

June 19

Before breakfast, I was going over some of my old notes regarding **truth**. I came across a two-page piece I wrote soon after I started my re-education. It was something I wrote especially for my 14 year old daughter, Maya, to give her an idea what this new education is all about. It was already a quarter to ten (Breakfast is served until ten), so I put the two pages in my pocket. As I was leaving my room for breakfast, I saw the maid outside. We said 'Good morning' with a wide smile (we always do) and she asked whether she could make up the room now. I approved, and went to the dining room. Gaya was not there, but as it was close to ten o'clock, and I wasn't the one to bend the **rules**, I started eating. I don't eat much in the morning (or ever), and when Gaya joined me a few minutes later, I was already having my post-breakfast coffee. Gaya noticed the pages on the table beside me, and asked what they were. I explained, and she became very interested: "How nice! this is what I call pure communication: A work of **art!**" I blushed (or, at least, that's how I felt) and said: "Far from it. It is naive, childish. I knew next to nothing when I wrote this". "All the more fascinating" said Gaya enthusiastically. "Can I read it?" I could not refuse. "Sure, why not? But you cannot: It is in Hebrew." Gaya was banging at her soft-boiled egg and said: "I have an idea. You finished eating, right? It is only two pages. Why don't you translate it for me? I will eat and listen." In spite of my instinctive reluctance, I took the pages in my hand, leaned back and translated while reading:⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The traditional trichotomy between *correspondence*, *coherence* and *pragmatist* theories of truth seems to be more an issue of **presentation** than of essence. Correspondence truth theorists⁶⁸ stand behind their Tarskian T-sentences, insisting there **must** be something out there our words **refer** to. They have loads of convincing arguments, which is a small wonder, because it suffices to say that in absence for something represented, the concept of **language** loses the best part of its significance. It is the **essence** of language to **represent**. But this nobody denies! Even radical anti-representationalists are well acquainted with the reference of **their** language: It is their own private **conceptual scheme** - their belief system. When Tarski said "Snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white, he didn't specify where one should look for (the) snow. Maybe he thought it was obvious; Where else to look for it, other from one's own **mind**, where the meanings of *wffs* are deciphered, where language and truth reside. No objectivism is implied by the notion of correspondence truth.

Coherence theories of truth, on the other hand, do not (necessarily) deny the existence of reference - not even of an **objective** one. They just deny that it determines truth. According to them, a statement is true if it is **consistent** with a **group** of statements it is compared with - a group consisting a **theory**. Truth is thus a relation between a statement and a (coherent) group of statements. A **theory** is a **consistent** logical system, and **consistency** is defined **internally**. When a new statement is examined 'against' it, if it contradicts any of the theory's statements, it cannot be accepted into the system; It is marked **false**, and its **negation** is accepted. Quine is a living example for peaceful coexistence of coherence truth and objective reference: He is a **holist** and an **empiricist** at the same time.

After more than two thousand years of "divorce" between ethics and epistemology (or between morals and truth), *James*⁶⁹, *Pierce*⁷⁰ and *Dewey*⁷¹ reintroduced **values** into the discussion of truth. Late 19th and 20th century **Pragmatism** is a fresh approach to truth, in that it relies on some or other notion of **good**, or **desirable**, or **successful**. Pragmatism is non-committal on the issue of **representation**; It has no **need** for a reference. Instead, it presupposes speakers to have not only **beliefs**, but also **desires**; This concept (or its variations: The 'good', the 'right', the 'correct') is closely linked to the concept of **intentionality**. Whatever the variation, the pragmatist premise, is that speakers share an (objective) notion of **desirability**. In an over simplified manner of speaking, pragmatism identifies **true** with **good**, and **false** with **bad**. The way I

“What is true is what exists!” Declared Maya categorically. “And if it is unknown whether it exists or not?” questioned Dana. “There are ways to find out” replied Maya. “Look it up in the encyclopedia, or ask mother”. “Or maybe you?” Sneered Keren; “You are saying this only so you can decide what is **true** and what is not!” “How is this relevant?” asked Maya; “I did not claim that what is true is what I say. I just maintained that what is **true** is what exists in the objective world, and that there are ways to find out what exists in the objective world and what does not. The fact that you are too lazy to look it up, and instead you ask **me** if something really exists or not, does not imply that I just make up the answers.” “Really? and when I asked you whether cats like to **swim**, and you said that they did? ‘Till this day, Pinky escapes every time I come near him, ever since I threw it in the pool!” “That’s different” replied Maya; “The question what cats like or don’t like is a matter of opinion. No cat ever officially notified what it **likes**, and to **my** opinion, cats like to swim.” Dana immediately recognized the flaw in her older sister’s reply, and attacked: “Ok. So the question what cats like is a matter of opinion. Can you give me an example of a truth that depends on **existence**, not on opinion?” Maya agreed to take part in the conversation, although my presence in the ring almost ensured the defeat of the correspondence truth she was trying to defend; “Sure, what’s the problem? Here goes: It is **true** that we have a cat named Pinky. In fact, it is true that there **are** cats. It is true that cats are animals. Enough? Or do you need more examples?” Dana rubbed her hands with satisfaction. Maya must have voluntarily become an easy pray; “And if tomorrow morning Pinky will open its mouth and announce that it does not like to swim, will it still be true that cats are animals? and that Pinky is a cat?” “I should have known you are bound to start with your ‘ifs’. I told you a thousand times that saying **if** followed by some nonsense, does not prove anything!” At this stage I interfered, whereas Maya broke the rule against applying undue authority. “Wait a moment, Maya” I said; “Your use of the word **nonsense** does not make you right. Incidentally, I forgot to tell you all, that this morning Pinky told me that it hated swimming.”⁴¹ Maya shrugged

understand the essence of pragmatism (and of coherence), there is no conflict between them. Pragmatism simply employs an additional premise, and ‘narrows down’ the infinity of truths that coherence is willing to accept. The way I see it, pragmatism is a **species** of coherence truth.

Pragmatism takes the moral factor not just as an **important** factor in determining truth and meaning, but as **essential** factor, **constitutive** to truth and language. Participation in the language game requires some **motivation**: a **reason** to willingly import and export beliefs, to constantly compare one’s own belief system with others. An **interest** is required to provide a **direction**. Without **desire**, without **will**, there would be no reason to exchange beliefs, to create language. Language is at all possible because all speakers **want**, and they all know what it is **to** want.

⁴¹ *The principle of charity* was defined by Neil Wilson⁷² as a (logical) constraint on interpretation (hence on **communication**). This principle states that speakers **in principle** utter truths. That they generally behave **in accordance** with their belief/desire systems. The principle of charity, adopted in several variations by Quine, Davidson and others, seems trivial in one sense, but provides a deep and significant insight into the nature of truth. It is **trivial**, because **that is what we do**: In discourse, speakers are assumed to be sincere unless there is evidence for the contrary. Had this not been the case, attempting communication would seem pointless: If I allowed myself to assume that there was no **correlation** between someone’s utterance and what she **believes**, I would not be able to infer anything from her utterances to her beliefs. Her utterances would just be a conjunction of true and/or false statements (for her), thus carrying no intelligible

contemptfully; “If you start like **that**, this will never end.” “Wait a moment” I requested; “Say it! You undoubtedly take my statement as **untrue**: That it is **not** true that Pinky started speaking this morning. Why don’t you say what you think - that I am **lying**?” “Because I’ve seen this picture before” said the experienced Maya; “Nothing in the world can force you to admit this. It is simply **irrefutable**”. “Right” I said; “We constantly rely on the testimony of **others** regarding what **exists** and what does not. Maybe you will agree to change your notion of truth just a **bit**: What is true is what exists, and what exists is what **credible** people claim to **certainly** exist?” “I accept the revised definition” said Maya; “Provided everyone here accepts the fact that **I** am **credible**.” Keren, who listened to the exchange in silence, turned to Maya: “For me to accept your credibility, you must first prove yourself credible. Don’t tell Dana that cats like to swim, and don’t tell me that there are no dwarfs in the park across the street.”

Maya, who does not like being reminded of her vices, retired. I stayed with the younger two, to continue the discussion on **truth**. Dana was still not satisfied, and gladly continued the discussion. “Dad, do questions of truth and existence really just depend on the testimony of others?” “Firstly, not **just** others. We said **credible** people. This is the crux of the matter: Who decides **who** is credible? This decision only **you** can make. Only you can decide what person, or what book, to **believe**.” Dana paused for thought, and Keren looked at me silently. Finally Dana said: “Some sources I **know** are credible. I have no problem with those. But if what someone, who’s credibility is yet unknown, tells me that something is **true**? In fact, **how** can I determine her credibility?” “This is not the only problem - determining the credibility of a source. Sometimes, **you** are the source that determines truth. Remember the tennis game we watched on TV yesterday? The line referee decides **himself** on the **truth**. He does not rely on any external source. **He** is the source!” Keren broke her silence and interjected a question: “And what if the second referee decides otherwise?” “That’s impossible” I replied; “Every line has only one lineman in charge of. If he decided that the ball was out, even the ten thousand people in the audience, and millions of TV viewers cannot change this decision. What he decided is what **was**.” Keren’s moral instincts came alive, and she spiced the story up with an ethical angle: “Suppose two tennis players are having an important match. One of them is a very good person, and also the best player in the world, and the other is a mean person and not as good a player. But this match is **tied**, and they are playing the last ball.

information. Even if this conjunction of statements seemed coherent, I would not have any way of determining whether this coherent conjunction is **consistent** with her belief system, or **contradictory** to it. (Her testimony as to which it is would hardly help...)

Although trivial, The principle of charity plays an important role in understanding the concept of truth. Without it, truth is meaningless. I said before that a speaker can be perceived as a ‘living’ theory of truth. When a speaker says that a statement is true, she is expressing a small portion of this truth theory. The words of this speaker are the only access anyone ever has to **her** truth theory. If it is not assumed that she is telling the truth, she cannot be regarded as **having** any such theory; She cannot be regarded a **speaker**. The concept of truth is based on the assumption that every speaker knows what (for her) is true (unless she knows that she does not know, in which case it is not a **belief**), and on the further assumption, that by “true” all speakers **mean** “What **I** believe in”. The principle of charity exemplifies the basic nature of truth as a predicate of *wffs*: **A proposition is true** (for speaker S) if and only if **S holds it as her belief**.

*The last ball falls exactly on the line. Now the referee can decide **what really was**. He must determine who won the match. If he is also a good person, he can decide that the good guy wins!” Dana looked at Keren, still in thought. Then she said: “If only all the referees in the world were really **good** persons. But what if the bad player bribed the referee? It would be better if a **machine** was invented, to determine whether the ball was in or out.” “Such a machine **was** invented” I replied; “But it is hardly ever used. It won’t serve any purpose - letting machines decide our truths for us. The trick is to continue to let **humans** make the decisions - only they should be the **right** decisions.” The clear emphasis of the word ‘right’ invoked an immediate reaction: “**Right?**” “Yes, right. What is the problem?” At this stage, Dana seemed to have reached some conclusion, and her words sounded almost like an announcement: “Before, you said that what is true is what I, myself, decide that is true; Or, what was said by someone that **I** have decided is credible: **I** have decided to believe him. This means, that in **both** cases **I** make the decision: Not Maya, not you, nor anybody else!” I was proud of her, but said: “This is not such a great revelation. Discovering that in the end, only **you** determine truth, is not such a great achievement. The important question is, whether you always know **what** to decide. If, to begin with, you always had a clear and strong opinion regarding what is true, this whole discussion would not have arisen. The whole thing started because more often than not, you do **not** have a definite opinion, and you need a criterion to help you decide.”^o*

^o I already mentioned that Quine holds a deflationary notion of truth. To him, it has no explanatory power, whereas it is determined **internally**, inside the theory, and not ‘transcendentally’, as **rationalists**⁷³ would have liked it. **Meaning**, on the other hand, Quine takes as **objective**: It is extensional, and determined for every *wff* by its truth conditions (i.e., its logical relations with all other *wffs*). Concurrently, Quine identifies a special, ‘preferred’ class of *wffs*: Observation statements. Their preferred status is based on the fact that they are not ‘revisable’: The rest of the theory has to ‘accommodate’ itself to cohere with them.

Donald Davidson is a Quinean in many respects, but he differs from Quine in these two points. He denies the preferred status of observation statements. He takes this preferred status to be already theory-laden: A product of a **specific** theory. Every theory may determine what **it** takes to be observation statements. More importantly, Davidson differs from Quine in his understanding of **truth**, and, consequently, also of **meaning**. Davidson does not accept the empty, disquotational notion of truth. Davidson believes that truth **does** have explanatory power. For him, truth is best exemplified by the principle of charity, as above. Davidson distinguishes between the **meaning** of a *wff* and the **belief** expressed by it. His strategy is this: To presuppose the belief (the principle of charity!) in the truth of the *wff*, in order to derive its **subjective** meaning: **Belief** acts as ‘mediator’ between meaning and truth: it can ‘compensate’ for a possible ‘discrepancy’ between the two, simply by **not** believing. A speaker may **understand** a *wff* as **true** (even if it is considered false by another), if he **believes** it is true. This, again, establishes the three-way connection between the proposition (*wff*), its meaning and truth: any two determine the third (footnote 38): When a speaker understands (the meaning) of the proposition **and** believes it, then it **is** true (the principle of charity!). If the speaker understands (the meaning) of a **true** proposition, he must be holding it as a **belief**; And most important: Given a proposition P **and** the fact that it is **true**, determine its meaning.

Davidson’s meaning, unlike Quine’s, is **subjective**. This is a small wonder, whereas he embraced a different notion of **truth**. I don’t think one of them is right, and the other wrong: I think they have different vocabularies: They speak (slightly, but importantly) different languages. What Davidson understands by the term “meaning” is clearly different from what Quine does, and the same applies to **truth**. Davidson’s ‘variation’ on Quine’s thesis of *indeterminacy of translation*⁷⁴, is an **indeterminacy of** (the particular) **language**. As of 1986,⁷⁵ Davidson adopted a more radical view as to what happens in human discourse:

*Dana is a pragmatist. For her, what is **true** has always been what **works**. The sudden implied freedom to decide her own truths only reinforced her instincts. She withdrew from the conversation, satisfied with the new authority the discussion vested in her. I remained alone with little Keren, who was not yet satisfied. Her first question was expected: “So now Dana may decide whatever she wants. What happens if she decides that kids don’t have to go to school?” “Do you really think that anything significant changed in Dana’s life today? Did I ever force her to go to school?” “No” replied Keren. “But up until now, she thought that it is **true**, in the real world, that kids should go to school. If **she** may now determine **truth**, she may decide that they need not!” “Do you know what Dana wants to be when she grows up?” I asked. “Of course - a veterinarian!” replied Keren. “And you think she knows that vet’s need to study in the university, and that in order to be accepted to the university, one needs to graduate from school?” I asked. “Sure she knows” replied Keren; “She cannot **both** not go to school and **still** become a vet. She will have to decide: Either or!” “How true” I agreed. But Keren wasn’t finished: “If so, than Dana **cannot**, after all, decide what is true and what is not. She **cannot** skip school **and** become a vet, like she cannot decide that now is daytime **and** night time at the same time! Some things she **can** decide upon, and some she cannot!” Keren was doing fine. So I decided to try one last step: “**Can** not? In what way? Do you mean **unable**, incapable?” Keren did not know how to answer, so I volunteered the rest of it: “It is not **prohibited** to hold contradicting beliefs; maybe they only **seem** to be contradicting. In your world, not going to school and becoming a vet are contradictory. In Maya’s world, her beliefs in biology and zoology contradict the existence of dwarfs in the park. But it is not impossible, that Dana should decide to put it to the test: To check whether it **is** impossible not to go to school and still become a vet. Stranger things have happened. What one takes as a contradiction, is not necessarily a contradiction for the other. Your dwarfs will continue to live in the park, as long as you want them to. If, and when the day will come that you will find yourself forced to choose between your dwarfs and a bunch of other, (scientific?) beliefs, you may find the way to **settle** the apparent contradiction between dwarfs (or **God**, or Astrology) and science.” I concluded with a sentence, that was directed more to myself than to Keren, who started to lose her concentration: “The requirement of **coherence**, the minimal requirement from truth, is not a heavy constraint: It can always be satisfied by an appropriate enhancement of the **theory**.”*

Every speaker, at any particular moment in her life, is a truth theory, or a **language**. In Davidson’s language, an **Idiolect**. Meaning is therefore private, subjective, whereas it is ‘determined’ by the specific dialect, **idiolect** the speaker is competent in.

In Davidson’s (personal) idiolect, the criterion to “identify” a language is its truth theory. Therefore, “falsehood” of beliefs is only possible when viewed from **outside**, considered by **another** idiolect. Davidson maintains, that each speaker speaks a different language from his fellow speakers; **Different** wherever they assign different truth values to a proposition, and **similar** wherever they agree on the truth value of the given proposition. The only thing that is **objective** in Davidson’s *worldview* is the **proposition**: The *wff*. No two languages are **identical**. They can be only more (or less) **similar**. And similarity between languages is a question of **degree**.

I raised my eyes and looked at Gaya. She gave me a huge smile and said: “How marvelous! It was close to eleven when we left the dining room for our morning walk. Before leaving, Gaya said: “Don’t forget to take some bread. We wanted to feed the ducks.” I wrapped a few slices of bread in a napkin and put it in my jacket pocket. We went straight to yesterday’s duck-bench, and sat down. The ducks approached us immediately. They were about ten in number, and I started ripping small pieces of bread and throwing it to them. They were fiercely fighting over every bit. One of the ducks was especially militant. He attacked every other duck that managed to grab a bite, even if it was already swallowed. I resented its behavior, and deliberately deprived it of food. Consequently, the situation became worse. The hostile duck was constantly attacking the others. Some of them even left the scene, as it seemed to be the strongest bird in the flock, and they didn’t feel like losing important feathers. I tried a different strategy: I ripped a large piece of the hard part of the bread, and threw it further away, to lure the mean duck away from the rest. It worked, it got busy with the larger piece, and the rest of the flock managed to consume the remainder of my bread in relative peace. The whole episode, that was supposed to be a nice, peaceful way to start the day, was quite unpleasant. More than anything, it was a clear display of the cruelty prevailing in nature. One of the ducks that suffered most from the beak of the cruel one, was a small duck with a broken wing. It was dangling on its side; It looked badly crippled. Naturally, I tried to prefer this particular duck in the feeding, and by doing so, turned it into the most frequent victim of the attacks. The poor crippled duck got the least food, and suffered the most. Right after the last bit of bread was consumed, I stood up and said: “Let’s go. Feeding ducks is much less fun than I anticipated.” Gaya watched the whole scene in silence. She was very much aware of what was going on, both outside and inside of me. After we started walking again, she said:^o “No justice, ha?” I agreed. “No justice.” I could feel a

^o To know what a speaker **means**, we must assume that she is speaking the truth (expressing a belief). Were there a way to know **apriori** what she means, we could be the **judge** as to the truth value of her statement. But we don’t! It is impossible to even **try** to understand what she is saying, if she is not **apriori** taken to be speaking the truth. This assumption is essential for us to be able to extract the **meaning** of the statement. Davidson criticizes the popular notion, prevailing in the philosophy of language, of **linguistic conventions** which constitute a public language. He rejects the ‘definition’ of ‘language’ as a set of behavioral conventions, whereas this view fails to explain anything **unexpected** that (often) happens in discourse; It fails to explain **mistakes**. No prior agreement between speakers is required for a conversation to develop. As Davidson himself so eloquently writes:⁷⁶ *“The need for conventions to explain meaning is another aspect of the reification of (objective) meaning. It is only if we see meaning as something to be **captured** in the words we use, and conveyed by them from one speaker to another, that we think there must be something connecting the speakers, something - such as (objective) language - they share, that bears meaning as a vehicle”*.

Davidson sees “language” as an **abstraction**, a generalization of the linguist, distinct from particular utterances: *“It is **not** the mastery of... language that permits communication... (It) is something like an **art**... of theory construction, in the form of interpretation.”* When we **listen** to a fellow speaker, we continuously form, throughout the conversation, ‘theories’ regarding his intended meaning, when he utters a word, a sentence, or a group of sentences. If we assume him to speak an idiolect that is **similar** to ours, e.g., **his** version of English, the theory that we put together with the intention of understanding him shall be based on **our** past experience in what we take to be similar cases of English conversations. If we fail to construct such a ‘mini-theory’, (If, for instance, we were mistaken in identifying him as speaking a dialect of **English**), we

lecture coming. I waited in anticipation, but she started with a question: “You’d much rather have the ducks would stand on a line, each getting fed in its turn. Right?” “Yes.” I said. “Especially in view of the fact that they are **Dutch** ducks. If they were American ducks, I would be less disappointed.” Gaya continued: “And also, if possible, you would like them to be properly fed **every day**, right?” I agreed again. “Had you succeeded in achieving this,” said Gaya, “You would have managed to ruin the whole duck civilization. If all the ducks were properly fed every day, they would lose most of their interest in life. You are making the age old western mistake: You try to eliminate the **bad**, not realizing that by doing that, you are also eliminating the good. It is the **problems** that ducks have, their hunger, their broken wings, the fear from a stronger animal, which make duck-life so wonderful, so worth living. You are not only trying to make them **human**, but make them **western** humans!” Frankly, Gaya didn’t tell me anything I didn’t already know. But it was a wonderful example. Still, it was too early to summarize; the lecture only started. “On the other hand, this is not about ducks, or about **the** ducks. As usual, this is about **you**. Nothing out of the ordinary happened to this flock of ducks this morning. For them, it was routine. The only one who introduced (the concept of) **evil** into the situation, was **you**.” I protested: “Could it have been perceived in any other way?” Gaya smiled. “It depends what you mean by **it**. You had an experience, and I had an

swiftly replace the theory that is to explain the situation with another theory, more suited for the task. This alternative theory may include the belief “he does not speak English”, and again we may try to understand him, this time with help of gestures and sign language that presuppose that he is, e.g., a member of western civilization, or just that he is a sane human being. Our ability to communicate is based on an epistemic capacity to interpret situations, not a semantic capacity to interpret *wffs*. In other words: In pursuit of effective communication, each speaker is constantly trying to guess his fellow speaker’s idiolect. There can be no **objective** criterion to determine the success of this venture.

Michael Dummett⁷⁷ shares with Davidson the following premise: *If the concept of objective language is meaningful, then it must be based on its linguistic conventions.* (in other words, on the meaningfulness of the term ‘**competent** speaker’). This agreement acts as the basis for their **disagreement**: Davidson denies the notions of linguistic conventions and competent speaker, and from the denial of the consequent he infers the falsehood of the antecedent: There is **no** meaningful notion of ‘objective language’. Dummett, on the other hand, holds the antecedent as a premise of the discussion, and hence (rightly) infers the consequent. Like with Quine, this difference of opinion between Davidson and Dummett does not imply that one of them is **wrong**. It just implies that they understand their terms (slightly, but significantly) differently; They speak different idiolects.

Bjorn T. Ramberg⁷⁸ tries to resolve the disagreement between Davidson and Dummett, by denying the proposition they both share: He proposes to assume that language does **not** necessarily depend upon agreed linguistic conventions, **and** to further assume that such conventions **are** in fact employed. In other words, he proposes to separate the question of understanding the **meaning** of an utterance, from the question in **what language** it is. Ramberg’s motivation in this maneuver is to demonstrate what he terms “Davidson’s Copernican revolution” regarding language: The reversal of priorities between **language** and its **interpretation**. The Davidsonian concept of language is derived, extracted, from the particular occurrences of speakers’ **interpretations**. Incidentally, this view nicely accommodates for the phenomenon of **metaphor**: New, original expressions that keep “the” language alive. Davidson does not reject the work of **linguists**, but takes their subject matter, “objective language”, as a mere abstraction. Ramberg takes the middle road between Dummett and Davidson (employs yet a third idiolect): There **is** a theoretical notion of an objective language, an “idealization”. No speaker in the world speaks it, but it provides them all with a convenient tool to use and enhance their own idiolect.

experience. Do you want to hear about **my** experience?" Very much" I replied. "Here goes" started Gaya. "I don't mind my broken wing. It has been broken ever since I can remember. The problem is I am **hungry**. I can't seem to be able to lay my beak on anything edible. I am starved. Ho, Lord of the ducks, **please**, I need a miracle! and the miracle arrived. You came with **food**. I managed to get five large pieces. The bully duck bit me several times, but I am used to that by now. I don't really mind. The bread was **so** tasty! I don't remember ever enjoying a meal as I have this morning. Thank you, Lord of the ducks! Life can be **really** beautiful sometimes."

° In his essay "*The Structure and Content of Truth*"⁷⁹, Davidson rejects the following two main approaches to the concept of truth: He rejects the notion that truth is "human", Epistemic - that truth depends on, is derived from a particular speaker's epistemology. Davidson also rejects metaphysical realism, positing the **world prior** to the concept of truth. He claims to have successfully avoided both horns of the dilemma. This achievement is based on Tarski's (Internal) Truth, acting as a "bridge" between **meaning** and **truth**. Davidson perceives truth as **primary** - something we are equipped with **a priori**. Based on this initial **gear**, like our speakers S1 and S2, we "create" a reference, something our sentences **correspond** to. **Meaning** and **reference** (the "facts") are the **product** of truth, not its **source**. But Davidson finds relativism hard to digest. He wants to discuss **everybody's** truths, not just his own; I suspect that the **objectivity** of truth was, for Davidson, both an essential **presupposition**, as well as the *telos* of his inquiry: He explicitly declares himself to hold a **negative** view on coherence truth, rather than a positive view towards correspondence. Davidson criticizes the coherence approach by pointing out, among other things, that it provides no criterion of choice between many different consistent sets of beliefs. But a closer look will reveal this to be a "pseudo-problem": What **kind** of "choice" needs to be "made" between two (each consistent) theories? Such a "choice" can only be conceived to be made from "God's eye view", a point of view Davidson explicitly rejects. When considered from **within** (a particular) theory, it is perfectly intelligible to have a clear (although private) notion of truth, while **accepting** the fact that another speaker, equipped with a **different** Theory, also has (his own, private,) truth. Questions regarding truth and falsity, when **discussed** amongst speakers, are handled in an "artificial" **sub-Theory**, a special **context** "created" for the specific conversation: a sub-theory incorporating the **presuppositions** of the conversation. "True" and "false" are **not** predicable to **theories**. They are Relations between statement (or sentences, or utterances) and the **whole** Theory - the entire corpus of the speaker's belief system; (or, in a particular conversation, the 'mini-theory' - the **context**). It is senseless to label a **theory** as **false**; What could possibly be the criterion for this falsity? What could be the **difference** between a false theory and a true one? Theories cannot be **compared**. The most we could hope for **between** theories is a kind of **logical isomorphism**, based on the **premise** of a shared Logical Structure.

Davidson takes relativism to deprive truth of its role as an intersubjective standard; He sees this as an inevitable consequence of relativism. But he overlooked human **will**: The implicit **stipulation** of every speaker before entering the language game: Truth is, **henceforth**, intersubjective. It is this **elective** stipulation of truth's **universality**, which makes language **possible**. Davidson regards statements, propositions, as **theoretical**, **unobservable** entities. They are **generalizations** of particular **utterances**. Utterances **always** have an "attached" **speaker**, equipped with an **intention**, which corresponds to the particular utterance. An utterance that is classified as belonging to a class "designated" by a certain statement, can be considered to have the truth value of that Statement (e.g., "It is raining!", "'Tis raining", "Es regent" and "Drops of water are falling from the clouds" are all **true** utterances, all represented by the true statement "It is raining"). The truth conditions of an utterance must be **determined** by the utterer. Classification to **statement** (fixing the utterance's **meaning**) comes later: First there is a speaker with an **intention**, and a notion of **truth**. He combines the two to create a **true statement**, which in turn is translated into (true) utterance form, and **expressed**.

Davidson perceives all Speakers' truth theories to include one key concept that is considered **shared**: the concept '**truth**', acting as the mediator between the different Idiolects. When a speaker makes an utterance,

Nice. Very nice demonstration of relativism. Frankly, she made me feel better. But I wanted to get **more** out of this. I asked: “You experienced one thing, I another. I’d much rather have had **your** experience than mine. Do you have **control**, a **choice**, of what **kind** of experience you have? In other words, of how you **interpret** the situation?” She said: “Can’t you see you are simply doing it **again**? What are you asking - If there is a trick of always seeing **the good side** of things? Don’t you realize that if you succeeded, you would **lose** the meaning of ‘the good side’? There would be only one **side**, and it would be neither good nor bad!” She didn’t answer the question. I didn’t let go: “But **can** you?” She looked at me, with a thoughtful expression on her face. “If I want. But I don’t. I like **living**. This is one of the reasons I enjoy spending time with you: You have **your** side of things, and you keep giving me fresh angles.” I considered this an undue compliment, but said nothing. She must have sensed I was disappointed with myself, because she had more to say: “Don’t get me wrong; Your point of view is indispensable. Do you realize, that my story about the duck **depended** on your story?” “How do you mean?” “Had you not **cared**, had you not exercised **care**, the poor invalid duck would have remained hungry, and I would have no story to tell. You saw injustice, you cared, and you **acted**! You had the bread; I, for myself, could not do anything to help - I could only **interpret**. It was you who supplied the **moral attitude**, and the **required** action. Because of your **western** point of view, the poor duck had the best breakfast in its life. I am not putting down the western point of view. I am just criticizing its often implied **exclusivity**. Feeling sorry for someone else is not always **right**, but it is not always **wrong**. The trick is to

she assumes the interpreter’s theory to “coincide” with her own regarding all **relevant**, or related, beliefs: She makes the utterance based on a set of presuppositions. This set acts as the substrata of the conversation - a kind of presumed **overlap** of the two idiolects. Davidson’s speakers are not **aware** of the exact content of the truth theory which they **are**. This theory is no other than their whole Belief System, and no one is ever **aware** of all (or most) of her beliefs at a given moment.

In the abovementioned article, Davidson **identifies** a theory of truth with a theory of meaning. Such a theory **T** of speaker **S** is a long list of T-Sentences, acting as its “natural laws”. He proposes a “unified theory”, linking the speaker’s intention (and meaning) with both her beliefs **and** desires: The extent of her **wanting** something to be true, plays a role in setting its truth value. Such a (hopefully quantitative) unified theory should take into account, in the process of determining the truth value of a proposition, all of the speaker relevant beliefs, **and** the speaker’s **motivation** to accept the proposition as true (or reject it as false). In cases of a very **strong** motivation, the speaker may “sacrifice” another belief, (**A**), in favor of a new, **attractive** one (**B**). But here an interesting question arises: By sacrificing, abandoning, **A**, the system **changed**, in a way that could accept **B** as **true**. **B**’s **meaning** is now different from what it was **before A** was abandoned. This gives **B** a **different** meaning when it is **false**, than the meaning it has when it is **true**. By “setting” the truth value of a proposition (accepting it as a belief, or rejecting it), the speaker **influences** its meaning in an important way. Since the principle of charity requires (assumes) that speakers **tell the truth**, their utterances are interpreted as “carrying” their meanings “**as true**”, unless the interpreter has good reasons to assume otherwise.

Davidson is a self proclaimed pragmatist. He emphasizes the role of desire, attraction, interest, in the concepts of meaning and understanding. The **intentional** nature we possess, our *conatus*, is not only a significant factor in communication - it is a condition of its possibility. Being human, rational, a speaker, thus consists of (private) beliefs, (private) desires, objective *wffs*, and a **constitutively shared** concept of truth.

know when to do either. My rule is this: If there is anything you can **do** about it, then you **should** feel sorry for someone else: Help him. If there is nothing (you can think of) that you could do to help, don't even feel sorry for him. There simply is nothing to feel sorry about. And if you **do** feel sorry, consider it a sign that you could **do** something about it. You were right to feel sorry about the duck. You could help. And you did. But I was also right, in **not** feeling sorry about the duck: There was nothing I could do; There was simply no problem!"^o

When I returned to my room, the maid just finished. We smiled at each other, but skipped the 'Good morning', a greeting that already got used up before. I thought about the extensive smiling I practice around here, and decided that it was nothing but an integral part of the local **language**: A kind of short friendly "Hello". Come to think of it, a smile is a part of other languages as well: Where I come from, it means: 'I am in a good mood', or 'I find the situation amusing', or 'I like you'. In some scary parts of New York or Los Angeles, it means 'I am not afraid of you'; But here in Edam, it simply means: 'Have a nice day' or something similar. I continued to think about this "body language" when I was sitting in the sun outside what has become my favorite cafe, on the main street. It was the same place where I had lunch yesterday. Yesterday, when the waitress cleared my table after I ate, I gave her a used napkin that I was holding in my hand, so it does not get blown in the wind. She didn't understand why I was handing her a used napkin, but my gesture and my smile made her understand that I wanted her to take it from me. She was a friendly lady with a warm smile. She took the napkin and sincerely said "I accept". I understood this as an expression of wonder. I explained: "It gets blown off the table by the wind". She understood and laughed, probably at her own misunderstanding. Today, as I was sitting there in the sun, observing the tourists passing by and enjoying the sun, I saw her standing on the threshold of the cafe, also looking into the street. Our eyes met. We both broke a wide smile, and looked back at the street. Was this a **conversation**? I think it was. We were both saying to each other: "How **nice** is it all, is it not?"

It **was** nice. The world was beautiful (it still is). It is spring, I am in the most beautiful place in the world, I spoke with Esti this morning and everything at home is just fine; My writing pace has reached a reasonable 9-10 pages per day, and I met the most amazing lady in the world. I haven't seen her since our morning walk, and I managed to squeeze in quite a lot of writing since then. Gaya was nowhere in sight. She had a way of making herself disappear every time I had something else to do. She must be doing it on purpose, not to impair my writing by offering me too much of her time.

^o Enough about Davidson. I got quite carried away writing about him, as I tend to sympathize with so much he has to say. In the relevant respects, our idiolects are "similar". I cannot resist bringing one last short quote in this context, by Dewey, who Davidson has the highest esteem for: "...*the profuseness of attestations to supreme devotion to truth on the part of philosophy is a matter to arouse suspicion...*"⁸⁰.