[39]: if we take the two occurrences of $p$ in the two-premise

account of *modus ponens* to be identical, we should have to admit that

$$(i) \qquad \vdash p; \vdash (p \rightarrow q); \text{ therefore, } q$$

could be expressed as the conditional,

$$(ii) \qquad [p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)] \rightarrow q$$

Russell, as Lewis Carroll did before him, recognized that (*i*) is logically *basic*: any

attempt to establish the validity of the inference schema on the basis of appealing to the

conditional, $p \rightarrow q$, is vitiated by the infinite regress famously described in 'What the

Tortoise said to Achilles'. Russell's assumption is that the principle according to which

"if the hypothesis in an implication is true, it may be dropped, and the consequent

asserted" is indemonstrable; but it is nevertheless "quite vital to any kind of

demonstration." (*PofM*, p. 35) This gives rise to the following problem. Provided that we

may be permitted to conditionalize the argument schema in the manner above (*ii*), then

from the truth of $p$ and the premise, $p \rightarrow q$, we should expect to be able to *prove* $q$ – i.e.

*assert* that $q$. But the threat of Carroll's regress is generated, together with Russell's

conflation of asserted propositions and "complex concepts," on the assumption that if we

take the conditional ($p \rightarrow q$) as a license to the inference (of $q$ from $p$), then, with the

truth of $p$, we may detach to get the conclusion. But we have no reason to believe that we

have satisfied the student who, although he can come to recognize the truth of the

conclusion and $p \rightarrow q$ still cannot manage to draw the inference to $q$.  The temptation is

then to suggest that the conjunction of these two premises, $p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)$, licenses the inference from $p$ to $q$. But here we come upon the regress. As Carroll has shown, and as Gilbert Ryle[40] later reminded us, we are mistaken to think that a conditional form *which justifies the inference* is something that we could ever obtain. All that we have done so far is replace one conditional premise with a more complex conditional premise; and all that we could further do is repeat that procedure indefinitely in such a way as to get increasingly complex conditional propositions as premises.

The suggestion that *modus ponens* is vitiated by regress arguments of this kind, given the assumption that the antecedent term of the first premise and the term of the second premise are identical, does not amount to the insurmountable difficulty it is thought to have amounted to. The solution is most easily seen given the following considerations, which have been brought to my attention by K. Wiredu (1960)[41]: *modus ponens* is a valid inference schema because we may justify the inference (when pressed to) by appeal to the conditional $[p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)] \rightarrow q$ as the *principle of the argument*. This is a sufficient license for inferring $q$ from $p$, for the conditional premise is now a *tautology* (and $p \rightarrow q$ is not). It would be inconsistent to question the validity of $[p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)] \rightarrow q$ because it is logically true. Thus, what appears to us at first to be the start of an infinite regress may be seen to stop at the conditional, $[p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)] \rightarrow q$.

I had earlier remarked that if we must speak in terms of complexes we should have recognized what Russell did not – that an element (or term) is supplied by the *finite form* of the verb. Though it is somewhat a matter of historical speculation why Russell did not recognize the significance of this point, I suspect that one reason for this is that it was thought that a proposition occurring as a logical subject *need not* be rendered

grammatically as a verbal noun or a participial construction. It would seem that this belief

was a consequence of the fact that a proposition which reflects the structure of a

declarative sentence can do double duty for a proposition that goes either asserted or

unasserted. It may be further supposed that the most plausible explanation for this

phenomenon and the double aspect problems to which it has given rise is that the notion

of assertion was, for Russell, primarily a *psychological* one. On the premises of Russell's

early realism, a *proposition* cannot be true merely by our taking it to be true. Either it is

the case that Caesar died or not. This seems to be the primary impetus for distinguishing

between the psychological and logical sense of assertion in the way that Russell (in

various periods) and the later Frege did. As it has been suggested in the foregoing

reflections, what they perhaps *should* have said is that the 'judgeable content' cannot be

true merely by our thinking that it is.

Chapter IV: Theories of Truth

Russell on the Nature of Truth and Falsehood

The primary aim of this discussion will be to give some indication of the plausibility of an account of truth that I attempt to explicate, in its essentials, more fully in §2 of Chapter V. A feature of this account which distinguishes it from several others is its similarity to deflationary theories, specifically in its repudiation of the notion of fact *qua* truth-maker. The notion of fact in Russell's relational theory of judgment, it should become apparent, introduces a further element to Russell's analysis, thus further complicating the epistemological dimensions of the theory. Rather than attempt to purge these entities from his theory, Russell endeavors, later in his analysis of judgment, to explain away the need for a *single* 'Objective' in favor of another *type* of objective. The new theory of judgment (henceforth, the multiple-relation theory) now requires a kind of objective that may be split up into constituent terms, which are then capable of standing in *several* relations to the mind. The theory is not without its difficulties, several of which are well documented and have even been argued to be irremediable.[42] On the account of judgment outlined in the present chapter, whose fuller explication appears later, it seems that we can do away Russellian facts – viz. complexes of terms and their interrelations – altogether and the difficulties that attend them. Escaping the implications of Russellian facts would seem prima facie to be evidence against the very idea of facts construed as entities whose semantic function are to serve as truth-makers. It is from this consideration, in part, that the proposed account may be seen to derive some plausibility.

Further, given a conception of judgment that duly accounts for the significance of the syntactical function of the "characterizing tie," we could avoid the traditional difficulties associated with the problem of propositional unity.[43] This is a problem which, as Davidson[44], plagues Russell's multiple-relation theory just as it did the theory of propositions of his earlier realist period.

According to Russell, a relation is 'multiple' "if the simplest propositions in which it occurs are propositions involving more than two terms (not counting the relation)." (Russell 1910, 155) Events may be construed to be the correspondents of true judgments.[45] However, that there are no events corresponding to false judgments may lead one to the false conclusion that "when we judge falsely there is nothing that we are judging." (Russell 1910, 155)

It might have been suspected that such a consideration would have likely forced Russell in 1910 to abandon talk of true and false objectives, but this was not in fact the case. The argument that Russell marshals against his earlier theory of propositions does not, strictly speaking, amount to a repudiation of the *notion* of an objective altogether but rather forces Russell to scout around for a more suitable candidate for the role of objective – something that would effectively do the work of true and false objectives while affording a way out of the earlier difficulties. Russell never abandons the notion. Even with the more epistemologically sophisticated multiple-relations theory, Russell speaks of there being an "objective ground" with respect to which judgments are determined to be true or false. It is, rather, the Meinongian notion of objectives that he abandons. A Meinongian objective is a single structured entity to which a judgment is related. And act of judging then involves the relation of a judgment to the *object* of the

judgment – i.e. what the judgment is about. To take Russell's example, we may say that 'Charles I's death in his bed' is just another way of saying that Charles I died in his bed, and therefore the complex 'Charles I's death in his bed' cannot be the objective. Curiously, Russell seems *not* to be tempted to say that 'Charles I's death on the scaffold' is just another way of saying that Charles I died in his bed. This is because, so we are left to assume, Charles I's death on the scaffold was an event that actually occurred, and so accordingly the form of words 'Charles I's death on the scaffold' names that event.

A notable feature of this discussion in "The Nature of Truth and Falsehood" is that the central line of argument begins with Russell stressing what must have appeared to him to be a truism, namely, that the "first point on which it is important to be clear is the relation of truth and falsehood to the mind." (Russell 1910) When we see the sun shining, Russell writes, "the sun itself is not 'true', but the judgment 'the sun is shining' is true". Although we may regard such a remark to be so obvious as to be beyond dispute, in stating this observation Russell obscures a point which might otherwise not have escaped his notice had the point been stated differently. This is something that is brought to light when he later claims that the truth or falsehood of *statements* "can be defined in terms of the truth or falsehood of *beliefs*." Further, Russell claims, "A statement is true when a person who believes it believes truly, and false when he believes falsely."[46] Hence, the truth and falsehood of statements is "derivative" of the truth and falsehood of beliefs. These remarks may lead us to attribute to Russell the view that belief has some kind of constitutive relation to truth, but this would be mistaken. The realistic notion of correspondence is introduced when Russell later claims that judging truly or falsely (as the case may be) requires some fact of the matter – some "objective ground" – in addition

to the judging mind. If the way in which this passage is worded is true to Russell's

meaning, it is difficult to see how this could be his actual analysis, even in a preliminary

sense. The claim in question is this: when a person believes a true *statement*, he believes

it truly; and when a person believes a false *statement*, he believes it falsely. I have

reversed the order of the wording in restating Russell's claim (above) because I think that

this paraphrase – rather than obscure what is said – has the advantage of showing that

what is stated is, strictly speaking, inconsistent with the claim that the truth and falsehood

of *statements* is derivative of the truth and falsehood of *beliefs*.

In fact, examining this particular passage reveals what we might be inclined to

argue is a deep-seated commitment to the *opposite* view, namely, that the truth and

falsehood of beliefs are derivative of the truth and falsehood of statements. That this is

likely to be Russell's view in "NT&F" is due to the following implication, which the

earlier paraphrase of Russell's claim was intended to clarify. In saying that a *statement* is

true when a person who believes it believes truly, there is the suggestion that what the

mind is related to is something that is *itself* true – and thus something that is apprehended

*as true*. Here it is assumed that this something is given *as true* independently of anyone's

coming to have the belief expressed by the statement – i.e. concerning the *content* of the

belief. Attending even the more sophisticated multiple-relation theory is the idea, which

is all-pervasive throughout Russell's philosophy (post-*PofM*) is the idea that something

*makes* a statement true. The assumption that something is true (sentence, belief,

proposition) is true independently of our believing it true combines frequently with the

notion of correspondence. In what follows, I will suggest that this notion of

correspondence does not *in itself* lead to a view which would force one to admit truth-

makers. In fact, a serviceable notion of correspondence may be easily accommodated in an epistemic theory of truth, as may be seen in the logical views of John Dewey.

Truth and Judgment: The Frege-Dewey Connection

The debate on the nature of truth between Russell and Dewey was published in a series of articles between 1939 and 40. It grew out of earlier work by both philosophers. Russell's view developed early on out of the *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912) and from even earlier work in logic and the foundations of mathematics. Dewey's views were, in large part, developed from1909 – the year in which he wrote *A Short Catechism Concerning Truth* to 1938, the year in which he wrote his *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. My discussion will focus primarily on an article entitled 'Propositions, Warranted-Assertibility, and Truth', first published in 1941 in *The Journal of Philosophy*. This article was a response to Russell's criticism of 1940, much of which appears in his article "Dewey's New Logic".[47]

Russell speaks of the difference between his and Dewey's views as consisting of the former's concern with *assertions* about *particular* matters of fact, and the latter as concerned with hypotheses and theories.[48] This is, in fact, a distortion of Dewey's view; it is an *idea*, not an assertion or sentence, that is the basic unit in terms of which truth is defined. Dewey's use of the term 'idea' is intended to draw our attention to an aspect of *ideas* which the anti-psychologistic bias of early analytic philosophy has at times obscured; that is, the *idea* construed as a "possible significance." This is not merely a psychological significance, but an epistemological – and we may assume – even a semantical one. An idea thus conceived is a basic element in terms of which we arrive at

a warranted assertion, the latter being applicable to both assertions about particular

matters of fact and hypotheses and theories. Dewey holds that the "presence of an *idea* be

by way of an existential operation," and that this distinct "presence" is what distinguishes

his theory from other theories of truth. Though the claim is most likely correct (leaving

aside the precise meaning of "existential operations"), there is a further point that

distinguishes Dewey's theory from the others, and this may be called semantical. That

difference reveals, in part, the source of both their disagreement about truth and the

nature of propositions, and what I will later argue is an error on Russell's part. The error

is a consequence of what Russell takes to be the correspondence relation and its terms.

His theory introduces a view of correspondence according to which when a particular

linguistic entity – a sentence – is true, it is in some way related to a particular extra-

linguistic entity, namely, a *fact*. The correspondence of a judgment, or derivatively, a

sentence, to the world is more complicated when the sentence is false, but we need not

enter into these details at this point. The virtues of this view are further discussed later, as

well as what I consider to be its shortcomings. I wish now to give only a rough

characterization of Russell's view for the purposes of contrasting it with Dewey's

conception of truth, a view that might be regarded as a correspondence theory of truth of

a radically different kind in essentials. Dewey's view is one of correspondence insofar as

the relation (of correspondence) obtains, not between sentence (or proposition) and fact,

but between *idea* and *fact*. The relation between the mind and the world is thus one that

relates, on the one hand, the basic conceptual components of judgment and the cognitive

operations by which judgments are formed to the 'existential' conditions, and which, on

the other hand, gives rise to them. I do not think it is necessary to adhere too closely to

Dewey's terminology in order to elucidate the contrast between his view and Russell's in this specific connection; but it will be necessary to proceed with caution.

Dewey was correct to say (Dewey 1941, 168) that he and Russell "cannot understand each other unless important differences between [them] are brought out and borne in mind."[49] I believe that these differences are most easily brought to light by first comparing aspects of Dewey's epistemology to those of Frege's early logical writings. Specifically, I have in mind their rather curiously similar conceptions of propositions as they appear, respectively, in the above cited work and the *Begriffsschrift* (1879). Once we have ascertained precisely what Dewey means by the term 'proposition', then we are in a position, so I argue, to see wherein precisely lay the disagreement between Russell and Dewey as concerns the nature of truth.[50]

Frege first makes the distinction between *grasping* a thought and *judging a thought to be true* in his article 'On Sense and Reference'[51], though the source of the distinction may be found in the earlier *Begriffsschrift*.[52] In the later article, Frege describes judging a thought to be true as a transition from thought to judgment whereby one "advances from the thought to the truth-value." What the truth-value *is*, ontologically speaking, is not a question I wish to pursue here. For the purpose of comparison it will do merely to note that Frege took truth to be a primitive concept. This difference has no bearing on the specific comparison I wish to draw. In fact, it is perhaps fair to say that in this specific connection, Frege and Dewey were separated more by differences of terminology than of substance. Dewey, it may be argued, recognized in his *Logic* what is tantamount to Frege's distinction insofar as there he stresses the necessity of observing a fundamental *logical* distinction between a proposition and an assertion. This is a

distinction that is made somewhat in much of Russell's work[53] which we find either

neglected or altogether absent from the writings of several students of Frege's philosophy

of language.[54] The point, however, is more fully explicated in Dewey's "Propositions,

Warranted-Assertibility &Truth" of 1941. This distinction is the basis on which Dewey is

able to maintain the connection between truth and inquiry – twin notions that are

divorced in the often platonistically oriented views of both Russell and Frege. The

concept of truth is thus primarily epistemic on Dewey's view. Deductive inference is one

among several operations of the mind whose essential function is to further rational

inquiry. The notion of inquiry alluded to here is considerably broader than what Russell

or Frege may mean by that term. In fact, Dewey often speaks of the *logic* of inquiry – a

locution apt to baffle most analytic philosophers and logicians (including Frege).

However, as concerns the analysis of the *structure* of judgment, it would seem that Frege

and Dewey have joined together in an 'unholy alliance' against Russell.[55]

  We may turn now to Frege's account of supposition in order to make the

comparison explicit. Suppositions, as well as thoughts, figure into a stage of inquiry at

which 'propositions' figure for Dewey, given the sense Dewey accords to the term.

Propositions, for Dewey are what I earlier referred to as 'the components of judgments',

and, as such, are categorially distinct from judgments in the same way, e.g., an individual

is distinct from a sentence in classical truth-functional logic. They are introduced and

combined in accordance with certain operations to *construct* judgments, and are therefore

*useful* insofar as they figure into judgments whose aim is to be warrantedly assertible.

When we turn to Frege's analysis of thoughts (*Gedanken*) – specifically, with a view to

their role as suppositions – we see the formal resemblance. The transition from thought to

judgment wherein, as Frege states, one "advances from the thought to the truth-value" (Frege 1892, 31) is the very transition described by Dewey when he claims that the proposition[56] occupies a *functional* role in the construction of a judgment – that is, prior to its being discharged as an *assertion*. If we bear in mind that a truth-value for Frege is possessed, not by a thought *in transition*, but rather by a judgment *as completed*, then the aspect under which the thought may be seen as a component of judgment should become clear. Dewey sometimes refers to propositions as "instrumentalities," sometimes as "ideas." In an idea's functional role in the process which leads to the end of scientific inquiry, they are said to have the property of *efficacy*. This is liable to be misinterpreted – and has been, along with Dewey's distinctly pragmatic remark that "the only alternative to ascribing to some propositions self-sufficient, self-possessed, and self-evident truth is a theory which finds the test and mark of truth in *consequences* of some sort…"[57] The misinterpretation is evident in almost all of Russell's discussions of Dewey's epistemology.[58]

Having indicated some points of convergence between Frege and Dewey, we may now turn to the debate between Russell and Dewey. Dewey attributes a view to Russell that, to quote Dewey, "seems to me to be the most adequate foundation yet provided for complete skepticism."[59] The view under consideration holds generally that atomic propositions afford a kind of epistemic ground for the complex propositions of which they are constituents in a way not unlike the way in which Hume's 'impressions of sense' serve to ground ideas[60] of varying complexity. Empirical *knowledge*, for Russell, then consists of justified, true belief as based on (true) propositions, where the truth of complex propositions is determined on the basis of their constituent (atomic) propositions

in accordance with the truth-functional rules of formation. However, the conditions under which the truth of the basic, atomic propositions is determined are mysterious. As Dewey points out, basic (atomic) propositions, taken as the objects of empirical belief, are determined to be true by virtue of their correspondence to certain facts. But these basic propositions are also said to be the causal *effects* of particular "causal antecedents", i.e., particular worldly events. Thus, if Dewey is correct, Russell holds that basic propositions are somehow *caused*; yet, these propositions are also capable of being used to *refer* to the events which cause them. But as it was earlier mentioned, empirical knowledge consists of true, justified belief where truth is defined as correspondence with the fact(s). Thus, Russell's view assumes that, if the cause is a fact, or set of facts, the cause of a proposition, then, is identical to its truth-maker.[61]

On Dewey's view, this conception might be amended in a way that gives it at least an appearance of plausibility; he might argue that there may be a way in which we obtain knowledge by experimental means *given* this conception of propositions. This would proceed by *testing* the truth of propositions by supplementing a given set of propositions (in Russell's sense) with other propositions. But such an accretion of propositions becomes regular and systematic on Dewey's view since they are given, or produced, by controlled observation. Which propositions are accepted and which are rejected depends on what Dewey calls the "cooperation of inferential and observational subject-matters"[62] and, perhaps, on various constraints that determine which propositions cohere with an existing set of propositions. But such a method of 'testing' amounts to a criterion by which truth is determined by "consequences of some sort," and as such must have appeared to Russell to compound the difficulties associated with traditional

coherence theories with those associated with James' criterion, viz. the thesis according to which *beliefs* are true insofar as they are useful. It may be noted here that Russell simply substitutes *proposition* for *belief* in discussing Dewey's view.

Returning to Russell's assumption that a proposition is identical to its truth-maker[63], if we follow Russell in rejecting Dewey's pragmatic criterion, we are forced to believe that Russell is proposing what Dewey calls a semantic version of the "doctrine of pre-established harmony." This is "the epistemological miracle … for the doctrine states that a proposition is true when it conforms to that which is not known save through itself."[64] The alternative to this discredited view is, of course, skepticism – a consequence of any theory of truth which defines truth as an epistemically inscrutable relation.

This notion of "pre-established harmony" which Dewey believes underlies Russell's view is, in fact, a consequence of Russell's definition of the correspondence relation – a "Relation at Large" Such a relation, Dewey claims, is a relation "without specification or analysis."[65] Dewey's remark here, and elsewhere, may be understood in light of remarks made in my earlier discussion comparing Dewey's epistemology with Frege's early logical views. Dewey's pragmatic criterion suggests, in part, a way out of traditional forms of skepticism as well as a way of properly identifying the terms of the correspondence relation.[66] It is the "idea," or equivalently, the "proposition" in Dewey's sense, that corresponds and has the essential causal relation to events in the world. These events, however, are not *facts* in the sense that they are entities or states of affairs pictured by sentences or beliefs, or by, e.g., the structured propositions of Russell's logical atomism. Rather, they are merely environmental factors which enter into complex causal relations with what Dewey calls "human factors." The proposition, conceived as

an instrumental agency, may be said to correspond with some extra-mental event, and it is by means of *this* correspondence that a warranted assertion is formed.[67] In setting up the correspondence relation between an assertion and an extra-mental event, Russell thereby (simultaneously) establishes an ontology of facts. This is a consequence, in large part, of attempting to fit sentences onto the world. Such an attempt, it should be recognized, makes the logical error of assuming that the correspondence of propositions (in Dewey's sense – or 'thoughts' in Frege's sense) to extra-mental reality is something that again corresponds with reality – with the facts. On this point, I think Dewey's remark is instructive: "the pragmatist …begins with a theory about judgments and meanings of which the theory of truth is a corollary."[68]

This mind-independent entity, as is evident from what Russell states elsewhere (Russell 1910, 1918) is sometimes identified with a Meinong's notion of objective. The various problems attending the role of objectives in Russell's earlier theory of judgment deserves fuller treatment than can be given here; but the point that I wish to make presently is that Russell appears in the passage quoted to have construed *statements* as having the same, or nearly the same, ontological standing as *objectives*.[69] Witness Russell: "[It] is difficult to abandon the view that, in some way, the truth or falsehood of a judgment depends upon the presence or absence of a 'corresponding entity of some sort" (Russell 1910, 152) We might compare this with his later view of 1940: "When we embark upon an inquiry we assume that the propositions about which we are inquiring are either true or false" (Russell 1940, 403) Ontological considerations notwithstanding, the implication of having identified facts and objectives with statements in this way should be recognized to be logical in nature. That this is in fact a piece of confusion is a

point that may be brought to light in considering more closely, not so much the question of the mind's relation to truth, but the question of what sort of thing, or things, *bear* the properties of truth and falsehood. In pursuing this question, however, it will be necessary to disambiguate what is commonly taken to fall under the meaning of the term "statement"; and this is perhaps best achieved by first inquiring into the question of what it is that we believe when we believe a statement or proposition to be true. Russell, we shall see, is not always sensitive to this question. Let us consider the following claim: "When, for example we see the sun shining, the sun itself is not 'true', but the judgment 'the sun is shining' is true"[70] (Russell 1910, 148) Russell explains in a footnote that the words 'belief' and 'judgment' are used here synonymously, but the reader is left with little clue as to what precisely Russell understands the relation between 'judgment' and 'statement' to be.

Chapter V: Austin and Strawson, and the Vagaries of Correspondence

The redundancy view of truth states generally that the truth-predicate 'is true' does not express an analyzable semantic property; and therefore it is semantically superfluous. To say, then, that a sentence or proposition is true is, in a certain sense, to assert nothing other than the sentence itself. According to Austin (1950) this is incorrect. The predicate 'is true' is not redundant, if for no other reason than that it is analyzable – not as expressing a property of sentences, but as expressing a property of their use, i.e. insofar as indicative sentences are used to refer to a "historical situation." We "approach the term," in Austin's phrase, "cap and categories in hand."

In what follows I argue that Austin's view is deficient in a way that Strawson's 'performative-redundancy' view is not; that the semantic categories with which we approach the truth-predicate are inadequate for an analysis of the concept of truth. I argue further that the defects in Austin's view are a consequence of failing to distinguish between two concepts of truth. This distinction becomes clear once another, closely related distinction is made, namely, that which lies specifically between the logical (and syntactic) character of assertion and the semantic character of declarative sentences, or sentence-uses.

 In predicating 'is true' of a sentence or speech-episode, we do not quite assert what is already asserted in the way Austin envisages. Austin does, in fact, claim that we "refer" to a given state of affairs in predicating 'is true' of a given sentence, conceding

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that this referring itself produces *another* sentence, which then, *as asserted*, involves

producing a truth-value on grounds distinct from those on which the initial assertion itself

is judged true. While Austin is correct in saying that we make another, numerically

distinct, statement (taken as a speech-episode) in this way, and in doing so assert another

*truth*, he does not explain that the process by which this happens is a consequence of the

application of the two (aforementioned) concepts of truth. A clarification of this

distinction, and what it amounts to, is attempted later.

Austin's semantic theory of truth is intended to vindicate the correspondence

theory of truth. An outline of the semantic aspect of his definition appears before the

definition when he states that there are primarily two kinds of semantic convention in any

form of referential discourse:


(*i*) *Demonstrative* conventions under which certain linguistic expressions are

related to "historic situations."

(*ii*) *Descriptive* conventions under which certain linguistic expressions are related

to *types* of situations.


The definition is as follows:

> A statement is said to be true when the historic state of
> affairs to which it is correlated by the demonstrative
> conventions (the one to which it 'refers') is of a type with
> which the sentence used in making it is correlated by the
> descriptive conventions.


There is, I think, considerable merit to Austin's view, a fact that is not always explicitly

recognized by his opponents.[71] There is, for example, something obviously correct about

Austin's notion that "a statement is made and its making is an historical event," and that, construed as such, a statement is something like a primary truth-bearer.[72] Less obvious is the contention that the idea of a primary truth-bearer implies a primary/secondary distinction. Something *like* this distinction, which often takes sentence-tokens and assertive utterances to be 'secondary' truth-bearers, is a commonplace in the philosophy of language. Given this, it is commonly taken for granted that the *concept* of truth appertaining to the distinction of truth-bearers is the *same* concept. It is seldom held that to this primary/secondary distinction there is a corresponding distinction between *concepts* of truth. In the second half of the paper I indicate why I think such a further distinction is needed. In light of this distinction, which is explained more fully in the second half of the discussion, we shall see that the connection between assertion and the concept of truth applicable to assertive utterances goes unappreciated by Austin and his critics. However, the programmatic aim of his analysis – of providing a "purified" correspondence relation – may readily accommodate this explanatory amendment.

There is a special context in which sentences may make use of the truth-predicate.[73] Austin gives the following examples as perfectly legitimate uses:

(a) "The third sentence on p.5 of his speech is quite false."
(b) "His closing words were very true."

In (a), 'sentence', and in (b), 'words', *refer* not to a proposition, fact, or truth-value, but to "the sentence *as used by a certain person on a certain occasion*."[74]

Austin's definition of the correspondence relation naturally requires a truth-maker, as any correspondence view must. He is somewhat wary of the implications of this demand, the effect of which is the erecting of a realm of facts (*qua* truth-makers) – "populating the world with linguistic Doppleganger." (Strawson 1950) However, while conceding the need to designate an historic state of affairs as the truth-maker for a statement, Austin is cautious not to lose sight of the important, if not truisitic, point that "we can only *describe* that state of affairs in *words*."[75] It becomes evident soon that Austin did not exercise sufficient caution in this respect, for he goes on to say:

> It takes two to make a truth. Hence (obviously) there can be
> no criterion of truth in the sense of some feature detectable
> in the statement itself which will reveal whether it is true or
> false. Hence, too, a statement cannot without absurdity
> *refer* to itself."[76] (my emphasis)

As an elementary criticism of traditional coherentist theories of truth, this has sometimes been, and perhaps ought to be, taken in philosophical seriousness. However, it would seem that Austin, and several other correspondence theorists, have taken the criticism so seriously as to let it obscure the significance of the observation that we can only describe a state of affairs in words. The kind of view recommended by this observation, on the one hand, and the sort of view implied by the quoted passage, on the other, are ordinarily taken by truth-theorists to be antithetical. Unlike Strawson, Austin sometimes fluctuates between them. Thus, once he articulates an insight which we may rightly consider to be the touchstone of any deflationary theory of truth he then moves back toward a correspondence view. How, then, Austin asks, is 'the statement that S is true' (read: TstST) different from 'the statement that S' (read: tstS)? Suppose that,

> If Mr. Q writes on a notice board 'Mr. W is a burglar', then
> a trial is held to decide whether Mr. Q's published
> statement that Mr. W is  a burglar is a libel: finding Mr. Q's
> published statement was true (in substance and in fact).
> Thereupon a second trial is held, to decide whether Mr. W
> is a burglar, in which Mr. Q's statement is no longer under
> consideration.[77]

Austin goes on to claim that a second trial is necessary to decide the separate issue of Mr. W's guilt or non-guilt. A redundancy theorist such as Strawson would believe that such a trial is in fact unnecessary, for the evidence leading to the verdict of the one trial is the *same* evidence as that in the other. Strawson, presumably, would then wish to argue that the point of the example generalizes so as to apply to the descriptive predicate, 'is true': thus the grounds for the semantic verdict for *TstST* are the same as that for *tst*. More precisely, the truth or falsehood of the one implies, and is implied by, that of the other. This piece of reasoning, Austin believes, is the consequence of confusing identity conditions of propositions (as synonymous with sentence meanings) with those sentences themselves.

The alleged confusion over sentential and propositional identity attends a related misconception concerning assertion. This misconception is merely hinted at in Austin's paper, in which he claims that the meaning of the sentence 'that *Fa* is false' is often confused with that of the negation of '*Fa*'. Both negation and assertion refer "directly to the world" not to "statements about the world;" they are, he avers, "on a level." This remark is at once odd and instructive, for the assertion and negation (denial) are seen *not* to be "on a level" the moment we consider how the truth or falsity of a statement arises in the first place. In illustrating his point, Austin asks: how are the assertions 'He is not at

home' and 'It is false that he is home' the *same* in a context in which "no one has said he is at home?"[78] Interestingly, it is *this* consideration that leads Strawson to depart from the earlier proto-redundancy view of Ramsey (1927) and to assign a performatory function to the various predicative uses of 'is true' – e.g., 'it is true that' (preceding a statement), 'that is true' (referring to what is said), and so on. Thus, the semantically superfluous predicate 'is true' is not *completely* superfluous, as it *does something* over and above its semantic role. It may confirm (in certain substantival phrases), assent, grant, or concede (in proleptic uses).

Austin's principal objection to all of this is that the performative interpretation of the truth predicate stresses a significant *aspect* of linguistic meaning to such an extent as to almost ignore the significance of the semantic content of the predicate. This, Austin claims, amounts to ignoring the fact that the performative aspect is merely *one* aspect among others. "To say that you are a cuckold may be to insult you," Austin remarks, "but it is also and at the same time to make a statement which is true or false."[79]

There is, however, one aspect of statement making whose importance must have been ignored altogether by Austin and to some extent Strawson, namely, the assertoric function of statements. It is in respect of this aspect of linguistic meaning that the significance of the *logical* concept of truth alluded to earlier is brought to light. I suggested that the logical concept is distinct from the semantic concept; but if Austin has somehow given a vague impression that this is so, it can only be by failing to observe that distinction in the first place. Witness Austin: "There can be no criterion of truth in the sense of some feature detectable in the statement itself which will reveal whether it is true or false. Hence, too, a statement cannot without absurdity *refer to itself*." (Austin 1950,

31) Here, one cannot be blamed for suspecting that it is Austin's undue fixation on a statement's referring capacity and the associated demonstrative conventions of the act of referring that prevents him from recognizing that a sentence *may* say of itself that it is true. I go on later to argue that it *must*. As it stands, the notion that a statement may be 'saying of itself' awaits further clarification.[80] It is worth noting that one would be mistaken to claim that Austin never entertained the suggestion that a statement can say of itself that it is true. In fact, we see some groping for an explanation of a similar point when Austin asks of sentence-uses "whether there is not some use of 'is true' that is *primary*, or some generic name for that which at bottom we are always saying 'is true'"[81]. Which, if any, of these expressions is to be taken "*au pied de la lettre*?"[82] Austin then quips, "[In] philosophy the foot of the letter is the foot of the ladder." His question leads to some more fruitful speculation about the concept of truth, but it is not pursued in the manner in which Strawson – I believe, rightly – pursues it. The result of Austin's efforts is thus a study of the demonstrative conventions by which statements refer, betraying a somewhat fruitless preoccupation with the strictly semantic import of the truth predicate.

It is in Strawson's discussion of the nature of facts where the redundancy theory prevails. The suggestion is that the words "'fact', 'situation', and 'state of affairs' have, like the words 'statement' and 'true' themselves, a certain type of word-world-relating discourse (the informative) *built in* to them."[83] Thus "it would be futile" to elucidate any segment of referential discourse in which these several terms naturally occur by analyzing the terms themselves, or in terms of one another, for they "contain the problem, not its solution."[84]

Implicit in these remarks may be the key to understanding precisely why Austin's view must be found to be untenable[85]. The point is reflected in Austin's telling remark that "it may further be questioned whether every 'statement' does aim to be true at all."[86] Though it may make no sense to say that statements really *aim* to be true, statements may be said, in a sense, to be true solely in virtue of their normal assertoric function (what Frege refers to as *force*)[87]. The linguistic conventions governing assertion are not wholly semantic; there is also a logical and syntactical dimension to which we have paid little attention in this discussion up to now.[88]

We may now wish to understand precisely what Strawson means by the claim "that facts and statements have a type of "word-world-relating discourse (the informative) *built in* to them."[89]  Why do Austin and Strawson both make the point that '*p*' and '*p* is true' do not mean the same, and that this difference emerges once one considers the conditions under which the question of truth and falsity arise? What if no one asserted 'that *p*'? Are we to believe that '*p* is true' *means* 'that *p*' in a context in which the assertion that p was never made, or is unlikely to ever be made? Both are in agreement that such questions reveal *something* defective in the redundancy conception, for which they offer their respective remedies. We may attempt to elucidate the nature of the problem by appealing to Strawson's insights. The terms 'statement' and 'fact' *contain* the problem. It is worth noting that Ramsey (1927) came near to making the same point earlier with his suggestion that 'truth' is not a problem that could not be dissolved through a proper analysis of the internal structure of judgment. We may understand Ramsey's remark by attending to the logico-syntactical point concerning standard cases of assertion discussed below.

To assert that *a* is *F* is, of course, to make a claim. It is to say *this is thus so*. A statement of the form *a* is *F* is true in the sense that it contains *in its making* the truth-value 'True'. A truth-value is, in a special sense, *thereby* conferred upon any judgment or statement that states *this is so.* This is a consequence of the declarative statement's logical form. The grammatical rendering of such a judgment typically links subject and predicate terms by means of introducing a finite verb – in this case, 'is'. Thus, the function of 'is' in 'is *F'* reflects an *act* of judgment, viz., of judging something to be the case. By 'subtracting' from the sentence '*a* is *F'* the finite verb 'is', we suspend what W. E. Johnson[90] calls the 'assertive-tie' of judgment, and so we are left with an expression syntactically unlike the statement '*a* is *F*' and unlike the corresponding judgment. The result of this suspension is a form of words that may be expressed grammatically in participial form, <*a's* being *F*>. Note, then, that when a truth-value is conferred upon this form (the declarative form of a sentence represents the formed judgment) the result – a *statement* – does not name or refer to a 'state of affairs' or 'fact' in the way the resulting sentence is alleged to name or refer.[91] In recognition of this distinction, we may say that such a statement is an instantiation of a concept of truth[92] in virtue of its *form* – in virtue of what I have called, after Wiredu (1975), an occurrence of truth in its *primary* sense. We might say, to be more precise, that such a statement contains an occurrence of a *primary concept* of truth.

None of this is to deny the obvious truth that situations in the world often give rise to judgments, as they obviously do. The mistake, rather, is to think that the truth of a resulting judgment obtains in virtue of a relation that obtains *ex post facto* between it and a given fact, or state of affairs. Frege, nearly sixty years earlier, suggested that there are

problems with the idea of taking facts to be truth-makers of judgments. It is worth noting

that the mistake is supported by the widespread belief that (1) there is no primary sense of

truth-value for statements to have, and (2) when we inquire as to the truth of a statement

we thereby inquire *not* into $<a\text{'s being } F>$ but into the truth expressed by the declarative

sentence *'a is F.'* If, however, we hold an Austin-style correspondence theory, we

commit a category mistake in supposing that a sentence *corresponds* to a state of

affairs.[93] We have already seen that there are good reasons on intuitive grounds not to

suppose that *sentences*, as logically and syntactically *complete* expressions, name, refer,

or correspond, to anything whatsoever. *In the primary sense*, a statement asserted just *is*

true insofar as it possesses a truth value (of True or False).

I wish now to consider a potential objection to the idea that assertions contain a

claim to truth, or possess what I have called a primary truth-value. The objection might

go as follows: "On your view even a sentence like '2 + 2 = 5' is *true* in virtue of its

merely being asserted. Surely, you do not wish to say *that*."[94]  That is, if a statement is

true in the primary sense, in virtue of its syntactical form as you have explained it, then

you must admit that *any falsehood* is also true in virtue of its being asserted, which is

absurd. The force of the objection seems to rest on the mistake of confusing *mention* with

*use* in the following way. When one presents the falsehood '2 + 2 = 5', as a clear counter-

example to the present view, it is not clear *what* exactly it is that one is presenting as

false. Is one presenting for our consideration '2 + 2 = 5' as a sentence i.e., *as a claim*, or

is one presenting the judgeable content of that sentence? In any case, it is plain that '2 + 2

= 5', however construed, is being proposed as an *obvious* falsehood; but presumably the

one who proposes it as such knows this in advance. If this is the case, however, then one

is in an important sense mentioning the *statement* that '2 + 2 = 5 is true' as a falsehood –
as a statement (in Austin's sense, a speech-episode) which one has already determined to
be false after having evaluated its content from a previous point of view. There is now
under consideration a point of view which has already been determined to be false. This
fact is obscured in part because the intended counter-example takes the grammatical form
of a question – viz. "Is the statement '2 + 2 =5' true on the present view?" The covert
judgment may be more easily detected in the question, "Are you prepared to admit that '2
+ 2 = 5' is true?" But the claim has been, somewhat covertly, evaluated from some
previous point of view.

Let us suppose that our opponent does *not* know in advance that '2 + 2 = 5' is
false, but rather is asking the question in all sincerity. It would sound odd were she to say,
'Could you really mean to say that '2 + 2 = 5' is in some sense *true*?', as if to ask, 'Are
you sure that you wish to commit yourself to claiming something so absurd?' If one did
not know in advance that '2 + 2 = 5' is a falsehood (and did not mean to suggest that in
being offered as a kind of counter-example to the present view we would then have to
countenance the absurdity that "'2 + 2 = 5' is true"), then, of course, one would not have
raised the question in the first place. The question arises with something *non*-declarative
in form. It is incorrect to think that when one asks the question 'Is 2 + 2 = 5 *true* (or
*false*)?', one would *first* present the idea that 2 + 2 = 5 is true *as if* it were false – let alone
as a claim – then proceed to ask whether it is true. Rather, what one actually does first is
to consider *whether* 2 + 2 = 5, and in doing so one considers not '2 + 2 = 5' as a
*statement* but as a question. What is truth-evaluable *in the primary sense* is a content that
has yet to receive a truth-value and therefore non-declarative in form. But the question

thus arises: if this accurately reflects linguistic practice, why would the grammatical form of the expression not correspond to the appropriate mood of entertainment – i.e. of its being a question? Such an act of consideration does, in fact, involve a *content* for whose expression a specific syntactical construction is to be used. For this consideration the proper formulation of the initial question, then, is 'Does $2 + 2 = 5$?' – or, equivalently, '*two and two's being five*'. In the context of inquiry *this* is what is in question. Accordingly, it is determined to be the case that two and two is *not* five, in which case the resulting (primary) truth-value is 'False'. Note that this would expressed by the declarative sentence '$2 + 2 \neq 5$', whereas the sentence "'$2 + 2 = 5$' is false" contains two truth-values, one of which is primary the other which is secondary.

These reflections may put several of Austin's earlier remarks into perspective. It was mentioned earlier that Austin believes that we "refer" to a given state of affairs in predicating 'is true' to a given sentence. It is by now perhaps more clear why this cannot be the case. The difference that 'is true' makes to a plain assertion is, in part, what Strawson takes it to be – a performative one; but it is not *merely* performative, a fact to which Austin is sensitive in a way Strawson is not. Austin's observation is that the act of 'referring' to another speech-episode itself entails *another* statement which, as asserted, receives a truth-value on grounds distinct from those by which we judge true the initial assertion. What is wrong with this is not only the idea that we somehow refer to other statements (though it is true that we *may* be said to concur, or agree, with them), but the idea that a bare assertion obtains a *secondary* truth-value in the construction of a judgment. We do not, in fact, form judgments in the way that Austin suggests. If we did, we should expect that we normally go about fitting judgments onto the world. It is then a

small step to the doctrine that the truth of a judgment is an epistemically inscrutable relation that obtains between it and a given state of affairs. But what Austin seems to be right about given all this – and what Strawson is perhaps mistaken about – is that we do, in fact, arrive at another judgment in the act of *predicating* 'is true' to a statement.[95] That judgment, itself a result of applying the truth predicate, is a comment upon a prior judgment wherein occurs the primary concept of truth. We do not arrive at another judgment, however, by fitting it onto the historical situation which is supposed to make it true. Rather, in cases of empirical belief, we "fit" a concept onto the world, where this concept in part *constitutes* our judgment.

It may be noted that a judgment, in terms of the concept of truth, because it is the product of a concept discharging its referring function, is never strictly *identical* with another judgment. This applies also to statements, speech-episodes, and propositions. Thus, if statements do not refer to states of affairs and cannot refer to themselves (given restrictions on identity), then a statement *p as* assented to by someone must be accounted for in a way that makes reference to the conditions under which *p* was initially made.[96] The details of such an operation cannot be discussed here. The point I wish to make bears on the debate between Austin and Strawson somewhat obliquely, but it is worth stating. When Austin says that the act of 'referring' to another speech-episode itself entails *another* statement, which, as asserted, receives a truth-value on grounds separate from those by which we judge true the initial assertion, he is only partially correct. Were his view amended in such a way as to incorporate the distinction between primary and secondary concepts of truth, it would have perhaps forestalled objections from deflationary quarters while still respecting our correspondence intuitions.

I wish now to consider a potential objection to the view that truth is an epistemic property, an objection that might be made to the idea, in particular, that assertions contain a claim to truth (in some non-psychological sense) or a primary truth-attribution. The objection might go as follows: "On your view a sentence like '2 + 2 = 5' is *true* in virtue of its merely being asserted. Surely, you do not wish to say *that*." That is, if a statement is true in the primary sense, in virtue of its syntactical form, then we must admit that *any* falsehood is true in virtue of its being asserted, which is absurd. Or, the objection may be put as follows: if your view is correct, then anything may be said to be true "in virtue of using a declarative sentence (e.g. '2 + 2 = 5')." On the present view, we have deviated from orthodoxy in maintaining that a declarative sentence cannot be *used* non-assertively in any legitimate sense. The force of the objection seems to depend on the mistake of reading into the epistemic view a kind of realist notion of correspondence of truth. This reading is accomplished by confusing *mention* with *use*. When one presents to us the falsehood, say, '2 + 2 = 5', as a clear counter-example to the present view, I think that we are entitled to ask what is it exactly that one is proposing, thereby elucidating what is intended by the critic to be taken as the primary truth-bearer. That is, we are entitled to ask whether one is presenting for our consideration '2 + 2 = 5' as a sentence, that is, as a *claim* which is expressed in the indicative mood. It is plain that '2 + 2 = 5' is being proposed as an *obvious* falsehood, and presumably the one who proposes it as such knows *in advance* that it is a falsehood; but if this is the case, then the one who is presenting the objection is, in a sense, *mentioning* '2 + 2 = 5 is true' *as* a falsehood.

Suppose that the critic who is offering '2 + 2 = 5' for our consideration does *not* know in advance that it is false, but is asking the question in all sincerity. It would sound

odd were one to say, 'Could you really mean to say that '2 + 2 = 5' is in some sense

*true*?' (as if to ask, 'Are you sure that you wish to commit yourself to claiming something

so absurd?' while asking the question sincerely). Of course, if one did not know in

advance that '2 + 2 = 5' is a falsehood, then one would not have known to raise the

question in the first place. This is because one would not know the sentence '2 + 2 = 5' *is*

a counterexample. It is difficult to imagine a situation in which someone who asks the

question sincerely would  first present the idea that 2 + 2 = 5 is true *as if* it were false –

that is declaratively – then proceed to ask the *question* 'Is it true that 2 + 2 = 5'? This is,

of course, very unlikely, for we normally ask whether something is true or false by

presenting *questions*, where the propositional contents of questions occur in the

interrogative mood rather than the indicative. That is, what one actually does *first* in

contexts of inquiry is to consider *whether* 2 + 2 = 5, and in doing so one considers not '2

+ 2 = 5' as a *statement* but as a question, or perhaps even as a kind of hypothesis. The use

of 'whether', and generally expressions of indirect discourse, signifies the asking of a

question. The question thus arises: if this is what one normally does in the context of

inquiry, then why would one not use an expression like "whether *p*"[97], or even express *p*

in the interrogative mood? We have already seen that there is an appropriate grammatical

expression corresponding to the act of considering. Such an act of consideration involves

a judgeable content for whose expression we have employed a specific syntactical

construction. If this is the appropriate consideration, the proper formulation of the

proponent's initial question, then, is 'Does 2 + 2 = 5?' – or, when considered as a truth-

apt propositional content – '*two and two's being five*'. This is what is in question in

normal contexts of inquiry. Thus it is determined to be the case that two and two *is not*

five, and thus determined to be the case that '2 + 2 = 5' is false. We may again look to

Frege's early conceptual notation to express all this in a more perspicuous manner:


(*i*)      'two and two's being five'  [— *2 +2 = 5*]

(*ii*)     'two and two is five' [⊢*2 + 2 = 5*]; or, in the case of a negative judgment:
         '<two and two is five> is false' [⊢–*2 + 2 = 5*]

The objection, therefore, depends upon omitting the transition from (i) to (ii) and upon

the assumption that in considering *whether* '2 + 2 = 5', one starts with (ii),

      One may reply to the initial objection by pointing out that, on the present view,

one does *not* omit the transition from (i) to (ii) – an omission of which the critic herself is

guilty. But if one does argue against the present view in the manner we are now

considering, then one is in effect eliding over this transition. The critic's reasoning may

be represented similarly as follows:

(*2*) 'two and two is five'                    ⊢*2 + 2 = 5*
(*3*) '<two and two is five> is true'      ⊢'*2 + 2 = 5*' is true


In this instance what one starts with is the claim '2 + 2 = 5', which implies that one *ipso*

*facto* admits to having *asserted* that 2 + 2 = 5. But if this is the case, then we have

*already* committed to the absurdity that we were alleged to have committed at the outset

when presented with the initial objection. There is yet another error committed by the

here by the critic: one has not only omitted the transition from (i) to (ii), but in so doing

erroneously takes the epistemic view in question to be doing the same. But if we hold the

critic to observe the necessary distinction and the transition from (*i*) to (*ii*) which depends

on it, then she will see that we are no more committed than she is to holding true the sentence '2 + 2 = 5'.


We may appeal to the distinction between 'use' and 'mention' thus construed in order to show more precisely at what point the confusion sets in with respect to the potential objection raised a few pages back (p.43). The point of the objection is to force the epistemic theorist of truth to admit that 2 + 2 = 5 is true, thereby showing the epistemic view to be in error. The argument implicit in the objection is a *reductio*. But, as is obvious given the needed distinctions, the admitted absurdity is of the form $[T_2(T_1p)]$ which must be taken as a *mention* of the previous assertion, an instantiation of $(T_1p)$.

The present view does not commit one to having to admit *as true* '2 + 2 = 5' unless one is committed asserting '2 + 2 = 5', as the former depends essentially on the first. But what reason do we have to expect another to bed committed to asserting '2 + 2 = 5'? If one asserts that 2 + 2 = 5, then, of course, one is committed to countenancing such an absurdity; but in such a case one *already* has evaluated '2 and 2's being 5' *as true*, insofar as there is a primary occurrence of truth. But in this case, even an opponent to the present view has, by the same token, committed to the same absurdity – for we should wish to say simply that the sum of 2 and 2 is *not* 5. Presumably this is not how one the objection is really intended to be taken. Rather what one means to say is something like this: according to the epistemic view under consideration, are you *claiming that* 2 +2 = 5? – to which the epistemic theorist may respond with propriety, 'no'. Our adversary then concludes that I am *not* claiming that '2 + 2 = 5' is true. But as was seen, talking in this way implies that one is using 'is true' as predicative of a

*sentence*, and this involves, on the present view, a *secondary* occurrence of truth. Although this is what the standard use of the truth predicate implies, presumably this is not what one really *means* in asking whether 2 + 2 = 5 is true.

What is now becoming clear is that one is here confusing primary and secondary occurrences, as if they are one and the same, or as if they may occur in any context (saving meaning). The primary occurrence of truth consists the making of an assertion, which consists, as has already been shown, in the instituting of the assertive tie *given the judgeable content as the primary truth bearer*. This is, given a simple syntactical consideration, not identical to the secondary occurrence of truth so-called because its corresponding truth-bearer is not a judgeable content, but rather a complete thought as expressed by a sentence – i.e. as a (complete) thought. Thus, to the question: 'Are you claiming that the sentence '2 + 2 = 5' is true?' the answer is 'no', for I have not asserted '2 + 2 = 5' as a sentence. Because I have not asserted '2 + 2 = 5', and thus do not have before me a complete thought to which the truth predicate can be applied, the question of *whether* the sentence '2 + 2 = 5' is true or false simply does not arise. We might imagine the initial objection to be reformulated as follows. Suppose, then, that you *have* asserted that 2 + 2 = 5; on your own view, you have no choice but to admit that *this* (the hypothesized assertion) is true given that you have asserted the sentence, and here the kind of epistemic view that you are advocating must admit that the question as to its truth or falsehood *does* arise.

But the response would be that the question as to its truth or falsehood arises given that I have been forced to assert that the sentence '2 + 2 = 5' is now false. But here, as the critic will be quick to point out, in declaring the sentence to be false I have

contradicted my own view. In this instance, what would have escaped him is that there is no reason to make such an assertion, insofar as it is admitted as something for which the question of truth and falsity arises at all. Of course, in normal contexts, there is no reason for anyone to make such an assertion. One may proceed to say of *it* (i.e. the sentence itself) that it *is false*, which would enjoin applying the truth predicate to a sentence, where the *sentence* is now the truth-bearer – not the propositional content carried by it. Thus the predicating of 'is true' to the sentence as a truth-bearer necessarily involves a secondary occurrence of truth; and it may be seen from this instance that every secondary occurrence depends, in a logical sense, upon a primary occurrence of truth. That this relation is logical may be seen by considering examples in which the *use* of the truth predicate in its primary *role*, i.e. where 'is true' is predicated of something syntactically *in*complete, e.g. *That* p is true, where the occurrence of 'that' transforms 'p' to a judgeable content, or, in cases relevant to semantic ascent, 'what she said is true'. But this is not how one need answer the objections. Rather, at this point, it is to be observed that that the critic of the epistemic view has committed the error of identifying the primary with the secondary occurrence of truth. Given the distinctions set out, this identification necessarily commits her to further conflating the truth-bearers appropriate to each occurrence. Once this has been brought to the attention of the critic, she may again try to reformulate her question in order that this dual conflation may be avoided. In doing this, however, the initial objection is rendered powerless. She would have to resort to asking: 'Given the distinction we have raised, I am asking: does not your view of assertion commit you to admitting that 2 + 2 = 5 is true by virtue of its simply being asserted, *as if* I am asking you 'Is it the case that 2 + 2 = 5? In other words, does this

view commit one to asserting '2 + 2 = 5' (which we have expressed more formally as ($T_1$p))? The response would be, again, 'no'; for although *I* may consider *the idea that* 2 + 2 = 5 – of two and two's being five – *I* have still not asserted '2 + 2 = 5'. In so considering a judgeable content I am no more required to *assert* 2 + 2 = 5 – where '=' carries with it the assertoric force of the finite form, 'is' – than is a rational person who denies all that we have said so far in support of the view under consideration or subscribes to a radically different theory of truth. Of course, the *sentence* has been presented to me for my consideration, but this does not thereby make the *claim* '2 + 2 = 5' mine in the sense that I am rationally committed to what is asserted by having asserted it.

At this point it would be helpful to introduce a distinction closely allied to, and entailed by, the one discussed thus far. This concerns differences in *point of view*. What is typically said to be either true or false is a sentence or statement. However, it is a truth-evaluable content that receives a truth-value, and this content is not itself a sentence or a statement, since a sentence or statement is what one ends up with once the content receives a truth-value. The point of this remark, and much of the previous discussion, is to show that truth is applicable to two different things. It remains to be shown that to these two kinds of expression there correspond two concepts of truth-value. It should become clear that my employment of the use/mention distinction, in the way that I wish to construe it, derives from the distinction between primary and secondary concepts of truth-value. In the present chapter I attempt an elucidation of this connection. First, it would be useful to see exactly how the primary/secondary distinction applies to different kinds of linguistic expression and how it may be appealed to in order to address the

potential objection raised a few pages back. I wish to consider how, in particular, the distinction applies to certain forms of indirect discourse. The sentence "Snow is white" contains an occurrence of the primary concept of truth (what I have been calling, simply, a primary occurrence of truth). The expression "Snow's being white" cannot be said to be true (or false) since it is not a claim. It may be made into a claim, however. For it to be made into a claim, it must be supplied with assertoric force (see figure on p.45). The addition of assertoric force here leads to the syntactical (and logical) transformation of a judgeable content (which is incomplete) to an assertion, or judgment (which is complete). Thus, not only do we have complete and incomplete expressions, the *kind* of truth-value assignable to incomplete expressions is distinct from the kind of truth-value assignable to complete expressions. What is incomplete is appropriately expressed by the participial form of a sentence, whereas what is complete is expressed by a declarative sentence.

We may get at what is peculiarly *epistemic* about this transformation by considering what assertoric force adds to an unsaturated judgeable content in the context of rational inquiry. It is clear that supplying assertoric force amounts to nothing other than the supplying of a claim from the point of view of the assertor. This point was made by Frege when he defined assertion as an "advancing toward the True." What appears not to have overly concerned Frege in this definition of assertion is the implication that a claim is something that results from what someone *does*. Claims are, of course, not advanced *ex nihilo*. It would be even more to the point to say that advancing claims is something that people do. Moreover, to the extent that people act on, and otherwise depend in various ways on the claims of others, we typically understand people to be involved in undertaking various commitments when making claims. In making any claim,

one normally undertakes a commitment, e.g. to withdraw a claim when it is shown to be untrue, to justify a claim when the claim is justly questioned, or to be held responsible when a claim is not withdrawn and it is shown to be untrue. We may take a claim to involve any of these normative commitments to constitute, in large part, a commitment to truth.

We may now return to the question of what assertoric force adds to judgeable contents of propositions. We may think of an act of assertion under normal circumstances as involving commitment to these judgeable contents. Assertoric force, in particular, is what *contributes* this commitment. The sense of "proposition" here may be clarified in the following way: a proposition is a structured entity that does not differ essentially from a sentence. We may think of it some sense as *what is expressed* by a sentence so long as what is expressed is not regarded as that which carries meaning independently of the sentence which expresses it. It is assumed that sentences are not mere concatenations of signs to which propositions (as expressed by those sentences) are then thought somehow to supply meaning. Propositions, in this sense, may be taken as being synonymous with statements – as essentially complete expressions.

It is perhaps difficult to understand commitment at the level of abstraction at which we have been discussing the issue so far. Commitment to something being true is a normative phenomenon that must be understood relative to an individual or a group of individuals whose linguistic behavior is rule-governed in a variety of complex ways. To maintain that commitment to the truth of a particular judgeable content of a proposition is what assertoric force adds to that content is to maintain that *someone* has committed to it and that someone has supplied the requisite assertoric force.

A further implication that I wish to draw out is that, in terms of what has been explained so far (see discussion on Austin and Strawson) corresponding to the commitment to the judgeable contents of a proposition – to, let us say, the *idea* of something – is a primary occurrence of truth; in fact, there may be reason to think that truth is partially definable in terms of commitment.[98] Since we typically speak of someone being committed to something, we should therefore take into account that the act of commitment is what someone within some particular epistemic (and linguistic context) does; that is, an act of commitment is *relative* in a particular way to a person in an epistemic context. A person may, of course, be committed to holding a proposition (thereby being committed to its truth) over her lifetime.[99] A person may be committed to a proposition for a relatively short period of time. Because of this – i.e. because commitments are allowed to vary during the course of a person's lifetime – it is necessary not to identify a point of view with a person. It would be more accurate to say that although commitment the truth may vary over a period of time, it cannot vary over a single point of view, as a point of view just is an act of committing to the truth of some proposition.[100] A commitment to truth may then be taken to be in a certain narrow sense relative to a point of view in a way to be distinguished from a commitment's being relative to a person. A point of view is something that a person may have at time $t_0$ but does not have at $t_1$; or may have at time $t_0$, not have at $t_1$ and have again at $t_2$. This variability of points of view (relative to a person) is a basic feature of discursive reasoning, in general, and is reflected in our practice of assertion at every level of social discourse. Nonetheless, commitment to truth amidst this potential plurality (and variablility) of points of view is possible.

The concept of point of view arises out of the primary/secondary distinction in the following way. Given that commitment is relative to point of view in the way just explained, it is crucial to recognize that, except in cases in which one mentions a claim made by another, the *making* of a claim necessarily implies cotemporaneous commitment to it, and this cannot be completely divorced from its truth. Therefore when we say that truth is a warranted assertion we mean that it is a claim from (or relative to) a point of view that carries a commitment cotemporaneous to the context of the sincere utterance of the assertion.[101]

We may get in another way at what is peculiarly epistemic about the transformation by returning to some points previously made about other philosophers' views on assertion. In an important respect, philosophers' understanding of the nature of assertion depends on certain conceptions of objectivity, or certain conceptions that have been formed on the basis of common-sensical notions of objectivity. These notions manifest themselves in more sophisticated philosophical analysis as one form or another of realism. We may bring such manifestations into focus in considering some traditional ways assertion has been thought to be related to the notion of the proposition. The connection between these notions and assertion comes into focus in considering a commonly made distinction between proposition and assertion: a proposition is said to have the structure of the sentence which expresses it, and an assertion is the act of sincerely uttering the sentence. It has been suggested that this sort of view has certain difficulties, and that a view that construes a proposition to have the structure of something incomplete has certain advantages.[102]

On such a view, given that the truth-value of a proposition remains what it is whether or not anyone happens to be asserting it, it is either true or untrue. We may be said to apprehend its truth or falsity, or said to be acquainted with it, in which case, if we sincerely utter the sentence that expresses it, we may be said to have asserted a true sentence. But, as is well known, even if one were to consciously believe and have justification for believing the proposition expressed by any given sentence, one may still not have its truth (where the truth of a proposition is justified inferentially). The problems with this are well documented, especially as concerns traditional definitions of truth in terms of warranted assertibility. On a realist theory of propositions, the tendency in some quarters has been to simply resign to skepticism and to maintain that the traditional model of knowledge does not model what we actually do as epistemic agents. There just is no principled means by which it can be determined that one can say she is in possession of a true proposition, whether or not the justification condition is satisfied. Because certain strong forms of skepticism imply the impossibility of knowledge, at least as it has been traditionally defined, for this reason skepticism is thought to amount to a kind of refutation of the traditional model. Of course, others have concluded from this implication that *skepticism* (in the strong, global form) is thereby refuted, not the traditional model. But it would seem that the philosophers who do come to this (latter) conclusion, do not fully recognize what it means: the implications of recognizing that a skeptical strategy is itself self-refuting are such that *no* theory of knowledge according to which truth is defined as a mind-independent semantic property that outruns our cognitive capacities is really possible. The idea is this: so long as truth is taken to be an evidence-transcendent property of propositions, yet it is taken to be a necessary condition

of any claim to knowledge, there will always be cases of justified belief that are possibly false. The innumerable elaborations on, and modifications of, the traditional Justified, True Belief, analysis of knowledge that followed after Edmund Gettier's article, "Is Knowledge Justified True Belief?" attests to this fact and to the vague sense one gets of their futility. But this would seem avoidable if the distinction between kinds of truth-bearer were consistently maintained in current theorizing about truth. However, a consistent application of the distinction is necessary, though not sufficient for an account of truth that provides a fuller analysis of the conceptual relations between truth and judgment. This brings us to the epistemological point: the advancing of a claim (what is the same as advancing toward the True for Frege) is necessarily an occurrence of a primary truth-value. As it was mentioned a few pages back, such a claim is a point of view within some context. Therefore, an occurrence of a primary truth-value *is* a point of view.[103]

The suggestion is this: because we have made the logical (syntactical) distinction between primary and secondary concepts of truth-value, and because an occurrence of a secondary truth-value is necessarily distinct from an occurrence of a primary truth-value (assuming the judgeable content is identical in both occurrences), there is necessarily a corresponding difference in point of view – the idea being that every unique assertion entails a unique point of view.

A vertical stroke is added to — p so that we have ⊢ p, an occurrence of a primary concept of truth. A point of view attaches to the primary occurrence, and we may indicate this occurrence by writing 'T' for the value 'true' and by using a subscript to indicate identity of point of view – '$T_1$'.

Note that, in accordance with Frege's concept script, we may symbolize the truth-function of negation as '⊤' in such a way that does not involve asserting anything. In this way it is clear that the negation stroke is a functional element in Frege's system, whereas the assertion sign is not. The addition of the vertical-stroke to the content-stroke supplies the assertoric force (which was earlier characterized as the 'assertive tie') to the judgeable content, p, converting the content to an assertion. It is useful to observe that, in Frege's notation, it is not clear how one could add the vertical-stroke to an assertion once it has been formed out of both the content and vertical stroke, although there is a certain sense in which the supplying of assertoric force to an assertion is a commonplace in the context of normal linguistic practice. Cases in which we supply assertoric force to an assertion just are statements like "'Snow is white' is true," or "It is true that snow is white." Here, the assertoric force occurs twice over, as is indicated by the fact that "is" occurs twice: we are saying that the assertion or judgment, "Snow is white" is, in fact, true. In recognizing, then, that assertoric force occurs twice over in this way, we are simply admitting that the concept of truth is being predicated of a truth-bearer that is *not* incomplete. This concept is what we have been calling the secondary concept. Though Frege's symbolism does not display how it is possible to supply assertoric force to an assertion. Also, in terms of Frege's notation, the secondary concept cannot be expressed: $—p$ becomes $\vdash p$ with the addition of assertoric force, but it is difficult to see how we may symbolize adding assertoric force to the expression, $\vdash$ p. This would be redundant in Frege's system and it is not surprising that we would run into difficulties were we to

articifially produce a device within that system that would express the idea of a secondary concept of truth.

Just as there are two distinct expressions to which truth is applicable, there are two concepts of truth-value. And the relevance of the distinction to grammatical constructions in general is that an occurrence of the secondary concept is predicative in a way that an occurrence of a primary truth-value is not.

It is apparent that if we admit that every truth comes in the in the form of a truth-claim, and that every truth-claim entails someone's making a claim, then we are in the position of also having to admit that there are necessarily two different points of view involved. For example, there are two points of view in "'Snow is white' is true", or "It is true that Snow is white," as there are two different occurrences of truth in "It is true that Snow is white" (as there are in "What he said is true." The one that occurs in the sentence "Snow is white," which is primary, and the one that occurs in "It is true that snow is white," which is secondary. Having observed this, to deny that there are necessarily two different points of view involved in "It is true that snow is white" would be to deny that any truth must come in the form of a truth-claim. Even realists do not deny *this*. What they do deny is the idea that truth could ever be an epistemic property, a denial which, in turn, implies the denial that any claim to truth could ever actually be true. For certain realists this idea must be reconciled ultimately with the idea, which is usually accepted, that it is people who make judgments and who therefore construct and use sentences for the task of making judgments. A concept of truth that does not contain the idea of its desirability in these terms would seem to be empty.

Chapter VI:    Judgment and Propositions: some traditional problems revisited

Having indicated that Russell's theory remains unsatisfactory on account of having left the problem of predication unresolved, I endeavor now to spell out more clearly the reasons why I think this is so. The following is a more detailed statement of Russell's multiple relations theory:

> The theory of judgment which I am advocating is, that judgment is not a dual relation of the mind to a single objective, but a multiple relation of the mind to the various other terms with which the judgment is concerned. Thus if I judge that A loves B, that is not a relation of me to 'A's love for B' but a relation between me and A and love and B. If it were a relation of me to 'A's love for B', it would be impossible unless there were such a thing as 'A's love for B', i.e. unless A loved B, i.e. unless the judgment were true; but in fact false judgments are possible. When the judgment is taken as a relation between A and love and B, the mere fact that the judgment occurs does not involve any relation between its objects A and love and B; thus the possibility of false judgment is fully allowed for. When the judgment is true, A loves B; thus *in this case* there *is* a relation between the objects of the judgment. (Russell 1910, 155)

One is tempted perhaps to say that there just is no *thing* called Desdemona's infidelity. The implication seems to be that the statement 'Othello believes that Desdemona is unfaithful' has been made but has been *later* determined to be false. Given this determination, it must therefore be a *fact* that Desdemona is *not* unfaithful. This seems to describe one tendency in our ordinary ways of thinking about facts and fact-stating discourse. If is an accurate description, then it is natural to think that it is

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ultimately responsible for the hypostasization propositions. This seems to be, in large part, a consequence of eliding the role contributed by the primary truth-attribution in the construction of a proposition. On Russell's multiple-relation theory, the issue that concerns us in the case of 'Othello believes in the unfaithfulness of Desdemona' is that there can be no relation of the mind to the proposition as designated by the noun phrase 'that Desdemona is unfaithful'. This follows because there is no such thing as Desdemona's infidelity. But the analysis may be seen to be incorrect insofar as Russell is taking the judgment 'Othello believes that Desdemona is unfaithful' to be in possession of a secondary truth-attribution.[104]

We should now examine the reasons in support of the traditional conception of propositions – a conception that we may fairly assume includes Russell's multiple-relation theory.[105] To escape the difficulty earlier mentioned, Russell proposes that in the case of false beliefs, the mind is *not* related to a fact (*qua* truth-maker) but rather to the constituents of what would have been the proposition *were* it true. In Russell's example, Othello's belief relates Othello to Desdemona and infidelity. On Russell's analysis, it becomes possible to distinguish between the truth and falsehood of judgments, which is an improvement over the views contained in *PofM*. As A. N. Prior notes, however, the move to paraphrase away 'Othello believes Desdemona is unfaithful' to get instead 'Othello ascribes infidelity to Desdemona' amounts to a false economy. (Prior 1971) Only a "too one-eyed concentration" could make plausible an analysis which explains away the abstract object expressed by the noun phrase 'that Desdemona is unfaithful' in order that we are left instead with the uninstantiated abstract object 'Infidelity'.[106]

Nicholas Griffin, in a recent study, writes that Russell "sought several different solutions to what is called "the problem of complexes" but the solutions had the unwelcome consequence of producing problems elsewhere. There is a slight irony in Griffin's discussion of the dialectical background out of which the problem of complexes emerged. The revolt against monism, which sought to place in its stead a pluralist metaphysics, involved its own difficulties. Yet Russell could not whole-heartedly embrace monism for the reason that it would *inter alia* "preclude the possibility of judgment." (Griffin 2001, 161) Griffin notes that the multiple-relation theory of judgment purports to explain away propositions, just as the theory of descriptions purports to explain away non-existent entities referred to by certain denoting phrases referents of denoting phrases. The virtue of the multiple-relation theory consists in its elimination of the chief difficulty for a theory of propositions conceived from the realist's point of view, namely, the possibility of *false* propositions. But it would seem that whatever virtues we find in the technique leading to these solutions is mitigated by that technique's failure to provide a satisfactory solution to the double-aspect problem in its various and sometimes subtle manifestations.[107] It is clear that the double-aspect problem still arises for the multiple-relation theory as it had for Russell's earlier theory of propositions of 1903. Following an objection raised in Geach (1957) and more recently Davidson (2001), Griffin observes that the distinction between relations *qua* meanings and relations *qua* terms becomes all the more necessary on the new theory. The distinction between relations parallels that concerning concepts, generally: 'one' .e.g. is a concept *as* meaning when it occurs as an adjective; 'one' is a concept *as* term when occurring as a substantive. Russell seems to believe that the distinction is applicable on the assumption

that relations are a kind of concept. Whether the distinction is any more needed on the new theory, we may note that it is not sufficient (as will become more clear in due course) to explain how Russell could have provided a theory of propositions that would not have led to equally deep and vexing problems in the articulation of a satisfactory theory of judgment.

In the judgment, e.g., 'Charles I died in his bed', a person stands in the relation of belief to Charles I, his bed, and dying. Where the constituent terms of the judgment are related in the right way, *inter se*, they form a complex in virtue of which the judgment is made true. But since there is no complex in this instance – for the terms are not so related – there is nothing to make the judgment true. But in the case of the belief that 'Charles I died on the scaffold' the constituent terms are related to one another as expressed by the judgment that Charles I died on the scaffold. There *is* the complex that we would name 'The death of Charles I on the scaffold', and so the judgment is true. The mind stands, as it does in the case of false judgments, in relation to each of the constituent terms, but unlike the false judgment that Charles I died in his bed, Charles I and the scaffold are, in fact, related to the term 'dying' in such a way as to form a complex. A point raised by several of Russell's critics is that on this account the mind must stand in relation to both the concept as *term* and the concept as *meaning* (i.e. the relation *as relating*); and although the need for this distinction does not arise with respect to propositions, since they are gone, it nevertheless arises now with respect to complexes. In his critical discussion of Russell, Davidson (2001) admits that there may be some deep truth in the 'Wittgensteinian thought' that is motivating Russell's new theory.[108] Since there just are no propositions, the problem of propositional unity – viz. of explaining what gives a

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proposition its unity – disappears. But the effect of this move is that now the same problem, or something very much like it, reappears under a new guise, under the domain of the mind: there is a shift in emphasis from an analysis of *propositions* conceived as mind-independent entities to an analysis of *judgment* as a mental act[109]. But such a shift signals a significant step toward a solution to the problem of propositional unity. Whatever difficulties we may have multiplied in the process, we may credit Russell with having relocated the problem to its proper domain.

Davidson takes the new theory to have the further implication that if what unifies a sentence is "no part or aspect" of the sentence itself (*satz an sich*), then we must be committed to a conception of propositions according to which sentences amount merely to "strings of names," and therefore must deny the predicative role of verbs. However, as it is suggested in Chapter 1, there is no reason to think that relegating the problem of propositional unity,[110] as it has been traditionally conceived, to a theory of judgment *entails* this denial. However, the multiple-relation theory, which had been seen as a solution to the problem of propositional unity, fails insofar as it encounters the double-aspect problem in a new form. The repeated confrontation with the double-aspect problem, from about 1903 to 1912, and up to the final version of the multiple-relation theory as it appears in *Theory of Knowledge* (1914), should give some indication that only a conception of assertion as *primarily* logical can afford an escape from potential double-aspect problems. This is a claim that both Davidson and Griffin seem to come close to making, but neither goes so far as to attribute the *source* of double-aspect problems to Russell's not possessing such a conception of assertion.[111]

Griffin provides an account of one of Russell's earlier attempts to come to terms with the double-aspect problem, locating the solution in an unpublished paper entitled "On Functions" (1904). [112] On the treatment given there, complexes were definable in terms of constituents – the concept of which was taken as primitive – and a *mode of combination* by which constituents form complexes. But the mode of combination is "not itself one of the constituents of the complex" (Russell 1904); otherwise it would count as a constituent to be combined with other constituents of the complex, and we would then have to specify a mode of combination which would combine the first mode of combination with the constituents of the complex, and so on *ad infinitum*. The mode of combination, then, while an entity, is not an entity belonging to the complex which it forms. Thus, Russell appears to have avoided both the threat of a Bradley-type regress argument on one hand (as concerns modes of combination), and on the other, the self-contradiction that would have otherwise come about in *not* taking a mode of combination to be an entity. It is not clear exactly what ontological significance a mode of combination is accorded on this view. But it is clear that introducing the idea was important to avoid both difficulties. A mode of combination must be capable of being made the logical subject of some other proposition, for in denying that it could be a logical subject, one thereby implies that it is. This difficulty is thus parallel to those Russell encountered in 1903. [113] In the case of functions, Russell saw the need to account for the contradiction generally as follows: given a function $/f'\acute{x}/$ it must be allowed that $/f\acute{x}/$ may be referred to as a constituent of a proposition, $/f'x/$. Here we are to take $/x$ satisfies the function $/f'\acute{x}//$ as the mode of combination. Russell's difficulties now consist in accounting for how it is a mode of combination can sometimes *be* a constituent

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of a complex and sometimes an entity not occurring *in* the complex of which it is the mode.[114] With respect to the manner in which the double-aspect problem pertains to verbs, Russell is led to entertain a curious solution. In *PofM*, Russell considers the predicate 'differs from' and its corresponding singular term 'difference' and arrives at the following conclusion:

> Yet these constituents, thus placed side by side, do not reconstitute the proposition. The difference which occurs in the proposition actually relates A and B, whereas the difference after analysis is a notion which has no connection with A and B …The verb, when used as a verb, embodies the unity of the proposition, and is thus distinguishable from the verb considered as a term, though I do not know how to give a precise account of the nature of the distinction (Russell 1903, 49)

Griffin notes that Russell's solution to this problem involves construing the satisfaction relation as a concept that "changes with the function satisfied". (Russell 1904)

We have briefly discussed several aspects of Russell's philosophy that tend in one way or another to run afoul of double-aspect problems, but it is his later multiple-relations theory of judgment that I wish to discuss in more detail, as the double-aspect problem reappears there in a subtler form. It would also appear that an understanding of how that problem is manifested in the theory would give us sufficient reason to question certain of Russell's assumptions as to the nature of the relation between truth and judgment. We must therefore return to and further elaborate on the central point of the previous chapter.

Let us recall that, on Russell's earlier theory of propositions, if we are to ask what is asserted in the proposition 'Caesar died', we would have to say that it is the 'The death

of Caesar is asserted', or simply, 'Caesar's death'. Thus it would seem obvious that 'Caesar's death' is here what is capable of being true or false; but it is equally obvious that truth and falsity cannot *belong* to a logical subject. As it was earlier suggested, we are entitled to ask how Russell arrives at the conclusion that 'Caesar's death' *is true*. Let us recall the distinction raised earlier in "Frege and Russell on Assertion":

(3) '*Caesar's being dead*' (or, what is the same, '*Caesar's death*')

and

(4) '*Caesar died*'

If we take the logical subject to be an *incomplete* entity, duly registering the difference corresponding to the grammatical distinction, then we ought to conclude that 'Caesar's death' is not the sort of thing that *could* be true or false. I suggest that what warrants the claim that 'Caesar's death' is true is also what supports the claim on the later multiple-relation theory that the mind cannot *ex hypothesi* bear any relation to 'false complexes', and is therefore what ultimately motivated Russell to introduce the multiple-relations theory. The element that I refer to is obscured, in part, by the ease with which we sometimes use participial forms and noun phrases interchangeably. There is nothing problematic in doing this from a strictly grammatical point of view. But the transition from, e.g. 'Desdemona's being unfaithful' to 'Desdemona's infidelity' is perhaps liable to confer upon the latter expression a semblance of its having an assertive element that it does not in fact possess. For Russell, the sentence 'Desdemona is unfaithful' is given as an example of a judgment expressing a falsehood; but there is no such thing as the

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complex to which the judgment refers. Russell's solution is, as we have seen, to explain away the fictitious complex by maintaining that the mind is related not to any *single* 'objective' as had been previously supposed, but to the several *constituents* of the judgment. Of course, there is no such thing as 'Desdemona's infidelity', but there is a strong temptation to forget that *this* is itself a claim that is either being advanced presently or (presumably) had been advanced at an earlier time. I think an interesting question suggests itself, viz. whence does such a temptation originate? Precisely *what* about Russell's later theory is responsible for it?

The answer to this question seems to be that the temptation arises out of assuming that the judgment in question is in possession of a truth-value as given by a *secondary* truth-attribution (or truth-valuation). This assumption is made, however, without Russell's first having acknowledged that such a judgment as 'Desdemona is unfaithful' must have first received a *primary* truth-attribution in its construction *as a judgment*, and this truth-attribution must have involved a transformation from a judgeable content to a judgment. Assuming the judgment to be in possession of a *secondary* truth-attribution without acknowledgement of the role contributed by the primary truth-attribution in the formation of the judgment, moreover, presents the act of judgment as destitute of any element of subjectivity.[115] The presentation of such a judgment (as expressing a fact) thus reinforces the idea that the truth of the judgment obtains independently of the person making the judgment; but more problematically, it reinforces at the same time the idea that the person judging has no cognitive access at all to the truth of the judgment. The latter is a consequence of the former, and though this may be seen as undesirable, even for the semantic realist – for it introduces truth-skepticism – denying the consequence

would come at too high cost – viz. of denying that the truth of a judgment obtains

*independently* of our thinking it true. This would be, therefore, to trade off skepticism for

a deep form of subjectivism. We are led to the conclusion by way of a faulty inference,

however. Because Russell has elided the role contributed by the primary truth-attribution

in the judgment 'Desdemona is unfaithful', the judgment is accorded whatever semantic

significance the secondary truth-attribution might surreptitiously afford it. And therefore,

Russell wishes to say now, as this move has now justified him, that it must simply be a

*fact* (*qua* truth-maker) that Desdemona is not unfaithful. The appeal to the notion of fact

here arises out of the assumption that it is the case that 'Desdemona is unfaithful'

independent of anyone having judged it to be so, where 'independent of' has the sense of,

conceptually, an perhaps temporally, 'prior to'. From the standpoint of an epistemic

conception of truth (e.g. a theory that defines truth as warranted assertibility), the notion

of fact arises out of a realist tendency in our thinking; but for such a conception the

assumption is unwarranted, as we have no recourse to facts as Russell conceives them.

On a view of truth as warranted assertibility, we may explain the realist tendency in our

thinking as follows: by the very use of the words 'there is no such thing as 'Desdemona's

infidelity' we assume the truth of the judgment 'Desdemona is not unfaithful' is as if the

judgment has already been made, and this is understandable given that the role that is

otherwise contributed by the primary truth-attribution is not discharged. This role is never

discharged is simply because there *is* no such role to be played in the case of a *true*

judgment; and the reason why there is no role for true judgments is that, for Russell, to

admit otherwise would be to admit that the truth of a judgment, and derivatively that of a

sentence, does not obtain given the way the world is:

....[It] is plain, also, that the truth or falsehood of a given judgment depends in no way upon the person judging, but solely upon the facts about which he judges  (Russell 1910, 149)

Of course, we may insist that epistemic accounts along these lines are incorrect and so, given the extent to which it is entrenched in our intuitions, there is no good reason to forfeit the realist notion of a fact. But, I will suggest, that the insistence on the idea that we must preserve the independence of mind from world seems to be the mechanism which operates very strongly in Russell's correspondence theory and the mechanism by which the theory of meaning is insulated from epistemological analysis. As Michael Dummett has said in this connection, "Although we no longer accept the correspondence theory, we remain realist *au fond*; we retain in our thinking a fundamentally realist conception of truth." (Dummett 1959, 14) Although this only applies partly to Russell (Russell had remained a correspondence theorist throughout his life too), it accurately characterizes the source of many difficulties that arise in association with realism and its relation to judgment.

We ought to recognize that this is a mechanism that is at work in the earliest phase of Russell's development and is one which is in large part responsible for the double-aspect problems which we've discussed. As Griffin notes, Russell was led, in response to these problems, to distinguish between a proposition and a propositional concept, where the former designates the complex /Caesar died/ and the latter designates the complex /the death of Caesar/. But the distinction cannot get us out of double-aspect problems, since, as Griffin notes, a propositional concept may be the logical subject of another proposition; but it remains that a proposition *proper* may also be the logical subject of another proposition, and this has been shown to follow on pain of self-

contradiction. But as Griffin further points out, propositions are generally of interest to logicians; and we should be permitted to say, borrowing Griffin's example,

> /Caesar died/ and /Caesar was assassinated/ are both subjects of the proposition //Caesar was assassinated/ implies /Caesar died//.[116]

As observed in the previous chapter, there is a difficulty with such a formulation as the one above. It was remarked that no grammatical transformation occurs precisely where it is needed. It should be stressed that the absence of the needed grammatical transformation conceals a point of logical significance, signaling the presence of a certain confusion. We may also note that Russell's introduction of the notion of a propositional concept in the attempt to explain the difference between what is expressed by /Caesar died/ and /the death of Caesar/ runs into Bradley-type regress argument. No matter how many new terms are introduced, the question remains: in virtue of what does a concept possess its dual aspect? If there is nothing about the nature of the concept itself that can reconcile the idea that a complex may differ with respect to having radically different properties with the idea that they express the same thing, then no device will be able to do so.

Mark Sainsbury's view[117] of Russell's difficulties is less charitable than Griffin's., the difference with respect to verbs led Russell "to characterize the predicative role as one which suffices for truth", and "plainly this is absurd." (Sainsbury 1979, 21) Sainsbury goes on to claim: "the temptation is responsible for his saying, in *PofM*, that in a logical sense 'only true propositions are asserted' and for his holding that what is puzzling about belief is how there can be *false* belief." At this point we may credit

Russell with at least having been tempted in the right direction. It is understandable to think absurd Russell's claim that the predicative role of the verb suffices for truth, but the claim is perhaps not as absurd as Sainsbury believes it to be. But instead of pursue the question of what an account of assertion in its logical sense should be, Russell struggles in various ways (from 1903-1914) to reconcile a conception of assertion with a theory of meaning, subordinating the development of a full account of assertion to his realist commitments.

When asked what is asserted in /Caesar died/ it is /Caesar's death/, but from the standpoint of judgment, the former is asserted in virtue of its declarative form; it is the judging mind itself that supplies the logical subject /Caesar's death/ with another term. There should therefore be no puzzle as to finding the point of difference between these two forms if Russell had recognized the logical significance of the transformation, since the "predicative role" of the finite verb in /Caesar died/ contributes the added constituent by which the two forms may be distinguished. But in considering, as Russell does, the complex /Caesar's death/ – "*where it is true*" – it would seem to be implied that there is *per impossible* a kind of coalescence of language with the world. Yet in quite a different sense of the phrase "/Caesar's death/, *where it is true*, seems to imply that the form of words expressing the singular term /Caesar's death/ also expresses a proposition in the realist's sense – what may be entertained as something that is true without anyone taking it to be true. This is a notion that is consistent with, if not a requirement of, Russell's early realism.

Chapter VII: A Semantic Treatment of Relative Truth

Epistemological questions have traditionally been segregated from those which have been declared to be the province of natural language semantics. It would seem from a survey of the philosophical literature that some of the most extensive work being written in what is called the 'theory of truth' is confined to solving the problem of truth in those terms in which it has been, and continues to be, formulated by philosophers of language, viz. as a problem of semantics. This should be seen as a phenomenon that has fostered certain insular prejudices among those presently working within the discipline. Among many of these theorists, it seems not to have been recognized that without a sufficiently developed theoretical framework within which the problem of truth may be usefully analyzed, the manner in which the two dimensions intersect remains somewhat obscure. A suitably developed framework would, ideally, comprehend not only the study of indexical languages – what is now called 'epistemology of language' – but also a wider range of pragmatic phenomena than has been investigated. With due recognition of this fact, the frustrations engendered by the traditional semantic approaches would emerge in a clearer light. Absent this recognition, it seems, such frustrations will continue to multiply, as may be seen, e.g., in recent writing on the interfaces among  various subdisciplines –  between formal and natural language semantics, semantics and pragmatics, and epistemology and semantics. The problem is that, since we expect a

solution to be given in the terms in which the problem has been formulated, we are bound to be dissatisfied even once a solution is proposed.

The following is an attempt to explain certain features of the proposed epistemic view of truth (as discussed in the first two chapters) by means of contrasting this view with what has been called a *relativistic* view of truth by John MacFarlane (2005) and which is given, borrowing some ideas from Kaplan (1983), a semantic treatment. The details of the contrast between the two views are discussed below. I will preface the discussion by first summarizing several theses concerning the concept of truth and assertion so far presented in earlier chapters. I then attempt to explain the key theses within the semantic framework suggested by MacFarlane[118]: the strategy is to explicate the concept of truth (rather than define it) by examining its role within an account of assertion. Then it will be seen whether we stand to gain by further elucidating this account assertion by appeal to the notion of context.

It was seen in earlier chapters that the use of "is true" in indicative sentences in ordinary English, carries with it certain logical implications. The structure which results from applying the truth-predicate to a sentence consists of a juxtaposition of two verbal expressions wherein two judgments are expressed: a judgment, on one hand, and what we might think of as a performative judgment on the antecedent judgment. There is, strictly speaking, a performative element in the act of any judgment or predication. But the construction that results from a (performative) judgment on the antecedent judgment is, logically, more complex than it is apt to seem in calling the act, by which the construction is produced, *performative*[119] The logical complexity of a judgment on an antecedent judgment owes to the fact that the expression involves an occurrence of *both* primary and

secondary truth-values.[120] For this reason, it is understandable that another point

concerning the concept of truth is liable to go unnoticed: that point, which is crucial to

grasping the epistemological significance underlying the application of the truth-

predicate, is that, in terms of our ordinary practice of assertion, the construction arises

from the juxtaposition of two *judgments* which are made within a *primary context*[121]. A

primary context may be taken as a function from a judgeable content to a primary truth-

value[122] and consists of a situation in which one is evaluating either

> (1) A statement, P, (expressed by, and possessing the structure
> of, a declarative sentence), or
>
> (2) A judgeable content (propositional content), p, which is
> expressed in natural discourse, as a participial construction or
> that-clause.[123]

Let us call (1) and (2) *situations* in which the truth-predicate may be applied to a

statement or judgeable content[124], respectively. Philosophers who talk of the truth-

predicate in connection with the theory of truth usually have in mind (1), wherein $P$ is

taken to be the object to which the predicate is applied. In various (epistemological)

contexts in which "is true" is predicated of $P$, $P$ normally occurs antecedently to a truth-

evaluation of $p$, although there are certain exceptions. As Strawson notes in his (1950)

article, "Truth", one may "anticipatorily" concede the truth of $P$ "in order to neutralize a

possible objection." The use of "true", Strawson remarks, "always glances backwards or

forwards to the actual or envisaged making of a statement by someone." While I think

Strawson's remark brings to light something important concerning the epistemological

dimension of predication, the point on which I wish to lay stress is a *logical* one: in

situation (1) the outcome of the use of the truth-predicate – that is, the resulting

construction, is '$P$ is true', whereas in situation (2) the outcome is simply '$P$'. Here, it is

not enough to notice simply that the *outcomes* differ, although this difference is important. It should be noted that the juxtaposition of *P* and "is true" involves one kind of predication.[125] We might say, to be more precise, that this juxtaposition involves two *instances* of one kind of predication.

In order to bring out its epistemological significance, Wiredu (1981) has expressed the point as follows: "Initiating an inquiry into *P* automatically…converts it into a question '*P*?' So to answer the question of truth we have to answer this question."[126] As concerns the concept of truth, the broader epistemological dimension – in terms of which we understand how the question of truth *arises* – intersects with the semantical dimension, in terms of which the *problem* of truth is customarily articulated. I maintain that the problem is soluble by appeal to this epistemological dimension in some way or another. This is an argument both the plausibility and implications of which I have been so far exploring.

We may distinguish between two concepts of truth value by approaching the analysis of assertion from another direction: rather than focus on the *aim* of assertion, we might focus on the sorts of commitment typically undertaken in the assertion of some (non-evaluative) declarative sentence. We often think of a sincere assertion as committing one to the *truth* (relative to some context) to what is asserted, but commitment to truth may in turn be explicated, in part, in terms of the normative consequences of a speech-act of sincere assertion. This is an approach that John MacFarlane (2003, 2005) has taken in an attempt to exhibit various grades of truth-relativity that could obtain – at least in principle – in a natural language such as English. For the purposes of understanding how MacFarlane's own brand of truth-relativism may

be related to the notion of point of view, it will be useful to incorporate the concept of *point of view* into his semantic framework, which I will explain in what follows. We might think of the point-of-view associated with an occurrence of the *primary* concept of truth-value as constituting part of the *context of use* of a sentence, *S*.[127] Similarly, we may think of the point-of-view associated with the occurrence of the *secondary* concept of truth-value as constituting the *context of assessment* of *S*. According to MacFarlane's view, a context of assessment is "*a concrete situation in which the use of a sentence is being assessed*" – which is to say, a truth-evaluation of *S* relative to context $C_A$. A context of use, $C_U$, is a situation in which the "circumstances of the context" are fixed.[128] The context of use plays a dual role in determining the truth-value of a sentence: at the initial stage the context of use determines which proposition *S* expresses, whereas at the second stage it determines the truth value of the proposition expressed by *S*, once propositional content is fixed at the initial stage. As MacFarlane explains, in recognizing the significance of this dual role it becomes clear why we should distinguish between context-sensitivity and context-indexicality. But it is on the question of *how* this is done, that I differ from MacFarlane's approach. Context-sensitivity is nonetheless the salient notion in terms of which the idea of truth-as-relative to a point of view is to be explained. Incorporating this notion of context into an account of assertion which stresses the "normative consequences" of a speech-act of assertion, MacFarlane suggests the following preliminary characterization:

> To assert a sentence S (at a context U) is (inter alia) to
> commit oneself to providing adequate grounds for the truth
> of S (relative to U and one's current context of assessment)
> in response to any appropriate challenge, or (when
> appropriate) to defer this responsibility to another asserter

on whose testimony one is relying by withdrawing the assertion." (MacFarlane 2003, p. 20)

Contexts of use and assessment play a role in a language in which utterance truth is to be relative in an "untame" way. A typical manifestation of "untame" truth-relativism is the (*prima facie*) incoherent idea that what is true for one person may not be true for another in some absolute sense, i.e. where reference to a feature of an inividual's situation is essential to the concept of truth and where that feature cannot be said to have any normative or law-like relation to truth. This is not the sense of relativity that I hold to be relevant to the concept of truth. The kind of relativity that is relevant to the proposed view is benign (or tame) and requires elucidation with respect to the notion of justification; what is necessary to point out is that it is not what is meant by "untamed."

Given a role for contexts of both use and assessment the semantics for truth in MacFarlane's framework allows us to provided us with a recursive definition of truth. The semantics for which truth is defined recursively is to be taken as an "input" for what is called "postsemantics"[129] The truth value of contingent sentences may vary over worlds and counterfactual contexts; therefore, in addition to use-sensitivity, the notion of assessment-sensitivity is needed to account for contingently true (or false) sentences in such a way that we may track variation of truth-value in sentences across counterfactual contexts. The kind of language that MacFarlane describes is one in which the "absoluteness of utterance truth" may be rendered doubtful and the idea that an assertion being "true for Joe but not for Sally" is intelligible. This language, which would exhibit what MacFarlane refers to as a *third*-grade of truth relativity – a form of relativity that has not been explored in previous work on relativism with respect to truth – is brought to light by employing the doubly-contextualized truth-predicate: "true relative to context of

use and to context of assessment." What the point of such a language would be is arguable, although it is argued in "Future Contingents and Relative Truth" that such a language contains the semantic resources to account for our evaluating future contingent propositions without assuming absolute truth-values for utterances. It seems that MacFarlane succeeds in providing a kind of description of such a language. We may question whether we have a use for, or even know what it means to use, such a language. MacFarlane's answer lay in his appeal to a speech-act analysis of assertion which would accommodate the semantic characterization of truth. On this analysis, the concept of truth is to be explicated in terms of assertoric commitment: to assert that $p$ is to be committed to the truth of $p$ To be committed to the truth of some proposition is to be *inter alia* be obligated to withdraw the commitment to, or provide justification for, the assertion that $p$ under the appropriate circumstances relative to the context of use. Justifying one's assertion relative to $C_u$, for example, means providing grounds for the truth of the sentence asserted. It is at this point, namely that of spelling out exactly what justification is to consist in that MacFarlane seems to smuggle into his theory the notion of justification the "absoluteness" that was to be avoided with respect to truth.

The idea of assessment-*sensitivity*, MacFarlane explains, should not be confused with assessment-*indexicality*. The truth-value of an assessment-sensitive proposition varies with context, whereas in speaking of an indexical, what is meant is that propositional content *itself* (as opposed to sentence-content) varies with context.

A context may contain several "parameters."[130] These may include world, time, and place of utterance; but it may also include speaker. Propositions exhibit context-sensitivity with respect to a *single* speaker, *S* (perduring over time) when, e.g., *S*

evaluates $p$ as true at $t_0$ and $p$ as false at a later time, $t_1$. A simple example of this is the proposition 'I believed that $p$ but $p$ is false', where the part containing the belief clause marks one truth-evaluation and the clause containing "is false" marks another.[131] Here, context sensitivity occurs over time but may be invariant with respect to any *class* of speakers, $S_1, S_2, S_3$ . Similarly, a proposition's truth may vary with respect to a class of several speakers, $S_1, S_2, S_3$ ...etc., simultaneously, at time $t$. As far as the proposed view is concerned, however, it is important to note that the "variance" of a proposition's truth with respect to a class of speakers is a slightly misleading way of saying that $S_1$ and $S_2$ disagree as to what the truth value of $p$ is. To say that the truth-value "varies" in this case is to say, rather, that one agrees with S1. For example, $S_1$ may evaluate $p$ at $t_0$ as true, while $S_2$ may evaluate $p$ as false at $t_0$. The latter kind of sensitivity is liable to strike some as more controversial than the former kind, but I will argue in what follows that, logically speaking, context sensitivity in the *speaker's* sense is really no more problematic than context sensitivity in the *temporal* sense just described. In fact, context-sensitivity *of this kind* is essential to the view I am advocating.

The context of use, $C_U$, may be allowed to diverge from the context of assessment, $C_A$ for any truth-evaluable sentence. This is so because the doubly-contextualized predicate, "true at $C_U$ and $C_A$", may involve a primary as well as a secondary truth-value. That is, $C_U$ may contain the primary truth-value and $C_A$ the secondary truth-value. As was noted earlier, these two truth-values can differ: for example, "The Dodo is extinct in 2008," and "It is false that the Dodo is extinct in 2008" – different truth-values for different contexts. Perhaps it is prudent to insert a word of caution here. A truth-evaluation is not being claimed to be *relative* in the sense that the individual truth-value

determined at $C_U$ or $C_A$ will *depend* on either $C_U$ or $C_A$. That a truth-evaluable content, $p$, or truth-evaluable proposition, $P$, may vary in truth-value over contexts *depends* not on context but on whether such a content or proposition is warrantedly-assertible at a context. It may be objected that in my having spoken of warranted-assertibility at this level of generality, I have neglected to specify any criterion or *standard* of warrant, or justification. I have deliberately left this question in abeyance for several reasons. One is that, for the purposes of distinguishing the present view of truth from relativism, it is more important to see how such a standard could be included in a context with the other parameters ($w$, $s$, $t$, $p$), and how such a standard would be treated in the context as a *constant* parameter. Were propositions and propositional contents not truth-evaluable relative to a fixed standard of justification, a more controversial and untamed relativism would likely result[132]. It is just such a relativism that is thought to be implied whenever an agent (or speaker) is taken to be a context parameter along with world, time, and place. But this, I suggest, is *not* an implication what it means to relativize the *concept* of truth-value to points of view, as I shall argue shortly. In order to distinguish the senses of relativity involved, we may say that a propositional content is truth-evaluable *in reference* to $C_U$ whenever "is true" (or false) is predicated of a *sentence*.

To make the distinction more precise, however, it will be necessary to identify certain aspects of MacFarlane's semantic framework with which the concept of point of view is compatible, as I have explained it, and those with which it is not. The sense of 'context' which I would like to adopt allows for the expression of the idea that use-sensitivity may diverge from assessment-sensitivity in a significant way. There are several ways in which this can happen: the truth-evaluation of a proposition at $C_U$ may

*occasion* the use of 'is true', as a speaker at $C_A$ is not in such a case *merely* determining an issue – i.e., either affirmatively of negatively – but is "commenting[133]" on an existing judgment made at $C_U$. A speaker, then, thereby recognizes how the secondary concept of truth-value is instantiated. Following terminology introduced in the last chapter, let us call such an instantiation an "occurrence". It should be clear that an occurrence of the secondary truth-concept entails the divergence of $C_U$ and $C_A$ since the use of the truth-predicate, as I have just characterized it, entails that $C_U \neq C_A$.

Critics of the epistemic conception sometimes point out that if truth is to be taken to *mean* nothing more than warranted-assertibility, then one must admit that a belief which was formerly held to be false may now be true. What had once been warrantedly-assertible may no longer be so in light of newly available evidence. Such an epistemic theory of truth of the kind just described, the objection goes, must somehow violate the law of non-contradiction. As it concerns the role that point of view plays in a context, this objection confuses $C_U$ with $C_A$. The confusion is brought to light in first recognizing that a truth-evaluation of a "belief" is tantamount to (*inter alia*) a truth-evaluation of a *propositional content* (as the object of a belief). It should be clear that since any determination of truth must be in the *form* of a claim to truth. It is also clear that since a truth-claim is itself a judgment, one's commitment to another point of view – i.e. to holding another claim *as* true – can only issue in the form of another commitment that is cotemporaneous with the *present*. Thus, any agreement with a former point of view implies a judgment to that effect from a new and distinct point of view. This alone does not preclude one from agreeing or disagreeing with a previous point of view at $C_U$. The two things that are cotemporaneous are (1) the *reference* – in this case, reference to an

earlier point of view, *P*, at world *W*, and (2) the commitment to the truth of the judgeable

content contained in the assertion of the earlier point of view, at world, *W*. What *is*

precluded is the possibility of being in possession of a truth that is *point of view-*

transcendent.

The outcome of a truth-evaluation may be either affirmative or negative

(assuming the principle of bivalence). Thus, with respect to contexts of use and

assessment, a proposition's truth is invariant when the truth-value of $p$ at $C_U$ and $C_A$ is the

same. For example, it is the same whenever at $C_U$ the determination is affirmative and at

$C_A$ it is also affirmative. It varies if, for example, at $C_U$ the determination is affirmative

and at $C_A$ it is negative. With respect to the former case we may say that there is a kind of

congruence of points of view. In the latter (where truth-value varies) there is an

incongruence. But it is, nonetheless, crucial to recognize that just as the points of view

are *numerically distinct* in the latter case they are also distinct in the former and that, in

the case of incongruence of points of view, the points of view themselves vary – not

strictly speaking the truth-value. I argue in what follows that this numerical distinctness

of points of view implies a kind of context-sensitivity without implying *relativism*.

Before commenting on how the notion of point of view may be related to the kind

of truth-relativism that MacFarlane advocates, it may be useful to summarize the main

objectives of his exposition. MacFarlane's aim is to challenge the orthodox view of truth-

relativism as a view that is plainly absurd by presenting a "clear counterexample to the

absoluteness of utterance truth."[134] According to the orthodox view, utterance truth is

absolute, whereas propositional truth is relative to a context of use. According to

MacFarlane ordinary talk of the term 'utterance' is often ambiguous. An utterance may

be taken in one sense as a speech-act (as an uttering) or in another sense as the object of

an act of uttering – what, e.g., MacFarlane takes as a particular inscription or "acoustic

blast." Given MacFarlane's semantic characterization, there is a way to understand

propositional relativism with respect to truth. For MacFarlance, this involves recognizing

simply that at least some propositions are assessment-sensitive. According to

MacFarlane,

> [Sentence] S is true at a context of use $C_U$ and context of
> assessment $C_A$ iff there is a proposition p such that (a) S
> expresses p at $C_U$, and (b) p is true at the world of $C_U$ and
> $C_A$.[135]

It is not entirely clear whether MacFarlane has articulated a form of truth-

relativism that is really intelligible, as he claims to have done. In what follows, I contend

is that that conception fails to be applicable to the formulation of point of view on the

proposed account of the concept of truth. Crucial to maintaining this position are several

ideas. One is that the idea of a point of view should not be taken as something on which

truth-values *depend* in any "controversial" sense. Such a controversial sense of 'relative'

is what MacFarlane – following Max Kolbel – attempts to articulate. The semantic

framework that he provides fails to apply to the following point: a proposition *may* be

context-sensitive in a given language without implying the "untame" truth-relativism that

MacFarlane wishes to vindicate. This is the case where *p* is assessment-sensitive at a

world, *W*, of $C_A$, while the standard of justification, *j*, remains *fixed* at both $C_U$ and $C_A$.

Just as the truth-value of the proposition "The glass is full" at a given context depends on

the world in which the sentence is used, the truth-value of the proposition depends on the

world in which it is being assessed.[136] A proposition is said to be assessment-sensitive if

its truth-value varies with $C_A$ while $C_U$ remains fixed.

Here, it is useful to point out, amending the previous definition, that a sentence $S$ is true at $C_U$ and $C_A$ *iff*

(1) S expresses $p$ at $C_U$

(2) $p$ is true at the world of $C_U$ and the *standard of justification, j,* of the assessor at $C_A$.

A proposition is true at $C_U$ and $C_A$ *iff* $p$ is true at a circumstance of evaluation determined by $C_U$ and $C_A$, where the circumstance of evaluation is composed of the world of $C_U$ and standard of justification of assessor at $C_A$.

I would suggest the following point about the Kaplanian notion of context as it concerns a view according to which truth is explicated in terms of warranted-assertibility. If a standard of justification is included as one of the parameters in a context, then a circumstance of evaluation would then be composed of $C_U$ and $C_A$ ($w,t,s,j$). But in this case the justification parameter would have to be construed as the 'One correct standard of justification'. In stressing the specific logical role played here by the standard of justification we are allowed to distinguish the epistemic conception of truth with other untame forms of truth-relativism. The role of justification figures crucially in this epistemic conception. It is necessary also to stress the following point concerning judgment as it relates to any standard of justification: in the context of inquiry the judgments which constitute points of view are, as Wiredu has claimed, "in accordance with the canons of rational justification." (Wiredu, 1980) Wiredu further lays stress on this point by clarifying the intended sense of the term 'relative', the use of which in philosophical discourse is often shrouded in obscurity. "Truth is not relative to point of view," Wiredu claims, "[It] *is*, in one sense, a point of view. But it is a point of view born

out of rational inquiry, and the canons of rational inquiry have a human application." In light of this remark, let us rewrite (2) as follows:

(3) $p$ is true at the world of $C_U$ and the '*One correct standard of justification*' at $C_A$.[137]

While this does not allow for one feature of context, namely standard of justification, to vary, it does allow for the other features of context to vary. Parameters, as they are defined in MacFarlane and Kaplan's framework, may be varied *independently*. Therefore, a proposition's truth-value may, in a sense, vary accordingly.[138] Thus, the truth-value of $p$ at a world, $W$, of $C_U$ may differ from the truth-value of $p$ at $W$ of $C_A$. Since there may be indefinitely many contexts of assessment, a distinct context of assessment for, as MacFarlane points out, for Joe, for Jim and for Sally. The truth-value may 'vary' among those contexts in the way just described. This *is* a kind of assessment-sensitivity. It amounts to the recognition that there is a plurality of truth-values that come in the form of points of view. We might agree with MacFarlane in wanting to preserve this notion of sensitivity:

> $C_U$    'The glass is full'
>
> $C_A$    'The glass is full'

While incorporating the concept of point of view and standard of justification as parameters into the context, we should allow for the possibility that the world of $C_A$ will not be the same as that of $C_U$. But, while we would like to suppose that a refutation of $p$ given by a challenger at $C_A$, where the asserter (speaker) may evaluate the putative

refutation, we would also need to allow for a world of $C_U$ in which the glass is full and another world, of $C_A$, in which the glass is empty. Similarly, it should be possible that there is a world of $C_{A(1)}$ in which the glass is full and a world of $C_{A(2)}$ in which the glass is empty. Therefore, there is nothing incoherent in allowing the truth-value of $p$ to vary with the context of assessment (while the context of use remains fixed). However, it is important to recognize that a proposition may be assessment-sensitive in at least two ways, one of which leads to untame relativism, and one of which that does not. That is, assessment-sensitivity may be due either to not fixing the *standard of justification* at the relevant $C_A$ or not fixing the *world* of the speaker.[139] Only the first kind amounts to untame relativism with respect to truth.

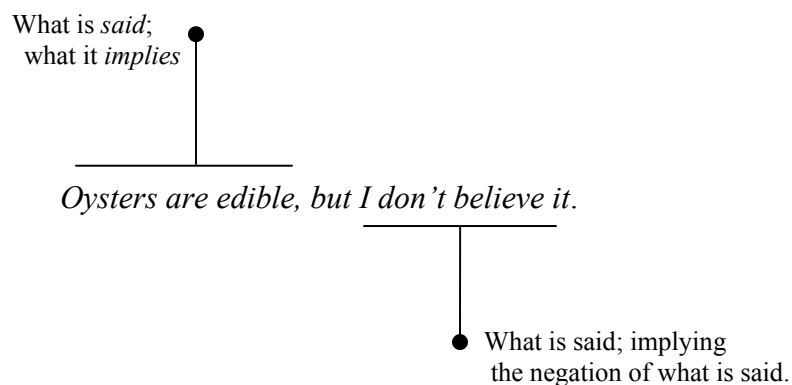Chapter VIII: Moore's Paradox and the Logic of Assertion

'Moorean sentences', i.e. sentences of the form '*p* but I do not believe that *p*' or 'I believe that *p* but it is not the case that *p*', appear to be paradoxical because the propositions they express are inconsistent with what they pragmatically convey. Many philosophers readily acknowledge the oddity of these sentences, attempting to explain away the oddity on the basis of recasting the distinction between 'standard meaning' (descriptive content) and pragmatic effect. I argue that this approach is mistaken. I suggest that the pragmatic/semantic distinction, despite recent attempts to 'stabilize' it, obscures a deeper problem which, once sufficiently analyzed, reveals that the various appeals to the distinction cannot afford a solution to Moore's paradox. One reason for this is that the problem is both a *logical* and *syntactical* one. Because of this, I suggest that a solution to Moore's paradox should not exploit the pragmatic/semantic distinction in the manner that has now become customary. Rather, I show that the paradox arises from the failure of standard semantic analyses to account for the role of the concept of truth in the practice of assertion. The concept of *point of view*, which is central to understanding this role of the concept of truth, affords us with an explanation as to why we are tempted to think that Moorean sentences are (possibly) true. Once the role of the concept of truth is properly understood, it becomes clear how Moorean sentences are analyzable simply as logical contradictions.

Moorean sentences are sentences such as the following:

(1) 'I don't believe it's raining, but as a matter of fact it is'.

(2) 'Oysters are edible but I don't think they are'.[140]

Such sentences would seem not to be amenable to the kind of treatment which the garden-variety semantic paradox receives, the reason being that neither appears to be in any way self-contradictory, as neither could be said to be used to assert two contradictory propositions. In asserting a sentence of the form '*p* but I do not believe that *p*' we *at least* standardly assert that *p* is the case and imply its negation. There has been, however, little agreement among philosophers as to precisely how this sense of 'imply' is to be properly analyzed.

The component sentences possess the dual function of assertion and belief conveyance (Figure 5):



What is *said*;
what it *implies*

*Oysters are edible, but I don't believe it.*

What is said; implying
the negation of what is said.

It may be said that an assertion *implies* that the corresponding belief is true, but an

analysis that rests on this assumption would appear to fail to meet what Roy Sorensen

and Jane Heal identify as adequacy conditions for any satisfactory solution of Moore's

paradox. Following Heal and Sorensen, I assume the burden of having to meet these

conditions:

**(C1)**    Moorean sentences must be shown to be *reducible* to contradictions

**(C2)**    An explanation must be given as to why we are tempted to say that
Moorean sentences can be true even if they cannot be rationally
believed.[141]

We may see the difference between a fairly standard view (E. H. Wolgast) and the

one that I propose, using (S1) to represent the former, (S2) to represent the latter, and

brackets to highlight the different in emphasis[142] (Figure 6):

(S1) The meaning *implies* (in some unspecified sense) that this is the speaker's belief;

paradox results from *conflicting beliefs*

It is raining, but *I do not believe it'*

(S2) The expression of this belief *commits*
the speaker to the truth of *what* is believed – either "It is not
raining" or "I have no attitude toward the proposition 'that it is
raining'"

One consequence of (S2) is that what is seen to be paradoxical about the sentence results

from a conflict between believing 'It is raining' and 'It is not raining'. I suggest that the

failure to realize the possibility that each conjunct contains an assertion from a different *point of view* obscures an otherwise a flagrant inconsistency.[143]

Supposing that, in some sense,

      (a) 'I believe it is raining, but I do not believe it'

is a defensible interpretation of Moorean sentences, on S1 the second conjunct would remain ambiguous, and would thereby present several difficulties into which we need not enter here. But if we suppose, on the other hand, that 'It is raining but I do not believe it' is analyzable straightforwardly as a contradiction,

      (b) 'It is raining, but it is not raining'

, then (b) would appear to satisfy our first condition. S1 and S2 may be further explicated in accordance with the following principles:

      **(P1)** *An assertion (standardly) expresses a belief.*

      **(P2)** *Articulating a belief standardly expresses an assertion; and stating, or asserting a belief in the first-person, thus from the first-person point of view, commits one to the truth of what is believed*

On the Wolgast and Black view, the expression of a given belief, according to **(P1)**, is central to the meaning of the sentence which is used to express the corresponding belief. I do not wish to dispute this claim, but it would seem that a lingering difficulty with such a

view (represented somewhat crudely in S1) is that it leaves the source of Moore's

paradox unexplained. Specifically, the demands on such a view would be to show that the

'paradox' amounts to a contradiction, and S1 does not allow this to be done absent a

detailed analysis as to how declarative sentences are to be "doxastically contexted."

These details are spelled out carefully in various treatments of Moorean sentences (e.g. in

recent work by Uriah Kriegel), but much of that work would seem unnecessary if we can

meet those demands yet forgo the complications attending views along the lines of S1.

The question then remains as to how Moorean sentences are analyzable as

contradictions in accordance with S2 – the answer to which I suggest points in the

direction of a simpler analysis of Moorean sentences. I suggest that the reducibility of

Moorean sentences to assertions may be permitted, assuming such sentences are seen to

issue from the *first-person point of view*. Further, I suggest that this strategy may be

extended so as to include belief reports generally.

The suggestion plainly fails for the sentence '*p*, but *she* does not believe it', since

what is asserted in the first conjunct is from a point of view that is distinct from the point

of view involved in *what is believed* in the second. In the second conjunct something is

believed from *another* point of view, such that what is asserted is that *someone* other than

the speaker does not believe what is asserted in the first. We may see that differences in

point of view also arise in connection with tense. Thus, not surprisingly, we find no

Moorean element in sentences such as 'It is raining, but I *did* not believe it'. The reason

is that, in saying 'I *did* not believe it', I am speaking *about* a point of view that I once

held but no longer consciously hold. Thus, the suggestion is that in cases of believing *that*

*p* from two numerically distinct points of view, one may not derive a logical

contradiction; rather, to do this one must assert that $p$ and $\sim p$ from *one and the same point of view.*

We may observe that in Moorean contexts the semantic content of 'I' is reflexive, and so is determined at any given time by the point of view associated with the speaker at the time of utterance. It is in virtue of the fact that *I* am sincerely uttering that $p$ that I am thereby expressing the conscious belief that $p$. But I should like to suggest that a sincere utterance of '*p* and I do not believe *p*' is not a *pragmatic* inconsistency, for the inconsistency lies between what is asserted in both conjuncts. Appeals to conversational implicature seem misguided here.

On the view that is indicated here, the first conjunct contains an implicit free variable whose value is determined by the *point of view* associated with the occurrence of the first-person pronoun. A point of view is represented by the token-reflexive 'I' and the surface grammar of a sentence in which it occurs would appear to allow for its elimination. It would seem that most, if not all, declarative sentences possess this grammar. But here, as elsewhere in philosophy, surface grammar is misleading as to logical grammar, and a sentence in which the token-reflexive character of a given point of view is implicit awaits further analysis. Such an analysis would supply the sentence with an index to which the truth of a given token of the sentence may be relativized. From the standpoint of the *pragmatics* of a point of view, a speaker's present point of view and understood by reference to several factors which constitute the narrow context of an utterance. It may not be immediately clear how, as regards the particulars, a more thorough account along these lines may be given, but the following considerations would appear to lead to a presumption in its favor.

In taking Moore's original example, 'I went to the pictures last Tuesday, but I don't believe that I did', we are told that "*what* is asserted is something which is perfectly possible logically" (Moore, 1944). The sentence, 'I went to the pictures last Tuesday but do not believe that I did', *is* absurd when *asserted*, but this is because an assertion from a given point of view entails a commitment to its truth **(P2)**; and, it may be further added that an assertion is necessarily from a point of view. What makes it 'perfectly possible' is that I am able to imagine someone else presently entertaining the same *proposition* (thus suspending commitment to truth) with respect to myself. Similarly, another person *saying* of me that J. Kelly went to the pictures but that J. Kelly does not believe it, may be correct, but this is because the entire sentence issues from *another point of view*. The notion of '*what is asserted*' is indispensable to rational discourse, since without it we should not be able to explain how it is possible to *consider* what it is that a sentence expresses; we should not be able to explain how the accusatives of thought are possible. Such considerations, however, issue from different points of view; and while they do not enjoin commitment to truth – for such a commitment is suspended in our merely considering some proposition – we should avoid the temptation to believe then that we may maintain the suspension of commitment when we sincerely *assert* a sentence. Given this, to have before us a Moorean sentence, a declarative sentence whose assertive force is reflected in its syntactical structure, and then go on to ask 'How is it possible that this is true?' is to yield to this very temptation. The sentence 'I went to the pictures but do not believe it' is possibly true only insofar as I am able to refer to myself having gone to the pictures at an earlier time, i.e. from *another* point of view. This could be any given hypothetical point of view; and it would seem that the possibility – of entertaining a

hypothetical point of view – explains why it is we want to say that Moorean sentences, despite their absurdity, may nonetheless be true. The temptation to regard Moorean sentences as possibly true would thus appear to be a consequence of confusing *two distinct points of view* – viz. the point of view associated with the (absurd) $1^{st}$- person assertion of a Moorean sentence and the point of view associated with the $3^{rd}$-person assertion of the Moorean sentence, which, of course, may be true. In both cases, we have the same proposition, taking a broadly Fregean view of propositions. It may then be seen to follow that if any interpretation of Moorean sentences as being possibly true or false is born of such confusion, so would consequent intimations of paradox.

As asserted from a first-person point of view, a Moorean assertion is absurd, whereas from a *third-person* point of view such an assertion is either true or false. Thus, someone other than myself may say truly of me that I went to the pictures but that I do not believe it, or, on a possible-worlds model, it may be true in some possible world other than the one that I inhabit. I may come to the same conclusion as that of the person in that world, but if I do so it is only in virtue of inhabiting some other possible world. The plausibility of the possible-worlds model, in connection with the concept of point of view, depends on clarifying a syntactic distinction between propositions in the sense given to them here and declarative sentences.

Insofar as I may be tempted to regard both parts of

(i) 'I went to the pictures last Tuesday, but I do not believe it'

as possibly true, I must effectively dissociate the assertion of the sentence from my present point of view so as to imagine the entire sentence being true of me at an earlier time. As I already mentioned, what gives one the sense that the sentence could nonetheless be true must be that, given any assertive utterance of (i), (i) is surreptitiously converted to an assertion from another *distinct* point of view. As is the case with speech acts in general, a point of view is episodic in nature. This fact, however, is not reflected in the logical grammar of (i). Similarly, I may imagine *what is said* being uttered by someone else, or someone else may say of me

(ii) 'He went to the pictures last Tuesday but he does not believe it.'

In either case I divorce the propositional content of the assertion from the assertion itself and go on to make an assertion; but in doing so I adopt *someone else's* point of view, in which case, the sentence should read:

(iii) 'I went to the pictures last Tuesday but *did not* believe it.'

Therefore, if it is to be true of anyone, there is necessarily a *commitment* to its truth by its speaker, and to this commitment there necessarily corresponds, by **(P2)**, a unique point of view. In believing (or asserting) that 'what is asserted' is 'possible' I thereby no longer consider the assertion from the same point of view, as I am not truly *considering* an assertion – unless commenting upon it. *Entertaining* some proposition that *p* is thus possible without being committed to the *truth* of that proposition, and in this way, *p*

appears to be *point-of-view-less*. But here we are *misguided* into believing that from a

proposition presented under one mood (of entertainment) as point-of-viewless, we may

infer that a proposition under any mood (e.g. the mood of assertion) is also point-of-

viewless: being wedded to a point of view does not necessarily commit one to the truth of

any proposition, *but in asserting any proposition to be true, one thereby commits oneself

to a point of view*. (More on what this commitment amounts to (e.g. normative

consequences))

Moorean sentences are therefore unique insofar as they are signal manifestations

of a failure to realize the implications of commitment to truth that is involved in any act

of assertion. We might suspect, given the foregoing reflections, that it is to this

uniqueness that Wittgenstein refers when he famously said in the *Philosophical

Investigations*, that Moorean sentences reveal something important about "the logic of

assertion." We may think of this commitment as what an assertion *adds* to a bare

proposition. If I am inclined to think that I might consider the *assertion* of a Moorean

sentence from one and the same point of view in such a way that it appears to be

simultaneously absurd and possibly true, I need only attend to the tense of the principal

verb of the second conjunct to see that an absurdity could result – insofar as I am

considering the sentence *as* asserted. 'I went to the pictures last Tuesday but do not

believe it' *is* absurd, yet the proposition *as a judgeable content* is possibly true when I

conceive of a state of affairs in which I *went* to the movies and later did not remember it.

But to do this is not to conceive of the same state of affairs referred to by the proposition

expressed by that sentence. It is quite a different thing to say to oneself 'I went to the

movies and *later* did not remember going'. The further rider may then be added: 'But I

remember now'. It should be clear that this is another assertion and that the assertion is a conversion of the judgeable contents, (expressed as two separate noun-phrases) 'my having gone to the pictures last Tuesday' and 'my not believing that I went to the pictures last Tuesday', to a declarative sentence which is both assertible and possibly true.  Thus, the sentence 'I went to the pictures last Tuesday but I don't believe it.' asserted from another point of view may be regarded as another sentence altogether.

Notes

[1] R. S. Wells, "Frege's Ontology" p. 16

[2] Ibid.

[3] See *Grundgesetze* (ed. M. Furth, 1964), section 2, for a nearly parallel discussion.

[4] Though we find, for example, a discussion of a function being doubly incomplete (*Grundgesetze*), Frege

[5] The "syntactical" distinctions appealed to are in keeping more with e.g. W.E. Johnson's employment of the term "syntactical" than, e.g., Carnap's (*The Logical Syntax of Language* (London; 1937)), the latter of which pertains exclusively to the study of *signs*.

[6] Sometimes called 'propositional sign', e.g. in 'Function and Concept' (1891)

[7] "Frege's Ontology," *The Philosophical Review*; 1960

[8] Dudman

[9] Here Dudman also cites Russell's complaint in a similar connection in *Principles of Mathematics*: "Asserted propositions have no indication." (*PoM*) 2nd ed. 1937, p. 504

[10] See p. iii of the introduction.

[11] Dudman (1975)

[12] See p. 24.

[13] See, e.g., Geach, 1975.

[14] Here we find echoes of Church's view.

[15] Or, to use Russell's example, 'Caesar is dead'

[16] Let us recall that Frege is alleged to have overlooked the fact that assertoric force is withdrawn in truth-functional contexts and so the use of a definite description to exemplify '—A' was unnecessary.

[17] In fact, this is Dummett's understanding of the matter. *Frege: The Philosophy of Language* (Harvard; 1980)

[18] See p. 31

[19] See Dudman, p. 157.

[20] See *Grundgesetze* pp.6f

[21] I repeat and earlier quotation from Ch II, p. 22. (M. Furth (trans.), Berkeley, 1964)

[22] See "Truth as a Logical Constant; with an application to the principle of excluded middle" *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 101 (Oct., 1975),

[23] Frege's Theory of Judgement, David Andrew Bell, Oxford: Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, I979

[24] Russell often speaks of this construction as the *verbal noun*.

[25] *Principles of Mathematics*, New York: Norton (1931) p.48

[29] George Pitcher has expressed some apprehension that a kind of schizophrenia here begins to set in to the theory of truth in this connection. Given that what I've said so far

implies the possibility of two kinds of truth-bearers, Pitcher is perhaps right. However, what I shall argue is that this "schizophrenia" is virtuous from the point of view of an analysis of the role that truth plays in the practice of assertion. In the pages that follow I distinguish between primary and secondary forms of truth-attribution and argue that it is *sentences* relative to contexts, not utterances, that are bearers of secondary truth-attribution. However, for the purpose of distinguishing between primary and secondary it is not necessary to distinguish here between sentences and their use. See Pitcher (ed.), *Truth*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964. See also Bar-Hillel, 'Primary Truth-Bearers', *Dialectica* (1973)

[30] Griffin, Nicholas. 1993. "Terms, Relations, Complexes' in Eds. Irvine and Wedeking *Russell and Analytic Philosophy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
[31] This is distinguished from what Russell calls a 'propositional concept', which is expressed typically by a noun phrase – or verbal noun.
[32] This is Griffin's observation. That Russell did not wish to assert this is perhaps arguable, but it seems to be an unlikely possibility.

[34] W. E. Johnson. 1921. *Logic*
[35] This phrase would appear to denote a datable event, whereas ii′ seems less apt to do denote the same datable event. This is merely an appearance, however. Strictly speaking, noun phrases do not denote anything. Strawson's remark regarding this matter in "On Referring" seems to show us why this is so: a phrase in itself does not denote anything. A phrase is something a person may *use* to denote something. The added qualification is then necessary: in the referring act, a noun phrase may denote something (in this case, an event). This is only possible, however, given the addition of the 'assertive tie', whereby the unsaturated expression (e.g. a noun phrase) becomes saturated. This is a transformation of the jugeable content to a judgement. By virtue of this transformation, an act of denoting just is a claim – i.e., a judgment. For this reason, it would seem that we must use a declarative sentence, not a noun phrase, to express the idea of a phrase having a denotation.
[36] By grammatical sameness of the definite description and the participial phrase I mean that both are unsaturated expressions.
[37] Wiredu (1975) distinguishes between this kind of determination (of truth-value) and that involved in the sort of attribution of truth by which the truth predicate is employed.

[39] This has also been discussed and recognized to be a real difficulty by Russell (1903), Geach (1975) and Dudman (1975)
[40] Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, vol. XLVI, 1946
[41] 'Knowledge, Truth and Reason', Dissertation, Oxford (1960)
[42] See Davidson (2001)
[43] See Ch. II for a discussion of the "characterizing tie."
[44] Geach (1957), Griffin (2001)
[45] Meinong's "Objectives"

[46] "On the Nature of Truth," in *Philosophical Essays* 1966, p.149

[47] This was published later in *The Philosophy of John Dewey; The Library of Living Philosophers*, vol. 1, ed. Paul A. Schilpp (Open Court, 1990)

[48] This is stated in *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth,* (Allen and Unwin Ltd.; London) 1948, p.148; hereafter *IMT*.

[49] This comment was made in response to Russell's remark (*IM&T)* that "there is an important difference between his (Dewey's) views and mine, which will not be elicited unless we can understand each other." (p.401)

[50] The connection between Russell's conception of propositions and the nature of truth is well documented in a discussion dating back to Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) in which Russell struggles, famously, to distinguish between logical subjects with respect to which truth is said to be external, and assertions with respect to which truth is said to be internal.

[51] "On Sense and Meaning", trans. M. Black, (Basil Blackwell, 1952)

[52] *Begriffsschrift*, trans. P. T. Geach, (Basil Blackwell, 1952)

[53] See, e.g., §§ 51-53, *Principles of Mathematics* (W. W. Norton, 1996)

[54] I have in mind, e.g., Alonzo Church (1956), Peter Geach (1965), Max Black (1964), Michael Dummett (1993), and V T. Dudman (1970). I do not mention Wittgenstein because he did, of course, treat the assertion sign of Frege in the *Tractatus*. Though the details of this treatment are quite significant with respect to the development of the philosophy of language in general, they fall outside the scope of our discussion.

[55] C. I. Lewis (*An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*; 1946) joins their company in this respect.

[56] For Frege, these propositions are the bearers of thoughts.

[57] *PWAT*, p.172

[58] Both my criticism of Russell's correspondence theory and my interpretation of Dewey here and throughout derive from the views of K. Wiredu's, to be found in several discussions on these subjects. See, for example, "Truth: The Correspondence Theory of Judgment," (*TCTJ*) *African Philosophical Inquiry* (January 1987).

[59] *PWA&T*. p.171.

[60] The use of idea here is not to be understood in Dewey's sense, but rather in a (classical) empiricist – i.e. as implying some primitive datum of experience whose function is to represent the object it is (in some sense) about.

[61] See p. 178 of *PWA&T*

[62] Ibid.

[63] This is what Dewey calls a proposition's "sufficient verifier"[63]

[64] Ibid., p.179

[65] *SCCT* p. 158

[66] I refer here to a form of truth-skepticism arising out of certain correspondence views that carry the implication that the truth-maker relation is asymmetrical and therefore cognititvely inaccessible.

[67] My attention was drawn to these observations by K. Wiredu, *TCTJ* (1987).

[68] *SCCT*, p. 165

[69] See p. 65

[70] The point here is made later in Russell's lectures on the Philosophy of Logical Atomism.

[71] I include, in addition to Strawson (1950), two notable truth-theorists, J. L. Mackie (1973) and Kwasi Wiredu (1973)

[72] Ibid.

[73] This a context to which Frege was sensitive early on despite exhibiting a strongly deflationary bias. See Frege (1879)

[74] Ibid. p.20; Strawson, more frequently than Austin himself, uses the synonymous term, 'speech-episode'.

[75] Ibid., p.23.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., p. 26

[78] Ibid., p.27

[79] Ibid., p. 31

[11] It is worth noting that Moore seems to have detected the sense of a sentence 'saying of itself that it is true that I wish to explain. On this score, however, it is evident that Austin did not follow Moore's lead.

[81] My emphasis.

[82] Ibid., p. 19

[83] Strawson, 'Truth,' (1950). Subsequent citations refer to the G. Pitcher, ed. *Truth* (Prentice Hall, NJ, 1964) pp. 32-53.

[84] Ibid., p. 42

[85] This may apply also to Russell's correspondence view of 1912. See his *Problems of Philosophy*.

[86] Ibid., p. 29

[87] Caution must be taken here to distinguish Frege's early concept of *force* of his *Begriffschrifft* (1879) from the later concept as it appears, e.g., in *Grundgesetze* (1891), as the differences between them, though subtle, lead to radically different interpretations. I refer here to the former. The critical literature on Frege from Russell to D. M. Armstrong would suggest that these differences in interpretations lead, in turn, to different ontologies.

[88] It is not possible to discuss this aspect of assertion satisfactorily here; it is an aspect which, as I mentioned earlier, makes essential reference to 'point of view,' a significant although somewhat technical term of art. The idea of point of view, insofar as it bears on the logic of assertion, is discussed fully in Wiredu's "Truth as a Logical Constant with an application to the principle of excluded middle" (1975). Many of the views contained in the present discussion are applications of the main ideas advanced in that paper.

[89] Ibid., p. 41.

[90] *Logic* (Cambridge: University Press, 1921)

[91] I was first made aware of the primary and secondary distinction in reading K. Wiredu's "Truth as a Logical Constant, with an Application to the Principle of Excluded Middle," (1975); see also his "Deducibility and Inferability" *Mind* (1973).

[92] I.e., has a primary value of 'True'

[93] This is what Strawson means, as I understand him, when he remarks that it is a "logically fundamental *type-mistake*" to suppose that there is something in the world to which a statement can be related (or be "about") other than that to which the referring part of the statement refers and that to which the describing part "fits or fails to fit." To understand how these functions are discharged in normal cases of assertion is to see precisely what it is a statement is *about*. Cf. Strawson, §2 of 'Truth' (1950).

[94] Or we might say 'in virtue of using a declarative sentence '2 + 2 = 5'. I have deviated from orthodoxy in maintaining that a declarative sentence cannot be *used* non-assertively (e.g. as a complex name).

[95] I should point out here not just the difference between primary and secondary concepts but that the secondary concept is derivative of the primary. This point is developed clearly in both K. Wiredu (1975) and K. Wiredu's "Truth: The Correspondence Theory of Judgment," (1987)

[96] The idea presented here, which I do not develop, may be found in Kwasi Wiredu, op. cit., (1973), and *Philosophy and an African Culture* (1980).


[97] Where '*p*' stands for a declarative sentence.

[98] I pursue this idea in a later discussion on the idea of relative truth.

[99] We may suppose that a commitment remains in force unless or until a person withdraws the assertion that carries it.

[100] This point will have implications for a later discussion of relativism.

[101] See Wiredu, 1975

[102] For clarification of what these advantages are, see my previous discussion of assertion in Ch. II, p. 50

[103] Precisely in what way a truth-value is identified with a point of view is explained on the next page.

[104] See Chapter V, p.114

[105] A. N. Prior *Objects of Thought*

[106] Ibid.

[107] See Chapter II.

[108] *Truth and Predication* (2001)

[109] In the context of Russell's later philosophy of mind, judgment so conceived was referred to as a 'propositional action'.

[110] Griffin suggests that such a relegation would demand an account of the "propositional action" of the mind (*Terms, Relations, Complexes*).

[111] There is good evidence that suggests Davidson's one views fail to recognize this point. Davidson's theory of truth does not, e.g., account for the logical aspect of assertion for reasons having to do with the fact that Davidson intends his theory of truth to serve also as a theory of meaning in a unique way. In light of the role that interpretation plays in this theory of meaning, the theory of truth then is supposed to describe the "critical core of speakers' actual and potential linguistic behavior – in effect how the speaker intends his utterances to be interpreted." (Davidson, 2001). Davidson further claims: "There is one intention not touched on by a theory of truth which a speaker must intend an interpreter to perceive: the *force* of an utterance." (emphasis added). Here, Davidson understands, as Russell did before him, assertoric force to be primarily *psychological*. I

have argued in "Frege an Russell on Assertion" how this construal is liable to error. Davidson later claims, "An interpreter must, if he is to understand a speaker, be able to tell whether an utterance is intended as a joke, an assertion, an order, a question, and so forth. I do not believe there are rules or conventions that govern this essential aspect of language. It is something that language users ca n convey to hearers and hearers can often enough detect…" He therefore concludes: "I believe there are sound reasons for thinking that nothing like a serious theory is possible concerning this dimension of language."

[112] I refer to Griffin's article, 'Terms, Relations, Complexes', in which he discusses the views of Russell's unpublished manuscript.


[113] The act of passing judgment in the case described here would yield a judgment that fails to fall, in C. I. Lewis's phrase, under a "mood of entertainment." (*Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*)

[114] Griffin, 2001.

117 *Russell* (London: Routledge, 1979)

[118] MacFarlane, "Making Sense of Relative Truth" (2005)

[119] It is performative in something like the sense in which Strawson understood the uses of the words "is true," but it is not redundant.

[120] I follow the analysis given in Wiredu's "The Correspondence Theory of Judgment" (1981). The structure of the expression may be represented as follows: T<T$p$>, in the case that "is true" is predicated of a (complete) proposition; F<T$p$> in the case that "is false" is predicated of a (complete) proposition.

[121] I borrow the term from Wiredu. See "The Correspondence Theory of Judgment"

[122] The latter being an affirmative or negative determination with respect to a judgeable content. See, "The Correspondence Theory of Judgment"

[123] According to Wiredu, a judgeable content (what he calls an "ideational content) may be represented more formally as a truth-functional variable in a classical logic. While I cannot here discuss the specifics of this suggested interpretation of propositional content, I use the upper and lower-case letters as Wiredu does in order to distinguish between *statement* and *judgeable content*.

[124] I will use 'judgeable' content and 'propositional' content synonymously throughout.

[125] I say the same "kind" in order to distinguish what Russell calls 'positive' and 'negative' forms of predication. See Russell (1905); see also Bernard Linsky, *Russell's Early Metaphysical Logic*

[126] Ibid

[127] We may think of context, e.g., as involving a speaker, world, time and place, which we shall refer to as parameters of the context. Further parameters may in principle be added to this list, such as a standard of justification)

[128] MacFarlane, "Making Sense of Relative Truth," p. 326. There are exceptions, as noted in F. Recanati's *Perspectival Though: A Plea for (Moderate) Relativism* (2007)

[129] Ibid.

[130] "Parameter" is MacFarlane's term and is equivalent to what Kaplan calls the "coordinate" of an index. An index may contain a *world, time, place, and agent* coordinate, ($i = w, t, p, a…$). According to Kaplan, "All these coordinates can be varied,

possibly independently, and thus affect the truth-values of statements which have indirect references to these coordinates." David Kaplan, "Demonstratives" (p. 508) *Themes from Kaplan*, Almog, Wettstein, Perry (eds.) 1989

[131] See Chapter VI, "Moore's Paradox and the Logic of Assertion"

[132] I borrow this term from Max Kolbel.

[133] The idea of an act of asserting as commenting upon an existing assertion may be found in K. Wiredu's "The Correspondence Theory of Judgment" (1980)

[134] See p. 14, "Three Grades of Truth-Relativity"

[135] I paraphrase this, leaving out "and the aesthetic standards of the assessor at" in (b).

[136] The same would apply context-indexicality at $C_U$ and $C_A$. A proposition is said to be assessment-sensitive if its truth-value varies with $C_U$ while $C_A$ remains fixed.

[137] I borrow the phrase, "The one correct standard" from MacFarlane (2001)

[138] See footnote 9.

[139] On MacFarlane's view the context of assessment at which the putative refutation is evaluated by the asserter is privileged, where the asserter is the same speaker at $C_U$ and $C_A$[139]

[140] This example is Max Black's "Saying and Disbelieving," *Analysis* (1952)

[141] Sorensen, R. A., *Blindspots*, (Oxford University Press/Clarendon Press: 1988). Although I find a good deal of Sorensen's discussion to be instructive, my treatment of the paradox diverges significantly at points from his own.

[142] Wolgast, E. H., *Paradoxes of Knowledge* (Ithaca, NY Cornell University Press, 1977)

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