In Memoriam Margo Laasberg

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Margo Laasberg (29.11.1970–13.10.1998) was an Estonian philosopher. He graduated from the University of Tartu in 1994, having studied English as his major subject. He had also studied Philosophy as a "special program" subject (his diploma paper is entitled *Propositional Attitude Sentences: Logical Form and Davidson's Proposals*). Thereafter, Margo started his graduate studies at the Department of Philosophy in Tartu, defending his MA thesis *Events and Adverbial Modification* in December 1996. During his MA studies he spent a term both at the University of Utrecht and at the University of Helsinki. Starting from the spring term of 1997 Margo stayed in Helsinki, enrolling in the Licentiate of Philosophy program at the Department of Philosophy there, being supervised by Gabriel Sandu (then Associate Professor). In the autumn term of 1997 he simultaneously enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy program at the University of Tartu, still mainly staying in Helsinki. In autumn 1998 Margo left Helsinki and began to teach an introductory course in the philosophy of language in Tartu. But in October of that same yearboth his life and his promising philosophical career came to the tragic end.

Margo's first interest in philosophy was the philosophy of language, especially the research program initiated by Donald Davidson. This is witnessed by the topics of his diploma paper and his MA thesis. During the last two years of his life Margo's interests shifted from the philosophy of language in the direction of metaphysics and the philosophy of mind. He also studied extensively the philosophy of Leibniz. His sole finished work on metaphysics is a paper in Estonian, 'Events and Causality'[1] where he defends the "fact theory of events" of Kim and Mellor.

In this issue of *Studia Philosophica Estonica* we publish a paper by Margo, 'Deflationary Truth and Truth-Biology'. The latest version of the paper is dated November 1997 and was written at the University of Helsinki. A different version of the same paper was published in Estonian in 1998[2]. It is quite

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[1] Sündmused ja põhjuslikkus. *Akadeemia*, **10:2** (1998), 330–353.

[2] Deflatsiooniline tõde ja tõebioloogia. In: *Tiidüs ja tõdõ. Märgütüisi / Arutlusi teadusest ja*

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sure that Margo himself was not satisfied with the paper in its present form and would probably not have wished to publish it. This is shown by the fact that soon afterwards he started to write another paper on truth, the surviving version of which is dated early 1998. The later paper is, however, more of an unfinished nature. We have decided to publish 'Deflationary Truth and Truth-Biology' in order to commemorate Margo and to demonstrate his philosophical skills at their peak.

tõest. J. Kangilaski & E. Kasak (eds.). Võru: Võru Instituut, 1998, pp. 135–142.

Deflationary Truth and Truth-Biology

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1. Introduction

Many or almost all writers about truth seem to agree that the entailment by a more or less formal account of truth of all the instances of the so-called disquotational schema

(DQ) ⌜p⌝ is true if and only if p[1]

is at least a necessary condition for this account to count as an adequate account of truth. My first task in this paper is to show that the correctness of the observation (DQ) does not by itself imply that truth lacks substance. My second task is to establish the instances of (DQ) as not only necessary but also sufficient for a characterisation of truth. Such a minimal theory of truth would seem to rob truth of all substance but going in for a more eloquent alternative as I shall attempt to show could result in an unwanted epistemisation of truth. I give the label 'truth-biology' to the epistemisation of the concept of truth on which truth is linked to the justification of beliefs[2] by providing a classification of the truth-conditions of various kinds of expressions according to the different ways the truth of such kinds of expression

[1] There is no denying that the words 'is true' occur in many other kinds of use and that an account of truth must admit of invocation in all such uses. All I wish to maintain that such uses do not constitute what Tarski (1944) calls a criterion of adequacy for an account of truth. I thus ignore theories where it has been shown how (DQ) can be extended, by a suitable system of logic, to other uses of 'is true'.

[2] Whatever I am attributing truth to in what follows, I maintain following David (1994) that all such attributions of truth (to beliefs, propositions, etc.) reduce to the attribution of truth to sentences. Neither do I wish to run up a quarrel with a theorist who attributes truth to utterances of sentences rather than to sentences themselves as long as he agrees with (DQ) even at the cost of renouncing truth for beliefs altogether (Quine is a case in point. He seems to think (Quine 1990) that the bearers of truth and those of justification are different. When a belief is said to be true, truth is predicated of the utterance that is being used to express it at any one particular occasion. When a belief is said to be justified, justification is predicated, roughly, of a class of utterances appropriately similar to the one made on the occasion, as they survive e.g. in the utterer's memory.).

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can come to be known. If my negative remarks I make about truth-biology can be taken to point to a positive doctrine, it would be a non-deflationist substantialism. According to a non-deflationist substantialist the intuitions that are needed and obligatory in an account of truth are restricted to (DQ) but this does not make truth non-substantial. In particular truth is not robbed from relevance to knowledge; it is only that the relevance must be more complicated than suggested by the truth-biologist.

2.

A deflationist about truth infers from the fact that (DQ) is the right intuition about truth that truth lacks substance. The concept of truth is either to be disposed of altogether in favour of a particular connexion between the sentences whereof truth is predicated or can be kept as a formal expedient in reasoning so that truth is not used *within* reasoning even though the words 'is true' appear on the surface of the language. The former is the position of Grover et al. (1975), the latter the position of Horwich (1990). I have chosen here to examine the position of Horwich because Grover as well as Field (1994) seem to run into trouble on account of their appeal to substitutional quantification. Substitutional quantification, even if restricted to sentences, promises trouble for its proponent already at the disquotational stage. Accept, to begin with, the deflationist thesis that there is no substantial account of truth, only a formal theory—a logical theory. The next step is to ignore the relationship between truth and consequence, perhaps by maintaining that the concept of *logical* consequence allows to cast light on the ordinary, non-logical concept of truth. A non-substitutionalist deflationist can now maintain that (DQ) amounts to just the requirement that when the sentence represented by the sentence letter p is represented by a formula ϕ in a logical system and the name of the sentence represented, 'p', by the structural-descriptive name $\ulcorner\phi\urcorner$ of the formula ϕ and the words 'is true' by the predicate T, $T\ulcorner\phi\urcorner$ and ϕ are logical consequences of each other. A substitutionalist on the other hand seems to run into trouble because the '*iff*' in 'For all substitution instances of ϕ, $T\ulcorner\phi\urcorner$ *iff* ϕ' would seem to warrant her in no more than saying that the two formulae flanking '*iff*' are interderivable. This, if true, also entails that the two are logical consequences of each other but not the contrary. It is the usefulness of logical consequence as casting light on the everyday concept of truth that must go, a thesis for which it is not altogether easy to argue.

A deflationist theory of truth demands a strong theory of meaning not itself heavily relying on the concept of truth. According to the deflationist, to understand an expression is to know what it means, and the truth of a sentential expression or its conditions may not play a substantial role in such

knowledge. Paul Horwich (1995) complements his minimalism, a form of deflationism about truth where no appeal is made to substitutional quantification, with a use theory of meaning. The meaning of an expression is the way in which it is used. He proceeds to use his theory to develop a theory of truth based on the thesis that meaning is truth-conditional, i.e. the thesis that to provide the meaning of an expression it is necessary but not necessarily sufficient to provide its truth conditions if the expression is a sentence (representing a closed formula), its extension if it represents a predicate and its reference if it represents an argument of a predicate. The meaning associated with a sentence is the empirical regularity of its use. Such regularities, however, are not what primarily matters to correct use, i.e. the knowledge of meanings. They are themselves rooted in the more basic regularities between the use and the reference of singular or general terms within a sentential expression. The contexts in which things can be truly predicated of trees, for example, do not come to acquire much importance as long as the meaning of the expression 'tree' consists in the regularity involving on the one hand the use of an inscription of 'tree' by the writers of English and on the other hand, trees. But one can also work from truth to meaning rather than the other way round on the assumption that a theory of meaning and a theory of truth are mutually supportive. It is not only open to someone who wants to criticise the deflationist theory of truth to attack the deflationist account of truth by proposing a theory of meaning with which it is incompatible, e.g. a theory of meaning where a version of the Context Principle—the view that the meaning of an expression depends on the ways how its contributes toward the ways how the totality of the expressions surrounding it can mean this or that—is given a prominent position.[3] He can also proceed directly to the account of truth itself. This is how I propose to proceed.

On the minimalist theory the regularity of use theory of meaning suffices to deflate truth. Once the regularities governing the use of an expression ϕ have been stated for all expressions ϕ in the language within a theory of meaning, no further task is left over for truth except as a convenient device for asserting many or very many expressions out of the collection of the sounds that qualify by the regularities obtaining between sounds and things in the world as sentential expressions. The theory of meaning suffices for the substantial task, to provide, possibly by recursion, the list of regularities governing the use of such expressions. The regularity of use theory of meaning

[3] Horwich's theory of meaning is behavioristic, made up of facts about behaviour linked by (strict) regularities. For someone whose primary concern is finding flaws in the theory of meaning it is open to argue as Kripke does in his (Kripke 1982, Ch. 2) that behavioral facts are insufficient to ground future use, or at least to ground future use as a matter of strict regularity.

together with the doctrine of the relatedness of meaning to truth-conditions, however, leaves open an avenue of escape for the anti-deflationist. On the regularity of use theory of meaning, "ϕ' means that ϕ because 'ϕ' is regularly used in connection with ϕ's'[4] holds for all expressions ϕ. But this schema as a general statement is as empty about the meaning of any particular sentence as a statement of Newton's second law of motion, $F = ma$, is about the mass and acceleration of any particular moving body. The reason is that the regularity schema does not presuppose a language to which ϕ's should belong. Rather the regularities behind the use of expressions taken collectively, even if discovered a priori, constitute the belonging of those expressions to a language. The derived truth schema "p' is true if and only if…' is likewise empty—languageless—whether or not there is a "substantial" filling for '…', i.e. a filling different from p itself. The deflationist under consideration certainly agrees that *both* meaning and truth are empty in that sense of 'emptiness'. A theory of meaning alone, i.e. the characterisation of meaning with the help of the schema just provided no more allows to deduce the meanings of all expressions or of all sentences of a language than mechanics allows to deduce the trajectories of all the bodies of a system without any description whatsoever being given of the system itself. Such emptiness derives from the schematic form of the truths involved and has nothing to do with their substantiality or non-substantiality in the sense relevant to the debate about truth.

Secondly, the theory of meaning, when in fact provided with a suitable input, allows to match the expression 'ϕ' with ϕ's. The result is a useful classification of the expressions, useful because it allows to constitute them as expressions by establishing a regularity.[5] On the acceptance of the Weak Context Principle—the principle that the meaning of a subsentential expression is constituted by the meanings of the sentences in which it occurs, in opposition to the Strong Context Principle that says that the meaning of any one sentence in the language is further constituted by the totality of sentences—the language—in which it occurs—a meaning-theory would segregate a sub-

[4] 'In connection with' is vague, but let us assume that this is the right place to match vagueness with vagueness.

[5] Again, let it be left open whether the regularity in question is a physical regularity. In fact things do not seem to stand this way. First, there is the difficulty about what physical matter of fact can correspond to sentences. If that is thought to be made up of just the physical matters of fact corresponding to its parts, those sentence part-world regularities could at best be viewed as criterial to F's meaning F. It is at best criterial to my meaning bears by the tokens of 'bear', for example, that I would utter 'bear' if I saw a bear, for in fact I may never have seen one. Again, a further question is whether an answer ot this question is to be tied to my ability to recognise a bear when I see one. I may be able to do so yet never have seen any, or any pictures of bears etc.

set of (would-be) German sentences as '*Kopf*'-sentences because there is a regularity between inscriptions containing the expression '*Kopf*' and heads. The deflationist assertion is that no such useful regularity can be provided for truth. No useful regularity is involved, for example, in "…*Kopf* ___' *ist wahr gdw.* …*Kopf* ___', or, for that matter, "…head ___' is true if and only if …head ___' beyond that already involved in the meaning theory for (would-be) German (or would-be English). That is to say, there is no classification of sentences in the truth theory corresponding to the classification of sentences in meaning theory allowing to segregate e.g. '*Kopf*'-sentences from '*Apfel*'-sentences.

Because of the very great discriminative power of the regularity of use theory of meaning let me call it meaning-physics. Such discriminative power accrues to the meaning theory because the classification provided there of expressions allows to ground regularities among the use of expressions as finely as meanings can be distinguished by intuition. In the same way, physics allows to assign to any two given objects different properties if any of their (in principle) sensible characteristics—trajectory, speed, etc. are different. From the richness of detail of a theory of meaning, however, it does not follow that no classification at all can be provided of the expressions of a language within a theory of truth. One very simple way to do this is to provide the classification of all sentences of a language according to the way in which they can be justified, or come to be known. Suppose a sentence to be justified if it has come to be known in a reliable way. Classification according to justification would then yield "natural kinds" represented e.g. by the following sorts of sentence: "The apple is red' is true if and only if the apple is red' or "Tom is digging the ground' is true if and only if Tom is digging the ground', etc.; "Two plus two makes four' is true if and only if two plus two makes four' or "Every map can be non-overlappingly coloured in four colours' is true if and only if every map can be non-overlappingly coloured in four colours', etc. ; "A city will never be built here' is true if and only if a city will never be built here' or "Every natural number has a successor' if and only if every natural number has a successor' etc. *Such an account of truth is non-trivially substantial* since, if e.g. the truth of 'Tom is digging the ground', the truth of 'Two plus two makes four' etc. do not come to take on common substance, they seem to be coming to take on at least common kinds of substance relative to other assertions of their respective sorts. This theory is a truth-biology rather than a truth-physics because the classification resulting from distinguishing between sentences on the basis of justification is so much less powerful than a classification afforded by a regularity-of-use theory of meaning. The truth-classes, including expressions very dissimilar by any measure except truth itself, allow to draw a much smaller amount of dis-

tinctions than the meaning-classes. But truth-biology is powerful enough to prevent the deflationist theory from turning non-minimalist, since nothing in the disquotational schema taken by itself precludes its use for truth-biological purposes.

A second reason for thinking that the disquotational schema is empty besides the confusion of non-trivial non-substantiality ((DQ) leaves no room for a substantial analysis of truth) with trivial non-substantiality ((DQ) itself does not suggest any particular analysis[6]) seems to be this. For any instance of the disquotational schema in any language, the understanding that it is an instance of the disquotational schema already presupposes an understanding of the counterpart of 'is true' in this language. To understand an instance of "*Der Apfel ist rot' ist wahr gdw. der Apfel rot ist*', for example, the speaker of (a suitably qualified idiolect of) English must already know that '*ist wahr*' means the same as 'is true' (Arguably, he cannot understand that unless he understood the whole of German). Since to understand a language is to know the meaning of its expressions and the understanding of the disquotational schema presupposes the understanding of the counterpart, in that language, of the English 'is true', truth, insofar as all there is to say about it is captured in the disquotational schema, truth must be a non-substantial concept. But a truth-biology could be built on the distinction between the different ways the truth of an antecedently understood sentence could come to be known as a theory of meaning could be developed from considerations of distinctions of meaning within a language already understood.

I think that truth-biology is internally incoherent. An account of truth cannot be derived from an account of the different uses of 'is true' insofar as the words 'is true' remain the same throughout. The different contexts that these words take cannot be constitutive of *different* kinds of truth because, insofar as can be gleaned from the words 'is true' occurring by themselves, such an account must be uniform. At least such uniformity guides the student of truth in his attempt at a uniform account, for if this uniformity of use, as embodied in the Principle of Disquotation, does not do so, what else can? It cannot be a constitutive characteristic of the notion of truth that it can be attained in such and such ways, for nothing in the concept of truth itself would seem to delimit the range of the ways in which it can be accessed. On a correspondence account of truth, say, the truth of a sentence is viewed as the correspondence of sentences or propositions to the world or to facts. But on such a characterisation of truth it is not obligatory to specify how it could ever be come to known that such correspondence obtains, i.e. how such a correspondence is accessed. The involvement of epistemological is-

[6] (DQ) can suggest an analysis if truth is indexed to a language (the 'is true' in DQ is to be read as 'is true in this language') but this view has difficulties of its own. See p.10 below.

sues in providing the identity conditions for propositions and facts indeed seems to have become, due to the confusion just noted, a major obstacle to the success of the correspondence account of truth. The distortedness of the truth-biological point of view in correspondence theory as elsewhere does not preclude giving a substantial account of truth. The existence of propositions or facts may well turn out a metaphysical necessity, and a substantial description of them, hence of truth as attaching to them, can be provided. Epistemological considerations enter not directly, as in a truth-biology, but via the circumstance that the epistemological circumstances of the creatures that grasp and describe truth (the concept of knowledge not being applicable to these circumstances unless it is assumed that things could be observed as it were from outside one's own language) are such as to render such a metaphysics intelligible. Suppose, for example, that a metaphysics is provided in terms of properties or in terms of causation. Such a metaphysics stands as long as it is credible that things can come to be known to have certain properties or instances of causation can be come to be known to obtain although as a matter of fact a knowledge of a thing's having a certain property or an instance of causation's obtaining never is known because, say, the evidence for the presence of the property or the obtaining of the instance is inconclusive. Or suppose there is a best theory and an ontology determined by it. It does not at all follow that truth within this theory is somehow underdetermined by the different ways how the truths of this theory could come to be known. That the truths of this theory are in fact known suffices for the purposes of giving an account of truth.

Although the deflationist account has been shown dubious because compatible with a truth-biology there is no reason, if the considerations just advanced are correct, why a substantial account of truth distinct from truth-minimalism could not be provided. Such an account of truth must contain a non-minimal element. This element is the grounding of truth in such a way as to preclude the turning of the account of truth into a truth-biology. The substantial account is nevertheless 'minimal' insofar as it would not prejudge any one metaphysics that attaches to such an account of truth. It only provides a limit to such a metaphysics, a constraint on the ways in which it can intersect with an epistemology.

3.

Does the fact that deflationism is compatible with a truth-biology entail that the disquotational schema is wrong? Does truth need to be something more than disquotation? As far as the schematic side of truth is concerned, I shall argue, truth not only is restricted but must be restricted to instances of disquotation.

It has been the major argument against the disquotational theory of truth as a comprehensive account of truth that it cannot handle sentences containing demonstratives and indexicals. I think that this task can be managed within a theory of truth without giving up on disquotation.

The requirement to accommodate demonstratives and indexicals seems to have been motivated by two insights. The first insight is the need for the justification, within a theory of truth, of Frege's Context Principle. According to this principle, all sub-sentential independently meaningful expressions obtain their meaning from the meanings of the sentences in which they occur. Their contribution to the truth of any particular sentence is owed to their contribution to the truth of all sentences in which they occur. That this principle is fulfilled for what represents predicates in surface grammar is obvious, since a predicate word is by its nature unsatisfied. Its meaning coincides with the totality of its correctly assignable arguments almost by definition; this totality, taken together with the predicate word itself, just is the "context" from which the predicate word acquires its meaning. E.g. 'red' depends for its meaning and truth-contribution on 'The apple is red', 'The book is red', 'Michael is red', etc. These sentences, if true, list the things or kinds of things that are red. The correctness of the Context Principle appears less obvious for the expressions in the language that represent singular terms (arguments of a predicate) in logic, since these, insofar as satisfied, can occur all by themselves. All of 'The apple', 'The book' and 'Michael', for example, can be understood as they stand.[7] Indexicals such as 'I', 'this', 'now' etc. on the contrary cannot prima facie occur independently. Renouncing them the general status of a genuine representative of a singular term is no good, since the only allowable way to find out what constituent of logical form a word represents is to examine its distribution in the sentences in which it occurs—and this is the same as for the usual representatives of singular terms.[8] It remains to recognise that they acquire their meaning from the context. What a speaker means by 'I', for example, emerges from the sentences, supposing

[7] The distinction between satisfied and unsatisfied expressions again owes more to the definition of the distinction between a word representing a singular term and a predicate-word. As far as untutored intuition is concerned, a predicate word such as 'red' could occur on its own with equal success. If the proposal has not been welcome in this form, however, it does seem to have regarded as a promising opening to drawing a distinction between expressions representing singular terms and expressions representing general terms as based on differences in ways of reference; for example that the former do, while the latter do not, refer directly or rigidly.

[8] The natural objection is that 'someone', 'everyone' etc. also have the same distribution yet cannot be consistently taken to represent a singular term. Such expressions, however, unlike indexicals and demonstratives, can be viewed as unsatisfied expressions (representatives of second-order functions), hence to them the Context Principle will apply naturally.

him to have uttered them, 'I am ill', 'I must have a look at the garden', etc. What a speaker means by 'John' or 'the apple' on the other hand does not seem to depend in the same way on what he means by the rest of his utterances. Considerations on demonstratives show that this latter intuition should not be taken into account in the construction of a theory of meaning or truth, as the vague untutored intuition that terms such as 'red' can occur on their own was rejected to build the distinction between satisfied and unsatisfied terms. Further, if all that counts from the truth theoretical vantage point is the occurrence of an expression in either a satisfied or an unsatisfied position in a sentence, the Context Principle must be proclaimed universally valid. The theory of meaning and truth, where this theory distinguishes expressions only according to their being satisfied or not, cannot consistently fail to be uniform for all unsatisfied expressions as well as for all satisfied expressions. Hence, since one kind of satisfied expression, indexicals and demonstratives, acquire their meanings from the context, then so must all other satisfied expressions. Since the Context Principle already holds for unsatisfied expressions, it now turns out to be universally applicable. Secondly, by providing an account of the truth conditions of (a truth theory for) the sentences that contain indexical or demonstrative expressions an account of truth is invoked to clarify the epistemic relationship between an individual and his surroundings. The thesis that an account of truth must at least display, if not state, the conditions under which an individual who knows the truth conditions of a sentence is also able to track its truth can be considered under two further headings according to how this kind of truth theorist thinks his task is best accomplished. Under the first heading, the theory of truth must account for the ability of a speaker to track the truth of the sentences containing indexicals and demonstratives. For example, a theory of truth must take into account the fact that John Smith, if he uses the word 'I' correctly, uses it to refer to John Smith, John Major to John Major, etc. This transcends the requirements of the Context Principle. For an indexical to depend for its meaning on its context, no more is required than e.g. a token of the expression 'I' should depend for its meaning on the way the hearer or reader of 'I' chooses or happens to think of the utterer or inscriber, possibly coincident with himself. If, for example, John Major chooses to think of himself as the proponent of a bill, his 'I' means 'The proponent of a bill'. In particular, the relationship between his utterances of 'I' and how he thinks of himself (or my utterance of 'you' and how I think of you) is, as far as the Context Principle is concerned, on a completely equal footing with his utterances of 'I' and how *I* who am not identical with him, John Major, happen to think of him, e.g. as the person I saw on TV the other night. Both ways equally contribute to the context on which the meaning of his 'I' depends, i.e.

no way is preferred to another because the Context Principle by itself provides no guidance as to which of the many ways of thinking of John Major should be given preference over others. It suffices to assume that some such way is available to everyone who understands the utterance, by John Major, of 'I am cooking spaghetti'. The Context Principle is silent on whether there is a unique such way, a correct such way, or whether any such way has priority over the others. As a matter of empirical fact, since the most frequent way of thinking of John Major happens to be as of John Major (whereas the most frequent way of thinking of Henry Tudor happens to be as of Henry VIII), 'I am cooking spaghetti' on this occasion perhaps has the same truth conditions for most speakers of English as 'John Major is cooking spaghetti'. In general, for any indexical expression X there will be a non-indexical expression E such that '…X ___' will have the same truth conditions as '…E ___'. Since the disquotational schema holds for all such expressions E there is no further story to be told; i.e. the disquotational schema is not only necessary but also sufficient to do the job required of a theory of truth. Why people happen to think of themselves and others in one particular way rather than another, in particular why John Major sometimes happens to think of himself as John Major (he most likely does so when he is e.g. signing a cheque or called to the chair), remains outside the scope of a theory of truth. Certainly, John Major would not use the expression 'I' correctly unless he at least sometimes thought of himself as John Major—but that according to the Context Principle is not a fact that requires an explanation.[9]

Under the second view of the role of indexical and demonstrative expressions in an account of truth, truth itself must be indexed to a language or to the idiolect of a particular speaker to account, within a theory of truth, for his ability to track it. But predication of truth does not always *indicate*, besides the explicit rendering of the truth conditions of a sentential expression or the truth contribution of a subsentential expression, to which language the sentence whose truth conditions have been provided belongs. For example, 'is true' displays to someone who understands what is being said by the sentence "Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white.' that the sentence whose truth conditions are being given is a sentence of English (or, as a minimum, a sentence in the speaker's idiolect) whereas it does not similarly display to the hearer in question that in "*Schnee ist weiss*' is true if and only if snow is white'. the sentence whose truth conditions are being given is a

[9] I am not sure whether the thrift of this argument is entirely clear. It is not that the Context Principle is correct but that the correctness of the Context Principle does not require a non-homophonic truth theory for (utterances of) sentential expressions containing demonstratives and indexicals. The Context Principle provides no reason to treat demonstratives and indexical in a special way. It provides a good reason not to treat them in this way.

sentence of German (or a sentence in the idiolect of someone whose speech is close enough to standard German usage), i.e. that the truth predicated is truth-in-German. On further examination this lack of indicative power also holds for a disquotational theory of truth because, as far as the truth of a sentence is concerned, it does not matter in which language the fact that this is so is expressed. "*Schnee is weiss*' *ist wahr gdw. Schnee weiss ist*' and "Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white', for example, have the same content even though '*ist wahr*' combined with the disquotational schema indicates that the sentence whose truth conditions are being given belongs to German and 'is true' similarly indicates that the sentence whose truth conditions are being given belongs to English. This is not so on this second type of theory of truth. On such a theory an index is required to keep track of the language or idiolect from which the sentence whose truth conditions are being specified has been borrowed. Thus 'true' as it occurs in "Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white' would mean 'true in this idiolect' (or 'true in this language'). The locution 'true in this idiolect' is then used to build up an account of truth-tracking. Error in tracking the truth is accounted for by the circumstance of the possible non-overlapping of different individual or language-wide concepts of truth. Since the individual concepts of truth need not entirely overlap either with each other or with some uniform concept of truth implicitly accepted across the community (as a totality of habits of use recorded for any particular idiolect by the Schema T, e.g. as a totality of habits to use 'snow is white' if and only if snow is white; such a concept of truth presumably is *the* concept of truth) it does not suffice for an individual to track the truth to merely think that he is doing so. The implication of replacing "Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white' with "Snow is white' is true in this idiolect if and only if snow is white' or "Snow is white' is true in this language if and only if snow is white', for example, is that the latter presupposes, while the former does not, a particular way of being right or mistaken. The way seems to be this. The words 'Snow is white', once truth in some idiolect or language can be predicated of them, express a belief. This belief is true in an idiolect or true in a language. It could, however, be false simpliciter, or, what seems to be suggested the opposition willy-nilly built up by drawing a distinction between truth in an idiolect and truth simpliciter, false somehow *sub specie aeternitatis*. Be it as it may with a superlunary conception of truth *simpliciter* forced on the truth theorist by his indexing of truth to a language (an idiolect), the motivation for such indexing clearly is to provide a theory about the relationship between the individual or the community and his or their environment. We are back at a truth-biology, this time at an externalist one, of characterising an individual as a truth-tracker (a matcher of truth in his idiolect with truth in general). Such an

account may fail as a truth-biology, since, for example, while belief is plausibly required to be made veridical, the account in question only allows to turn belief veridical within some idiolect or language. The main objection to the indexing theory of truth, however, is that it is a species of truth-biology. While at first the grounding of an account of truth in an account of truth in a language[10] seemed to be the only alternative to grounding truth in kinds of justification, such an account has now itself ended up in grounding truth in justification. There is no denying on the disquotational or any other theory of truth that language is an activity, a form of life, and talk of truth does not make sense without some account of such forms of life. It only is questionable whether an account of truth should be bound up with an account of the appropriateness to these forms of life to the world or the environment. It is seen as a virtue rather than a vice of the disquotational schema that it does not prejudge the validity of any one such account.

Apart from its truth-biological connotations the indexing account appears somewhat unusual in the face of usual practices of translation. "Snow is white' *ist wahr gdw. der Schnee weiss ist*', for example, does seem to count as a perfectly legitimate translation of English "Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white'. That 'is true' here goes into '*ist wahr*' suggests that the concept involved must be the same. On the other hand, hardly anyone would debate the concept of truth as truth within a theory, whether or not "the theory" is taken to be a theory in the strict sense of mathematical logic, and language identified with the total theory. It seems that truth in such a total theory is not the same as truth in an idiolect. Suppose that my idiolect is extended by my coming to know that '*Schnee ist weiss*' translates, in my idiolect, as 'Snow is white', to be rendered according on an account that identifies truth with truth in an idiolect, by my coming to know that '*Schnee ist weiss*' is true if and only if snow is white. My idiolect is extended by the expression '*Schnee ist weiss*' because I now know what it means. But this extension is not accompanied by any extension in a total theory, whether my total theory, to be identified with the totality of my beliefs, or a more general total theory.[11] The traditional way to overcome this difficulty is to provide my beliefs themselves with superindividual criteria of identity by arguing,

[10] I assume the existence here for the sake of simplicity of a common language, just to take the naive view for granted. Nothing that I argue for here presupposes a further or preferred explanation of this simple datum.

[11] The argument, again, is this: (i) no-one's idiolect can represent a *theory* insofar as there are ways of extending one's idiolect that are not ways of extending one's knowledge—even all of a person's knowledge is *brought to bear* in such extensions of one's idiolect; (ii) no-one's idiolect, even if it did represent a theory, can represent his *total* theory, since for the concept of a 'total theory' to be of any use the total theory must be something he can share with other speakers otherwise than by way of mere agreement.

for example, that they supervene on what the world is like. Since the world is as it is quite independently from anyone's possession of a particular set of beliefs, it is reasonable to assume that it is as it is for all knowers in the same way. Any one individual's beliefs come to be part of a broader total theory. Given this connection between knowers and what is known truth is as well predicated of those beliefs, expressed in an idiolect, instead of the expressions of the total theory couched in a super-individual language. The alternative, however, is a genuine one insofar as the approximation between language and theory can be carried out to a lesser or greater degree. When language is regarded as genuinely super-individual it can be identified with the total theory rather than as something that can be used to build up the total theory but by no means identical with it. Language on such a view would represent a means for an individual's schooling itself into the total theory. Someone's coming to understand quantum mechanics, for example, can be understood as such a development in the vocabulary of his idiolect as would allow him to come to understand quantum mechanics, to come to know the meaning of quantum-mechanical terms. If truth is to be thought of as truth in such a language, then certainly the concept of truth cannot be divorced from the concept of coming to know. The coming to know of things in its turn can only be by justification of beliefs as expressed in one's idiolect by treating the expressions in one's idiolect, for example, as assumptions subject to verification. Truth-biology is obtained when truth in a total theory (truth in the common language) comes to be treated on a par with truth in an idiolect. The identification of truth in an idiolect with truth in a language depends on the unwarranted if not incorrect assumption that the claims of the total theory are justified in much the same way as the claims of the speaker of an idiolect. But this need not bear any resemblance to an idiolect as to its epistemology. First, although the concept of truth clearly is applicable to the total theory, as witness the universal applicability of the disquotational schema there is no such thing as coming to know the total theory. The total theory is if anything like a screen on which knowledge claims in different idiolects are projected. The way how any one speaker of an idiolect comes to justify his knowledge claims is different from the way how claims come to be established as part of a total theory.[12] When on the other hand truth is viewed as truth in an idiolect, then it is quite meaningful to pose to the

[12] To be sure, the truth of such claims must transcend mere consensus or agreement concerning their truth, for otherwise an analogy can be established between truth in an idiolect and truth in a total theory. Claims within the total theory would as claims in an idiolect be subject to justification and differ from the latter only as to their *method* of justification. As the intuitions against truth as consensus are very strong, I conclude that no useful parallel can be drawn between the total theory and the idiolect concerning justification.

pretender to truth the question of warrant.

An objection could be made here that noone could come to know of the existence of such a total theory as opposed to the existence of an idiolect. For, arguably, all of us can only come to know things privately, via their idiolect. In this coming to know of things they are aided by whatever they have in common. In my coming to know the meaning of 'red', for example, I rely in certain ways on the fact that I am made up in much the same way as the creatures whose language I learn.[13] How else could we both mean red by 'red'—how could any of us come to know the meaning of 'red', for that matter—than by being tied up to red things in the same way. We are both able to see red, for example, i.e. be seeing-related to a red thing. To the extent that I know in a way accessible to myself that things are thus and so, i.e. am capable of making assertions about them, I know that I have a language, for how else can I know that things are thus and so. But this warrants only as little as the recognition of the existence of an idiolect. I propose that I can also come to know of the existence of a total theory, i.e. of the existence of the screen of truth to which my assertions are projected. This is by the concept, not only of truth, but also of contradiction, coherence and proof. That is to say, the total theory is considered as a repository of the conceptual means that I use to justify the truth-claims in my idiolect, for if they derived from my idiolect they would themselves be in need of the same kind of justification. If so, however, the claims to truth *simpliciter* I make within my idiolect would lack a normative force altogether, that is to say, it is not clear why the disquotational schema and other truth-related schemas have the force of a law or a prescription. I could not tell, for example, why two English sentences, A and Not: A must contradict each other with at least as strong a necessity as people's having been made up the same way (in a world they all inhabit, to be sure) is necessary to their knowledge of meanings.

Let me digress on another conceivable use of indexing truth to language, anti-Platonism about thought and meaning. It would seem that nothing as strong as the indexing of truth to a language is required to establish it. According to anti-Platonism about thought and meaning, on no account of these two notions can there be thoughts or meanings apart from, respectively, a thinker or a language. Anti-Platonism presupposes the existence of *some* thinker or *some* language as a precondition of the intelligibility of the concept of meaning or of thought. Similarly, for an account of truth

[13] Those who oppose this view by contending, for example, that someone's brain could be run entirely on chips and still be a brain seem to fail to notice that the very grounds for calling something a brain is that the thing in question is wired up to other things much as the human brain is wired up to other parts of the human body, and that it works in the same way as (other) brains work in (other) humans.

where truth is taken to be the property of expressions in a language rather than of the thoughts of a thinker so that the anti-Platonism associated with truth takes the form of assuming the existence of at least one language rather than the existence of at least one thinker, it is indifferent what the existing language is. If so, truth cannot be an abstraction from, what is common to, truth-in-English, truth-in-German etc., since all these concepts of truth in L are indexical on L: truth-in-English is indexical on English etc. Such an account of truth may be independently defensible, but it is not necessary to establish an anti-Platonism. To establish an anti-Platonism it would be enough to provide an account of truth that presupposes the existence of some language but does not presuppose the existence of any particular one of them. This is already well captured by the disquotational schema whose very formulability requires the existence of a language. It suffices to stipulate that the disquotational schema should record an essential property of the concept of truth.

A possible objection to the resolute rejection undertaken above of truth-biology is that truth is thereby made independent of *access* to truth, i.e. that a sentence's being true or false does not depend at all on the ability of a speaker to recognise it as such. This is not so, however. As far as the *evidence* for the truth of, say, 'Ceramic pots were made in county M around 10 BC' or 'World War Two was won by the allies' is concerned it must make possible a justified utterance of 'Look, the women are making ceramic pots' in county M two thousand years ago or a justified utterance of 'We have won!' by a trustful representative of the Allied Forces on May 9th, 1945. However, the question of the presence of such an observer and such a representative is irrelevant to the question of the truth or intelligibility of such knowledge-claims. It is not being suggested that access to truth could be had independently from evidence. All that is being said is that an account of the ways truth is accessed is irrelevant to an account of truth—although truth certainly cannot be accessed independently from evidence.

4.

What positive support can be provided for the view that to provide an account of truth it suffices to provide an account of the instances of the disquotational schema? All that has been shown so far is that the account is sufficiently general, since the disquotational schema holds irrespective of language, and the truth predicated within it is truth, not truth in a language. There is no danger, for example, that the giving of all instances of '$\ulcorner S \urcorner$ is

true if and only if S' yields no more than an account of truth-in-English.[14] It yields an account of truth, in English. As to the indexical sentences, the disquotational schema will suffice because it is a necessary prerequisite to the understanding, say, of 'I am ill', to understand a sentence of the form 'ϕ is ill' where ϕ does not contain 'I' or any other indexicals or demonstratives. All such sentences taken together constitute the necessary and sufficient condition for the understanding of an utterance of 'I am ill'; 'I am ill' will have the same truth conditions as such a collection. *The disquotational schema can be used to account for the truth conditions of 'I am ill' as long as it can be used to account for the truth conditions of such a collection*, e.g. of the truth conditions of 'John Major is ill', 'the British Prime Minister is ill', etc. Since the collection does not contain any indexicals or demonstratives—the only demonstrative involved in 'I am ill' is 'I', and it has been subjected to a paraphrase.

The remaining debate, within a disquotational theory of truth itself, is about the formal rendering of the disquotational schema. I propose to take here as the guiding principle that, since to formulate the disquotational schema is to provide a language and the truth conditions of all the sentences of a language have been given if the truth conditions have been given for any one of them, to provide a theory of truth—a theory specifying the truth conditions of all the sentences of an arbitrarily chosen language—it suffices to provide the truth conditions of any one sentence in the language. Once the language is in place it is required that the recursive definition underlying the disquotational schema must put together identicals with identicals, i.e. the right-hand side and the left-hand side of the biconditional representing truth must coincide except for the quotes on the left-hand side. The disquotational schema turns out to be meaning-giving in the following sense. It must be assumed that the giving of the truth conditions of all the sentences of an arbitrarily chosen language results in giving the meaning of all the sentences of the language. The disquotational pairing of sentences can then be taken to result from the simple fact that any two sentences that differ in syntactic shape can differ in meaning; thus to provide the truth conditions of the sentences of a language is, as it happens, also to put together sentences with the same meanings (every sentence must mean the same as itself, although some sentences in the language may mean (and do mean) something dif-

[14] I confess to not being able to give a sound answer how Tarskian truth theory could be of help unless the relationship between the predicate represented by the predicate-word 'is true' and the predicate represented by the predicate-word 'is true-in-L' is different from the relationship between the respective predicate-words themselves. In particular, one predicate could legitimately be viewed as a generalisation of the other whereas truth, for the reasons indicated cannot be viewed as a generalisation of truth in a particular language. The latter relationship is rather one of extrapolation.

ferent than any given sentence). To achieve this aim in any language L, the connective 'iff' in "*p*' is true iff *p*' must be viewed as a 'same-meaning-giving' or as a 'strong' connective, in opposition to the 'weak', 'truth-functional' connective. That is to say, it is proposed to paraphrase the informal locution '⌜*P*⌝ is true if and only if *P*' as 'T(⌜*p*⌝) iff *p*' where '*p*' as opposed to '*P*' represents a formula in a canonical notation. Supposing a recursive characterisation of the substitutes for *p* to have been given, the only remaining problem is to provide a formal explanation of the strong connective 'iff'. Considerations of holism about meaning and truth suggest that this can be done by providing a paraphrase of the strong connective 'iff' in terms of the ordinary, truth-functional connective *iff*:

(EQ) '*T*(⌜*p*⌝) iff *p*' *iff* ((*p* ∈ L & ('T(⌜*p*⌝) *iff p*')) and (Πq)('⌜*q*⌝ is true' ∈ L *iff* ⌜*q*⌝ ∈ L))[15]

where L is the paraphrase, in a first-order canonical notation, of a total theory.

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[15] The definition (EQ) of the meaning-giving connective invokes substitutional quantification. It use there is harmless insofar as (DQ) is not a proposal to analyse truth in terms of substitutional quantification.