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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE ANALYSIS OF TRUTH . . . . .	1
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">A Propositional Theory of Truth Two Ordinary-Language Analyses Implications for the Analysis of Truth</p>	
II. MEANING AS USE: WORDS AND RULES . . . . .	28
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">The "Meaning of a Word" "Use" Function and Purpose Conventions and Meaning-as-Possibility Rules of Use Prescriptive and Descriptive Rules Rules: Theory and Practice The Nature of Word-meaning</p>	
III. MEANING AS USE: SENTENCES AND ACTION . . . . .	52
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">Sentences as Meanings Sentences: Function and Form Sentences: Use and Action Language-games and Actions Language-games and Basic Activities Conclusion: Sentences and Meaning</p>	
IV. THE PHILOSOPHIC PROBLEM OF TRUTH . . . . .	80
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">Some Formulations of the Problem Method and the Nature of Philosophic Problems Philosophic Problem of Truth</p>	
V. ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH . . . . .	97
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">That which is True or False Truth-games and Truth-claims Language-games and Truth-games Meaning, Truth and the Concept of a Proposition Truth and Function</p>	
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	125

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE ANALYSIS OF TRUTH

This study is an examination of the problem of truth within the context of the "use" view of meaning. In this chapter will be outlined briefly my reasons for thinking that such a study is desirable. I shall discuss two types of analysis of the problem, a "propositional" theory and two "ordinary language" theories, and argue briefly that they are not entirely adequate for dealing with all aspects of the problem of truth. Concluding the chapter is an outline of the manner in which the problem is to be pursued in the remaining chapters.

Throughout the entire study two principles will be taken as given--(1) that the meaning of a word is its use, and (2) that philosophic problems are conceptual problems. Chapters II through V thus constitute an exercise in analytic philosophy as delimited by these two principles. Both of these principles, however, although treated as axiomatic, are themselves interpreted. That is, they are not treated as proved propositions whose proof is assumed along with them, but, rather, as specifying a type of philosophic approach that is open to more than one interpretation, one of which is developed in this study.

The analysis of truth given in the last chapter is therefore the result of a philosophic exercise that has taken as its limiting principles these two views, one concerning the nature of word-meaning and one concerning the nature of philosophy itself.

A Propositional Theory of Truth

Exposition

In Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus<sup>1</sup> statements are held to be ultimately analyzable into simple statements that correspond to simple facts. If the simple facts are actual, existent facts, then the statement is true. If they are merely logically possible facts, and are not actually existent, then the statement is false.

The possible fact corresponding to a sentence constitutes the meaning of the sentence and the actual fact, if there is one, establishes its truth. The possible fact is called a "proposition," and thus: proposition = meaning of a sentence = possible fact. The actual or existent fact, on the other hand, cannot be said to be the truth of the proposition but, rather, the correspondence of an actual fact with a possible one establishes that the proposition is true.

What has meaning is what it is possible (permissible) to say, that is, what is correlated with possibilities of facts. Whether a sentence expresses possible facts must be determined by whether it may be asserted to be true or false. That something may be true or false is essential to its meaning something.

The word "Satz" in the English translation of the Tractatus is translated "proposition," the logical term, but it also may be translated "sentence," the grammatical term. Wittgenstein is not using the term ambiguously, though, since he considers the sentence to be "essentially," i.e., logically, reducible to the proposition.

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<sup>1</sup>Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922).

The truth-values of propositions are determined by the truth-values of their constituent elementary propositions. The sense or meaning of all propositions depends upon the sense of elementary propositions. So, the Tractatus begins with a discussion of the relationship between names and things, since it holds the meanings of names to be elements of the sense of elementary propositions.

Names are viewed as having things ("objects") for their meanings, and are combined together in sentences in such a way as to reflect or project the combination of "objects" into "facts." The "object" is the meaning of the name, and the "fact" is the sense of the proposition. ("Meaning" is limited in the Tractatus to a special relation between name and object, the relation of naming. To speak of the "meaning" of sentences requires another word, "sense." This removes the ambiguity of "meaning," which is quite different for a word and a sentence, and this difference is indicated by the use of the two terms.)

The sense of a sentence is said to show itself in the sentence. The meaning of a name can be shown by putting it in sentences which, however, cannot be themselves understood until the name, as well as each of the other constituent names, is known to mean a particular object. To know that a proposition has sense, then, depends upon knowing that particular objects are meanings of its particular names.

If we had before us an unanalyzable, primitive, elementary proposition, its elements would be names. If we also had before us the fact pictured by the proposition, we would be able to correlate its objects with the names composing the proposition. Since the sentence reflects the particular fact, it has a structure in common with it. Now, every object in the fact has a logical form that is internal to it and that

determines all the possibilities of its combination into facts. The object, however, determines only the "form" of the facts it enters into. That is, it itself only determines which facts it may enter into, not those into which it actually does enter.

The names of objects accordingly cannot, through their syntactical limitations, tell anything about which elementary propositions are in fact true; they can tell only which elementary propositions are possible. These possibilities of syntax are possibilities of facts. The truth of propositions lies in the existence of facts, while the form of facts, their logical structure, constitutes merely the possibility of facts.

In this way, this propositional theory avoids saying that a sentence has meaning in virtue of an actual state of affairs with which it is correlated, i.e., that to mean something it must be true. The sense of a sentence is only the possible fact it "mirrors" (or "shows forth").

Propositions have a common form--the "general form of proposition,"  $[\bar{p}, \bar{\xi}, N(\bar{\xi})]$ , and a common material--elementary, unanalyzable propositions. Their meaning is thus dependent upon the nature of the meaning of elementary propositions (correlation with "facts") and on the nature of the meaning of compound propositions (sharing the common logical/grammatical structure of compound propositions). Their truth depends upon their having a meaning--i.e., being a possible fact, and there being an actual, existent fact corresponding to it.

### Critique

This propositional theory connects meaning and truth through the concept of a "proposition," which may be defined both as (1) "the meaning

of a sentence," and (2) "that which is true or false." The theory offers an explanation of how these two concepts are equivalent.

In this section will be discussed very briefly, first, how the Tractatus concept of a proposition as "the meaning of a sentence" would seem to be incompatible with a view of meaning as use, and second, how the Tractatus concept of a proposition as "that which is true or false" and the related correspondence type of theory of truth also would seem to be incompatible with a view of meaning as use.

The Tractatus theory of meaning is incompatible with a use view of meaning in at least two fundamental ways: (1) in respect to words as names, and (2) in respect to sentences as sharing the "general form of proposition."

1) Since the meanings of names are basic to the sense of sentences, it may be asked what an example of a name would be. Since names as understood in the Tractatus cannot be defined or analyzed it is clear that few, if any, nouns of any natural language would be names in this sense. "Name" may be understood to be, in Wittgenstein's terminology, a "formal concept," properly represented by a variable that may be substituted for by words that are primitive and whose meanings are objects that may be pointed to. That the name is indefinable and that the object may be pointed to are the criteria of both the meaningfulness of the name and the existence of the object.

In this view language is basically composed of names in relation to each other--theoretically, we may analyze everything we say into elementary propositions composed of names in particular logical structures. Whether or not such analyzes are possible in practice, in this theory



linguistic meaning is viewed as dependent upon its analyzability into ("elementary") propositions made up of names of unanalyzable, ultimate objects. Now, this specificity of meaning that, through names, underlies all linguistic meaning, is in contrast to the view of meaning as definable through "use." The notion of meaning as use gives an alternative view of the foundation of meaning. Rather than depending upon a basis of names that correlate with ultimate objects of some sort, meaning, in the use view, depends upon activities of use of words, only one type of which are names or analyzable into names.

2) Wittgenstein claims to give the essence of language in the Tractatus; by his own definition this is to give what is common to all well-formed expressions of language, and yet there is no allowance within such a theory for common sentences such as commands, for instance. He claims to have reduced general propositions and those of the form "A believes p," to concatenations of elementary propositions, but just as important are sentences such as "Scram!" as well as warnings, swearing, etc., which cannot be so analyzed. Having no way of explaining the meaning of such sentences, it becomes doubtful whether we are any longer talking about language itself at all.

Here again, whether or not it is possible in practice to reduce all sentences to a "general form of proposition," in this theory linguistic meaning is viewed as "essentially" of this form. This view of the structure of sentences (and, hence, in this theory, of all linguistic meaning) is in contrast again to a use type of view of meaning. The activities of language serve the function in a use type of view that the notion of sentential structure does in the Tractatus theory. Rather than depending

upon an essential form or structure, sentential meaning, in a use view, is a function of activities.

In these ways, in respect to content and to form, the Tractatus' treatment of a "proposition" as "the meaning of a sentence" is incompatible with a view of meaning as use.

The theory of truth of the Tractatus cannot be entirely satisfactory if the theory of meaning is not. By focusing on the theory of truth now, however, it will be seen that, as a correspondence theory, it is also incompatible with a view of meaning as use.

The notion of a proposition as "that which is true or false" is interpreted in the Tractatus as a "possible fact." There is an obviously important relation between facts and truth, and this theory offers an explanation of this relation as correspondence through common "logical structure." Thus, truth is viewed as a relation between entities of two categories--linguistic and material. The relation is between two kinds of facts and is possible because the "structure" of linguistic facts can mirror the structure of all other facts, both possible and actual.

(Russell, in his version of the propositional theory, says that facts are neither true nor false, they just are. Of course, linguistic facts are, too, but these facts are the rules and usages of language, and the meanings of the linguistic facts that are sentences are the propositions whose logical structures mirror other facts. There are things that just are--facts, and there are things that are true or false as well--propositions.)

The notion of a "proposition" as "that which is true or false" is interpreted in the Tractatus as a "possible fact," which, in turn, is

equated with "the meaning of a sentence." Truth is the relation between possible fact and actual, existent fact, or between "words and the world," meaning and reality. This "correspondence" theory treats truth as a predicate of the meaning ("sense") of a sentence. When a proposition is "true" there is a correlation between it and an actual fact. Truth is a correlation of meaning with states of affairs that are extra-meaning.

The philosophic concept of a proposition is connected, in this and other theories, with the drawing of a distinction between linguistic signs and their meaning. A sentence as such, it is reasoned, cannot be true or false because it is composed merely of marks or sounds, which, as marks or sounds, cannot be either true or false. Therefore, it must be the meaning of these "signs" that is true or false. In this way, the notion of something that is the sort of thing that can be true or false may come to be defined as a meaning.

In this sort of employment of the philosophic concept of a proposition, the problem of truth is viewed as one of first identifying and nailing down what sort of thing "true" is predicated of, and then examining it to see how it is different when "true" is in fact properly predicated of it. A sentence comes in this way to be defined as a unit of meaning, a single, unitary thing of which "true" may be predicated. It seems to be a requirement for the analysis of truth that what is capable of being true be a unit of meaning whose truth may be tested--something whose truth or falsity may be validated, at least theoretically.

This putative requirement may lead to the adoption of a notion like that of a proposition in which is involved what might be termed a "meaning-freeze," i.e., the proposition is defined as a unit of meaning that is independent of context and whose truth is thus theoretically

determinable once and for all. The proposition in the sense of a unit of meaning may become dependent in this way upon supposed requirements of the proposition in the sense of that which is true or false.

Propositional theories of this sort treat truth as a predicate. That is, the problem of truth is seen as centering on the term "true," which is predicated of sentences. An attempt to explicate "true" then leads to specification of the sort of sentence of which it is predicated. This sort of sentence (a "statement") then may be treated as a vague, natural-language shorthand for a "proposition," i.e., a meaning frozen in time and space through complete specification, which therefore may be determined, in theory, to be either true or false.

Ingeniously, the Tractatus view avoids saying that what is false must be meaningless while simultaneously holding that the meaning of a sentence is the name of a fact. This is done through the notion of a possible fact as a "proposition," but a proposition is a logical meaning--the real meaning of words of natural language whose rules are arbitrary and idiomatic. How a meaning is expressed--the arbitrary linguistic rules--is unimportant; what the meaning is that is expressed--the proposition--is the important aspect of meaning so far as truth is concerned. The proposition itself, however, has a logical structure that is a distillation of linguistic structures--the proposition is the "essence" of language(s). The correlations between a proposition and a fact, when a proposition is true, are meaning-relations: The "names" that have a structure in the proposition are correlated with their "meanings," objects that have a structure in a "fact" in the world, and the total proposition names a fact through likeness of structure and correlation of names and objects.

Likeness of structure is a logical matter and, hence, a matter of meaning. It is, in this theory, to "mean" (correlate with) an actual fact that constitutes what truth is; if the constituent names of a proposition "mean" "objects" but the logical structure does not correlate with the structure connecting these objects into a fact, then the lack of such correlating lines constitutes falsity.

The Tractatus theory of truth is incompatible with a use view of meaning in at least one fundamental respect: as a correspondence theory it relates language to the world in a manner that is incompatible with meaning viewed as use. Some view of the nature of meaning is involved in any correspondence theory of truth, because one of the two sides of the correlation is a meaning-entity. We have seen above how the Tractatus theory of meaning is incompatible with a view of meaning as use. Further, since the related theory of truth is a correspondence type of theory, it is inextricably connected with a view of meaning in which there are meaning correlations connecting meanings with what they mean. This sort of view of meaning, which, as we have seen, is incompatible with meaning as use, would seem to be required by any correspondence view of truth. It is difficult to imagine how a correspondence view of truth could be formulated without a view of meaning of this general type. In any case, the Tractatus theory of truth is incompatible with a use view of meaning because it does involve this type of view of meaning.

#### Two Ordinary-Language Analyses

Two writers, who reject the Tractatus theory of meaning and advocate the view that the meaning of a word is its use, have dealt with the problem of truth in quite different ways. J. L. Austin and P. F. Strawson,

while agreeing on the "use"-view of meaning and on the problem of truth as being the problem of the use of the word "true," nevertheless offer quite variant analyses in their debate, "Truth."<sup>1</sup>

### The Debate

#### Austin

Austin begins his analysis of the problem of truth by defining this problem as "the use, or certain uses, of the word 'true'" (p. 11). In his rebuttal, Strawson pounces, in effect, on this limitation to "certain uses" by concentrating his attack on Austin's confinement of the problem to factual statements. Austin reaches this limitation, however, through asking the question, "What is it that we say is true or false?" and looking for an answer that will tell what is true primarily: "It seems reasonable to ask 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'" (p. 112). He then gives reasons for rejecting the predication of "true" of anything except what he calls a "statement." His definition of "statement," though, is unusual: "A statement is made and its making is a historic event, the utterance by a certain speaker or writer of certain words (a sentence) to an audience with reference to a historic situation, event or what not" (pp. 113-114). Sentences are used to make statements, and "a sentence is made up of words, a statement is made in words" (p. 114).

So, a statement for Austin is evidently not a kind of sentence

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<sup>1</sup>J. L. Austin and P. F. Strawson, "Truth," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume, XXIV (1950), 111-156.

but, rather, something made by means of a kind of sentence (since not all sentences can be used to make statements). And, the use of a sentence to make a statement is understood by Austin to be its utterance, considered as an event in time. The further qualification that it be "with reference to a historic situation, event or what not," is the part of Austin's definition that comes closest to most definitions of "statement" (and also "proposition"). In defining "statement" he has referred to that to which the statement refers, "a historic situation, event, 'thus confining statement' to 'factual statement.'"

This definition of the term involves, then, not only a distinction between sentences and statements and a peculiar view of what the "use" of a sentence consists in, but also a view of the referential meaning of statements. Thus, the basic ingredients of a correspondence theory of truth are found in Austin's definition of that which may be true or false --the statement--since this definition contains a view not only of the linguistic relationships of the statement--to sentences and their use--but of its relationship to extra-linguistic events or "facts."

Having argued for the primacy of statements as what are capable of being true, and for what statements are, Austin asks the question, "When is a statement true?" If it be answered, "When it corresponds to the facts," this answer, though not wrong, may be misleading, Austin says. He therefore sets forth his view of what this correspondence with the facts consists in. Communication, he notes, requires symbols, such as words, and that which the words are "about": "this may be called the 'world.'" The world must "exhibit . . . similarities and dissimilarities" or, otherwise, "there would be nothing to say" (p. 115). Furthermore, "there is no reason why the world should not include the words, in

every sense except the sense of the actual statement itself which on any particular occasion is being made about the world" (p. 115).

These are the general requirements for communication--there must be symbols and the world which they are "about," and the world may be considered to include the symbols, except in the sense of the actual statement itself. (Since Austin has defined a statement as an utterance considered as a temporal event, it is hard to see how it can be considered as outside, or not included in, the world. He is asking that a distinction be made between a temporal event that is a statement and a temporal event or situation that is "in the world" and is what the statement is "about." There does not seem to be anything else that distinguishes the two sorts of events, and on the basis of which one is assigned to the world and the other rejected from it, except that one is an utterance and the other is not.)

These requirements having been given, there are still further requirements--evidently to be considered as special, rather than general, rules or requirements of communication--that are necessary in order to resolve the problem of truth. These requirements are two sets of conventions: "Descriptive conventions correlating the words (= sentences) with the types of situation, thing, event, etc., to be found in the world," and, "Demonstrative conventions correlating the words (= statements) with the historic situations, etc., to be found in the world" (p. 116). In terms of these two sets of conventions Austin then answers his question of when a statement is said to be true: "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"



(p. 116). "'Is of a type with which,'" Austin explains, "means 'is sufficiently like those standard states of affairs with which'" (footnote, p. 116).

Demonstrative conventions, then, correlate statements with specific situations in time in the world. This correlation is the referring relation. Descriptive conventions, on the other hand, correlate sentences with types of situation in the world. This relation by means of descriptive conventions is made possible by the similarities exhibited in the world. A statement is said to be true when the event referred to by the statement is "sufficiently like" the type described by the sentence. So this theory of truth depends upon a relation between referring and describing, a relation of classification in which a particular situation is judged to be (or not be, if the statement is false) classifiable as of the certain type described.

This theory is a specification of what "correspondence with the facts" consists in. "Correspondence" has been defined in terms of a relationship between two sets of "conventions." Austin emphasizes that the correspondence in his theory is "purely conventional" and implies no "mirroring" of the world in words. A picture may be true to its original, he notes, but not true of it, and it is the truth of statements with which the theory of truth is concerned.

(Although it is correspondence with the "facts" that Austin claims to be clarifying or specifying in his theory, he speaks in his formulation of "situation" rather than of "facts." "Fact," he says, is misleading, and he analyzes the phrase "fact that" as "a compendious way of speaking about a situation involving both words and world" [p. 118].)

### Strawson's Critique of Austin

Austin's theory attempts to salvage a correspondence theory of truth while rejecting a theory of meaning in which there is conceived to be a correspondence between words and their meanings--objects in the world. Strawson is working from a similar view of the nature of meaning: He wishes to reject the "correspondence" theory of the meaning of words and to view the meanings of words as their "use." It is the use of "true" which they both contend to be the problem of truth, but Strawson disagrees not only with Austin's analysis of the use of "true" but also with his identification of this problem with the problem of the analysis of "fact-stating discourse."

Strawson's critique is divided into three sections, on statements, facts and correspondence. In regard to Austin's treatment of "statements," Strawson points out: "'My statement' may be either what I say or my saying it. My saying something is certainly an episode. What I say is not. It is the latter, not the former, we declare to be true" (pp. 129-30). Although "the use of . . . 'true' always glances backwards or forwards to the actual or envisaged making of a statement by someone," the word does not "characterize such . . . episodes" (p. 131).

Secondly, facts, according to Strawson, are misunderstood by Austin, who refers to the second term of the correspondence as "thing," "event," "situation," "state of affairs," and "feature," as well as "fact." Strawson believes Austin to be correct in emphasizing that the conventionally established relations between words and things referred to, and between words and type of things described, are different relations. Strawson contends further, however, that in statements that are "reference-cum-description"

(which, according to Strawson, not all statements are) stating is neither of these relations--neither referring (or demonstrating) nor describing--but both at once.

In a "reference-cum-description" statement, the "thing, person, etc." referred to by the referring part of the statement and which the describing part "fits or fails to fit" is what the statement is "about." There can be no other relatum, Strawson contends, and to ask for one is a "logically fundamental type-mistake" (p. 134). Although we say that "a statement corresponds to . . . the facts, as a variant on saying that it is true, we never say that a statement corresponds to the thing, person, etc., it is about" (p. 135). Therefore, although it is not wrong to say that the fact a statement states is what makes it true, this fact is not an object of any kind, it is not "in the world," but is itself stated by the statement and so cannot be that to which the statement is correlated when it is true (p. 135).

Strawson's criticism of Austin's treatment of "facts" focuses on his view that facts are "in the world," like the objects that statements are about. As for Austin's equating "facts" with "situations" and "states of affairs": "It is true that situations and states of affairs are not seen or heard (any more than facts are), but are rather summed up or taken in at a glance (phrases which stress the connection with statement and 'that'-clause respectively), it is also true that there is a sense of 'about' in which we do talk about, do describe, situations or states of affairs" (p. 137). These expressions, however, are "substantival expressions to abbreviate, summarize and connect" (p. 138). They are devices for connecting a "series of descriptive statements" with "the remainder of my discourse" (p.

138). "A situation or state of affairs is, roughly, a set of facts not a set of things" (p. 138). When we speak about a situation, it is the "subject" of a statement and, therefore, cannot be also that which makes the statement true.

Strawson's view is that only things and events are "in the world," and that the only relation of a statement to such things is the "about"-relation. He sees the correspondence theory of truth as really an attempt to elucidate the fact-stating type of discourse, while the problem of truth is properly the problem of our use of "true." And, when we use "true," "fact," etc., we are "talking within, and not about, a certain frame of discourse," so, the "problem about the use of 'true' is to see how this word fits into that frame of discourse" (p. 142).

Strawson believes, then, that the terms of Austin's correspondence relation are wrong. He believes further that the conventional type of correspondence laid out by Austin is also wrong. The fundamental confusion of the theory is between what the semantic conditions are for a statement "p is true" to be true, and what is asserted when a certain statement is stated to be true (i.e., what "p is true" asserts). It is as "absurd," Strawson says, to claim that in making a statement "p is true" one is asserting that the semantic conditions for its truth are fulfilled as it is to claim that in making the statement "p" one is asserting fulfillment of these conditions. If Austin's theory of "true" were correct, in declaring a statement to be true we would either be talking about the meanings of the words of a statement "p" or saying that the speaker has used the words in the statement correctly. Since we are doing neither of these things, Strawson concludes that Austin's whole theory must be dispensed with (pp. 143-44).

Not only is Austin's analysis of the use of "true" mistaken according

to Strawson, but he is also mistaken in identifying this problem with the problem of the analysis of fact-stating discourse. Although the restriction of "statement," "true," and "false" to the fact-stating type of discourse may be all right "in some philosophical contexts," Austin's approach to the analysis of this type of discourse is not (p. 153). "Mr. Austin's description of the conditions under which a statement is true, regarded as an analysis of the fact-stating use, applies only to affirmative subject-predicate statements. . . . It does not apply to negative, general and existential statements nor, straight-forwardly, to hypothetical and disjunctive statements. I agree that any language capable of the fact-stating use must have some devices for performing the function to which Mr. Austin exclusively directs his attention, and that other types of statements of fact can be understood only in relation to this type" but "nothing is gained by lumping them all together under a description appropriate only to one, even though it be the basic, type" (pp. 154-55).

Strawson's critique of Austin revolves around three major objections: (1) "True" is not properly viewed as predicated of a sentence, proposition or anything else; (2) the use of "true" is not confined to fact-stating discourse; and, (3) in using "true" we are not asserting that the conditions do in fact obtain which must obtain if we are "correctly" to declare a statement to be true. These three points constitute the major rejections involved in his own theory of truth.

Strawson

Strawson's own theory is generally called the "performatory" theory of truth, although even in his original paper in Analysis he says: "This is a misnomer. A performatory word, in Austin's sense, I take to be a verb,

the use of which, in the first person present indicative, seems to describe some activity of the speaker, but in fact is that activity. Clearly the use of 'is true' does not seem to describe any activity of the speaker.

. . . The point of using Austin's word at all is the fact that the phrase 'is true' can sometimes be replaced, without any important change in meaning, by some such phrase as 'I confirm it,' which is performatory in the strict sense."<sup>1</sup> "Is true" is not itself, then, a performatory phrase but can, "sometimes," be replaced by certain performatory phrases.

In his symposium paper, Strawson takes basically this same position, although he discusses additional uses--for which might be substituted the additional phrases "I grant it" and "I corroborate it." In this paper he also refers to "the assertive device which is the subject of this symposium (the word 'true')" (p. 150), but modifying this characterization by treating "true" as a device for re-assertion without actual repetition of a statement. This is a change from his original paper in Analysis, in which he says "is true" is not assertive in any sense but, rather, a "linguistic performance." The particular type of linguistic performance is described at one place in this essay as analogous with the use of the expression "Ditto." So, in his second look at the problem of truth, Strawson evidently feels that he had exaggerated the non-assertive character of "is true," which (as might be gathered easily from its claimed resemblance to "Ditto") re-asserts without actual repetition.

Toward the end of his paper, Strawson modifies his position. Here he says, "I have no wish to challenge the restriction, in some philosophical

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<sup>1</sup>P. F. Strawson, "Truth," reprinted in Philosophy and Analysis, ed. Margaret Macdonald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), p. 275.

contexts, of the words 'statement,' 'true,' 'false,' to what I have myself earlier called the 'fact-stating' type of discourse. What troubles me more is Mr. Austin's own incipient analysis of this type of discourse. It seems to me such as to force him to carry the restriction further than he wishes or intends" (p. 153).

#### Austin's Critique of Strawson

Austin's paper includes a critique of Strawson's theory as presented in his initial paper in Analysis. This theory he sees as having two main parts: "that 'is true' is not used in talking about . . . anything" (p. 127), and that to say that S is true is "to confirm or grant . . . the assertion, made or taken as made already, that S" (p. 127). The first part of this theory is wrong according to Austin because "is true" is used in talking about statements. The second part is wrong because, although there is a performatory aspect to many ordinary statements, they may also be statements that are true or false. (Austin indicates that "statement" would best be reserved for what is true or false, and not be extended to utterances of a certain grammatical form. He is using the word in that sense here.)

Austin criticizes Strawson's theory on the ground that "he confines himself to the case where I say 'your statement is true' or something similar, . . . but what of the case where you state that S and I say nothing but 'look and see' that your statement is true? I do not see how this critical case, to which nothing analogous occurs with strictly performatory utterances, could be made to respond to Mr. Strawson's treatment" (p. 128). In reply to this Strawson says: "The man who looks and sees that the statement that there is a cat on the mat is true, sees no more and no less

than the man who looks and sees that there is a cat on the mat, or the man who looks and sees that there is indeed a cat on the mat. But, the settings of the first and third cases may be different from that of the second." Austin's objection, Strawson says, serves to emphasize the "importance of the 'occasion'" of the use of "true" and to minimize "(what I was inclined to over-emphasize) the performatory character of our uses of it" (pp. 149-50).

### Critique

Austin and Strawson have covered quite thoroughly possible objections to each other's treatments of truth. Austin's theory is a type of correspondence theory and thus treats truth as a relation between words and the world. This treatment is open to the fundamental criticism that it confuses truth with fact-stating, or the nature of the meaning of a type of statement.

Strawson's theory, on the other hand, takes the view that the central fact about the meaning of "true" is its assertive or reassertive function. He claims that analysis of the meaning of statements of fact is, at best, tangential to the problem of truth as such. This treatment is open to the fundamental criticism that there is more involved in the use of true besides its performatory aspects.

In taking the position that the analysis of fact-stating is irrelevant, Strawson rejects a dichotomy of words and world of the type that Austin (as well as some logical positivists) accepts. This, of course, eliminates the possibility of treating truth as a relation between words and world. Consistent with this point of view, Strawson's treatment of "facts" is quite at variance with Austin's, which is closely similar to



that of "actual facts" in the Tractatus. Strawson holds, on the contrary, that, while facts are what make statements true, they are not anything in the "world." Although there is something in the world which a (purportedly) fact-stating statement is "about," this is of no relevance to the elucidation of "true" (p. 135), and is not itself the fact (p. 136). Strawson is saying, in other words, that an about-relation is different from a truth-relation, and also from a meaning-relation. This view is based on the view that neither truth nor meaning are relations of any kind whatsoever. The about-relation is of significance only in the elucidation of fact-stating discourse, and "true" must be viewed as within this type of discourse, not as about it (p. 142).

For Strawson, the conventions of "true"--of this particular word--replace, in effect, any rules of truth. For him, there are no relevant conventions or rules except meaning-conventions, and these are not, in a general way, relevant to the problem of truth; indeed, according to Strawson, to think so would be to commit Austin's mistake of equating truth and fact-stating. The only meaning-conventions that are relevant to the problem, according to Strawson, are those of "true." Now, this implies a quite narrow, limited definition of what is included in the meaning of the word "true," since this meaning does not include referring to statements said to be "true," nor, therefore, to the meaning of any statements. Strawson's view takes as the fundamental use of "true" its simplest use in a sentence: "True!" (= "Ditto!") This is a very narrow view of what "the meaning of a word, x" consists in.

Furthermore, Strawson's analysis does not include the aspect of the ordinary usage of "true," "truth," etc., in which part of what we mean by

saying that something is true is that its being so is, in some sense or other, beyond our control--in that it is non-conventional in nature. Even granting that what we (meaningfully) say may be limited, not only by the range of possibilities of a particular language, but also by the necessary limitations of any language, due to "the ways things are" (both in regard to ourselves and to the world at large)--even granting these limitations of language itself, truth is spoken of as limited in a stronger sense--its criteria being spoken of as outside the scope of conventions. There are no such criteria in Strawson's treatment.

Austin's theory defines truth as a type of relation between two sorts of meaning-relations (themselves connecting words and fact). These conventions of meaning involved in fact-stating discourse explain, for Austin, the nature of truth. According to him, we use "true" to refer to situations in which these linguistic conventions are used. This theory offers a description of what is involved in fact-stating and then, in effect, defines truth as the fulfillment of the claims of a factual statement. That is, in saying that the actual state of affairs must be "of a type" with the (type of) state of affairs expressed in the sentence, Austin is saying that the sentence must mean something actually existent.

In speaking of a correlation between words and the world, Austin sets up naming-relations between sentence and extra-sentential "fact." Characterizing these relations as "conventional" might mean they are arbitrary and non-necessary--and Austin intends this to be understood: "A statement no more needs, in order to be true, to reproduce the 'multiplicity,' say, or the 'structure' or 'form' of the reality, than a word needs to

be echoic or writing pictographic. To suppose that it does, is to fall once again into the error of reading back into the world the features of language" (p. 119). As is also illustrated by this passage, he intends to say further that truth consists in a relation between certain meaning-conventions. The following passage illustrates this in a somewhat different light: "Even when a language does 'mirror' [features described in the world] very closely (and does it ever?) the truth of statements remains still a matter . . . of the words used being the ones conventionally appointed for situations of the type to which that referred to belongs" (p. 120). Being true, then, consists in the proper or correct application of this type of meaning-conventions.

Despite Austin's interpretation of the relevant meaning-rules as conventions, his view is a correspondence type of theory that interprets these conventions as correlating words and the world. No doubt there are some such conventional correlations between words and the world, but Austin's interpretation of them as explaining truth results in begging the question.

Strawson's analysis construes the "conventions of the use of 'true'" very narrowly, as consisting exclusively of the performatory aspects of its use (the "occasion" for use not being considered as involved in its use, and the problem of that to which the term is applied also being considered as uninvolved in its use). Strawson's view of what the problem of truth is would seem to be extremely narrow, because it would seem that it is not just a problem about how to use "true," but what this use implies and how it is related to other aspects of language-games in which it is included.

Austin's analysis, on the other hand, construes certain meaning-

conventions as being the conventions relevant to truth, and does not allow for differentiating truth from the machinery of fact-stating. Austin approaches the problem of truth as one of "the use of 'true'" but interprets "true" as used to designate cases in which certain meaning conventions are applied to situations to which they are, in fact, applicable. There is no similarity of logical structure involved in this view, but for this notion is substituted a "conventional" correlation between statements and what they are about. "True," according to Austin, means that meaning-relations of this sort obtain. The disparity between Austin's and Strawson's views suggests that each deals with only one aspect of the concept of truth. And, their agreement on the formulation of the problem (as "the use of 'true'") obscures the disparity of their interpretations of this formulation--for Austin the "use" of the term involves the whole context of fact-stating discourse, while for Strawson it is limited to what would seem to be one sort, or perhaps one aspect of its meaning.

#### Implications for the Analysis of Truth

Having now examined the Tractatus propositional theory and two ordinary language analyses of truth and seen some of the reasons none of them is wholly satisfactory, what are the implications for the problem of the analysis of truth? In this section I shall discuss what I take these implications to be, and outline what I shall attempt to do in the following chapters.

It was argued above that the notion of a proposition, which is fundamental to the Tractatus' analyses of both meaning and truth, is inconsistent with the view, accepted in this study, that meaning is use. Writing from a

similar point of view, both Austin and Strawson renounce this notion of a proposition, and it embodies a view of meaning which Wittgenstein's later use view of meaning<sup>1</sup> was explicitly developed to counteract.

As was discussed on pp. 4-5, however, the notion is a dual one, being definable both as "the meaning of a sentence" and as "that which is true or false." While the Tractatus' notion of a proposition is inconsistent with the point of view of the study at hand, it will be argued that the notion of "the meaning of a sentence" is not only consistent with, but important to, a use view of meaning. Secondly, it will be argued that the notion of something that is true or false is important in the analysis of the problem of truth.

The critique of the analyses of Austin and Strawson suggests certain requirements for an interpretation of the use theory of meaning and for the formulation of the problem of truth: A view of meaning should include the question of the nature of the meaning of sentences, as contrasted with that of words. Secondly, the problem of truth should be interpreted as involving "depth grammar" as well as "surface grammar." In the terms of this study, the problem of truth is one of what the concept of truth is. This requires examination, it will be argued, not only of the "use of 'true,'" but of the use of statements said to be true.

Therefore, in Chapters II and III will be developed an interpretation of the use view of meaning with the special purpose of developing a view of the nature of sentential meaning. And, in Chapter IV will be developed a view of the general nature of philosophic problems, in order to interpret the formulation of the problem of truth as "the use of 'true.'"

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<sup>1</sup>Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953).

The interpretation of the meaning of words and sentences given in Chapters II and III will result in viewing sentences as the fundamental units of meaning, in a manner somewhat similar to "propositions." The interpretation of philosophic problems given in Chapter 4 will result in treating truth as a problem about a type of use of a type of sentence, and the notion of "that which is true or false" is used in the analysis of truth.

Thus, although the Tractatus notion of a proposition is inconsistent with a use view of meaning, its two central aspects, "the meaning of a sentence" and "that which is true or false," will be argued to be theoretic concepts useful in the analysis of truth.

The theory of truth developed in Chapter V results from a view of the meaning of a sentence as an action forming part of an activity, and a view of truth as an activity of assertions (a type of action or sentence).

## CHAPTER II

### MEANING AS USE: WORDS AND RULES

This chapter will examine the meaning and implications of the contention that "the meaning of a word is its use." An interpretation of this view will be developed from the analysis, first, of the subject phrase, "the meaning of a word," and, second, of the predicated term, "use." The interpretation thus developed views words as "possible meanings" that presuppose sentences or "actual meanings." The notion of "the meaning of a sentence"--i.e., the notion of the meaning of a sentence as distinct and different from the meaning of words--is thus held to be necessary as a working philosophic concept, if the view of the meaning of words as their use is interpreted adequately for dealing with the problems of this study.

#### The "Meaning of a Word"

In "The Meaning of a Word,"<sup>1</sup> J. L. Austin asserts that the "general question, 'What is the meaning of a word?'" is "spurious" (p. 25), and, indeed, a "nonsense question" (p. 26). He argues that philosophers are led to ask it on a model with questions of the form: "What is the meaning of (the word) 'x'?" and that the error in the generalized form "What is the meaning of a word?" is exposed if the model is changed to "What is an 'x'?" Then, "it becomes very difficult to formulate any

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<sup>1</sup>J. L. Austin, "The Meaning of a Word," Philosophical Papers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 23-43.

general question which could impose on us for a moment. Perhaps 'What is anything?' . . . In the same way, we should not perhaps be tempted to generalize such a question as 'Does he know the meaning of the word "rat"?' 'Does he know the meaning of a word?' would be silly" (p. 26).

In connection with this thesis, Austin gives two lists, one of "specimens of sense" and another of "specimens of nonsense" (p. 23). The specimens of sense are all questions asking what the meaning of a particular word, phrase or sentence is. The specimens of nonsense include different forms of the question, "What is the 'meaning' of words?" and of "What is the meaning of 'What is the "meaning" of words?'" Austin's specimens of nonsense sound considerably more nonsensical than either of these epitome sentences, but in fact only two of the specimen sentences can really be said to be "nonsense," viz., "What is-the-meaning-of-(the-word-)-'rat'?" and "What is the 'meaning' of (the word) 'rat'?" These two sentences (which are different ways of asking "What is the 'meaning' of 'x'?" and which are not covered by the epitome sentences given) are nonsensical--although "What is the meaning of 'x'?" does make sense. Since both "meaning" and "rat" (or the variable "x") are in inverted commas in Austin's sentence, it combines in a nonsensical fashion two different questions: (1) "What is the meaning of 'meaning'?" and (2) "What is the meaning of 'x'?" That is, the question reduces to: "What is the meaning of 'meaning' insofar as it relates exclusively to the word 'rat'?" The answer is, of course, that there is no such meaning, or aspect of the meaning, of "meaning." Thus, the question is nonsense because the meaning of "meaning" precludes its use in such a way. The question is nonsense because any answer to it--if to the point--would be nonsense, not because the question itself is "meaningless."



Austin's paper is an attempt to show that only questions asking for the meaning of specific words are "sense"; while all "general" questions about meaning are nonsense because they may be reduced to the epitome question: "What is the meaning of a word?" But, insofar as any philosopher asks this question, it is synonymous with "What is the meaning of words?" rather than--as Austin treats it--"What is the meaning of any old word?" This is beside the point since it takes "any word" as synonymous with "just any word whatsoever" rather than as a phrase specifying the sort of meaning asked for by the question.

The sort of objection that Austin raises to asking "What is the meaning of a word?" would imply, if it were valid, strange things about the nature of linguistic meaning. It would imply that the nature of meaning itself cannot be investigated since every word has a unique meaning, one having nothing in common with all other words. But, what words may be said to have in common is, of course, not what they mean, but, rather, that they mean. It is the fact that each one does have a particular meaning that causes it to be classified as a word. It is at this point that we then ask the further question, "What is the meaning of a word?" i.e., "What constitutes this fact in virtue of which a word is so classified?" This question calls for an explanation of linguistic meaning in general and word-meaning in particular.

The question is thus perhaps more clearly framed as, "How, or in what way, do words have meaning?" in order to avoid mistaking the question for asking, "What do all words mean?" which is, of course, absurd. We are looking, then, for a characterization of the manner in which any word means, and in virtue of which it is a word. Such a description is ventured in

the view that "the meaning of a word is its use." "Use" is here given as characterizing the manner in which a word has a meaning.

### "Use"

"Use" is a very common word that probably is used in a greater variety of ways and contexts than "mean," "meaning," etc. The view that "the meaning is the use" may be viewed as resulting from the following argument: "In order to determine the meaning of a word, it must be seen how the word is used. When it is seen how it is used, that is to see its meaning. To know how it is used, is to know its meaning in the fullest sense." This seems a clear and straightforward argument. A word obviously has meaning only insofar as it is used conventionally in certain ways within a language. There are pitfalls in the argument, however, and some of them may be traced to the highly flexible meaning of "use."

Consider the statements:

- 1) The meaning of a word consists in how it is used.
- 2) The meaning of a word consists in its use.

The difference between these two statements might appear to be negligible. Statement 1, however, is most naturally interpreted as repeating what was said in the preceding paragraph: A word has meaning only insofar as it is used conventionally in certain ways. Statement 2 is something else again, and requires further argument to establish it. This is not to say, of course, that "its use," referring to the use of anything, never can be employed idiomatically as synonymous with "how it is used," but in some contexts the two statements would be different and different sorts of inferences might be drawn from them.

Statement 1 is acceptable because any particular word clearly has

the meaning it has because conventionally it has been used in certain ways. What it means, or what its meaning is, however, would appear to be another problem. It is this second problem to which statement 2 appears to be a solution. It might be construed as a general solution to any instance of the question, "What does this (particular) word mean?" It is apparent what is meant by saying that how any word has meaning is through being used in the ways that it is used. It is far less apparent what might be meant by saying that the meaning of any word "is its use."

Statements 1 and 2 taken together present a crucial issue in the "use" view of meaning. One difference between them has been discussed: Statement 1 is interpretable as an answer to a general question about the meaning of any word or the meaning of all words: statement 2 can be taken to be in answer to the same question--in which case it would be identical in meaning with statement 1--or to be in answer to what the meaning of any particular word is. What statement 2 might mean and imply in this second sense is not immediately evident. In order to investigate it, it will be useful to examine a second set of statements:

1a) To understand the meaning of a word is to understand how  
to use it.

2a) To understand the meaning of a word is to understand how it  
is used.

It will be noticed that either of these statements might seem to imply or be implied by either statement 1 or 2. If the meaning of a word consists in how it is used, then to understand this meaning would be to understand how to use the word. And if the meaning of a word consists in its use, then to understand this meaning would be to understand how it is

used. If one understands how a word is used, he must also understand how to use it. To understand how to use a word, however, does not imply that one understands how it is used. That these are different is evident from the fact that a judgment that someone understands how to use a given word is based on his correct use of it, whereas a judgment that someone understands how a word is used would be based on his description of its characteristics of use. "To understand the meaning" in statement 1a thus refers to the understanding of a different sort of thing from the subject of understanding in 2a.

It appears, then, that "meaning" is used in different ways in statements 1a and 2a. In 1a "meaning" refers to something the understanding of which is evidenced by correct use. In 2a "meaning" is something the understanding of which is evidenced by the description, rather than the act of use, of sentences that would be taken as evidence for understanding meaning in 1a. Sufficient evidence for "understanding the meaning of a word" in the sense of 1a could consist entirely of sentences incorporating the word. Sufficient evidence for "understanding the meaning of a word" in the sense of 2a would include sentences or phrases incorporating the word, but which would be within quotation marks and which would serve as material for analysis of the use of the word.

The difference here is that 1a refers to the conditions of speaking and understanding a word, that is, using it. Statement 2a, on the other hand, refers to the description of these conditions. In order to clarify the meanings of words of ordinary language, it is obviously useful to realize that they have whatever meanings they have by virtue of their use, that this is the source of their meanings. This is what is formulated in 1a. Statement 2a, on the other hand, seems to say that there is another way in

which we may be said to understand the meaning of a word--that of being able to explain how it is used. This may be interpreted as equating this sort of understanding with the mechanics of its use, rather than the act of use of it.

Statements 1 and 2 are about the meaning of words whereas 1a and 2a are about the understanding of (the meanings of) words. With this difference, 1 and 1a otherwise share a reference to source of meaning, and 2 and 2a share a reference to the nature of any particular meaning. The common elements in these two pairs of sentences may be expressed as:

1b) To have meaning is to have a conventional use (1 and 1a).

2b) A meaning is a conventional use (2 and 2a).

That 1 seems to imply 2, and that 1a seems to imply 2a, is due to the apparent equivalence of 1b and 2b, partly concealed within these other statements. Statement 1b formulates an answer to the question, "What is the source of meanings": 2b formulates an answer to the question, "What is a meaning?" The contrast between 1b and 2b brings out the need to avoid a genetic fallacy in which source and product are identified, or at least confused with one another.

Statements 1a and 2a show the need to distinguish also between the theory of a practice (2a) and the practice itself (1a). As the discussion of them brings out, what is said about the source of meaning of words may be transformed improperly into a statement about the nature of philosophic investigation.

The first pair of statements focuses on "how used" as opposed to "use"; the second pair on "understanding how to use" as opposed to "understanding how used" and the third on "source of meaning" as opposed to "meaning." They show how "use," besides being in some contexts substantially

synonymous with "how used," may also be interpreted (in the context of "understanding how used") as the unique job of the philosophic investigation of meaning, and, in a more general sense (in 2b) as meaning itself.

From considering these various senses of "use," it may be seen that it is desirable that a use theory of meaning be established on a theoretic framework that provides a differentiation of: (1) the source of meaning from meaning itself, and (2) the practice or exercise of language from the theory of this practice.

#### Function and Purpose

A use view of meaning is in opposition to views in which, implicitly or explicitly, meaning is identified with some sort of "object" named by a word. The foregoing pairs of statements all contradict such naming theories of meaning.

A use view is also in opposition to theories of meaning in which words are treated as vehicles of the purposes of their users. Consider the statements:

1c) The meaning of a word consists in how it functions.

2c) The meaning of a word consists in its function.

These statements have been obtained from 1 and 2 by substituting "function," in two of its various forms, for the two different forms of "use" in 1 and 2. The sense of "use" as more or less synonymous with "function" is the dominant sense in the first three pairs of statements discussed, but is not an unambiguous synonym for "use" in these statements. If it were, there would be a close parallel between 1 and 1c, whereas they actually differ considerably. One involves an implied user or users of words, which 1c does not, and usually would not be so construed because

of the difference in the functions of "function" and "use."

The implication of a speaker or speakers in 1 shows why a sense of "use" involving "purpose" could be thought to be involved in or implied by statement 1. This sense of "use" is found in the phrases "used for" and "used to," and questions of the purpose of the use of words would be further questions beyond that implicitly answered by statement 1, since "how" indicates that "function" is the sense of "use" here. If "purpose" were immediately involved, the statement would have to be changed to read, "The meaning of a word consists in why it is used." With this change, if 1 and 2 were taken as equivalent, 2 could be construed as "The meaning of a word consists in its purpose."

A similar situation exists in the second pair of statements. Statement 1a, "To understand the meaning of a word is to understand how to use it," indicates again the sense of "use" as "function." In 2a, "To understand the meaning of a word is to understand how it is used," "how" again indicates the sense of "function." "Function," however, may be read into 2a --as "To understand the meaning of a word is to understand how it functions" --but not into 1a, where "how to use it" cannot be translated into a phrase containing "function." A speaker is implied here, also, and so the sense of "purpose" is also to that extent implied.

In the third pair of statements, "function" may be substituted for the single word "use" in both of them. Statement 1b, "To have meaning is to have a conventional use," may be translated into "To have meaning is to have a conventional function" (or "function established by convention"); and 2b, "A meaning is a conventional use," becomes "A meaning is a conventional function" (or "function established by convention"). Since 1b and 2b were said

to express the common elements in the preceding sets of statements (1 and 2; 1a and 2a), it is curious and significant that 1b and 2b both can be reformulated with "function" while 2 and 2a cannot.

An "intentional" aspect of the use theory is implied by the idioms employed in 2 and 2a. This aspect of the use theory is, further, not confined to questions about the source of meaning, but is involved also in questions about the understanding of meaning (2a) and the nature of meaning (2).

The senses of "use" as "function" and as "purpose" are quite different, although not always distinct. To describe the function of something is to describe the operation of one element within a complex. To describe a purpose, on the other hand, is to describe what the end of a task is: the reasons for doing something, or, sometimes, the actual results of the doing or operating of something. This is not to say that the questions of how and why something is used never overlap. They do, in fact, frequently overlap to such an extent that to ask the one question is to ask, at the same time, the other. To describe a function may involve the description of a purpose, and, conversely, to describe a purpose may involve describing a function, but they are distinguishably different types of description.

Both of these senses of "use" are implicit in speaking of "the use" of words. Of course, it would always be difficult to discuss the function of a word--the mechanics of its use--without reference to actual or possible purposes for using it. Perhaps in some cases it even would be impossible. And, in speaking of the source of the meaning of a word, we may say that it has what meaning it has as a result of its being used in certain



ways. We may also say that it has what meaning it has as a result of being used for certain purposes.

A tool such as a hoe is made in a certain form in order to serve certain purposes. If it is used for its purpose, hoeing, then the form in which it was made contributes to its fulfilling its purpose. Would one say that a hoe is the sort of tool it is because it is used in certain ways? Or, would one say that it is a hoe because it is used for certain purposes? The ways in which a hoe is used and the purposes for which it is used are nearly indistinguishable. This tool has a particular form in which it was purposely made in order to suit it for use in particular ways for particular purposes.

We may call a "tool," though, anything that is used to bring about something. Something like a rock or a hunk of steel, for instance, may be called a "tool" insofar as it is used for a purpose of bringing something about. When such objects are called tools it is with reference to such uses for a purpose. It does not make sense, in a general context, to say that rocks are tools, although it does make sense in any context to say that any material object such as a rock may be used as a tool.

But, a hoe is a tool whether it ever is used as one or not, while a rock is one only when it is used as one. The possibility of use that is built into the hoe warrants calling it a tool. Such a possibility is not built into a rock, but, rather, is seen in it whenever it is called a tool. When a rock is actually being used as a tool--for the purpose of hoeing, for example--it may be called a tool. But, when it is not actually being used for this purpose, then this possibility or other possibilities of use are referred to--are indicated by the explicit or implicit context--when it

is called as tool. A rock may be called a tool only in reference to specific, actual instances of its use as a tool; but, in general, it may be said only that a rock may be used as a tool for various purposes, i.e., that it is a possible tool.

So, to say that the meaning of words is their use and interpret them on an analogy with tools, still leaves open the questions of whether and in what ways linguistic meaning is similar to possible and to actual tools--tools with built-in purposes and objects with possible uses as tools.

### Conventions and Meaning-as-Possibility

To speak of the meaning of words at all may seem to imply a distinction between words and their meanings. We frequently speak in other contexts, as well, of the "meanings of words," commonly saying things like "What does that word mean?" "I don't know the meaning of that," etc. But what is a word as distinguished from its meaning? There are words such as are found in Lewis Carroll's nonsense verses that could be called "meaningless words." But, since they are meaningless it would be better for most purposes not to call them words at all. A reason they might be called words is that they look and sound like them--they can be pronounced and have some series of letters found in actual words in our language. Presented with "llbit," however, one would be less inclined to call this series of letters a word, even if printed as one within something that looks like a sentence of some sort.

So, what might be called a word depends to a large extent on the characteristics of groups of sounds and letters that do have meaning in our language. We are not inclined to call any meaningless sound a "meaningless

word." This is our tendency because "word" in many contexts is equivalent to "meaningful sound" (or the written symbol for one). When we ask about the meaning of words, we are using "word" in the sense of "articulated sound or the symbol for it." But, in using it in this sense it is pointless to specify a word as opposed to part of one--its syllables, for instance--because both the whole word and each of its component sounds or letters are articulated sounds or the symbols for them. So, a word is not treated as such unless it is known to be meaningful. A word is not distinguishable from its meaning until it is known to be a word, until it is known to have a meaning.

So, to speak of the meanings of words might seem to have more points of similarity with the use of a rock as a tool than with the use of a hoe. This might seem to be the case because a word may be said to have no more meaning "in itself," that is, as a mere articulated sound, than a rock, in itself, is a tool of any sort. What makes a sound a word is its use as a meaning; what makes a rock a hammer is its use as a hammer.

On account of this seeming similarity, it is useful to emphasize the conventions of the use of words in discussions of their meaning. For, while a manufactured tool such as a hammer has the use it has because it was designed for that purpose, a word has the meaning it has because it has been established by convention. Both manufactured tools and words are tools in a different sense from that in which a rock may be said to be a tool. It is only in its functioning, in its actual use as a tool, that a rock is a tool. A word, on the contrary, is a word because it is conventionally used as one; similarly, a tool is a tool because it has been built for such a purpose. A word carries its meaning along with it in the way that a tool such as a hammer carries its purpose along with it.

It is useful to emphasize the convention of use in order to bring out the philosophically important sense of "word" in which it carries its meaning along with it. This is made possible by convention: the word has a use "built in" or established by convention, as a tool has a use built in by design.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The analogy drawn here between words and tools may be misleading in quite different ways. One difficulty with it is that, taken as a close analogy, it might suggest that words have fixed, unchangeable meanings, whereas new ways of using words are constantly being devised. Another, rather different, difficulty with the analogy, if taken as a close one, is that, while a word must be used analogously with its convention of use (if it is to remain the same word), a tool, on the other hand, may be used in innumerable ways other than those for which it was made (e.g., a hoe may be used as a bean-pole, a darning-needle as a weapon).

The first of these difficulties involves what is a rather important question in the philosophy of language, viz., that of the creation of novel meanings out of established meanings. The convention of use of a word is a highly flexible group of analogous sorts of use, and what counts as analogous sometimes may be quite far-fetched. A new use of a word must be analogous to some degree with its convention of use, however, or else it is simply a new word entirely. The shape or form of a word that lies in its convention of use is nevertheless subject to modification should the uses of a word be extended. The shape of a real tool, on the other hand, imposes fixed limitations upon its potentialities of use.

Insofar as the use of this analogy in this chapter is concerned, it is sufficient to note this aspect of the inexactness of the analogy between words and tools, although there remain more general (and probably quite complex) problems about creation of novel meanings out of established ones.

The second of the difficulties mentioned--viz., that real tools may be used in radically different ways from those for which they were designed, while words cannot--suggests that it would be desirable to specify sorts of the "uses" of words and tools that are to be understood as involved in the analogy in the present context. The use of a hoe as a bean-pole or a darning-needle as a dagger are uses that should be understood as excluded from those uses relevant to the analogy in the present context. It is only those uses that are characteristically those of particular tools that are here being pointed to as similar to the uses of words. If a word is used by someone in a completely novel way, then it is not the same word but just the same sound (or written sign) of a word. Similarly, if a hoe is used as a bean-pole, it is a bean-pole--a bean-pole made out of a hoe--and is definable as such on the basis of its use. The physical form of the hoe makes it recognizable as such by anyone familiar with hoes, but whether it is more to the point to designate it as a hoe or a bean-pole is a matter of the context or circumstances of its use.

Rules of Use

The notion of a "convention of use" may be viewed as in answer to the general question of why a word has a meaning. This convention of use may include a number of senses, so that, strictly speaking, the meaning of some words may be a "family"<sup>1</sup> of senses, each sense itself made up of a family or set of particular uses. So, in order to determine the meaning of a word, it is necessary to look at all the uses of it. But, how can this be done?

It can be done because it is possible to isolate types of use (which may or may not be different enough to be considered as "senses" of the word). This, in turn, is possible because it is possible to recognize, implicitly or explicitly, the rules for the use of the word. ("Rule is being used here in a very broad sense, as including "law" and "principle.") To recognize such rules "implicitly" is, of course, simply to use a word in accordance with its rules. To recognize them "explicitly," on the other hand, is actually to formulate the rules, to describe the use of a word instead of merely using it.

If one knows how to use a word, one is able to act in accordance with its rules of use. In this sense, one may be said to be "following rules" whenever he uses a word correctly. In many contexts, though, "to follow a rule" implies a conscious, deliberate application of the rule. "To follow a rule" in this sense is not a part of the activity of language

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<sup>1</sup>The term "family" has disadvantages in a use theory of meaning because it involves the notion of heredity, implying that the source of similarities in meaning is to be found in common ancestors. I am using the term here only as Wittgenstein, I believe, intended it to be understood, viz., as describing or suggesting the aspects of family resemblance (as in Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, I, 67) and without itself involving any view of the source of the meaning of words.

as such. The "rules" of language are descriptive--they are formulations of procedures "followed" within a particular language. To be conscious of what these procedures are is not prerequisite to speaking and understanding the language. It is only in that one acts consistently with the rules when speaking the language that one may be said to act according to them. The activity of language is that from which the rules may be read.

#### Prescriptive and Descriptive Rules

Rules may be either prescriptive or descriptive. Language being a human activity and institution, there is an important sense in which the rules of language may be considered as prescriptive. It has been emphasized that the rules of language are conventions, and any convention involves constraint of some kind. There are some customs or conventions, though, that are not formulated as prescriptive rules--methods of harvesting grain, for example. Constraint in these cases may seem just like the constraint of necessity or natural laws. So, harvesting methods may be thought by their practitioners to be determined by necessity just as precisely as the seasons determine growing periods. The rules of language, also, are conventions in the sense in which methods of harvesting are. Hence, they are neither prescriptive nor descriptive of natural processes.

This characteristic of linguistic laws, their conventional aspect, suggests the sense in which there is neither inevitability about linguistic rules nor total arbitrariness in them. The laws of language are neither purely capricious nor are they descriptions of unchangeable facts. The mechanisms of language are always to some extent determined by the situations in which language is used, just as methods of reaping are determined to some extent by the natural laws involved in the structure and properties

of grain. But there is not any sort of absolute necessity--such as laws of logic or laws of nature that cannot be other than they are--which dictates the rules of language. The rules of language are conventions like those of reaping, not like the purely conventional ones of a harvest dance, and may be said to be neither descriptive nor prescriptive.

Prescriptive laws, of course, may be described, and the rules of language may be described without reference to what sort of rules linguistic rules are. But in the philosophic investigation of the problems of meaning, the nature of the rules themselves should be considered, since we are concerned in this case not with a particular meaning or meanings but with the nature of linguistic meaning in general. This philosophic question is a further question beyond that of determining what the rules for the use of a particular word are.

#### Rules: Theory and Practice

There may be a theory of any practice--as of anything else. A position in which "theory" is viewed as inherently nonsensical may rest sometimes on an apparent similarity with questions of the sort discussed in Prescriptive and Descriptive Rules. It is not unusual for the notion of the following of rules as conscious guides to be confused with the implicit following of laws formulated in, e.g., laws of nature. That linguistic practice does not require deliberate application of rules of grammar, etc., may be taken as implying that the practice of language does not involve any rules at all. That is, the fact that language is a practice may be taken as antithetical to its having a theory; the destruction of the notion of the "application of rules," through its ambiguity, may be

thought to destroy also the notion of analysis into principles that is the heart of "theory."

It may be misleading to speak of philosophy as a meta-activity-- or to speak when doing philosophy as though it were--if by "meta-activity" is meant discourse on another level and in another vocabulary than ordinary discourse. This view, however, ought to be distinguished from the view that philosophy must not be "theoretical."

"Theory" is used in some contexts to distinguish "pure" from "applied" knowledge or "practice." It may also be used to mean an hypothesis, which sense is closely related to another, perhaps more fundamental sense, that of a systematic view of the principles of something. In this last sense, "theory" must be involved to some extent in any kind of investigation--in any attempt to answer questions of a higher degree of generality than that of "What is the meaning of 'rat'?"

A technical distinction may be made between a theory as a systematic view of the principles of something and as a notion of how to do something. When one speaks of a "theory" of a practice or activity it might mean either a systematic view of the principles involved or a view of how to go about performing the activity.

As far as the issues now being considered are concerned, to view language as a practice or activity is useful in considering, among other matters, the nature of the laws or rules of language and the nature of linguistic meaning. In other words, viewing language as an activity or practice in the present context is for the purpose of developing a "systematic view of the principles" of language, i.e., a "theory." It is in this sense that a "theory" of language is being sought here. A systematic view of the



principles of linguistic meaning will be sought through considering language as an activity.

#### The Nature of Word-meaning

The analysis of "use" on pages 31-35 suggested the desirability for a use theory of meaning to distinguish between: (1) the practice and the theory of linguistic meaning, and (2) the source and product of meaning. In regard to the first of these points, it may be said that, looking at language as a practice, the use of words creates linguistic meaning, and "the meaning is the use" is interpretable in this context as explaining the creating of meaning; while in a philosophic view (a "theory" in the sense of a "systematic view of the principles," as discussed in the preceding section) that takes the "use" of words as fundamental to the explanation of linguistic meaning, language as a practice takes a central position, and "the meaning is the use" is interpretable in this context as explaining the nature and possibility of meaning.

In regard to the second point listed above (regarding the desirability of distinguishing between the source and product of meaning), it will be argued in the following discussion that "the meaning of a sentence," as distinct and different from the meaning of words, is desirable in a use theory of meaning.

That the uses of words are equivalent to their meanings was taken as given at the outset of this study. We have seen, however, that a "use" may refer to an actual employment of a word in a sentence, the manner in which it functions in various sentences and contexts, or, again, the "usage" that creates a convention of use. Furthermore, there are certain uses of words--e.g., ironic uses--that are not at all equivalent to their meanings.

It is therefore necessary to define exactly in what sense of "use" it makes sense to say that the meaning of a word is its use.

The use theory was developed in response to what were held to be inadequacies and inaccuracies in the Tractatus theory, and related theories, in which the possibility of meaning was held to lie in objects in the world with which words are correlated, and in the logical structure common to propositions and to this world of objects arranged into facts. So, in this type of theory, the nature of meaning was two-fold: It was composed of "semantic" and "syntactic" elements that together explained the possibility of meaning by explaining the possibility of sentences.

If a use theory is to be very valuable as a theory of meaning it should explain not only words--the "semantic" elements, but sentences--for which "syntactic" elements were introduced in theories related to that of the Tractatus. But, there is no need for a distinction between "semantic" and "syntactic" in a use theory of the meaning of words. If the meaning of words is their use, the "rules of use" or "conventions" describe their manner of use in sentences at the same time that they describe the "meanings." "Semantic" and "syntactic" collapse together into "use."

Another way of saying this is to say that the rules of use of words are the same as the rules of the construction of sentences. There is no double set of rules, one for words and one for sentences, in terms of which words and sentences may be defined and distinguished from one another. In fact, it is not necessary to distinguish between words and sentences as meanings in this type of view, considered in itself (without reference to other views of meaning that do make such a distinction). That is, "the use of words" insofar as it is equivalent to words as

meanings simply is the use of words in sentences. A sentence is a case of the use of words.

So, the sense in which the meaning of a word is "its use" may be defined in terms of that which constitutes an actual use of words--a sentence. A word by itself is merely a possible meaning, and of importance to a general theory of meaning only as embodying the conventions or rules whose practice is the active use of words. But, as actual meanings, words must be in use, which is to be in use as parts of sentences. That is, the rules of the use of a word constitute what might be called a "possible meaning," while an application of these rules (a use of the word) might be called an "actual meaning."

The words of a sentence are not to be theoretically distinguished from the meaning of the sentence because the words together simply are that meaning. Insofar as "the words" are taken as designating the marks on a page or the sounds spoken, however, they may be said to be the "sign" of the sentence, distinguishing the sentence as a sign (or "symbol") from the sentence as a meaning. This distinction is useful in certain contexts, but to the problems presently under discussion "the words" of sentences are relevant as meanings rather than as "signs."

The distinction sometimes drawn between "token-words" and "type-words" is similarly irrelevant to the present discussion. Each occurrence of the word "x" may be designated a "token-word," numerically different from every other appearance of "x." Since the sounds (or written forms) of all such tokens are similar, they may be used as a "type-word." One might speak of token-words as "occurrences," "appearances," or "uses" of

type-words. Besides this sort of "use," which is roughly equivalent to an "utterance," there is also that "use" which consists in the pattern of use of the token-words. Such a pattern of use is what has been referred to above as a "convention of use." To speak, then, of the "use" of token words is to speak of appearances or utterances (spoken or written) of what are recognizable as standing for a type-word. They are recognized as such because of similarity of aural or visual form, but this form reflects a pattern or similar or analogous "uses" of the token-words which may be equated with the type-word. A type-word is a meaning, a convention of use, created by means of utterances of token-words. The pattern of use of token-words of similar printed and spoken form constitutes a type-word. It is these type-words with which we are now concerned.

(Eliminating distinctions--such as type-token, sign-meaning--by ruling out one side as "irrelevant," amounts to defining the problem with which I wish to deal. There are other, related problems to which these rejected distinctions may be relevant, or perhaps even indispensable. They are irrelevant to the present inquiry in that the problem under investigation is definable through specification of what terms are not within its frame, what distinctions collapse in relation to it.)

One difficulty in the examination of the relationships between words and sentences lies in the fact that words in one sense derive their meanings from sentences (in that they derive their meanings from their use in sentences) while, on the other hand, sentences derive their meanings from words (in that they are composed of them). If sentences are viewed as actual meanings, and words are viewed as requiring use in sentences in order to acquire actual meaning, then the derivation of the meaning of

sentences could be said to lie in the words whose use produces them. In this case, the derivation of the meaning of words could be viewed as the derivation of linguistic meaning in general.

"Derivation," "source," or "origin" of meaning, as used here, are meant to refer to a type of relationship between aspects of language, rather than to historical questions of, e.g., etymology. Words are sometimes said to be the building materials of sentences, but with the collapse of "syntactic" and "semantic" into one term, "use," there arises the problem of what is to be considered to be the fundamental unit of meaning, that in terms of whose use the meaning of any aspect of language is definable.

If it is asked what the derivation or origin of the meaning of a particular word is, such a question may be answered by reference to the word's convention of use--i.e., "It means this because it is (has been) used this way." But, if it is asked what the derivation of the meaning of words in general is, then to refer to the existence of conventions would be to beg the question, because "words" here is to be taken in the sense, not of "articulated sounds," but of "meanings." Words as meanings are the embodiment of the conventions of meaning, and conventions cannot be said to be the origin of conventions.

The first question is an historical one, while the second might be characterized as about the "possibility" of meaning. In "the use of words," we might answer, lies the possibility of meaning. It has been argued in this chapter that words as such are "possible meanings," but, also, that they are not actual meanings except in use--i.e., as parts of sentences. They are possible meanings because they have possible uses

in sentences. Thus, the possibility of the meaning of words might be said to lie in the possibility of their use in sentences.

"Use," insofar as it is the source of linguistic meaning, is defined in this way as "use in or as a sentence." All types of uses of words, all aspects of the use of words, are not among those which are the meaningful uses, viz., those in which the word is used as part of a sentence. Sentences are the source of meaning in that it is use in or as sentences in which the possibility of meaning lies.

The nature of "the meaning of a sentence" will be examined in Chapter III. So far it has been contended only that such a notion is fundamental to explanation of word-meaning. The notion of a sentence--of an entity of meaning distinct from and different from words--has been characterized, in this chapter, as that in terms of which the "use of words" may be identified with "the meaning of words." As will be developed in the following chapter, this view of the sentence is intended to specify the manner in which "use" is meaning, and the manner in which words and sentences are related to their larger "contexts," a term whose sense will also be specified in Chapter III.

## CHAPTER III

### MEANING AS USE: SENTENCES AND ACTION

It has been argued in the preceding chapter that the notion of a sentence as a meaning distinct and different from words or possible meanings is derivable from a use theory of word-meaning. This chapter will attempt to define what is important about this notion. As the preceding chapter presented a view of a way in which the meaning of a word may be said to be its "use" (viz., as a convention of use), this chapter will present a view of how the meaning of a sentence may be said to be its "use"--viz., as the function of an action. It will be argued that the notion of an action, of the type a sentence is, may be interpreted as involving an "activity," or language-game, of which it forms part.

If it is asked, "What is a sentence?" there are a number of answers that are equally correct. For, a sentence is many things--a series of words, one of the grammatical structures accepted in the language as sentences, a form, a function, a (manufactured) tool, and also an action and part of one or more activities. The problem of this chapter is to determine what is characteristic of sentences as meanings, strictly speaking.

#### Sentences as Meanings

As observed in the preceding chapter, it would usually be pointless to call any meaningless sound a meaningless "word," since it would

be thought to be a meaning if it were thought to be a word. To speak of "meaningless sentences" is similarly artificial and not usually of much value, because in most contexts "sentence" means "meaningful series of words," and it is its meaningfulness that leads one to call it a sentence. One might, of course, call a series of words a sentence without sufficient evidence--because it looked or sounded like a sentence--and subsequently say it was really meaningless. Nevertheless, the judgment that it was a sentence, whether justified or not, would be based on the belief or assumption that it did not mean something in the way other sentences do.

It is not of much value in the present context to distinguish between the "sign" of a sentence--its visible or audible characteristics--and the "meaning" of a sentence. When we do speak of the "meaning of sentences" it might seem from the structure of the phrase that the sentence is something independent of its meaning. But, where we commonly speak of the "meaning of sentences" is in contexts in which sentences are being contrasted with other sorts of meaningful things--words, mathematical propositions, etc. It is mainly in contexts in which words and sentences are treated as meaningful that phrases with the structure "the meaning of x" arise. Thus, both "words" and "sentences" are themselves sorts of meanings--but, although it is more accurate to distinguish between the sign of the word and the word itself (a symbol or meaning) than to speak of a distinction between a word and its meaning, in the case of sentences there is, besides the distinction between the signs and the symbols of its words, the further distinction between these words and the sentence itself. Without this distinction, it would seem that any series of words would be theoretically indistinguishable from a series constituting a sentence. But, as was discussed in the preceding chapter, the words of a



sentence, as meanings, and the meaning of the sentence itself are interpretable as identical entities.

When the "sign" of a sentence is distinguished from its "meaning" (or the "proposition" expressed by it), the difference between how and what a sentence means may be intended. Also, though, it may be intended to distinguish between "arbitrary signs" and their "meanings." In the present view, these two distinctions are not to be equated. The manner or means and the product in linguistic meaning are not to be identified, respectively, with words and sentence.

In this chapter, then, "the meaning of a sentence" is to be understood as synonymous with "a sentence as a meaning."

### Sentences: Function and Form

#### Sentential Form

The Tractatus attempted to define the meaning of sentences in terms of a common form--the "general form of proposition." A sentence was viewed as having a (logical) form peculiar to all sentences. Even if such a common form could be discovered, however, it would not necessarily be what is essential to sentential meaning. In this chapter it will be argued that, on the contrary, all meaning ultimately may be defined in terms of function, rather than of form.

It was observed in the preceding chapter that the conventions of the use of words should be emphasized in order to explain the sense in which a word has a "form"--that is, as the totality of possibilities of its use. A word can be said to have a "form" only in this metaphorical sense, of course, but sentences have the perceptible forms expressed in formulations of "syntactic" or "grammatical" rules, as well. The characteristic

forms of sentences generally are what tell us which series of words are sentences and which are not. That it is the syntactical configurations of words that are the means by which identification of sentences is made, however, is a different matter from the problem of what is essential to sentences as meanings.

There are at least two separate questions that may be expressed as "What is a sentence?" the questions of identification and of nature. It is important to recognize that they require different types of answers, because the question of identification is a practical one and that of nature a theoretic one.

If the form of a sentence is viewed as constituting its meaning, this form could not be interpreted as the conventional syntactic forms of sentences, unless, as was discussed in Chapter I, there could be found a sentential schema or common form. The breakdown of sentential types given in grammar books is a generalization of those conventions by which sentences are recognized as sentences--a practical problem of identification. But, to take the form of sentences as what is essential to their meaning is theoretically mistaken, because it is to confound that by which we decide what has meaning (form) with meaning itself (function), i.e., the possibility of meaning (conventions) with the activity (process or function) of meaning itself.

It has been argued that a word has a meaning in the sense that it has a set of possible uses. That is to say that words, except in the sense of their written or spoken signs, are possible functions. In the case of sentences, however, there is a "form" that is literally a configuration of words. The convention of use of a word replaces as "form" the design of a tool. There is a form of any given sentence, however, which, even though

it might be a thoroughly conventional one, is real and not metaphorical.

The source of the "form" of a word is in conventional usage. A convention of use ("usage"), that is, creates the possible uses that make up any word as a meaning. The source of the form of a sentence, on the other hand, might seem to lie in the agency of the speaker. A speaker uses words to construct sentences for particular purposes--to fulfill certain functions. In this sense, a sentence might be said to have a particular form because it was constructed for a particular purpose, as a hammer is.

But, the "because" here may be interpreted as making reference to either the source, in this sense, or the possibility. The form of a sentence is a composite of the (forms of the) words that are in it. The sentence has the form it has because it was designed for certain purposes. The possibility of this form lies, however, in the conventions that make symbols out of sounds. So, the purposes of a speaker are fulfillable because the words exist to express his "meaning"--i.e., the intended meaning. The existence of linguistic conventions makes it possible for an intended meaning to be expressed as a sentential meaning.

The possibility of sentential form thus lies in the established conventions of words. The source of the form of a sentence, however, might seem to lie not in the usage of words which has made them capable of meaning, but in the intentions or purposes of the speaker or writer constructing the sentence, since a speaker uses words to construct sentences with particular purposes. But, while it is certainly correct to observe that, in one sense, the source of the form of any sentence is its speaker, this fact is really irrelevant to the fact that the sentence has

a meaning, and that this meaning is what it is. The source, origin or derivation of meaning that is of importance for the problem at hand is that in which the possibility of meaning lies. If the form of a sentence is taken as equivalent to its meaning, then the possibility of the form is found in the conventions of the use of words.

The distinction between "type" and "token," discussed in the preceding chapter in relation to word-meaning, also needs to be interpreted for sentence-meaning. The datable occurrences of a particular sentence, "tokens" of it, should not be identified with "actual" meanings or sentences, but, instead, a sentence as a meaning may be identified with the notion of a sentence-"type." Like tokens of words, tokens of sentences have patterns of use (although there would not be much point in describing them as "conventions of use") and these may be said to constitute sentence-"types." "Actual" meanings are patterns of use in the same sense in which words, "possible" meanings, are. The "meanings" that are words, phrases or sentences all are patterns of use, and, thus, "types" as contrasted with "tokens," but the patterns of words and phrases are parts of patterns of sentences. "Conventions of use" are derived from patterns of sentences, however, and it is this aspect of the use of words that I wish to suggest by the term "possible meaning." "Actual" meaning, on the other hand, is intended to suggest that sentences are the fundamental uses of language, those in terms of which other uses are explicable.

It was argued in the preceding chapter that words are not the fundamental entities of meaning, and it was suggested that, instead, sentences are. Why not paragraphs, though, or some other division of language? Sentences are fundamental, I believe, because: (1) words, phrases

and sentences are the parts of language that have patterns of use, while the uses or functions involved in paragraphs, essays, language-games, etc., have as forms in common, patterns, only those of sentences and parts of them, and, therefore, sentences or certain parts of them are fundamental; (2) it is sentences rather than some sub-division of them, that are fundamental, because (as argued in Chapter II) words and phrases occur only in sentences, have meaning only in relation to them, and may be defined only in terms of them.

It might appear that sentences, in contrast to words, have meaning in isolation, i.e., outside the context of a language-game, since some (probably most) sentences uttered in isolation convey some meaning not conveyed by single words uttered in isolation. (This is partly responsible for the temptation to view sentences by themselves as "complete," or even "fixed," meanings.)

Why do we think of such sentences as conveying "some meaning," though? The meanings of the words of a sentence are specified in meaning by their use in the sentence. Their senses are made specific to some degree by being put into the context of a sentence, and in this way a sentence "fixes" the meanings of its words to various degrees. Thus a sentence out of context has a somewhat more definite meaning than does a word out of context--its sense is clear to some degree, depending upon the particular sentence.

As discussed in Chapter I, some correspondence theories of truth may be said to involve a "meaning-freeze" in the notion of a proposition. If the meaning of just certain sentences--those capable of being either

true or false--could be exactly specific, complete and fixed, then the notion of a meaning-freeze in propositions perhaps might be appropriate for the purposes of these correspondence theories. But, although there is greater specificity in sentences than in words, and sentences are capable of a high degree of specificity, there is an important sense in which the meanings of sentences are not totally independent of the context of a language-game.

The functional nature of meaning involves interrelations of sentences with some context(s). It will be argued below that besides the immediate context, the language-game in which the sentence plays a role, there are other language-games in which the same and similar sentences play roles, and these contexts also contribute to the meaning of the sentence. Nevertheless, there are sentences--e.g., "All men are fools"--that might seem to have context-independent meanings. Such sentences, viewed outside any immediate language-game, have a meaning in a sense that sentences of more vague, less specified meaning--e.g., "Was it down there?" do not. The meanings of sentences of the latter kind are more dependent upon their immediate contexts than are those of the former kind, whose meanings are more completely determined by the larger context (of other language-games in which the same and similar sentences play roles). Thus, although there is a sense in which certain sentences may be said to be context-independent--viz., in that their meanings are independent of the context of any immediate language-game (at least to a great degree) but are determined by language-games which are not at a given time being "played," there is another sense in which sentences are always to some degree context-dependent--viz., in that there is one or more language-game

in relation to which the sentence has a meaning.

(There is another type of sentence--e.g., "It's raining"--which also seems to be context-independent, but in a different way. This type of sentence might be said to be independent of any language-game at all because it could conceivably never be used within any linguistic context at all. This is a more complex matter than that of sentences like "All men are fools," but the reasons for holding that this sort of sentence also is context-dependent in a fundamental way will be clear when the notion of "basic activities" is developed below, since these sentences are directly dependent upon "basic activities," and only indirectly upon related linguistic activities.)

If the "meaning of words" is their use, as interpreted in the preceding chapter, then to interpret the meaning of sentences as their form could involve a notion of the sentence as a configuration or structure made out of other, conventional forms--words. The meaning of such a form could be said to lie in its created design, as the meanings of its constituent forms lie in their conventional "forms," or possible functions. The meaning of a sentence in this interpretation would lie in a set of possible functions which its form makes possible.

There remains the possibility that the nature of sentential meaning is to be found in such a "form" conceived as the totality of potential functions.

### Sentential Function

If the meaning of a sentence (a sentence as a meaning) is a "function," it must be quite different from the sort of function that is the meaning of a word. A word, as discussed in Chapter II, is similar to a

tool--specifically, similar to an improvised tool such as a stone which comes to be called a tool on account of its use to do something, and only insofar as it has been so used. A sentence, on the other hand, would seem to be similar to a designed tool, such as a hammer. But, only the words of a sentence (i.e., the composite form made up of the word-forms) are really analogous to a designed tool such as a hammer.

Indeed, the meaning of a sentence is more closely analogous to the act of using a designed tool. The meaning, which is neither an entity, a common form, nor a family of possible functions, involves both (1) that there be a tool designed to be used for certain purposes and (2) that there be an act of use. The words of the sentence are put together, like a tool, into a form suitable for certain functions or jobs; this form, though, is the form of an action. Thus, the meaning is actual in that it is an action.

The function of the words of a sentence and the function of the sentence itself need not be differentiated. The words are the "form" of the sentence, but the sentence itself is an action, not an object or quasi-object. Thus, the words are not elements in the structure of an object, but elements of the acting aspect of the sentence. So, as an action, a sentence has an aspect that is the doing or acting as well as another aspect that is the deed, action or what has been done. The words together form the acting aspect of a sentence. The functioning of the words is equivalent to the functioning of the sentence, because the aspect of the sentence that has a function is the words.

The action, on the other hand, is the result of the use of words, of the acting. It is this which is the aspect of the sentence that is its "meaning." The meaning is the aspect of an action (the sentence) that is



that which is done, the result of the acting, the "action" itself.

Thus, a sentence as an action may be viewed as a composite of means and ends, of the acting and the action or results. The "sign" and the "proposition" that it signifies are better conceived of as aspects of a sentence, which is itself an action and not an object or quasi-object. The "type" and the "token" both may be interpreted as actions, the "token" as a datable one and the "type" as one specifiable in terms of a context of one or more language-games. These also might be said to be two aspects of any given sentence, but it is the action in the sense applicable to the "type" that is identifiable as a meaning as a function--that with which this study is concerned.

Since a sentence is created out of conventions, the action is one made by means of conventions and is a structure of conventions. So, the ("grammatical") form of a sentence is made literally out of words, but it is not like a structure or form made of a "material" of words or "semantic" meanings, and yet it is the form of something--viz., an action.

Words are the material of meaning in the sense that they are the potentiality of meaning. An action that is a sentence is one made possible by the existence of these conventions and made actual by their use. Usage, though, is a body of actions and the "rules of use" that may be abstracted from this body of actions are not themselves actual meanings but, rather, are descriptive of these actions. Therefore, meaning should not be explained exclusively in terms of rules of the use of words.

There is no essential nature of a word, nor even a means of identifying one, since what sign is a word and what is not is merely a matter of convention, of what is so used. But, there can be said to be an essential nature of words collectively, of the material of meaning as a whole. This

essential nature may be said to be one of conventions established through usage.

This is to define the nature of the rules of use of words. These rules describe the established possibilities of the relationships between words. Thus, they describe the manner of the construction of sentences. The observation that these rules of the use of words are rules describing conventions is an observation about the nature of the rules, rather than an observation about the words themselves. For, there could be nothing common to the meaning of all words (or of all sentences), but there is something common to the manner of their meaning--viz., the common nature of the rules describing how they mean.

In the case of sentences, also, the manner in which they mean is described by the rules of the use of words, since words are the material of sentential meaning. The rules of the use of words describe the possibilities of sentences, i.e., the possibilities of action of a certain kind.

Meaning should be explained not in terms of the rules of use of words, but in terms of action. The manifestation of meaning depends upon action, so the definition of words as well as sentences should be in terms of action. In the preceding chapter words were defined in terms of their relationship to sentences, since it was contended that the concept of a word was dependent upon that of a sentence. If sentences are interpreted as actions, words are ultimately definable as parts of these actions--the signs or representations of linguistic rules.

#### Sentences: Use and Action

Since action is an inseparable aspect of "use," it is important to examine how it is involved in meaning--of both words and sentences.

Words in isolation are merely possible meanings and have no actual meaning except when used in sentences. That is, words have no meaning except in use, and it is in sentences that the relevant type of use is made. (Of course, words may be "used" in other ways--a large number, perhaps--besides the basic way in which they are used as meanings in sentences.) In investigating what is essential to this basic type of use of words, it should also be seen what is essential to actual, as opposed to merely possible, meanings.

If words are used--no matter whether in the basic manner or some other--an action is performed, an act of use. If, for example, someone were taught how to enunciate aloud the printed words of a language he did not understand at all, there would be a sense in which he could be said to be "using" the words--in speaking their sounds. This is an illuminating case since, further, there would be a sense in which the words spoken had meaning, but clearly not on account of their pronunciation by this non-comprehending reader.

The words as printed on the page either do or do not have meaning, of course, regardless of whether or not they are read, silently or aloud, by anyone. Utterance is not meaningful use, although it may be a necessary part of the means to meaningful use. Utterance is clearly an act, as well, and this act therefore is not one of meaningful use.

The sense in which the words as spoken would have meaning in the case given would be as used by the original writer rather than the actual speaker. The sort of use that is relevant to the philosophic problem of meaning is not use as utterance by anyone--the original writer any more than a reader. Meaningful use is an act of a different sort.

One knows that an action that is a sentence has been performed, usually, when one has heard (or seen) the utterance of conventional sounds (or written signs) in a series that meets the grammatical conditions for a sentence in the language in use. This, however, is a test used in identification. It is how a series of words actually is commonly identified as having a meaning of the sentential type. The philosophic question now under investigation, though, is not "How is a sentence to be identified?" but, rather, "How is a sentence to be defined?"

The problem of definition involves "use" in a different way from the way in which it is involved in identification. In identifying a word or series of words as a sentence, one is exercising a skill--a basic skill involved in using language, since to recognize what series of words constitute sentences is to recognize what might play a part in an imaginable language-game. To define a sentence, however, is to describe, instead, the nature of this skill itself, as well as that of other, related skills--i.e., its relationship to the total activity of language.

"Use," in all its senses, implies a user. "Function," in contrast, refers purely to the manner of operation, without hint of any kind of agent. But "use" carries with it the idea of someone (or, in rare cases, something) who employs the thing used, in addition to the idea of the functioning of the thing.

So, for "use," action is involved in two ways: There is the action of something on its surroundings or field of action; and, there is the action of an agent that puts the thing itself into action. In the case of words, it is more to the point to speak of them as being used than of their

functioning, since, fundamentally, they are human tools, in the sense discussed in Chapter II. Being fundamentally tools used by humans, they are tools in more than the metaphorical senses in which "tool" is stretched to cover anything serving as a means to an end. This aspect of the analogy does not militate, however, against recognition of a fundamental distinction between agency and operation or functioning. Similarly, the fact that both agency and functioning may be treated as actions should not obscure the distinction between them.

It might be argued that using a tool, e.g., pounding with a hammer, is more properly labelled an "act" than an "action." When the two terms are contrasted, "action" is sometimes used to designate the process of a function being performed, while, in contrast, "act" sometimes designates what is done by someone. "Act" in this usage involves the notion of human agency, and, more important, it often includes both the process of doing and the result of it.

These terms do not, however, have clearly separate functions in ordinary speech. So, as they are being used here, "act" is to be understood as designating only the process of a function being performed, and "action" as the results brought about by this process, or the combination of process and results.

There are "uses" that are themselves actions--"tokens" or occurrences of words or sentences, as well as "uses" that are the rules or conventions of linguistic meaning--"types." The former may be called the "signs" of language, and in this sense the "uses" of words together are identical with the utterances of a sentence. On the other hand, the action that is the type of a sentence is that in terms of which the types of its

words are definable. It is with actions of this sort that we are now concerned.

Any meaning--word or sentence--is a product and function (in the sense of "a quality, trait or fact so related to another that it is dependent upon and varies with that other," Webster's New World Dictionary) of actions. The difficulties in seeing what these meanings consist in are due in part to the fact that, on the one hand, there are the other actions of the immediate context of any given sentence and, on the other hand, there are the actions which determine the usage which in turn determines the form of a given sentence. The analogous aspects or parts of the latter actions may be identified as the words of a language, while actions of the former kind constitute what may be called the "language-game," in which any given sentence is involved.

These two relationships that a sentence has to other sentences--analogies with actions in other language-games and direct relationships with actions constituting the immediate environment or context--together account for its meaning. They are both relationships of one action (the sentence) to other actions. They are, also, both relationships of this action to language-games.

#### Language-games and Actions

The notion of a language-game serves, among other things, to emphasize two important facts about language--that its nature or essential characteristic is that of an activity and that it may be viewed, rather than as a set of words plus syntactic rules, as a group of interrelated activities. In the most fundamental way the possibility of meaning lies in the possibility of indefinite numbers of language-games. What does actually

mean, furthermore, does so because of the existence of interrelated activities, language-games.

In Chapter II were discussed "rules of the use of words" and now it may be asked (1) whether these rules are also the rules of language-games, (2) whether there are also rules of the use of sentences and, if so, (3) whether these are the rules of language-games.

If a sentence is taken apart, analyzed, we may describe the uses of every word in it, and also the modifications of the words upon each other and the limitations placed on each word in this way (the "senses" to which certain of the words are limited). In this way, the rules of the construction of the sentence would be presented.

One problem now at hand is to determine whether or not a complete description of this kind for every sentence participating in a language-game would constitute the rules of the language-game itself. If the rules of the use of words describe the possibilities of sentences, they describe the possibilities of action of one kind, viz., of linguistic meaning, and, therefore, they also would describe the possibilities of the activities formed by these actions, viz., language-games.

To speak, though, as in the first sentence of the foregoing paragraph, of a "complete description of [the rules governing] every sentence participating in a language-game" is really misleading, since it would seem to imply a notion of language-games as fixed in content, as finished entities or processes. A better notion of a language-game, as an instrument of meaning theory, would be, instead, a notion of a set of possibilities. A game such as chess may be described through listing its formal rules--this is the game of chess. This should be distinguished from an

actual (playing of a) game which applies these rules (as well as others, e.g., laws of logic). Just as a game of chess should be thus distinguished from the game, an actual language-game, such as is embodied in a conversation or part of one, should be distinguished from the set of possibilities residing in the rules of the language-game.

The actualization of the set of possibilities that constitutes a language-game takes place in sentences (and other actions) which, together, form actual language-games, or particular instances of language-games. These are instances of application of rules of meaning.

The notion of a language-game is the notion of an activity. Any activity may be seen to be made up of actions. To describe an activity, however, we would describe its governing principles or rules (in the sense discussed in Chapter II). To describe simply the actions constituting one instance of the application of the rules, one "playing," would be to describe, not the activity, but one instance of it. Although an activity is formed out of actions, it is itself described through description of the principles or rules of the actions.

Failure to mark a distinction between the activity and its instances would lead to regarding a language-game as similar to a football game rather than to the game of football. For example, a particular football game may be said to be composed of the sum of the actions taking place in it; the game conceived of as without one of these actions would be another game. The role of a sentence in a language-game is not like this, though, and its nature or defining characteristics would not be discovered on such a limited conception of language-games.

The relation of a sentence to a language-game is, rather, one of



action to rules--because a language-game is a set of possibilities that are never exhausted, i.e., there is never a last possible "playing." If, however, a sentence is viewed solely in relation to the language-game--its immediate context--then only those aspects of its meaning that are generally known as its "sense" in the given context are concerned. If this were what the meaning of a sentence consisted in, then the rules of any single language-game would suffice for generating a sentential meaning. Thus, although the relation of a sentence to its immediate context in a language-game is a relation of this action to the rules of this activity, the meaning of the sentence (the sentence as a meaning) cannot consist entirely in this relationship. The notion of a language-game should involve more than the notion of the matrix of meaning of its elements (actions).

The meaning of any sentence, on the contrary, is derived from a number of uses of language in a number of language-games. All these uses in all these language-games are described by the rules, the formulations of the conventions, of the use of words. Thus, the two categories of relationships that a sentence has to other sentences--viz., analogous sentences in other language-games, and the sentences of the language-game at hand--together account for its meaning. Or, also, it may be said that meaning is produced by the interaction of rules--the rules of other, analogous language-games and those of the immediate language-game.

It was pointed out at the outset of this section that a language-game (1) is better viewed as a group of interrelated activities rather than as a set of words plus syntactic rules, and (2) serves to emphasize that the nature or essential characteristic of language is that of an

"activity." Some implications of the first point having now been discussed, the second will now be examined. The implications of this aspect of the philosophic notion of a language-game are perhaps somewhat more basic to the nature of meaning in general.

An activity may be defined as formed out of actions. Actions seen as without reference or relation to each other, however, would be mere events in time and space. It is when the utterance of (the form of) a sentence is seen as an action in an activity that it is seen as a sentence.

Now, a language-game, as we have seen, may be defined as a set of possibilities of linguistic action. In any instance of the operation of the rules of a language-game (which are not themselves ever defined once and for all, since the boundaries laid out by rules are merely relative to whatever activity is under inspection) any actual utterance may be interpreted as an action by a reference to the activity. (Of course, through recognition of a conventional form of sentence, one might identify the words as a sentence, but this merely would be to see it as a possible function in some language-game.) The interpretation of an action as a function in an activity is complicated by the fact that an instance of a language-game is a series of events progressing in time and thus is a continually evolving structure. The total relationship of any action to the other actions of the language-game is thus not determinable at the time when the action is made.

A given form of words may be interpreted as an action, not because of the fact that it is analogous in form with the forms of other actions in other activities, but because it performs a (possibly novel) function

in the activity going on. An utterance is interpretable as an action only insofar as it forms part of an activity. In order for a form of words to constitute a sentence it must have a function in some language-game. This does not necessarily imply, however, that an activity first must be identified before the words may be identified as functioning together as an action. The action may be seen as implying or suggesting the activity. In such a case, the sentence may be said to express a rule or rules of the activity, and suggest others that together may amount to the rules of the possibilities of actions that constitute a language-game. The utterance of the form of a sentence immediately suggests language-games of which it might form a part--the initial action. The rules of a language-game, in other words, are rules only in the sense of descriptions; they are not prescriptive rules that are followed, nor do they tell what had to occur, but, rather, what simply did occur. What might occur is limited only by the possibilities of analogous language-games.

So, to treat sentences as actions has implications beyond those of treating language as composed of interrelated activities. If a sentence is properly defined as an action, then, as such, it is known to be involved in and connected with a larger context of action, and is (1) fundamentally a function and not an object, and (2) a human deed, practice or performance, as distinct from a natural occurrence.

Returning to the three related questions posed at the outset of this section (see p. 68), from the point of view that now has been outlined, "the rules of the use of words," interpreted as comprising

descriptions of the analogous functions of sentences, must be equivalent to a description of the principles of all possible language-games and, therefore, equivalent to the principles of all possible sentences. "Rules of the use of words" takes in all language and is a comprehensive term for linguistic rules. "Rules of sentences" might be thought to be ambiguous in that it might refer either to the rules of the construction of sentences or to the rules of the "use" or functioning of sentences. It is pointless from the present point of view, though, to so differentiate between the function of words in a sentence and the function of the sentence itself. The function of a sentence just is the function of its words. How the words of a sentence work together is identical with how the sentence functions in its context.

"Rules of language-games" may be equally well equated with rules of words or of sentences, depending upon whether the possibilities or actuality of meaning is to be stressed. The rules of language-games in general are the rules of words, but these in turn depend upon the rules of particular language-games composed of complete actions--sentences. Thus, although all three types of rules may be seen to be essentially equivalent, each is essential to illuminate fundamental aspects of language.

Consequently, to define a word properly is to define, at the same time, sentences and language-games, since the rules of all are identical. To speak of the "use of words," however, is to speak about possibilities of sentences or meanings, while to speak of sentences, on the other hand, is to speak of actual, functioning meanings in the context of a language-game. Here the central term is "sentence" and its definition links "language-games," on the one hand, with "words," on the other.

To understand this it will be useful to recall that differentiation of actions from natural events involves a particular type of differentiation between language (and other types of human activities) and the world. Prima facie, events or occurrences of natural phenomena are indistinguishable from human actions. An event is interpretable as an action only insofar as it forms part of an activity.

Of course, any events whatsoever, including actions, may be viewed as natural events, insofar as they may be described by laws of nature. To describe actions as such, however, it is not sufficient to describe the natural laws involved. To describe an action, e.g., of welding by a mechanic, it would be inadequate merely to describe the physical laws involved in the welding process and, further, it would be inadequate even if the physiological laws involved in the movements of the mechanic were added. These laws would describe the action only as a bare event. To describe it as an action it would be necessary to make reference to the general activity of repairing or building of which the action was part.

Symbolic actions such as sentences may be described in similar terms. Such an action does not take its character as an action from the symbolism constituting its form, but, rather, from its role in an activity.

#### Language-games and Basic Activities

The view of meaning that now has been outlined centers on the idea of "activities." As treated here, "language-games" are activities that include both linguistic and non-linguistic actions. It will be seen why this is the case, if one considers a language-game involving orders or commands. The nature of sentences that are commands is explicable in

terms of the actions made in response to them. These actions therefore are part of the language-game, the total context in which the action operates.

Thus, a "linguistic action" is one that occurs in a "language-game," but this type of activity is not carried on solely by means of words (although there might be particular instances of language-games in which all the actions were sentences). Not all the elements of language-games are linguistic actions.

Language-games are only one type of activity among a multitude of human activities, but they are related to non-linguistic activities in special ways. Meaning is generated in language-games, linguistic activities, but it is a medium of activities as well as a product of them. Most (perhaps even all) activities require language for the performance of some actions of the activity. Language is to this extent required as a medium of the activities.

On the other hand, language is itself an activity. Strictly speaking, meaning is not the product of the activity of language, since it is that activity. However, linguistic meaning is a product of non-linguistic activities. "Language-games" are really one aspect of many activities. They are distinguishable activities that may be isolated for certain purposes--e.g., in order to pursue the philosophic investigation of meaning. But, they are themselves interwoven with other activities and are fundamentally the means, or part of the means, for conducting these other activities.

In order to distinguish these language-relevant activities from language-games themselves, I shall call them "basic activities." These

activities are the foundations of the generation of meaning. If languages are spoken of (quite misleadingly) as "systems of signs," and if linguistic meaning is described in terms of discrete categories of rules, semantic and syntactic, then the assigning of meanings to the signs may come to be seen as how signs are connected with "the world," with what it is they are about. If, instead, we look at meaning in the context of "basic activities," the connections between words and the world appear as more indirect, in general, than naming-connections (which even themselves, perhaps, appear more direct than they often really are). The connections between words and what they are about are generated out of the actions performed by means of words, even in the simplest cases of naming. Thus, sentences are generated out of basic activities, and this generation of meaning is partly a matter of creating relationships between the linguistic actions and the actions of the basic activity.

The fact that meaning is generated as a product of activities is secondary to the fact that it is a medium of activities. Meaning as a means to action is fundamental to the theory of meaning. Meaning as a product of action is useful mainly in explaining the origin or generation of meaning, and is inessential in interpreting its nature.

"Basic activities," then, are fundamental activities carried on in some cases and to some extent with the aid of language. The rules governing basic activities, however, are not those of meaning. More important, the rules of meaning are not part of the rules of basic activities. To consider the rules of meaning is not to single out a certain class of rules out of those governing basic activities, but, rather, to consider one aspect of these activities, viz., one type of activity among all those that are means to the pursuit of the basic activity.

Meaning-rules have to do only with one such "enabling" activity. The notion of an activity, it has been remarked, is relative to the purposes at hand. The rules of meaning have to do with (some of) the same phenomena that constitute a basic activity, which is itself definable in terms of another set of rules describing the same phenomena in another respect.

Basic activities, carried on probably without exception partly by means of meaning-rules, are themselves that for which meaning-rules are used. The actions carried on within these activities are describable as such by rules relating them to these activities. The same events or phenomena may be described in relation to other matters, including the conventions of meaning, but, as such, they are not the same actions.

As an example of a basic activity and related language-games, consider a case in which I am building a shed. I measure beams and planks, saw and hammer, dig support holes, pour cement, etc. I might engage in a number of language-games with myself, with a helper, with a hardware salesman. These language-games are interpretable by reference to the building of the shed. If I were directing my helper to mark off measurements on a beam, I might call out the figures to him and, in order to clarify where they were to be marked off, he might ask questions about where the finished beam was to be placed, etc. In this context, the marking of the beam may be considered as a basic activity. The whole activity of building the shed might be viewed as a basic activity in another context, e.g., one in which I discuss with a hardware salesman the best sorts of lumber to be purchased for the shed. In this case the language-games would be related



to the whole complex of activities that are to be involved in the building of the shed. What is to be identified as a basic activity depends upon the language-games focused upon.

Conclusion: Sentences and Meaning

We call, at various times and in various situations, all relations between sentences and, hence, between words, "meaning." In this chapter there has been outlined a view of the nature of linguistic meaning as lying in actions defined as made by means of the use of words, and determined as actions by their functions in linguistic activities, "language-games." In this way, the relevant sense of "meaning" has been specified.

Since this definition is in terms of the function of a linguistic action, the notion of a language-game has been examined in order to clarify its elements, sentences. This notion may be described as that of a set of interrelated rules for the use of words. Such a set of rules of action embodies certain possibilities of action, by describing types of interrelations between certain linguistic and non-linguistic actions.

The rules of language-games are equivalent to the rules of sentences and of the use of words. These rules, which describe human activities, are neither arbitrary nor necessary, but involve both "facts of nature" and non-necessary customs. This conjunction is reflected in the notion of a language-game as composed of both linguistic and non-linguistic actions, performed in and limited by the human environment.

The notions of "action" and "activity" are central to the interpretation of the use view of meaning outlined in Chapters II and III. The concept of a sentence, an action of a particular type, is the concept of a unit of meaning, in terms of which rules (and words) are distinguished

and out of which language-games are constructed. The "meaning of a sentence" (or "a sentence as a meaning") is thus fundamental in this view of meaning, being used as a theoretic concept for the explanation of meaning.

The notion of "the meaning of a sentence" is obviously quite different from that of the "proposition" in the Tractatus and related theories. It is similar in an important respect, though, viz., as viewing the sentence as the basic unit of linguistic meaning and fundamentally different from word-meanings.

In Chapter I were discussed three analyses of truth and their relationships to meaning as use. The view of meaning outlined in this study will have application in a new analysis of truth. It has application also, however, in the establishment of the nature of the problem of truth and of the nature of philosophic method. Thus, of the principles taken as given in this study--viz., that the nature of linguistic meaning lies in use and that philosophic problems are conceptual--the second now will be interpreted.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PHILOSOPHIC PROBLEM OF TRUTH

#### Some Formulations of the Problem

Among the possibilities of what the philosophic analysis of truth might yield are:

- 1) When a statement is true,
- 2) When we may say a statement is true,
- 3) When we say a statement is true,
- 4) When the word "true" is used.

One is a formulation of what traditionally has been taken as the philosophic problem of truth. This formulation has been interpreted in a variety of ways, including 2, 3 and 4.

If 2 and 3 are considered equivalent to one another, meaning becomes the criterion of truth in that the criteria of "true" having meaning in a particular context would be taken also as the criteria of truth in this same context. If it is mistaken to view these two sets of criteria as equivalent, though, the problem then arises of what the criteria of truth are and what, if any, relation they bear to the conventions that are the criteria (as well as the media) of meaning.

Two might refer to standards other than those of usage. It allows for drawing a distinction between what is in fact true and what is said to be true. It has been argued in the preceding chapters that the conventions of usage that make meaning possible are neither of a completely

arbitrary nor of a completely necessary nature. This does not preclude the possibility, however, that the conventions of a particular word might be exclusively of one kind or the other. One of the most important questions in the case of the word "true" is: Are the rules of its use determined by something more than arbitrary standards of usage?

Implicit in many debates about truth--including that between Austin and Strawson--is a confusion of statements of the type of 1 and 2 with those of the type of 3 and 4. That is, there is a confounding of the question of which standards of truth are conventional with the question of which standards of truth will give the truth. In the case of Strawson, there is also deliberate identification of the conventions of the application of "true" with the conventions of truth, which is coupled with a rejection of the question of what standards of truth will give the truth.

Statements 1 and 2, then, allow for being interpreted as referring to extra-linguistic standards, while 3 and 4 are questions about linguistic usage. The standards of rules of truth may or may not be identical with those rules (or some part of them) that are the conventions of meaning, but it is the job of the philosophic analysis of truth to establish and not assume such an identification, since it is far from commonsensical.

The difference between the two pairs of statements is involved in rejecting the problem of "truth" as a philosophic one, and contending that, instead, the problem of "true" is the properly philosophic one. In the debate discussed in Chapter I, Austin sets up the problem with reference to Pilate's pretentious "What is truth?" "Truth" being an abstract noun is likely to lead one astray, Austin believes, and the use of "true" or "is true" will be less treacherous to analyze. This, of course, gives

the problem still other twists. Most important, if truth is put into adjectival form for analysis, it easily may appear to be something predicated of large units of meaning--e.g., "sentences" or "propositions." Asking what "true" means leads to treating it as a property of semantic units of some kind, such as these. Just as formulating the problem as "What is truth?" puts a certain cast on the matter, so formulating it as "How is 'true' used?" also puts a certain cast on it--viz., the problem is put into the class of 3 and 4 and thus comes to be treated as a search for linguistic rules or conventions.

There are at least two types of formulation of the problem of truth, then, those that may be interpreted as referring to extra-linguistic criteria and those that imply purely linguistic criteria. It is important to note, however, that venturing an answer to the question of linguistic criteria does not dispose of questions of the other type. It should be shown why the philosophic question is formulated in one way rather than others.

#### Method and the Nature of Philosophic Problems

To isolate the problem of truth requires something more than protestations of the modest claims of philosophy when it takes "true" as the proper item for investigation. What constitutes a philosophic problem clearly must have some relation to what is viewed as constituting the proper philosophic method, but the nature of any philosophic problem is not immediately evident from the general view that "meaning is use." To establish a method for investigating the general nature of truth (or any other philosophic problem), some view of the general nature of meaning is not enough. It is further necessary that the analysis of meaning be

established as a method of philosophy, and that the general nature of this type of analysis be outlined.

That the delineation of the nature of a proper philosophic problem is a different sort of task from that of outlining a philosophic method is evident from considering that problems are material for investigation by some method. If philosophy were to be defined in terms of its matter, it would be the study of a certain body of problems. This would be a useful definition, however, only if "problems" were understood as including not only the general designation of any problem, but also its specific formulations, i.e., the various manners in which it has been or may be posed.

It was argued in Chapter II that there may be a theory of the practice that is language, just as there may be a theory of anything else. A theory of language in which meaning is seen as use is not itself, of course, a philosophic method. To treat this theory of language as implying a philosophic method might be done with the idea that language is the material of philosophic inquiry--i.e., that the problems of philosophy are all matters of language. Methods of analyzing language are modeled to a large extent, of course, on theories of the nature of language. In this way, the development of a theory of language becomes central to establishing a method for philosophic investigation. So, indications of the interpretation of the use view adhered to by any particular analytic philosopher may be found in his methods of dealing with various philosophic problems.

In order to establish a suitable method, I shall consider the nature of philosophic problems in general and then consider what sort of

method the nature of these problems suggests. It is only after both of these matters have been considered that formulation of the particular problem--that of truth--can be attempted with a clear idea of what is assumed by the formulation and what remains to be solved.

It has been argued in the preceding chapters that the notion of a word is derivative from that of a sentence, that meaning is basically sentential, and that sentences insofar as they are meanings may be interpreted as actions. What does this interpretation of the view that meaning is use suggest or imply about the nature of philosophic problems?

Other interpretations, such as those discussed in Chapter I, have been linked with the view that the nature of philosophic problems is fundamentally linguistic. Connected with these two factors--the view of meaning as use and the view that philosophic problems are fundamentally linguistic--has been the further contention that a suitable philosophic method is one which examines the "use" of "philosophic" terms or concepts in their "ordinary," extra-philosophic habitats.

Between this view of method, on the one hand, and, on the other, the use theory of meaning and the linguistic theory of the nature of philosophic problems, the links are somewhat tenuous. They may consist in views and arguments of one kind or another that involve treating certain terms--individual words or, at most, phrases--that have commonly been central to formulations of "traditional" philosophic problems, as the proper objects of philosophic inquiry. In this way, traditional problems often are disposed of, in effect, by, first, taking their central terms as objects of inquiry--removing them to their "ordinary" habitats and investigating the sort of use they have there--and, second, concluding that in

the philosophic questions at hand these terms are used improperly, i.e., inconsistently with their use in ordinary discourse.

The rejection of traditional philosophic questions is not made out of hand by such analytic philosophers but is a result of analyses of this kind made of central philosophic terms. A result of this procedure, however, is that the questions investigated by these philosophers are almost exclusively questions about the use of words--showing what is wrong with traditional philosophic uses and advocating other uses consonant with ordinary usage.

This approach is not entirely satisfactory for at least two reasons: (1) meanings of single terms are not the sole problems of philosophy (and are frequently only among the initial ones involved in the investigation of central philosophic problems); (2) the method of investigation, based upon a too limited interpretation of the use view of meaning (in which there is an insufficient treatment of the meaning of sentences) is itself too limited. Thus, neither the delineation of problems nor the method of investigating them is entirely adequate, and for similar reasons, viz., their relationships to interpretations of the use view of meaning that go little further than the use of words.

In the following sections will be outlined, first, a view of the character of philosophic problems and, second, an extended method for philosophic investigation.

#### The Nature of a Philosophic Problem

The formulation of a problem determines, at least to some extent, the methods employed in attempts to solve it. For this reason, theories of the nature of philosophy itself contain views both of the general



character of philosophic problems and of the method to be used to investigate them.

In order to interpret the second large assumption of this study--viz., that philosophic problems are conceptual problems--it will be useful to consider two large categories within which philosophy might find its problems, viz., phenomena and concepts. (By "phenomena" I mean "observables," objects of perception, what is observable through the senses. By "concepts" I mean instruments of thought, as expressed in language. See next paragraph.) It is within the competence of any natural language to refer to both. So, the analysis of language does not limit philosophic inquiry to only those aspects of language that have to do with concepts, nor to those that have to do with phenomena, since many concepts are of or about phenomena. Thus, to define philosophic problems as conceptual is not to eliminate aspects of language that deal with phenomena.

"Concepts" are tools or instruments of thought and are expressed in our actions. Perhaps pre-eminent among these actions are linguistic actions, elements of language-games. The meanings of linguistic actions, i.e., sentences as meanings, are fabrics of concepts.

It might be misleading to say that concepts are meanings of words, though, because this way of putting it might make it seem that a concept is the meaning of a word. This is, perhaps unfortunately, hardly ever likely to be the case. There is, for example, the concept of meaning, which is expressed not only in what we do with the word "meaning" but in what we do with meanings. There are also concepts such as "cause" that can be defined perhaps only along with the concept of "effect" (and, indeed, for some purposes it might be more to the point to speak of "the

concept of cause-and-effect"). It is less misleading to say, therefore, that concepts are exhibited in sentential meanings in a variety of ways, many of which may be quite complex.

To analyze how we use certain concepts is to elucidate what these concepts are. Why should not philosophic analysis be limited, then, to analysis of concepts if philosophic problems are conceptual? Because, for one thing, conceptual and phenomenal language are so closely interwoven in ordinary speech, and, more important, because phenomena influence our concepts, and, conversely, concepts direct the observation of phenomena.

Thus, concepts may be investigated through investigating pertinent aspects of language, but the pertinent aspects might include phenomenal as well as conceptual aspects of speech. In adopting the view that philosophic problems are conceptual, then, and studying these problems in the use of pertinent parts and aspects of language, we are not, in so doing, limiting the field of inquiry to anything less than the whole of natural language.

To study the workings of language, though, involves studying linguistic phenomena, viz., signs and the manner in which they are used (in relation to each other and to other things). Philosophic problems are concerned with these phenomena, however, only insofar as they manifest concepts pertinent to the problems. In the view of the present study, "words" are not equivalent to these phenomena (even though they are co-extensive), since words as such are merely conventionally singled out from sentences, and represent only the smallest units of meaning held in common between all sentences containing them. There being nothing

fundamental about words as meanings, they are not the phenomena of language that are relevant to philosophic investigation of meaning.

The relevant entities of language are meanings, i.e., sentences--events of which the signs held in common, words, are merely an aspect. So, to set forth a philosophic problem involves deciding which sentences or types of sentences are relevant to the problem. The objects of study are particular uses of language.

Since there is quite often no one-one correspondence between a concept and a word, it is not enough to examine all the sorts of sentences in which a word ostensibly naming a single concept appears. The sorts of language-games where these sentences appear and the relationships of the sentences to other elements of these language-games are often fundamental in exhibiting the concept. Since language-games often include actions other than sentences, relationships of the sentences to these elements are also important in such an investigation. Indeed, the relationships between linguistic and non-linguistic elements of a language-game are often of fundamental importance since they may suggest the links of the language-game to a larger context of one or more basic activities. Since it is basic activities that use and generate meaning, it is the relationship of concepts to basic activities that should be the ultimate focus of the philosophic method of conceptual analysis.

Language is the material of philosophy, then, because it manifests concepts, and these often are embodied in the interrelations of a variety of activities. If language is fundamentally sentential and sentences are fundamentally actions within activities, then philosophic

problems are problems about certain aspects of linguistic activities--viz., those that manifest the meaning of concepts.

Since meaning is definable in terms of the actions that may be performed by means of it, there is a sense in which concepts, as well as words, have meanings. There are non-linguistic actions that may be performed in part by means of concepts--indeed, most human actions probably involve concepts originating in activities involving language. Even skills such as driving a car or perhaps even pitching a baseball may be argued to essentially involve concepts.

The "uses of words," or, more accurately, sentences, are the material for philosophic investigation insofar as they reflect the functions of concepts. So, it is not because words "stand for" concepts that the study of meaning is crucial in philosophy, but, rather, because it is the meaning of concepts themselves that is the concern of philosophy. That is, it is the relationship of a concept to other concepts and other things that is of interest, and this is its "meaning." The ways we say things--the mechanisms of linguistic meaning--are of interest insofar as they illuminate the ways we conceive things.

Linguistic meaning is a phenomenon, i.e., it is manifested in observable facts, but, also, it is a concept--or, more accurately, a set of interrelated concepts, which cluster around "mean." If these concepts were adequate in every way, for all purposes, there would be no need for philosophic theories of meaning. On the other hand, if all concepts were adequate in every way there would be no philosophic problems at all.

Conceptual adequacy involves not only clarity and consistency of related concepts but also adequacy in dealing with the related phenomena.

So, in order to clarify concepts it is necessary to examine them in relation to phenomena as well as to other concepts.

On the basis of the above analysis of the nature of concepts and their relations to linguistic and related meaning, concepts are means to action that are reflected in linguistic and related actions. Therefore, conceptual problems are problems arising out of the meanings of concepts --i.e., arising in connection with actions resulting from the use of concepts. These problems may be approached through examination of the milieu of activities in which concepts are used.

#### Philosophic Method

Language-games are fundamental to the view of the meaning of sentences developed in Chapter III. The notion of a language-game was defined there insofar as required by the theory of meaning. Now it will be considered how this concept is involved in the analysis of philosophic problems.

If philosophic methods are to be directed toward explicating concepts, this may be done in part through description of the relevant meaning-actions--the interrelationships of sentences containing the word(s) "naming" the concept, and those, as well, whose functioning in language-games is interdependent with these sentences. To limit investigation to those sentences that actually contain (or might contain, i.e., may be translated into sentences that do contain) the name(s), would be to investigate only one aspect of language-games in which these words have meaning, whereas their meaning is completely described only with reference to the total context.

The relevant meaning-actions are not the only requirements of conceptual analysis, however, since language-games have been interpreted as containing, at least sometimes, actions other than linguistic ones. (Pointing is an example of such an action.) There may be, as well, extra-symbolic activities ("basic activities") that form a context for a language-game. The activities that generate meaning-activities or language-games should be the primary focus of investigations of philosophic problems, since, fundamentally, they generate the relevant concepts.

Thus, philosophic investigation should attempt to isolate these "basic activities" that generate the contexts in which the relevant concepts are found, and then analyze how the concepts function. In studying these functions, there are three levels of activity to be investigated: (1) relationships between concepts within individual language-games; (2) relationships of these concepts with other, non-linguistic actions and other phenomena; and (3) relationships between such language-games and the resultant interrelationships of the concepts. These represent the most important aspects of "basic activities" as related to language-games.

The aim of such a philosophic method is, first, to determine what sorts of actions may be performed by means of particular concepts (and in many cases what other actions may be performed on account of these actions) and, second, through the explication of concepts thus arrived at, to attempt to deal with philosophic issues in which they are involved. In effect, then, the examination of the meaning or function of concepts leads to formulations of rules, which may be applied then to the problems in which these concepts are involved.

### The Philosophic Problem of Truth

Philosophy, whatever else it may be, is a search for truth. Therefore, any theory of the nature of philosophic problems implies some view of truth, since in the formulations of philosophic problems lie views of where truth may be, that is, what questions might be answered.

The problem of truth holds a central position in any philosophic point of view, since, fundamentally, a point of view is a notion of truth. A notion of truth must be among the first principles, explicit or not, upon which a philosophic point of view stands. Similarly, any theory of the proper method of philosophy (apart from any view of philosophic problems) implies some view of truth, since a notion of a proper method is a notion of how to carry on the search for truth.

That truth is a concept with an intimate connection to sentential meaning is evident from the frequent ways in which truth and sentential meaning have been closely associated in analytic theories. Interpretations of this sort may be viewed as related to the fact that the locus of the possibility of truth, i.e., that which has the capacity of being true or false, must have meaning. And, it has been argued, what has meaning pre-eminently is sentences. In this way, "that which is true or false" may come to be treated as a sentential meaning.

The problem of truth often has been approached by asking, first, "What sort of thing may be true?" and, second, "What does the truth of such a thing consist in?" That is, first what is possibly true is singled out, and then what is actually true. Now, when the answer to the first question is given as some sort of statement, proposition, etc., this may lead to seeking an explanation of the possibility of truth in the

meanings of statements, etc. The possibility of truth, however, need not be sought in this direction at all.

(We predicate "true" of various sorts of things--pictures, stories or accounts, measurements, copies, linguistic meanings, beliefs, descriptions, works of art, etc. In the present study we are mainly concerned with only one application of "true," in sentences of the form: "p is true" [p standing for a sentence]. Since, in the view of this study, sentences are the fundamental units of meaning, whenever "true" is predicated of any linguistic meaning it is ultimately predicated of sentences. The non-linguistic things of which "true" is sometimes predicated--e.g., true copies, measurements, pictures--do not present problems of the type discussed in most of this study, which is therefore almost exclusively concerned with truth as predicated of sentences. In Chapter V it will be argued that the view of truth developed for "true" as predicated of sentences extends to "true" as predicated of other sorts of things.)

The question "What sort of thing may be true?" may be treated as asking only for the type of sentences of which "true" is predicated. The sort of "possibility" that these sentences exhibit is merely that "true" is grammatically applicable to them. There is no need to treat sentences of this kind as having intrinsic properties mysteriously connected with "truth."

There is no need, either, to go on and identify such properties with the meaning of these sentences, reasoning that whatever is true or false must be meaningful and therefore the "possibility" of truth must be "meaning." This would be similar to arguing that whatever reproduces sexually is living and therefore the "possibility" of sexual reproduction consists in having life.



Rather than approach the problem of truth in this way at all, it is preferable simply to begin by asking, first, what linguistic phenomena are most closely or immediately associated with "true," and then ask what these relationships consist in, what characterizes them. Perhaps the whole approach associated with "possibility" and "actuality" in the problem of truth is unnecessary and has the effect of aborting a solution before it is fully developed.

The question of what sorts of things are true is susceptible of interpretation as equivalent to the question of what all true statements are, i.e., asking for a list of all "truths." We are here engaged, though, not in a search for truths, instances of truth, but, instead, the analysis of truth, the concept. We are therefore concerned with the use of the concept of truth, including the implications of saying that certain sentences are true. Questions having to do, instead, with justification for saying this are another matter. We are not concerned with which sentences ought to be said to be true, but with what is done with them when they are said to be true.

It is not the problem of what distinguishes true statements, statements in fact true, from false statements that is the concern of this study. Rather, our problem is that of what distinguishes statements said to be true and/or used as true from other sorts of statements. For this purpose, sentences merely capable of truth are the relevant meaning-entities.

The entities with which we are here concerned are instances of "that which is true or false," one sense of "proposition." In this sense, the notion of a proposition is here being used as a working concept in the philosophic investigation of truth.

As such a working concept, "that which is true or false" might be interpreted as embodying the "possibility of truth" in the sense that it refers to any phenomenon to which "true" may be applied. This concept is useful in the analysis of truth, however, because it represents a pre-eminent aspect of the use of "true," viz., that it refers to sentences of some kind. If we can discover and describe the nature of these sentences insofar as "true" is predicated of them, the initial step, at least, will have been taken in explicating the concept of truth.

To return now to the formulations of the problem of truth given on page 80, it may be seen that, as developed in this chapter, the initial question to be asked in analyzing this problem would include an answer of the form of statement 4. That is, it would tell when or how "true" is used. It has been argued, however, that the meaning of the concept of truth may be said to be the central issue, and this is not fully expressed in the use of "true." This point of view is similar, I think, to that connected with the distinction drawn by Wittgenstein<sup>1</sup> between "surface grammar" and "depth grammar." The discussion in this chapter of the nature of philosophic problems and method may be said to amount to an interpretation of what depth grammar consists in.

The other three formulations given on page 80 all involve reference to a "statement." It has been argued that "what is true or false," entities to which the concept of truth is applied, should be the initial objects of investigation. It will be argued in the next chapter, however, that these entities are not "statements," strictly speaking, at all.

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<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, I, 664.

Perhaps the most fundamental matter arising from considering these four formulations of the problem is the classification of 1 and 2 as implying non-linguistic standards or rules, and 3 and 4 as implying linguistic rules, instead. Since rules of meaning cannot govern truth, it must be determined what rules do govern truth.

This is involved in 1 and 2 (and it is important to note that "rules governing truth" is not necessarily synonymous with "rules of verification"). Besides this question, there is an equally legitimate question involved in 3 and 4 of how rules of meaning (or sentences containing "true" and related sentences) express (as opposed to govern) truth.

The problem of truth, as defined in this chapter, will not be resolved by being assigned to one category or the other--linguistic or non-linguistic. It is in the very nature of the problem that both are involved in it. Many of the paradoxes surrounding the problem of truth reflect this double nature of the problem. Many of them arise from the fundamental paradox that, while it is apparently meanings, in some sense, that are said to be true, truth itself would not seem to be governed by rules of meaning, nor explained by them.

In the following chapter, an analysis of truth will be initiated by considering the elements of this fundamental paradox.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH

#### "That which is True or False"

To investigate the concept of truth in accordance with the principles developed in the preceding chapter, we may begin by asking what sorts of things may be said to be true (or false). For reasons mentioned in the preceding chapter, this investigation will focus on linguistic things, but we shall see that non-linguistic things said to be true play an important part in the investigation. When we predicate "true" of a sentence it is predicated of it as a meaning (not as an utterance of words). Only sentences of a certain grammatical form are said to be true --viz., statements. Since in the view of this study sentences as meanings are functions, types of sentences are characterized by similar functions. Thus, although grammatical form is an indication of some similarity of functions, it is to these functions that we must look for what is common to (or at least similar in) all statements.

One function common to all statements is that they are capable of being true (or false). Traditionally, all sentences of statement form are said to have the capacity to be true or false and to be necessarily one or the other, in fact. There are, however, some uses of statements that would seem not to make any claim to truth--e.g., statements involved in jokes, fiction, irony. In this study statements that do make a truth-claim will be termed "assertions" or "truth-claims."

In view of this study, there is some activity in terms of which any meaningful linguistic event is interpretable as an action. So, an assertion is interpretable as such by reference to a particular activity in which it has the function of making a truth-claim.

Now, any activity involving asserting may involve, of course, actual use of the words "true" but it need not always do so. To assert p is equivalent to asserting that p is true, in that the results of the one are equivalent to those of the other, except that in some cases "p is true" emphasizes that an assertion is being made--i.e., that a statement-form is being used to make a truth-claim.

What asserting consists in is not saying that a sentence is true but using a sentence as true. This function or job is that of making a truth-claim, explicitly or implicitly, which is different, of course, from actually being true. Therefore, since assertions, statements that make a truth-claim, are distinct from "true statements," the function of making a truth-claim is not the function of being true.

As the distinguishing marks of an assertion are not those of being true, the task of explicating the concept of truth is a different task from that of examining true statements and their relationships to other things that determine them as true. If there could be discovered certain characteristics common to all true statements (or perhaps only shared family resemblances), these would not define the concept of truth. The question of the nature of truth, of what it is to be true, is ambiguous since it may be interpreted as being about a concept or about the phenomena, true statements. It is the concept with which we are here concerned, and it is characteristics of statements that make a truth-claim (rather than true statements) that define this concept.

Truth-games and Truth-claims

The distinguishing characteristics of truth-claims are to be sought in those activities in which they function. Let us call such activities in which truth-claims function "truth-games."

Truth-games might be (1) a type of language-game, (2) a type of basic activity, or (3) some other type of activity. As defined in Chapter III, language-games are instruments of basic activities. If truth-games were a type (or family) of language-games then there would be no uses of truth that were non-linguistic. That is, "true" would be predicated only of sentences. It has been noted in Chapter IV, however, that there are other, non-linguistic things said to be true. Therefore, truth-games are not language-games.

If truth-games were activities of a type different from basic activities, then they would be activities that neither use nor generate language-games. Since the most obvious examples of truth-claims are statements in language-games such as those involving proofs, truth-games may be included in the broad category of basic activities, as defined in Chapter III.

In order to discover the distinguishing characteristics of truth-games, let us examine some types of activities that would seem to be truth-games. The most obvious examples of truth-games would seem to be found in proofs (or attempts at proofs) of various sorts--mathematical and scientific as well as less rigorous chains of reasoning employed in everyday situations. For example, while driving I might say to myself, "The traffic is heavy. I'd better slow down." These sentences form a language-game arising out of the activity of driving. Each sentence is

used as true in that a claim to truth is essential to its function. It may also be observed that each sentence functions to suggest ("entail" or "imply" in a broad sense) other actions. That is, the first statement ("The traffic is heavy.") suggests the second ("I'd better slow down.") in that the two statements constitute an abbreviated argument; the second sentence suggests that I let up the pressure of my foot on the accelerator and perhaps shift to a lower gear. (Both of these non-linguistic actions, if performed, also would be part of the truth-game.)

Cases of the above type are those in which "truth-claims" are clearly being made because inferences are being drawn from certain statements--those making claims that such inferences are warranted, those making truth-claims. In order to determine which characteristics of this type of truth-game are common to all truth-games, it will be useful to consider a type of activity in which it would seem that truth-claims are made but in which it would seem that these truth-claims do not entail one another in any way analogous to that discussed.

An activity of this type would seem to be any describing activity. We may distinguish examples of describing-games in which statements are "used as true," in that it is part of a describing-game to use true statements, but in which these statements would not seem to entail each other in any sense.

To take a simple example, consider a group of statements made by me to a visitor to my village. As we stroll downtown I point out to him various buildings--the post office, the public library, an unusual monument in the square, a lunch counter, etc. All the statements I use in this activity, along with other actions such as pointing wordlessly to

certain points of interest, taking certain routes that I think will be interesting for various reasons, behaving cautiously when crossing dangerous corners, all these actions make a sort of picture of the village. They are related to each other primarily in that they all have to do with some aspect of the village. Possibly I might not make any two statements related to each other in the manner in which the statements in the driving language-game were related. I am not presenting arguments of any sort, but simply a group of facts (or what I believe to be facts) about the village. In presenting facts, though, one uses statements (and other actions) "as true." Yet, in this case the statements are related to each other not as elements in chains of reasoning, but as elements in a description or picture.

The elements (statements and other actions) in the driving language-game were said to function to suggest or entail other actions. In the describing-game this cannot be said to be the case; the statements are not logically related. We might take an even more difficult example, and imagine that, after showing my friend the village, I take him for a ride in the country. We are both tired and there is no conversation except once, when he exclaims, "Look, that barn is round!" This statement would seem to have no relationship to any linguistic context, and also not to a truth-game.

Describing games are not truth-games because the elements of descriptions are not related to each other by logical rules. There is nonetheless a sense in which these elements are truth-claims--in that the whole description makes a truth-claim. That is, the individual statements make an indirect truth-claim since the whole description is related



to a variety of activities that are interpretable only in reference to the description. There might be, for example, views about the relative comforts of the village which I expound to my friend, and which could involve truth-games having logical relationships with the description I had given him of the village. In the case of his isolated remark, "Look, that barn is round!" which is a single-sentence description, this is a sentence used as true only in the sense that it is potentially an element in a truth-game.

Describing is an activity that is interpretable as a part or aspect of a truth-game, but not as itself a truth-game. Thus, the statements in a describing-game are "used as true," but not directly, in relation to each other, but indirectly, as potential elements that make a truth-claim in a truth-game.

To actually use a sentence as true is to use it as an element in an activity in which it has with at least one other element of the activity a mutually dependent relation, such that if one is true the other is false, the other false. In any truth-game there must be at least two elements related to each other in such a mutually dependent manner. There might be any number of other statements having a role in a truth-game but not the role of making a truth-claim. There might be quite a variety of relationships between the elements of a truth-game besides the mutually dependent relationships that make it a truth-game. All these elements are parts of the truth-game, but not the parts that determine it as a truth-game.

As defined here, "use as true" ("actual use as true" is to be understood unless the phrase is specifically limited as "potential") is not

opposed to "use as false." It might be thought that there are types of activities such as lying-games and propaganda-games in which "sentences are used as false." Let us imagine a propaganda-game in which my actions are directed toward **convincing** an audience that some particular war is justified on our side. "They began shooting first," I lie, and produce falsified evidence to back up by statement. Since both my statement and the "evidence" I produce are lies, I am deliberately using a false statement and performing other actions in order to deceive. False statements used as propaganda and lies in any context, though, are not merely false but falsehoods. Within any context in which lies are used they are statements used as true, nevertheless, in the sense that they are mutually dependent upon each other within the lying-game. (If they were not used as true in this sense, then they could not perform the function of lying.) Within its immediate language-game a lie is a sentence used as true, although relationships of this language-game to other, basic activities disclose that the language-game is part of a deceiving activity.

When an activity is characterized by interrelationships of its elements, as we have done here with the notion of a truth-game, one difficulty that arises is that there might be some activities in which no pattern is discernable. I might, for example, observe someone repeating to himself, "Since there are watches, there must be water." Upon investigation I might possibly discover that the speaker is drunk, in which case what he is saying makes no sense because he is incapable of thinking clearly. Similarly, I might discover that he is the town idiot, in which case what he is saying makes no sense for the same reason. Or, I might discover that he is a foreigner just learning the language, and believes

"watches" to mean "rivers." In this case he makes no sense because his instruments of expression are not immediately interpretable by others around him. But, with adequate investigation of his related actions, one should be able to discover, as I did, that he is performing meaningful actions. In the first two cases, however, in which it turned out that he was drunk or stupid, there was no internal consistency in his actions, including his utterances.

This sort of situation is important in the present context because there are cases in which someone tries to use true statements in a truth-game, but fails to some degree and produces logical inconsistencies. Since truth-games have not been defined in terms of the intentions of participants in them, but rather in terms of the relationships between their elements, it might seem that all truth-games are, by our definition, activities in which the relationships between the statements are all logically consistent.

This would be somewhat similar to saying that only actions of the winning side constitute playing chess. The actions of a losing player might differ from those of the winning player in that certain rules of logic were violated by the losing player. For example, he might plan an attack in which some of the moves cancelled out other moves. We would still say, however, that he was playing chess, as long as he was following the special rules of the game of chess. The fact that he is using them in a futile manner does not change the fact that he is playing chess.

The "rules" of truth-games are rules in the sense that it can be demonstrated that they are followed in most cases. Someone playing a

truth-game might use the rules of truth in improper ways, but we would say he was engaging in a truth-game as long as there could be seen some manner in which the elements appeared (perhaps only to one participant) to be logically related. The case would be similar to a language-game in which a participant misunderstood many of the relevant rules of grammar. For any sort of activity there are borderline cases in which it is doubtful whether or not they should even be called activities, since they lack a coherent structure. Aside from extreme cases of this type, however, we identify an activity as a truth-game by analogy with other truth-games.

Included among activities of this kind are logically invalid structures of statements that are nevertheless classified as truth-games because certain meaning-relationships between their elements disclose that certain elements are being used as mutually dependent. In any given language-game that expresses a truth-game there are likely to be a number of meaning-relationships among various elements of the language-game that indicate that certain statements are used as mutually dependent.

If truth-claims are related in the "mutually dependent" manner defined, i.e., when one truth-claim in a truth-game is a true statement, any related truth-claim must also be a true statement, and if one is false, the other must be false, then the relationships between truth-claims may be said to be logical relationships. Truth-claims are the defining elements of truth-games. That is, it is by reference to the existence of truth-claims in an activity that it may be characterized as a truth-game. So, the rules of logic are of some importance in characterizing truth-games.

Formal logic distinguishes between "validity" and "truth," the former applying to formal deductive arguments and the latter to propositions, the elements of logical arguments. Thus, in a valid argument if the premises are true then the conclusion must be true. A "sound" argument is a valid deductive argument all of whose premises are true. Inductive arguments, on the other hand, are usually termed "correct" or "incorrect," rather than "valid" or "invalid."

Formal logic is accordingly defined as the study of the rules of "validity" and "correctness" when both deductive and inductive branches are included. Truth, in the terms of this definition, is another matter with which logic does not concern itself.

In the present analysis of the concept of truth, however, we are not investigating the conditions under which statements are in fact true, but, rather, the use of truth-claims. Statements of logic describe the interrelationships of statements insofar as they are true. Statements are treated in logic as postulates: their implications, when they are assumed to be true, are studied.

Logic may be interpreted as isolating the truth-claims in truth-games and analyzing them apart from the other elements of truth-games. Since truth-claims are the defining elements of truth-games, logical rules express the rules of the concept of truth. Rules of logic are formalized statements of the meaning of the concept of truth, resulting from analysis of truth-claims.

The activity of logic is in this sense an analysis of the concept of truth, and its laws are descriptive of the meaning of this concept. So, logic is the activity of discovering the meaning of truth. It is the

discovery of the implications of the use of the concept of truth. If one wishes to say what the concept of truth is, we can say that it is the characteristic processes of truth-games. If one wishes to "define the meaning" of truth, we can point to the discoveries of logic as such a definition, although an imperfect, incomplete one.

The uses of truth-claims disclose the meaning of truth, but they have meaning, implications, beyond their present actual use. It may be assumed that the concept of truth has aspects that have not yet been discovered. It is the job of logic to explore these aspects of the concept of truth.

#### Language-games and Truth-games

"Rules of meaning" describe activities of language by describing the interrelations of meaning-entities, sentences. "Rules of (the concept of) truth," on the other hand, may come to be confused with these because what they describe are also interrelations of (certain) meaning-entities. Although the entities relevant to truth are also meaning-entities, the rules of truth are not rules of meaning. It is the rules that differ and not the entities which they govern.

How this is possible will be evident if it is remembered how events are interpretable as actions: in respect to activities in which they function. What the entities of meaning are, viz., sentences--are such in respect to the appropriate activities, language-games. In respect to other matters these same entities are, e.g., utterances, sound disturbances in the atmosphere, grammatical forms, etc. In the case of truth-entities, "truth-claims," the rules of the concept of truth describe relationships between meaning-entities in the capacity of truth

entities. As meanings, these sentences are instruments of a type of basic activity, truth-games. As such, they are interpretable as truth-claims in relation to these activities.

Since the rules of truth are different from the rules of meaning and govern sentences insofar as they are parts of truth-games, it would seem that "p is true" must differ from "p" in meaning. According to the interpretation of this study, however, "p" in "p is true" is an "assertion," and does not stand for all statement-forms. "p is true" signals that a truth-game is going on and that the assertion "p" forms a part of it as a truth-claim. If "p" is used in a way that implies that "p is true," then "p" is equivalent to "p is true." To use a sentence as true involves it in the same relationships to other sentences in the argument as it would have if it were stated explicitly to be true. "p" considered outside any context, without being said to be true or used as true, is not an assertion at all, i.e., the question of truth is irrelevant.

"p" here is either some other sort of statement--e.g., fictive, ironic, etc.--or a mere statement-form. In either case, the question of truth would be irrelevant. Nevertheless, to say a statement is true is to say that it is a particular sort of statement--an assertion or truth-claim. Thus, "p is true" says that "p" has a certain sort of job, one governed by truth-rules, and forming part of an activity within the total meaning-activity. On the other hand, an assertion "p" merely shows or implies this. So the meaning of "p is true" does differ from an assertion "p" in this sense.

The predicate "is true" does not, however, attribute any meaning-rules or meaning-relations to "p" in addition to those governing "p" as

an assertion. In other words, this difference in meaning is not a difference about meaning; what "p is true" predicates of "p" is not a type of meaning-rules but, rather, truth-rules. Thus, although the meaning of "p is true" differs from that of "p," "is true" does not mean a type of meaning.

As was noted at the outset of this chapter, there are non-linguistic things of which "true" is predicated--beliefs, pictures, measurements, etc. These cases are interpretable in terms of the analysis of the concept of truth that has been outlined. Beliefs are truth-claims that are related to activities in which one engages. Their relationships may be to (non-linguistic) actions performed as well as to statements made, and these activities are interpretable as truth-games. Beliefs and other non-linguistic entities of which truth is predicated are truth-claims in the same sense in which assertions may be--in their logical relationships to other elements in an activity. Since truth-games are basic activities which need not always be conducted by means of language-games, their defining elements may be actions of any type as long as they are "used as true" in the sense defined.

This view of truth may now be summarized: "Truth is a concept manifested in the use of actions in what I call "truth-games." These activities are distinct from language-games since they are one type of "basic activity," which has been defined as an activity that generates and uses meaning. Meaning-activities or language-games are products of basic activities, one type of which is truth-games. The concept of a



statement said to be true is that of an assertion used as a "truth-claim" in a truth-game. "Using a sentence as true" or "making a truth-claim" is defined as using a sentence as an element in an activity in which it has with at least one other element of the activity a mutually dependent relation, i.e., if one is true the other is also true, or if false, the other false. "Activity" in this definition, i.e., a "truth-game," is to be understood, however, to include logically invalid structures of statements which are nevertheless truth-games because meaning-relationships between their elements disclose that certain elements are being used as mutually dependent. So, in a given language-game that expresses a truth-game the meaning-relationships reveal which statements are "used as true," i.e., which statements are being used as mutually dependent. The concept of truth (as manifested particularly by the use of statements said to be true) is the concept of the interrelationships of truth-claims in truth-games. It is thus the concept of a type of job performed in one type of basic activity.

Whether the statements we use as true and assert to be so are or are not, the concept of truth remains the same. The statements we use as true, the activities we engage in, change continually. We use immensely complex methods to verify statements about sub-nuclear particles, for example, and employ complicated machinery to apply these methods; but, what is meant by the concept of truth does not change, even though the truth-games in which it is manifested do. What changes is "the truth"-- or, properly, what is accepted as the truth. The nature of what it is to be true, what the concept means, does not change.

Meaning, Truth and the Concept of a Proposition

In this study have been examined the implications of two views: that meaning is use, and that philosophic problems are conceptual problems. A view of meaning has been developed to interpret the first of these tenets, and a view of philosophic method and the nature of conceptual problems to interpret the second. The interpretation of the first involves viewing the meaning of a sentence as the fundamental meaning-unit, distinct and different from words. This concept is an interpretation, therefore, of one sense in which the philosophic term "proposition" has been employed. The interpretation of the second tenet involves a view of concepts and their relation to language that leads to a formulation of the problem of truth as that of the use of sentences said to be true. This is an interpretation of the second sense in which the term "proposition" has been employed.

Both senses of "proposition" are useful and, perhaps, necessary concepts for philosophic purposes in dealing with the problems of this study. These two senses have been equated in some treatments of "propositions," however, and this is not desirable. The two senses have been equated because of certain aspects of the problem of truth, which may now be examined in the light of the view of truth that now has been outlined.

As was discussed in Chapter I, these two senses may come to be identified with each other because of the fact that what is true must have meaning. From this the conclusion might be drawn that it is sentences that have meaning and that are true-or-false. In terms of the view developed in this study, however, it may be said that such an inference would involve a failure to define the objects of truth and meaning

in terms of their relations to appropriate activities, and hence a failure to distinguish between sentences as meaning-entities and sentences as truth-entities. It is a sentence in one capacity that has meaning, and in another capacity of which truth is predicated.

It has also been a feature of some propositional theories to treat the notion of a proposition as involving a "meaning-freeze," as discussed in Chapter I, since "true" has been thought to be an absolute norm in that if a statement is true it must be absolutely true, or true regardless of context. From our point of view, this view involves misapprehensions about both the nature of truth and of meaning. Sentences conceived as meanings-in-themselves, without reference to a context in which they mean, are merely potential meanings or grammatical forms, in the view of the present study, and any actual meaning is by nature context-dependent. The idea of truth as an absolute norm, from which the idea of a meaning-freeze may be generated, is also mistaken. It is intimately connected with the view of truth as a relation between meaning and "fact" or "state of affairs" in the world. If truth were this sort of relation, then precision of meaning would be essential. If it is not, as has been argued in this study, then the notion of it as an absolute norm is not to the point, and the notion of a "meaning-freeze" becomes unnecessary in the philosophic investigation of truth.

The notion of truth as a norm of norms (i.e., a norm at the top of a hierarchy of norms; an ultimate norm) has been instrumental in dissuading some philosophers from its examination as such--e.g., Austin, Strawson and Pontius Pilate. If "true" and "truth" are interpreted as referring to some one, unified, ultimate norm in terms of which everything must be judged, it would seem to be dubious both that such a norm

could exist and that anything could ever be shown to meet it. No ultimate norm is implied by the ordinary meaning of "true," however, and there are many truth-games in which norms are not involved. There are many truth-games that do involve, however, setting up, testing and applying norms. When a sentence asserting "p is true" occurs in a language-game it signals that a truth-game is being carried on. If this is a truth-game in which the use of norms of some kind is involved, "true" in "p is true" says that p is in agreement with these norms. (Whether or not p actually does meet those norms is a matter of fact that is not a matter of the meaning of p. But, "true" means here that these norms are met. "p is true," like "p," means what it does regardless of the truth of p.)

Truth is an ultimate norm only in that it comprehends all norms. It is not a separate norm above all others, but is applicable to any normative truth-game, i.e., one in which standards of some sort are involved.

It is sometimes said, also, that an assertion is "true only in this context." Here, again, this usage sometimes is taken as implying that there is an absolute standard of "truth" in a strictest sense. In order for an assertion to be "true in one context" but not in all, however, it need not be true "absolutely." It need only be the case that there be some contexts in which the statement is false. This might be the case because: (1) the statement-form in this context has a meaning different from its meaning in other contexts; or (2) the statement in this context has a role in a truth-game different from its roles in other truth-games.

This dual relationship of truth to context is a sense in which there is "relativity of truth" and the meaning of truth, i.e., how the concept is used, implies neither that there is nor is not a hierarchy of degrees of truth.

The "proposition" as the "meaning of a sentence" has been distinguished from the "sign" of the sentence. Indeed, it is suitable to distinguish between "utterances," spoken or written, and their meaning or use. In the view of this study, though, the "signs" of sentences, "utterances," are mere events that are not actions in activities.

Propositional theories in which the meaning or proposition correlates words and the world are highly misleading, if meaning is use. The structure of "propositional signs" is a conventional matter, but it is a surface manifestation of the interconnections of actions in language activities. The conventional nature of meaning reaches deeper than the arbitrary aspects of grammatical rules.

Of course, there is a sense in which both meaning and truth are relations of words to the world--sentential meanings are about something, and, therefore, so are true sentences. The identification of meaning and truth in the notion of a "proposition" might be interpreted as arising from this general circumstance. Language itself, however, is an activity in the world, and not merely about it. The type of activity that constitutes truth, and in which true statements are used as the elements of the activity, is also an activity in the world. Meaning is related to "the world" through activities ("basic activities"), including argument-activities or truth-games.

Thus, it might be said that meaning is related in one respect to the world through truth, in that words have relations to extra-linguistic matters because language is an instrument of basic activities, one type of which is truth-games. It is not, then, meaning that is the medium through which truth is related to "the world," or what meanings are about.

It is misleading in general, however, to speak about the "relation of words to the world," which involves by-passing a fundamental fact about meaning--its generation in basic activities, which are themselves rooted in the world. This, I have suggested, is a central aspect of meaning, and its explication is needed in the analysis of truth, as well. The relations of "words to the world" are immensely complicated as well as indirect and devious. These relations may be clarified and delineated through understanding the nature of meaning and related activities, including truth-activities. But, as is illustrated by the theories discussed in Chapter I, it is misleading to reverse the direction and approach meaning and truth through these relations, instead.

The notion of a proposition has also been connected with a type of treatment of the problem of falsity. It has been argued that what is false cannot be meaningless, although what is true must be meaningful, and that, therefore, what is meaningful must be what is possibly true or possibly false--a proposition. In the view of this study this whole argument is based upon an initial confusion--that involved in treating what is meaningful as an intrinsically true-or-false object.

"False," of course, is predicated of a meaning in the same sense that "true" is--viz., as an element of a truth-game. To say that something is "false" implies that it is meaningful, that it is a sentence or

meaning, since "false" may be predicated only of the same sort of thing that "true" is. There is a sense in which a false statement may be said to be "possibly true"--viz., its form is the same as that of a true statement. To say an assertion is false, however, is to say that it cannot be used in whatever truth-game is involved, because of (not its meaning but) its truth-value. Why it is false and the manner in which this may be established are matters of verification; "false" is not synonymous with "disproved," any more than "true" is with "proved." The concept of "false" is of a sentence which is in conflict with the rules of some truth-game and therefore should not be used in some truth-game (quite possibly not the same one).

To say a form of words is possibly true or false is not very useful; only a sentence as a meaning may be true or false but this is simply because meanings are the means by which truth-games are conducted. What is "possibly true or false" is co-extensive with, but not equivalent to, "assertions," a type of meaning.

In Chapter I, it was argued that truth must be independent of meaning, in that it cannot consist in meaning-conventions; and, that meaning must be independent of truth, in that it is sometimes capable of truth but need not be either actually or even potentially true. In the view developed in this study, "true" is predicated of meanings that are used as truth-claims and its rules are therefore different from meaning-conventions. The rules of truth and the rules of meaning have to do with the same events or phenomena, but in different capacities, as actions defined in relation to different activities.

Thus, the concept of a proposition, which has filled an ambiguous

philosophic role, as unit of meaning and as that of which "true" is predicated, is a misleading concept since these two senses refer to quite distinct matters. Although each sense has a role in the explanation of the concept of truth, combining them obscures the nature of truth, as well as of meaning.

### Truth and Function

If we look now at the debate between Austin and Strawson discussed in Chapter I, their views may be interpreted in terms of the view developed in this study.

Austin's modified correspondence theory offers a description of truth as a type of correspondence between "statements" and "facts." This correspondence, he contends, is effected by means of a correlation between two types of meaning relations, descriptive and demonstrative conventions. This treatment of truth differs from a propositional correspondence theory like that of the Tractatus in viewing the relevant meaning relations as conventions that have no connection with any sort of necessary rules--in particular, logical rules. Austin's view is nevertheless of a correspondence type that interprets these conventions as correlating words and the world. Any correspondence type of view involves some view of the meaning side of the correspondence in which it may be correlated in some way with what it is about. Such views of meaning conflict with the view of meaning as use presented in this study.

The statement side of Austin's correspondence is similar to the propositional-sign side of the Tractatus correspondence, except that it consists in the words as an "historic utterance," an utterance as a temporal occurrence, rather than as signs. An "utterance" in this sense



Austin considers to be the "use" of a sentence, and to be what is true or false. A "statement," according to Austin, is a "use" of a sentence, i.e., it is made by means of a sentence, and the making of it is an "historic" (temporal) event.

In this treatment, the statement is similar to the proposition, combining what is (possibly) true and what has a (type of) meaning, but the words as a sentence are correlated with types of situations by descriptive conventions, while the words as a statement are correlated with actual situations by demonstrative conventions. These correlations are, as Strawson puts it, the conditions of "fact-stating discourse." In the view of the present study, an utterance in this sense cannot constitute a use. Strawson's criticism of this is similar: "'My statement' may be either what I say or my saying it. My saying something is certainly an episode. What I say is not. It is the latter, not the former, we declare to be true."<sup>1</sup>

On the other side of the correspondence, that of "the world" as opposed to "words," Austin puts a "fact," which is synonymous for him with "state of affairs" or "circumstances." This is rather eccentric usage, since in ordinary usage a "fact" is something that is true, while a "state of affairs" is an existent situation. To use these terms synonymously is to confuse two quite different types of things--what in philosophic terms are sometimes distinguished as "truth" and "reality." A "state of affairs," a part of "reality," just is, so to speak, but a "fact" is a true statement.

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<sup>1</sup>Strawson, op. cit., pp. 129-30.

Strawson, in criticism of this aspect of Austin's view, contends that "a situation or state of affairs is, roughly, a set of facts not a set of things," neither facts nor states of affairs being in the world. Strawson argues, anyway, that what a statement is "about" (which is something in the world) cannot be what makes it true. Strawson's view of the meaning of "facts" and "states of affairs" does not agree with that advocated in the last paragraph, but, regardless of the correctness of this, Strawson's associated criticism that what a statement is about cannot be what makes it true involves a curious interpretation of the words and world dichotomy. Strawson sees the world as composed of objects and events exclusively, while facts, situations, etc., are evidently matters of meaning.

What meanings are about are these objects and events in the world, while truth, facts, or, apparently, anything about objects and events, are matters of meaning. This view is an eccentric one and oversimplifies the relations between language and what it is about. To reduce what language is about to "objects and events," exclusive of any relationships among them, is too language-centered, as well as being inadequate as a description of what exists in the world. On this sort of view of the relationships between language and what it is about, an analysis of truth is limited to intra-linguistic relationships and, therefore, is likely to find truth in some sort of meaning-rules.

To return to Austin now, his treatment of "facts" as synonymous with "states of affairs" is misleading and, more important, it suggests an ambiguity at the basis of his analysis of the problem of truth. That is, by identifying "what makes a statement true" ("facts") with "what it

is about" ("states of affairs"), he is led to a correspondence type of theory. He says "fact that" is a "compendious way of speaking about a situation involving both words and world." The phrase is "designed for use in situations where the distinction between a true statement and the state of affairs about which it is a truth is neglected" (p. 118). But, perhaps if facts and states of affairs--true statements and situations in the world--were distinguished from each other at the outset, then truth need not be sought in a relation between these two types of things, true statements and situations in the world.

Austin defines the nature of the problem of truth at the beginning of his essay as the "use of 'is true.'" What he understands by "use" is partly explicit in his definition of the use of a sentence as its utterance, and partly implicit in his analysis. His interpretation of the use of a sentence as its temporal utterance is beside the point, as has already been discussed, but what is more important here is that "use" is in this way differentiated from "meaning." It is the use of a sentence (as a "statement") rather than its meaning, that is true or false. To differentiate the meaning of sentences from their "use" (in any relevant sense of the word, one of which is not as "utterance," for the reasons discussed in Chapter III) in this way is mistaken, in the view of this study.

Implicit in Austin's analysis is also, I believe, a view of the use of words that is too close to that of traditional rules of grammar--what was referred to as "surface grammar" in Chapter III. In any case, Austin's treatment of truth as a problem of the use of sentences is in line with the views of the present study, even though his reasons for

thus treating it are beside the point. His view of the use of words and the relation of this to the use of sentences, however, is in contrast with the interpretation of meaning as use of the present study.

Strawson's treatment of the problem of truth, on the other hand, appears quite different from Austin's, approached from the viewpoint of this study. To begin with, his formulation of the problem, "the use of 'is true,'" is only superficially the same as Austin's. What Strawson understands by the use of "true" seems to be limited to rather superficial aspects of its use, as was discussed in Chapter I. This understanding of "use" includes the view that the use of "is true" does not include talking about anything. This is a central point in Strawson's analysis, and is closely connected with his highly circumscribed treatment of use.

Strawson's views on "about" have an important application in his analysis of the nature of fact-stating discourse. He contends that when we use "true," "fact," etc., we are "talking within, and not about, a certain frame of discourse," so the "problem about the use of 'true' is to see how this word fits into that frame of discourse" (p. 142). Now, the fact that in using such words we are talking within a certain frame of discourse does not exclude the possibility that we are talking about something--either something within that frame of discourse or something outside it. From the viewpoint of this study, how "true" "fits into" the frame of discourse would not exclude its relationships to things "outside" it--viz., things "in the world," whatever they may be. These are "about"-relations, which are not excluded from language-games, and how words are used is interpreted too narrowly when it is taken to exclude them.

The performatory or re-assertive theory of truth that Strawson advocates hinges on the concept of a "linguistic performance." In the view of the present study, this concept is identified with that of a sentence. A performatory word Austin understands to be a verb (in first person, present indicative) which although seeming to describe an "activity" of the speaker, actually is that "activity." ("Activity" here is similar to "action" as used in this study.) In the present study, a performance of this kind could not be a word, but, rather, a sentence made by means of it. Only a sentence can constitute an action, in this sense.

In the view of this study, any sentence, in the proper context, as an element in an appropriate language activity, may be interpreted as primarily a performance of this kind. This type of sentence is a primitive one, in the sense that it fails to have the complex inter-connections with other actions in the activity that sentences "about" something have.

An essential part of the concept of performatory utterances (both for Strawson and for Austin; see Austin's "Performative Utterances"<sup>1</sup>) is the view that they can be neither true nor false, since they are performances and not about performances or anything else. One does not say, of course, that a performance or action is "true." This seems to be interpreted by Austin and Strawson as following from or, at least, connected with the fact that a performance is not about anything. Truth, however, has nothing to do directly with being about anything, in the present view, but the notion that it does is fundamental to many theories besides those of Austin and Strawson.

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<sup>1</sup>J. L. Austin, "Performative Utterances," Philosophical Papers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 220-239.

To view a sentence as being a performance or an action of one kind or another does not imply that therefore it cannot be true-or-false. We predicate "true" and "false" of meaning, but we do not say, either, "This meaning is true." We do not say that actions are true, but we predicate "true" of entities signified by certain structures of words, but analyzable as symbolic actions or meaning. It is how we use words, not what we say about them, that discloses their meaning in full.

The essentially sentential nature of performatory utterances is perhaps revealed in Strawson's suggestion that "Ditto!" is substantially synonymous with "true." "Ditto!" is a sentence analogous with the sentence "True!" or "That's true." A "linguistic performance," in the present view, is a sentence and, if this is the case, perhaps to analyze "true" as a linguistic performance necessarily leads to analogizing it with a sentence of some type. Thus, Strawson's rejection of many of the pertinent aspects of the use of "true," particularly its reference to certain sentences, results in his treatment of the concept as actually being a sentence, in the terms of the present study.

The analyses of Austin and Strawson, as well as that of the Tractatus, involve oversimplified interpretations of the nature and mechanisms of linguistic meaning. The conclusions of the present study offer ways of understanding how such oversimplified views may be generated out of facts about the use of "true" (and its relation to meaning) through oversimplification of the implications of these facts.

The view of the concept of truth developed in this study has been derived from views of (1) the nature of linguistic meaning and (2) the

nature of conceptual problems. Meaning has been viewed as the functioning of language-games, tools of basic human activities. Concepts have been viewed as elements or aspects of basic activities and therefore exhibited in language-games. Within the context of these views, truth has been analyzed as a concept that functions in a type of basic activity in which the defining elements are logically related.

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