

**DONALD DAVIDSON ON
TRUTH, MEANING AND INTERPRETATION**

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DECLARATION

I, C. Bindu, do hereby declare that this thesis **DONALD DAVIDSON ON TRUTH, MEANING AND INTERPRETATION** has not been submitted by me for the award of a degree or a recognition before.

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This is to certify that this thesis **DONALD DAVIDSON ON TRUTH, MEANING AND INTERPRETATION** is a bonafide record of research done by **Smt. C. Bindu** under my guidance and that no part of it has previously been submitted to any other university or academic body or published.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AM	Anomalous Monism
ARC	Action, Reason and Causes
BBM	Belief and the Basis of Meaning
CLM	Covering Law Model
EAE	Essay on Action and Event
ITI	Inquiry into Truth and Interpretation
LOT	Language of Thought
KW	Kripke Wittgenstein
MBP	Mind Body Problem
ME	Mental Event
NCC	The Nomological Character of Causality
PAM	The Principle of Anomalism of the Mental
PCI	The Principle of Casual Interactin
PNCC	The Principle of Nomological Character of Causation
PNG	The Principle of Non-Generalization
REST	Revised Extended Standard Theory
SCT	The Structure and Content of Truth
SST	Strange Singular Term
TM	Truth and Meaning
TMI	Truth Meaning and Interpretation

P R E F A C E

The present thesis grew out of crucial debate of recent days among philosophers and non philosophers to define truth. New developments in psycho technology proves not merely that machine could think, but it can also act and interact as human being.

Welcoming those tradition of psycho civilization, we would have to accept three different images of man – *homo persona* (man as person), *homo artificialis* (man as machine) and *homo natura* (man as physical organism). He is *homo persona* because man as entity with a role in the system that manifest itself as existence, subjectivity and culture. He is *homo artificialis* in the sense that his feelings, desires, plans and ideals are demonstrably formed in the context that is not 'natural' but intellectual, historical, social and the like. Moreover, what he thinks, chooses, decides and acts in ways that are not immediately nor exhaustively deducible from his biophysical structure. Unlike this he has existence also as immanent part of nature, body and matter. He is therefore *homo natura*. But the coming generation of psycho civil society, there are still another image of man as machine. In what ways we could accommodate it with us. It seems that new image of *homo sapien* have been closely connected to a revival of doctrine inspired by naturalistic and realistic principles. Hence it requires explanations of reason as well as of causation which in turn will be hermeneutic as well as empirical. The analytic tradition in this context is finding its way back into our intellectual scenario with new energy and credibility.

The study begins with the recognition of the confluence of two major streams of influence in Davidsonian thought: the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language. While the former centres round the problems relating the notion of Anomalous Monism (AM), the latter studies interpretative project of the relation between Truth, Meaning and Interpretation (TMI). The main objective of the study was to collate the different views regarding the interface between

philosophy of language and philosophy of mind and also to assess the impact on Davidson's own theorization of TMI.

The priority between language and thought becomes a central issue for elucidating the concept of meaning. There are philosophers who give prior claim to mind and also there are philosophers who give priority to language in elucidating meaning. But they are all sceptics regarding meaning. Thus my primary query is to show how Davidson's contribution differs altogether from the rest of the analytic traditions. In what ways, his contribution to the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language intersect each other? In what way they differ from each other? While answering this question, I suppose that I would like to concentrate on his perspective which has enormous impact on cognitive science, ethics, anthropology, politics and other social or scientific discourses.

The second chapter deals with Davidsonian concept of anomalous monism and its various problems relating it. Davidson doctrine of AM is the revival of traditional mind-body problem (MBP). Rethinking modern thoughts, essentially consider MBP with new lights and scopes. While speaking of 'mind' or mental an unsettled debate was whether one may admit a human dimension which is autonomous and irreducible in relation to the bodily. Many thinkers have reflection on the descriptions and explanations of psychology. But the question was whether it is possible or even necessary to admit the existence of a descriptive and explanatory language of psychic phenomena which is independent of physically constituted languages. Davidson's perspective regarding this dimension can be inferred through various premises, which at first glance might seem inconsistent. Hence the section 2:1 deals with the question whether there is inconsistency in Anomalous monism thesis. In order to answer this question, one must know the need of causal explanation to mental events. Section 2:2 deals with the problem of causal explanation, in which Davidson reacts against causation in Humean sense of Hempel's covering – law model types. Section 2:3 dealt with the problem of rational explanation, in which he supports "reason causes action" by attacking human rationality as totalizing rational thinking. The result is that the mind and its

correlates are not the ultimate reality. There exists, according to Davidson, a weak version of supervenience between mental events and physical events. Section 2:4 dealt with the concept of supervenience.

The third chapter switches on to Davidson's contribution to the philosophy of language. His philosophical perspective on language emerged with his central concern of semantic issue. His philosophy may often be called as truth conditional semantics. It had a strong empirical base. His semantic account of truth provides a clear picture of how the language, thought, and the world outside are related. Truth, for him, is the most basic concept which directly related to the notion of meaning and belief. And so, this chapter focuses on Davidsonian conception of truth and meaning. It has been noted that the tradition follows different approaches to the theories of meaning. Section 3:1 concentrates on two contrasted approaches to the theories of meaning. Davidson's alternative approach of truth conditional semantics stands apart from tradition. To Davidson, meaning is truth conditional. Section 3:2 explains in detail how meaning is truth conditional. Davidson finds the basic model of such theories in Alfred Tarski's work on truth. Hence section 3:3 compares and contrasts Tarski and Davidson, and section 3:4 compares and contrast Quine and Davidson.

In the course of investigation, I found that there are different stages of Davidsonian conception of truth. The fourth chapter, therefore deals with different stages of his conception of truth. In the preliminary stage, Davidson makes use of Tarskian truth-definition as a formal tool to explain the theory of meaning. But unlike Tarski, Davidson is certainly not interested to construct an epistemological or metaphysical theory of truth. On the contrary, he suggests that an empirical theory of truth will serve as a basis for metaphysical or epistemological investigation. However, Davidson notices the material inadequacy or limitation of Tarskian truth definition to develop a much wider theory of meaning. For Tarski, language is something given. Truth is the matter of investigation through the concept of meaning. On Davidson's view, Tarskian truth definition lacks empirical content since his attempt is to fix meaning in particular truth context.

In the second stage, Davidson introduces certain ramifications into Tarskian truth definition. Without changing the formal structure, Davidson basically uses Tarskian truth theory as a theory of interpretation. He wants to ascribe truth-conditions to the utterances of language users. Here, the constraint is that the concept of truth is taken as primitive. Meaning, reference, language are theoretical constructs derived from the concept of truth. The sentence uttered by the speaker is endowed with meaning. An interpreter searches for the formation about the episodes in the world that causes an agent to prefer that particular act of utterance to be true. This will provide a unified theory of meaning and belief, which in turn suffices for a satisfactory understanding of language as a means of communication. A central feature of this stage is that truth theory is considered as a branch of probability theory. Truth is, here, a matter of agreement. Though the empirical status is maintained throughout, he is still doubtful whether an empirical status can be given to the truth theory. This leads to the type of indeterminacy of meaning as Quine conceived. Ramberg is critic of this view. According to him, indeterminacy of meaning is not at all a serious issue on Davidson's radical interpretation model.

In the third stage, truth, as he avers, is an undefinable concept. Realising the folly of defining truth Davidson proceeds to reject all those theories that attempt to define the notion of truth. Instead he puts forward a fairly alternative suggestion. He proposes a kind of methodology that agrees with all instances of truth definition. This leads to the contingency of language and contingency of self hood as Richard Rorty (1989) conceived. But could it add empirical content to the theory is yet another question that waits for an answer.

The fifth chapter shows how we can use the concept of truth as the source of empirical content. Unlike Tarski, Davidson ascribes truth conditions to language users. He calls the situation as Radical interpretation. Quine calls such a situation as Radical translation. Section 5:1 discusses the difference between radical translation and radical interpretation. This would help us to know how Davidson is a critic of Quinean Scepticism. Davidson claimed that in interpreting speakers, we maximize the empirical content of our theories solely by constructing speakers as a

speaker of truth. The import of this assumption is often called as the principle of charity. Both Davidson and Quine use this principle. Whether this principle is a constraint or pre-condition is yet another problem we ought to discuss in section 5:2. For Davidson, the principle of charity is not a constraint but it is an inevitable pre-condition of language users. We should also have to stress that it is not an expression of faith in the sincerity of speaker. Massive error, he says, presupposes epistemic investigation. Communication does succeed without any kind of regularity in the use of language. Section 5:3 explains Davidson's denial of language, error and convention. While discussing the major issues, we could notice how Davidsonian conception of language differ from Dummett's and Hacking's conception of language. While Dummett noticed the diachronic aspect of linguistic generalization, Davidson supports the synchronic aspects of radical interpretation. Both these aspects of generalization works in our linguistic competence. But the discrepancy between these two structures must also consider in order to understand the contribution of Davidsonian semantics to other discourses. By relying on convention rather than radical interpretation, there is a tendency of a possible diffusion of meaning or a blurring of linguistic understanding. However, we could give accounts of the ways in which convention changes or changes in social practices that affect our linguistic understanding. It explains in what ways they blur, or distort the meaning of our discourses. As Ramberg noted, this idea provides us with general frameworks for understanding the problem of incommensurability. Davidson conceives intranslatability of language as incommensurability. Ramberg, in that context, is a critic of Davidson. According to him, the identity of intranslatability and incommensurability, as Davidson conceived follows that there exists, a language which is untranslatable. This is a type of reification of meaning, which Davidson also rejects. Section 5:4, thus dealt with the problems of intranslatability, indeterminacy and incommensurability. As Ramberg noted, Davidson's method of radical interpretation is a true justification of Kuhnian model of incommensurability. But the notion of intranslatability of language in Davidsonian theory actually strengthen his empirical standpoint.

In the final chapter, I conclude by evaluating and assessing an overall perspective derived from Davidson's philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. In between many interpretations we have studied and contrasted, it has been seen that none of them accepts the basic point of interface with which Davidson started with. To add empirical content to the truth theory, these two streams need not necessarily coincide. They are independent discourses flowing in their own direction. This was actually Davidson intended to be. That is way Davidson accepts Ramberg's interpretation.

Thus by studying those interpretations, I think Davidson's methodological stances provide structure and content of truth. That is the least possible way to understand the meaning. His understanding of the inter-dependence of the notion of truth, meaning and interpretation which found in the initial stage of his philosophy has no connection to the contingency of language and mind found in the latter stage of his thought. This saves philosophy as a discourse from the rest of the discourses.

INTRODUCTION : A BROAD OUTLOOK ON DAVIDSON'S PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A BROAD OUTLOOK ON DAVIDSON'S PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Donald Herbert Davidson (1917-), one of the most distinguished living Anglo-American philosophers is remarkably influential today in Britain, even more than in his home country. He was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, educated at Harvard University, received his Ph.D. from the same university in 1949, and held posts in number of universities until he becomes professor at Berkeley, University of California in 1981. The insight in his works has an unavoidable reference point in current debates of two distinctive and intimately related theoretical perspective in the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language. As a critique of modern notion of human rationality and as a critique of Quinean scepticism, his philosophy marked as a passage to the post-analytic tradition. The earliest of his work is the paper on 'Action, Reason and Causes' [ARC] was published in 1963. Another influential work is the paper on 'Truth and Meaning' [TM] which was published in 1967. Since then, he has produced more than a hundred articles and the most important of these articles (up to early 1980s) have been collected in two volumes namely:

- (i) Essay on Action and Events (1980) [EAE]
- (ii) Inquiry into Truth and Interpretation (1984) [ITI]

Davidson's views about the relationship between our conceptions of ourselves as people and as complex physical objects have had significant impact on contemporary discussions of such topics as intention, action, causal explanation and weakness of the will (Akrasia).¹ His first collection of essays

contain many seminal contributions in these areas. But perhaps even greater has been the influence of Davidson's philosophy of language, as reflected especially in latter volume. Among the philosophical issues connected to language on which Davidson has been influential are the nature of truth, the semantic paradoxes, first person authority, indexical, modality, reference, convention, indeterminacy, realism etc. The philosophical perspective of the above two books may be regarded as representing the two streams of influences in his thought.

1.1. Two Streams of Influence

Davidson's theoretical perspectives might be broadly classified under two heads: the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language.² They are regarded as the two streams of influences in his thought. While the former studies the nature and method of explanation in intentional behaviour, the latter concentrates on semantic issues of understanding what it is to speak a language. The concepts of 'Truth, Meaning and Interpretation' [TMI] plays a key role in the latter stream but the doctrine of 'Anomalous Monism' [AM] might be the core aspect in the former stream of his thought.

While compartmentalizing philosophy of mind and philosophy of language in this way, one must be aware of the danger of conceiving meaning as linguistic expression that it has nothing to do with mind or mental states whatsoever. It is not only linguistic expressions that are capable of possessing meaning but also some mental states – beliefs, desires, intentions, wishes and so on – are thought to possess meaning or content. For example, the content of my *belief* that Gotra is in Gujarat is *that Gotra is in Gujarat*; like wise, I can have an *intention* with the content *that I will finish this book on time*; I can have a *wish* with the content *that My articles will be published in the forthcoming journal*; I can have a *desire* with the content *that I win next week's National Quiz Competition*; and so on. Philosophers call such mental

states as propositional attitudes. Just as sentences have *linguistic meaning*, so to say, propositional attitudes have *mental content*.

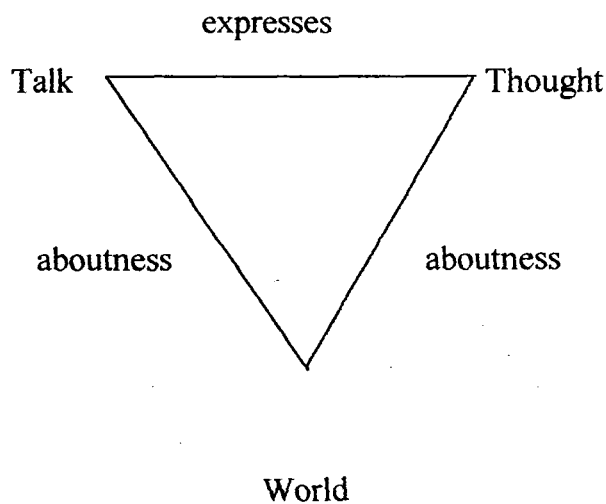
Then the problem arises: what is the relationship between linguistic meaning and mental content? Do we have to explain the notion of linguistic meaning in terms of the notion of mental content? Do we have to explain what it is for a linguistic expression to have meaning in terms of the propositional attitudes of speakers of the language?. Or can we explain the notion of mental content in terms of the notion of linguistic meaning? (ie, can we explain what it is for a speaker to have a propositional attitude with a certain content in terms of the linguistic meaning of expressions of a language?). In recent contemporary philosophic scenario, these questions arise fundamentally relating to the priority between the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind.

Indeed, as Martin Davies noted, we generally tempted to believe that any strategy for elucidating the concept of meaning will inevitably depend on our common view of the order of priority as between talk and thought (1996: 97). But the notion of priority, here specifically mentioned, is yet to be cleared. It is neither 'ontological' priority nor epistemological priority we ought to discuss here. Rather our dealings are mainly based on analytical priority.³ In particular, our question about the order of analytical priority as between language and mind relates to the notion of linguistic meaning and the notion of intentionality (aboutness) of mental states. If it is so, then there are four possible alternative views regarding the analytic priority.

(i) *Mind first:* This is the view that it is possible to give a philosophical account of the intentionality of *thoughts* without essentially adverting to language and that the notion of linguistic meaning can then be analysed in terms of the thoughts that language is used to express.

(ii) *Language first*: This is the view that an account of linguistic meaning can be given without bringing in the intentionality of thoughts, and that what a person's thought are about can be, then, analysed in terms of the use of language.

(iii) *No priority (both together)*: This is the view that there is no way of elucidating the notion of what a person's thoughts are about without bringing in the notion of linguistic meaning, nor the other way around. The two notions have to be explained together. Accordingly, there is an essential relation between uniform relation between talk, thought and world. We use language to talk about the world, and to express our thoughts, which are also about the world. Talk, Thought and World thus form a triangle [*Ibid.*, 96]. Martin Davies argues that the philosophy of language, Philosophy of mind and also Metaphysics move around this triangle (see Figure 1.1).



[Figure 1.1. The Schematic representation of the relationship between Talk, Thought and World, which is explored in the philosophy of language, the philosophy of mind and metaphysics].

(iv) *No priority (both aliened)*:⁴ This is the very different view that we could neither analysis notion of what a person's thoughts are about in terms of the notion of linguistic meaning, nor could we analyse the notion of linguistic meaning in terms of the notion of intentionality of thought. Meaning (whether intentional or linguistic), according to this view, is purely contextual or truth-conditional. Nothing pre-established or pre-determined in it. They questioned subjectivity on the one side and objectivity on the other. There is no such thing as 'mind'. There is no such thing as 'language'. The main objective, is to attack against reification of such notions. For the proponents of this view, the notions like 'mind' or 'language' are more contingent factors. They might be 'ever changing' or 'just passing' entities. In such cases, linguistic meaning and intentional meaning need not necessarily coincide, that the two notions are quite unrelated.

While Paul Grice [1913-88], John Searle [1960, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1991, 1992, 1995],⁵ Paul Churchland [1981, 1984], Daniel Dennett [1975, 1978a, 1978b, 1988, 1991, 1996] and others follow the mind – first approach, the language – first view finds expression in Michael Dummett's writings [1973, 1978, 1991, 1993, 2002, 2003]. The no-analytical priority view is the specific characteristic of the work of Donald Davidson, who neither proposed ontological nor epistemological priority claim as well. But whether this 'no priority claim' *binds* two streams *together* or *creates lacuna* between the two is yet another interesting debate confronted among recent continental thinkers as well as among Davidsonian interpreters. At a single glance, one might interpret Davidson's no priority claim meant for the intersection of philosophy of mind and philosophy of language. Davidson's initial works also seem that they are not to be considered as quite independent to each other. He stresses that there can be no thought without language [1975] nor language without thought, and that there is no finding out in detail what a person believes without interpreting the person's speech [1974]. It seems, as Martin Davies

noted, that they mutually intersect each other to provide a coherent account of language and mind. Still considering Davidson's latter works, we are tempting to interpret his no-priority claim as aliened each other.

To decide which of the above types of view in the relationship between language and thought is correct is an extremely difficult task. However, the inadequacy of the former two views might be clear if we consider - KW skeptical paradox: there are no facts in virtue of which ascriptions of meaning, such as "Jones means addition by '+' are either true or false" [Kripke: 1982]. Suppose one adopts mind first approach on which linguistic meaning is explained in terms of mental content, possessed by speaker. Here KW's argument, which is the targeted on linguistic meaning, will carry over to threaten the notion of mental content: If A is explained in terms of B, and the notion of A proves to be incoherent, then we cannot avoid conclusion that B is incoherent also. For example, if the notion of responsibility is explained in terms of the notion of free will, then given the conclusion that the notion of responsibility is incoherent, we will be forced to the conclusion that the notion of free will is incoherent also [Miller: 1998]. Likewise for the Dummettian view, on which the content possessed by propositional attitudes is to be explained in terms of the use of language. If A is explained in terms of B, then any argument that B is in coherent will thereby threaten the coherence of A. For instance, if Divine Grace is explained in terms of God, and the latter notion proves to be incoherent, then there will be nothing left of the former. So, given the Dummettian view, KW's skeptical argument, in threatening the notion of linguistic meaning, will also threaten the notion of mental content.⁶

Paul Boghossian summarized the points as follows:

There would appear to be no possible way to promote a language-specific meaning skepticism. On the Gricean

picture, one cannot threaten linguistic meaning without threatening thought content, since it is from thought that linguistic meaning is held to derive; and on the [Dummettian] picture, one cannot threaten linguistic meaning without thereby threatening thought content, since it is from linguistic meaning that thought content is held to derive. Either way, [mental] content and [linguistic] meaning must stand or fall together [1989: 510].

The point is best explained, when Davidson argues that there is no explanatory priority either way: if linguistic meaning and mental content must be explained together, or not at all, then any argument against the coherence of one notion is straight-forwardly an argument against the coherence of the other.

However, the real issue of KW's argument might not be limited to priority claim, but it might extend to the problem of the nature of the same argument itself. The KW's argument is not based on the fact that sentences belong to language, but just on the assumption that they possess meaning. Thus, even if, nothing mental possesses content would be equally good as that nothing linguistic does [and vice versa]. This is mainly because their arguments are *against the existence of items individuated by content*. It might follow that there is no fact of the matter as to whether we have propositional attitudes with certain contents. And it seems no matter as if we substitute linguistic meaning for propositional content. This conclusion essentially appears to threaten the explanation of human action [Miller, 1998: 181].

Then the problem is, if linguistic content and mental content are taken together, how could Davidson explain human action? An action, he says, is an event. If so, in what ways action might be described physically and mentally: In other words, how mental events and physical events causally related? Can

we reduce mental events into physical events? If not, in what ways they are identical? Or in what ways they are different? Is there any 'explanatory gap' between the two? While answering these questions Davidson's first stream of influence flows as the philosophy of mind. His proposal of the thesis of AM is an attempt to explain intentional behaviour through non-reductive materialism.

At the same time, if linguistic meaning and propositional attitude are taken together, how do we determine meaning of an expression in a given language? Davidson never provides us any straightforward solution to this problem. Instead he puts forth a methodological strategy by asking the question, 'what is it for words to mean what they do?' [ITI, p.xiii]. The answer amounts to a 'theory of meaning' which for Davidson is 'not a technical term but a gesture in the direction of a family of problems (a problem family)?' [ITI: 215]. In order to avoid circularity, he argues, a theory of meaning must explain language and communication without relying on undefined semantic concepts. To do that, it must fulfil two basic requirements: it must be powerful enough to provide an interpretation of any utterance a speaker of a natural language might take, and it must be testable against evidence available independently of any knowledge of the detailed propositional attitudes of the speaker or linguistic concepts of the language. [ITI: xiii/215]. The main focus of Davidson's investigations is Tarskian truth schema which, he argues, provides both the structure and content of a theory of truth. Thus, Davidson's philosophy of language revolves around the core issues of semantics relating the problems of 'TMI'.

No doubt, the two streams of influence are flowing apart from the same metaphysical issues. But the question is whether metaphysics has existence apart from the world. Davidson's attempt is not to exclude metaphysics from the physical world. He was inspired much from Dewey's words that 'God in

the heaven must come down to earth⁷. But can we reduce mind into physics, as scientific theorist believes? His attempt is not to highlight science or physics. Rather his non-scientific attempt is a therapeutic work, which not merely explains but to detect and describe how mental state operate its function in accordance with scientific laws that could be described. It is at this juncture, scientific (physics/psychology) and non-scientific (Folk psychology) theories meet together. There are so many things that science can tell us about ourselves and about the world, but still there are some thing that science could not explain. In other words, *science could not prove that there is no such thing as mind*. But we as a man know a lot about ourselves and about the world. Can we contribute anything new to science? However, without considering this linking dimension of Davidsonian thought, simply demarcating his general views of the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language, on the basis of his two books published earliest, might be superfluous. Some critics like Simon Evnine notice, "an irruption of internally generated tensions" in two streams of his thought (1991: 175). He argues that, for Davidson, these two streams are two different projects concentrating on different issues and explanations. While the former, he interprets, as 'causal explanatory project,' the latter, he says, is 'hermeneutic project.' Hence, for Evnine, it is hard to find an exact link between two streams of his influences.

I think that even if there creates tension in both two streams of influence, that is not actually because of contradiction created by causal explanatory project and hermeneutic projects. Perhaps, his intension behind the two works might be different, but this does not create tension in his basic thought of language and mind. That is, even if he proposed a causal explanation to the mind-body problem (MBP), this never hinder the hermeneutic dimension of the mental as well. We shall discuss in detail more about this in the subsequent chapters. Before that we may introduce the core

issues of the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language respectively in the consecutive sections.

1: 2 The Philosophy of Mind: 'Anomalous Monism'

What is mind? Is there anything existing as mind? What is the relation between mind and body? If there are mental and physical property, can we reduce mental into physical? Whether mental properties are identical with physical properties? Are there any psychological or psycho-physical strict laws?

Rethinking those traditional enigmas of the mind-body relationship become indispensable while our generation is standing at the threshold of 'Psycho-civilization' where physical control of people's brain achieved by means of chemical agents or of electronic impulses [Delgado: 1969]. The philosopher's responses from scientific and non-scientific discourses are varied. Yet there seems a common tendency to hold crude materialism in a revived form. The impetus behind this tendency is to prove scientifically whether machine could think, act and interact as man. Recent developments in cognitive science and physics reached at the critical stage that they are highly problematic concerning environment factors and the first person's authoritative aspects. In this scenario, it is relevant to note how Davidson's psycho-semantics works via AM and TMI.

No doubt, the real issue of the mind, for Davidson, is not concerned with the nature of the existence of mind as *Suigeneris*. He calls the mind, as 'mental'. The mental is an 'event'. Events are particulars – unrepeatably, datable, locatable ontological category. An event, at particular moment probably is 'action' or 'utterance'. Actions and Utterances are physical events or episodic events. Davidson's doctrine of AM is a version of neo-physicalism. It is monistic because it holds that mental events are physical

events; it is anomalous because it insists that events do not fall under strict laws when described in mental terms. The AM argument had three main premises.

- (P₁) The principle of causal interaction: At least some mental events interact causally with physical events.
- (P₂) the principle of the Nomological character of causality: Events related as cause and effect must fall under strict laws.
- (P₃) The Anomalism of the Mental: There are no strict laws on the basis of which mental events can be predicted and explained [ME, 208].

From those premises, Davidson proposed, "we can infer the truth of a version of the identity theory" [ME, 209]. Each and every step of this argument is not freed from various attacks. Reading each step separately one might seem inconsistent. Putting the things together, there is hardly anything to find defect in his perspectives of inferences. For instance,

"Take an arbitrary mental event M. By(1) it is causally connected with some physical event P. By(2), there must be a strict law connecting M and P; but by (3) that law cannot be a psychophysical law. Because only physics aims to provide a closed system governed by strict laws. The law connecting M and P must be a physical law. But then M must have a physical description – it must be a physical event" [Davidson, 1999: 30].

A widely accepted criticism of AM is that it makes mental causation irrelevant because it is the physical properties of events that do the causing [Kim 1993, 1998]. For Davidson, all mental events are causally related to physical events. Unlike Kim, it is events, not properties that are causes and

effects [Davidson 1993]. If events described in physical terms are effective, they are identical with those same events described in psychological terms, then the latter must also causally effective. For example, changes in propositional attitudes such as beliefs and desires cause agents to act, and actions cause change in the physical world. Events in the physical world often cause us to alter our beliefs, intentions, and desires. The vocabularies of physics and of psychology are, however, irreducibly different ways of describing and explaining events, but one does not rule out or supercede the other.

[P₂] was accepted by Hume and Kant, though their reasons for holding it were very different from Davidson. However, these premises has been questioned by many others [Anscombe, 1971, Cartwright, 1983, Brain McLaughlin, 1998]. Davidson argues if two events are related as cause and effect, there is a strict law under which they may be subsumed. This means that cause and effect have descriptions that instantiate a strict law. A strict laws is one that makes no use of open-ended escape clauses such as "others things being equal." Such laws must belong to a closed system. Whatever can effect the system must be included in it. Davidson, here, reminds us by observing that physics is defined by the aim of discovering or devising a vocabulary (which among other things determines what counts as an event) which allows the formation of a closed system of laws. The chief argument for the nomological and definitional irreducibility of mental concepts to physical is that mental concepts, in so far as they involve the propositional attitudes, are normative, while the concepts of a developed physics are not. This is because propositions are logically related to one another, which places a *normative constraint* on the correct attribution of attitudes. Since an attitude is in part identified by its logical relations, the patterns of attitudes in an individual must exhibit a large degree of coherence. This does not mean that people may not be irrational, but the possibility of irrationality depends on a

background of rationality [Davidson 1991]. Thus the principle of normativity and holism are the two general characteristics of mental events.

Yet, to what extent physics could go ahead to define human science? (P₃) argues that there are no strict psychological laws (laws connecting or identifying mental events under their mental descriptions with physical events under their physical descriptions). This is because of the fact that events described in psychological terms do not belong to a closed system. But in his careful analysis, he stated that psychological laws must always contain *ceteris paribus* clauses. P₃, thus rules out two forms of reductionism: reduction of the mental to the physical by explicit definition of mental predicates in physical terms (behaviouristic program) and reduction by way of strict-bridging laws – laws that connect mental with physical properties (programme of cognitive science), which leads to psychological anomalism and psycho physical anomalism respectively.

Davidson's arguments of AM do entail ontological reduction, because they imply that mental entities do not add to the physical furniture of the world. This claims Davidson, by his Spinoza's metaphysical inspiration, for ontological monism coupled with conceptual dualism⁸. Critics like Kim vehemently attacks monistic claim of Davidson. He prefers dualism to Monism. Very recently, Michael V. Antony (2003), who derives ontological dualism from AM, seeks support from Kim to accept Fodor's view as a model of physicalism. But he is hardly aware of why Fodorian token–token identity (monism) as distinguished from Kim's type-type identity (dualism) requires 'lot of physicalism in'. According to Davidson, unlike Kim and Michael Antony, there is no explanatory gap between the mental and the physical events, even if he denies nomological or definitional reduction. As Serigo Moravio noted, man is not a 'homoduplex' [1995: 3]. Ontological dualism⁹

presupposes that there is an 'explanatory gap' between mental and physical predicates.

Davidson disagrees with both Kim and Fodor [1981b] in certain respects. The problem arises in Fodorian conception because his attempt is to visualize mental content 'in the brain'. If we accept Kim, the danger is that we should have to accept the essentialist urge of reducing not only 'meta-physic' entities, but also 'meta-psychic' entities. Fodor's functionalism, on the otherside, is the scientific urge to physicalism through the language of thought (LOT). The result is a type of internalism.

Putnam's Twin Earth argument [1975] explains how Fodorian conception (1980, 1982) is not to be true. He asks us to imagine two people exactly alike physically and (therefore) alike with respect to all 'narrow' psychological states. An inhabitant of Earth, calls the word 'water' for water (H₂O). Another inhabitant of Twin Earth calls the word 'water' for not water, but twater (xyz). Under the circumstances, Putnam claims, the first speaker refers to water when she uses the word 'water'; her twin refers to twater when she uses the word 'water'. Do they know what they believe? Putnam says, propositional content 'ain't in the head', therefore they do not know what they believe.

According to Putnam, what determines meaning or content is in part fixed by the circumstances in which we learned and used the words. It 'is not, in general, fully known to the speaker' [Putnam: 1975: 164-5]. Here 'psychological state' means 'narrow' psychological state.¹⁰ It is assumed that only such states are 'fully known'. He, therefore, argues that there are cases where narrow psychological states are identical yet the speakers mean different things by the same word.

Davidson argues that Putnam's interpretation of Twin Earth is misleading [1994]. He claims that there is nothing on the basis of which either speaker can tell which state she is in, for there is no internal or external clue to the difference available. Davidson's counter-example: Place a glass of Water (H₂O) in front of them. Both utter same words, 'Here's a glass of water.' Each of them are speaking the truth since their words mean different things. And since each is sincere, it is natural to suppose that they believe different things – the first speaker must believe there is water in earth, the twin speaker must believe that there is twater in twin earth. But this is not the case. He claims that they know what they believe. Only the third person knows the semantic difference. But whether it is correct or not, is out of question. Hence he argues there are cases where people exactly alike physically, yet psychologically different. Putnam identity thesis is, therefore, absurd.

Thinkers who are convinced of the external dimension of the content of thoughts by Putnam's arguments responded in different ways. One common response has been to make distinction between the contents of the mind as subjectively and internally determined, on the one side, and ordinary beliefs, desires, and intentions, as we normally attribute them on the basis of social and other outward connections, on the other side. Jerry Fodor [1980, 1981], John Searle [1983], Stephen Stich [1983], Andrew Wood Fields [1982], Daniel Dennett [1978], Taylor Burge [1979] are some of them, who follow this trend of Putnam's argument. Their common temptation is to reject first person's authority. Davidson argues that their scientific psychology is a search for essence in Cartesian sense.

Jerry Fodor argues that psychology should adopt the stance of 'methodological solipsism' (Putnam's phrase) – that is, it should deal exclusively with inner states, the truly subjective psychological states which

owes nothing to their relations to the outside world. He agrees with Putnam that if propositional attitudes were partly identified by factors outside the agent, they would not be in the head, and would not necessarily be known to the agent [1980: 63-73].

Daniel Dennett, John Searle and others believe that the ties between language and thought on the one side and external affairs on the other are so pervasive that no thought as usually conceived is untouched. Searle seems to accept the inference that if meanings are not in the head, the first person authority would be lost. In the same vein, Daniel Dennett remarks, 'one must be richly informed about intimately connected with, the world at large, its occupants and properties, in order to be said with any property to have beliefs' [1978: 76]. He goes on to claim that the identification of all beliefs are infected by the outside, non-subjective factor. He has been particularly concerned to deny that beliefs and desires are causally active inner states of people. Instead, he maintained that belief ascriptions and desire ascriptions are merely nomological assumption of rationality or calculative devices that happen to have predicative usefulness for a reason that he goes on to explain. He granted that such ascriptions are often objectively true, but not in virtue of describing inner state. He also believes that any attempt 'Quinizing Qualia' is a threat for first person's authority. Stephen Stich holds that the 'folk psychology' so far developed are not sufficient to explain yet-to-be invented 'cognitive science' [1983]. He also believed that the problem of first person authority cannot be solved.

Andrew Wood Field attempts to explain externalism from third person's perspective. But what went wrong in his attempt is that he believes that world itself might correctly determine contents of thoughts about the world. This view completely rejects first-person's authority. According to

him, our ordinary beliefs about the external world are directed on to the world, but we don't know what we believe.

Tyler Burge's [1979] thought experiment shows that the propositional content (belief) are always changing and we cannot trust first person's authority. He believes that full understanding of a content is in general a necessary condition for believing the content.' A person's thought content cannot be fixed by what goes on in him or what is accessible to him simply by careful reflection. According to him, what we mean and think 'is determined (fixed) by the linguistic habits (common standard of language) around us. The claim is that all thoughts and languages must have a foundation in such direct historical connections, and these connections constrain the interpretation of thoughts and speech. So, if other things are more or less equal, then a speaker and an interpreter's words on the particular occasion mean the same thing and we express the same belief. Error or mistake of any one's belief makes no difference to what I meant or thought on this occasion. But, as Davidson argues, there is no way to prove this claim. Only evidence is the third person's report. Davidson agrees that what we mean and think is not fixed by what is going on in us, but what he rejects is that Burge's account of how social and other external factors control the contents of a person's mind. He argues that if what we mean and think is determined by the linguistic habits around us in the way, as Burge believes then, the first-person authority is very seriously compromised. It will turn out that first-person authority is dependent on and explained by, the social and public factors that were supposed to undermine that authority.

According to Davidson, this is the crude version of materialism in which it might be analogically represented as follows. "The mind is a theatre in which the conscious self watches a passion show (the shadows on the wall). The show consists of appearances,' 'sense data', 'qualia', what is given in

experience. What appear on the stage are not the ordinary objects of the world that the outer eye registers and the heart lover, but their purported representatives. Whatever we know about the world outside depends on what we can glean from the inner clues" [1994: 61].

Then the problem remains is: how it is possible the computer can come out from the inside to the outside? How to locate the self in the picture? How can we locate objects of the mind? Are they in the mind or simply viewed by us? According to Davidson, there is no object of the mind as sense data. For him, language of thought (mentalese) or propositions, representations are not entities that mind can 'entertain', 'grasp', 'have before it' or be acquainted with. The source of the trouble is the dogma that to have a thought is to have an object before the mind. *Having an attitude is not meant having an entity before mind.* Having an attitude is just being in a certain state. It is a modification of a person. There need not be any 'object' in or 'before' the mind for the person to be thinking, doubting, intending or calculating. The object to which an attitude attribution relates the holder of the attitude must be known but it is only the attributes he/she must know it. Those objects are semantic and can be before the mind in its semantic purpose. Scientific analogy of semantic functions as follows: numbers serve in keeping track of temperature or weight. There are no such things as weights or temperatures. "This box weighs 9 pounds' relates the box to a number on the pound scale, but the number is an abstract object unknown to the box [Davidson, 1986, 1989a].

Anyone capable of attributing an attitude has at his or her command an infinite set of abstract objects suited to keep track of the attitudes of others, which are also the sentences of his or her language. An alternative is to take the relevant objects as the actual utterances of sentences rather than mere sentences.

Davidson in this sense accepts with Burge and Putnam that there is a causal interaction between people and parts and aspects of the world. The dispositions to react differentially to objects and events thus set up are central to the correct interpretation of a person's thought. If it were not the case, we would have no way of discovery what others think, or what they mean by their words. According to Davidson, ordinary attributions of meanings and attitudes rest on vast and vague assumptions about what is and is not shared by the attributer, the person to whom the attribution is made and the attributer's intended audience. When some of these assumptions prove false, we may alter the words we use to make the report, often in more substantial ways. When nothing finds fault in it, we take someone at his word, even if this does not quite reflect some aspect of the speaker's thought or meaning. But this is not because we are bound to be legalistic about it.

Davidson rejects Burge's insistence that we are bound to give a person's words, the meaning they have in his linguistic community, and to interpret his propositional attitudes on the same basis. He argues that this conventional bound would overlook the extent to which the contents of others' thoughts are not independent atoms, and so there can be no simple, rigid rule for the correct attribution of a single thought. So to what extent social factors do control what a speaker can mean by his words is an irrelevant question.

According to Davidson, a speaker who wishes to be understood must intend his words to be interpreted in a certain way and so must intend to provide his audience with the clues they need to arrive at the intended interpretation; this intention may be served by using words as others do. Similarly, a hearer who wishes to understand a speaker must intend to interpret the speaker's words as the speaker intends, whenever or not the interpretation is 'standard'. These reciprocal intentions become morally

important in endless situations, which have no necessary connection with the determination of what some one had in mind. Here, an interpreter is the learner of first language. It is the requirement of learnability, interpretability that provides the irreducible social factor. This proves why someone can't mean something by his words that can't be correctly deciphered by another. Davidson says,

"When we have freed ourselves from the assumption that thought must have mysterious objects, we can see how the fact that mental states as we commonly conceive them, are identified in part by their natural history not only fails to touch the internal character of such states or to threaten first person authority; it also opens the way to an explanation of first person authority" [1994: 63-4].

According to Davidson, there is no psychological object called 'mind'. What we call mind is subjective and metaphor. This does not mean that belief sentences and sentences that attribute the other attitudes are not relational in nature. A successful communication takes place only when there is asymmetric relation between mental and physical. The explanation comes with the realization that what a person's words mean depends in the most basic cases on the kinds of objects and events that have caused the person to hold the words to applicable; similarly, for what the person's thoughts are about. An interpreter of another's words and thoughts must depend on scattered information, fortune training and imaginative surmise in coming to understand the other. The agent herself, however, is not in a position to know whether she is generally using her own words to apply to the right objects and events. Since whatever she regularly does apply to the objects or events gives her words the meaning they have and her thoughts the contents they have, and there is possibility for error or misapplication or malapropism.¹¹ In such case, Davidson argues that she may be wrong in what she believes about the world,

but it is impossible that she should be wrong most of the time. He says, "unless there is presumption that the speaker knows what she means, i.e. is getting her own language right, there would be nothing for an interpreter to interpret" [1994: 64]. Accordingly if someone regularly misapplying her own words, there would be no thing to which communication proceed. But this does not mean that the person does not know what he believes. Since the content of what we think we mean is determined by exactly the same circumstances that determine what we mean. Here, the difference between the interpreter and speaker is *not a difference in what they see and feel, but what they look for, and in what they deem relevant to something's being a particular something* [Ramberg: 1989].

Davidson's conception of AM is, therefore, consistent with the supervenience thesis as well. The supervenience thesis states that there is a dependency relation between the mental properties and the physical properties. The idea is that there is no psychological object distinguishable by psychological predicates. He says, "a property M is supervenient on a set of properties P if and only if M distinguishes no entities not distinguishable by properties in P" [1999: p.30]. Since there are no mental entities, Davidson holds that people can be in all relevant physical respects identical while differing psychologically. It seems as if physical event remains fixed while the content of mental event are varying. But, here, he stresses the fact that if two mental events have different contents, they are surely different events. That doesn't mean that one event has different description. But any of the given different description has different content, and then the event also might be different. In positing supervenience thus, Davidson was able to claim that a denial of definitional as well as a nomological reduction of mental properties to physical properties was compatible with a dependency relation between them. This allowed the scientific study of physical nature maximum description in its dominion without any concession to mind/body reduction.

Thus, as far as Davidson is concerned, machine communicating as a man might not be an impossible task. P.S. Churchland's [1986] Parallel Distributed Processing (PDP) or connectionist model of the latest discovery shows its proof. Unlike causal historical approach of psychosemantics, Churchland's approach diverges from the standard deployment of 'rules and representations' and from the idea of linear or monotonic theorem-proving from a pre-loaded data base. PDP employs an array of 'units', each being connected by ligatures to other units and each having an 'activation potential' that is directly affected by the potentials of adjoining units, which is similar to brains neural nets. Some units are designated as inputs, others as outputs; the rest are 'hidden' and mysteriously regulate output when they are given input according to various algorithms. A major focus of PDP research is *on learning over time*; connectionist net works are good at learning pattern recognition tasks [Lycan: 1996].

Scientific theorists were so ambitious of such developments in cognitive science. P.M. Churchland claims, we are on the threshold of a genuine "intellectual revolution": a revolution that will finally replace the now obsolete theory of a person (*homo persona*) with the product of what is identified as the "scientific theory" of man, which is in turn identified with neuro-physiological interpretation of human being [Churchland 1979, pp.4-5 and 144 ff].

However, Davidson was not so much ambitious about that claim. He was well aware that thoughts are not independent atoms, and there can be no simple, rigid, rule for the correct attribution of a single thought. There is, therefore, no objective codified laws of rationality regarding social and other external factors. That is the reason why he points out the folly of trying to define truth [Davidson, 1996]. However, by taking truth as granted, one

could construct unified theory of meaning and belief. This provides a wide implications in cognitive science and various other disciplines.

But as far as Davidson is concerned, the question remains unanswered for the scientist is whether meaning is in or before the head? Davidson argues that *to have a thought object need not be in or before the mind*. As a semantic object it can't be determined by first person's perspective rather it can be determined by third person's perspective. This does not reject the first person's authority as well. Since semantic difference lies outside world, beyond the reach of subjective or sublunar knowledge, any attempt to define truth will reach no where, and so, ad infinitum. For Davidson, what we call 'subjective' or 'objective' are really metaphors and *nothing* more to discover. However, we should not eliminate them by labelling 'linguistic turn'. Davidson argues, to understand meaning, one must focus on truth-conditions. But it is not the use of language more important rather it is the requirement of learnability or interpretability that provides the clue for irreducible social factor and its unending developments¹².

One can, therefore, measure to what extent *homo artificialis* is an apogee of *homo nature*. An unseen *homopersonal* intervention between *homo artificialis* and *homo naturalis* is unavoidable, but it is man, not machine to decide whether he wants to be a slave of *artificialis* or master of *artificialis*. Reminding Nietzsche, it is here we are forced to move behind moral responsibilities than production of meaning, to decide whether truth is the matter of assertion or value judgement or interpretation. Then the question remains ambiguous by many philosophers is this: can we resist (deny) or accept scientific progress? Davidson's philosophy of language concentrating on 'Truth, Meaning and Interpretation' provides us with certain clues for the rational choice.

1:3. The Philosophy of Language: 'Truth, Meaning and Interpretation'

Davidson's philosophy of language revolves round the crucial issue of meaning itself. Meaning, as already noted cannot be fix in terms of mental content. Then the question remains is this: Can we fix meaning in terms of linguistic content? Is there any particular reference to represent the reality as such? How can we determine meaning of a sentence in a given language?

Davidson develops his own position as a critique of traditional as well as contemporary twentieth century philosophers. It has been noted that among those thinkers, there were mainly two groups depending on different approaches to the theory of meaning. One of these approaches is the application of formal semantics to natural languages and is associated with the works of Frege [1953], Tarski [1956] and Carnap [1956]. The second approach has been called the 'theory of communication intention' and some of its most famous advocates are the latter Wittgenstein [1958], Austin [1961] and Grice [1957]. As Simon Evnine noted, these two approaches are construed by different intuition, they are not necessarily conflicting or contradictory. They are not necessarily exclusive. None the less, they have tended to be practised separately [Simon Evnine: 73].

Though Davidson's work was developed as the part of the former tradition, his temptation was inclined to the second approach. In other words, his theory reconciles both aspects. In an overall perspective, thus, his approach to the theory of meaning is the combination of the two approaches. His attempt is to explain how communication works with the tools of formal semantics.

Formal semantics is the study of meaning for formal languages. A formal language is a set of symbols, which can be assigned to various categories, together with rules defined over these categories for combining

expressions. The intuition that motivates the use of formal semantics for natural languages is that the sentences of natural languages are composed out of words in systematic ways and that their meanings depend on the meanings of their parts. This is known as the principle of compositionality. Formal semantics particularly offers a good way of accounting for the application of this principle to natural languages.

The communication-intention approach rejects that linguistic expression expresses (means) anything in themselves. According to them, the meaning depends on the use and intentions of the people who use them. It, thus, focuses on the nature of the 'performances', or 'speech acts', which constitute the use of sentences. They stress on how language is embedded in a social context, and how the meaning of the sentences depends on the intentions with which they are used.

Davidson's reformulation of these two approaches from the different standpoint that made him outstanding in the tradition. He agrees and follows Fregean in several respects. It was Frege who shows us the model of how the meaning of the sentences depends on the meaning of their parts (compositionality principle).

Davidson noticed the limitation of Frege's proposal. Consider, for instance, the sentence, 'the father of Annette', how the meaning of the whole does depend on the meaning of the parts? According to Frege, a possible way is to assign an entity that may yield 'the father of x' as value. If this is done, we can assign any entity or even no entity. If we assign any entity, he becomes father of anyone, absurd result. If we assign no entity, then the father of no one, who cannot be called as father [ITI: 18]. Paul Horwich defends Fregean semantics by taking it as matter of articulation than as a matter of explanation [2001: 559-77]. However, it seems that there are some confusion implicit in Frege's theory of reference which cannot be denied as well.

According to Davidson, Fregean semantics follow the classical defect of the theory of reference. On Frege's theory, the singular terms expressed descriptive concepts and refer to those items that satisfied the concepts. Accordingly, by fixing the reference of a given expression presupposes an account of its sense or meaning that is prior to the way in which the expression is actually used. Without an account specifying the sense of expression in advance there is no way to tell whether it successfully refers. The notion of analyticity, here, leads to vicious circle. No one ever could escape from this fatal circle.

Bertrand Russell [1956], unlike Frege, attempts to identify the meaning of an expression with facts. He argues that it is beliefs that are true or false, and facts that make belief true. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* begins famously "the world is all that is the case. The world is the totality of facts, not of things the world divides into facts" [1961: 1:1 & 1:2]. Later Wittgenstein attacked this classical approach to reference. To the classics, the name refers to something true of the objects. But there is no one truth to represent fact about object. In other words, there are many truth predicates, and so truth can never be specified. Putnam, Kripke, Quine and others attacked the theory of reference in the same line. However, they were all sceptic about meaning.

As discussed earlier in section 1:1, KW arrived at the "sceptical paradox". Let Jones be a typical speaker of English, and consider such sentence as "Jones means *addition* by '+'". "Jones understands the '+' sign is such that it stands for the *addition* function". KW argues for a form of constitutive scepticism about such claims: there is no fact of the matter that constitutes Jones's meaning one thing rather than another by the "+" sign, no fact of the matter that constitutes his attaching one sense rather than another to the "+" sign. Another way of stating the paradox would be: ascriptions of

meaning or sense do not themselves possess sense, they do not have truth-conditions, and are neither true nor false. KW's "sceptical solution" for this paradox is this: even though there are no facts in virtue of which ascriptions of sense and meaning are true or false, we can still find a place for them by viewing them as possessing some non fact-stating role. KW therefore attacks the idea that the expressions of our language possess such a thing as determinate meaning [1982] [Alexander Miller: 1998].

Quine also had much more negative outlook on meaning. He argues that there is no fact of the matter as to what it means, whether given sentence is analytic or synthetic, whether they are synonymous or not. There is no fact of the matter we can 'get right' in our choice of translation manual [1970: 178-83]. There is therefore indeterminacy of meaning that critics interpreted as meaning scepticism.

Why they were sceptic about meaning? There has been number of attempts to respond to these sceptical challenges. Davidson's challenge is more outstanding because his perspective is entirely different from what others think of the relation between language, mind and world. Here, while traditional thinkers look for the referential object outside language, the contemporary thinkers like Quine, Kripke attempt to fix reference in the use of language. He argues, what goes wrong in their attempt is that they assume that there is a strong connection between meaning and reference. For them, *to know the meaning or sense of a word is to know how to pick out its referent*. And once reference is secure, we are on the road to truth, i.e., we are in a position to spell out the truth conditions of sentences. Hence, he argues, for them *reference* is the central to an account of both truth and meaning [Ramberg: 1989].

Davidson insists that we do not need an epistemological bridge between language and the world because 'language is not a filter or a screen

through which knowledge of the world must pass' [ITI: xvii]. We transcend verificationism only when we abandon the metaphor of epistemological confrontation between language and the world altogether. This we do when we realize that while experience *causes* us to hold sentence true, it does not *make* sentences true, neither individually nor as corporate bodies. That is, any event occurring in the world (as an experience by any one) is most sensitive at the moment only. And any interpretation or description of that event is mere use of language in particular truth context. According to Davidson our ascription of truth or falsity¹³ to a particular event or occurrence is purely linguistic usage. And there is *nothing* in the use of language. Davidson says,

Nothing no thing, makes sentences and theories true: not experience, not surface irritations, not the world, can make sentence true. That experience takes a certain course . . . make[s] sentences and theories true [ITI, p.194].

Davidson turns upside down the traditional approach to truth and meaning. He shifted the focus from epistemology to semantics. Semantics, in general, deals with the problem of meaning. Regarding meaning, Davidson says, it is truth conditional. Regarding truth, he says, it cannot be defined. They are not contradicting each other in his hermeneutic vision. Then, how can we determine meaning of a sentence or word in a given language? Davidson's semantic attempt is not to provide a 'theory of meaning' or 'theory of truth' in a conclusive sense. Rather, his semantic urge is to revise some commonly held ideas about how communication works.

As early noted, Davidsonian semantic programme emerges out of crucial issue "What is it for words to mean what they do?" [ITI, xiii]. The answer amounts to a 'theory of meaning' which, for Davidson, is the gesture for different questions in different directions (epistemological, metaphysical, ontological, cultural and the like). Unlike Quine and others, Davidson is not a

sceptic about the content of meaning. But his question is whether we could explain 'meaning without the concept of meaning', 'theory of reality without the concept of reference' and theory of interpretation without prior conception of language. Davidson's philosophy of language deals with crucial issues of truth, meaning and interpretations. Even if these three notions are intertwined each other, one may not be clear about how they are related to one another without considering issue of each one separately. In a very broad sense, one may say that Davidson's philosophy of language, in particular, deals with the theory of meaning (semantics).

Davidson argues that a theory of meaning, in order to avoid circularity, must explain communication without relying on undefined semantic concepts. To do that, a theory must fulfil two basic requirements:

- (a) It would provide an interpretation of all utterances, actual and potential, of a speaker or group of speakers.
- (b) It would be verifiable without knowledge of the detailed propositional attitudes of the speaker [ITI: xiii].

The first condition acknowledges the holistic nature of linguistic understanding. The second condition aims to prevent smuggling into the foundations of the theory of concepts too closely allied to the concept of meaning.

With respect to these conditions, there are three clusters of problems around which the bulk of his semantic work developed. The first cluster centres around the question, how can a theory of truth provides as with a theory of meaning? The core issue of the second cluster of problem is that: 'Can we define truth?' Davidson denies any definitions of truth. Truth according to him, is an un-definable concept. Consequently it leads to the third cluster of problem relating to the question 'whether there is anything as

stages of his thought, is the philosophical fall out of his perspective on truth, meaning and interpretation. This will provide a methodological strategy or clue for the strong realistic basis of our understanding of meaning.

In the course of investigation, Davidson deprives the idea of reference, the concept of meaning, the concept of language of any useful semantic purpose. They can do no work on an account of linguistic competence. All three are conceptual parasites, gaining any content they might have only as the theoretical construct of a model of linguistic communication. It derives its explanatory power from another source, the concept of truth. His theory of truth, therefore, is 'theory of reality without reference', 'theory of meaning without using the concept of meaning', and 'theory of interpretation without prior conception of language'.

Davidson finds the basic model of truth theories in Tarski's T-Schema, where we find how to construct a theory of truth for formalized languages. But unlike Tarski, Davidson's goal is not simply a characterization of the notion of truth. Tarski's attempt is to find out a way to define the concept of truth. Davidson argues truth cannot be defined. It is an undefinable elementary concept. He is, therefore, not primarily interested in Tarskian semantic concern, which was to find a way of expressing what we mean by calling a sentence true. And he is certainly not attempting to construct an epistemological or metaphysical theory of truth in the sense of a theory about the nature of truth. Davidson's investigation focuses on Tarski's T-Schema, in so far as it provides the structure of a theory of meaning.

For Davidson, the concept of truth is primary and elementary. While accepting Tarski's T-Schema, Davidson's use of this format is very different. Davidson calls Tarski's T-Schema as convention T [ITI: 66].

Con T : S is T iff P.

For Tarski, truth is the property ascribed to sentences. On the contrary, Davidson ascribes truth predicate to the utterance of the speaker, and also relativize the utterance by time. His question might be thus: *under what condition a sentence uttered by the speaker causes him to hold true?* The resulting formulation attempts to capture a three place predicate intended 'to relate language with occasions of truth in a way that invites the construction of a theory' [ITI: 44]. This formulations will be, for instance, like

(T) 'Gavagai' is true in L when uttered by x at time t if and only if there is rabbit in the vicinity of x at t.

Here, truth is taken for granted. It is the primitive concept. And so it is possible to create interpretative context which Terence Horgan recognised as 'contextual semantics'. Terence Horgan argues that it is the semantic normativity that makes sentence true or false. Contrary to neopragmatism, truth in this sense can not be reduced to epistemic normativity. A statement can be semantically correct, in the relevant sense, even if it would be impolite, impolitic or otherwise inappropriate to utter it. Truth, according to him, is *semantically correct assertability* and falsity is *semantically correct deniability*. Semantic standards are not monolithic within a language. Instead they vary from one context to another, depending upon the specific purposes our discourse is serving at the time. Not only do semantic standards often vary from one mode of discourse to another, but they also often vary within a given mode of discourse. Terence Horgan noted that the operative standards in a given discourse context is maximally strict, if there are objects and properties in the world answering to each of the standards constituent singular terms, constituent assertoric existential quantification and constituent predicates. He also argues that even in discourse contexts where the operative semantic standards are not maximally strict, these standards typically sanction as true instances of Tarski's equivalence scheme.

(T) "*p*" is true iff *p*.

He claims that even vagueness is viable, legitimate and can be affirmed and embraced. He accepts Nietzsche's transvaluationism in this respect. Nietzsche held that one can overcome nihilism by embracing transvaluation of all values. Transvaluationism asserts vagueness. He argues that various intermediate positions are occupied by statements whose semantic correctness, in a given context, does depend in part on how things are with the world, but where this dependence does not consist in direct correspondence between the referential apparatus of the statement and object or properties in the world. Unlike Horgan, Davidson's attempt is not to determine truth by squeezing into the concept of meaning. By assuming that what one speaks is true (rational), an interpreter is not actually bracketing speaker's belief rather he is looking for the condition under which the speaker says so and so. He agrees that neither speaker's intention nor interpreter's intention coincide. Here, the principle of charity must apply both to the speaker and an interpreter. This will provide us with unified theory of meaning and belief which actually meant for semantic correctness.

A speaker who holds a sentence to be true on an occasion does so in part because of what he means, or would mean, by an utterance of that sentence and in part because of what he believes. If at all we search for the fact of honest utterance, we cannot infer the belief without knowing the meaning and have no chance of inferring the meaning without the belief. Here, the advantage of the principle of charity is that we not only accept first person's authority but also arrives at common standard by the third person's perspective. But that public standard with which we arrive is not static phenomena, rather dynamic and ever changing. In this context, Davidson changes his position that there is no objective rational code of agreement. He

defends his own position by saying that "the aim of interpretation is not agreement but understanding" [1984a: xvii].

The main criticism towards Davidson is that his conception of truth as 'parameter' and also his use of biconditional as sentential connectives. Max Kolbel [2001] argues that they are the two dogmas of Davidsonian semantics. Before answering those criticism, we will have a look on Dummett's attack of Davidson. Dummett argues, a sentence is said to be effectively decidable if there is some procedure that a speaker can in principle apply in order to determine whether or not the sentence is true. Thus, " $2+2=4$ " and 'John Major had corn flakes for breakfast yesterday' are both effectively decidable. But "James II had a migraine on the afternoon of his 32nd birthday" and 'Every even number greater than two is the sum of two primes' are not known to be decidable either true or false. So we cannot assert a priori the principle of bivalence for sentences that are not known to be decidable. We cannot assert, a priori, that they are either true or false. But he does not reject the principle of *tertium nondatur* that there is no third truth value standing between truth and falsity, which he believes 'you can't say' (2002). What he argues is that one could not determine the truth value of every sentence by means of bivalence. Davidson in this respect, is not denying the possibility of intermediate truth value. He also accepts the fact that there is indeterminacy of truth. But for Davidson, this indeterminacy of truth cannot be solved as a matter of assertion. Davidson argues that the indeterminacy of truth never creates problem in understanding meaning. Contrary to Dummett, Davidson's goal of enquiry in this respect is 'not truth' but meaning.

Dummett's argument is thus: Some one who accepts that the truth-conditions of a region of discourse are potentially verification transcendent are also accepts that our understanding of the sentences of that discourse consists in our grasp of potentially verification transcendent truth condition.

He criticises Davidson that he omits those "essential ingredient of the understanding" [2003: 6]. Crispin Wright best answers Dummett's criticisms, than by Davidson.

As Crispin Wright put it,

"To conceive that our understanding of statement in a certain discourse is fixed . . . by assigning them conditions of potentially [verification] transcendent truth is to grant that if the world co-operates, the truth or falsity of any such statement may be settled beyond our ken. So we are forced to recognise a distinction between the kind of state of affairs which makes such a statement acceptable, in the light of whatever standards inform our practice of the discourse to which it belongs and what makes it actually true. The truth of such a statement is bestowed on it independently of any standard we do or can apply; acceptability of our standard is, for such statement at best merely congruent with truth. Realism in Dummett's sense is thus a way of laying the essential semantic ground work for the idea that our thought aspires to reflect a reality whose character is entirely independent of us and our cognitive operations [1992: 4].

Crispin Wright argues that we must view meaning as judgement – dependent if we are to avoid the sceptical paradox about meaning. The proper upshot of the rule following considerations, he thinks, is thus that meaning is judgement dependent. But if meaning is judgement-dependent, we have to give up the objectivity of meaning. If the meaning we attach to statement is determined by our best judgements, then it is certainly not the case that the meaning of S "is a constraint . . . to which verdicts about its truth value may objective conform or fails to conform; quite independently of our considered opinion on the matter".

Thus Wright's evaluation of anti-realist argument is from rule following consideration. It depends on attaining a plausible perspective on the correct interpretation and implications of value judgement meaning. McDowell argues that if we give up the judgement independent conception of meaning, we will not be able to find room for the idea that meaning is genuinely normative. In effect McDowell thinks we have to accept the objectivity of meaning on pain of losing the notion of meaning altogether.

But the problems remain are: Does this mean that the sentence can be verified by us as we actually are? by some one, some where, as they actually are? by some one, some where, given some suitable idealization of their present cognitive power? And what is permissible as a suitable idealization? And how can the notion of effective decidability be extended from mathematical case to the empirical domain? Neither Dummett's assertability condition, nor Crispin Wright's "judgement dependent" conception of meaning could answer these questions, if their anti realism is to have determinate content.

McDowell says "There is no standpoint from which we can give a sense-making characterization of linguistic practice other than that of immersion in the practice: and from that standpoint, our possibly verification transcendent world is certainly in the picture" [1981: 248]. As Terence Horgan noted truth is semantic correctness. It involves a type of correspondence with the world but it is never epistemic. Nonetheless, the type of correspondence can vary according to what we are talking about. This is because the semantic norms governing truth can vary with context. Thus there is a spectrum of ways in which statements can correspond to the world.

Unlike Terence Horgan and Crispin Wright, Davidson semantic causal relation between language, mind and world never maintains any hierarchical gradation of objectivity. Terence Horgan argues, on the one end of the

spectrum are statements governed by maximally strict-semantic standards. Such statements are true just when they directly correspond, via causal/referential relations to mind-independent to mind independent object and properties. On the other end are statements whose truth is determined almost entirely by the semantic standard alone. In between sets the majority of the statements we make in life, such as those about corporations, work of art, which indirectly correspond to entities, and attributes that are in many cases mind-dependent.

According to Crispin Wright, there was two grades of objectivity. First he develops a version of minimalism about truth-aptness, according to which all of the discourses including morals, comedy, the external world, mathematics, the past and so on – do turn out to be truth-apt. Secondly, he develops a *number* of ways of characterizing realism and anti realism about discourses whose truth aptness has already been granted – that is, a number of different ways in which truth-conditions can be objective. It turns out that viewing the sentences of a discourse as having potentially verification – transcendent truth-conditions is only one of a number of ways of characterizing realism and the notion of objective truth-condition.

Davidson's view is therefore comparable to the similar views of Crispin Wright and Terrance Horgan. The three views form a triangle of not uncommon sort. In this context, we may note how Davidson's view stands apart from others in the subsequent chapters.

Agreeing with KW, Quine and Dummett, Davidson argues that there is indeterminacy. Davidson also accepts that there is indeterminacy. But this indeterminacy never creates problem in understanding meaning. He takes the material biconditional of propositional logic as an advantage of his theory of meaning. A material biconditional is true only if both sentences have the same truth value. Recall the truth table for the material biconditional.

P	Q	$P \equiv Q$
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	F
F	F	T

Here, material biconditional is true only if both conditionals have same truth value. Hence even if there is false belief, it never contradict so far as both conditionals (beliefs) are false. Here, Davidson argues that one need not want to grasp the proposition in order to understand meaning. We already noted in twin earth model (Putnam), that there is also the possibility of error in our beliefs (Water-Twater Case). There is also possibility of error for an interpreter. Even in that case, the T-theorem works as far as, there is no change in the belief or meaning of the speaker and interpreter under truth condition. If there is any change in belief, the theory utters in more substantial way. Here we are confronting with new theories. Still T-theorem works, not by negating or falsifying old theories. But by accepting the truth of another paradigm, we are justifying in rejecting old ones. Here the holistic constraints on interpretation, and the holistic process of conforming a theory of meaning, allow us to rule out theories of meaning containing "rogue" T-theorems with the logical tool of biconditionals. Truth, in this context, neither 'bearer', nor 'maker', nor have one-to-one correspondence relation. Rather it is an undefinable, primitive. It is neither dogmatic as Max Kolbel believes.

Davidson writes, "we can be realists in all departments. We can accept objective truth conditions as the key to meaning, and we can insist that knowledge is of an objective world independent of our thought and language". Frege writes, "A thinker does not create [thoughts] but must take them as they

are. They can be true without being grasped by a thinker". If a thought the sense of the sentence can be determinately true or false even though that thought is not even grasped by a thinker, then the sentence in question can be true or false, even though thinker are incapable even in principle of determining its truth value.

Richard Rorty recently criticizes Davidsonian interpreters who conceive his truth condition as to be a non-linguistic facts which might contradicts the main thesis of 'True to the Facts'. But only in the above context we can agree with Rorty that his conception of truth has no direct correspondence with non-linguistic facts. Davidson specifically mentioned that there is only a 'correspondence without confrontation'. This sense does not encourage the thought that "we understand *what* it would be like to compare sentences with *what* they are about, since the theory provides no entities with which to compare sentences" [ITI: xviii, emphasis mine]. Thus, he argues that no prior assumption of truth content is needed in understanding meaning. Truth, in this sense is most elementary concept. As Lynch argues "it is difficult to engage in any theoretical inquiry without employing it. You cannot even argue over a theory of truth without using the concept, because to question a theory is to question its truth, and to endorse a theory is to endorse it as true" (2001: 2). Davidson argues that truth is essentially related to meaning, belief, knowledge, reality and so on.

Davidson claims that the different languages or conceptual schemes 'divide up' or 'cope with' reality in importantly different ways. He stresses the fact that the source of evidence is only through the method of interpretation. Here, no non-linguistic fact is needed to understand that the others have radically different intellectual equipment. He strongly denies the dogma of scheme-content dualism. In other words, according to him, there is no uninterpreted source of evidence available to us. However, this unavailability

does not create any unknown gap between language and reality. We can explain and describe in any number of ways. Yet, he believes that there is an objective world independent of our knowledge of it. Here unlike others, Davidson might accept the claim that only world is out there, but truth is not out there [Richard Rorty, 1989].

Martin Davies, here, clearly emphasizes the importance of "aboutness". Accordingly, what we speak or what we think are always *about* world. [Though speaking and thinking about an object are different aspects]. Looking in this sense, one can agree with Davidson that a 'theory of truth is an empirical theory about the truth conditions of every sentence in some corpus of sentences' [SCT: 309]. [However for Davidson, similar to Terrence Horgan, it is semantic normativity that explains empirical status].

According to Davidson this theory of truth is tested by theorems that state the conditions under which sentences are true, but the theorems itself say nothing about reference. As long as the conditions of truth are not affected to experiences as such, the evidence we have here is *nothing* other than a *matter of indifference*. Hence there is no object a term refers to and there is no object a predicate 'is true' have.

Davidson here agrees with KW, Quine and even Dummett that there is indeterminacy. But this indeterminacy or inscrutability of reference cannot be relativize or rectify by taking some position or by offering some solutions. Davidson says "nothing can reveal how a speaker's words have been mapped on to objects, there is nothing to relativize to; and interpretation being unaffected, there is no need to relativize" [ITI, xix].

Davidson is neither a pragmatist, nor realist, nor antirealist, nor idealist nor internalist. According to him, if we accept and take certain position it implies that we are fixing metaphoric meaning in certain context of truth.

More specifically, it means that meaning is determined in the use of language. Davidson says, "we explain what words in metaphor do only by *supposing* they have the *same meaning* they do in non-figurative context. We lose our ability to account for metaphor as well as rule out all hope of reasonable theory, if we posit metaphorical meanings" [ITI, p.xix].

Hence according to Davidson, there is no determinate meaning. Meaning is ever changing in different truth context. No doubt, Davidson's theory is an empirical theory. His semantic programme had its practical implication in communicative or interpretative context. In communication, an interpreter proceeds his conversation by adjusting his theory of truth.

Davidson argues that the truth is an undefinable concept. According to him, communication would proceed without the use of convention. The important significance of Davidson's radical interpretation model of linguistic communication lie in the fact it reverses the logical priority of the concept of language and the concept of interpretation. This reversal finally works itself as the rejection of the concept of a language as a theoretical tool. By postulating interpretation we are not actually mastering the language. Rather we are trying to find shared features of strategies of interpretation. So the concept of language derives its content from our theory of interpretation and not vice versa. No matter how conventional our use of language, the only way to theoretically specify what the sentence of the natural language mean is to construct a theory of truth. And to this end neither convention nor shared languages make any semantic contribution.

Davidson's model of radical interpretation therefore provides enormous possibility of different truth conditions that give different theories of meaning. His principle of charity in this sense is neither a pragmatic constraint nor a matter of sincerity towards the speaker. Rather it is the inevitable precondition of interpretation. By saying "all are being rational", he is not

presupposing any constant criterion of rationality. Even malapropism, error, deceptive elements all include in rational principle. The result is the constant questioning of subjectivity and objectivity. What we call 'subjectivity' or 'objectivity', according to Davidson, are metaphors.¹⁴ They are ever changing with the difference in truth conditions. Farrell [1994], therefore, finds disenchantment¹⁵ of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity' in Davidsonian semantics.

Unlike others, Davidson radical interpretation model has no metaphysical or epistemological inclination to explain 'what truth is?' or 'what language is?' or 'what meaning is?' Rather his attempt is to purge semantic reification from our thinking about communication. He challenged the very idea of a language emerges as a natural development of his theory of meaning.

He concluded in one of the most influential paper as follows: "There is no such thing as language, not if a language is anything like what many philosophers and linguistics have supposed. There are therefore no such things to be learned, mastered, or born with. We must give up the idea of a clearly defined shared structure which language-user acquire and then apply to cases" [1986a: 446]. It is clear from these lines that he never denies the very existence of language. His aim is not to deprive the study of language of its subject matter. His attempt is rather to revise some commonly held ideas about how linguistic communication works [Ramberg, 1989].

Hence by depriving the role of language in linguistic competence, Davidson's aim is to deny the *fixation of meaning in terms of the use of language*. Linguistic meaning can neither be analysed in terms of propositional attitudes, nor mental content can be analysed in terms of linguistic meaning. His no priority claim therefore succeeds not only in diversing linguistic component and mental component but also in recovering the physical world outside. This is actually the implication of his doctrine of

AM (conceptual dualism and ontological monism) which is related to truth, meaning and interpretation.

1:4 ORTHODOX AND UNORTHODOX INTERPRETATION

It has been noted that the writing of Davidson have generated widespread interpretation among analytic philosophers as well as literary theorists. The most basic exposition among them was that of Simon Evnine [1991]. Bjorn. T. Ramberg [1989] supplies yet another interpretation to Davidson's theory. These two works are two typical exclusive studies on Davidson which can be categorised as belonging to orthodox and Un-orthodox interpretations of Davidson's complete philosophy of language.

An orthodox interpreter may attempt to expose the author's intention (text) as such. Where as, an unorthodox interpreter may attempt to read the context (extension) of the author's intention in his work. An orthodox interpretation may sometime lack the realistic outlook towards the world, for it deviates more towards the author's mind. But an Unorthodox interpreter seems to be bracketing the author's intention by holding a realistic attitude towards the world outside. The latter may, therefore, provide a more genuine and rational interpretation of the text. Such interpretations not only help in explaining and understanding normative sciences but also provide a rational explanation to all arena of positive sciences.

Considering the above cited two interpretations, Simon Evnine's book *Donald Davidson*, offers a systematic and accessible exposition to Davidson's work. He begins by discussing Davidson's contribution to the philosophy of mind and then he examines his work on the philosophy of language. While he shows how Davidson replaces the study of mind with the study of the mental on the one side, he examines on the other side how communication works without conventions or rules. On Evnine's understanding, as already

remarked, the above two projects suffer from "an irruption of internally generated tensions' [1991: 175]. Hence, for Eynine, it looks rather implausible to lay bare the exact link between the two streams of influence. He, therefore, interpreted Davidson's work as a dichotomy between two projects namely the causal-explanatory in the philosophy of mind on the one hand and the interpretative and hermeneutic project in philosophy of language on the other. I think Simon Eynine is fundamentally wrong in understanding Davidson, while demarcating philosophy of mind and philosophy of language in this way, he is assuming that linguistic meaning has nothing to do with mental content whatever. Even if there creates tension between two streams of influence that need not necessarily created dichotomy between causal explanatory project and hermeneutic project. In other words, what Simon Eynine calls as causal explanatory is hermeneutic as well. Hermeneutics devoid of causal explanation is *nothing* to share about or to understand.

Ultimately this leads Eynine to cast doubt on the empiricist perspective of Davidson's philosophy itself. He interpreted Davidson's philosophy as 'rationalistic idealism' based on his non-empiricist vision [*Ibid*: 6]. Non-empiricism here means an idealist vision. This is what is determined by his idealistic theory of content that underlies his philosophy of language. Since the notion of language is purely conceptual and interpretative, he believes that it is devoid of objective facts. And so, he interpreted Davidson's philosophy of language as uninformative for scientific explanation. This seems to be partial and orthodox. If this is so, this view clashes with the empiricist or realist theory of content enshrined in the first project. Does this cause an unnecessary damage to Davidson's overall outlook? The question is not easy to answer. I shall seek a different source to answer this, by looking at Ramberg's reading of Davidson's project. Ramberg, despite being unorthodox, still has a promise over the orthodox variety of interpretation advanced by Eynine.

The convenience here about Ramberg's interpretation of Davidson as a mere empiricist is that it is not as orthodox as Eynine's. More interestingly, his reading is an unorthodox interpretation in the sense that he portrays Davidson's philosophy of language as an attack on the reification of the linguistic communication. However, according to Ramberg such an attack to the notion of language, does not really meant for an 'idealisation'¹⁶ of linguistic competence. Instead it is the 'realization' of some commonly held ideas about the way linguistic communication works. According to Ramberg, Davidson's priority of interpretation over the mastery of language provides a wide impact on educational, political, scientific, ethical field and so on. In Davidson's radical interpretation model, he noted the slippage of synchronic as well as dychronic aspects of linguistic competence.

This helps us to see various distortion or blurring of meaning in our ordinary use of language. It indirectly works as a methodology which might actually be some gestures towards various problems. It seems that for Davidson, understanding the language through interpretation is more important than the mastery of language given. However, Ramberg attacks Davidson's defence of indeterminacy thesis. He argues that indeterminacy thesis in Davidson's radical interpretation model is an inconsistent thesis. According to him, if Davidson accepts indeterminacy or intranslatability of language as Quine does, it will leads to a type of scepticism. That is, intranslatability of different language in different culture presupposes that there is an untranslatable language. Actually his interpretation of Davidson's thought might be free from such sceptic matters. Ramberg's remoulding of Davidson's philosophy open a venue to the liberal world of hermeneutics in Gademarian line of thought. However, this dimension of Ramberg provides much content to Rortian conception of contingency of language and selfhood on one side, and on the other side it also supports much aspects of Frank. B. Farwell who proposed 'disenchantment' of subjectivity and objectivity in

Davidson's thesis. This interaction shows how Davidson's semantic programme has challenged deeply held notions of subjectivity, mind and language. Unlike Dummett, Crispin Wright, Quine and others, this challenge never leads to antirealism and relativism. Rather as Farrell argues, the rejection of certain metaphysical notions leads to a more possible sense of realism, which is actually 'the recovery of world' from post-modern 'linguistic turn'. Such an interpretation stands in conformity with Davidson's own claim about the empirical status of his theory, voiced more in the later stages of the development of his theory. Davidson wrote,

"A thinker must have concept of objective truth, an awareness of the chance that his or her beliefs may be false. The ultimate source of this awareness and hence of the possibility of thought is 'the triangle that relates the thinker, other thinkers and the world they share'. Frank Farrell has the interesting idea that the history of Western Philosophy has successively over-emphasized, even deified, the epistemic and ontological roles in our thinking, first of the world, then of the individual mind, then of society" [Frank B. Farrell; 1994: Covering page].

Evaluating Ramberg's interpretation, Davidson himself wrote that it is "...an astonishing piece of work...in number of places Ramberg has explained my views better than I have done, and perhaps better than I could" [Ramberg 1989: Covering page].

This shows that Ramberg's book on *Donald Davidson's Philosophy of Language: An Introduction*, provides a slightly out-of-ordinary exposition of Davidson. However, comparing to Simon Evnine's orthodox interpretation, Ramberg's book is to be preferred as a better interpretation. For, the latter indirectly defends the empirical status, and falls in line with Davidson's own claim. It is by following the kind of interpretation advanced by Ramberg that

I propose to develop the major part of my thesis. And I shall also draw materials from Simon Evnine's interpretation in order to seek support for the inquiry.

Making use of these interpretations, I propose to fuse them together into a coherent whole so as to look at Davidson's philosophy from an entirely different perspective that could provide a broad framework for understanding the cardinal features of his philosophy of mind and philosophy of language.

Notes

1. Akrasia is the very old Greek concept even Socrates used it. To him, it means if one really knows what is best, one can do nothing else. Aristotle interprets it as the special kind of ignorance that weakness of will is never 'just that'. That is always bound up with some form of self-deception, delusion or other epistemic error. Davidson, in his famous article entitled 'How is weakness of the will possible?' (1970), locates the problem of akrasia firmly within the philosophy of action, discarding its traditional connections with morality and defeat of moral judgement by passions of various kind.
2. The distinction is based on his two books discussed above.
3. To say that the notion of X is analytically prior to the notion of y is to say that Y can be analysed or elucidated in terms of X, while the analysis or elucidation of x itself does not have to advert to y. Thus to say that the notion of belief is analytically prior to the notion of knowledge, for example, is to say that knowledge can be analysed in terms of belief while a good analysis of belief does not need to reintroduce the notion of knowledge.
4. This priority claim is one that I developed on the basis of Davidson's overall position.
5. Searle seems to be changing his view in recent works, more deviating towards other side (language).
6. Dummett recently criticizes Davidson's modest theory of meaning. Accordingly there are two opposite errors in Davidson's conception of truth. In order to be modest, he argues, Davidson must reduce an explanation of meaning to only one of these two components (Dummett, 2003).
7. See his introduction "The Structure and Content of Truth" (The Dewey Lecturers) in the *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. LXXXVII (No.6), p.279-328. His semantic program is therefore free from the threat of scientism as P.M.S Hacker and others noted. Davidson's philosophy of psychology is essentially a folk psychology.

8. M. Antony called his own view as ontological dualism as against Davidson's ontological monism. He supports Kim with the help of Fodor.
9. Here, Davidson is not concerned with personal dualism as Kim maintained for him brain/body is the part of physical world.
10. Putnam distinguishes between 'narrow' and 'wide' psychological state. The former is inner in the sense that they do not presuppose the existence of any individual other than the subject to whom the state is ascribed. The latter is the very states, which we normally identify and individuate as we do beliefs and the other propositional attitudes.
11. There is possibility for mistake of our tongue to utter the proper word as commonly utters it leads to malapropism.
12. Here is where philosophy as a discourse keeps away from the other discourses. Davidson's theory might therefore be called as post-analytic.
13. Here Davidson accepts Richard Rorty that truth is not something out there. Only world, which is out there.
14. Davidson argues, "there are no instructions for devising metaphors; there is no manual for determining what metaphor 'means' or 'says' A metaphor implies a kind and degree of artistic success. There are no unsuccessful metaphors, just as there are no unfunny jokes" (ITI: 245).
15. The notion of disenchantment actually in modern sense means disillusionment experience of the world by the soul (Max Weber's reading). Farrell, here emphasis in using that term to express that the world's or subjectivity's loss of its enchanted status.
16. For Simon Evnine, Davidson's theory of interpretation is meant for idealization of linguistic competence. That is why he calls Davidson as aggressive rationalist.

ANOMALOUS MONISM

Bindu. C “Donald Davidson on truth, meaning and interpretation” Thesis.
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CHAPTER 2

ANOMALOUS MONISM

Anomalous Monism (AM)¹ is one of the most controversial current brands of non-reductive materialism. The theory states that while every mental event is also a physical event (monism), there are no strict laws connecting the mental and the physical domain (psycho-physical laws). It is a type of 'physicalism' as well as 'monism' because it implies that all events are of one fundamental kind namely, physical but this does not deny that there are mental events. Rather it implies that every mental event is also some physical event or other [See EAE; McLaughlin: 1998].

The idea behind Davidson's view is that some one's thinking at a certain time that the earth is round, for example, might be a certain pattern of neural firing in their brain at that time—an event which is both a thinking that the earth is round (a type of mental event) and a pattern of neural firing in the brain (a type physical event) [*Ibid*: McLaughlin]. That is, there is just one event that can be characterized both in mental terms and in physical terms.² Consequently the mental events and the physical events are two distinct types of predicates of one particular event that occurs in the physical world. This is roughly what he calls the monistic part.

The real issue of the mind is not concerned with the nature of existence of mind as *sui generis*. He calls the mind as 'mental'. The mental, he says, is anomalous. By 'anomalousness', he specifically meant that the mental is 'not governed by strict law' [ARC; see also Evnine: 1989]. This claims that the propositional attitude such as beliefs, desires and so on are not subjected to strict scientific laws as physical laws are. It, therefore, denies the possibilities

of exact psychology (psychological anomalism) on the one side and strict bridge laws (psycho-physical anomalism) on the other side.

It seems as if psychology as a discipline might lose its existing identity? Does it so? Davidson, as a philosopher, his therapeutic work was confined not to reject scientific status of psychology. Rather his non scientific attempt is not merely to detect and describe, but to understand how mental state operates its function in accordance with scientific laws that could be described.

2.1 Is there inconsistency in Anomalous monism?

The distinctive feature of Davidson's alternative materialism is that it does not aim at any identification of mental properties with physical properties, nor any analysis of mental talks in other terms. Rather what he argues is the non-existence of mental entities. He says that

"There is no such thing as mind, but people have mental properties, which is to say that certain psychological procedures are true of them" [1994: 231].

According to Davidson, these properties are constantly changing and such changes are mental events. Examples: noticing that it is time for lunch, seeing that wind is rising, remembering the new name of Cambodia deciding to spend next Christmas in Botswana or developing a taste for Trollope.

"Mental events are, in my view, physical (which is not, of course to say that they are not mental)" [1994: 231].

According to him mental events and physical events have distinct features that the former cannot be reduced into latter and *visa versa*. Davidson, 'anomalous monism', calls this controversial view of non-reductive materialism.

The most interesting way to understand the thesis of anomalous monism is to see it as designed to resolve an apparent 'paradox' generated by PCI, PNCC, PAM equally accepted [see Sec. 1:2].

The apparent contradiction in these principles is this. If some mental events causally interact with physical events, then some mental events are caused by physical events. Consequently, there must be laws on the basis of which mental events can be explained and predicated. This precisely contradicts the third principle.

The implication of such contradiction might be clear when we consider the following arguments for Davidson's psycho-physical thesis: Take an arbitrary mental event 'M'. By PCI, we may say M is causally connected with physical event P. By PNCC, we know that events related as cause and effect fall under strict laws. And so there must be a strict law connecting M and P. But by PAM, that law *cannot* be a psycho-physical law. Since only physics aims to provide a closed system governed by strict law. The law connecting M and P must be physical law. Then M must have a physical description and it must be a physical event.

As Louise Antony noted, Davidson's solution comprises these three theses

- a) Token-identity thesis: It holds that each individual token mental event is also a physical event. "Where an event is taken to be an unrepeatable dated particulars."
- b) Extensionality thesis: The thesis asserts that the extensionality of a singular causal claim, "...cause...." denotes a relation that holds between particular events however they are described.

- c) Intentionality thesis: The thesis asserts that all claims relating events to laws contain intentional contexts. And so, explanations and predictions incorporate appeals to natural laws. Davidson argues that the truth of the claims that an event or a pair of events instantiates a law will depend upon the description used to pick out the event or event occur in space and time, but not on the basis of the intrinsic properties of events [1989: 153-87].

The first two theses explain the monistic part of the theory that there is no logical connection between the descriptions of a pair of events. The third thesis resolves the contradiction generated by the first two and thus fully compliments Davidson's methodological commitments.

The thesis is meant to warn us against interpreting mental events as 'anomalous in themselves.' Davidson says, "in my view the mental is not an ontological but a *conceptual* category." [1987b:46, Italics mine]. That is, the anomalousness of the mental are not of its mental events but its mentalist description. In other words, once the laws are instantiated, mentalistically described events would be no sense anomalous.

Louise Antony, thus, suggests to replace the principle of anomalous of mental as entailing the following principle, stated as:

"The principle of Non-Generalizability (PNG): 'There are no strict deterministic laws formulable in the vocabulary of psychology'" [Ibid: 163].

This is mainly because there is no underlying mental reality whose laws can be studied in abstraction from the normative or holistic consideration of event. That is, it is impossible to have a linguistic explanation in purely mentalistic term. Then, as Louise Antony says, the only way to get out of the mental

realm is to regard rationalization as a 'species of causal explanation' [*Op. cit.*: p.166].

Yalowitiz (1997) might disagree with Louise Antony in this respect. But he argues that both mental anomalism and monism are premises that can be derived from Davidson's commitment concerning the concept of causation and do not depend on considerations about rationality. Hence Davidson's argument of AM contains not only the principles of PNCC and PCI but also the causal explanation of reason and the anomic nature of causally defined properties. AM is therefore a consequences of a unified argumentative strategy. Accordingly we might also argue that causal explanation is a species of reason explanation.

Apart from this brief sketch of the argument of anomalous monism, there might arise serious queries about various steps in these arguments. One such cluster of problems may be related to the first step of the argument leading to the interim conclusion that there are non psycho- physical laws. And the other groups of queries might be regarding the continuation of the argument that leads to the final conclusion that mental events are physical events. Accordingly there are at least two ways of responding to these worries about arguments for anomalous monism. The *first* way makes use of the idea of *ceteris paribus clauses* (non strict laws). This line of response is to say that properties that are mentioned in either strict laws or non-strict laws can be causally relevant. In essence, this seems to employ Fodor's notion of causally responsible properties. And the *second* line of response is to employ the notion of supervenience. Accordingly, mental events might depend on physical events and physical event may depend on mental events without reducing one into another. They are supervenient. Kim and others follows this path. Davidson's path differ from both Fodor and Kim, since the concept of supervenience never matters causal relevant of mental.

2.2 : Causal Explanation

Davidson considers, cause and effect as events. Ex: The stone moves of being thrown is an event. Events are episodic occurrences. Between different events there are causal relations. Davidson, here, distinguishes between causation and causal explanations while the former explains the nature of causal relation, the latter explains the occurrence of an event or description we use to pick out those event in terms of causes. The latter part explains psycho-physical anomalism whereas the former explains the monistic part of the event. In Davidson, then there is distance between ontic and epistemic conception of causal relation. However, this distinction is not actually based on knowable and unknowable as Kant or Hume considered.

To explain the ontic conception of causation, Davidson argues for monism. According to him, events are particulars. They are unrepeatably dated occurrences. An event such as death of Caesar is unrepeatably, since it never occur again. Events are dated in the sense that they occur at a particular period of time. While two events can occupy the same period of time, one event cannot occupy two distinct period of time. Events in this sense are particulars rather than universals [like properties and relations].

Like material objects, events can be described and redescribed in many ways. We can describe Caesar as 'the famous Roman conqueror of Gaul' or as 'the husband of Calpurnea' or as the historical figure most interesting'. But all descriptions are meant for one event – Caesar's existence. Like that, we could made enormous description of same event – Caesar's death as 'the death of the conqueror of Gaul', the death of the historical figure most interesting and so on.

According to Davidson, causation is implied in any causal explanation. Causal explanation in this sense is an answer to a 'why'? question. If we ask a

physicist, why unsupported things fall down to the ground, he/she should give an explanation of the phenomenon in terms of gravity. Many explanations like this one are causal explanations. They explain why an effect happened, by telling about its causes.

Looking in this sense, critics argue that all explanations are not causal in strict sense. For instance if we ask why did Brutus feels remorse? One might reply "Because the murder described on page 100 of my copy Shakespeare occurred" there is nothing in the physical world that happens Brutus's remorse. But still there might have clues for the evidence of Brutus feeling remorse. All statements of mental and physical have causal explanation, and they are, therefore, causally relevant.

Davidson's critic, Robert Murray [1995: 317-34] argues that Davidsonian version of causal theory fails to provide an account of the explanatory force of reason explanation. According to him, the source of the apparent contradiction in Davidsonian argument lies in a perceived link between the Humean account of causality and the CLM of causal explanation [Hempel: 1966].

Hume held that causation was really a matter of constant conjunction of events. This means that singular causal claims such as '*a cause b*', causal claims about particular events rather than types of events, are true only if there is some general truth such as 'every a-type event is followed by a b-type event'. In Hume's word, 'we may define a cause to be an object, followed by another, and where all objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second' [1975: 76]. From this it is clear that Hume's discussion of causation was an attempt to ascertain the nature of causal connection. Whereas, Davidson, who disavows any intention of analysing the nature of causation as such, is essentially different from Hume's position.

However, one can agree with Simon Evnine who argues that Davidson's view on causal explanation is one of support for a principle, derived from David Hume, which Davidson calls 'the Nomological character of causality' (NCC). Accordingly, Humean thought can be taken as saying that wherever one event causes another, there is a causal law which relates types of events of which the two particular events are instances. This has led to Hempel's causal explanation, called the deductive-nomological causal law or CLM [1966] according to which one causally explains some events if one shows how the sentence asserting its occurrence is a deductive consequence of a general causal law and a statement of the occurrence of its cause.

Hempel's CLM is a type of methodological monism. The causes (explanans) and effects (explanandum) are subsumed under law. It presupposes a valid causal explanation. A causal explanation might be incomplete explanation, provided it can be filled out to satisfy the requirement for complete explanation. An incomplete explanation is the part of a complete explanation and is explanatory in virtue of that fact.

This model, as Salmon Wesley argues, offers information about the laws of 'quantum mechanics' which shows that x was to expected definitely, that does show why x occurred. He noted that Hempel's CLM uses two different conception of causal explanation. The epistemic conception and the ontic conception of causal explanation. Salmon points out that with regard to the explanations of quantum phenomena , the epistemic and ontic conception of causal explanations is distinct. While the former explains why the phenomenon to be explained was to be expected, the latter explains how to define the phenomenon to be explained into nomic nexus [1975: 149-66].

As a critique of Davidson, Robert Murray argues that Davidson endorses an ordinary causal explanation closely resembling to the ontic conception of causal explanation but it is beyond doubt that Murray is wrong

in interpreting Davidson's view of causal explanation. Against CLM, Davidson argues that one can causally explain event without referring to any laws. He puts forward two objections against covering law model. One is against the requirement that causal explanations include laws as part of the *explanans* and the other is against the requirement that explanations of the occurrence of events were to be expected. This makes it clear that Davidson's attempt is not to define causality as such. His attempt is *not to* deduce strict bridge laws in psycho-physical realm.

Davidson's criticism of CLM does not contradict with Humean thought. The true singular causal claims do imply that there is some law that the events which are causally related to instantiate. Events instantiate laws when described in certain ways and not when described in others. Davidson says,

“Causality and identity are relations between individual events no matter how described. But laws are linguistic, and so events can instantiate laws and hence be explained or predicted in the light of laws, only as those events are described in one or another way” [1970b: 215].

Davidson warns us to read the principle of NCC carefully enough that it should not be mistaken. According to Davidson,

“It says that when events are related as cause and effect, they have description that instantiate a law. It does not, say that every true singular statement of causality instantiates a law” [1970b: 215].

Davidson also says ,

“The most primitive explanation of an event gives its cause; more elaborate explanations may tell more of the

story, or defend the singular causal claim by producing a relevant law or by giving reasons for believing such exists. But it is an error to think no explanation has been given until a law has been produced" [1963: 17].

According to Davidson, there is causal explanation when 'events are characterised in such a way that we can deduce, or otherwise infer from laws or other causal lore, that the relation was causal' [1967b: 155]. The phrase 'causal lore' actually meant that there is a causal disposition, which leads to the type of psycho-physical or psychological generalisation. Davidson admits that such an explanation by reference to disposition 'is not high science but it isn't empty either' [1976b: 274]. Davidson's causal explanation in this sense is not actually the product of rationality, but rather it is a species of reason explanation.

Davidson's causal explanation answers Humean scepticism. Hume thought that causal relations cannot be known through experience. Kant answers his scepticism that the causal explanations are synthetic *a priori* judgement. In the case of metaphysics, synthetic *a priori* is unknowability. According to Kant, knowledge is the product of sensibility (perception) and understanding (conception). In the case of metaphysics, perception is impossible. i.e., Understanding of such objects are based on reason. In the realm of reason, only possibility is antinomies. Hence there is only knowledge about unknowability. Here, Kant not only presupposes the analytic-synthetic distinction but also scheme-content distinction. Following Quine, Davidson denies analytic-synthetic distinction as a dogma of empiricism. Causal explanation of any sentences whatever (even belief sentence) is possible, despite the fact that one cannot reduce into another (mental into physical). The second dogma of empiricism is, therefore, reductionism of statement into particular object outside. Unlike logical

positivists, Davidson never rejects metaphysics as non-sensical. In other words, all statement (metaphysical or physical) are meaningful if it meets the requirements of truth-conditions (discussed earlier in Section 1:3). Here, there is no distinction between truth to the matter of fact and truth to the matter of reasons as logical positivist and modern thinkers believes. Here for Davidson the question is 'What is it for words to mean what they do?' Answering this question provides only conditions of being true. Hence truth is neither given out there nor it is the matter of something mysterious. Rather it is non-reductive attribution to particular event, still there are other options of truth.

Critics like Martin Davies [1995] argues that for Davidson, causal truth are known *a priori*. According to Davidson, knowledge of causal truths are not the matter of synthetic knowledge or a priori knowledge. Taking for granted that there is truth, we can verify the condition of being true. Truth, in this sense is undefined concept (primitive) having explanatory power on relating it with other concepts like meaning, reference and so on. There are other nonlinguistic facts. Only statements of truth or falsehood exist. Here, what Davidson argues is that events are particulars, but events, by themselves, are not causal explanatory. They are only on the basis of reason that causal explanation is possible. That is, it is the principle of rationality that works belonged the cause event, and effect event e_2 . Reasons are therefore causes.

While causal explanations are possible between the descriptions of events (e_1 statement and e_2 statement), causation takes place between events. Here, Davidson attacks the third dogma of empiricism – scheme-content and distinction. That is, meaning cannot be fixed on particular causal explanation. Causal explanation might vary in accordance with truth conditions and reason conditions. Causal explanations are also subjected to the matter of interpretation. They are therefore species of reason explanation.

2.3. Rational explanation

Reasons are therefore causes. All mental events are causally related to physical. For example, beliefs and desires cause agents to act and actions cause changes in the physical world. Events in the physical world often cause us to alter our beliefs, intentions and desires. Mental events are causally relevant.

Why, we need reason to explain causation? Salmon Wesley's explanation of Reichenbach's thesis, in this respect, elucidate clearly about the issue.

Given events of two types, A and B, which are positively relevant to one another, we are always tempted for a common cause C which is statistically relevant to both A and B. Here, unless we can find a direct causal dependency, we are only following in lazy way to the work of others. C absorbs the dependency between A and B in the sense of the probability of A and B given C, is equal to the product of the probability of A given C and the probability of B given C. The question remains: why should we prefer, for explanatory purposes, the relevance of C to A and C to B over the relevance of A to B which we had in the first place? The answer is that we can trace a spatio-temporally continuous causal connection from C to A and C to B, while the relation between A and B cannot be accounted for by any such direct continuous causal relation. This is especially clear when A and B lie outside of one another's light cones [Salmon Wesley, 1975: 161].

Here, Salmon and Davidson share the same view that we are tempted to depend on common reason for explaining causes and effect because we are always looking for the spatio-temporal continuous causal connections. Unlike Quine, Louise Antony, Murray, Devitt and others, Salmon and Davidson were against a symmetric dependency of continuous causal relation. Salmon Wesley argues improbable coincidence may have common effect as well as

common causes, but their common effects do not explain the coincidence [1975: 161]. Davidson also argues that any attempt to analyse action to know about cause will be a failure. Instead one must ask what cause one to prefer that particular act rather than the other? Here, Davidson prefers to the requirement of statistical relevance relation explanation at the first level. Both Reichenbach (1956: 19) and Wesley argue for this model to explain quantum mechanics. Causal relations according to them need not be deterministic; they are, instead a species of statistical relevance relations (see Salmon, 1975). In this context, we may note why Louise Antony suggests Davidson's causal explanations as the model of rationalization or 'Species of causal explanation'.

According to Louise Antony, Davidsonian model of rationalization is based on three conditions. [*Ibid.* 166]

- (i) Truth Condition [TC]: Any attribution of mental attitude to the agent contained in the rationalization must be true.
- (ii) Rationality Condition [RC]: The rationalization must display the action as being reasonable in the light of beliefs and desires attributed in accordance with the truth condition.
- (ii) The Casual Condition [CC]: The event cited as reason is the explanans is the cause of the event cited as the action in the expanandum.

By attributing this picture to Davidson's position, Louise Antony is trying to reconstruct a viable analysis of rationalization as casual explanation consistent with the commitment of PNG. Accordingly, rationalization explains action by doing two things.

- (1) By citing the physical cause (despite the use of materialistic description of a physical occurrence.

- (2) By displaying the action as being reasonable in the light the agent's belief and desire through the use of mentalistic description.

The condition (i) and (ii) constrains the kind of the ways in which the cause of an action can be picked out in order to get a genuine rationalization. And condition (iii) ensures that the adequate rationalization will have genuine explanatory force. [*Ibid.*: 166] And so, there is not much substance in holding that it is impossible to have detailed, unconditional psychological or psychophysical laws. It indirectly implies that there is reference to the 'casual lore' or 'disposition' that cannot be eliminated in principles. Though it can be granted that such 'reference' Davidson argues, is nothing but a semantic abstraction, still Davidson has a point of defence.

The crucial problem that we face in this context is this: can reason be a cause of action? This, in turn, leads to another problem of reference to reason. Davidson never rejects the possibility of rational explanation. Rational explanation, Davidson says, "are in some sense low grade, they explain less than the best explanation in the hard sciences because of their heavy dependences on causal propensities" [1987 b: 42]. But many critics (like Simon Evnine and Robert Murray, for example) are not willing to go with Davidson. According to this criticism, Davidson's thesis holds that reason explanation is causal explanations, even while granting a form of supervenience, may not after all coincide with physical causal explanation.

Robert Murray argues that reasons are causes of action. According to him, though Davidson seems to endorse the ontic conception of casual explanation, his theory fails to provide an account of the explanatory force of rational explanation. He noted that, in many places, Davidson expresses agreement with Kantian-Chomskyan thesis in linguistic rationality. Davidson argues that reason explanation is not enough to explain reason and action into nomic nexus. Since reference to reason and action, existing in different

conceptual domain, never correlate accurately. Davidson also states that we do not have 'rough laws connecting reason and actions' and that generalizations connecting reasons and actions are not and cannot be regarded as genuine law on the basis of which accurate predictions can reliably be made.

Robert Murray finds in Davidsonian theory that a Quinean presupposition of Heideggerian Hermeneutic Phenomenology. According to him, rational explanations, as Davidson argues, are not explanation sketches. It presupposes a complete explanation. Even complete explanations fail to have predicative implications. For it fits the specific agent only and perhaps only for a short time. Hence, any laws based on rational explanations are peculiar to individuals and even to individuals at particular moments. Consequently, we may have an enormous number of highly particular laws equally valid. This does reject the possibility of scientific psychology, but open a new venue for the possibility of 'folk psychology'.

Thus, following Quinean claim about casually defined properties, Louise Antony and Robert Murray argue that there must be a causal link between mental state and behavioural action. This is because the only evidence available of mental operations are behavioural action. If there is no such link between them, then Louise Antony believes that the mental properties of his theory are epiphenomenal. Louise Antony suggests that the only way to rescue Davidson's theory from epistemological threat is to regard rationalization as a 'species of casual explanation' [*Ibid*: 166]. Robert Murray appreciates Louise Antony's reconstruction of Davidsonian model of rationalization.

However, Quine's behaviourism followed by Louise Antony and Robert Murray face some serious worries. First, is the problem of event. Events, according to Quine, are to be individuated by their space-time

locations. Davidson, here distinguishes between objects and events. If events or objects have the same space-time location, they are identical but if a material objects and an event share a space-time location, they need not be identical, since 'events and objects may be related to locations in space and time in different ways; it may be for example, that event *occur* at a time in a place while objects *occupy* place at times'[1985 : 176]. Events are particulars -datable, locatable individual entities. Whereas, objects are materials essentially physical things. Mental states, Davidson says, are events. So Quine's criterion for event identity turns events into material objects. Quine says, "a physical object in the broad sense in which I have long used the term, is the material content of any portion of space time however small, large, irregular or discontinuous. I have been wanting to view events simply as physical objects in this sense" [1985: 167]. Davidson holds the distinction between events and objects, and says, 'in the metaphysics implicit in our language, this distinction I do not want to give up' [1985: 176].

The second problem is related to the holism of mental events. According to Davidson, the propositional attitudes can only be attributed against the background of other propositional attitudes. There is no relation between the individual mental states and behaviour warrants the attribution of those mental state. Just as statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience as a corporate body, so attributions of propositional attitudes face the tribunal of behaviour (including linguistic behaviour) as a corporate body. Davidson's holism, therefore, rejects one-to-one correlation between beliefs or desires on the one hand, and actions or other behaviour on the other hand. Thus reasons are not causes of action.

The third problem is the absence of reference or meaning. As Lepore noted, understanding a language in behaviouristic spirit means that each of our illustration refers to a particulars act. Although linguistic behaviour is *a*

mark, it is not *the mark* [1986:3]. That is according to Davidson, any utterance is only a piece of behaviour. One particular utterance could not justify various other appropriate beliefs and knowledge of the speaker. Understanding a language sensitises us to special ways, for example, to specific sound and shapes in our non-linguistic environment. The problem is to explain what this involves. Some one might respond to our words appropriately without understanding our language. Some one might raise her hand upon hearing 'Raise your hand' and yet not understand English. Davidson's response is that it is not any linguistic or non-linguistic behavioural fact which is responsible for understanding. Instead, the mentalistic features or propositional attitudes such as beliefs, other mental attitudes about the world and about the mind of others contain the mark of understanding. Hence as Lepore noted, understanding is not a game we play with words and sentences alone. Still something is right about characterising understanding in virtue of what speakers can *do* that known speakers cannot do.

Davidson says: 'I despair of behaviourism, and accept frankly intensional attitudes . . . ' [Lepore *Ibid*:5;n: 2]. The best version of 'intentional realism' is the language of thought (LOT) advocated by Jerry Fodor. Fodor is anti-Quinean since he rejects holism and treat the semantics of mentalese as atomistic. His Chomskyan way of looking semantics argues that the internal representations, brain states, are syntactically and semantically structured. Fodor envisages psychological laws described in terms of their contents. It is the laws, which relate mental state types to each other. Davidson, here accepts Fodor in certain respects.

Fodor hopes for a naturalized theory of rationality. He says that the principles of rationality relate mental state to each other. In other words, the root causes of human actions are related to the mental state. Davidson rules

out this possibility. According to him, Fodor's notion of rationality is not naturalized. He stresses that to have propositional attitudes is to be more or less rational. There is no possibility that people's actions or mental states should be related to other mental states to which they are not rationally related. Davidson's normative principles of rationality prevent the possibility that mental states could ever, by and large, be related in non-rational ways.

Jerry Fodor [1987] argues that mental events are causally relevant not only to produce strict laws but also to construct psycho-semantic of Mentalese³. He thinks that if Davidson rejects psychophysical laws because of the necessity of fail safe clauses, he will have to reject the laws of generalisation of all the special sciences and conclude that the only real science is basic physics. But this is not the case. Davidson never gives any special status to physics. Then what Fodor claimed is that the generalisations of all special science are in principle, *Ceteris paribus* and there is, therefore, nothing unique about psychophysical laws.

According to Davidson, psychophysical generalisation is not impossibility. And so, even if there cannot be any strict law in the mentalistic part, there are *Ceteris paribus* clauses which of course, as a law, that is not strict. Steven Yalowitz argues that Davidson's own formulation of anomalous monism seems to be inconsistent due to the lack of relevant analysis of the laws in succession-*Ceteris paribus* laws. Davidson, in his official picture, distinguishes two different types of laws, namely—strict bridge-laws and strict succession-laws. Strict-bridge laws would correlate simultaneous instantiations of apparently distinct properties. It amounts to a bi-conditional correlating mental and physical property instantiations of the form,

“P1 \longleftrightarrow M1,”

[Where P1. stands for Physical event and M1 stand for Mental event]

Strict succession laws on the other hand, are *ceteris paribus* clause would correlate temporally ordered states and events, covering singular causal relations. It would be like 'whenever a creature is in certain physical or mental conditions, a certain mental states/events results'. These include laws of the form

“(P, $\&$ P2) \rightarrow M1,” ; “(P1 $\&$ M1) \rightarrow M2” ; “(M1 $\&$ M2) \rightarrow M3”

[Where P represents Physical events, and M represents Mental events]

As Fodor, Yalowitz also noted that the strict psycho physical and psychological laws of succession are *ceteris paribus* laws. Yalowitz explains three different possibilities of *ceteris paribus* laws

[cp]₁ ‘striking matches cause fire’

[cp]₂ ‘chemical reactions cause fire’

[cp]₃ ‘chemical reaction under certain conditions causes fire’

For Davidson the first and the third model of laws are homonomic and heteronomic laws respectively. Homonomic laws are generalisations whose positive instances gives us reason to believe that the generalisations itself could be improved upon by adding further provisos and conditions stated in the same vocabulary as the original vocabulary. Such a generalisation points to the form and vocabulary of the finished laws. Heteronomic laws, on the other hand, are generalisations which when instantiated may give us reason to believe that there is a precise law at work, but one could be stated that law only shifting to a different vocabulary.

Davidson’s argument is that there is only heteronomic generalisation possible in mental events. It is not possible to have any description of the mental event in mental terms.(Psychological vocabulary) but only in physical terms. Louis Antony, therefore added another, thesis of PNG.

This principle is against Fodor's conception of Mentalese. According to him, the mental states also have content which have syntactic structure. He believes in the language of thought (LOT). The advocates of such views, as Davidson says, are intentional realists. LOT's advocates hold that our hopes, beliefs, fears and wants are bonafide elements of an account of what there is in the world. That is, our propositional attitudes are not first order physical properties, but functional states purportedly characterizable as relations to physical tokens of symbols with intentional contents.

According to Ramberg, there are two important features to the LOT:

- i) It appears as there is a law-like causal connection between semantic constituents of a language and features of the world.
- ii) Like natural language expression, mentalese expressions can *ex-hypotheses* be generated from a finite stock of primitive expressions and compositional rules. So that the meaning of a complex expression can be construed as the function of the meaning of its constituents⁴ [1986: 21].

These two features of LOT are essential to the causal theorist. According to the first feature, we need a schema giving the form of law that causally relate to some property of the world to the token of some semantic type. Here, the problem is that there is no referent to the mentalese. So their etiology is susceptible to law-like generalisation. The second feature requires an account of the relation between natural language and the LOT. The problem is how the representational power of mentalese expression refers to the features of the world in English. Here, the evidential support is missing. Hence there is problem in relation between theories of reference and the kind of evidence we can have for semantic theory.

According to Devitt, [1985] the language we speak is identical with our LOT. Hence, testing a theory of reference for our mental representation is nothing but testing a semantic interpretation of language we speak. Devitt identifies 'public language' with 'private language.' Here, 'private language' is postulated or taken for granted, to our public utterances. Evidence and referential testing for the semantic interpretation of a language is applicable only for the language we speak and not for the language we talk. In other words, by preserving the connection between the postulated language of thought and empirical evidence, we can have a particular interpretation of natural language.

As Ramberg argues, Devitt fails to provide a way to verify (test) whether the speaker (thinker) of that language actually has the thought that our causal hypothesis would attribute to her/him. In other words, Devitt's theory of causation lacks evidential base, it seems as if the reference is the product of the nomological causal generalisation. According to Devitt, when we confront a language we do not understand, we can not know if our theory isolates the appropriate set of causal laws. So he argues that the nomological generalisation would be mere legislation without empirical content. Devitt's question is whether an empirical theory would capture reference in non-semantic terms independently testable consequence of the causal generalisation. Devitt resists the semantic dependence of reference on the concept of truth. He says, Davidson is wrong in explaining causation.

Ramberg criticises Devitt for mistaken the views of Davidson. He argues that Devitt appears to attribute a rather crude instrumentalism to Davidson based on the distinction "between the 'observational' sentences which are factual and "theoretical" one which are mere instruments [Devitt 1985: 169]. Devitt argues that this instrumentalism does not 'justify discrimination against reference in favour of truth' [*Ibid*, 175]. According to

Ramberg, Davidson does not base his position on the above distinction. Actually, Davidson considers this distinction as the 'third dogma' of empiricism⁵.

According to Davidson, the concept of truth is prior to the concept of reference. This priority does not depend on a general instrumentalist distinction between observational sentence and theoretical statements. According to Davidson, concepts, notions, names are presupposed by observations. The distinction Davidson relies on suggests that we test a theory in part by relating it to other sorts of theories. It definitely does not imply that the empirical consequences of a theory can somehow be tested directly against immediate experience, the given, or any such Phantom. Causal theory of reference might be formulated without using the concept of truth, but testing such a theory presupposes knowledge of the truth value of sentences. And our intuitions about the truth value of sentences are certainly semantic. That is, they are always *ad hoc* explanations of meaning. Thus a causal explanation of reference, cannot by itself give rise to the sorts of empirical predictions of scientific psychology, as Fodor and Yalowitz maintained.

While arguing that reason is the cause of action, Davidson is also aware that there is no objective code of rationality. What he calls reason is either mental description or physical description of the event. There is no direct assess to find an objective code of rationality. Because the event which we are looking for reason are linked by various other descriptions that we cannot detect and pick one out of the several other beliefs and descriptions to represent the whole. In this context, Davidson ascribes holism and normativity to the physical as well as mental domain.

The holism is the doctrine that a mental state cannot occur in isolation. Davidson argues that one cannot attribute a mental state to a person in abstraction from one's attributes of other mental states. Any attribution is

only plausible relative to a background of other mental states. According what make a belief the belief it is, are (at least in large part) its interconnections with other mental states. The identify of a mental state is a function of its place in the larger network. The normativity of the mental lies to the fact that mental states are subject to norms that specify, in very general ways, what it is reasonable to believe, desire and so on.

But between mental and physical descriptions there is categorical difference. In the case of mental, strict normative principle laws never works. We cannot avoid the possibility of unpredictability behaviour-psychological anomalism and psycho-physical anomalism results. Whereas in the case of physical event, strict laws are possible, that the reason could predict the correct result in action.

Simon Evnine noted that the presence of normativity an holism makes a realm of mental fluid, open to interpretation and reinterpretation. But the real dimension of Davidson's radical interpretation derives out of impassibility of scientific psychology [as Louise Antony noted] which is mainly due to the lack of specific reference of the mental domain.

According to Davidson, the nature of constitutive principle that are operative in the two domain seems that it is impossible for strict psycho-physical laws. Davidson (1970) contrasted strict laws with rules of thumb' but later (1993) he explicitly allows for laws that are not strict. He, therefore, accepts the possibility of *Ceteris paribus* clause.

Simon Evnine argues that Davidson's normative, principle of rationality is hardly something we have discovered, about beliefs and other mental states. There was never a time when we could identify beliefs but didn't realize that if someone believed that *P* then he ought not to believe that *not P* ($\sim P$). Such knowledge, Simon says, is always a priori – so long as we

know a belief when we see one, we know that someone who believes that P ought not at the same time to believe that *not* P ($\sim P$). According to him this is Davidson's principle of charity.

According to Simon Evnine, the principle of charity is the normative constraints imposed on mental events. Thus to the question, Simon Evnine noted, 'whether people might not actually be approximately rational and consistent in their patterns of belief and desire', Davidson's answers 'in my view, this cannot be a factual question. If a creature has propositional attitudes then, that creature is approximately rational' [1985a:245]. By saying that it is not a factual question, Davidson is emphasizing that we cannot first identify some one as having beliefs and desires, and then go on to wonder whether these beliefs and desires do or don't conform to the normative principles of rationality. Between a believer and an agent, he argues, that there is no gap because human beings are more or less rational.

Simon Evnine interpreted Davidson's philosophy of mind as 'casual explanatory project'. In fact, Evnine subscribes to a stronger thesis according to which reason explanation is not a form of casual explanation. What works against this thesis, according to him, is that not only the anomalism of mental, but also an idealistic theory of mental content, with the ubiquitous principles of charity. This idealistic theory of content stems from his acceptance of propositional content. No wonder, in Evnine's characterization, Davidson's theory of content embodies in rationalist idealism. On Evnine's understanding, an idealistic theory of content depends on an idealistic theory of rationality and hence it is opposed to a naturalistic or realistic theory of content. And the consequences are obvious for a theory of psychology as science. This is evident when Simon Evnine compares Davidson's idealistic rationality with that of Dennett [*Ibid*, 157-8].

One can, we believe, recover Davidson's philosophy by deviating more towards philosophy of language that accepts a thesis about holism of content. Let us quote a remark from John McDowell in this connection, which supports the above standpoints. As McDowell noted, there seems to be a clear analogy between AM and semantic holism. Holism, says McDowell.

"is quite compatible with the thesis that whenever a name, say, occurs in an utterance – event, the event is suitably related, in physically describable ways, with event or circumstance involving the name's denotation (ie., referent). What need not to be true is a corresponding thesis with a quantifier shift: that there is some one physically describable relation which obtains between any occurrence of any name and its denotation . . . it seems right to conclude that denotation, on this view, is a non-physical relation" [1980: 127].

Here, we can agree with Ramberg, that problems in Davidson's philosophy arise not from the conflict of idealistic and realistic approaches to content. Both realistic and idealistic interpretations of rationality are rather 'un-Davidsonian reifications of meaning and belief'. Ramberg argues, the principle of charity is not a 'pragmatic constraint' on interpretation. Rather it is an inevitable precondition of radical interpretation that an interpreter possesses for a pre-theoretic understanding of truth. In other words, it works because the interpreter knows how to apply truth-predicates of her own language.

According to Ramberg, the crucial issue of Davidson is not the controversy between extensionalism and intensionalism. Davidson argues both intensional as well as extensional accounts of reference share the same fundamental problem. In casual theory of reference, of the intensionalist thesis,

the casual relation is mainly based on reason. And the only evidence we have for an existence of an a priori linguistic structure is language as we speak it. We have direct access to such a structure only through Kant's twelve categories of understanding. But then, that structure is only a hypothesis based on generalization from speech acts. This hypothesis is to be tested by the predications about future speech acts. For the purpose of semantic theory, the generalizations must take the forms of generalizations about semantic structure. The evidential base can only be the truth-value we attribute to sentences. Only if the theory fits the evidence, the theory captures the a priori structure.

According to intensional theorist, an account of meaning and reference is primary to an account of truth. The empirical testability, is therefore, impossible. As Ramberg noted, we can use intensional theory to interpret a language we do not know by using dictionary. However, we cannot know. In other words, there is no way of knowing whether the dictionary, we are provided with, is a good one or simply legislates the semantics of language.

Ramberg argues that both intensional theorists and casual theorists proceed on the assumption that there is a relation of reference to be elucidated. They are all versions of what Davidson refers to as the building block theory. Such theory intended not only to determine what the expressions in their domains refer to, but also to explain how it is that they refer in non-semantic terms. The casual theorists hope to do this directly, while intensionalist theory want to do indirectly, by defining type-reference in terms of sense and giving content to sense by linking it to a Chomskyan innate linguistic structure. If either strategy worked, it would provide a base for constructing the rest of semantics, including the relation to truth. But neither kind of theory produces theorems that are testable against evidence available independently of linguistic concepts. Neither hypothesis about

casual relations between words and objects, nor hypotheses about the nature of innate Chomskyan structures are verifiable without knowledge of the truth-condition of sentences. Hence both theories fail to explain the *ceteris paribus* clauses in such a way as to fit the need of empirical status of Davidson.

Steven Yalowitz, who agrees with the empirical status of *ceteris paribus* clauses, is dare enough to give up Davidson's official picture of rationality as such. He argues that Davidson own formulation implicit the possibility of heterogeneously formulated strict laws. Yalowitz calls it as an 'intermediate model'. There are laws of homogeneously formulated and heterogeneous vocabulary. In the former, the terms belong to the same conceptual domain whereas in the latter the terms belong to the distinct conceptual domain. According to Davidson, the finished (strict) law towards which *ceteris paribus* laws pointed must be stated in homogeneous vocabulary. Both Fodor and McLaughin share the similar position that strict laws are always homogeneously formulated. Yalowitz's laws that formulated in 'intermediate model' went against these assumptions. It seems that Yalowitz's laws of 'intermediate model' hope for neo-identity theory closely resembling to Kim's model of supervenience.

Reason in modern sense, is a self referring entity. Any attempt to fix content in terms of language will results to the indeterminacy of rational content. Neither inductive nor deductive nor inducto-deductive logic of inference could define rationality. Psychologist therefore failed to explain reason as a cause of action.

Davidson argues, but folk theorist knows how reason can be cause of action. He argues that events are also utterances or hence the whole scenario of interaction between cause and effect become the context of speaker's language and context of interpreter's language. The event-A (cause) becomes speaker's language and event B becomes interpreter's language. The

advantage of such ascription is that utterances might be language we talk about and also language we think about. Here, both linguistic content (meaning) and mental content (propositional attitude) are taken together in particular language. And so, here, the problem relating to this cannot be limited to the content of language but also extended to the propositional attitude (mental content). KW sceptical paradox as discussed in the earlier chapter arises here. As Boghossian stated it is related to the problem of content itself. Ramberg might recognize it as the problem of situating reference.

Why they failed to capture the content of the sentences? Events are utterances. Then utterances are mental or physical, since events are mental or physical. Our utterances are language we 'talk about' and language we 'think about' the physical world. The utterance in this sense is not third element connecting talk and thought. Rather utterance itself is 'what we think about' and 'what we talk about'⁶. We have the propositional 'aboutness' of utterances and also linguistic 'aboutness' of utterances. Here as Martin Davies noted, stereoscopic representation of rationality work (conventional aboutness) might be like the triangle (see fig 1:1).

According to Davidson, our communication proceeds even if there is no such connection between thoughts and talks. What the speaker believes or knows need not coincide with what interpreter interprets. Both of them might differ in what they think and talk about. Yet communication succeeds. The reason is that while an interpreter interprets speaker's words (utterance or action), he/she is actually searching for the reason of that action. In other words, he/she is asking: why speaker chooses that particular word rather than other? Here, the answer he arrives at is the utterance or sentences or statements (language) of reason. But that particular act is only one mark of reason. There are also other marks of reason that we could have no access.

What she/he (speakers) thinks need not necessarily coincide with the reason, the interpreter has chosen. It directly implies that there are other statements or utterances which cause her/him to utter that particular words. That is mental properties/descriptions differ widely from linguistic properties. Yet both expressions are in the context of language itself.

Here, what the speaker thinks might be known to the speaker himself/herself for at least that particular moment. But while interpreting the speaker's words about the world, the interpreter's truth varies at least in time and so need not necessarily coincide. It implies that there is no such thing (content) in the mind (mental) or in the language. Content is always outside our thinking expressions and talking expression. But there need not be any non-linguistic fact. Hence there is always a sort of distortion in the triangular representation of speaker, interpreter and world. Davidson argues that the subjective, the inter-subjective (knowledge of other minds) and the objective (knowledge of our own mind) are three interdependent (knowledge of nature) aspects of epistemic situation. It is in this epistemic situation that we find ourselves. But unfortunately none of the three forms of knowledge is reducible to one or both of the others. Each of these three kinds of empirical knowledge has its distinctive characteristics, of course, all three varieties of knowledge are concerned with aspects of the same reality, where they differ is in the mode of access to reality.

Davidson in this context denies the existence of mental content apart from physical content. And so, not only mental events are physical events, but they are dependent (supervenient) on the latter.

Supervenience

The concept of 'Supervenience' was first introduced in English ethical and juridical discourse. It suggests that a relationship of determination and

dependence may exist between two classes of events or properties. Davidson employed this term into the discussions of the mental. Davidson argues that the notion of supervenience can provide initial support for the claim the mental, while in large part dependent on the physical, is nonetheless not subjected to exact and nomological organised correlation.

Davidson writes:

Supervenience as I have defined it here is clearly all I needed for the argument in 'Mental Events' since what I was arguing for there was only the identity of mental events with physical events. I wanted to emphasize that such ontological reduction does not imply that mental properties are physical properties, nor that there are casual or bridging laws relating events classed by mental properties with events classed by physical properties [1985, 245-4].

According to Davidson, mental events are physical events but there are no entities, with which we may be called mental as different from physical. In the realm of events (utterances), both mental and physical are one and the same. There is no other vocabulary (language) especially meant for mental events.⁷ Our thinking are always about world might not be represented as such through language. This is because there is a holistic network of beliefs and also a holistic network of language parallel to each other. Perfect matching is impossible. Yet, each mental event, even if it utters or not is about the physical world. When utters, it becomes actions. Here triangulation between speaker, interpreter, and world might be distorted. Still communication proceeds because of its supervenient nature itself.

Thus mental in this sense depends on the physical but reverse dependent often seems to be an impossible task. Hence Davidson's sense of supervenience claims that there cannot be two events alike in all physical respects. But differing in some mental respect, or that an object cannot alter in some mental respect without altering in some physical respect (1970/1991:250). This claim does not merely say that there happens not to be any pair of events that are mentally different though physically the same. It does not just say that objects do not, as a matter of fact, alter mentally without altering physically. It says that these things cannot happen. So, it is a modal claim (a claim about necessity, possibility or impossibility) [Martin Davies, 1995].

Kim applied the concept of supervenience in the sphere of mind-body problem (MBP). He clearly emphasizes the role of one pole of the psycho-physical relationship. That is, the physical in many ways 'comes before' the mental. His view is a quite sophisticated physicalism. It is free from the rigid, systematic and nomological binds of stricter versions. Kim writes, 'there seems to be mental states which are nomologically incommensurable with respect to neuro-physiological or more generally, physical properties' [1978: 150].

Kim illustrates this with an example, the mental state of 'thinking of Vienna'. This means different things can conjure up different images to different people. It follows then, "that it is exceedingly unlikely that there is some neurophysical state which occurs to a person whenever and only whenever he thinks of Vienna" [*Ibid*]. If there are identity between mental and physical properties, then we would have to "find for thinking of Vienna is nomologically co-extensive physical property". But this is impossible. Consequently, "we need a different account of these mental properties which

are, or at least appear to be nomologically incommensurable with respect to physical properties" [*Ibid* : 151].

Kim points out that while it is true that we should not expect to find a physical correlate for every mental event, this does not deny the fact that 'each of these events may have a neural correlate'. Robert Sperry, the leading neuro-physiologist clarifies the concept of supervenience using the example of television. The television program obeys a phenomenology and specific laws that are completely independent from and do not interact with the laws governing the physical circuits of a television broadcasting system. But in certain sense, the programs depend on and congruence with the physical processes that make up television. And in that sense, they 'are supervenient on them' [1965;1983 :94-5]. This shows that Kim's view of physicalism is an Cartesian attempt to satisfy scientific urge to find a conclusive definition of truth. Incommensurability in this sense leads to the type of scepticism and never leads further more.

Davidson suggests only the supervenience in the weaker sense. In other words, there is only simple correlation of mental and physical events which may as well dependent but does not possess the requisites of necessity and universality. As Martin Davies noted, such supervenience might be taken to mean that there cannot be two events alike in all physical respects but differing in some mental respect; or that an object cannot later in some mental respect without altering in some physical respect [1995]. This claim does not merely say that there happens not to be any pair of events that are mentally different though physically the same. It does not just say that objects do not alter mentally without altering physically. It says that these things cannot happen. So it is a modal claim of possibility that, in any possible situation, if two events differ mentally, then they also differ physically. Since the two

events are imagine to occur within the same possible situation, it is "within a world" supervenience.

Kim suggests an 'across-world' supervenience – claiming that if an event (in some possible world) has certain mental and physical properties, then that even could not have (in any other possible world) those same physical properties but different mental properties. Davidson does not make this 'across-worlds' supervenience claim. Critics seem to argue that Davidson is not a physicalist as that of Kim. According to them, Davidson has some metaphysical inclination which cannot be omitted. Thus, they argue while Kim finds the possibility of psychology as the study of objective universal phenomena, Davidson deny this scientific status of the mental.

Sergio Moravio, in this context argues that Davidson has a strong anti-ontological and non-substantial leaning. Like Kim, Davidson usually speaks not of the mind – an entity called mind- but of the mental. But Kim considers the mental as a property or a state. Whereas Davidson speaks of events 'state' or 'property' could appear to refer to a mode of phenomena that in some measure belongs to a reality *a parte objecti* or at least to a constant, regular and nomological occurrence of the phenomenal themselves. 'Event', instead, seems to allude to concept of 'truth' rather than 'reference' or meaning. Events Davidson says, are particulars and such particulars are less 'consistent' more individual, diversified and relatively unpredictable entities.

Kim developed an account of events as particulars. Accordingly, events are constructed out of three components, an object a property and a time. An event $\langle a, F, t \rangle$ occurs if the object ' a ' has the property f at time t . Events are identical if their objects, properties and times are all identical. With Quine's views, it was a problem that it might not individuate events as finely as we would wish. Davidson asks "if a metal ball becomes warmer during a certain minute, and during the same minute rotates through 35

degrees, must we say these are the same event?" [1969c: 178] According to Quine, the answer is yes. A rotation and a warming which we might intuitively think were different events had to be counted as one even if they occupied the same space and the same time [1985: 167].⁸ Kim's view, by contrast, individuate events very finely, indeed too finely for Davidson.

Take the event of Brutus stabbing for Caesar at some time, and the event of his killing Caesar at the same time. For Davidson we have here one event, but under two different descriptions. For Kim, since the proposition of stabbing is not the same as the property of killing. We must have two separate events. Thus in killing Caesar by stabbing him, Brutus performs two events. In fact, almost any attempts to redescribe an event will end up describing a new event, since when we redescribe something, we usually do this by mentioning different properties it has. If I can describe one object as 'a tie' and 'a birthday present' it is because this one object has the property of being a tie, and the property of being a birthday present. On Kim's view, as Davidson says, 'no stabbing can be killing and no killing can be a murder, no arm-raising a signalling, and no birthday party a celebration. I protest' [1969a: 133-4]. The possibility of describing events is of utmost importance for the use to which Davidson puts them in dealing with action and the mind. Kim's view of their identity conditions, therefore, is unacceptable to him.

Davidson's original work on events took the form of a defence of a claim about their identity conditions. He says that 'events are identical if and only if they have exactly the same causes and effects'. According to him particulars can stand in various non-logical relation to each other. With material objects, the most prominent kinds of relations are spatial, whereas in the case of events, the paradigmatic kinds of relations are temporal, and especially casual. Events can happen before, after or at the same time as each other. And events can be the causes or effects of other events. It is this

intuition that led Davidson to the view that their conditions of individuation should be framed in terms of causes and effects.

Davidson says very little about the nature of events. Causation, according to him, is a relation between particulars. It relates events and they are particulars. It provides no independent reason for thinking that events are particulars. Further, it says nothing about what kind of particulars events might be. It would, as Simon Evnine noted, in itself, be consistent with events being concrete, material particulars or abstract, no material particulars or some kind of *sui generis* third possibility.

Sergio Moravio noted, [1995] Davidson is a firm anti-reductionist. For him, the procedure of reductionism cannot in any way be generalized or absolutized. His anomalous monism does in fact recognise that "all events are physical", but it does not accept the thesis that for the particular class of physical events made up of mental events, "purely physical explanations" can be give. In this connection we should note that Davidson, while sympathetic to a *lato sensu* physicalist perspective, firmly rejects an absolutizing physicalism which affirms that all languages and all explanations can be reduced to one single language and one single explanation. As Quine believed, it is the third dogma of empiricism.

No doubt, Davidson's interpretation of the mental is not only 'liberal' but also rich in promising implications. He has no intention of neglecting or much less of eliminating the set of mental events. On the other hand, he develops, as Sergio Moravio noted, the principle of *peculiarity* and *autonomy of mental events* [Ibid : 163]. Traditionally, it is believed that psycho-mental state often reveals certain binds of 'dependence' on physiological phenomena. But this does not mean that all that is mental is also physical nor does it means that they are homogeneous. Between mind and body, Davidson writes, recalling Ryle, there is a "categorical difference".

According to Davidson, the most significant form of diversity between mental and physical what he calls the 'lawlessness' of the mental events (1980: 208). Unlike physical events, mental, events are not "law like". Hence psychology as well as psycho-physical laws are impossible. Davidson, however, insists on this point repeatedly and vigorously: It would be a fatal error to confuse mere psychological correlation with genuine laws.

According to Davidson, psychophysical correlations refer to a simple connection which may well be causal, but does not possess the requisites of necessity and universality, whereas genuine laws rigidly require regularity, generality and predictability. To justify simple correlations *a parte objecti*, it is sufficient to appeal to the concept of supervenience. The notion of supervenience also gives us a rather effective grasp of the interplay of relative autonomy and dependence between distinct phenomena. Laws, on the other hand, imply not only dependence but also congruence and homogeneity. It precludes the categorical difference between the mental and physical states. This explains why; Davidson asserts that it is impossible to capture mental events "in the nomological set of physical theory" and ends with the conclusion that any neologism concerning the mental must be rejected.

Anomalousness of mental is related to the other peculiarity of mental events, namely, 'holism of the mental realm'. For Davidson, there exist some mental events that are generated not by physical process but by other mental events. I feel a joy, jealousy, desire, as a function of my ways of being and the forms and motivations of these ways of being are not so much physical as existential, cultural and social. In other words, under certain circumstances certain mental states or events appear inextricably bound together, and even joined in such a way that one leads almost exclusively to another. However Davidson stresses one point in particular that independent of the identity of

certain mental states as such, the explanations of those phenomena “relate them to other mental events and conditions” [1970].

Thus, for example, we explain a person’s free actions by linking them not to presumed neuro-physiological agents, but to ‘his desires, habits, knowledge and perceptions’. The identity theorist as well as physicalist is missed all this as a mere ‘errors’ committed by common sense. As Serigo Moravio says, they themselves were the victim of psychological and cultural prejudices [*Ibid*, 164]. They believe that the truth will be objectively demonstrated by the ‘things- themselves’ revealed by science. But Davidson takes an entirely different position. He openly defends the dimension of the mental and its independence from the physical. He stands by the legitimacy at least as a program and in principle, of explanatory schemes that do not confine themselves to ‘eliminating’ mental phenomena or ‘substituting’ them with something else.

Davidson’s critical neo-identity as well as neo-physicalism stresses the point that mental events can be described physically and, therefore, can be a “physical event”. In another incident, he says, “taken one by one” all mental events “are describable.....in physical terms, that is, they are physical events.” What Davidson really meant, here, is nomological correlation which leads to the *ceteris paribus* clauses. This, according to Serigo Moravio is ‘ the linguistic turn’ in Davidson. It not only supports the concepts of supervenience but also provides the possibility of folk psychology [1995: 168-175].

By ‘linguistic turn’ what actually meant is that, in Davidson view, the description of the mental or physical events, of course, signifies ‘aboutness’ of thought and world. It seems, as Putnam argues, that a property is a way of being of something, connected not with the real and objective being of things but with our descriptions of them. Mental things, Putnam says, are essentially

predicates that we attribute to a definite physical referent or support: but we shape and describe them, with full cognitive legitimacy, on the basis of our existential and cultural interests and models [1975].

Putnam introduced the idea of two worlds which are exact physical replicas of each other, except for the fact that what on earth is H₂O is on twin earth some macroscopically indiscernible substance xyz. If I have some belief which I would express as 'water is clear', my twin-earth counter part would have a belief which he would express in exactly the same way. However, my belief would be about water, whereas his belief would be about xyz and not water. Although our brains are, by hypothesis, in type-identical states, we have different beliefs because of the nature of the stuff our beliefs are 'about'.

Putnam is expressing an externalist account of content. On an externalist view, propositional content, what my belief is a belief that, or what my sentence means, is not determined just by what is going on with me but is affected by the nature of things outside me, the things that my beliefs and sentences are about 'Meanings', as Putnam puts it, 'Just ain't in the head'. Putnam, here, argues for the externalism. But the problem is that, for him, the meaning is fixed by some public standard. Davidson also noted that by fixing meaning (content of truth) on particular structure, he can correctly determine truth value or meaning. But, here, the fixing standard is impossible because mental is anomalous. According to Davidson, the anomalousness of mental is not all a problem in the context of endless interpretation. Davidson also accepts an externalist view of content, Davidson's externalism is far more radical than Putnam. Hence Davidson no longer holds to supervenience in the way he originally conceived of it.

Sergio Moravia says, "the philosopher who has made the most stimulating and rigorous contribution to the redefinition of mental in the anti-substantiality terms of properties and events, and of the psychophysical

relationship in terms of non-systematic and non-nomological correlation is Donald Davidson" [*Ibid*, 161-62].

Davidson argues that there is no such thing as 'mind' and there is no such thing as 'language'. There are only particular events unrepeatably, unpredictable, diversified individuals. Events, Davidson says, as 'utterances', or 'actions'. As Ramberg argues, it never leads to theoretical reification. Davidson is never a metaphysician nor ontologist (who explains what reality is), nor an epistemologist (who explains how to justify our beliefs). He is, as Ramberg shows, a semantic theorist, and as such, he dealt with the problem how to understand language of thought and language of world. Mental events are merely 'semantic abstractions. Hence any linguistic utterance (action) might be taken to mean that mental and physical are identical. 'Monism' in this sense is not metaphysical but only physical. As Ramberg says, we cannot determine any reference (mental or physical) in non-linguistic terms. What Davidson proposes is a reading of mental events which is not, so to speak 'vertical' or 'deterministic' but "'horizontal' and 'relational'" extension of meaning. [Sergio Moravio: 1995] This reading as Sergio Moravio argues encourages a rather innovative approach to the effective, intellectual and behavioural world of man.

According to Davidson, the concept such as 'language', 'mind' are metaphors. Still they depend or supervenient or contingent on physical world. Why? But this is not because we know ourselves only by the asymmetric causal relation between language, thought and world. Rather we know ourselves in the distortion of the triangle by questioning the continuous connection shared by others.

Thus from this contingent causal connection, one cannot derive continuous common causal connection (objective rational code). By this public standard, what one misses is asymmetric causal dependency explaining

improbable coincidence. There is no third element of language that intervenes between mental and physical events. Davidson denies the existence of language as medium of representing reality.

Still, in our communication, we are not relying on language but on the truth conditions of events happening in the world (which of course is objectivity as Crispin Wright mentioned). Davidson also rejects the language as tool model refining mental contents. It is here, Davidson differs from Rortian conception of pragmatism.

As Farerell noted, Rorty, here exploits the core issue of Davidson which might not be neglected. Rorty says that Davidson gives us “the first systematic treatment of language which breaks completely with the notion of language as something that can be adequate or inadequate to the world or to the self” [1989 : 10].

Even then, one could notice in Davidson’s acceptance of first person’s authority as a recognition of our own beliefs about the world. By overlooking this dimension of Davidson, Rorty seems to compromise with the “world well lost” [1972 : 649-65].

Rorty argues that if we adopt Davidson’s account of language, we shall not be tempted to ask about the place of intentionality in a world and thought [1989 :11-2] . Here, Rorty exaggerates Davidson’s argument of PNC and PAM, consciously overlooking PCI and identity thesis. For, while Davidsons argues that there will be no reduction of psychological talk to physicalist talk, and that there can be no strict causal laws picked at the psychological level of description, he does find it important to show that mental events, under other descriptions, are suited in a deterministic causal order. According to Davidson, reasons are causes.⁹

Davidson frequently reminds us about the nature of language, mind and world. While the concept of language and mind had no entities by themselves, world, apart from language and mind has substantial entities. For Davidson two mental events are not alike though physically same.¹⁰ He, therefore, asks whether entities have to have a language in order to count as having thoughts and beliefs. Here Rorty noticed that for Davidson there is no link between language and thought. Davidson also agrees that the talking about beliefs (thinking) and talking about intentions (world) are different. But this does not mean for the instrumentalists' view that such talking about (belief and intentions) is an invented vocabulary that has turned out to be rather useful in making sense of the marks and sounds that others produce. Rorty says,

“To say that it is a language user is just to say that pairing off the marks and noises it makes with those we make will prove useful tactic in predicting and controlling its future behaviour”. [1989 : 15].

Davidson denies this instrumentalist picture of mind as well as language. Rorty believes that Davidson was against scientific discoveries and his theory of interpretation is the safe guard to prevent harmful effects of science. For Davidson, Scientific development may or may not harmful, it depends on how we conceive it. Here, he gives more importance to the first person's authority. In this context, one may reject others view by strong assertion (by reason explanation, essentially causal), but still we must aware that there are other view equally strong and reasonable (causal as well) in different ways for the same issue. Here, Davidson argues that we could not have concluding statement of assertion. Assertions and negations proceeds endlessly. He agrees with Rorty that the concepts of language, mind and world are all metaphors for the language users, but this does not deny the possibility of identity between mental events and physical events on the one

side and 'aboutness' of mental and physical occurrence on the otherside. For Davidson, mental events are physical events because they are about the physical entities itself. Unlike Davidson, Rorty, here with, by highlighting anomalousness of the mental, attempts is to fix mental content in terms of the use of language.

Farrell, here notices Rorty's yearning for divinity that 'I shall encounter only myself in everything I touch'¹¹ (1994:138). He argues that anyone who supposes that all determination will be a self determined, and that the boundaries a human discourse runs up against will be boundaries for that it has set for itself, are hoping for a divine existence. Hence, Rorty's defeat of the myth of the given is not accompanied by the Davidsonian re-affirmation of the world's causal sway over our entire belief system, but by an unconstrained self-relating discourse for which world is an empty reflection (ibid).

Davidson agrees that historical epistemological shift of linguistic turn, of course, opens to the cultural critique. But the world never disappears as something substantial and independent over and against the momentum of our ongoing conversations. Here, one could notice Davidson's alliance with Heidegger, in his attempt to rethink modern notion of subjectivity. (Farrell, 1994). Heidegger rejects the picture of a subjective determining power that orders its patterns upon a world of objects. He argues that thinking is what it is already 'belonging to' the world and to letting it manifest its character. It is only in being towards the world, in being situated in its surroundings, that I as thinker or experiencer have and real content to my activity; and language, rather than being the embodiment of some conceptual scheme or other is an "openness" in which things themselves are making their appearance. We do not have to work in order to bring an *alienated* subjectivity always in touch

with things, because it is by its very nature as subjectivity that we always keep touch with them.

Hence both Davidson and Heidegger argue that through language one can never make truth. One can neither be a truth bearer nor be a truth maker. Yet there is correspondence without confrontation. Davidson denies any attempt to define truth.

However, Heidegger and Davidson differ widely in an important respect. For Davidson, we are situated within the world causal processes and it is generating beliefs in us, so that an interpreter will properly interpret those beliefs by relating them back to their causes. For Heidegger, it is our 'pre-understanding' of things through being ("otherness") open to their contexts of significance. Those contexts are neither given to us nor made by us, but what we and things find ourselves within as a condition for our encounter. He argues that we must avoid the one-sidedness that would take them to be no more than projections of communal subjectivity, yet we must work within our historical pre-understanding in letting what is there to be encountered take hold of us. (Farrell: 134). Language itself on Heideggerian view is given or rather cannot but utter, the last word. [Alasdair Maclyntre, 2002: 170] For Davidson, Language is not something given and then applied to the cases. He says,

"there is no such thing as a language, not if a language is anything like what many philosophers and linguists have supposed. There is therefore no such thing to be learned, mastered, or born with. We must give up the idea of a clearly defined started structure which language-users acquire and then apply to cases" [1986a: 446]

Farrell argues, "Rorty's use of Heidegger is very much like his use of Davidson. He ignores the way that thinking and speaking are for Heidegger

under the sway of Being; the lesson he learns is rather that once correspondence is dismissed as the basis for connecting thought or language to the world, then we are left with the discourses themselves, with linguistic sequence that generate other ones without the world being there to constrain the process" [ibid:134]

Farrell therefore noted in Rorty that the disappearance of the world is the most reliable sign in which one could work within, rather than genuinely transforming the patterns of modern picture of subjectivity. Here, languages or discourses come to occupy the position of the modern thinker. They make their own object and transform the world into a reflection of their pattern. In this sense, on keeping aside the essential aspect of being, there is common aspect of challenging the modern picture of subjectivity in both Heidegger and Davidson. Rorty seems to be away from this challenge that made him more orthodox. Farrell says,

"Rorty is quintessentially and "religiously" modern in holding that if we open ourselves to any constraint at all from the world, we are submitting ourselves to an unacceptable authority that limits the free, self-relating play of subjectivity"[ibid: 134].

Looking in this sense, Serigo Moravio's clues for 'the linguistic turn' is not an 'empirical hope' as Farrell maintained. Davidson in this context seems to compromise the debate of realism and anti-realism. His conception of mind, language and world, might be more clear if we consider his semantic contribution in relation to truth, meaning and interpretation.

Notes

1. The doctrine of “anomalous monism” and the arguments of AM were introduced initially in Davidson (1970)
2. It is use of the term event that shows the non substantial nature of mind (thought) and talk (language) which essentially questions modern notion of subjectivity and objectivity.
3. Jerry Fodor coined the word *Mentalese* to express language of thought.
4. This means that one content of an infinite variety of thought can be captured by a finite set of axioms, which give semantic content to finite basic vocabulary in terms of casual relations and to any complex expression in terms of combinational rules.
5. Davidson never made distinction between schema and content. There no such thing as ‘given’ or experience in or before the mind which constrains the contents of the beliefs.
6. Thinking contains the mark of understanding, but it is only through utterance we could express our thoughts. Hence we will have an assess only to a mark of understanding.
7. Recall Louse Antony’s PNG discussed in previous section.
8. Quine believes events are to be individuated by their space-time locations. Here, it seems that he identified event with material objects.
9. See above discussion regarding this, and also see his articles, ‘Action, Reasons and Causes’, ‘How is weakness of the Will Possible?’, ‘Mental Events’, ‘The Material Mind’, and ‘Phychology as Philosophy’ in EAE.
10. This is because of the contingency of language and contingency of self hood.
11. Farrell compared Rorty’s view with the self-relational activity of Aquinas’God. He argues that Rorty is a religious in the sense that there is a religious spirit in his conception of subjectivity.

DAVIDSON'S APPROACH TO MEANING AND TRUTH

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CHAPTER III

DAVIDSON'S APPROACH TO MEANING AND TRUTH

Davidson's philosophical perspective on language emerged with his central semantic concern. His philosophy might be often called as truth-conditional semantics. His semantic account of truth provides a clear picture of how the language, thought and the world outside are related. Truth, according to Davidson, is undoubtedly related to meaning and belief. Then the core issue, here to, discuss is; how truth, meaning and belief related? Traditionally, philosophers followed different approaches to the theories of meaning. In general, there were two main contrasted approaches to the theories of meaning- formal semantics approach and communication intention approach.

3.1. Two Approaches to the theory of meaning

Semantics surrounds a cluster of problems. The crucial semantic issues are: what is it for sentence to mean anything in general, and how do they mean what they do in particular? Answers to semantic questions can be given by propounding theories of meaning.

There are two general approaches to the theory of meaning. One is the application of formal semantics to the natural languages. The main exponents of this technique were Gottlob Frege, Alfred Tarski and Rudolph Carnap. Quine and Davidson worked as a part of this tradition, though there are much wider ramifications. And the second approach is the 'Theory of Communication-Intentions.' The major advocates of this theory are later Wittgenstein, J.L. Austin and H.P. Grice. Though these two approaches are to

be practiced separately, they are not necessarily conflicting and exclusive to each other [Simon Evnine, 1991:72-3; see chapter 1 of this thesis also].

1. Formal Semantics

Formal semantics is the study of meaning for formal languages. A formal language consists of a set of logical symbols or notations that can be assigned to various categories, together with rules defined over these categories for combining expressions. The application of formal semantics to a natural language such as English, presupposes precision and clarity. Such application therefore will consist largely of attempts to describe various types of sentences according to logical categories. Formal semantics offers a good way of accounting for the application of compositional principle to natural languages. It gives an account of how the sentences of natural languages are composed out of words in systematic ways and how their meanings depend on meanings of their parts.

(2) The communication – intention theory

The communication – intention approach, on the other side, believes that mere sounds and marks cannot mean anything in themselves. Accordingly, meaning of a linguistic expression must come through its ordinary use of language. It involves the intentions of the people who use them. It, therefore, focuses on the nature of the performances or 'speech acts' that constitutes the use of the sentence. It stresses how language is embedded in social context and how the meanings of the sentences depend on the intentions with which they are used. According to Simon Evnine, the typical characteristics of communication-intention approach are best explained by Grice. Grice characterizes what it is for a person 'A' to mean something by a sentence 'X' as follows: " 'A' must intend to induce by 'X' a belief in an audience, and he must also intend his utterance to be recognized as so

intended. But these intentions are not independent; the recognition is intended by 'A' to play its part in inducing the belief, and if it does not do so something will have gone wrong with the fulfillment of 'A's intentions"[1957:45].

The contrast between the two approaches to the problem of meaning is mainly resulted from the questions of priority between philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. Accordingly, one may conceive the word 'means,' either as 'what sentence does' or as 'what a person does'. However, for Davidson, neither of these approaches consider both aspects together. While formal semantics is supposed to put the philosophy of language at first giving priority to sentence meaning, communication intention theory takes sentence-meaning as dependent on speakers meaning, thus making the philosophy of mind and theory of speakers intentions fundamental for the philosophy of language.

Davidson denies the philosophical priority to language or thought. He argues that there can be no thought without language [1975] nor language without thought, and that there is no way of finding out in detail what a person believes without interpreting the person's speech [1974]. Davidson rejects the elucidation of sentence meaning in terms of the mental states of the speaker, but he clearly recognizes the importance of constraining a theory of meaning by facts about propositional attitude psychology. It is largely detectable in his adherence to the third person's perspective in studying mind¹. There is, therefore, no danger that his theory of meaning will become detached from a theory of mental states of speakers. This will become clearer in his theory of radical interpretation.

The third-person perspective, applied to propositional attitudes, has by now become common in philosophy. Philosophy followed psychology here, and philosophical behaviourism received its most unequivocal expression in

Gilbert Ryle's famous book *The Concept of Mind* (1949). Ryle says, "when we describe people an exercising qualities of mind, we are not referring to occult episodes of which their overt acts and utterances are effects; we are referring to those overt acts and utterances themselves"². This is the central tenet of behaviourism.

Wittgenstein was also influential in the third-person's perspective. According to him, language is an array of vocal utterances. Each and every utterance implied certain rules or conventions. When we speak some language, people *act* upon it and *understand* it. This is mainly due to the autonomy of language. Language is essentially public. Between speaker and listener, there is "sameness" of certain attitudes. Unless there is "sameness" of what people intended, the communication between them might be impossible. According to him, the concept of 'language' is not something crystal clear. It does not represent reality as such. Critics, who highlight this view, KW might argue that there is *the rule following skepticism* in Wittgenstein's theory of meaning.³ But for Wittgenstein, meaning lies in the use of language. Language, in this sense, is a game. It is a form of life. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein's main concern is to see language in terms of its use, its relation to intellectual, social or practical context. In his another work, he says,

If, eg., someone says: 'I believe that I hear a word that I understand I always feel something that I don't feel when I don't understand the word' – that is a statement about his peculiar experiences. Some one else perhaps feels something quite different; and if both of them make correct use of the word 'understand' the essence of understanding lies in this use, and not in what they may say about what they experience (Wittgenstein 1983, 212).

Wittgenstein's theory of meaning is a communication intention theory since he deals with the problem of what speakers mean of rather than what words mean.

Communication-intention theory, as advocated by Grice [1957], does require an initial attempt to characterize the mental states of the speaker in order to say what the sentence means. It presupposes that the notion of intentionality is prior to the notion of linguistic meaning. It is precisely this that leads Davidson to reject the communication-intention approach. For Davidson, the questions of how mental states get their contents and how sentences get their meanings are interdependent. He never, therefore, hope to use thought to explain linguistic meaning.

Davidson seems to welcome Austin's claim [1961] that not all speech consists in the communication of ideas. Austin ascribes meaning to the 'utterance's or 'speech act'. But still, his thinking is dominated by the notion of intentionality. He believes that in speech act, the speaker is 'present with' his utterance; he understands his own intentions by hearing himself and that the auditor is hearing him also understands that meanings, grasps that intention. This analysis, according to Simon Evnine, is from 'the first persons perspective'. It presumes that the speaker has a determinate intention, is fully conscious of it, and can use language in such a way that, in and through hearing him, his auditor is bound to be aware of his intention. Thus, he describes speech acts as communications, if not of ideas then of intentions. Davidson accepts first person's authority in this sense. According to him knowing one's own self, is more explicit than knowing others.

John Searle [1983] claimed to redefine Austin's theory of 'speech acts' by explaining doing philosophy of language'. Mental or brain state, according to him, is the 'theoretical machinery'. However, his starting point is neither the words, or the sentences, but rather the producing of such words or

sentences 'in the performance of a speech act'. He argues that the 'theory of speech acts' and 'theories of language' must be thought as complimentary. According to him, a complete theory of language must take into account both of what a speaker means *to* in speaking and what *is meant* by the sentences he uses. The theory of meaning would be a part of the philosophy of mind, since speech acts would be linked with intentionality.

Daniel Dennett has also developed a similar approach to propositional content. He is concerned with our attempts to explain and, especially, predict the behaviour of things. He thinks that, in attribute beliefs and desires to people, we are assuming that they are rational. While Davidson shares the same assumption, he also denies the idea that mental states are calculation-bounded entities or logical constructs. According to Davidson, Ryle, Wittgenstein, Grice, Austin, Searle, Dennett and the others alike explain meaning in terms of the mental states of the speaker. Such elucidation always shows philosophical priority to intention or thought over language.

Formal semantics, as against this approach, may some time seek to account for the meaning of words or sentences of a language prior to locating it within the context, social and philosophical, of its use. For instance, Dummett regards the philosophy of language as pre-eminent in semantic investigation. According to him; a good theory of meaning will be a theory of what it is to understand of what one knows when one knows a language. He denies, however, that such investigation results to the knowledge of something psychological. As Passmore noted, if a robot could talk a language on Dummett's view, it would demonstrate an implicit knowledge of linguistic principles without possessing our psychological states [1985].

Dummett interprets Fregean philosophy of language as independent on philosophy of mind. Frege, he thinks, shows us the path to follow, by envisaging philosophy as a theory of meaning. Dummett writes.

We may characterize analytic philosophy as that which follows Frege, in accepting that the philosophy of language is the foundation of the rest of the subject [1978:441].

There are many thinkers, especially Saul Kripke, Tyler Burge and others who believe that meanings of the words uttered are independent of the speaker's intentions. For them, the meaning of the utterance depends on how the majority of the community speaks and not what the speaker intended. Davidson thinks that such a doctrine of formal semantics reveals nothing serious philosophical interest about semantic concepts.

Davidson's interpretation of Frege is different from that of Dummett. Though Frege's logicism was against psychologism, Davidson argues, he proposed a content-oriented logic. This is already implicit in Fregean contextual principle:

Never to ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a sentence [1953:X].

This principle emphasizes that the sentence is the basic unit of meaning. Accordingly, when we analyse sentence, we get meaning of words (content) through function. But by decomposing sentences we get concepts and objects *via* the content and the assertion of the possible judgements. Davidson, therefore, subscribes to the Fregean principle that the semantic properties of a complex expression are always a function of semantic properties of its component expressions. Its meaning may also depend on context. This is the principle of compositionality.

Davidson's principle of compositionality shows how the meanings of sentences depend on the meaning of the words of which they are composed. Even if sentences are primary, we must still discern semantic structure in them in such a way as to be able to account for the dependence of the

meaning of sentences on the meanings of their parts for the following reason. A natural language contains an infinite number of sentences. Given that, at any point, the number of sentences we have actually used or understood is finite, there will always be an infinite number of sentences which are new to us, but which we are capable of using and understanding immediately. But although we can understand and use new sentences in a language we could not do this if the new sentences were not composed in familiar ways from familiar words. This requires, therefore, that we see sentences as composed out of words, the meanings of which determine the meanings of the sentences they make up.

A theory, in the formal sense, is a collection of axioms and rules of inference from which further theorems can be generated. There is only finite number of axioms. But our ability to use and understand an infinite number of sentences on the basis of limited semantic experience suggests a different form for the theory. It suggests that the theory has a finite number of axioms which give the semantic properties of the words of language and the semantic effects of their permissible modes of combination, which together entail an infinite number of further theorems which give the semantic properties of all the sentences of language.

Davidson holds that,

When we regard the meaning of each sentence as a function of a finite number of features of the sentence, we have an insight not only into what there is to be learned; we also understand how an infinite aptitude can be encompassed by finite accomplishments. For suppose that a language lacks this feature; then no matter how many sentences would be speaker learns to produce and understand, there will remain others whose meanings are not given by rules already



mastered. It is natural to say such a language is unlearnable (A) learnable language has a finite number of semantically primitives.

Thus, the question whether semantics for a natural language must be compositional has become interconnected with the questions about how a language can be learned. It is possible, as Davidson shows, to give a constructive account of the meaning of the sentences in any given natural language. For a learnable language has a finite number of semantically primitives. Here, Davidson's theory, resembles Chomskyan theory of language. As Chomsky noted, the theory of language is not of language as a collective phenomenon, but the creativity of each and every language user; his capacity to utter and to understand sentences he has never encountered before [1969].

Given a theory of meaning for a language is giving a theory such that knowledge of it would enable us to understand, and use, that language. But in answering the question of what we could know that would enable us to interpret the speakers of some language. Davidson is careful to stress that he is not answering the question of what we actually *do* know that enables us to do this. This is mainly because, as he says.

There may easily be something we could know and don't knowledge of which would suffice for interpretation, while on the other hand, it is not altogether obvious that there is anything we actually know which plays an essential role in interpretation [1973c:125].

Similarly, when Davidson talks of how we could come to learn a theory which would enable us to understand a language, he argues that it is not the part of his project to describe the actual process of language acquisition.

Here, Davidson's view differs sharply from that of Chomsky. While Davidson shares empiricism, Chomsky is an ardent rationalist. Chomsky rejects the 'empiricist' account of language learning. He proposes an older rationalistic theory of the human mind, according to which experience stimulates the mind to make use of a knowledge which already forms part of its own structure, is 'innate'. He argues that the human beings are specifically designed to learn language. Unless we possess such innate design, he says we cannot possibly understand how a child can learn language. In other words, Chomskyan competence description of language shows that every one of us has an innate capacity to grasp the grammar of the sentence. So, every native speaker knows what the alien speaker talk about.

Chomsky, therefore, writes in his recent work, *New Horizons in the study of Language and Mind*,

... what language he has to learn, but he must know that its grammar must be of a determinate form that excludes many imaginable languages [2000].

According to him, grammar is not simply a descriptive phenomena but an explanatory theory. In order to study grammar, we have to study its 'competence' rather than its 'performance'. He argues that a child already had *an implicit knowledge* of language. His explanatory theory actually meant to compete or to reflect upon actual implicit knowledge on the part of speakers of a language. He criticizes empiricist style psychology since it is incapable of explaining how a child learns his first language. He claims that the linguistic theory is a central clue to the understanding of human mind. Chomsky's Revised Extended Standard Theory (REST) assumes that linguistic acquisition is the matter of *parameter-fixing*. The idea is this: the grammars of natural language can vary only in finitely many ways with respect to finitely many parameters. There are only finite number of

parameter and each parameter can take only a finite number of values. To specify values for each of these parameters is to specify a grammar for a natural language. Learners are presumed to know innately this fact about natural languages; in particular they are presumed to come to the learning task with something like an innate grammar- schema whose parameter values will be fixed in the course of the learning process [1981]. Learning process, according to him is a causal process. Parameter fixing is assumed to be a matter of triggering rather than inductive inference.

However, Davidson's theoretical reconstruction of language mastery is not intended to reflect upon the *innate or a priori* knowledge. Unlike Chomsky, Davidson's approach to language is from the *third person's perspective*, and is not from the *first person's perspective*. This is more evident when Davidson says.

There is a mechanism in the interpreter that corresponds to the theory (of meaning). If this means only that there is some mechanisms or other that performs that task, it is hard to see how the claim can fail to be true [1974b:141].

This shows Davidson never denies the possibility of *a priori* knowledge. All knowledge (whether *a priori* or *a posteriori*) are knowledge of physical world.

As Ramberg noted, Davidson's view of language is empirical, even then he could explain the nature of linguistic competence without any prior sanction of the concept of a language. Davidson says,

There is no such thing as a language, not if a language is anything like what many philosophers and linguists have supposed. There is, therefore, no such thing to be learned, mastered, or born with. We must give up the idea of a clearly

defined shared structure, which language-users acquire and then apply to cases [1986a:446].

While stating that there is no such thing as a language, Davidson is not actually intended to question the very existence of language. His aim is not to deplete the study of language *as such*. Rather what he means is to re-examine some commonly held ideas about how linguistic communication works. According to him, language is neither a communicative tool, nor a conceptual tool. But it is the matter of *theoretical deductive construction*. The genuine nature of linguistic technique might be more evident in his theory of radical interpretation. It would show that Davidson's linguistic competence is advance to Chomskyan theory of language.

According to Ramberg, Davidson provides an empirical, holistic and dynamic picture of language. He argues that Davidson's intention behind the attack of the concept of language is neither to reject the very use of language, nor to negate the world of experience. But it is an '*attempt to exorcise the ghost of reification from our thinking about communication*' [Ramberg, 1986:2, emphasis mine]. Hence, while challenging the concept of a language, of meaning and reference, his attempt is not to replace these concepts all at once. By taking for granted that there are languages, Davidson is able to articulate a theory of meaning. The theory of meaning in turn enables him to subject the very natural supposition of language itself to critical scrutiny. The result is not a theory that undercuts itself, but a comprehensive, coherent account of the phenomenon of linguistic communication.

Ramberg writes that,

"In papers published in the 1960s and 1970s. Davidson carefully develops a philosophy of language purified of the reification of meaning and reference. More recently, he has

focused on the reification involved in the notion of a language itself. It turns out that the concept of a language, like the notion of meanings of the words and the ideas of a relation of reference can do no work in an account of linguistic competence. All three are conceptual parasites, gaining any content they might have only as the theoretical constructs of a model of linguistic communication that derives its explanatory power from another source: the concept of truth" [1986:2-3].

No doubt, according to Davidson, there is an obvious relation between the notion of meaning and the concept of truth.

3.2. Truth and Meaning as Related Notions

Traditionally, it has been accepted by many different philosophers that truth will have something to do with meaning. They believed that sentences have meaning and knowledge of these meaning warrants certain beliefs upon hearing these sentences uttered in various sorts of circumstances. They are commonly dissatisfied with behaviouristic account of linguistic understanding. This encourages them to elucidate justification by specifying the meaning for words. Here, the speaker uses it to refer anything on the basis of the knowledge of the meaning of a word. And so, there is a strong connection between meaning and reference. *To know the meaning or sense of a word is to know how to pick out its referent* [Ramberg; emphasis mine]. And once the reference is secure, we are on the way to truth. The reference is therefore, central to an account of truth and meaning. This assumption is fundamental to the classical theories of meaning. The modern version of the above theory is that the idea of the singular terms expresses descriptive concepts and refers to those items express that satisfy the concepts. Frege, Church, C.I. Lewis, Carnap, Searle . . . share this view.

Davidson opposes the above assumption with his hostile approach to language. He turns upside down this traditional approach to truth and meaning. According to him, to know the meaning of a sentence one must know its truth-conditions, *to know how the words must be if the sentence is to be true* [Ramberg; emphasis mine]. Hence the concept of truth is central to an account of meaning or reference. He deprives that the idea of reference have any useful semantic purpose. In other words the concept of reference is mere 'semantic abstract'. The meaning, according to him, is truth conditional.

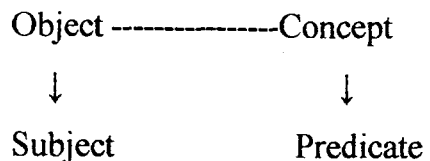
It was Gottlob Frege, who first introduces the idea of truth-conditional semantics. However, for Frege, it was simply an un-emphasised consequence of his general approach to the questions of meaning. In the transition from logical positivism to modern analytical philosophy, the idea came near to being misled entirely. Recently, Davidson re-discovered the idea into a new prominence. He pressed its claim as a principle in the philosophy of mind and meaning, and as the only proper basis on which to conduct serious semantic investigation.

Before entering into Davidson's work, we shall introduce some basic ideas Gottlob Frege. To Frege, the sentence is the basic unit of language. According to him meaning of the words are determined by the context of a sentence. He argues that in order to understand a sentence, one must grasp the truth-condition of the sentence. Then, how the thought that expresses the sentences will depend on the condition under which the sentence is true? He describes it thus:

It is determined through our stipulations for the linguistic expressions and devices comprising the language of the *Begriffsschrift* under what conditions (any sentence of *Begriffsschrift*) stands for the truth the sense of this name (of a truth value, i.e. the sense of this sentence), that is the

thought, the sense or thought that these conditions are fulfilled. The names (expressions), whether simple or composite of which the (sentence or) name of truth-value is constituted, contribute to the expression of a thought; and this contribution (of each constituent) is its sense. If a name (expression) is the part of the name of a truth value (i.e., is part of a sentence), then the sense of the former, the name (expression) is part of the thought expressed by the latter (sentence).⁴

The propositions (what sentential utterances expresses) are related to form sentences. When we analyse propositions we get predicate logic. Every propositions have truth value. Every sentence has truth value. By splitting propositions, we may get concepts and objects. By analyzing sentence we may get subject and predicate. According to Frege, the subject and predicate are taken as object and concept respectively.



Every sentence has an asserted truth value. And so every proposition carries the assertion sign '⊢'. If a proposition has meaning, then it is true.

Proposition → Object of Judgement
Act of Judgement

By the functional analysis of propositions, we get *concepts*.

Ex: '_____ is red' is a concept. The concept, when expressed symbolically as R_x it may call as '*function*'. If we put different values (such as a, b, c) to x we get variables. It says that an object has property or a

class has a property. According to Frege, an object is *nothing* (not an entity) but a determinate truth-value.

Frege distinguishes between sense and reference. Thought when expressed in language is called *sense*. And *reference* is the truth-value⁵. He argues that every sentence or expression have sense (meaning) and reference (truth value). He distinguishes them as two different types of semantic properties of expressions – their intensions and their extensions respectively. The extension (reference) of an expression is the truth value of the things in the world to which it applies. The intension (meaning) of an expression is the semantic property of mind (thought) that it expresses.

According to Frege, we can easily determine the extension of the object in the world as its truth-value. For instance, in the sentence 'John of Arc was born in Orleans', the extension of 'John of Arc' is John of Arc, the extension of 'Orleans' is Orleans, the extension of 'was born in' is the set of ordered pairs of people and places. The extensions of complex expressions, according to him, are functions of the extension of their parts. That is, given the extension of the parts of a complex expression; one can uniquely determine the extension of the complex expression. The extension of a sentence, therefore, is something that remains unchanged if we substitute for any of its constituent co-extensive terms. 'The maid of Orleans' is coextensive with 'John of Arc' and we can substitute it to obtain". 'The maid of Orleans was born in Orleans.' What remains constant through such substitution is the truth of the sentence. As long as we restrict substitution to co-extensive terms, we cannot change the sentence from true to false. We can, therefore, identify the extensions of sentences as their truth-values, either the true or the false.

However, expressions like 'John of Arc was born in Orleans' and "The maid of Orleans was born in Orleans 'expresses different senses (meanings).

If some one failed to know that 'John of Arc' and 'The maid of the Orleans' refers to the same person, he could take one sentence to be true and the other to be false. Thus, Frege argues, a sentence has not only extensions but also intentions (meanings), the intention of a sentence could be conceived of as the thought it expresses its cognitive value. Since the intention of an expression is the function of the intentions of its constituents, we must assign different intentions to the expressions. 'John of Arc' and 'The maid of Orleans', though they have the same extension. So, 'meaning' determines in intentional context is indeterminate is already implicit in Frege's semantic approach. This leads Frege to opt extensional approach rather than the intentional approach (Dummett's view that Frege was against Psychologism is suspectable).

Thus it is orthodox to think that Frege does not give any status to the philosophy of mind. For him, 'thought' and 'talk' have similar status. And it is the truth condition of the sentence that determines the meaning of the sentence. However, his method is purely extensional. After Tarski, Carnap W.V.O. Quine. Davidson follows his footsteps and then deviated in different directions.

Davidson's theory is also a kind of truth-conditional semantic. He argues that the target theorems of a semantic theory should exhibit the format.

$$(T) S \text{ is } T \text{ iff } p$$

[Where stands for the name in the meta-language of a sentence of the object language which is to be replaced by the dummy predicate T (i.e. is true) and p is either the sentence named by S or its translation which is replaced by sentential connective (bi-conditional) *iff*

Since the theorems specifies condition under which a sentence is true, it is called truth-conditional semantic. Following Frege, Davidson treated semantics extensionally.

Davidson's argument for the advocacy of extensionality comes into two steps:

The *first* step is intended to rule out the idea that to each word, each phrase and each sentence, there should be some assigned entity as its meaning. Traditional thinkers seek definition for meaning. They believe that there must be a definite answer 'x' of the ϕ to the meaning of the word or the phrase or sentence. What, therefore, they demand is the theorem of the form:

(M) S means *m*

[where '*m*' is replaced by the singular term that refers to the meaning of S]

Frege, for instance argues that we could assign a complex singular term (which Hoffman [1995] calls 'strange singular term' SST). 'Fx' to refer to the meaning of the sentence 'Theateus Flies' where 'F' stands for a functional 'unsaturated' predicate expression and 'x' stands for a singular subject term fitting into the argument place for the saturation of the functional expression (in mathematics, we say 'x' has value), Then, given the meaning of 'Theateus flies' as value. Only if any we replace 'x' by any variables say a,b, c, etc.

According to Davidson Frege's semantics follows the classical defect of the theory of reference. On Frege's theory, the singular terms expressed descriptive concepts and refers to those items that satisfied the concept. Accordingly, by fixing the reference of a given expression presupposes an account of its sense or meaning that is prior to the way in which the expression is actually used. Without an account specifying the sense of expression in advance, there is no way to tell whether it successfully refers. The notion of analyticity, here leads to vicious circle. No one ever could escape from this fatal circle.

Ludwig Wittgenstein attacks, this classical approach to references. To the classics, the name refers to something true of the objects. But there is no one truth of an object. In other words, there are many truth predicates. And so, truth can never be specified. Putnam and Kripke also attack the theory of reference the same line. According to them, if the reference succeeds, the list of truth predicates cannot be satisfied and if the list is satisfied, noun fails to refer. It seems that no general conclusions follow from such intuitive counter examples. Namings and meanings are simulate and circular in nature. They could not explain how words, come to refer in the ways the actualiy do refer for how they come to have the meanings they do have.

Following Frege, Alston [1963] argues that we can identify the meaning of a particular word by way of using an identity statement of the form:

The meaning of w is the meaning of v .⁶

[Where w and v stands for the name of particular words].

According to Alston, we cannot say anything about a meaning except that it is meaning of such and such a word. Since this in turn implies that we cannot say what sort of objects meaning are Alston concludes that the word meaning does not refer to any entity at all.

Simply for defending sake, Davidson argues as follows:

Meaning as entities or the related concept of synonymy, allows us to formulate the following rule, relating sentences and their parts: sentences as synonymous whose corresponding parts as synonymous ('corresponding' here needs spelling out of course). And meanings as entities may in theories such as Frege's do duty on occasion as references,

thus, losing their status as entities distinct from reference.

[ITI :20]

Davidson rejects the above proposal mainly because it objectifies or reifies reference and meanings. Meanings become items like objects or events that are referred to by words or sentences.

The second step in Davidson's argument is to reject the meaning specifying (intentional) theorems of semantics. According to Davidson, what the theory, such as Frege's Church's. Alston's etc., demand is a consequence of all the form:

(M) S means that p

[where S stands for object-language name in meta language and p is the sentence of the meta language which gives meaning as non-identity].

In this approach, the connection between meaning and truth is as follows [See Lepore : 1986 : 6]. Suppose we knew that

(1) The words 'it's midnight' *means that* it is midnight.

Assuming the speaker to be sincere and reliable, we can infer and add to (1), knowledge that

(2) 'It's midnight' is true.

Our challenge then is how meaning is related to truth. An intuitive principle which provides the needed connection is thus.

(3) If a sentence S is true, and if S means that p , then p .

That is, knowledge that (1) – (3) justifies the belief that its midnight. It is not important whether the *belief* is acquired upon hearing the asserted utterance by a reliable speaker. What is acquired will vary according to the information

the listener already possesses and also according to how the outside world impinges on him. In the present case, knowledge of meaning suffices to account for the justificatory element. In fact, here, the speaker knows meaning and it is this knowledge that employ in understanding.

According to Davidson, such theorems wanted to know what the meaning of the sentence is?' He argues that it is no progress to be told that *it* is the meaning of that sentence. Here, Davidson noticed Quine's argument for rejecting it. According to Quine, the sentential operator 'mean that' appears not to allow *salva* veritate (the substitution of co-extensive turns without affecting truth value) in the sentence on which it operates. For instance, from,

- i. 'Nine is greater than five' means that nine is greater than five.
- ii. 'Nine' and 'the number of planets' have the same extension, we cannot infer,
- iii. 'Nine is greater than five' means that 'the number of planets is greater than five'.

It is, of course, true that the number of planets is greater than five, but what is not true is that sentence gives the meaning of the sentence 'nine is greater than five', since 'nine' and 'the number of planets' do not have the same sense. The operator 'means that' is sensitive not only to the extensions of the terms that follows it, but also to their intentions. It creates what Quine called an intentional context (meaning context). Davidson also realized the logical difficulties of this situation. Abstract entities such as 'meaning', according to Quine, are, ill-defined. His objections to these kinds of entities are that they are not clearly individuated. He is skeptical about meaning. He says that it notoriously difficult to say then one meaning is the same as, or different from is another.

Another objection, according to Quine, is that, since meaning is obscure, one cannot understand what alien speaker actually meant by her words. He is therefore sceptic about meaning. Bensen Mates and many other philosophers argued that synonyms are not interchangeable in intentional context [1952 : 111-38]. Mates's problem is mainly concerned with the intentional term 'mean that'. Truth and meaning are justified by belief. His famous criticism of belief sentences is that they are opaque.⁷

Katz [1975] also argues that Fregean criteria for inference by substitution leads to opaque context. The central point in Katz's paper is that inference from intentionalism to substitutivity is invalid. This is mainly because of 'hyper opaque' nature of the verb 'believes that' or 'means that'. The sense of the synonymous clauses (Let it be P and P') are altered by the verb 'believe that' And so, the two sentences need not have same intentional objects.

From Davidson's perspective, the problems with the classical theorist are as follows. The first one is that they attempt to find a non-circular way of characterizing reference. The second and the important problem with the classical theorists is that they believe that the meaning of the sentence would be worked out on the basis of the reference of the parts. They actually intended not only to determine *what* the expressions in their domains refer to, but also to explain how it is to refer in non-semantic terms.

Davidson's point in 'Reality without a Reference' is that reference is *nothing* but semantic abstraction. And so, the first part of the problem is illusory. Reference cannot be source of the explanatory import of a theory of truth, no matter how we attempt to construe it. Because the only way to test any such construal is to trace its effects on the truth value of sentences, ie. to test it against truth.

In 'Truth and Meaning', Davidson says, individual words have no meaning at all . . . in any sense that transcends the fact that they have a systematic effect on the meanings of the sentences in which they occur'. We input meaning to 'each item in the structure of the sentence only as an abstraction from the totality of sentences in which it features' [ITI p-22]. But then, the only way to add new content to the notion is to provide a theory that gives the structure of the whole language by abstracting from its potential infinity of sentences. It provides the systematic effects on the truth-value of those sentences of the various ways of combining atomic parts.

In this regard, Davidson's holistic approach to meaning operates it as follows:

If sentences depends for their meaning on their structure, and we understand the meaning of each item in the structure only as an abstraction from the totality of sentences in which it features, then we can give the meaning of any sentence (or word) only by giving the meaning of every sentence (and word) in the language. Frege said that only in the context of a sentence does a word have meaning; in the same vein, he might have added that only in the context of the language does a sentence and (therefore, a word) have meaning [ITI : 22].

Then how we will specify, the meaning of each term to capture the meaning of the sentence? It is from here Davidson could be able to connect his project on semantics with the work done on truth by Polish Logician Alferd Tarski. Tarski showed that for certain formalized languages, we could construct a finite set of axioms and rules that entails for each sentence or word of the infinitely many sentences or words of such a language. This rule is something of the form:

(T) x is true iff p

[where p is the arbitrary expression of the meta language x is the object language). Those finitely stable rules which takes together are sometimes called a truth theory of the language, might entail:

' $P(x) (Rx \rightarrow Bx)$ ' is T iff every raven is black'.

This would do this by having separately assigned interpretations to 'R', 'B', ' \rightarrow ' and ' x '. Davidson argues that truth conditions may be determined compositionally in analogous ways every sentence in natural language, however complex they are. Tarskian style theory of truth, therefore, provides, formal structure for Davidson's theory of meaning.

Hence, Davidson's objection to the above classical theorem is not that semantics cannot find a place for meanings but we can do just as well without them. Yet none the less, Davidson prefers to raise his objections as follows:

My objection to meanings in the theory of meaning is not that they are abstract or that their identity conditions are obscure, but that they have no demonstrated use [ITI].

Davidson's proposal is that the semantic conception of truth will provide us with a concept that can be made to serve the function of reference intended to fulfil. While we can never explain the truth-conditions of our sentences in terms of the reference of their constituents, we can use the concept of truth to explain what our words (constituent) mean. Hence, for Davidson, the concept of *truth* is primary and elementary. Whereas the concepts such as 'reference', 'meaning' etc. are the semantic concepts to be replaced as the touchstone of semantics.

Then the third step is Davison's solution to be intentional context, as he says logically 'simple and radical'. Since problem with (M) arouse from the

'mean that', he suggests to cut the Gordian knot and replace it with an extensional or truth-functional sentential connectives. For this purpose, he selects the material biconditional 'if and only if.' The special advantage of the bi-conditional is that it is true only if both the connected sentences (say p & q) are true or both of them are false; and it will be false if the connected sentences differ in truth value. By employing sentential connectives, we are in need of two sentences on the either side of the bi-conditional. If 's' on the left side of the bi-conditional is merely 'name' of the object language, we have to provide a matching sentence p on the right side of the bi-conditional. Then the problem that remains is to say what property do we demand that a sentence such as 'snow is white' should have if and only if snow is white? Davidson's obvious answer is truth. Thus given a name 's' we could provide a matching sentence p by attaching a predicate 'is true' to it, which may yield the theorem of the form:

(T)S is T iff p .

Accordingly, meaning seems to do little work. Knowing conditions under which our utterances is true licenses the move from heard utterances to the belief that it is midnight. So we could replace (1) and (3) with (4).

(4) The word 'is is midnight' are true in English (when uttered to me), iff it is midnight at the time of utterance.

Without appeal to earnings knowledge that (4) and (2) suffices to warrant the belief that it is midnight. Although we can account for understanding by appealing both to truth and meaning, we apparently do equally well with truth and alone. Davidson concurs and settles for the answer that knowledge of the truth conditions of the sentences for a language [as in (4) suffices for linguistic understandings.

Here we could find Davison's influence on Austin's theory of truth. Austin argued that a sentence is linked by two different sets of conventions. One is the descriptive convention linked it to a state of affairs – something which may or may not be obtained. And the other is the demonstrative convention linking it to a particular situation. Thus, to use Austin's example, an utterance of a sentence, 'the cat is on the mat' is linked by the descriptive convention of the state of affairs of the cat being on the mat and by the demonstrative conventions to some particular situation in some region of the world. However, Austin is rather unclear about just what particular situation is involved in the meaning of the sentence.

Traditional views hold that an adequate characterization of knowledge is sufficient for understanding includes meanings. For Davidson, meaning and therefore knowledge of the meanings of expressions is not obviously needed to justify this belief. "What I call a theory of meanings has after all turned out to make no use of meanings . . . (but it) supplies all we have asked so far for a theory of meaning." [ITI : 24]. According to Davidson, the meanings and therefore knowledge of meanings of expressions are not obviously needed to justify these beliefs.

Jerry Katz counter argued that meaning is not always superfluous. Since sometimes knowledge of truth conditions as Davidson constructs them is insufficient to characterise the linguistic understanding. He criticizes Davidson for that he has a dogmatic allegiance to extensionalism. He believes that Davidson was so convinced by Mates' problem that it becomes the basis for his case for an extensionalist form of linguistic analysis. According to Katz, Davidson uses Mates' problem to justify replacing the intensionalist 'means that' paradigm of linguistic analysis with the extensionalist 's is true if *p*' paradigm. To justify the replacement, Davidson says that he knows no other way to account for even as much as the truth

conditions of belief sentences and others containing opaque contexts than on the basis of what we know of the meanings in them [ITI : 21].

Another criticism into Davidson's theory entails various outward consequences. Katz's argues that sentence (a) would be indistinguishable from (b)

- (a) 'snow is white' is true iff snow is white.
- (b) 'snow is white' is true iff grass is green.

Katz's argues that since both bi-conditionals are true, and since Davidson only requires material equivalent truth condition, he has no ground to distinguish (a) and (b) [1975].

To this criticism, Ernest Lepore's responses seem to defend Davidson's position. He argues that Davidson's proposal provides an account of an adequate interpretation for a language and it is also a measure for when this task has been accomplished. An adequate semantics for a language L, should provide a statement T such that if a person knows that T, he would partially understand L. It is well known that Lepore says, Davidson's solution for T is a Tarski's truth theory for L.

Lepore's [1986] argues that Davidson's adherence to Tarski's truth theory is actually meant to give solution for the inefficiency of intensionalist semantics. As Chomsky and others argue, speakers of a natural language have the potential to understand indefinitely many sentences. This infinity prevents a general description of linguistic competence comprised solely of a list of truth conditions for each sentence she potentially understands:

'Snow is white' is true iff Snow is white
 'Grass is green' is true iff Grass is green
 'Water is clear' is true iff Water is clear

and so on. We could never complete this list. Hence the pressure to describe exhaustively a speaker's knowledge has suggested to some, the following strategy.

Construct a theory which has as consequences infinitely many sentences using the words 'is true if and only if' as a link between a description of sentences and a sentence. We can utilize this theory to provide a finite yet discernible description of knowledge sufficient for understanding [Lepore : 1984 : 277-294]. We can describe a speaker's knowledge as consisting of what is expressed by a specifiable subset of the consequences of the theory. Those consequences provide a statement of the truth conditions for each sentence of a language. Such a theory enables us to characterize an infinite competence by finite means.

However, as Ramberg noted, Davidson's attempt is neither to characterize nor to define the concept of truth. Davidson holds that 'empirically well founded' Tarski's – like truth theories to do this job. He argues that an adequate account must issue in consequences of the theorem such that the sentence used on the right-hand side can be used correctly to interpret the sentence named on the left hand side of the bi conditional. And for this purpose, additional constraints need to be imposed on a truth theory to qualify it as a theory of meaning [See else where in this thesis]. According to Davidson, the above sentence (b) violates the *empirical* condition because it cannot be employed in justification of beliefs and behaviour. This condition is fundamental feature of Davidson's project, as Lepore conceived.

Davidson finds it,

is worth emphasizing that the concept of truth played no ostensible role in stating our original problem. That problem, upon refinement, led to the view that an adequate theory of meaning must characterize a predicate meeting certain

conditions. It was in nature of a discovery that such a predicate would apply exactly to be true sentences [1967c: 23 - 4].

Another response of Davidson to Katz's problem is that since he treats 'theories of truth as empirical, the axioms and theorems (must) be viewed as laws . . . taken not merely as true, but as capable of supporting counterfactual claims.' According to Davidson, the theorems like '*Snow is white*' is true iff *Snow is white* might be taken as law which is capable of supporting counterfactual claims. Whereas, theorems like '*Snow is white*' is true iff *Grass is green*, cannot be taken as law because, here, truth is matter of justification of our beliefs. Davidson warns, therefore, that

Truth conditions are not to be equated with meanings; at best we can say that by giving the truth conditions of a sentence we give its meaning [1970-56, n :3].

It shows that Davidson's account of truth is different from Tarskian conception of truth. As Lepore noted, Davidson's concern is not to adjudicate between the intensionalists and the extensionalists. Rather, his attempt is to connect the view that it is knowledge of truth conditions that justifies our beliefs based on testimony with Tarski-like truth theories for natural languages.

3.3. Tarski and Davidson

At first glance, it might appear that Davidsonian semantic theorem (T) and Tarski's T-schema as similar, since both of them uses the same format

(T) 'x' is true if and only if p

But it is misleading to think so, because the prime goal of Tarskian investigation is entirely different from Davidsonian semantic project. Unlike

Davidson, Tarski's attempt is to provide a satisfactory definition of truth. His semantic concern is to find a way of expressing, what we mean by calling a sentence true. In other words, he sought and found a way to define or to characterize the concept of truth. Hence, given a sentence of a particular language. Tarski hoped to illuminate the concept of truth by using the notion of a translation (meaning) in stating convention (T). Davidson wishes to do just the opposite of Tarski. His proposal is to use the concept of truth to elucidate the meaning of the sentence (therefore of word) in the context of language taken as whole. Davidson's semantic problem is this: 'what is it for a word to mean what they do?' The answer amounts to a 'theory of meaning' which for Davidson 'is not a technical term but a gesture in the direction of a family of problem'. Hence Davidson's aim is not to *define* the concepts like 'meaning' or 'truth', but to find their relations between them in linguistic competencies.

For Davidson 'truth' and 'meaning' are related notions. He argues that the semantic concept of truth is the powerful formal foundation of a competent theory of meaning. He finds the basic model of such theories in the work of Tarski. According to him, a satisfactory definition of truth should satisfy two meta-theoretic conditions. The one is the *materially adequate* conditions and other is *formal correctness*. It is *materially adequate* if the desired definition does not aim to specify the meaning of a familiar word used to denote a novel notion; on the contrary, its aim is "*to catch hold of the actual meaning of an old notion*" [1994]. By characterizing such notion precisely would enable anyone to determine whether the definition actually fulfils its task. The definition, according to him, is formally *correct* if we specify the words or concepts that we wish to use in defining the notion of truth; and we must also give the formal rules to which the definition should confirm. In short, we must describe the formal structure of language in which the definition will be given.

Tarski applies the term 'true' to sentences in a particular language. By 'expressions', 'sentences' etc. what Tarski means is not individual inscriptions but classes of inscriptions of similar form. Thus, expressions or sentences having truth predicate are not to denote individual physical things but classes of such things. Consequently, according to Tarski, the notion of truth, like that of a sentence always must relate to a specific language. Here, the same expression, which is true sentence in one language, can be false or meaningless in another language. However, Tarski's notion of truth for sentences does not exclude the possibility of a subsequent extension of this notion to other kinds of objects.

For Tarski, like any other words in ordinary language, the term 'True' is certainly ambiguous. His intuition, however, adheres to the classical Aristotelian conception of truth that finds their expression in the well-known words of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*:

"To say of what is that is not, or of what is not that it is, if false, while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true" [Lynch, 2001 : 333].

Another formulation of this conception might be find its expression in correspondence theory of truth. It states:

"the truth of a sentence consist in its agreement with or (correspondence to) reality" [Lynch, Ibid]. In other words, *'A sentence is true if it designates an existing state of affairs.'* According to Tarski, none of these formulations can be regarded as satisfactory definition of truth, for they all lacks preciseness and clarity.

Tarski argues, if the definition of truth is to confirm to Aristotelian conception, then the sentence, 'snow is white', is true if snow is white and that it is false if show is not white. Accordingly the definition must imply the following equivalence.

(1) The sentence 'snow is white' is true if and only if, snow is white. The phrase 'snow is white' occurs in quotation marks on the left side of the equivalence is the name of the sentence. On the right side, the sentence itself without quotation marks. Employing the medieval logical terminology, Tarski calls the former as *suppositio materialis* and the later as *suppositio formalis*. Tarski's ramification of classical definition, distinguishes it as object language and meta-language respectively. According to Tarski it is not necessary that the object language should be substantially different from English (or whatever language we are speaking). We can also construct a so-called *homophonic* theory of truth for English-in-English, as stated in the above equivalence(1). Accordingly, sentence in object language is 'snow is white'. It is kept in quotes, in order to show that 'is true' is used as the characterization of truth. The right-hand side of the T-sentence is the sentence of the object language but that sentence now belongs to the Meta language. In other words, by characterization of truth predicate, the object language becomes homophonic part of the meta-language. But in the cases where the object language and meta-language are different, for instance:

(2) The German sentence, "*schnee is weiss*" is true if, and only if *snow is white*.

The object language is translated into the meta-language so that left-hand side has object language sentence right-hand side has the translation of the object language into meta-language. Tarski, therefore generalizes the above sentences by the following equivalence.

(T)x is true if, and only if, *p*

Where *p* replaces the any sentences of the language to which the word 'true' refers and *x* is replaced by a name of this sentence. That is, *p* stands for the *sentence itself* presented in object language, and *x* stands for the *name* of the

sentence of the object language. The latter is a canonical description of a sentence in the object language of the theory whereas the former is a translation into meta-language (If the languages are different) or the sentence itself (if the object language is contained by the meta language); 'is true' is the placeholder for the truth predicate.

Tarski proposed T-schema as a test of any truth definition Davidson calls it has convention-T. Convention-T is a material adequacy condition that any theory of truth must meet. It determines the extension of the truth predicate and not its intention. It ensures that for each sentence of the object language L, there is a T-sentence or T-bi conditional available such that truth is definable for that language. Any predicate that applied to object- language sentences if and only if their translations in the meta-language were true would be the predicate 'is true'. A theory satisfying convention T answers the question of what we *mean* by calling a sentence of a language L true by showing how the corresponding T sentence of meta-language follows as a theorem from a determinate set of axioms.

Davidson's conclusion is stated as follows:

Convention- T and T-sentences provide the sole link between intuitively obvious truth and, truth and formal semantics. Without convention- T we should have no reason to believe that truth is what Tarski has shown us how to characterise [1973a : 66].

Tarski succeeds in defining truth for a delineated object language because the theorem it generates are trivial. They are trivial because Tarski stipulates that we must know what it is for a sentence of the object language "to have the same meaning" as a sentence in the meta-language. Misled by this triviality, Quine argues that Tarski's truth definition is 'disquotational'.⁸

Accordingly, if s is the name of a sentence in the object language and p that the same sentence or its translation in the meta language, then '(T) s is true if and only if p ' can be effectively re-read as s means that p . However we have to face crucial problem in such theorem. Meaning, in some sense, a richer concepts than truth, hence we cannot equate the concept of meaning with that of the concept of truth. To say that the sentence is true, or even to say under which condition it is true, is to say less about it than what it means. Davidson argues that two sentences could be true under the same condition yet none the less not be synonymous. The following example sentences elucidate the above arguments. For instances,

- i snow is white means that grass is green.
- ii snow is white is true if and only if grass is green.

While the sentence (2) is correct, the sentence (1) is wrong hence, it is not proper to assume truth and meaning are one and the same notion.

According to Davidson, Quine is actually misled by the triviality of the biconditional; one feels that sentences about colour of snow might take us little distance towards an understanding of the nature of truth. This is not correct in the sense that T-sentences are not epistemologically informative. Davidson argues that the purpose of Tarskian investigation is neither epistemological nor metaphysical. In other words, it is not an attempt to determine the truth value of sentence. Rather it is a semantic issue related to the property of truth.

Davidson says,

Since there is a T-sentence corresponding to each sentence of the language of which truth is in question, the totality of T-sentences exactly fixes the extension, among the sentences, of any predicate that plays the role of the word 'is true' . . .

(hence) . . . any predicate is a truth predicate that makes all T-sentence true [ITM : 65].

Accordingly, a finite set of axioms and procedural rules (logical axioms) that entails a true T-sentence for every possible truth functional sentence of a language is a theory of truth of that language. But such a theory obeys convention-T. This is Tarski's celebrated criterion of adequacy for theories of truth.

At first sight, convention-T appears to be circular. According to Tarski, when a theory determines the extension of the truth predicate for a given language, that language does not include the T-sentence as expressed by definition. So when we ask whether T-sentences are true, we are asking whether they belong to a set of expressions denoted by a predicate other than one defined by the theory. As long as we retain a firm grip on the notions of meta-language and object language, and the truth predicate as predicate defined for language, there is no danger of circularity.

However, by convention-T, we are told nothing that we do not already know. To tell whether the sentences consists of true T-sentences, we would have the know everything about the truth predicate of language that 'the theory' purports to tell us. But convention-T requires that *p* be a translation of the sentence named by *s*. So if we understand *what* it is for a sentence of language to mean the same thing as sentence of the meta-language, we would be able to assess the T-sentences without an independent understanding of the truth predicate of the object language L. Hence when judging the adequacy of a theory of truth for a formalized language, some *pre-theoretical understanding* is certainly required. It is this pre-theoretical grasp that allows us to see the T-sentence is as trivial or trivially true. And it is only because we are able to see them that we can read them as confirming instances of our theory.

For Tarski, in the pre-theoretical understanding required in testing a theory should not be expressed as an understanding of truth. In other words, this understanding is not the concept of truth defined by the theory. So it is not question begging. Because of the translation requirements, we can assess the T-sentences without knowing in advance what it is for a sentence of the object language to be true. A good or adequate theory is one which gives adequate T-sentences as theorems. Such adequacy is cashed in by Tarski in terms of the 'sameness of meaning.' Translation of one formalized language into another is the matter of logical legislation, Tarski, there takes the notion of translation as primitive.

Davidson says,

Since Tarski was interested in defining truth and was working with artificial languages where stipulation can replace illumination, he could take the concept of translation for granted [ITM : 172].

Sameness of meaning is just the co-existence of expressions and its form stipulates the extension of an expression. The adequacy of T-sentences in formalized language is determined by syntactical form alone. These are not epistemological but symmetric information about the truth predicate of the object language. That the truth predicate applies to all and only those sentence the translation of which he would assert. In other words, in the case of natural language (or of two different languages) truth predicate can not be applied. Hence, according to Tarski 'truth functional equivalence' and 'sameness of meaning' are not synonymous. Whereas, for Davidson, truth and meaning are not independently definable.

Tarski defined truth for a formalized language by relying on the concept of translation. But, for Davidson, the point is to explain what it is for

words to mean; what he is after is just what Tarski leaves unanalyzed. So Davidson turns Tarski on his head. Davidson says, "our outlook inverts Tarski's: we want to achieve an understanding of meaning or translation by assuming a prior grasp of truth [ITI : 150]. This Davidson believes will provide us with a way of judging the acceptability of the theorems of a theory "that is not syntactical, and make no use of the concepts of translation, meaning or synonymy, but in such that acceptable . . . (theorem) . . . will in fact yield interpretations." [ITI : 150]

According to Davidson, the concept of 'meaning', 'reference' and so on is undefined semantic concepts. The theory of meaning cannot understand these concepts without circularity. Davidson, therefore, argues that the theory of meaning must explain communication without relying on undefined semantic concepts. In order to provide such explanation, Davidson suggests that the theory of meaning must fulfil two basic requirements.

- (i) The theory must be powerful enough to provide an interpretation of any utterance of a speaker of natural language.
- (ii) It must be testable against evidence available independently of any knowledge of the linguistic concepts of the language.

Davidson notices that these two requirements are satisfied by Tarski-style theory of Truth. Tarskian truth theory provides a method of defining truth for a language without depending on some property or relation that makes sentences true. Tarski's construal of truth does not rely on a relation to be explained. According to Tarski, the relation is an explication of the property of truth. Truth derives its conceptual content and not from a relation but from an extensional definition.

Tarskian truth theory can be applied only in a formalized language. He characterizes the truth predicate in terms of the axioms and rules of inference

of the theory. His truth definition relies on a meta-language with significantly stronger ontological resources than those available in the object language. For formalized language, it is not at all a problem, whereas in the case of natural language, it seems problematic. Tarski, therefore, doubted in the applicability of truth-definition of natural languages.

Davidson cited the italicized remarks from Tarski

The very possibility of a consequent use of the expression 'true' sentences which is in harmony with the laws of logic and the spirit of everyday language seems to be very questionable, and consequently the same doubt attaches to the possibility of constructing a current definition of the expression [ITM : 28].

According to Davidson, Tarski's chief worry was mainly because of two reasons :

- i. The universal nature of natural language leads to contradiction and thus leads to semantic paradoxes.
- ii. The natural languages are too confused and amorphous to permit the direct application of formal method. Hence in order to apply formal semantic methods in natural language we would have to reform a natural language out of all recognition. Davidson dissolves Tarski's controversy of formal language and natural language.

Davidson argues that the problems of natural language, will become apparent when we consider a case 'where a significant fragment of a languages is used to state its own theory of truth.' As a speaker of English, we do not have available and ontologically stronger meta-language in which to state our theory of truth for English. Any attempt to construct and

ontologically more resourceful meta-language would be self-defeating, since success would simply represent an expansion of our natural language, which is also the object language.

Tarski refers to the feature of natural language as universal. It gives rise to antinomies of self-reference like the Paradox of the Liar. See for instance, the sentence "this (very) statement is false" is true if and only if the statement is false [Lynch : 339].

This sentence is paradoxical because if it is true then it is false and if it is false then it is true. Similarly the famous 'Liar Paradox' involving Cretan's statement that "All Cretans are liars" such statements threaten the cogency of the term "true".

Tarski diagnosed the source of the paradox by distinguishing meta-language and object language. He held that ascription of truth or falsity to sentences is meta-linguistic. Hence ' "snow is white" 'is true' is a meta-linguistic assertion about the sentence 'snow is white'. Here, truth is construed a predicate of a meta-language applicable to sentences of its object language; it is a semantic property of the latter, predicated whenever the meta-language states that object language sentence designates what in fact the case. Hence, what Tarski argues is that the fault lies in the fact that sentence belongs to a semantically closed language.

According to Tarski, sentence contains not only its normal stock of expressions but also the names of these expressions and semantic terms such as 'true' referring to its sentences; and moreover, the tacit assumption is that all sentences, which determine the use of 'true', can be asserted in that language itself. Here, Tarski's attempt to define truth in the use and mentioning (name) of language. He therefore noted that the truth can be defined only in formal language but in natural language truth is undefined.

According to Davidson, the universality of natural language creates problem in Tarskian truth-definition mainly because of his confusion in the order of explanation. If the structure of Tarskian truth-definition is properly used then the universality may not create problem for understanding language. It is also argued that semantic paradox arises when the range of the quantifiers in the object language is too generous in certain way. But if the object-language and meta-language are expressed in the same language, the range of the quantifier cannot be insufficient to yield a formal definition of truth.

Similarly, according to Davidson, one does not need formalized language in order to understand natural language. He says that if at all truth-definitions are needed for natural language, it is capable of doing that. To him, the task of a theory of meaning is *not to change or improve or reform a language*, but to *describe and understand* it. He also added that what Tarski meant by amorphous and ambiguous in natural language would not matter for the application of truth definition in it. As long as ambiguity does not affect the formal structure of truth definition, it can be translated into meta-language.

Since Tarskian truth-definition is mainly meant for formalized language, the substantial content of such definition is not enough to capture the meaning of the sentence in natural language. Its method of defining truth predicate for language relies on the additional ontological wealth of the language. Davidson's question, on the other side, is to provide theory of meaning for natural languages. His pivotal project is to see whether natural language will yield to the formalization required for the application of Tarskian theories of truth.

Davidson agrees with Tarski that we cannot give an explicit definition of truth for natural language. But he also added that we could get a *theory of truth* without having complete definition of truth. Davidson says, we

require no more than a theory of truth, to go beyond to an explicit definition does widen the gap between the resources of the object language and meta-language [ITM : 72].

He says, in order to have a recursive characterization of the truth predicate of particular language, we need not postulate entities like sets, classes or sequence, to state our theory, since such entities are ontological propagation outside the object language.

However, Davidson says even if a recursive characterization of truth predicates requires no ontological base it does require an "increase in ideology" and this increase can be "limited to the semantic concepts".

As Ramberg interpreted, it implies only that when we are constructing an explicit truth theory for language, we are expanding the language *actually* or *potentially*. We are *actually* expanding it, if the language of theory is also the object language. It ensures the continuous emergence of domains for further theory construction. That is, language can never complete its own truth theory. Because in treating itself both as object and meta-language it is always stretching its conceptual resources. We are *potentially* expanding the language, if it is a language different from the one in which the theory is stated. The latter requires ontological base whereas the former is not necessarily ontological but conceptual.

Ramberg says, the universality of natural languages is not at all a problem if we settle the issue of incompleteness of truth definition, by the conceptual expansion of the object language. No doubt, for Davidson there was some confusions regarding the nature of truth. He says, 'there may in the

nature of the case always be something we grasp in understanding the language of another (the concept of truth) that we cannot communicate to him." Such deviation towards non-empirical, led Simon Evnine to interpret Davidson as a rationalist. Ramberg also accepts that Davidson, here, is not setting forth a specific empirical hypothesis, rather he is giving the measure of such hypothesis suggesting that they would be met by candidates embodying a structure of certain kind. Ramberg, therefore redesigned Davidson's idea differently. He says:

We could better express this idea by suggesting not that we cannot communicate what we have grasp, but that in so far as we do succeed in communicating our understanding it ensures its own incompleteness by forcing the conceptual or ideological expansion of the object language [1989: 51].

Construing the relationship between natural and formalized language this way, Davidson undercuts objections to the validity of this project raised on a *priori* grounds. It is worth noting, that the possibility of giving theoretical description of linguistic competence by way of a formalization of language now becomes linked to the relative importance of communication of the abstracted *synchronic* aspects of the language on the one hand and *diachronic* aspect on the other. Ramberg argues that it is the latter issue, which finally leads the Davidson to conclude that we cannot make theoretical sense of the concept of language.

According to Davidson, the problem is how the truth condition of sentences provides their meaning. Tarski's theory had no hope of attaining an explicit definition of truth for natural language. But its promises lie in the fact that it produces theorem, which states the truth condition for the sentences of object language by giving the translations of those sentences in the meta-language. This means that only those resources available in the

object language are needed to see that the theorems are true as long as we take for granted the correctness of that translation.

According to Davidson, the importance of Tarski's theorems does not lie in theorems themselves but in their derivations. The power of a Tarskian theory lies in its showing how we get, from a finite stock of primitive building blocks and logical (recursive) axioms, all and only the true T-sentences for a language. The theory is a logical structure of the language. So even if the verification of the theory of truth for a particular language does presuppose that we already have a concept of truth, the theory would still be rich in content (meaning). Hence, instead of meaning, if we take truth primitive, it explains everything we need to know to understand alien speakers.

While Tarski employs the concept of translation in his formulation of convention-T, Davidson's purpose will not do this. In Davidson version, convention T goes like this.

A theory of truth will be materially adequate, that is, will correctly determine the extension of the truth predicate provided it entails, for each sentence *s* of the object language, a theorem of the form *s* is true if and only if *p* where *s* is replaced by a description of sentence and *p* is replaced by a sentence that is true if and only if *s* is (ITM : 150).

This formulation substitutes the truth equivalence of *s* & *p* for Tarski's stipulation of *p* as an interpretation of *s*. Davidson also argues that we do want *p* to be an interpretation of *s*. But his aim is to come about as a result of the requirements formulated without making use of the notion 'interpretation'. Hence, for Davidson, the T-sentence "'snow is white" is true iff grass is green' are perfectly good.¹⁰

By taking translation for granted, Tarski's proposal ends up giving for each sentence of the object- language a sentence of the meta- language which is true iff the object-language is. But it does not guarantee to provide an adequate interpretation of it. Sentences, for Tarski, are uninterpreted. He defined sentence-hood in particular language before we gave its semantics. Uninterpreted sentences are mere syntactic strings. They can have different interpretations and could be treated as sentences of different languages. Saying what language we are defining truth is, thus simply fixing the interpretation of the sentences in the object language.

According to Davidson, in order to say the above sentence is correct, we must have an intuitive grasp of the concept of truth and also must know the meaning of each terms. Truth, he argues is far more easily understood than meaning or translation. He suggests to treat truth as an undefinable basic concept. Davidson, thereby, gets thing back to front. Rather than using meaning to illuminate truth, he uses intuitively understood notion of truth to get whatever can be got out of semantic concept of 'meaning'.

For Davidson, meaning is not the only semantic concept that features in the theory of meaning. The axioms from which the T-sentences are derived employ the obviously semantic notions of reference and satisfaction. They include axioms such as "snow" refers to snow and "is white" is satisfied by all and only white thing". The question, therefore, arises of how these notions themselves are to be understood. Can we use truth to enable us to understand the substantial concept of reference? Or will we have to give some independent account of what reference is, thereby making semantic concepts stands with truth in the order of explanation? Davidson maintains the former whereas Tarski maintains the latter view. Davidson puts this as a conflict between holistic and building block approaches of the theory of meaning.

Taken sentence by sentence, Tarski-style truth-theory fails to add up to a theory of meaning. Davidson argues that the T-sentences are not the only part of the theory. What is special about the theory is that it shows how the truth-condition of the sentences are accounted for, on the basis of words of which they are composed and the ways in which those words are combined. Each T-sentence, therefore, is located in a network of relationship with other T-sentences by virtue of the fact that they share various component parts. Davidson says that it is an error to think that

We can learn from a theory of truth about the meaning of a particular sentence is contained in the biconditional demanded by convention-T. What we can learn is brought out recursively in the proof of such a biconditional, for the proof must demonstrate step by step how the truth-value of the sentence depends upon a recursively given structure (1970:61).

Being able to interpret is not simply knowing the appropriate T-sentence. It is knowing that some sentence is true if and only if some condition obtains and that the sentence is composed out of parts which features in other sentences which are true if and only if other specified conditions obtain. And so, in order to interpret one sentence, we have to be in a position to interpret many related sentences. We have axioms which characterize the semantic properties of the basic components of the language, words and their models of combination. From these axioms and the rules of logic, we can derive the remainder theorems of the theory which are the T-sentences.

In the above case, the theory has to produce the T-sentence 'snow is white' on the basis of the structure of this sentence. The T-sentence must fall out deductively starting with the theoretical primitives as we run through

the recursions to the truth conditions of the sentence via the satisfaction of the sentential function of which it is a special case (ITM : 48-9 : 61). It is because the theory must reach the truth conditions of 'snow is white' and every other sentence of the language in this way, using the same finite resources to account for any of an infinity of possible sentence. We can expect the right side of the biconditional to be an interpretation of the left. But it should be worth noted that the theory which yields interpretation never completely capture meaning using convention-T. In other words, according to Davidson, truth cannot be defined, as Tarski construed it.

As against Tarskian building block approach to the truth definition, Davidson proposes holistic constraint imposed by convention-T. And this is the key to the connection between truth and meaning. Each theorem tells us very little, since only a pairing of truth-value is required. However, this should not mislead us into giving up on an extensional account of meaning. He says,

The present thought is rather to expect to find minimum of information about the correctness of theory at each single point; it is the potential infinity of points that makes the difference [ITM : 225].

He adds the following :

the desired effect is to extract a rich concept . . . from thin bits of evidence . . . by imposing a formal structure on enough bits (ITM : 74).

Davidson argues that the stuff of meaning is extensional and also we need an unending supply of it. In this potentially infinite mapping of sentences and their truth-conditions, the theory assigns specific structural roles to its finite resources. That is to say, it assigns meanings to words and

defines the logical operations by abstracting their role in determining the truth-conditions of sentences. The theory captures the impact of a sentence being true or false on the language as a whole, because it reflects this in the structural role it assigns to the terms of that sentences. A theorem, accordingly, gives the meaning of a sentence in the sense of "assigning the sentence a semantic location in the pattern of sentences that comprise the language" (ITM : 225). And according to him, we need no other sense in which to ascribe meaning to a sentence. So a structural theory of truth for language of this kind is just an interpretation of that language. Thus if the theorems are true then we get right interpretation.

But how can we use the concept of truth as a source of empirical content. In other words, how a Tarskian theory satisfies Davidson's second requirement of the theory of meaning. According to Davidson, the empirical content of the theory of truth depends on whether our theorem actually capture co-extension. The necessary condition is that the object language and the language of the theory is to give independent to each other (For example to the theorems $E=mv^2$, the T-sentences must be nomological ie. they must be able to support counterfactual and subjunctives, and they must be confirmed by their concrete instances but not confined to them). In order to provide this condition, Davidson prescribes a modified T-sentences which relativise truth to times and speakers. Thus there are two conditions for ascribing truth predicate to the sentence.

- i. We have to take the sentence as utterances of or speech acts of a speaker.
- ii. Relativize the utterance by time¹¹.

The resulting formulations are attempts to capture a three place predicate intended "to relate language with occasions of truth in a way that invites the

construction of a theory" (ITM:44). These formulations will look much like this (T) 'Gavagai' is true in L when uttered by x at time t if and only if there is rabbit in the vicinity of x at t . The interpreter might decided to add 'and the rabbit is being ostensively indicated by x ', she might decide the number of rabbits is irrelevant and modified the formulation. Accordingly, she might even notice that 'gavagai' is uttered only in fair weather, that a speaker of L cannot be prompted the say 'gavagai' when it is raining, no matter how many rabbits are splashing conspicuously about and include this fact as a conjunct in the sentence that is the right side of (T).

It is worthy of note that the interpreter, here, is not trying to translate 'gavagai'. The right side of the conditional is not a guess at what 'gavagai' means. She is trying to formulate a sentence that states as specifically as possible the combination of the feature characterising occasions when speaker of L utter 'gavagai'. On the sole basis of *facts* about the behaviour of speakers in relation to sentences', an interpreter must specify the truth-conditions of those sentences as best she can. The hope is to get a sentence or conjunction of sentences that uniquely characterises these occasions. Collecting a good number of such hypotheses, the interpreter cannot help but discern pattern, she will individuate words assign them structural roles, and so on. This will allow her to form testable hypothesis. In a theorem of her nascent, she can try out on L speakers; will they utter the required *ss* under the circumstance of *p*?

According to Davidson, the best way to articulate the task of the radical interpreter is that he/she must attempt to isolate the salient features of what Wallace calls the *contextual frame* in which the uninterrupted sentence is embedded. In other words, he/she attempts to isolate those environments features that *cause* the speaker to assent to the sentence. In this task, she is not forming her tentative T-sentences on the basis of presupposition-less observation. Likewise, the pure observer would never be able to come up

with any characterisation of occasions of utterance at all. There are at least two assumptions we have to make to get any T-sentence off the ground.

- i. We have to assume that we are observing creatures who assert and, crucially, that we are reasonably adept at telling when those observed are engaging in this particular language activity – even when we have no clue as to what is being asserted.
- ii. We must assume that when they assert, they are by and large do so correctly. Unless we make both these assumptions, we will never be able to understand what is being said.

Which facts will make a purported theory the theory of meaning for some language? Davidson's answer is that a theory would correctly be taken as a theory of meaning for some language if the totality of the T-sentences confirmed to the constraints included in the principle of charity, if this condition is met and is known to be met, then the theory as a whole can correctly be taken as a theory meaning for a language as a whole. On this view, the contact between the theory and the world, the empirical clout of the theory, comes at the level of the totality of the T-sentences. Davidson, thus proposes holistic approach to the theory of meaning.

Davidson argues that the theory of truth is an empirical theory about the truth conditions of every sentences in some corpus or sentences. It should not be simulative definition. Sentences or words are mere abstract entities. They have empirical content or life only in the embodiment of sounds and scribbles by speakers. In ascribing truth conditions to the utterances or the inscriptions of language users, Davidson's aim is to develop an empirical theory. The concept of truth has the essential connection with the concept of meaning and beliefs of language users.

Here Davidson embraces Quine's holism and applies it both to language and the mind. Indeed, Davidson regards linguistic meaning as inextricably bound up with the mental states of the users of language. In this context, it is quite relevant to notice how Davidson is the critique of Quine's vestigial empiricism by embracing holism of mental.

3.4. Quine and Davidson

As a critique of empiricist tradition, Quine has been the greatest single influence on Davidson. In an essay called "The Dogmas of Empiricism", Quine challenged two of the characteristic features of empiricism. The first dogma which Quine attacks is the distinction between analytic and synthetic truths. Quine argued that any attempts to say exactly what analyticity is in terms of meaning or necessity are doomed to failure since all these notions are interdependent. Hence he argues that there is no analytic sentence immune from revision. This leads Quine's disputes to the second dogma of reductionism. Reductionism holds that "every meaningful statement is translatable into a statement (true or false) about immediate experience" (1951, p.38). Against this dogma, Quine presents an alternative, holistic picture of language in which all sentences are interconnected in the manner of a web. Accordingly Quine argued that there is no correlation between single sentences and experiences which confirm or disconfirm them. Instead, "statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but only as a corporate body" (Quine 1951: 41).

Quine's reason for believing this can be given by an example. Suppose we sincerely assert that the sentence "All swans are white." Subsequently we seem to have an experience of a black swan. This is inconsistent because it cannot be the case both that all swans are white and that we have seen a black swan. Seeing a black swan falls into the category of sensory experiences that disconfirm the sentence "All swans are white". According to the empiricist

reductionists, on having that experience, we should give up belief in the sentence "All swans are white'. Quine correctly points out that, though this is one possible resolution to the conflict, there are other possibilities, such as experience of black swans might be hallucination, it might be another kind of bird which look just like a swan and so on. Hence my experience of the black swan does not directly and by itself determines that I must give-up the belief that all swans are white, but whether I give-up that belief when I have the experience will depend on other belief of mine.

Quine is a behaviourist. His holism is limited to the linguistic behaviour, but Davidson is not a behaviourist. He embraces Quine's holism and applies it to both language and the mind. Davidson claimed that propositional attitudes could only be attributed against the background of the other propositional attitudes. Just as there is no connection between individual sentences, and conformity and disconfirmation experiences which determine the truth or falsity of those sentences, so there is no relation between individual mental state and behaviour which warrants the attribution of those mental states. Just as statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience as a corporate body, so attributions of propositional attitudes face the tribunal of behaviour as a corporate body. Behaviour which might ordinarily be thought to force us to withdraw the attribution, if we are prepared to change our attributions of other propositional attitudes.

For example, suppose we attribute to someone a desire to steal a painting of Rothko. It might be thought that he could not have this desire if he had an opportunity to steal a Rothko but didn't take it. Here, holism means that the attribution need not be withdrawn on his failing to steal such a painting when given the opportunity. Because there may be any number of other beliefs and desires he could have which would make his desire

consistent with his failure to act. In other words, the attribution of anyone mental state is not fixed by any single piece of behaviour. He may have a stronger desire not to act dishonestly; he may not believe that he does have an opportunity and so on. There is no one-to-one correlation between beliefs or desires on the one hand and actions or other behaviour on the other hand.

Quine's behaviourism underlies his negative attack on meaning and translation. His problem is how one could assemble a translation manual for some total unknown language. The aim of the manual is to be able to produce an English sentence to translate any native sentence.

Quine's method of translation is an attempt to translate meaning in existing social patterns whereas Davidson's radical interpretation model is a matter of understanding. As Gibson noted "Quine's radical translation and Davidson's radical interpretation should not be regarded as competitors, for although the methodologies employed in the two contexts are similar, the two contexts are designed to answer different questions. Moreover, interpretation is broader than translation; sentences that cannot be translated can still be interpreted."

Quine argues when we pursue our conceptual truth genealogically, we do not make the expected discovery of empirically uncontaminated meaning. Instead, we find only unquestioned agreement to the more obvious features of the world. The difference between the questions of meaning and questions of facts amounts to a difference in degree of consensus or agreement to the sorts of conclusions. We tend to draw about anyone who refuses to conform. We might defend our consensus against a non-conformist by recommending a sensory apparatus examination or by suggesting a remedial course in English. Quine argues that this difference in our response towards a deviant is not in the end supported by underlying differences in the kinds of question at issue.

According to Quine, stimulus meaning is clearly a theoretical concept. His holism of meaning suggests a web model of a language. The nodes of the web represents sentences. The identity of each nodes depends on its relation with other nodes and with experience. The nodes at the outer edge of the web will connect predominantly with experience (Whatever is beyond the web). While the nodes inside the web is less direct contact with experience; but the more its identity is determined by its relation with other sentences. The sentence at the edge are Quine's 'observation sentences'. They are the sentences like 'This is red'. Such sentences, Quine argues, have strong and direct connections with other sentences. He says, 'even for observation sentences we cannot identify stimulus meaning with meaning *tout court*, though stimulus meaning pulls most weight with observation sentences. However, he accepts that in the case of observation sentences, stimulus meaning will do partial duty for meaning *tout court*, which enables us to translate them well enough but still not with any certainty. As Ramberg noted, Quine's point is best appreciated in the context of his *holistic critique of verification*. He agrees that meaning does lie in the deference made by something being the case. As the verificationist maintained, he argues that the meaning of some bit of language is to be explicated in terms of the sensory givens. It would leads us to assent to that bit of language. The problem is that the sort of thing we assent to, that is, sentences, cannot individually brought into determinate relations with packets of sense data or patterns of stimulations or any other such attempted explication of the given. This is one of the key points in 'Epistemology Naturalised' (Quine 1969b: 79).

Quine says,

The typical statement about bodies has now fund of experimental implications it can call its own . . . (Only a) substantial mass of theory, taken together, will commonly

have experimental implication, this is how we make verification predictions (Quine 1969b: 79).

Quine distinguishes still other groups of sentences further in the interior of the web, such as "Lo! a bachelor," stimulus meaning is less close to plain meaning because "as one says in the uncritical jargon of meaning, the trouble with 'bachelor' is that its meaning transcends the looks of the prompting faces of concern matters that can be known only through other channel." To deal with such sentences, Quine suggests that the radical translation construct 'analytical hypotheses.' Analytical hypotheses go beyond the behaviour evidence which, Quines thinks, is all the evidence there is for translation. He, therefore, holds that radical translation shows that translation and meaning are *indeterminate*. They exceed all possible evidence and thus nothing in our evidence can determinate the fact of matter about how something should be translated. The consequence, if there for, for some native sentences, one set of analytical hypothesis could give as a translation *s* an English sentence *e*, while another set could give *e'*, where *e* and *e'* are different, are non-synonymous sentences.

Quine's thesis is not just that our evidence might leave open different translations. The evidence which will have run out constitutes the totality of linguistic behaviour. Since he regards knowing a language the simply as having a set of dispositions to respond in various ways of different stimulations. If this set of dispositions leaves open the possibility of rival sets of analytical hypotheses, then we have a rival translation. But there is *nothing else* to close it. There would be no fact of the matter about which translation was the right one.

Quine's holistic approach to the confirmation of language with experience eliminates the possibility of distinguishing between a contribution of meaning and a contribution of world towards making our sentence true or

false. The reason is that it leaves us no isolable thing that corresponds to the idea of the meaning of a sentence' in the sense required. If we equate meaning with empirical content, as Quine does, insist that only theories as a whole have empirical content, then sentences have meaning only as parts of a body of theory. In such a body it is possible to systematically tamper with the roles assigned to its parts, words and sentences, in ways that leave the empirical contents of the theory as a whole unaltered. This is Quine's doctrine of *indeterminacy of translation*.

The thought that, of two incompatible translation, one of them must be right and other wrong, is fostered, Quine says, by "an uncritical mentalistic theory of idea; each sentence and its admissible translations express an identical ideas." Quine takes behaviour dispositions to constitute the meaning of the sentences of a language, and not the expression of mental ideas. Hence not only translation, but meaning itself is indeterminate. Quine argues that if the sentences are meaningful, then they are used for various social purposes, but there is *no* such thing as the 'meaning' of a sentence.

According to Simon Evnine, Quine's argument for indeterminacy of meaning is this: "any genuine semantics facts are constituted by behaviour; behaviour does not suffice to determine meaning or translation; therefore there is no such thing as determinate meaning or translation." So, Simon argues, the indeterminacy of translation is connected with the denial of meaning, was encouraged by Quine's nominalism. He notices that this kind of indeterminacy carries over into Davidsonian theory of meaning as well, though in a modified form. The basic point he noted is this: "there may be different ways of assigning truth conditions of sentences, that is, there may be different, not equivalent sentences in the meta-language which are true if and only if various sentences in the object language are true, such that the different truth theories they allow will . . . equally well" (Simon Evnine, 123).

Interpreting Davidson in this way is actually missing the right points in Davidson's theory of meaning. As Simon Evnine himself pointed out, this is the wrong way of interpreting Davidson. Davidson writes that

We must view meaning itself as a theoretical construction. Like any construct it is arbitrary except for the formal and empirical constraints we impose on it. In the case of meaning, the constraints cannot uniquely fix the theory of interpretation. The reason, as Davidson has convincingly argued is that the sentences as speaker holds to be true are determined, in ways we can only partly disentangle, by what the speaker means by his words and what he believes about the world. A better way to put this would be to say: belief and meaning cannot be uniquely reconstructed from speech behaviour. The remaining indeterminacy should not be judged as a failure of interpretation, but rather a logical consequence of the nature of theories of meaning [1973: 256-7].

Davidson makes a helpful analogy with theories of measurement

"A theory of measurement for temperature leads to the assignment to objects of numbers that measure the temperature. Such theories put formal constraints on the assignments, and also must be tied empirically to qualitatively observable phenomena. The numbers assigned are not uniquely determined by the constraints. But the pattern of assignments is significant (Fahrenheit and Centigrade temperature are linear transformations of each other; the assignment of numbers is unique up to a linear transformation). In much of the same way, I suggest that what is invariant between different acceptable theories of truth is meaning. The meaning (interpretation of a sentence is given by assigning the sentence a semantic location in the pattern

of sentences that comprise the language. Different theories of truth may assign different truth conditions to the same sentence . . . while the theories are (nearly enough) in agreement on the roles of the sentences in the language." (1977 : 224-5).

Just as we can measure temperature in either Fahrenheit or Centigrade, so we can 'measure' meaning with different sets of truth conditions. So long as the pattern between the roles of sentences is preserved, a pattern which is determined by the formal and empirical constraints placed on the theory, the resulting indeterminacy is not significant.

Simon Evnine argues that this analogy fails to point out a number of ways in which Davidson's form of indeterminacy may be more acceptable than Quine's. Here also, Evnine goes on in the wrong way of analyzing Davidson theory of meaning or interpretation. According to Davidson, it is beyond doubt that there is indeterminacy of meaning. But as Davidson's argued, it is 'neither mysterious nor threatening'. He rejected the notion of meaning not because of the indeterminacy of meaning. But the concept of 'meaning' is not necessary to understand language. Davidson's point is not that the semantics cannot find place for meaning, rather that we can do just as well without them.

As Alexander Hoffman [1995] construes, there is no kind of measuring rod whose length will not change because of the interfering factors such as temperature or pressure. But the standard we are looking for is not any particular measuring rod but rather its *theoretically corrected length*. Here, one can agree with Alexander Hoffman that the common reason for indeterminacy is the fact that the empirical basis for a theory of meaning as well as theory of measurement is not evidence of one single theory but rather for several interlocking theories such that difference between competing theories of meaning may be cancelled out by their respective, complimentary

theories. This horizontal extension of natural language implicit in Davison's theory of radical interpretation. As Ramberg conceived it's not a 'meta narrative' but rather as 'hermeneutic task'.

According to Ramberg, different ways of translating a speaker into some other language can be equally satisfactory. This is because the asymmetrical relation between truth and meaning (empirical content).⁹ Quine's holism argues that while we ascribe truth values to individual sentences, we ascribe definite empirical content only to bodies of sentences. Indeterminacy of translation is the free play resulting from the fact that it is possible to neutralize the effects of alterations in the truth value of one sentence on the body as a whole by making adjustments elsewhere. This asymmetry in the ascription of meaning and truth is also what deprives the analytic-synthetic distinction of any grip. In criticizing the distinction Quine is arguing not that we cannot make sense of the concept of analytic-synthetic sentence, he is suggesting that these classes of sentences are empty.

Ramberg supports Dummett's arguments in "The Significance of Quine's Indeterminacy Thesis". "(Quine's position is that) an analytic sentence is one such that no recalcitrant experience would lead us to withdraw our assignment to each of the value true, while a synthetic one is such that any adequate revision prompted by certain recalcitrant experience would involve our withdrawing our assignment to it of the value true . . . as thus defined, there are no analytic sentences, and there are no synthetic ones." [Dummett, 1978].

The reason is that the implication that even while we ascribe the definite empirical content to a body of sentences, we are unable to secure any individual sentence in that body against possible revision. In short, Quine argues that it is impossible to fix the meaning of any individual sentence by reference to experience.

Quine's holism rejects two dogma's of empiricism – analyticity and reductionism, he also rejects the special classes of sentences the truth by virtue of their meaning. He there by undermines any attempt to give privileged status to certain kinds of truth. Rejecting foundational epistemology, he rejects the special class of sentences, the truth by virtue of facts (world). According to Quine, meaning is no more or less definite than empirical content. It neither can be ascribed to sentences regarded in isolation. Truth, on the other hand as a property of individual sentences, is never fully constrained by the empirical content or meaning. For we ascribe meaning bodies of sentences. Thus the domains of the concepts of truth and meaning are not defined at the same level of linguistic structures. And so, neither semantics nor epistemology can provide us with a firm foundationalist footing.

On Davison's account, as Ramberg argues, it is impossible to over estimate the significance of Quine's prying lose the concept of meaning from the individual sentences, that is from the vehicle of truth. Davidson says,

In my view, erasing the line between the analytic and synthetic saved philosophy of language as a serious subject by showing how it could be pursued with out what there cannot be: determinate meanings" (1986b:313).

But he adds,

"I now suggest also giving up the distinction between observation sentences and the rest." (Ibid).

According to Quine, Ramberg says, observation sentences or occasion sentences are the sensory given. Quine regards occasion sentences as defined with relation to a given speaker or group of speakers. The trained scientist's occasion sentence will be the young student's inference. But no matter how

fluidly construed, they are meant to serve as the link to experience that ultimately grounds our knowledge claims. For Quine, observation sentences are thus endowed with a special and central epistemological status. Ramberg argues that this is what makes Quine as empiricist, and it is precisely what Davidson means to challenge, for example in "a Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge" (1986b), and 'Meaning, Truth and Evidence' (1988).

In 'Meaning, Truth and Evidence,' Davidson clarifies the relation between, Quine's notion of observation sentences and his empiricist commitments. Davidson argues that Quine should give up his official theory of meaning – a 'proximal' one (in Davidson's terminology) which defines sameness of meaning for a observation sentences in terms of sameness of patterns of stimuli in favour of 'distal' theory. It is something private and it defines sameness of meaning in terms of public objects and events. This would, according to Davidson, save Quine from the relativism of truth and scepticism of senses with out jeopardizing his naturalism. This seems that it is inescapably flowing from empiricism in its various guises.

Quine refuses to regard sentences, (taken individually) and the world as a *relata* of a relation needed for philosophical grounding. He stops short of rejecting the whole idea of an epistemologically significant relation between language and experience.

Davidson doubt that, on Quine's view, we can make good sense of the idea that there are seriously divergent total conceptual schemes, He urges that this second dualism of scheme and content of organising system and something waiting to be organised, cannot be made intelligible and defensible, it is a third dogma of empiricism—the dogma of schema and content.

According to Robert Kraut, [1986] the world is waiting to be organised and sentient beings, armed with interests and taxonomies, carve up the environment into homologically viable classes. Thus he says,

"the scheme-content dualism is simply the dualism of world (which consists of items in principle representable believes, desired and perceptions) The representational apparatus, itself (whether linguistic, psychological or artistic). Content is what is represented; scheme is how it is represented. This dualism between representational acts and there imminent objects ["representing" weds the items towards which such acts are intentionally directed (represented) is surely indispensable to all, save an occasional idealist or textualist. He also notices another construct that, 'the something' waiting to be organised corresponds to a domain of simple representation, Kantian intuition, which falls somehow between the world and our full-blown representation of it "On this construal, what waits to be organised is the common observational given upon which all theories of the world ultimately depend both causally and for there epistemic justification. On this reading, he argues rejection of the scheme content dualism is simply of what Sellar has dubbed the 'Myth of the given'[1986:400].

According to Ramberg, the 'myth of the given'¹⁰ survives in Quine's writings in the form of the idea that sensations not only cause beliefs, but can somehow justify them. The concept of occasion sentences is an attempt to harness sensations for justificatory purposes. For Davidson, this is an impossible task. *Only beliefs can justify beliefs; the only evidence there can*

be for the truth of a sentence are other true sentences. Quine never draws this conclusion, and his failing to do so is the source of most of his disagreements with Davidson.

At the heart of Davidson's semantic strategy, Ramberg says, is the Quinian sight that we can never get truth by squeezing the concept of meaning. Truth and falsehood are properties of sentences, and as such they are uniquely compounded. For the purpose of testing not just our theories about the way the world is, but our theories about works and how they come to me. Davidson presses Quine's critique of empiricism to his conclusion by exposing Quine's notion of occasion sentences. And it is a vestige of the attempt to isolate so ultimate source of evidence for our beliefs.

As Simon noted, the plausibility of the sceptic's attack lies in our seeing the contents of brain's beliefs as determined independently of their cause. Here, unlike Simon Evnine, what we have to stress is that the causal relation need not necessarily be a-symmetric because, for Davidson the theorem developed not on the base of fixed norms. 'Language' and 'Mind' are metaphors but truth is also not out there. Here, Philosophy of language and Philosophy of mind are going parallel to each other. Thus Davidson says,

"If I am right, we can't in general first identify beliefs and meanings and then ask what cause them. The causality plays an indispensable role in determining the content of what we say and believes". [1983:317]

Richard Rorty argues that the confusion will be apparent if we made a distinction between the claim that world is out there and the claim that the truth is out there. To say that world is out there, that it is not our creation, is to say with commonsense, that most things in space and time are the effects of causes which do not include human mental state. To say that truth is not out

there is simply to say that where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human languages and that human languages are human creations.

Truth, Rorty says, cannot be out there. It cannot exist independently of human mind. Because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but the descriptions of the world is not only descriptions of the world that can be true or false. The world on its own unaided by the describing activities of human beings cannot be true or false.

Davidson insists, that we do not need an epistemological bridge between language and the world because '*language is not a filter or a screen through which knowledge of the world must pass*' (ITI :XVII). We transcend verificationism only when we abandon the metaphor of epistemological confrontation between language and the world altogether. This we do when we realise that by experience causes us to hold sentence true, it does not *make* sentences true, neither individually nor as corporate bodies. Thus he says,

"Nothing no thing, makes sentences and theories true: not experience, not surface irritations, not the world, can make a sentence true. That experience takes a certain course . . . make(s) sentences and theories true" (ITI:194).

As Gibson notices, the idea of radical interpretation developed by Donald Davidson as a modification and extension of Quine's idea of radical translation. Quine is concerned with the extent to which empirical data determine the meanings of sentences of a natural language. In the context of radical interpretation, Davidson is concerned with a different question, the question of what a person could know that would enable them to interpret another's language. For example, what could one know what would enable the interpretation of the German sentence '*Es regent*' as meaning that *it is*

raining? The knowledge required for interpretation differs from the knowledge required for translation, for one could know that 'Es regent' is translated as 'Il pleut' with our knowing the meaning (the interoperation) of either sentence. Beginning with the knowledge that native speaker holds certain sentences true when in certain publicly recognisable circumstances, Davidson's radical interpreter strives to understand the meanings of those sentences. Davidson argues that this scenario reveals that interpretation centres on one's having knowledge comparable to an empirically verified, finitely based, recursive specification of the truth conditions for an infinitive sentence – a Tarski-like truth theory.

Thus, it seems that Davidson is actually departing from prior tradition (of which the most celebrated manifestation is Quine's 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'); which took the central problem in the area to be that of spelling out the *conditions for the two expressions to mean the same thing*. This radical shift emphasises that the central philosophical questions about semantics are questions about understanding.

In the course of investigation I noticed that Davidson's empirical status of the concept of truth gradually unfolded in the different stages of the development of his theory. This is what we dealt with in the subsequent chapter. That will enable us to see the empiricist motif takes him away from the Tarskian truth-theory. We shall see then what is really missing in Tarskian characterisation of truth.

Note

1. One can examine content (linguistic/ mental) from two points of view. (i) The first person's perspective (ii) The third person's perspective. In the former case, it is an attempt to study meaning and belief from the speaker's point of view (author's or speaker's intention is more important here). In the latter sense, meaning and belief are studied from the interpreter's point of view (priority in most case given to public language but in the case of Davidson interpretation is prior to public language).
2. Ryle's behaviourism might be contrasted with Davidson's externalism. As discussed in earlier chapter for Davidson, reason is the cause of action or utterance. Yet unlike Ryle's contention, reasons are either events or descriptions of events. Hence while accepting third person's perspective, Davidson never fall into the threat of behaviourism-first person's loses his/her authority. Since he is so cautious of the dogma of 'the ghost in the machine', he strongly defends for event monism.
3. This is clearly outlined in the first chapter while discussing KW's semantic paradoxes.
4. The quote is taken from the book, *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*. (ed.) Bob Hale and Crispin Wright [1997]. 'Meaning and truth conditions: from Frege's grand design to Davidson'- David Weggins; Chapter-1.
5. This inspires Davidson to think about externalism. To Frege, thought is not an internal matter but external affair.
6. Gareth Even and John McDowell call this view as 'translation semantics (1976 : IX).
7. This problem of intensional context later became famous as 'Mates problem'.
8. Unlike Quine Tarski's attempt is to define truth with presupposed meaning. And Tarski has not attempted to explain 'what meaning is?' Tarski's method

is purely extensional (recall Taylor Burge's earlier externalism) and based on established norms or convention.

9. There a symmetric casual relation only when there is strict bridge-law between mental and physical. Since Davidson argues for AM there the symmetric relation is only improbable coincidence. Where as in the case of Quine a symmetric relation is possible because he presupposes a public language or convention. He is, therefore interpreted as a behaviourist.
10. Between truth and meaning there is a conclusive relation in Quine. Quine therefore calls truth as disquotational. Here, causal relation is strict and the behaviourism, here with leads him to think that there is particular scheme and content destruction which Davidson asserts it as the third dogma of empiricism.

DIFFERENT STAGES OF DAVIDSON'S CONCEPTION OF TRUTH

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CHAPTER IV

DIFFERENT STAGES OF DAVIDSON'S CONCEPTION OF TRUTH

As remarked earlier, in the overall analysis of Davidson's conception of truth, we notice that there are three stages of development of his thought. Initially, he accepts Tarskian T-schema as an excellent extensional tool-model for his own semantic program. Later, he denies Tarskian characterisation of truth predicate to provide definition of truth. He argues that that such definition, lacks empirical content. In the second stage, Davidson modified Tarskian truth definition. Truth, he says, is an elementary primitive concept. He, uses T-schema to provide a unified theory of meaning and belief. In the third stage, Davidson argues, truth as an undefinable concept He was, here, critique of different forms of truth theories. And finally, his grand theory of radical interpretation not only provide empirical status but also informs us with methodological strategy that provides us with clues for the legitimate problem of meaning. We shall explain and discuss more in detail about this in the final stage that might be continued in the next chapter. In this chapter, we may concentrate on the first and second stages of the development in this thought.

4.1 Preliminaries : Tarskian T-schema

In his initial stage, Davidson adopts Tarskian truth – definition as formal structure for the theory of meaning. Davidson does not call it as definition.¹ He calls it as convention-T. The schema of his truth theory is as follows:

(T) S is true if and only P

Convention-T is a material adequacy condition that any theory of truth must meet. It determines the extension of the truth-predicate and not its intension. It ensures that for each sentence of the object-language, L, there is a T-sentence or T-biconditional available such that truth is definable for that language. Any predicate that applied to object-language sentences if and only if their translation in the meta-language were true would be the predicate 'is true'. Davidson's conclusion is stated as follows.

"Convention-T and T-sentences provide the sole link between intuitively obvious truth about truth and formal semantics. Without convention-T, we should have no reason to believe that truth is what Tarski has shown us how to characterize" [1973:66].

Given the material adequacy condition, Tarski has shown how to define truth for a particular language in formalized language. By formalised language, what Tarski meant is a set of symbols that can be assigned to 'structural descriptive term together with rules defined over these terms for combining expressions. It consists of variables, x , y and z the one place predicate F and the two place predicate G , the truth-functional operators of negation ' \neg ' and conjunction '&', and the existential quantifier ' $\exists x$ '. In describing language, there are two things that have to be specified for it – its syntax and its semantics.

The syntax of the language shows how expressions combine to form other expression. It consists of well-formed formulae (wffs). The well-formed formulae (wffs) of language, are the following five clauses:

- a) a one-place predicate followed by a variable is a wff (Fx).
- b) a two-place predicate followed by two variables is a wff (Gxy)
- c) If A is a wff, then so is ($\neg A$)

- d) If A and B are wff, then so is $(A \ \& \ B)$
- e) If A is a wff, then so is the result of prefacing A with the existential quantifier binding any of the variables in A.

Thus since Fx is a wff, so is $(\exists x) (Fx)$.

A variable can occur as free or bounded in a wff. If the quantifier does not bound a variable then it occurs as free in a wff and it is called 'open' variables. If a variable occurs as bounded by the quantifier, then it is not a free variable and it is called 'closed' variable in a wff. Hence in the wff,

$(\exists x) Gxy$, the variable x is bounded (closed) while the variable y is free.

Despite its extreme simplicity, language L has an infinite number of sentences. For example, if A is sentence, then so is $\neg A$, if $\neg A$ is a sentence, then so $\neg\neg A$, and so on ad infinitum. A wff may be simple or complex. In complex wff, it contains wff as parts. All the sentences of natural language are the closed wffs of L . All closed wffs must be existential quantifications. All sentences. All sentences of L are complex wff because they are made out of wff themselves. However, not all complex wff are sentences. $fx \ \& \ Fy$ are not sentences.

Tarskian semantics shows how to derive the truth of sentences from the interpretations of their parts. According to him, we can define the truth of a complex sentence in terms of the truth of its constituent parts. Hence a complex sentence ' $A \ \& \ B$ ' is true if and only if A is true and B is true. However, this procedure does not work in the case of the sentence made out of open wffs. A wffs like ' Fx ' is itself neither true nor false. Fx does not refer to anything, since x is a variable and not a singular term. According to Tarski, the truth of such sentences can be defined in terms of another semantic notion which he calls as 'satisfaction'.

For Tarski, satisfaction is something which applied to open wffs, and not sentences. The idea behind satisfaction is that open wffs apply to things according to whether those things satisfy some conditions. Thus,

- i. In the case of Fx , if F is interpreted as 'is red', then Fx will be satisfied by any object if and only if that object is red.
- ii. In the case of Gxy , if G is the two-place predicate 'beheaded', then Gxy will be satisfied by any ordered pair of things such that the first beheaded the second. So it will be satisfied by [Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots], but not by [Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth I].
- iii. In the case of complex wff A , something satisfied – A if and only if it does not satisfy A . Thus, for instance if we take ' F is "is red"', we can interpret Ronald Reagan satisfied- Fx , since he does not satisfy Fx . He does not satisfy Fx because he is not red, and only red things satisfy Fx .
- iv. In the case of existential quantified wff, i.e., $(\exists x) Fx$, it says given our interpretation of F , that there is something red. This is true as long as there is something red, i.e., as long as there is something satisfies the open wff, Fx , everything will satisfy the sentence $(\exists x) Fx$. If nothing satisfies Fx , then nothing will satisfy $(\exists x) Fx$. In other words, since the quantifier bound x , it does not matter what values we assign to it. That value will satisfy it, as long as there is something which satisfies Fx .
- v. In the case of complex wff, $(\exists x) Gxy$, it says there is something which beheaded y . the corresponding open wff is Gxy . Thus, Gxy is satisfied by any ordered pair of which first member beheaded the second member. Since the quantifier bound x , it does not matter what value assigned to it. The wff will, therefore, be satisfied by an ordered

pair, so long as there is some ordered pair which differ from the first pair only in its first member (i.e. the member assigned as a value to x) and which satisfies Gxv . So the pair [Batman, Marv Queen of Scots] satisfies $(\exists x) Gxv$ ('There is something x which beheaded v ') since there exists a pair (Elizabeth I, Marv Queen of Scots] which satisfies Gxv , and which differs from the first pair only in what it assigns to the variable bound by the quantifier.

Since all sentences of L are either existential quantifier with no free variable or made up from them with the truth-functions, we can thus give the definition of truth in L by saying that a true sentence is something which is satisfied by everything and a false sentence is one which is satisfied by nothing. Thus Tarski has shown how to define the concept of truth for a particular language using the concept of satisfaction of meaning.

Davidson finds prospects in Tarskian truth-definitions for the application of the formal semantics of natural language. He agrees that the language for which we have given a truth-definition is a very minimal language. As long as the stock of predicates is finite, for each of which we must provide a separate axiom saying that what satisfies it, and there are no principled difficulties in making that stock as large as we like. Furthermore, we can give axioms for satisfaction of complex sentences built with other truth-functions like disjunction, material implication and material equivalence, as well as for the universal quantifier. And so, we can give a theory of truth which satisfies convention-T for any language using first-order predicate logic.

Thus, Tarski doubted the applicability of truth-definition to natural language because of the universality and amorphous nature of natural language.

Davidson dissolves Tarski's controversy of formal language and natural language, by arguing the formal definition of truth can be applied to the natural language itself. He says, philosopher's language must not have a distinct status.

There is a common beliefs that logical or formal language is parasitical. But it is wrong in the sense that no language is ever be independent. The advantage of logical language is only its preciseness and clarity.. Such precise languages are actually meant for common language itself. In other words, if logical language is meant for logic only, then where does it apply? Hence, Davidson argues that truth can be defined in one and the same language.

According to Davidson, the universality of natural language creates problem in Tarskian truth-definition mainly because of his confusion in the order of explanation. If the structure of Tarskian truth-definition is properly used, then the universality may not create problem for understanding language. It is also argued that semantic paradox arises when the range of the quantifiers in the object-language is too generous in certain way. But if the object-language and meta-language are expressed in the same language, the range of the quantifier cannot be insufficient to yield a formal definition of truth.

Similarly, according to Davidson, one does not need formalized language in order to understand natural language. He says that if at all truth-definitions are needed for natural language, it is capable of doing that. To him, the task of a theory of meaning is not to change or improve or reform a language, but to describe and understand it. He also added that what Tarski meant by amorphous and ambiguous in natural language would not matter for the application of truth-definition in it. As long as ambiguity does not

effect the formal structure of truth-definition, it can be translated into meta-language.

Davidson argues that Tarskian semantic project provides purely extensional minimal tools to define truth. His theory, therefore interpreted as truth bearer. The truth predicates in his format defines the class of true sentences in a particular language. Meta-language is merely interpretations about calculus of class. Mind, in this sense is analogous to calculating machine, having no interaction as man in the world. However, Tarski never claimed that he could provide a general truth predicate for science and ethics. In other words, he has no aim to exceed the limits of extensionality by capturing the meaning of the terms. Instead, he wants to eliminate these semantic notions to guarantee that his concept would not introduce inconsistencies into the formal discipline. We applied truth predicate and conditionals to formal language only. He is aware of that characterization of semantic concept would be 'vague' or totally wrong if those concept had no empirical application.² Hence unlike Davidson, in Tarskian semantics³, there is a wide gap between science and non-science. In other words he could not welcome folk philosophy to trespass the province of science. Philosophy, for Tarski, is the method of analysis in formal language. Davidson, therefore rejects Tarskian truth definition by adopting only its formal structure. His attempt is to extend the application their formal structure of truth predicate and biconditional to natural languages.

4.2 Truth as Primitive : A unified theory of truth (Second stage)

In second stage, Davidson makes use of this structure to provide meaning of the sentences uttered by the speaker at particular time. Thereby, his attempt is to extend Tarskian formal semantics to natural language. Truth

in Davidson's sense, is primitive. It is an elementary concept. He claims that by relating to this elementary concept, we could explain and understand any semantic notions whatever. In this sense, for Davidson, truth and meaning are related notions. Any utterance or sentence, he argues, does involve meaning. Unless there is connection between truth and meaning, the theorems cannot yield empirical truth about the sentences of any language. And the theorems cannot be taken to provide the truth conditions of sentences. It has been noted that Tarskian semantics lacks empirical content to capture the full extension of truth predicate. Davidson finds analogy of Tarskian logical tool with lifeless machine. Davidson's problem is, how can we extend the limits of Tarskian truth – predicate to capture the meaning of the terms? In other words, the crucial issue here is: how Davidson provides empirical content to Tarskian theory of truth?

Davidson suggests ramifications in truth-definition. Tarski's definition of truth are normally reached through several steps. First, there is a definition of what it is to be a sentence of the object language. Next, a recursive characterisation of satisfaction relation. Finally, the recursive characterization of satisfaction is turned into an explicit definition. Davidson boldly dropped the final step that turns the recursive characterisation of satisfaction into a definition by treating the notion of satisfaction and its predicate (truth) as primitive. Davidson argues that once we have obtained the theory, we can explain the truth of sentences or utterances on the basis of their structure and the semantic properties of parts. He suggests to posit unobserved or indirectly observed objects and forces utterance (events) in order to organise and explain what is directly observed. 'Truth' and 'biconditional' are these objects and forces. The essential nature of these notions, however does not affect the formal system; and the theory can be correctly tested by verifying the conditions of occurrence of events (utterance). Davidson therefore measured two conditions to ascribe truth-predicate to the given sentence.

- (i) We have to take sentences as utterances of the speaker.
- (ii) Relative the utterance by time.

Davidson's perspective on language and truth is this. What is open to observation is the use of sentences in the context. Truth is the simplest semantic concept that we understand its relation with meaning and belief at best. 'Reference', 'Satisfaction', 'Meaning', 'Language' are theoretical concepts. They are conceptual parasites gaining any content from the concept of truth. According to Davidson, what is missing in Tarski's truth theory is the connection with the users of language. He says, that nothing would count as sentence and the concept of truth would therefore have no application, if there are not creatures who use sentences by uttering or inscribing token for them" [SCT; 1989 : 297]. It does not provide an account to explain linguistic competence or communication itself. Davidson argues that truth can be defined only if the speaker and the circumstances of the utterances of each sentence mentioned in the definition is matched by the speaker (interpreter) and circumstances of the utterances of truth-definition itself. In short, the interpreted sentence and the speakers utterance must homophone each other. Reading in this way, sometimes Davidson's theory might be interpreted as homophonic theory of truth.

However, Davidson's attempt in the theorem is not to construct homophonic theory of truth. [which might be clear in the next stage]. While expecting homophonic theory of truth, we are actually looking for the symmetric causal relation between speaker, interpreter and world in verbal behaviour. But the inevitable problem we have to face here is that the sentence (of any kind) which a speaker utters not only have linguistic meaning but also have intentions or beliefs (propositional attitudes).

In this context, the problems which we addressed in the introduction arises. KW's sceptical paradox arises because their attempt is to fix meaning

in terms of the use of language. And also as discussed earlier, there are philosophers who analyse language in terms of mind. Both attempts are wrong. According to Davidson, philosophy of mind and philosophy of language must be taken together. For this, he proposed a unified theory of meaning and belief.

For Davidson, the question whether the theory is true of a given language (of a speaker) makes sense only if the sentences of that language have a meaning that is independent of the theory. Otherwise, the theory is not a theory in the ordinary sense, but a description of a possible sense. According to him, it is not necessary to define truth for a given language instead the language must have life independent of the definition.

Davidson's theory of truth is mainly meant for solving the problem of interpretation. He argues that sentences that a speaker utters have meaning or intention. For him, meaning is not merely an obscure concept but it clearly involves truth. If we know what an utterance actually meant, we know its truth condition. He thinks that without considering speaker's intention, one cannot reveal anything of important about what is basic of communication.

Davidson influences H. P. Grice in this respect. The theory demands a fit between how speakers intends to be interpreted and how their interpreter understand them. The utterance of the speakers is true if and only if the speaker intends it to interpreted as true. Conversely, the interpretation of the utterance will be true if and only if the interpreter could grasp the literal meaning of the speaker's utterance. The theory, therefore, connects speakers with interpreter.

How an interpreter collects data from the utterances of the speaker? The theory describes at once the linguistic abilities and practice of a speaker

and gives the content of what knowledge interpreter knows. This will enable him to grasp the meaning of the speaker's utterances. Neither speaker nor the interpreter is aware of propositional content of such a theory. It says nothing directly about what speaker means. But it provides an opportunity to specify the infinite possibility of language to the interpreter to know about what the speaker meant. If an interpreter had explicit propositional knowledge of the theory about the speaker, he would know the truth-conditions of the utterance of speaker.

Davidson calls his own truth-conditional theory as 'a far looser sense of theory' than Tarskian truth-theory. The conditions, the theory provides, are not one that could be satisfied completely. Even then, it can be applied to natural languages. The semantic concept of truth provides not merely an insight into the nature of truth but also it provides meaning or knowledge of the propositional content enough for understanding language. Hence, truth-concept is not necessarily conflicting or inconsistent in Davidsonian truth theory.

How an interpreter could grasp or understand the literal meaning of the speaker's utterances? Davidson argues that the theories of correct interpretation are possible only if the meaning and truth-conditions are necessarily based on available evidence. The theory accomplishes this by describing the critical core of the speaker's potential and actual linguistic behaviour. This does not entail that truth and meaning can be defined in terms of observable behaviour. But it does imply that meaning is entirely determined by observable or even readily observable behaviour. Davidson, the determinacy of meaning is a matter of grasping the content of belief sentences. He says,

"The aim of interpretation is not agreement but understanding. My point has always been that understanding can be secured only by interpreting

in a way that makes for the right sort of agreement. The 'right sort', however, is not easier to specify than to say what constitutes a good reason for holding a particular belief" [ITI : XVII]

Davidson says further,

We do not know what someone means unless we know what he believes; we do not know what some one believes unless we know what he means [ITI : 77].

According to Davidson, the concept of meaning has essential connection with other intentional notions such as belief and desire. He calls these concepts as basic trio which cannot be reduced into behavioural or neurological or physiological entities. In other words, they are mere linguistic entities (metaphors) which could be understood and analysis in terms of one another or other concepts. But, if intentional notions are analysed in terms of such notions itself, communication would be impossible. Then Davidson's proposal is to find an approach that yields an interpretation of the speaker's words at the same time that it provides a basis for attributing beliefs and desires to the speaker. By this approach, he thinks that we would enable us to provide a basic structure for the individuation of propositional attitudes.

Davidson argues,

"Meaning and belief play interlocking and complementary roles in the interpretation of speech. By emphasizing the connection between our grounds of attributing beliefs to speakers and our grounds for assigning meaning to their utterances, I hope to explain some problematic features both the belief and of meaning"[ITI : 141].

What are the prospects for the axiomatic treatment of words uttered? Tarski has showed in detail how to describe structure or pattern of truth in

language. Davidson extended his task to identify the presence of such a pattern or structure in the behaviour of people. He finds the basic model of such theory in Bayesian decision theory (Richard Jeffrey's version). It explains how our choice of one course of action over another (preference that one state of affair obtain rather than the another) is the product of two unknown states of mind – i.e., degree of belief and cardinal value (relative strength of preference – desire). Jeffrey has shown in detail how to extract subjective probabilities and values from preferences using truth-functional structure of propositions. Davidson says that,

“It develops a striking parallel between Bayesian theories of decision and theories of meaning, and gives reason why two theories should be considered mutually dependent”. [ITI : XVII]. This will provide a promise of a unified theory of speech and action.

Bayesian decision theory does not provide a definition of the concept of beliefs and preferences on the basis of non-intentional notions. Rather, it makes use of one intentional action (preference – outcome) to give content to two further notions – degree of belief and comparison of difference in value (desire). And so, the theory does not aim to reduce the intentional concepts to something else. Even then, it will, in application, come closer to publicly observable behaviour. Moreover, the theory shows how is it possible to assign content to two basic and inter-locking propositional attitudes without assuming that either one is understood in advance.

According to Davidson, a Bayesian decision theory is a theory for explaining human action. It presupposes that a rational agent has an ability to identify and individuate the proposition to which attitudes like belief and desire are directed. Davidson adds that, such ability is not to be separated from our ability to understand what he says (speaker's utterance). Thus, obviously, a theory that explains attitudes and beliefs; preferences and choice

must include a theory of verbal interpretation. The theory, thus, opens a way to know what an agent means by his words. Unlike Ryle and others, Davidson argues that one knows clearly of what he thinks or speaks of. Yet, Davidson says that this addition must be made in the absence of detailed information about the propositional content of beliefs, desires or intention.

Davidson attempts to provide similar approach to the verbal interpretation. According to him, a speaker holds a sentence true as a result of two considerations.

- (i) What he takes the sentence to mean.
- (ii) What he believes to be the case.

Then what is relatively observable by the interpreter is the product of these two unobservable attitudes (meaning and belief). The observable phenomena are nothing but speech-act itself. Thus, how can the role of unobserved explanatory factors be distinguished and extracted from the evidence (speech-act)?

Quine's key idea is that the correct interpretation of an agent by another cannot be intelligibly admitted in every respect. There is certain kind and degree of difference between interpreter and speaker's utterance (interpreted) with respect to belief. As a result, an interpreter is justified in making certain assumptions about the beliefs of an agent before interpretation begins. As a constraint on interpretation, this is often called by Neil Wilson,⁴ by the name, 'The Principle of Charity'. For Davidson, this is a brilliant device for separating meaning and belief without assuming either.

Davidson is inspired by Quine's method of approach to meaning but he deviates from Quine substantially. Quine is mainly concerned with the conditions of successful translation from a speaker's language into the interpreters. Whereas, Davidson emphasises what interpreter needs to know

for the semantics of the speaker's language. He says, that given a theory of truth for a speaker's language L and stated in the interpreter's language M , it is fairly easy to produce a manual that translates from ' L to M '. But the converse, i.e., from M to L is false. For instance, it is easy to imagine a language which contain translation of the English word 'now' and can give the truth-condition of the English sentences containing the word 'now'. But the converse, (i.e., translation for unknown language) is impossible. Quine's causal explanation is based on the effect or actions, whereas Davidson's reason explanation is based on cause. Both Quine and Davidson attempt to provide casual relation between events. In the case of Quine, reason might be the third element connecting two events. Hence his question is 'what causes one to act in particular way rather than another'. The answer will provide reason which is the cause of action. Thus rationalization is therefore 'species of causal explanation' [Louse Antony, Murray and others follow this path]. In the case of Davidson, reason is not the third element⁵ connecting cause and effect. His question is therefore: 'Why one act in particular way?' The answer will be good analysis of cause, ie reason itself which never presupposes any effect. This will provides explanation of why we denies asymmetric causal explanation (see Salmon Wesley's explanation.)⁶ The propositional attitude is not taken into account in the latter case. And Quine's causal explanation are looking for objective rational code of communication. That is the reason why he is sceptical about meaning. Davidson's view of radical interpretation solves this problem. According to Davidson, the theory demands to satisfy the constraints of the theory of truth. In other words, the theory of interpretation needs a basic structure of truth-theory.

Hence on the basis of convention T , Davidson noticed in Quine that the possibility of understanding the speech or action of an agent depends on the existence of a fundamentally rational pattern, i.e., a pattern that must be shared by all rational creatures. Such shared rational pattern of rationality is

the logic of understanding. We have to project our own logic into the language and beliefs of another. This means, it is a constraint on possible interpretation of sentences held true that makes communication logically consistent. Logical consistency, in this way might yields interpretation of the logical constants. Quine's radical translation proceeds on the basis of public availability of constitutive aspect of language.

Davidson noticed that if the identification of the logical constants required for first-order quantification structure have been accomplished, it is possible to identify singular terms and predicates. Then, how singular terms and predicates are to be interpreted? Here, interpreter must also consider the events and objects in the world that causes speaker to hold the sentence true. The circumstance of the agent to accept that particular sentence as true must take into account by the interpreter. In other words, the circumstances observable by the speaker and interpreter must be alike. Thus, the interpreter on noticing that the agent regularly assent (accepts) or descent (rejects) the sentence 'The coffee is ready', when coffee is or is not ready will try for a theory of truth that says that 'an utterance of an agent of the sentence'. 'The coffee is ready' is true if and only if the coffee can be observed by the agent to be ready at the time of the utterance.' [SCT : 320]. This is Quinean way of radical translation. Davidson's radical interpretation model is not based on observable evidence. He ramified Tarskain truth definition according to tense logic.

Tarskian formal definition of truth treated demonstratives, indexicals as constant. In logic, it is possible to ignore these elements without error. But what is omitted in Tarskian truth-theory is the logic of the tense. Davidson argues that the demonstrative, indexicals, etc., should not be eliminated from the sentences in natural languages. It is through these elements that we most directly allow predicates and singular terms to be connected to objects and

events in the world. It must, therefore, be accommodated within truth-theory. Davidson shows how to accommodate these elements in theories of truth.

Davidson suggests to use the logic of tense proposed by A.N. Prior [1967]. Of course, Quine also used this technique. In the semantics of tense logic, points in time (the states of world at each point in time) correspond to the alternative world of modal logic. The intuition is that we understand the expression with tense operator by understanding what it would mean for the simple expression to be true at other points of time. Thus, for any point of time, we can distinguish between the points that precede and the points that follow it. This makes it possible to have four operators in tense logic.

- (i) $F\alpha$ is true relative to a point in time t iff α is true relative to a point in time which follows t .
- (ii) $H\alpha$ is true relative to a point in time t iff α is true relative to a point in time which precedes t .
- (iii) $G\alpha$ is true relative to a point in time t iff α is true relative to *all* points in time which follows it.
- (iv) $A\alpha$ is true relative to a point in time t iff α is true relative to *all* points in time which precedes it.

Accordingly, when a speaker utter the sentence 'That book was stolen'. It can be interpreted as follows:

"That book was stolen' is true as (potentially) spoken by P at ' t ' if and only if the book demonstrated by P at ' t ' is stolen prior to ' t .'" [ITI : 81].

Davidson says that "Sentences with demonstratives obviously yield a very sensitive test of the correctness of a theory of meaning, and constitute the

most direct link between language and the recurrent macroscopic objects of human interest and attention". [Ibid : 82]

Davidson argues, at one moment the truth of the event is sensitive and creative. But for the next moment, even speaker might have varied truth condition and so different meaning; and confusion arises. The sensitivity and creativity of speaker and interpreter differ widely depending on time, and of course place. Even then, understanding meaning is possible if we consider evidence as events (it includes historical case, present case, future case, mathematical, even ethical). If we consider evidence as truth conditions of event spoken by speaker the sentence uttered must have semantic clues of worldly circumstances. As discussed in the first chapter, unless there is no semantic object for semantic purpose, there would be no thing for the speaker and the interpreter to communicate. Interpreter, in this case, re-interprets speaker's words in more substantial way. Here, it is not convention that plays an essential role in communication, rather the sensitivity and creativity of the speaker or interpreter to grasp truth predicate working as biconditionals provide meaning or empirical content to the speaker as well as interpreter.

Davidson here, proposed an alternative kind of methodology rather than the more detailed account of truth. Accordingly Davidson asks, 'What it is for words to mean what they do?' The answer amounts to a 'theory of meaning', which for Davidson is 'not a technical term but a gesture in the direction of a family of problems (a problem family)'. The methodology have positive as well as negative effects. As a negative effect, it offers no definition of the concept of truth, nor any brief substitute for a definition. The positive effect is its attempt to trace the connection between the concept of truth and macroscopic human attitudes and behaviour (action).

Davidson's methodological inspiration comes from axiomatic theories of various sciences. For instance, the theory of measurement. We put clear

constraints on one or more undefined concepts and then prove that any model of such theory has intuitively desired properties. And that it is adequate to its designed purpose. The theory can be applied to and tested against the specific phenomena as mass or temperature. Here, we cannot demand a precise indication of how to do this. But we could find a useful method for applying theory to the necessary phenomenon.

However, there must be actual objects and states of affair in order to apply the above method directly. But there is no prospect to apply directly to the utterances, beliefs, desire and so on. And if we did not understand what it was for utterance to be true, we would not be able to characterise the content of these states, objects and events. So, in addition to the formal theory of truth, there must be an account of how truth is to be predicted to these empirical phenomena.

According to Davidson, the problem connecting truth with observable human behaviour can be diagnosed by a theory of verbal interpretation. But the interpretations of terms which cannot be directly observed are largely depending on conditional probabilities. Its construction is based on more elementary attitudes. The theory of meaning calls for a degree of belief in order to make serious use of relations of evidential support. In this case, Davidson suggests a unified theory of meaning and action. Here, the theory of verbal interpretation and Bayesian decision theory combinely produces results. This is a method of applying axiomatic treatment to the propositional attitudes, which, in turn, will enable us to calculate or derive the degree of belief, desirabilities on an interval scale and the probability he attaches to those states are contingent on the truth of the relevant sentence.

Hence, to the philosophical question, 'What makes the sentence true?', Davidson says, we knew all that it was possible in advance. That is, Davidson truth is something, which we taken for granted. It is the primitive concept.

The concept of truth has its content only in relation with 'meaning', 'reference' or 'beliefs' etc. Hence to the question what makes the task practicable at all, he argues, provides only the structure, the normative character of thought, desire, speech and action. What is that imposes the correct attribution of attitudes to others? Davidson has no refrains to answer these questions. The norms that govern theories of intentional attribution are crude, vague and incomplete. The way to improve our understanding is to improve our grasp of truth conditions implicit in all interpretation of thought and action.

I think this would be enough to explain how monism of mental and physical event is possible. It is non-reductive physicalism as well. By defending anomalous monism in this way, Davidson's concern is to elucidate *homo natura* dimension of man. Thereby his attempt might be not to measure but to understand and describe the distance between *homo persona* (man in social situation) and *homo natura*. Hence in the fifth chapter we may discuss more in detail about homo-personal dimension in Davidsonian theory of radical interpretation. Still, Davidson argues for anomalism of mental. Why? Let us enter into the third stage of his perspective.

4.3 Truth as Undefinable (Third Stage)

According to Davidson, truth is an undefinable concept. We saw earlier that in the first stage of his endeavour Davidson was preoccupied with the hypothesis that truth and meaning are related notions so much so that meaning itself could be defined in terms of truth-conditions. This is what earned the label realist to him. Accordingly, the paradigm of realism is associated with

Meaning = *df.* Truth-conditions

Davidson was considered to be offering a truth-conditional theory of meaning as part of the overall project of semantics of natural language. The basic project in the above is to transform the truth-predicate into one that could

account for meaning. This is the celebrated project of Tarski-Davidson paradigm in semantic theory that held sway among philosophers for over half a century. In all essentials, it was an axiomatically developed theory that yields the meaning-theorems for each and every sentence in language. The foremost criticism was not against this theory but making truth as central to it as one of the twin notions. The paradigm was threatened by the verification-theorists who put forward their alternative by holding that

$$\text{Meaning} = \text{dfb} . \text{Verification} - \text{Conditions}^7$$

Verification-Conditions was almost synonymous with assertability conditions and it is associated with anti-realists who questioned not only the centrality of truth, but also began to think that realism lacks credibility. The change has come over to Christen assertability conditions with justifiability conditions. It is at this juncture, Davidson began to pursue a unified theory and supported the empirical status of this theory with the theory of decision. Its axiomatic form was determined by Bayesian decision theory of probability that could very well be used to analyse propositional attitude content. Truth-theory was conceived to have a structure as well a content. Its structure was determined by axiomatics in the above sense and the content of course belongs to semantics. Without abandoning the contours of a unified theory, Davidson was soon to have recourse to a defence of his theory in the face of upcoming deflationists who destroyed any chances of defining truth-theory. This moved him on towards the third stage. Finally, in the third stage of his thought, Davidson recognises the methodological error in defining truth. Though at first his semantic theory explains the correspondence relation between language and reality, it is still doubtful whether an empirical status can be given to it forever. One can agree with empirical status, but still it opens to certain perennial questions.

As a result, Davidson's own claims to realism began to be suspect. Davidson himself showed signs of fighting a losing battle on the realistic front. His was realism without reference, and correspondence without confrontation. Nevertheless, he was not totally willing to give up the modicum of relationship that was introduced at the initial stage of his theory. Originally the battle was against the Tarskian constraints of truth-theory which were made applicable to the class of formal languages. The definition of truth was in terms of satisfaction of a sequence of open sentences within a particular schema. He was not willing to give up the broad contour of scientific theory and it was then he introduced the concept of prior theory and passing theory which were poised enough to sustain communication and interpretation against falling into scepticism about correct interpretation.

It is this crucial feature of the theory that Ramberg's study exploits so as to recover the empirical status of Davidsonian theory of interpretation, communication and convention. With this, Davidson's commitment to relativism has been softened down to a minimum. Finally, in the wake of redundancy theory of truth and the deflationist theory of truth, Davidson was motivated to build a new foundations of semantic theory. Against the impossibility of defining truth, he went on to couple it with meaning with a view to sustain a programme that has been heavy weathered since the time of Quine's scepticism. Once again, truth and meaning became the crucial pair. The perennial question was how to tackle the implausibility of defining truth. This is what motivated him to reflect on the procedure of defining truth. Calling it a fallacy, he went on to think about a combined understanding of truth and meaning, interpretation and communication. It was Dummett who first formulated the dictum 'a model of meaning is a model of understanding'.

Dummett and Davidson are two leading advocates who propose a close connection between meaning and understanding. Dummett says, "a model of

meaning is a model of understanding." He insists that a theory of meaning for language must give an account of "what it is that someone knows when he knows the language, that is, when he knows meaning of the expressions and sentences of the language" (Dummett 1975 : 99).

Dummett argues 'a model of understanding' as 'a representation of what it is that is not when an individual knows the meaning' of the possible object of understanding-as it might be, a word, a construction or a whole language (1973 : 217). To provide such a model is to spell out the kind of knowledge that constitutes, or at least sustains, various kinds of linguistic understanding. Dummett's view is that the central philosophical debates about the nature of meaning are properly understood to be the debates between the following two slogans: One slogan is 'the meaning of sentence is the method of verification'. And the other is 'the meaning of sentence consists in its truth conditions'. Accordingly, if the sentence means anything at all, then to understand a sentence, the former construes as to know how it may be verified and the latter argues as to know under what conditions it is true. Dummett and the Davidson hold those views respectively.

According to Dummett, the knowledge is propositional. Any attempt to produce a theory, knowledge of which constitutes possession of a linguistic capacity. In saying so much, Dummett is not committed to denying that an understanding of a word or sentence is the first instance a matter of knowing how to use it. However, he is committed to denying that his formulations provides a complete account of understanding. He argues that we need a more detailed facilitation of what such *know* and how consists in [1973:223]. Dummett is, so clear that the propositional knowledge in question will in general be *implicit*. That is to say, it is the knowledge that a subject may possess even though he is unable to express the proposition thereby not. From this observation, Dummett derives consequence crucially constrained

the sort of knowledge which he thinks might constitute or sustained understanding. 'Implicit knowledge', he says, cannot meaningfully be ascribed to somebody unless it is possible to say in what the manifestation of that knowledge consists. There must be an observable difference between the behaviour and capacities of someone who is said to lack it (1973 : 217). Thus the implicit knowledge possessed in proposition is said to underlie understanding. It must be manifested in behaviour.

The significance of this requirement emerges when we consider above two models of understanding. In discussing the problem of characterizing our understanding of declarative sentences, Dummett exemplified these two models. The first one is Davidsonian truth – conditional model of understanding. The second one is the verification condition model or anti-realistic model of understanding.

According to the truth conditional model of Davidson – which Dummett labels 'realist' model- *understanding* 'consists in our grasp of (the sentence's) truth conditions, which determinately either obtain or failed to obtain, but which cannot be recognized by us in all cases as of obtaining whenever they do' (1972:23). Thus, our understanding of the sentence 'A city will never be build at the North Pole' is taken by the realist to consist in our knowing that it is true just on condition that a city will never be build at the North Pole, a condition that may be obtained without our even knowing so (Dummett, 1959 : 16-7). This Dummett argues, is rendered problematic by the requirement of manifest ability. 'It is quite obscure', he writes 'In what the knowledge of the conditions under which a sentence is true and consists, when that conditions is not one which is always capable of being recognized as obtaining' (1973 : 224).

That is, "there can be no manifestations of the required kind of the knowledge of truth conditions in cases where it is in principle impossible to

know the truth of some true statements' (1976 : 99). The crucial claim, in other words, is that there is something opaque about the attribution. To know that sentence *s* is true just as condition that the city will never be built at the North Pole'. Because the occasion may never arise on which somebody is granted the opportunity to give conclusive reasons for accepting the sentence as true or rejecting it as false, 'the knowledge which is being ascribed to one who is said to understand the sentence is knowledge which transcends the capacity to manifest that knowledge by the way the sentence is used' (1973 :225).⁸

Dummett says,

"Ought meaning be explained truth conditional? Ludwig Wittgenstein thought, or atleast frequently wrote as if he thought that the meaning of a word or type sentence is constituted by its use, that is, the manner in which it is (correctly) employed in linguistic interchange (spoken or written)" [2003:9]

Dummett noted that there are three fundamental features of Wittgenstein's notion of 'use' [Ibid:10]. First is what is accepted as justifying an utterance. If the utterance is of an assertoric character, this becomes the grounds for asserting a statement. It includes what is acknowledged as entitling a speaker to make an assertion, what requires him to withdraw it and in what circumstances if any it conclusively establishes it as correct. The second feature consists of what speaker commit himself to by saying something and what is counted as proper response to another's utterance when the utterance is assertoric, this comes consequence of making the assertion. It includes what constitutes acting on an assertion when it is accepted as well as inferences drawn from the statement so asserted. The third feature is (according to Dummett more reflexive) the point of having a

given form of words in language. He argues that a fully adequate account of the use of a given form of sentence will always show what is the point of having it in the language, whenever there really is a point in this. Dummett argues none of these features of a language involves the conception of a statement's true.

Dummett found harmony between the two fundamental features of Wittgenstein's use of language: that we draw from a statement only consequences that match the ground for asserting or accepting it, and that we accept it on any grounds that justify the consequences we draw from it. If such harmony prevails, then, he argues, one of the two fundamental features of use will be derivable from the other; and the meanings of individual words and sentences of the language can be given in terms of either such feature.

Dummett says,

"A theory of meaning given terms of the grounds for asserting a statement I shall call a justification theory; one given in terms of the consequence of accepting a statement I shall call a pragmatist theory". [Ibid, 11]

Dummett also says that there is indeed no guarantee that the linguistic practices accepted by the speakers of any actual language will conform to the requirements of harmony. In this sense, Dummett also accepts that there is indeterminacy of meaning. But here, unlike Quine, Dummett's solution is to suggest for reformation of those practices.

According to Dummett, the truth-conditional theorist, therefore has two challenges to meet. He has, first to show how the fundamental features of the use of any statement of a language can be derived from the conditions of its truth. And secondly determine what are the grounds for asserting the

statement, and how accepting it will affect the actions of a speaker or hearer. [2003:12].

Dummett argues,

"In showing this, the theorist will be spelling out that connection between the use of language and the truth conditions of its statements the connection between truth and meaning-which Davidson, in his original formations, left a tacitly understood". [2003:12].

Pointing towards these deficiency of Davidson's theory, Dummett already proposes his alternative theory of 'anti-realism'. Dummett argues that we should explicate meaning in terms of grounds of assertion rather than truth. And we should give up the laws of bivalence of those statements that truth value of which is in principle undecidable. Such statements, Dummett says, we should be non-realists. Dummett supports a type of anti-realism of truth. Accordingly, our understanding of the sentence will consist, not in knowing under what conditions it is true, but 'in knowing what recognizable circumstances determined it as true or as false' (1972:73). It consists in knowing under what circumstances a sentence may be asserted.

According to Dummett, what differentiates such a theory from one in which truth is central notion, is, first, that meaning is not directly given in terms of the conditions for a sentence to be true, but for it to be verified and; secondly, that the notion of truth, when it is introduced must be explained, in the same manner, in terms of our capacity to recognize statements as true, and not in terms of a condition that transcends human capacities.' [Ibid].

Dummett claimed that his alternative model anti-realism not only met the demand of manifestability but also have the merit of leading to a more plausible account of what learning a language involves: "Thus we learn to

assert 'p and q' when we can assert p and can assert q, to assert 'p or q' when we can assert p or can assert q . . . we no longer explain the sense of a statement by stipulating its truth value in terms of the truth value of its constituents, but by stipulating when it may be asserted in terms of conditions under which its constituents may be asserted (1959:17-18).

Davidson's overall perspective are not entirely different from Dummett. They agree each other in important aspects, they differ each other. Davidson also accepts with Dummett that the truth value or content of truth is determined by the essential grasp of speaker's contention. But unlike Dummett, Davidson ardently believes that it is not based on 'speaker's grasp' or meaning that we understand truth, rather it is based on conditions of grasp being true, that we determine meaning of any sentences. According to Davidson, meaning cannot fix neither in terms of the use of language nor in terms of the propositional attitudes, of the speakers or interpreter himself. Davidson's perennial question therefore related to the crucial issue of fixing the meaning of the terms itself.

Dummett's criticism of Davidson's theory is invalid. As Akil Bilgrami noted, [1986] he misinterprets and Davidson as a pragmatist. Dummett believes that the dictum "Meaning is in use" implies in the knowledge of truth-conditions of the sentences of the language. This follows from the assumption of Frege's antipsychological adherence of intuitions in Davidson's truth-conditional meaning. And since there is discoverable distance between knowable and unknowable person, Davidson seems to support Wittgenstenian behaviourism. This leads, Dummett to think that – 'meaning is something public' in Davidson's theory.

On the basis of above assumption concerning Davidson, Dummett suggests that the only way in which knowledge of truth-condition may be manifested is by the exercise of a capacity to recognize them as obtaining *if*

and when they obtain. To have such a capacity, we must engage in some finite activity. It culminates in some routine behavioural manifestation of the recognition of the obtaining of truth-conditions. Therefore, he says, 'meaning is use'. But the difficulty of this view is that we cannot genuinely know their truth-conditions. Yet we do know the *meaning* of these sentences. In short, he is saying that what we know in virtue of which we understand them cannot be their truth-condition. Thus he proposes an alternative thesis: To know the meaning of a sentence is to know the conditions that warrant the sentence's assertion or denial.

According to Bilgrami, Dummett has not yet developed a way of applying the alternative thesis of Davidson's theory of meaning. Dummett never specify the details of the form of theory of meaning to be constructed or tested. Often, he uses an alternative notion of the truth tied to what we are capable of recognition. But the difference is in words.

Crisper Wright argues that there is some sense of realism of truth laying at the essential semantic ground work of Dummett. Accordingly, he believes that our thought aspires to reflect a reality whose character is entirely independent of us and our cognitive operations. Hence both realism and anti realism accepts truth condition.

Thus, as Alexander Miller noted, we may distinguish realism and anti-realism as follows:

Realism: The sentences of D have truth conditions (are truth-apt) and these truth conditions are potentially verification-transcendent.

Anti-realism: The sentences of D have truth condition (are truth-apt) but those truth conditions are not potentially verification transcendent.

The debate between realism and anti realism about a region of discourse is a debate about the nature of the truth-conditions possessed by the sentences of that discourse. Any account of truth conditions of range of sentences will be unacceptable if it cannot cohere with a plausible account of what our understanding of those sentences consists in. Dummett's strategy is thus to argue that the account of linguistic understanding that realism leads to is completely implausible, so that realism must be rejected.

Anti-realist, in general, put forward three main argument to challenge realism. (i) the acquisition challenge (ii) the manifestation challenge (iii) the argument from rule following. The former two arguments are of Dummett and the latter argument is of Crispin Wright.

(i) The acquisition challenge: If a piece of knowledge is ascribed to a speaker, then it must be atleast in principle possible for that speaker to have acquired that knowledge. And so it must be at least in principle possible for us to have acquired knowledge of verification-transcendent truth-conditions of a discourse. But there is no plausible story to be told about how we could have acquired knowledge of verification transcendent truth-conditions. Thus the sentences of discourse do not have verification transcendent truth-conditions, so realism about the subject-matter of discourse must be rejected. Crispin Wright criticises this argument as inconclusive. He added that the traditional theories of that sort have long been recognized to be inadequate. In order to be more than a challenge, it would need the backing of a proven theory of concept-formation of a broadly empiricist sort.

(ii) The manifestation argument: This argument follows from the Wittgenstenian insight that understanding does not consist in the possession of an inner state, but rather in the possession of some practical ability. Accordingly, if speaker possess a piece of knowledge that is constitutive of linguistic understanding, then that knowledge should be manifested in

speaker's use of the language, that is, in their exercise of the practical abilities which constitute linguistic understanding. But our knowledge of the verification transcendent truth-condition of the sentences of D should be manifested in our use of those sentences, that is, in our exercise of the practical abilities that constitute our understanding of D. Since such knowledge is never manifested in the exercise of practical abilities which constitute our understanding of D, it follows that we do not possess knowledge of the truth-condition of D. And so we cannot grasp the senses of the sentences of D. ie. we do not know their truth condition. Thus the sentences of D do not have verification transcendent truth-condition, so realism above the subject matter of D must be rejected. The basic weak point is that, so far as an account of speaker's understanding goes, the ascription of knowledge of verification-transcendent truth-conditions is simply *redundant*, there is no good reason for ascribing it.

(iii) The argument from rule-following: This argument involves direct use of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations. Here, Crispin Wright introduces a number of different species of objectivity. According to him, there is the sort of objectivity that is possessed by regions of discourse whose sentences have potentially verification – transcendent truth conditions. He calls the objectivity of truth as:

"To hold that a class of statements may be fully intelligible to us although resolving their truth values may defeat our cognitive powers (even when idealized) may naturally be described as believing in the objectivity of truth" (Wright, RMT: 5).

In addition, there is a distinct notion of objectivity which he calls the objectivity of meaning:

"The meaning of a statement is a real constraint, to which we are bound, as it were, by contract, and to which verdicts about its truth-value may objectively conform, quite independently of our consideration opinion on the matter" (Ibid : 5).

Now Wright argues that if a discourse exhibits objectivity of truth then it follows that it must also exhibit the objectivity of meaning:

"The objectivity of meaning is a manifest implication of the objectivity of truth. If statements of certain sorts can be undetectably true, then we have no alternative but to think of their meanings as, so to speak, reaching into regions where we cannot follow: there is already a verdict about the truth value of such a statement which – if it is intelligible to suppose that our cognitive powers could be appropriately extended – our present understanding of its constituents and syntax would oblige us to give once, we had investigated matters properly" (Ibid.5).

Thus, for a given discourse D, the shape of the argument from rule-following is therefore:

- (a) If D exhibits objectivity of truth then it exhibits objectivity of meaning.
- (b) D does not exhibit objectivity of meaning. Therefore
- (c) D does not exhibit objectivity of truth, that is, the sentences of D do not have potentially verification transcendent truth conditions, so that realism about D must be rejected.

As Alexander Miller noted, this argument is certainly valid. But the plausibility of the argument from rule following against verification – transcendent – truth thus depends on the plausibility of Wright's judgement – dependent conception of meaning. Accordingly, if meaning is judgement – dependent, we have to give up the objectivity of meaning. If the meaning, we

attach to a statement S, is determined by our best judgement, then it is certainly not the case that meaning of S "is a constraint . . . to which verdicts about its truth value may objectively conform, or fail to conform, quite independently of our considered opinion on the matter".

For Dummett, according to Ramberg, truth-conditions are verification-transcendent, if there is a range of objective truth-condition. Hence Antirealist might argue that we explicate meaning in terms of grounds or assertion rather than truth and we should give up the law of bivalence since the truth value of which is in principle and decidable. Such statements, Davidson says we should be non-realist.

Anti-realism was challenged by Anthony Appaih. Appaih believes that the issues between realist and anti realist can be resolved by paying careful attention to semantics. According to him, anti realism is wrong. He argues that he ought to be realist about statements concerning in-principle, inaccessible region of space-time.

Ramberg argues that Dummett's polemic is not with standing because the word he noted that the issue between Dummett and Appaih turns on between acceptability conditions and truth-conditions. The anti-realists wants to get rid of it by suggesting that certain sentences – those sentences, the truth value of which might elude us even if we had all the evidence in the world-are not like other sentences, either true or false. The realist wants to keep the gap open as a receptacle for metaphysical filler, a space which provides room for things to be what they independently are or some such notion.

According to Ramberg, the notion of truth operates in Davidson's work is not the kind required by realist metaphysicians. A true statement for Davidson is simply one we would assert when all the evidence is in, No statement is ever indefeasible. Firstly, for the epistemic reason that we never

posses *all* the evidence there might be and not because of a potential discrepancy between all possible evidence and the way the things really are. Secondly, for the semantic Quinian reason that it is always possible to play around with the truth-value of sentences in a theory while preserving the empirical content of the theory as a whole. According to Ramberg, the debate between the realists and anti-realists is on the law of bivalence in semantics. Dummett may say hard distinction between direct and indirect evidence for the truth of a statement.

Here, Bilgrami's query is this: does the sentences meet the requirement of the direct verification by capturing experiences alone? He argues, "even if we take it for granted the perceptual encounters, which are canonical mode of verification of empirical sentences, one might wonder why all sentence as are not indirectly verified in terms of perceptual experiences. Because it seems difference in verification of our encounters.

As far as Ramberg is concerned the epistemological distinction are at least to be suspected. What for, instance, is the difference between an in-principle unverifiable sentence and a practically unverifiable sentence?

to suggest that a sentence may be false inspite of the indications of all available evidence is uncontroversial. But to suggest that a sentence might be false inspite of the indications of all possible evidence or that it may be true or false even though no evidence either way is conceivable is to introduce a meta-physically laden concept of truth that carries much heavier burden than Davidson's concept of truth is asked to do (Ramberg : 47).

The relation of correspondence that Davidson endorses is one where relata are epistemologically on a *par* (reference and relata are equal in status).

It is the relation of correspondence between observed utterance and specifiable features of the environment. The realism, here, is not of a kind that carries metaphysical significance, since neither of the relata can serve as an underpinning of the other. It is, rather a reminder that we can be no more or less sure about meaning than about facts in the world.

Davidson's realism come to the following :

"If we think we understand what people says we must also regard most of our observation about the world we live in as correct. Davidson does not provide metaphysical assurance of our connection with reality. He simply makes the point that if we try to give-up the world, we must also give-up the language" (Ramberg, 1989).

Davidson's reconciliation of correspondence and coherence is summed up in the slogan "correspondence without confrontation." (Davidson, 1986b: 37). He hinges on a clear grasp of the distinction between semantics and epistemology.

Davidson proclaims himself as realist because, the only way to construct a semantic theory of truth is to postulate a relation between language and the world. But this relation does not serve justificatory purposes of any kind. Rorty also claims that this does not leave much content to the designation 'realist' and he wants to enlist Davidson in the pragmatist's attempts to dissolve the metaphysical questions, as a "struggle that is *beyond* realism and anti realism" (1986:354).

Davidson is a coherenist because the only way to test claims of truth is to see how they cohere with other truths. If we miss the first point, we stand in danger not of losing touch with world, but of opening up the metaphysical

space where epistemological brands of realism and anti-realism confront one another.

Davidson's realism is realistic only in the negative sense that his naturalistic semantics leaves no room for idealism. Missing the second point the epistemic justification is a matter of coherence. We remain bogged in the hopeless search for the link between the world and our representations of it ie., the search for the special mark of truth that would justify the our beliefs.

Hence to the question: 'What makes sentence true?', Davidson replies: "Nothing . . . no thing, makes sentences and theories true: not xperience, not surface irritations, not the world, can make a sentence true. That experience takes a certain course . . . make[s] sentences and theories true" [ITI : 194].

Lynch says "whichever methodological stance we take, there are two central questions one might ask about the property, or underlying nature , of truth. First, does truth even have a nature, and second, if it does, what sort of nature does it have? These two questions are the focus of two very difficult types of debates." [2001 : 3].⁹

According to Lynch, philosopher in this arena, concerned with two types of debate. The theories which try to answer the above question by assuming that truth is an important property that requires a substantive and complex explanation. He calls this robust theories. In the same version, recent theorists were motivated by the questions as follows : Is there such a thing as absolute truth, or is all truth in some way or other subjective or relative? etc. They were mainly concerned with the objectivity of truth. On the other side, there are deflationists who suspected that the so-called problem of truth was really a pseudoproblem. In their view, the alleged

mysteries should not be explained but explained away. They were disquotationalists, redundant theorists, minimalist, performative theorists, prosententialists etc. [Lynch, 2001: 5].

In this context, it is relevant to ask where does Davidson's truth theory stands Given the brilliant pronouncement that nothing makes sentence true, we are tempting to read Davidson's conception of truth as a kind of deflationism. Does he belong to the list of deflationists who destroy philosophically interesting conception of truth? Attacking deflationism of such kinds, Davidson recently pointed out the methodological error of questioning the nature of truth.

Philosophers from early upto these time seek definitions, that will reduce the definition a more primitive type of notion. Whatever may be the case, no one could ever since provide an extremely satisfactory definition. While their insight per deep and deep, the unending questions crippled and reached nowhere. They missed to answer the question, "What really is truth?" Is there any way to rescue it from this sceptical question? What does it mean to ask what truth is? It might be the concept or the property or both. Davidson very much wanted to direct their attention towards a safe path to escape from this hazardous situation. He pointed his finger to the sorts where philosophers had gone wrong in their ingenious attempts to define truth. In other words, he tried to show the falsity of defining truth.

Socrates in his book on *Euthyphro* asks, 'What holiness is?', 'What "makes" holy things holy?'. He was not satisfied with any co-extensive terms. Plato seems to be a sceptic in front of justified belief. Davidson criticises Hume and others by holding that they forget the scepticism of external world, when they formulate doubts concerning knowledge of other minds. According to Davidson, traditional philosophers were going through the wrong path of investigation. They were trying to penetrate deep into

particular concepts as if they were reaching into the realm of metaphysics. They were less worried about the equal involvement of the concept with other concepts [1999 : 263].

Philosophical investigation, for Davidson, is a matter of conceptual analysis. He argues that any rational mind who has an adequate handle of concepts can assume how the things are related. Davidson teaches the following lesson:

"... however feeble or faulty our attempt to relate various basic concepts to each other, these attempts fare better and teach us more than our efforts to produce correct and revealing definition of basic concepts in terms of clearer or even more fundamental concepts." [SCT. 279].

Davidson made a shift in the focus of philosophical puzzlement from epistemology to (the conceptual enterprises) to semantics. According to him, we can describe the world by using language. But, when we analyse language, we could at most expect only its relation to the other concepts. There is no need to expect more than or something above its relation. The relation is purely conceptual. And we do not need any epistemological or metaphysical bridge between language and the world. He insists that

"Language is not a filter or a screen through which knowledge of the world must pass" [ITI : XVIII].

Davidson argues that the concept of truth has the possibility to find the foundation of the theory of meaning. But truth cannot be equated with anything else. We cannot hope to underpin it with something more transparent or easier to grasp. Truth is an undefinable concept. This recalls his position maintained at the second stage calling truth as primitive. However, this does not mean that we cannot say anything revealing about it. Nor does it imply

that the concept is mysterious, ambiguous or untrustworthy. According to him, we can reveal everything about truth by relating it with other concepts like belief, desire, meaning, cause and action.

For Davidson, the concepts such as truth, knowledge, belief, action, cause the good and the rights are the most elementary concepts. And without which there is no concept at all. According to him, negative concepts like 'falsity' or 'wrongness' can be determined only by relating them with positive concepts. In other words, negative concepts always miss content of the 'actual' or 'real' or 'text'. Davidson argues that there is no need to reduce those elementary concepts definitionally to other concepts that are more basic simpler or clearer. According to him, what makes those concepts elementary and valuable is the fact that there is a possibility of finding a structure for a theory of meaning.

Davidson, criticises correspondence theorist, coherence theorist, pragmatist and even deflationist of our age. He compartmentalises all these proposals into two categories [SCT : 1989].

- (i) those who humanise truth by making it basically epistemic.
- (ii) those who promote some form of correspondence.

While coherence theorist and pragmatist conceived truth as an epistemic concept, correspondence theorist claimed truth as real. The latter believes that truth is entirely independent of our belief. They argue that our beliefs must be just as they are and yet reality is very different. And therefore, truth about reality is different and independent of our belief. They regard truth as 'radically non-epistemic'. Putnam criticises their idea calling it as 'transcendental realism'. Dummett calls realism as 'evidence-transcendent'.

Davidson rejects coherenist's claim that finite rational creatures can verify a belief dependent on truth somehow. He regards epistemic view as

unutterable and the realist's claim as unintelligible. Both these views are fundamentally mistaken ideals. Realist, by denying the dependence of truth on belief or other human attitudes, defies only one part of the philosophical use of the word 'realism'. Whereas, epistemologist, idealists and phenomenologists reduce truth to epistemic concept and they become basically sceptical. They are sceptical not because they make reality unknowable but because they reduce reality to so much less than we believe that there are.

Most recently, deflationists, as an alternative for the traditional truth-theories deny the basic supposition of specify what truth is. They believe that the basic theory of truth contains nothing more than equivalence of the form: " p " is true iff p' . Deflationists argue for various competing proposals such as redundant, disquotational theory, minimalism, convergence theory. Argues that none of them seems to keep off from fairly obvious counter-examples. According to him, deflationists are wrong in their conclusion even if he accepts all that they reject. He complained that they hesitate to pump enough content into the concept of truth. Deflationism rejects all theories like correspondence, coherence, pragmatism, realism, anti-realism and so on, for they are dissatisfied with any characterisation of truth. While accepting this as part of their rejection, Davidson disagrees with them in their positive thesis.

Alfred Tarski who claimed himself as redundant theorist wants to hold correspondence theory of truth. Davidson noted that he is neither a redundant theorist nor a correspondence theorist. He could not define truth completely. Even if he defined it, the definition is based on satisfaction and not based on correspondence. Neither could he eliminate the concept of truth from the truth-definition, for he could not capture the essence of the concept of truth. However, according to Davidson, Tarski's convention – (T) is not a rough substitute for a general definition. It is the part of his successful attempt to

provide definition of truth. Davidson criticises Tarski for he does not provide enough content wanted for defining truth.

Davidson argues that Tarski is neither a correspondence theorist nor a redundant theorist. Davidson accepts his strong adherence with Aristotelian formulation. But neither Aristotle's formulation nor Tarski's truth-definition introduces entities like facts or states of affairs for sentences that correspond to. Tarski does define truth on the basis of satisfaction which relates expressions to objects. But the sequences that satisfy sentences are not 'facts' or 'states of affairs' as correspondence theorists argue for. According to correspondence theorist, the truth of a sentence consist in its agreement with (or correspond to) reality. It should be noted that Tarskian truth-definition works with old or known term and not with new terms. And so, if one of Tarski's sequences satisfies a closed sentence, thus making it true, then that same sequence also satisfies every other true sentence, and thus also makes it true. If any sequence satisfies a closed sentence, every sentence does. The truth-predicates in his definition define the class of true sentences in a particular language. Thus, Tarski's concept of truth is not a correspondence version of theory.

If Tarski is neither a correspondence theorist, nor coherent theorist is he a deflationist? Quine believes that he is a deflationist. According to him, Tarskian truth-definition does disquotational function. Quine argues that we can get rid of the predicate 'is true' after the quotation of an English sentence simply by removing the quotation marks. In other words, truth and meaning are one and the same. Quine summarises the Tarskian truth-definition in terms of what he calls truth as disquotation. On this matter, he has not changed his position. Quine puts his general paradigm as follows:

(T) '–' is true in L iff –.

Though the paradigm is not a definition, its disquotational feature makes truth so much clearer a concept than meaning. Davidson finds hard to see how truth could have the power of determining meaning if there is nothing to say about truth. According to him, Quine's view of truth is a mere extended form of Tarski's redundant truth. Both Tarski and Quine segregate the question of truth and the question of meaning. Meaning, for Quine, is another matter of warranted assertability.

Stephen Leeds [1978] also argues that Tarski's schema is a technical improvement of what is basically redundant. Reacting to Quine and Leeds, Davidson argues that Tarski's T-schema is not disquotational, for it shows how to eliminate the truth-predicate from the definition. Tarski himself says that mere disquotation cannot eliminate the word 'true' from the sentences like "The first sentence written by Plato is true'." Here, Tarski is claiming himself as redundant theorist. However, according to Davidson, redundancy is less manifest in Tarskian T-sentences than he claimed, for redundancy must belong to different language (object-language) from the language of which it is predicated. Hence, if at all, there is redundancy of truth, Davidson argues it is clear that such uses play only a small role in our talk of truth. In other words, we cannot meaning in the use of language.

Paul Horwich follows Quine's approach to meaning. Although Davidson endorses Horwich's arguments against correspondence, coherence, pragmatic and epistemic theories, he does not accept Horwich's minimal theory of truth. Horwich does not appeal to substantial quantification in explaining truth. He does not generalise his schema as:

(p) (the proposition that *p* is true if and only if *p*)

by employing propositional content. He argues that if we generalise it in this way, we would have to view ordinary sentences as singular terms referring to propositions and not as expressing propositions.

Davidson believed that Tarskian schema might be redundant, if he agrees with Horwich's view. Horwich argues that the T-schema tells us all we need to know about truth. He says that

"The notion of truth was completely captured by Tarski" [1982].

The term 'true', according to him, means whatever an expression must mean in order to properly fill the blank in the following schema:

' "P" is – iff P'

The blank should be filled in such a way that whatever sentence (of the appropriate kind) one puts for P, the result is true. Horwich argues that Tarski's truth-definition uses this minimal technique.

The recent Minimalistic account of Horwich [2001 : 557-78] is as follows :

Consider the biconditionals like

<Snow is white> is true \leftrightarrow snow is white

and

< lying is wrong > is true \leftrightarrow lying is wrong.

– that is, instances of the equivalence schema:

< p > is true \leftrightarrow P.

Here "<P>" abbreviates "the proposition that P", and " \leftrightarrow " is the material biconditional.

For example, from the premises

What he said is that he was abducted we are prepared to infer. He was abducted.

This particular use of the word "true" is explained by supposing that we first employ Leibniz's Law to get from our pair of premises to

< He was abducted > is true

and then invoke the relevant instance of the equivalence schema. And more generally, it can be made plausible that no fact about the truth predicate—nothing beyond our allegiance to the equivalence schema – is needed to explain any of our ways of using it. Horwich argues that it is for this reason that we are entitled to conclude that the meaning of 'true' is determined by that schema

[2001 : 557-78]

And so, any one speaks a language which does not contain the predicate true may also accommodate to the predicate in the following way: whenever he utters something assertatively, for example, 'P', we could say, you could just as well have said "'P" is true'. Here, we use the notion of equivalence but this does not, at least explicitly make use of the notion of truth. Thus, as Tarski maintained, we could utilise instances of the schema to explain truth without taking truth itself for granted.

Davidson argues that, Tarski does not agree with Horwich that truth, as he defined it, specifies truth-conditions adequate to an account of what language users know. According to Tarski, the semantic definition of truth implies nothing regarding the conditions under which a sentence 'Snow is White' can be asserted. It implies only that whatever we asserted or rejected the sentence, we must be ready to assert and reject the correlated sentence.

Davidson comments:

" --- but he (Horwich) holds that Tarski's schema gives the truth-condition and hence the meanings of the expressions of language his view is essentially that of my '**Truth and Meaning**'. [SCT : Fn :22]

Later Davidson recognised his confusion regarding Horwich's view. He says:

"My confusion on this point is most apparent in '**Truth and Meaning**' – my mistake was to think we could both trace Tarski's truth-definition as telling us all we need to know about truth and use the definition to describe an actual language. But even in the same essay I (inconsistently) discussed how to tell that such definition applied to a language. I soon recognised the error (see the 'Introductin', pp.XIV-XV and other essay in **Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation**). [SCT : Fn : 20]"

Thus Davidson's clarification is given as follows:

"Despite the limitation that have been identified and imagined in Tarski's work on truth, a number of philosophers . . . have endorsed that work as embracing all of truth's essential features . . . I do not belong to this list (of philosophers) however." [SCT : 287-88]

Davidson finds two fundamental problems with Horwich's theory. First, the same sentences appear twice in instances of Horwich schema. One after the word 'the proposition that' and other as an ordinary sentence. Davidson argues that we cannot eliminate this iteration of the sentences without destroying all appearances of the theory. In other words,

compositional principle is missing in his view. The second problem is that he maintains 'assertability condition' for understanding a sentence. Then Davidson's question is this: 'If truth is an assertability condition and knowing the assertability condition is understanding, then how we can understand a sentence without having the concept of truth?'. The same is applicable to Quine, Scott Soames, Putnam, Dummett and the likes.

Apart from the structural accomplishment of truth-definition, Tarski's concept of truth cannot be defined in general. There can be no definition of 'for all language L , and all sentences S in L , S is true in L if and only if – S – L –'. In other words, Tarski justified the application of a truth-predicate to the sentences of a particular language only, by restricting its application to the sentences of that language. Davidson, thus, argues that Tarski's work on truth is not deflationary in the sense that he provides all that is wanted for truth-definition. According to him, Tarski is a deflationist because he could not capture the 'essence' of truth.

Scott Soames [1984] agrees with Horwich in calling T-schema deflationary. He thinks that when truth-predicate explains the concept of truth, we should not ask for anything more, aside from the application of truth to proposition. According to him, truth has nothing to do with meaning. His attempt is to define truth using assertability condition. For Davidson, truth-definition without meaning is 'empty' and mere assertability has no use.

Scott Soames [1984] describes this nature of Tarski's truth-definition as 'deflationism'. Tarski does not believe that there is such a thing as 'the philosophical problem of truth'. He admits that he has been

"informed in this connection that my definition, though it states necessary and sufficient conditions for a sentence to be true, does not really grasp the 'essence' of the concept is, I

must be excused from discussing this point any larger."
[1985 : 61].

While Davidson agrees with Putnam's internal realism, he rejects Putnam's argument of 'idealised justified assertability'. Putnam agrees with Dummett in keeping epistemological status of truth. Dummett's view of truth, however, is more certain than Putnam's idealised version. He abandons the principle of bivalence. His truth is limited to what is definitely ascertainable. Dummett identifies truth with 'justified assertability'. He calls his position as anti-realism.

Davidson rejects Dummett's conception of truth chiefly because it is either empty or makes truth a property that can be lost. Dummett misses the connection of meaning and belief with truth. Thus, on Dummett's view, we can understand and believe a city that will never be built on this spot though belief have no truth-value. Davidson argues that Dummett's view is merely false. For Davidson, realism and anti-realism are not the only ways to give substance to the theory of truth.

Davidson obviously realises the folly of expecting much from the definition of truth, but this does not mean that it has nothing to do with meaning. He does not agree with Soames, Etchemendy and Putnam that Tarski was not even doing semantics, for such comments simply denies the relevance of Tarski's results to the ordinary concept of truth.

An alternative version of traditional pragmatism appears in Richard Rorty's conception of truth. He wanted to enlist Davidson in the pragmatist's attempt to dissolve metaphysical questions, 'a struggle (that) is beyond realism and anti-realism.' However, Davidson persuades Rorty to give up the pragmatic theory of truth. Rorty's version of deflationism accepts John

Dewey's thesis that truth is not a special province of philosophy. But he wrongly concludes that there is nothing interesting to be said about truth.

According to Davidson, Dewey's pragmatic thesis never meant to destroy the fruitful conception of truth. In other words, his pragmatism has positive contribution to the philosophical conception of truth. Dewey argues that there is no highest and ultimate truth inaccessible to experimental research and ordinary practices. But this does not reject the philosophical consequences; rather he says that it has a scientific method of inquiry. Dewey's pragmatic aim was to bring truth down to earth. Once it comes down, there are philosophically important constitutive and instructive thing to say about truth, in relation with human attitudes.

Davidson notices that deflationism has shown some idea of how to formulate a theory of truth but there is no serious idea of how to formulate a theory of meaning based on a concept of 'assertability' or 'use' of language. He thinks that the sort of assertion that is linked to understanding already eliminates the concept of truth. If this is so, we can assert a sentence in a required sense only if we believe the sentence we use to make the assertion is true. And ultimately, what ties language to the world is that, the condition that causes to hold sentences true. Hence, for Davidson, truth, meaning and belief are interrelated notions of understanding. Criticising deflationism, Davidson simply remarks that

"it would be shame if we had to develop a theory of meaning for a speaker or a language independently of a theory of truth for a speaker or a language" [1999 : 275].

He wants to conclude that:

"... the prospects for a deflationary theory of truth are dim. Its attractness seem to me entirely negative. It

avoids or at least tried to avoid, well marked dead ends and recognisable pitfalls" [Ibid].

Davidson notices that the deflationists are still under the Socratic influence of looking for the essence of truth. They made a significant analysis of various concepts to answer the question, 'What makes the sentence true?' Davidson argues that they still fall for the fresh man's fallacy and demand definition of the terms. He insists that it is pointless to aim at the definition. In conceptual analysis, the best possible way of understanding truth is to find its relation with other concepts. He says, in the case of truth, there is no short substitute.

Davidson suggests taking Tarski's truth-definitions to say something about the relations of specific languages to the world. In this sense, one cannot claim that he had told all there is to know about the concept of truth. He has not told us, 'what the concept is', that the truth-definitions for particular language have in common. Thus, Tarski was not trying to define the concept of truth but he was employing that concept to characterise the semantic structures of specific languages. He did not indicate how we can in general reduce the concept of truth to other more basic concepts, nor how to eliminate the English predicate 'is true' from all contexts in which it is intelligibly applied to sentences. Hence Tarskian truth definition is neither redundant nor disquotational.

For Davidson, Tarski's convention-T is not a rough substitute for a general definition. But it is the part of a successful attempt to persuade us that his formal definitions apply our single pre-theoretical concept of truth of certain languages. It seems as if that Davidson is looking for the robust-deflationary continuum truth theory (as the model provided by Boghosian, Crispin Wright, Terrence Hogan and others)

In this context Boghossian notes that on a deflationary conception of truth it is sufficient that it be disciplined by norms of correct usage and that it possess the syntax distinctive of declarative sentences.

According to him, nonfactualism about meaning presupposes both truth is robust and also that truth is not robust. Whether or not a sentence is true is a function of two things: the truth condition it possesses and the way world is. For example, the fact that the sentence 'Grass is green' is true is a function of the fact that it has the following truth-condition.

"Grass is green" is true iff grass is green and of the fact that grass is green as a matter of fact. Secondly, if one of the things that determines whether *a* is non truth -functional, then it will follow that there is no fact of the matter as to whether *a* is *f* either. It follows from non-factualism about meaning that for any *S*,

'*S* is true' is not truth-conditional.

This is just to say that there is no property, truth in virtue of the instantiation (or non instantiation) of which sentences are true (or false). It follows that:

There is no property corresponding to the-predicate "is true". But if there is no property corresponding to the predicate 'is true' then *a fortiori* there is no language-independent property corresponding to the predicate 'is true'. Then truth cannot be robust. Thus according to him, the non factualism about meaning both entails truth as robust and truth as not robust.¹⁰

Terrance Horgan while contrasting non-factualistic account of minimalism and deflationism with *referential semantics* of DCMR, alleged that they do not acknowledge discourse-independent-objects, properties or states of affairs. While anti realist accepts Tarskian truth theory *per se*, repudiate the conception of reference as a direct linkage between language

and a discourse-independent, mind-independent world. In other words, they are rejecting the existence of outside world apart from language and its discourse.

Terrance argues that if truth is the correct ascertainability under operative semantic standards, then the role of meaning is played by the semantic standards themselves. So the matters of meaning at least in large part, matters of operative semantic standards. He claims, that a statement can be semantically correct, in the relevant sense, even if it would be impolite, impolitic or otherwise inappropriate to utter it.

Unlike Crispin Wright, Boghossian Terrance Horgan Davidson's attempt is to keep the vagueness as such. Even if we can correctly determine meaning by relating it with elementary concept of truth, it is the only one point of representation. There are still other determination equally acceptable. Hence it is through interpretations we could proceed endlessly. Using $\text{con}(T)$, Tarski demonstrated how to handle the semantics of quantification for individual languages. His construction of truth-predicate verify and elucidates that the class of true sentences cannot be characterised without introducing a connection between words and objects. Davidson argues that if we conceive the concept of satisfaction as a general form of reference, Tarskian definition has shown clearly how the truth of the sentence depends on the semantic properties of its parts (words). However, his semantic description is limited to capture 'the actual meaning of the old notions' in a particular language. He has no aim to exceed the limit of extensionality to capture the meaning of the terms. Thus, Davidson argues that there is something more to be known about the concept of truth that we learn from Tarski's definition of truth-predicate.

According to Davidson, the formal structure of Tarskian truth-definition is absolutely correct. In order to make use of the structure, we need

not make any change in Tarski's formal system. There is nothing to prevent us from working within Tarskian system. Application of formal semantics to natural languages would not lead to inconsistencies, as Tarski himself believes. Davidson, thus, says that we may take full advantage of Tarskian technical work.

Yet, for Davidson truth is definable. Why it is undefinable? Even if we expect causal connection between speaker (mind), interpreter (language) and the world (event), Such homophonic theory of truth is impossible. What a speaker believes might not be same as what an interpreter interprets. Even if both speaker and interpreter were speaking truth, very oftenly they might be about same thing. Still communication proceeds, here what we noted is that 'language' or 'mind' as entities is not needed for communication. Hence convention is not essential for communication to proceed.

Davidson, here distinguishes between passing thing and prior theory. Passing theory is just passing. It depends on sensitivity and creativity of actual practices occurring at that particular moment. So any description of that event in next moment will destroy the objectivity of truth. Only possibility is to interpret that particular occurrence of event at different time. No prior assumption of truth of the speaker's intention or interpreters intention has to coincide languages with which they speaks. On the other side, neither speaker's language nor interpreter's language has to coincide with the intentions of speaker or interpreters.

It seems, that there are confusions implicit in triangular representations of Martin Davies. As far as Davidson is concerned, this confusion can be removed by constructing causal connection between speaker and interpreter. (homophonic theory of truth). But he argues that there three varieties of knowledge implicit in the above triangular representation – subjective (our knowledge of our own minds), intersubjective (our knowledge of other

minds) and objective (our knowledge of nature). His concern is therefore to find relations among these varieties of knowledge. According to him, these three sort of knowledge form interdependent aspects of epistemic situation and he argues it is in this epistemic situation that we all find ourselves. However, for Davidson none of the three forms of knowledge is reducible to one or both to the others. Each of these three kinds of empirical knowledge has its distinctive character of course, all three varieties of knowledge are concerned with aspects of the same reality, where they differ is in the mode of access to reality. There is undefinability of truth but this never matter in understanding meaning the point will more clearly discuss in chapter V.

Notes

1. Tarskian also never calls 'All equivalence of the form' as definition.
2. Davidson seems to be doubtful regarding Tarskian claim (See Tarskin, 1944 : 359) that he himself as a redundant theorist.
3. I am tempted to call Tarskian truth definition as semantic project because he also made an attempt to the semantics with formal tools. But he agreed the failure of such attempt. (See Lynch : 349,353)
4. Neil Wilson's article on 'Substances without substrate'. Quine applies the principle primarily to the interpretation of logical constant. [See ITI : XVII].
5. He rejects scheme-content distinction as the third dogma of empiricism
6. The quantum mechanics describes casual explanation in this way.
7. Verification condition is put forward mainly by Dummett's anti-realism. Crispin Wright and Terrence Horgan attacks Dummett recently and hence the issue is hotly debating today.
8. See Dummett's recent article Dewey lecture 2003 for his influence of wittgenstein
9. See P: 4 of Lynch (ed) work (2001) for the details for various streams of conception of truth and schematic representation of truth theories.
10. Lynch might call. This form of theory as Robust deflationary continuum

DAVIDSON ON RADICAL INTERPRETATION

Bindu. C “Donald Davidson on truth, meaning and interpretation” Thesis.
Department of Philosophy , University of Calicut, 2003

CHAPTER V

DAVIDSON ON RADICAL INTERPRETATION

No doubt, Tarskian truth definition provides a basic structure of the Davidsonian theory of Interpretation. But it is the right interpretation only if it assigns correct truth conditions to the sentences of the language. If the theorems are true, then the problem is to know how it can be tested in the context of language totally unknown to us. In other words, how we can use the concept of the truth as a source of empirical content?. Even if the sentences of the object language appear identical to the sentences of the meta-language, we cannot assume that they are meta-language sentences. It is in this situation, Davidson introduces the notion of Radical Interpretation (RI). Quine called such situation as Radical Translation (RT).

Section 5:1 discusses the difference between Radical Translation and Radical Interpretation. Davidson claimed that in interpreting speakers, we maximize the empirical content of our theories solely by constructing speakers as a speakers of truth. The import of this assumption is often called *as the principle of charity*. Whether this principle is a constraint or precondition is yet another problem we ought to discuss in section 5:2 .It is not an expression of faith in sincerity of speaker. Massive error, he says, presupposes epistemic investigation. Communication does succeed without any kind of regularity in the use of language. Section 5:3 explains Davidson's denial of language, error and convention. Davidson conceives of an intranslability of language as an indeterminacy as to what language is being spoken. Ramberg noted that Davidson's method Radical interpretation is comparable with Kuhnian model of incommensurability. Section 5:4 deals with the problems of Intranslability, Indeterminacy and Incommensurability.

5:1 Radical Translation Vs Radical Interpretation

Suppose we came across some previously undiscovered tribe in some remote part of the world. The members of this community appears to use a language though it is totally unrecognizable to us, and they appear to perform various actions. Both these appearances presuppose that they have a wide range of beliefs, desires and other mental states. If we could understand their language, we could use it to gain some knowledge of their mental states. If we knew what their mental states were, we could perhaps work out what they were saying. But unfortunately we know nothing about any of this. Here, the task of interpretation being crystallized.

The interpreter in this situation has nothing to go on but she sees the native speakers and the sound she hears them utters. If she proceed step by step to capture their language, she is actually assuming that she is dealing with one homogenous language community. When they utter '*gavagai*' accompanied by ostensive gestures in the direction of rabbits, she cannot assume that it is a rabbit but she is uncertain whether the word actually meant rabbit itself. She could not guess their intensions, since it is part of arriving at an interpretation of what is being said.

In this context, there are two possible ways to deal with this situation:

- (a) The Method of Radical Translation
- (b) The Method of Radical Interpretation.

(a) The Method of Radical Translation : Radial translation is the process of a thought experiment conceived by Quine in the late 1950's. As Gibson noted, "In that setting, a linguist undertakes to translate into English some hitherto unknown language-one which is neither historically nor culturally linked to any known language". [25] He says,

“Suppose that children, in the normal course of events, acquire their native tongue (for example, English) by observing their parents and others talking in publicly observable circumstances. A corollary of this common sense supposition is that whatever there is to linguistic meaning can be manifested in behaviour in publicly observable circumstances. However, one might ask just how far do empirical data go toward fixing the meanings of the sentences being spoken? Quine thought experiment of radical translation is designed to answer this question.”¹

In the context of radical translation, the field linguist might construct a manual for translating the newly discovered language for ‘Jungle’ into English. There is fundamental difference between the linguist and a child in psychological aspects to learn ‘Jungle’. While the field linguist has a prior knowledge of English, (and will exploit that knowledge in constructing a ‘Jungle-to-English’ translation manual) a child learning a first language has no prior language to exploit. However, this difference does not touch the ultimate empirical data available to both of them. The ultimate data is the empirical fact about behaviour. Such data are available to both of them are the same. But the problem is that how the field linguist could assemble a translation manual. Quine believes that the linguist has no access to bilinguals versed in the two languages, English and ‘Jungle’. As Gibson says, there is the poverty of ultimate data to the field linguist to translate one language into other. Quine’s Radical translation actually meant to bring out the indeterminacy of translation (meaning).

It is widely believed that Quine is a behaviourist. This underlies his quest for determining meaning and translation. Regarding the evidence for a translation manual, he writes

“What we objectively have is just an evolving adjustment to nature, reflected in an evolving set of dispositions to be prompted by stimulations to assent to or dissent from sentence”(1960 pp.38-9)

For Quine, this constitutes the totality of linguistic behaviour. It follows that what we can do to solicit evidence for our manual is limited to testing the natives for assent to and dissent from sentences in response to various stimulations. Thus, to give Quine’s famous example, suppose we hear a native utter the one-word sentence ‘*gavagai*’ as a rabbit run past. It occurs to us that his sentence might be translated as ‘there’s a rabbit’ or “Lo! a rabbit”. We can set up various test situations, some of which include rabbits and some of which do not, and in each case, ask the native ‘*gavagai?*’. If he agrees in enough where there is no rabbit, we can tentatively translate ‘*gavagai*’ as ‘Lo! a rabbit’.

However, according to Quine, we would not want to count how much times we agree or disagree. Instead, Quine suggests that we take an appropriate condition not such thing as ‘rabbit’, but rather patterns of sensory stimulation (what he calls ‘stimulus meaning’). The more we exclude from the stimulus thing which are external to the responder, the more we remove the possibility of unwanted interference such as that caused by fake rabbits, contaminating the experiments. In the case of sight, the stimulus would be ‘the pattern of chromatic irradiation of the eye’ (1960 :.31), but of course, we would have also to identify the forms of stimulation for the other sensory modalities. It, then, creates a pattern of stimulation which would assent and pattern of stimulation which would prompt dissent belong, respectively, to the affirmative stimulus meaning and negative stimulus meaning for that sentence and native speaker at that time.

Given the stimulus meaning, one might say that what 'Gavagai' and its translation 'Lo! a rabbit' share is the same stimulus meaning. However, this too would be wrong, for stimulus meaning is a private the native speaker's nerves are distinct from the linguist's nerves. It would be more accurate, but still problematic, to say that the native speaker's stimulus meaning for 'Gavagai' and linguist's for 'Lo! a rabbit' are approximately the same. However, reflecting upon the fragmentary nature of these data, Quine could draw the following conclusions²:

(i) Translation of theoretical sentences is indeterminate on the basis of public standard (shared same meaning) there is indeterminacy of meaning. *The meaning of theoretical sentences of natural languages can not be fixed by empirical data.* This is because the radical translator is bound to impose about as much meaning as they discover. *The result undermines the idea that propositions are meanings of sentences.*

(ii) One could not answer which 'rabbit' expression are to count as terms of what object the term 'rabbit' expresses the result is empirical data. They do not fix reference.

The Method of Radical Interpretation:

The idea of radical interpretation was developed by Donald Davidson in the 1960's and 1970's as a modification and extension of Quine's idea of radical translation. Quine is concerned with the extent to which empirical data determine the meanings of sentences of a natural language. In the context of radical interpretation, Davidson is concerned with a different question, the question of what a person could know that would enable them to interpret another's language. For example, what could one know that would enable the interpretation of the German sentence 'Es regnet' as meaning that it is raining? The knowledge required for interpretation differs from the knowledge

required for translation, for one could know that '*Es regnet*' is translated as '*Il pleat*' without knowing the meaning (or the interpretation) of either sentence. Beginning with the knowledge that the native speaker holds certain sentences true when in certain publicly recognizable circumstances, Davidson's radical interpreter strives to understand the meanings of those sentences. Davidson argues that this scenario reveals that interpretation centres on one's having knowledge comparable to an empirically verified, finitely based, recursive specification of the truth-conditions for an infinity of sentences- a Tarski-like truth theory.

What Davidson adds to Quine's account of radical translation is the idea that the hypothesis ventured by the field linguist take the form of T-sentences, or rather modified T-sentences which relativize truth to times and speakers. The relativization has nothing to do with what we think of as a relativist concept of truth, ie, with relativized to some scheme or other. The resulting formulations, are attempts to capture a three-place predicate intended 'to relate language with occasions of truth in a way that invites the construction of a theory'. (ITI :44). These formulation will look much like this

(T) '*Gavagai*' is true in L when uttered by x at time t if and only if there is a rabbit in the vicinity of x at t .

The interpreter, here, has enough space to add any relevant or irrelevant matters as she noticed the case, and modify the formulation accordingly. And that a speaker of language cannot be prompted to say '*gavagai*' when it is raining. No matter how many rabbits are splashing about, and include all these fact as a conjunct in the sentence that is the right side of (T).

In the context of radical interpretation , an interpreter is not trying to translate '*gavagai*', nor to guess at what '*gavagai*' means. Instead she is trying to formulate a sentence that states as specifically as possible the combination

of features characterizing occasions when speakers of language utters 'gavagai'. She must specify the truth-conditions of the sentence 'gavagai' as best she can, on the sole basis of 'facts about the behaviour of speakers in relation to sentences'(ITI : 133). The result is a sentence or conjunction of sentences that uniquely characterizes these occasions. However, the interpreter by such sentences or hypotheses, cannot define truth or to determine meaning. But she could discern patterns she will individuate words, assign them structural role and so on. This will allow her to form testable hypothesis (theorems of her nascent theory) that she can try out on the language of Speaker's: will they utter the required *s* under the circumstances of *P*?. The process of radical interpretation is therefore intended as a theoretical description of linguistic competence, a rationalization of the practice of interpreting speech, not as a description of an actual procedure such as the method of translators.

John Wallace, [1986] who misconstrued Davidson's method' noted that the inadequacy of the Quine – Davidson model of interpretation. Wallace complains that contrary to what Quine and Davidson suggest, 'the form in which the meanings of sentences are given is not simple correlation of sentences to sentences but this plus a gloss'. For such criticism, Vermazen rightly point out 'Davidson's truth theory is required to yield for each foreign sentence a statement of the condition under which the sentence is true: far from being a mere correlation of a foreign expression with a home expression, such a statement may be just the kind of gloss that Wallace is after.....' (Vermazen 1986 : 242)

According to Ramberg, what underlies it is a misconception of the sense in which natural language is given – that it consists somehow of ready – made sentences, of fixed extensions. This is false. Of course, for any given sentence, its extension is fixed, but it places no restrictions on what can be said

in a given language, because we are able to construct new sentences with new extensions. Thus, what the radical interpreter is doing, is precisely constructing new sentences in her own language to match the extensions given by the sentences of a speaker she is interpreting. We quickly slip into reification thinking of meanings as something to be captured by the sentences we use [Ramberg: 67]. For Davidson, both meaning and belief matter in describing the environmental condition. So, any one who attempts to isolate salient features of contextual frame (in which the uninterpreted sentence is embedded), she attempts to isolate environmental features that cause the speaker to assent the sentence. Hence, there is no matter of fixing the meaning in terms of language or in terms of belief on the basis of public standard rules. But the perennial issue remains unsettled is this: is there any objective rational code to justify or assert out assumptions? Davidson uses of principle of charity, in this context, explains more in details about this aspects.

5.2 The principle of charity

As a methodological strategy, the principle of charity, was first named by Neil Wilson.³ The central idea of this principle is that any proffered translation that construes the native speakers as holding some patently silly belief (for eg, the law of non- contradiction is false) is less likely than that the proffered translation is bad one. Thus, he argues, there is a sound methodological reason for translating a native speaker so as to construe them as holding true belief by linguist's own standards. The principle raises a number of questions. Is it justifiable to employ it, and if so, why? How do we account for the fact that people have false beliefs? Does a principle which ostensibly deals only with sentences believed true by interpreters and interpreters have any connection with true itself? and so on.

Quine makes use of this principle while discussing the translation of observation sentences, and truth functions in words and objects.

Quine says, “ One’s interlocutor’s silliness, beyond a certain point, is less likely than bad translation” (1960 : 54).ie, our proposed translations make the native seem to deny obvious truths while denying that a sentence and its negation both be true. It follows to mean that some of our translations are wrong rather than that the native speaker does really deny such obvious truth. Here, as Gibson noted, “ Quine augments this principle with another : maximize psychological plausibility. This latter principle permits the linguist to translate a native speaker’s sentence by some patently false English sentence if, given the native speakers “ outlandish” rites and taboos or whatever, doing so is more plausible than translating the sentence in question by some true English sentence”.⁴

Quine’s formulation of the principle of charity has certain limitations. Firstly, The principle works solely in terms of agreements or truths by the interpreter’s standards. Secondly, his application of this principle is limited to the translation of the truth-functional operators. Consequently, a native adherence to a sentence as logical falsehood is far less likely than as mistranslation. This still opens the possibility that native might accept a contradiction. Thirdly, according to Quine, the behavioural evidence alone leaves open the possibility, of different explanations. And so, we can make the behavioural evidence consistent with different translation, by varying our attributions of belief, to the native speakers. The principle of charity, here rules out all those translations which seem to be attributing to the natives too much silliness. It, thus, functions as a constraint on possible translations.

Unlike Quine, who advocates the principle of charity at the level of translating observation sentences (like ‘*Gavagai*’ and the ‘Jungle’ equivalents of truth-functions), [1960 : 59]. Davidson advocates the principle

at the level of interpretation. (1984, :136 n.16). Davidson applies charity 'across the board' (1984a : xvii). We not only, should assume that some one does not openly believe logical contradictions, we should also assume that people believe that it is raining if they are in perceptual reach of rain. Here, believing the obvious truth is construed not just as believing the logical truth, but as believing as whole range of non-logical truths which make up the frame-work of our system of beliefs. Davidson stresses that we should not overlook the massive body of shared beliefs that different people in different cultures hold in common.

What Davidson actually requires is that the meaning giving T – theory must be empirically warranted under the practice of radical interpretation. This means that empirical considerations must be respected in choosing between different but true truth theories. The favoured T – theory is to be selected on the basis of evidence plausibly available to a radical interpreter.

Imagine a radical interpreter who speaks only English, does not have access to bilinguals, and is attempting to interpret Kurt, who speaks only German. The interpreter has no prior detailed knowledge of meanings of Kurt's utterances nor of Kurt's beliefs. In the first step of radical interpretation, she attempts to isolate the salient features of the contextual frame in which the un-interpreted sentence is embedded. That is, she attempts to isolate those environment features that cause the speaker to assent to the sentence. So among the primary data for radical interpretation are for example,

(E) Kurt belongs to the German speech community, Kurt holds – true '*Es regnet*' on Saturday at noon, and it is raining near Kurt on Saturday at noon.

Data like (E) are collected from a variety of speakers across a variety of times to confirm or support a generalization like

(GE) For all speakers x in the common speech community, for any time t , x holds – true ‘*Es regnet*’ at t iff it is raining near x at t .

Sentences like (GE) provide evidence that the speakers of the community take some form of words to express a certain truth. Davidson, remarkably, does not consider anything else as potential evidence for interpreting another (1984:135). But he is aware that our linguist is not framing her tentative T – sentences on the basis of presuppositionless observation. The pure observer would never be able to come up with any characterization of occasions of utterance at all. Davidson invokes the principle of charity in this context. He argues that there are at least two assumptions we have to make to get any T–sentence.

The first is the interpreter has to believe that – her sample occasions, the speakers both intend (mean) to utter something true and believe what they utter to be true when they utter it. The interpreter does not know the content of belief. She does not know what it is the speaker intends to assent, or precisely, means to say. And so, it is necessary to assume that the attitude of holding a sentence to be true on the part of the speaker. But this assumption tells us nothing about which sentences that speaker hold true under which conditions, rather it explains, under which conditions they (the speaker) prefer one sentence to be true rather than another. Hence it says nothing of *intentions* and *beliefs* of a kind useful in determining meaning. We are not sneaking ‘meaning’ in through our assumptions at beliefs and intentions. But we are granting that the subject of our interpretation is a creature with beliefs and intentions. And, this means that the causal links the linguist attempts to isolate with her T – sentences run between states of the envioning world and intentional states of the subject. The content of the theory is empirical.

Because an interpreter can inductively determine these causal link without knowing in advance the particular intentional states of the subject of interpretation. Hence there is no hope of producing a behaviouristic empirical semantics.

The second assumption is that we must assume that when they assent, they largely do so correctly. Here, as Ramberg noted, we are not saying that people whose language we are interpreting happen to possess the truth about the world. Instead, we mean to suggest that unless they see the world as we do, unless they believe what we believe, we cannot understand them.

The content of the above two assumptions is that by using the procedure of holding belief constant as far as possible, the interpreter can solve not only the problem of meaning, but also could solve the problem of the inter dependence of meaning and belief. But what justifies this procedure? After all, Kurt could be in error about it raining near him, and interpreter could be in error about what distal stimulus is prompting Kurt's utterance, and hence, about the belief that is ascribed to Kurt. Davidson says,

“What justifies the procedure is the fact that disagreement and agreement alike are intelligible only against a background of massive agreement” (1984 b : 137) For example, if two people agree or disagree that what they see is rabbit in tall grass, they must be in agreement regarding an indefinite number of other beliefs about rabbits grass distance and so on.

Davidson's mandatory principle of charity, therefore, indicates that the verification of ascriptions of meaning and of belief are holistic in character. However, if the premise of these arguments is formulated in terms of a rough and unspecified notion of agreement, it is easy to misunderstand rationality as a label restricted to those who agree with us. As the corollary of this principle,

one might argue that those who do not agree with us are irrational. For Davidson, this conclusion does not follow. He says,

“The methodological advice to interpret in a way that optimize agreement should not be conceived as resting on a charitable assumption about human intelligence that might turn out to be false. If we cannot find a way to interpret the utterances and other behaviour of a creature and true by our own standards, we have no reason to count that creature as rational, as having beliefs or as saying anything” (1984 b. : 137)

The implication of Davidson’s argument might be clear if we consider Ramberg’s reconstruction of his principle of charity. Ramberg argues that speaking of the principle of charity in terms of agreement and matching beliefs is to think of it only as giving a criterion for evaluating rival theories of interpretation of a language. It does not work as a principle of theory construction. Until we have such theories, it makes no sense to speak of the interpreter as trying to match her beliefs with those of the speakers of the language she is trying to understand.

A belief, Davidson insists, ‘is identified by its location in a pattern of beliefs, it is this pattern that determines the subject matter of the belief, what the belief is about?’ (ITI : 168). It is just as the meaning of a sentence is given by its location in the structural pattern of the sentences of the language, specified by a theory of truth for the language. Unless we can attribute clusters of beliefs, we cannot attribute beliefs at all. The idea of attributing beliefs one by one is a hopeless task as the idea of assigning meaning to sentences in isolation. Here, no notion of matching belief or of agreement will capture the task of interpretation in its initial stages, since at this stage, there is nothing to which the interpreter can match her beliefs.

In the context, Ramberg correctly points out that this principle is a misnomer in so far as it suggests that it is a principle we magnanimously choose to employ as a kindness towards the native speakers. It is, on the contrary, an indispensable methodological principle without which, as Davidson argues, a theoretical description of our own linguistic competence would founder, because of the inseparability of attributing beliefs to speakers and meaning to the sentences spoken.

Ramberg articulates Davidson's point in this way : the concept of belief (or agreement) is an intentional concept. The main task is to show precisely how we get the intentional from the extensional. Belief and meaning arise in the same way, by the imposition of structure on an infinite supply of extensional evidence. Yet as methodological principle, the principle of charity must apply also in the initial stages of theory construction. That is, the interpreter should initially do whatever makes for the most agreement in the end, when it does make sense to talk of agreement. But if we take the extensional and holistic nature of our theorizing seriously, we are committed to articulating the assumptions that guide us without intentional concepts like 'belief', 'agreement', and so on. We should also find a way of clearly articulating the problem of the inseparability of belief and meaning. In other words, the principle must be intended to solve in non-intentional terms. The problem faced by the interpreter is that of establishing connection between sentences of L and the observable circumstances of their being uttered. The extensional link is, of course, truth.

An essential assumption the interpreter needs to make is that sentences must ascribe truth value. Then we have to assume that the true sentences are beliefs or intentions of the speaker of language. Since the negative truth value of a sentence serves the connection between sentence and observable circumstances, the interpreter of a language must be able to identify sentences

of L with positive truth value under specific circumstances. The principle of charity is intended to express the necessity of presuming that this link, therefore, as Ramberg argues, is the core of Davidson's theory of interpretation.⁵ It is the very transaction in which truth is exchanged for empirical content.

According to Davidson, interpretation from one language into another works only because the interpreter possesses a pre-theoretical understanding of truth. That is, it works because the interpreter knows how to apply the truth – predicate of her own language. However, it must also be stressed that this understanding is not epistemic but semantic because it is essentially related to meanings and beliefs.

It is this semantic understanding that allows interpreter to formulate the right side of the bi-conditional theorems, *the P of the T* – sentences. But it is not sufficient to know what it is for P, a sentence of theory of language to be true. She must also know *that* it is true, that it indeed is true on the occasions of utterance of the sentence of (L) whose extension she is attempting to capture. That is to say, she must know that it is true on occasions of utterance of the sentence. This epistemic judgment derives *no support from the causal relation between her belief and the world*, yet reason explanation a elucidated earlier might show how casual relation functions.

Davidson says,

“Of course we can't get outside our skins to find out what is causing the internal happenings of which we are aware”. (1986 b : 312). This means that the appropriateness of P rests on the combination of semantic understanding of the causes of beliefs and epistemic judgment of their coherence.

Unlike Tarski, who attempts to define truth for a language using the notion of sameness of meaning, Davidson's attempt is to construct theory of radical interpretation using the primitive notion of truth. By treating sentences of language as true, the interpreter, as Davidson argues, provides with material for a theory about the structural significance of the elements of sentences of language. As the theory is formed, and assigns meaning to words, she attributes beliefs in clusters; and naturally her evidential base widens. If she is to individuate belief of a speaker of language, she must already have a very good idea of the structural role of the terms occurring in the sentence expressing that belief. This she could get only from other sentences in which those terms occur. When she suddenly finds herself crediting the L – speaker with in explicable belief, she must have a specific semantic location in the structure of L for the sentence in so far as she believes she knows what it means. But the case is different, if there is odd belief in the pattern of beliefs. However the oddness of the belief presupposes that the interpreter has assigned meaning to the words of the sentence. Hence she is able to formulate innumerable hypothesis – T – sentences – making use of those words to test her understanding. And in those hypotheses, she could presumably express those beliefs. In so far as these hypotheses are confirmed, the oddness of the belief would diminish. But if they are falsified, the interpreter would have good reason to doubt that her theory assigned the proper structural roles to the terms of the sentence expressing the odd belief. However, this is not at all a serious issue. Because the crucial point is that the radical interpretation model must be understood as a model of process, not as a model of a static state of semantic competence. It is a process of theory exchange, so it cannot be modeled on one theory of truth. It refers to the endless replacing of one truth theory with another. Semantic understanding therefore, is essentially dynamic in nature.

Radical interpretation, in this sense, is the construction of a theory of truth for a language. But the grand theory of truth for language is only an idealization. And so, our construction of it is for ever a work in progress. We will continue to improve our understanding of language by constructing as true as many of their assertions as possible. Attempting to maximize truth, we will continue to replace one inadequate truth theory with another. That there is no one theory of truth in absolute sense is not at all a problem for radical interpretation model. It is what keeps the radical interpretation process going on.

There is, then, no need for a further regulating principle beyond the principle of charity. There is, therefore, no need to assume anything about speakers of language other than they are speakers of language and generally speakers of the truth. Taking in this sense, Davidson's conception of the principle of charity is not the principle of humanity in disguise. It neither offers any advice to us as interpreters nor does it yield any interpretational strategy. It is not a heuristic device, nor it can be regarded as a pragmatic constraints on choice between different interpretation. Rather it is a necessary pre – condition of the possibility of any interpretation.⁶

5.3 Errors, Languages and Conventions

As early noted, according to Davidson, the Principle of Charity is an inevitable pre-requisite of radical interpretation. If we want to know what the speaker means, we have no chance but to treat him or her as on the whole a speaker of truth. But this does not mean that it is impossible for anyone ever to be wrong about whether some sentence is true, or for someone to be mistaken. Being wrong is simply believing that the condition which would make some sentence true obtain when in fact they don't.

Error arises precisely because there does exist some public standard which fixes the interpretation of sentences held true by individuals. This public standard presupposes that we have both the concept of belief and the possibility of mistaken belief. Davidson says, “ Belief is built to take up the slack between sentences held true by individuals and sentences true or false by public standards” (1974 b: 153.) The principle charity, there fore, allows for individual errors by idea of an interpretation of a public language.

Davidson argues, on radical interpretation model, the problem of error is not at all a serious issue. If there were some individual member of the society who generally believed to be true sentences which are false, the principle of charity would exert pressure towards the conclusion that the individual was speaking a different language from that spoken by the rest of the community. And it tells us how to re –interpret his words.

However, according to Davidson, while interpreting, the interpreter cannot assume a shared notion of trivality, but she must search for the trivality. Her searching could not be done ostensively. She can only be sure that she has matched on the obvious for speakers of language when all her informants invariably assert a sentence mentioned on the left side of the hypothesis on occasions described by the right side. The difference between the interpreter and language speaker is not a difference in what they see and feel, but in what they look for and in what they deemed relevant to something being a particular something. This will depend on what sort of features of the world they find it useful to call attention to juxtapose or ignore. The interpreter therefore will have to add “ and not under other circumstances” because not all obvious truths of language are of use to her. She needs context-sensitive obvious truth.

Davison, in this context, agrees with Quine that the initial basis for theory formation will be occasion sentences rather than observation sentences.

However unlike Quine, Davidson does not think that we can attribute any particular epistemological status to observation sentences. He never explain speakers' verdict in behaviouristic terms nor to provide any physicalistic description of the same concurrent stimulation as a intermediary between objects in the world and objects of our beliefs.

According to Davidson, if we are to establish the link between utterance and observations, the principle of charity must be applied to the interpreter and interpreted alike. But the principle has no implications about substantial relations between webs of beliefs about the world. It is only a condition of the possibility of our speaking comparatively about beliefs. Hence there is no room for massive error. Massive error presupposes an epistemic representational relation between language and the world and a corresponding reification of the meaning of the words and sentences.⁷ This is the very conception of language which Davidson rejects.

On the radical interpretation model of the language, Davidson argues, the meaning of assertions are not construed in terms of representation of some non-linguistic reality. They cannot be at the same time an inadequate representation of reality. Davidson, argues that once we come to see the relation between mind, language, and world as a causal semantic relation, the principle of charity just becomes the expression of the naturalistic view of what it is for words to mean.

The principle of charity in this sense is not an expression of fate in the sincerity of the speaker. We cannot make omniscience on the part of the speakers of a language. The principle does not counsel us to assume that speakers of a language to be interpreted or see things as the way we do. It is not a tool of cognitive imperialism not is it a rule of thumb suggesting that on the whole we are likely to assert the same truth. It is not an over estimation of our cognitive and communication capacities, rather it is a pre-condition of

anyone ever interpreting language. Error and dissent, therefore, are least likely to occur.

Thus Davidson writes, "It isn't that any one false belief necessarily destroys our ability to identify further beliefs, but that intelligibility of such identification must depend on a background of largely unmentioned and unquestioned true beliefs. To put this another way: The more things a believer is right about, the sharper his errors are. Too much mistake simply blurs the focus". (ITI: 16).

According to Davidson the larger evidential base successfully incorporated in the theory, the more precise will be the structural roles assigned to the words of the language, and the richer meaning will be while constructing a theory of the semantic structure of a language, our assumptions about a given utterance might be false. In such cases, the principle of charity is taken to be as a rule of thumb or a reasonable guide. However, unless the assumptions embodied in the principle of charity are true, the sentence in question and the occasion of its utterance cannot serve as part of the evidential base from which an interpretation of the language is developed.

Here, what Davidson wants is to illuminate meaning in terms of theoretical description of linguistic competence. Hence it is relevant to see how Davidson conceives the concept of language as different from radical interpretation.

In one of his famous papers, Davidson expressed his view that, "there is no such thing as a language, nor if a language is anything like what many philosophers and linguists have supposed." (1986: 446) While claiming that there is no such thing as a language, as Ramberg noted, Davidson is not actually intended to question the very existence of language. His aim is nor to deplete the study of language as such. Rather what he meant is to re-examine

some commonly held ideas about how linguistic communication works. Hence by denying the concept of language, he is deductively constructing a comprehensive philosophy of language.

According to Davidson, language has no basic clearly defined shared unchanged structure. Linguistic competence, he says, is a natural phenomenon, ever developing and changing process. And so, language users are not actually acquiring language initially, and then apply to the cases. It is not a 'thing' to be learned, mastered or born with. Rather language is emerging out of individual and social practices. Davidson, therefore, attacked our traditional outlook of language as communicative or conceptual tool.

Traditionally, it has been conceived that a language is a conventional assignment of interpretations to sentences. As Lewis defined, convention is an intentional conformity to a regularity. It involves the nested beliefs of the conveners. Individuals are mutually intended to confirm each others beliefs. They believed that there is a common intention which gives each of them good reason to conform. It also presupposes the possibility that the point of convention could have been achieved by conformity to some regularity other than the one that actually constitutes the convention. Conventionality therefore, is implied in our communication. Accordingly, communication is supposed to require a language. Linguistic competence, in traditional sense appears to be the mastery of a set of convention. Conventionalists like Dummett, Appiah and others (1986) agree with this view.

Davidson opposes this view. He denies that it is the knowledge of convention that helps us to understand each other's language. He argues that the communication does succeed without the kind of regularity in the use of language. The fact that the two people speak no common language is not a basic obstacle to their communication. What is essential for communication, according to him, is that when one of them uses a sentence, the other

understands what the speaker means. Language, therefore, if seen as a conventional assignment of interpretations to sentences, is not after all, required for communication.

In his paper on ‘A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs’, Davidson elucidates the whole scenario of understanding meaning while introducing the distinction between “prior” and “passing” theories. The prior theory is what the interpreter or the speaker desires, beliefs or expects in advance to convey the content and so on. The interpreter’s prior theory “ expresses how he is prepared in advance to interpret an utterance of the speaker” (1986a: 442). These need not coincide for communication to succeed. He argues that, infact, no prior theory is necessary for communication.⁸

Speakers actual usage does not have to conform to our expectations of their usage as a condition for our understanding meaning. By focusing on malapropism and idiosyncratic language use, Davidson shows that our everyday conversation require more non-homophonic interpretation than homophonic interpretation. We understand each other without having to make any assumption about whether this or that language is spoken. Thus, communication does occur even if prior theory is altogether absent.

According to Davidson, in order to understand a speaker, an interpreter’s passing theory must coincide with speaker’s passing theories. Passing theories are, in other words, just that passing. There is nothing that constitutes a conventional regularity. Davidson says, “the passing theories cannot in general correspond to an interpreter’s linguistic competence. Not only does it have its changing list of proper names and gerry-mandered vocabulary, but it includes every successful – ie, correctly interpreted – use of any word or phase far out of the ordinary. Every deviation from the ordinary usage, as long as it is agreed on for the moment (knowingly deviant, or not, on one or both sides) is in the passing theory as a feature of what the word

mean on that occasion. Such meanings, transient though they be, are literal
”(1986a: 42)

In this context, Davidson distinguishes between the first meanings and the literal meaning as resulted from prior theories and passing theories respectively. The first meaning represents author intentions. Davidson rejects the necessity of the first meaning for successful communication. For it is an another way of reduction of the notion of a convention itself. According to him, communication is possible only by understanding the literal meaning of the sentences. The literal meaning is contextual and occasional. It is not determined by any conventional connection between sentences and particular uses of sentences or between words and particular extensions or intensions of words. It could not be seen as a product of rationalization by which we learn the conventions of a language. Rather it could be seen as an interpretative model of what it is we do when we make use of that language. Literal meaning, therefore, is just passing.

Davidson observes, we derives our passing theories “by wit, luck and wisdom..... there is no more chance of regularizing, or teaching the process of creating new themes to cope with new data in any field-for that is what this process involves”.(1986a:446).

Linguistic competence, on Davidson’s account, is essentially dynamic and creative. It is not the knowledge rationalized by one given passing theory. Rather, it is an ability to come up with new ones. He argues that even if it were taken for granted that any given truth theory captures a set of convention, the continuous production of such theories cannot be described as a matter of conforming to conventions of meaning. It follows that communication does not depend on our speaking the same language, but it

depends on our speaking the truth and continuously reforming our theories of meaning on that assumption.

Following Wittgenstein, Dummett also *rejected* the idea of a language constituted by convention. Dummett argues, language is not a theory, it is not an existing pattern of communicative speech. But it is a phenomenon. He argues that we all have our own evolving idiolects and no one idiolect perfectly matches a language. And idiolects can be related in ways which make it possible to claim that they are idiolects of the same language. This language is specifiable in terms of *convention* that constitute it. These conventions are but inductive generalization over a number of speakers or idiolects. They are the matter of *agreement*. These conventions are real because the pure language constituted by them both as idealization and in constant change.

Davidson agrees with Dummett in most of the aspects as discussed in earlier chapter. But what Davidson doubts is that the concept of language in this sense can throw theoretical light on linguistic meaning. To him, the linguistic communication does essentially involve convention. He thinks that what allows one English speaker to understand another is just that fact the interpreter interprets the speaker as speaking an idiolects of English. So if the English language were not meaningful independent of all the individual speaker's idiosyncratic versions of it, no understanding would be possible. That is, in order to understand meaning or to understand what it is to understand what someone means, we must give an account of what it is to know a language. So knowing a language is what make linguistic communication possible. Consequently, conventionalists, like him argue that knowing a language is logically prior to the activity of interpretation. This is the very misconception that Davidson rejects.

The crucial significance of Davidson's radical interpretation model of linguistic communication lies in the fact that it reverses the logical priority of the concept of language and the concept of interpretation. This reversal finally works itself as the rejection of the concept of a language as a theoretical tool. By postulating interpretation, we are not actually mastering the language. Rather, we are trying to find a shared features of strategies of interpretation.⁹ So the concept of language derives its content from our theory of interpretation and not *vice versa*. No matter how conventional our use of language, the only way to theoretically specify what the sentences of a natural language mean is to construct a theory of truth. And to this end, neither convention nor shared languages make any semantic contributions.

According to Ramberg, Davidson is not actually denying the concept of convention governed practice. But his claim is that the shared features of strategies of interpretation have no semantic significance. For Davidson-rule-governed repetition is a 'usual though contingent feature' of speech. It is nothing more than a complex and immensely valuable practical aid. Our theories of meaning apply primarily to occasions of utterances but not to this or that languages, nor for that matter to this or that idiolect. The salient contract, for Davidson is not between idiolects and languages but between occasions of utterances on the one hand and abstractions such as language and idiolect on the other.

Ramberg noted that by denying the body of conventions that constitute a language, Davidson observes the dialectical relation between meaning and the production of meaning. Meaning or understanding the meaning of an utterance is modelled in radical interpretation whereas the production of meaning is modelled by the concept of language. Ramberg argues that by divorcing the concept of language from that of linguistic competence we recover the possibility of exploring a semantically significant relation

between interpretation and bodies of conventions. Both Dummett and Davison preclude this possibility. For Dummett, linguistic competence is the mastery of a language. For Davidson, convention is semantically irrelevant. According to Ramberg, It is only the middle way which allow us to reinstate the concept of language as theoretically significant without giving up the primacy of interpretation. Hence without contradiction, we could claim that both languages are conventions governed social practice and that a theory of meaning conceived as a rationalization of a speaker's linguistic competence doest not involve the knowledge of convention. As Ramberg noted, according to Davidson, whether we understand what someone says and whether we knew what language has been spoken are theoretically independent questions. In practice, whether we understand the literary meaning of an utterance and whether we knew the language employed are wholly interdependent. This is because interpretation normally precedes by the theoretical shortcuts of conventions. We usually approach communicative encounters with some prior theory and in most cases the prior theory turns out to be the basis for the construction of passing theories. We never start the from scratch. Hence, in practice what governs our use of expressions are the conventions of our language.

But, theoretically, there is inconsistency in regarding convention as the basis of language. Languages is not a static ideology. It is a ongoing, dynamic process based on interpretation. The interpretations are modelled by continuous creation of truth theory and not by the knowledge of any one truth theory. Hence, there is discrepancy between radical interpretation of meaning and the conventional production of meaning. While the former is a synchronic generalization, the later is diachronic generalization. Changes in usage will reflected differently in the two kinds of theoretical structures. Radical interpretation is more flexible in ascribing semantic significance. It instantaneously absorb any change in the truth-theoretic significance of a

word producing a revised truth theory, whereas conventional usage is historical. It takes time to accept changes and so while changes in use of language have a gradual impact on convention, there is an immediate impact on radical interpreter. By relying on convention rather than radical interpretation, there is a tendency of a possible diffusion of meaning, a blurring of linguistic understanding. To speak a language is always to be in danger of misinterpreting what is said.

On radical interpretation model, this misinterpretation is not at all a serious issue. We can give accounts of the ways in which convention changes or changes in social practice, affect our linguistic understanding. In other words, we can show in what ways they blur or distort the meaning of our discourse. It therefore helps to connect semantics with other-fields of inquiry such as the critique of ideology, the sociology of knowledge and the history of science. This kind of analysis removes the discrepancy between two theories and conventional production of meaning. Only then we could conceive the possibility of slippage between diachronically determined linguistic conventions and synchronic truth theories of radical interpretations. This idea provides us with general frameworks for understanding the problem of intranslatability, indeterminacy and incommensurability.

5.4 Intranslatability, Indeterminacy and Incommensurable

Recently, philosophers using these terms intranslatable, indeterminatable, incommensurable with different connotations. Quine asked, 'Are there facts about meaning? He says, there is no matter of fact as to what the sentence means. Here, Quine not only is sceptic about meaning but also sceptic about correct translation of one language into another language. Meaning, he argues, as intranslatable. If there is no fact of the matter about the correctness of the translation manual, then there will be no fact of the

matter about the sameness of meaning. This entails that there are no facts about meaning. This entails that there are no facts about meaning at all.

Recall K.W.'s sceptical paradox and Boghossian's predicament that the real attack is against the existence of items individuated by content. Kripke says that the notion of meaning 'vanishes into thin air'. He argues that even though there are no facts in virtue of which ascriptions of sense and meaning as true or false, we can still find a place for them by viewing them as possessing some non-fact stating role. According to him, it is not necessary condition for understanding that some particular item might come before one's mind when one uses a given expression. As a matter of empirical fact, it seems to be the case that no one mental entity comes before one's mind when one correctly understands a linguistic expression. Even in the absence of the item, we can perfectly well conceive of someone understanding the expression. He also argues that there is no sufficient condition for meaning a sign in a particular way that some item, be it a picture or otherwise, come before one's mind. The essential point is that the picture does not by itself determine the correct use of the associated word, because the picture thus associated is really just another sign whose meaning also required to be fixed. Even if we accept Wittgenstein's "The Rule-following considerations", Kripke claims that there are no fact of the matter as to which applications are correct and which are incorrect. He also claims that there are no facts of matter as to which continuations of the arithmetic series are correct or incorrect. However, the sceptical solution admits that discourse-involving meaning is not fact-stating, but attempts to legitimize it by finding it a legitimate non-fact stating role to play.

KW's, view here, supports Dummett's claim involving the assertability conditions of ascriptions of meaning. KW's view also shows that asserting them under these conditions plays a useful role in our lives.

In the context of understanding meaning, Dummett says, there are sentences that are neither true nor false [See Dummett, 2002]. He is arguing that meaning cannot be determined by verifying truth-condition. Meaning is therefore indeterminate in realistic sense. In the context of 'paradigm shift' occurring in scientific community, Kuhn coined the notion of incommensurability. He argues that across cultural understanding, it would not be possible at all. He therefore introduced the notion of incommensurability.

These types of negative attacks on the notion of meaning have been enormously influential today. Yet, parallel to these attacks, there are many systematic thinkers who attempt to rehabilitate the notion of meaning. Davidson, says, meaning can be determine by truth-conditions. Yet truth is undefined concept. He argues that there is intranslatability, still one could understand meaning of any sentence by potentially verification-transcendent truth condition.

The core issue of debate between them is the question whether continuity of reference is what makes communication possible. According to Davidson, the problem of interpretation is not whether there is continuity of reference, meaning or truth . Rather his problem is whether one could fix the content of truth in terms of language or propositional attitudes¹⁰ Davidson's negative answer to the problem leads him to challenge the cardinal features of modern enlightenment as well as the behaviouristic (scientific) approach of the twentieth century analytic as well as post-modern tradition.

Davidson notices that the concept of language is not something already given. And so, our common appearances of regularity and shared nature in the use of language are not actually there, prior to our interpretation or communication. It arises out of our own practical ability and creativity to

understand or grasp truth-conditions. He argues that the productivity of meaning, in this sense, is a matter of luck. Davidson, therefore, denies Kantian conclusion that we all share the same conceptual scheme.

There is no substantial conclusions about similarities of dissimilarities between various ways of carving up the world, follows from Davidson's reasoning. In other words, it is impossible to have an absolute correct objective code of rationality. The world, in this sense, is not the 'Absolute Giest' or 'Absolute Spirit' as Hegel believed. Mental, Davidson says, 'anomalous' in nature and so strict bridging-laws are impossible. Hence the focal point of debate of post-analytic tradition is about the nature of rationality itself.

As Farrell noted, how matters stand in the world is the essential factor in fixing the content (meaning) of the propositional attitudes or linguistic terms. It deals with not only how I am talking about the world but rather, how I grasp the world that depends on what is there to be thus taken. Davidson, here stresses how any speaker (first person) could know what he/she is thinking or talking about. But this doesn't mean that there is anything external to the mind in implicitly fixing the content of truth.

In this context, there arises two diverging schools called the internalist view and the externalist view. While the latter challenges our often limited powers of our imaginations to think of what might be the case of our imaginations to think of what might be the case in the contrary to fact situation, the former retreats inward to arrive at a genuine mental autonomy in order to know precisely how much of the content of an individual states is due to what is going in him.

In both attempt, we end up with extremely abstract content descriptions. In intentional approach, we fail to count anything as intentional

states at all for there is nothing left that can properly be called mental. In extensional approach, we are appealing to a distinction that depends on a thought experiment (Tyler Burge) for we cannot even begin to think about with any precision. The real point is that if we are extensionist about meaning, we cannot imagine what it is for a language to have an 'inside', one that remains inaccessible to even if we have some how managed to us map the 'outside' of the language by pairing off of extensions of sentences in radical interpretation. And this mean that we cannot make sense of the idea of intranslatable languages. In this context, Davidson shows the unrelated or alienated nature of mind and language. Our thinking about objects are not necessarily same as talking about objects. This is because of the holistic and anomalousness of nature of the mental events.

The implication is the rejection of Marxian ideology that there is a shared convention underlying materialist conception already given. It is only through our practical ability and genuine engagement in the world that we create our shared language. Davidson, therefore once again turns upside down the relation between reason (convention) and action. For him, reason is the cause of action. But there is neither absolute reason (Hegel) nor common reason that causes action. Here, Davidson's analysis of causation is based on causes itself and not based on effect. As Martin Davies noted that conception of reason is actually various possible answers for 'why?' questions. The interpreter, might ask : why she/he acts in this way rather than the other way. The answers we provide will be various dissimilar discontinuous truth contents. We could understand, describe and analyse what they are talking about with certain clues. But that need not represent the truth as such. Hence the shared conventions are only improbable coincidences.¹¹

Ramberg, in this context, compares Davidson's radical interpretation with Quine's concept of incommensability Kuhn says, "It may be a mistake

to suppose that within domain of science, there is a steady and orderly growth of knowledge in accordance with a fixed rule"¹² According to Kuhn, a scrutiny of the way science actually develops from age to age shows a considerable variation.

Scientific revolution occurs when one scientific theory or tradition is replaced by another. But the concepts involved in those 'paradigm' often change in fundamental ways. Eventhough the concepts of different paradigms may not logically contradict each other, they have reference to no common body of data. This, in nutshell, is the problem of incommensurability.

Let us see some instances in the history of optics. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the most popular theory of the fundamental nature of light was that it consists of tiny material particles. In the early nineteenth century, this displaced by the theory that light consist not of matter but of motion a periodic motion (wave-like), transmitted through an all pervading elastic medium. In the late nineteenth century, this theory was in turn replaced by the claim that the light consists of vibrations carried not by a material medium but by an immaterial electro-magnetic field. Finally, this theory now is replaced by the claim that light consists of photon obeying an entirely new quantum mechanics.

Kuhn speaks about conceptual incommensurability. Though the whole of his arguments seem vague and ambiguous, much of the debates has centred on conceptual incommensurability. For instance, how is the claim of conceptual incommensurability to be understood? What is it about 'terms' that is incommensurable? Is it their meaning that are so radically different of their referent? Are all the terms of a paradigm incommensurable with all those of another, or does incommensurability is only for some of the terms? Certainly, Feyerabend [1965] believed that 'that meaning of every term we use depends

upon the theoretical context in which it occurs'. Kuhn, too, sometimes wrote as if proponents of different paradigms are always at 'cross purposes' that communication across paradigm is 'inevitable'. However, the large part of semantics underlying the concept of incommensurability is left unclear by Kuhn and other philosophers of science.

It is important here to note that Kuhn's later writings speak less about paradigms and more about the theories and languages. In those papers, he argues that the inter-defined concepts cause translation problems because they divide the world up in distinctive ways, different from the structuring of other theories or languages. This structuring can only be grasped holistically, by becoming familiar with the whole network of interrelations between the concepts and with the assumptions about the world which are made in that interlocked network. According to Kuhn, this constitutes interpretation through which it is possible to gain an understanding of radically different theories. He also distinguishes a 'narrow' sense translation, piecemeal or not word-for-word, from 'interpretation' in which piecemeal translation is impossible. But it is not clear what he actually meant by use of the term 'interpretation'.

It seems that much of what Kuhn discussed on incommensurability is very close to Davidson's conception of intranslatability, Davidson argues that theories of science are seldom discarded, even in the face of seemingly striking anomalies in the observational data. This is because normal science, on Kuhn's view, operates within the term of reference determined by a 'paradigm' – his term of ruling assumptions and standards of inquiry associated with dominant-scientific theory; He argues that the dominant theory will be is over thrown. When the existing paradigm runs into crisis when same alternative paradigms available, Hence is there is the possibility of a scientific revolution'.

Hintikka [1998] noted that, in a critical philosophical perspective, a main source of scientific tradition is an exceedingly narrow idea of what can be meaningfully said in the language in the science and not only shown by means of science and not only shown by means paradigms. According to him, it is Quine who illustrates very well this claim of most thinkers unawareness of their our paradigms. For instance, Kuhn claims that it does not make sense if progress in science depends crucially on his thesis of that we cannot meaningfully speak in science of closeness to truth. But we can speak of truth merely a matter of careful analysis to understand also the idea of closeness to truth. Hence, in the test analysis, Kuhn has to rely on the same version of those in ineffability of truth as in fact been the focal point of critics of logical positivists. The nature of reason will not discourage all claims of the undefinability and expressability in claims.

Unlike Kuhn's paradigm shift', Davidson's radical interpretation proceeds even if there is no existing rules or standards. Here, intranslatability or incommensurability or indeterminacy is not at all matter in understanding meaning. For Davidson, the aim of interpretation is not an agreement but understanding itself. However, it is intranslatability or incommensurability or indeterminacy which proceeds our interpretaion further. For Davidson, there is no existing objective rational code in our communication, because our mental character is essentially anomalous. Unpredictable behaviour is ever, possible. Hence, any one who asserts or denies that he does at particular moment may also at other time negates, for there is nothing in our mind to control what we utters. And so, in-order understand others, one must take into account the holistic nature of mental. Interpreter's have no assess to other's mind. Then the only possibility is to search for the reason for of the utterances. That are occurring in the world. Such reasons might not what speaker believes. Even then, interpretation proceeds endlessly on the vulnerable metaphoric nature of mind (propositional attitudes) as well as

language (linguistic meaning). Hence elucidatory task of philosophy never ends. As Alasdair MacIntyre [2002] noted, we may not have the last word forever.

Davidson's theory of radical interpretation, here, finds similarity with Gadamerian hermeneutics. Gadamer [1976] argues that it is not that hermeneutics, rather than dialectics has the last word. He expresses the conviction that philosophy is a human experience that remains same and that characterise philosophy and that there is no progress in it, but only participation. Progress in philosophy is, of course, different in key respects from the progress in the natural science. The logical nature of natural language and also of our thinking process always needs further explication, that the explication which is also about world.

Gadamer remarks, "concept are only what they are in their functioning and this functioning always rests on the natural logic of language" [1976 : 93]. So both the elucidation and the analysis of concepts always have to refer a back to refer to natural language. And it is because of this that dialectics cannot claim the last word.

The more radically objectifying thought reflect upon itself and unfolds the experience of dialectics, the more clearly it points to what is not Dialectic must retrieve itself in hermeneutics [Ibid : 93].

Davidson says,

I can recognize myself to be a believer, to have a point of view on the world, only through being able to recognize others as having possibly different points of view on that same reality. So only communicators can have a sense of

an objective world, and only they can have beliefs [1985 : 480].

Gilead Bar – Elli says,

Contrary to the common view, the great analytic philosopher were so concerned with language not because they believed that 'everything is linguistic and that 'language is the key to truth" but for quite the opposite reason: they believed that language ie, natural language, can be profoundly misleading and that we must free ourselves from its bounds. The idea was rather that some features of language, particularly logical and grammatical features, may suggest wrong and misleading philosophical (again mainly ontological) conceptions. And that is how logic came to acquire its central role. Logic came to acquire its central role. Logic came to acquire its central, role logic was held to be the route to freedom [1998:167] .

Notes

1. See Gibson. R Roger, "Radical Translation and Radical Interpretation" *Routledge Encyclopedia*, (2000). p. 25:35.
2. See Ibid p. 25.
3. See his article 'Substance without Substrata' . Both Davidson's and Quine use this principle but the application is different.
4. Gibson, Ibid. p. 27.
5. It is here, Davidson hermeneutic visions accommodate dialectics of reason.
6. Any attempt to spell out the principle of charity in sociological psychological or anthropological terms is changing the subject. The Quinean model of radical translation. Originally designed to isolate the relevant empirical features; is conducive to this sort of technique. For it allows use to forget that what we are discussing is a rationalization not only of alien language but also for our mother tongue.
7. One could understand whether the given sentences erroneous or correct only if there are strict rules for rationality assessing its validity. Unlike logical tool for logical purposes as discussed earlier there are no other strict objective code of rationality.
8. In our common usage of talk and thought, we are least concern of we already in known in advance. That means our communication mostly depends on conditions or context of truth.
9. Recall Putnam's water-twater example. In this case even if we believe water for twater communication succeed. Here, it is not language meaning or reference is more important. Rather we are arriving at some shared features of interpreter and speaker here.
10. Recall the initial query that we raised in chapter I of thesis. Davidson rejects the mind priority claim as well as the language priority claim in analysing meaning. By accepting no priority claim, his attempt is to focus on the concept truth, which of course is elementary and logical. But he noticed that this concept while relating with meaning and belief provide

substantial content which of course metaphorical. If we get rid of those metaphors we could understand what the speaker intended. However, any description of understanding elements can not be fixed in the use of language or prepositional attitude.

11. Salmon Wesley explains quantum mechanics in this way. The casual explanation results only to the improbable coincidences.
12. The structure of scientific Revolution [1962]

CONCLUSION

The sum up, Davidson's philosophical perspective that begins with the confluence of two streams of influences, namely, philosophy of mind and philosophy of language. These streams never intersect each other. They flow parallel to each other, with no priority claimed. Yet, Davidson's identity thesis of mental and physical (supervenience claim) adds empirical status through out his thought. But this never contradicts the anomalous thesis. The impetus behind this is his view of reason explanation based on semantic casual reference. This provides a key for post-analytic vision in his thought.

According to Davidson, there is no codified objective rationality. What we call subjective, or objective, inter-subjective are metaphors. Yet there is a symmetric causal relation possible only as improbable coincidence. Here, the knowledge of subjective (knowledge of one's own self), knowledge of objective (knowledge of external nature), knowledge of inter-subjective (knowledge of other self) are discrete. One could not reduced into another. Our communication usually proceed without any prior conception of language. Both speaker and interpreter have their own truth conditions and their own production of meaning. Yet perfect matching between language and reality is impossible. Looking in this way, as W. Child argues, Davidson's reasoning of anomalism can be reconstructed employing the idea that there is no complete set of codified principle of rationality. However, this never denies the possibility of authenticity of event occurrence in particular time. Davidson maintains both speaker's as well as interpreter's autonomy of the mental. Yet, both were talking about or thinking about world outside. If this is so, there might not be a strict triangular schematization of

language, world and thought. But each time when we assert or deny, there is distortion in the schema, which leads to rejects objectified code of rationality.

Davidson's reason explanation is more revolutionary in social and scientific practices. There are social scientists, Freud and Marx, who maintain that participants are often mistaken about reasons for their actions. Participants, according to this view are frequently self-deceived. They suffer illusion or false consciousness. Their social or psychological situation is such that they do not themselves correctly understood what they believe or desire or why they act the way they do. Gayathri Spivak called this situation of people as 'ideology victimizers'.

As Michael Root [1986] argues Freud's explanation of these errors are reason explanations. Whereas Marx's explanation of the participants misunderstanding are not reason explanation, but as Cohen says, they are function explanation. According to Marx, in class-divided societies, much of what people believe about their own psychological attitudes they believe because believing it has certain unrecognized and unintended effects; their having these beliefs causes the forces of production to increase.

However, as far as I understood Davidson, both Marx's explanation and Freud's explanation (also including Spivak's) are reason explanations. Their explanations are based on reason because the rationality then developed are based on truth-conditions of particular events occurred in their world. Their rationality might not be wrong. But what is gone wrong is that the truth-conditions varied. We arrived at different meanings. Old meaning has new connotation. Even if there is no connection between old theory and new one. We are looking yet for such continual causal relation (objective code of rationality). Here as Gayathri Spivak [1987] says, participants (publics) who follow their path become 'ideology victimizers'. In this context as I

discussed earlier (in first chapter), it is man/woman (as an individual) – should decide whether we are slaves or masters of ideas. Hence no ideology ever have an static status- it is dynamic and evolving with the evolution of dialectics, interpretation varies methodology also varies.

Davidson's philosophy of mind and philosophy of language appear to be interdependent because that is the only way to find ourselves with others in this world. Davidson says,

"If I were bolted to the earth I would have no way of determining the distance from me of many objects. I would only know they were on some line drawn from me toward them. I might interact successfully with objects, but I could have no way of giving content to the question where they were. Not being bolted down, I am free to triangulate. Our sense of objective is the consequence of another sort of triangulation one that requires two creatures. Each interacts with an object, but what gives each the concept of the way things are objectively is the base line formed between the creatures by language. The fact that they share a concept of truth along makes sense of the claim that they have beliefs that they are able to assign objects a place in the public world". (1985:480).

This shows how Davidson's perspectives stand a part from traditional as well as contemporary thinker. His radical and innovative approach through his doctrine of AM has had a wide impact not only in cognitive science but almost all areas of science and art. His normative vision puts least effort to speculate and create a metaphysical realms of reason or thought. Instead he concentrates more on social and scientific issues in orders understand, describe and explain the matters that he is so cautious for not to say 'what ought to be? yet he puts forward the methodological stance, that enables us to analysis and understand various issues by ourselves. This

opens an avenue for folk science and folk philosophy. Looking this sense, Hacker's perspectives regarding philosophical discourse might be suspected.

"I claimed that analytical philosophical waned often the 1970s, I should like to conclude clarifying this. Each phase of the analytic movement was motivated by a revolutionary fervor. . . . the methodological self consciousness characteristics of the analytic moment in all its phase diminished, for philosophy no longer seemed to be in need of justification . . . there is no vigorous debate on what philosophy is, and what can be hoped for from it. . . . The hallmark of much contemporary philosophy especially philosophy of psychology and philosophy of language is scientism The critical function of the analytical traditional has been abandoned" [1996:24].

Further, Hintikka [1998] asks 'who is about to kill analytic philosophy?' I strongly suspect whether any one could ever kill, or destroy analytic philosophy as we commonly believe . Philosophy as a speculative discipline is no more, because it has nothing to do with but only to talk with. But philosophy a matter of understanding needs, not only critical function in our talk and thought but also needs to extend it in our ordinary practices and engagements in social and scientific enterprises. Davidson's philosophy in this sense is an actual possibilities of life itself. Today, what is missing in scientific (positivistic) and normative discipline is the philosophical prospects itself. It is high time to think and to talk about what we are doing . One should not wait for 'Philosophers' philosopher' to prescribe a normative function of their own discipline. This need not necessarily be a threat for philosophy as discipline. Yet, even in our doing philosophy we always have a conscious attempt to understand other's world for we find ourselves only through others. Hence man as *homonatura* always strive himself to understand, describe, and analysis his own existence by asserting

and denying what others think and talk about. . Here, philosophy genuinely recarnates in new lights and scopes.

Reminding T.S Eliot's words, I would like to quote

"What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make end is to make a beginning.
The end is to where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time." ¹

Notes

1. T.S. Eliot (1943) 'Little Gidding' *Four Quartets* the American (ed) p. 154.
The poem is a symbol of how man should live in the world without being of the world.

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