MORE, AND DEEPER, DOGMAS OF EMPIRICISM: TOWARDS A HOLISM WITHOUT SCEPTICISM

I

In «Two Dogmas of Empiricism»[1] Quine argued that empiricism could not allow the analytic/synthetic distinction, nor make sense of the notion of equivalence of meaning. His own model for a scientific theory is that of an interconnected web, with no part immune to revision in the light of experience, and no experience forcing rejection of just one part. He believes that single sentences have no meaning, and supported this view in his *Word and Object*[2] by the thesis of «indeterminacy of rational translation»: the view that a sentence can always be regarded as meaning a multitude of different things.

There is a continuity in Quine's thought over a series of publications suggesting throughout the thesis that meanings do not exist, only sentences interrelated with the whole network of language. The *gavagai* example from *Word and Object* is a polyglot version of a general thesis which can also be put in monoglot terms. The thesis claims that the same indeterminacy applies, *mutatis mutandis,* to verbal equivalences within our mother tongue. Thus, the translator's problem as to whether *gavagai* means rabbit hides a prior problem, which is what 'rabbit' means. A definition taken from a dictionary will not satisfy the indeterminacy sceptic, who immediately points out how the lexicographer arrived at that equivalence is open in principle to exactly the same doubts as arise in the case of translating *gavagai.* Lexicographers are not born with innate knowledge of definitions: ultimately they have to infer what particular words mean from observation of how they are used. So the missionary-in-the-jungle scenario is simply a rather dramatic way of focusing on a quite general difficulty encountered in the attempt to give semantic equivalence.

Thus a conceivable criticism of Quine of over-emphasizing the importan-

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1. W.V. QUINE, «Two Dogmas of Empiricism», in *Classics of Analytic Philosophy*, ed. by Robert R. AMMERMAN, Mc Graw-Hill, pp. 196-213.

2. W.V. QUINE, *Word and Object*, Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, 1980.

ce of translation would miss precisely this point. It may indeed be suggested that Quine seems to place an excessive importance on the question of translation. A world with one and only language is conceivable, and there is no reason why, in that case at least, the problem of translation should even arise, let alone threaten the traditional conception of meaning, the argument would go. But, as it has already been suggested, Quine's argument cuts deeper than that; it questions synonymy itself as the foundation of traditional theories of meaning and intensionalism, and translation is only one of its aspects. Of course this is not without its implications. As Jerrold Katz has complained, indeterminacy can indeed become a «slippery slope»:

> «... accepting indeterminacy, we are locked into a linguistic solipsism of the moment: one's own words of the moment would not have univocal interpretation. There would always be other translations based on mutually incompatible schemes under no independent control[3]».

But this sort of radical scepticism is already acknowledged by Quine as early as «Two Dogmas[4]...». What is more, Quine believes that his whole argument leads to scepticism. Indeed, the main thrust of his position against the tradition, destructive as it may be, is actually a deliberate one, and for that reason comparable to, and inspired by, Hume's own. The thinker, having reached this sceptical conclusion, can then leave it behind in his study, and join the rest of the world and its endeavors, be it in the area of physics or some other science.

Of course, it can be argued here that Quine feels comfortable when the scientist does physics but not when the philosopher does semantics. In other words, it can be said that Quine fails to apply to physics the very restrictions that he applies to semantics. As Katz puts it,

> «failure to arrive at a determinate scheme of translation is no more serious philosophically than, say, the failure of physicists to give us a complete enumeration of all the elementary particles[5]».

But then Putnam, of all people, comes to rescue Quine here:

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3. Jerrold KATZ, *The Refutation of Indeterminacy*, paper read at a Philosophy colloquium at the Graduate Center of C.U.N.Y. in the Fall of 1986; p. 20.

4. For a rather strong but also apocalyptic statement (a real Pandora's box), see: «But in point of epistemological footing the physical objects and the gods differ only in degree and not in kind. Both sorts of entities enter our conception only as cultural posits» («Two Dogmas...», *op. cit.*, p. 212).

5. J. KATZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

«...saying 'why shouldn't we be as much realists in psychology as in physics?' is no answer to Quine. The counter is of course that we should be realists in both areas — sophisticated realists. And a sophisticated realist recognizes the existence of equivalent descriptions, because it follows from his theory of the world that there are these various descriptions, as it follows from a geographer's description of the earth that there are alternative mappings (mercator, polar, etc.)[6]».

Thus, Quine appears to be consistent: similar criteria are applied across the board.

Now, for another thing, there is an issue where Putnam himself disagrees with Quine, i.e., that of justification. As Putnam writes,

«...what the logical positivists and Wittgenstein (and perhaps the later Quine as well) did was to produce philosophies which leave no room for a rational activity of philosophy. This is why these views are self-refuting[7]».

And in another article, specifically criticizing Quine, Putnam argues that the rejection of metaphysical realism need not entail the rejection of all trans-subjective standards of rational justification:

«Why should we expend our mental energy in convincing ourselves that we aren't thinkers, that our thoughts aren't really about anything, noumenal or phenomenal, that there is no sense in which any thought is right or wrong (including the thought that no thought is right or wrong) beyond the verdict of the moment, and so on? This is a self-refuting enterprise, if there ever was one[8]».

But then perhaps Quine's scepticism is simply of the type which allows for one view only to remain unchallenged, namely that nothing can be known. On this assumption —and this is something that Quine himself would be comfortable with— one can build various schemes of trans-subjective rationality based on, to use Quine's own suggestions, convenience, simplicity and tradition. Still this notion of rationality remains firmly at the subjective level. After all, the difference between the individual subject and the social subject is only a difference in numbers, as far as realism is concerned. The

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6. H. PUTNAM, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences*, 1978, p. 51.

7. H. PUTNAM, *Reason, Truth, and History*, 1981, p. 113.

8. H. PUTNAM, «Why Reason Can't Be Naturalized», in *After Philosophy*, Kenneth Baynes ed., 1987, p. 242.

scope of the justification process may be larger, but the thesis to the effect that rationality is bound up together with the given language remains intact. It is a different sort of rationality that trans-subjectivism produces, and, once again, Quine's own conception allows for it, too. It accepts objectivity as inter-agreement, and denies it as determinacy.

So far then, the charges against Quine have either failed to aknowledge the full force of his criticism, or they have failed to accept its consequences as readily as he.

II

Quine's thesis will prove wrong only when its scepticism will have been fully aknowledged, adressed and refuted. This cannot be done from a point of view which shares with Quine a deeper commitment to the importance of analyticity for a theory of meaning. The question is not synonymy, the question is representation. Bringing representation into the picture, as a necessary component of any theory of meaning of natural language, helps undermine both the analytic-synthetic distinction, as well as Quine's conclusion to the effect that meaning holism entails scepticism.

All propositions are revisable, but not in virtue of other propositions; rather, they are revisable in virtue of their relation with the world they are supposed to be about. Thus, the complaint expressed in the previous section about an excessive and exlusive importance placed on translation aquires now a new thrust: it amounts to protesting against the practice of neglecting that part of semantic theory which purports to explain the language-world relation. Any such theory which misses that dimension may succeed in proving that there is no fact of the matter to be explained, as Quine certainly does, but only after it has operated on language on a true Procroustean bed.

If it is scepticism that a defender of realism should criticize in Quine, then this, to be done effectively, must abandon any attempts to come up with more sophisticated versions of the analytic-synthetic distinction. What is really erroneous in Quine's thought is to think —along with his potential critic of a more traditional trust— that only analyticity can serve as the foundation of certainty. He differs from the latter in that he believes he has refuted the analytic-synthetic distinction, and in that he accepts scepticism as the only natural alternative after that refutation. His critic also accepts this kind of dualism (i.e., either analyticity, or scepticism) but holds firm to some version of the analytic-synthetic distinction in the hope of successfully defending realism.

Conversely, it is erroneous to believe that meaning holism entails relativism or scepticism. Quine's insight about the revisability of all parts of language must be granted as correct, but then it must be shown to entail no relativism. For this to be done effectively one needs a conception of knowledge foundation, truth confirmation, etc., which goes beyond the traditional rationalist and empiricist alternatives. What both of these alternatives share is the attribution of the role of the foundation of knowledge to some part of the cognitive process (e.g., categories, ideas, etc.) and, subsequently, they share the identification of truth itself with that respective part. In other words, they have failed to distinguish between truth as correspondence with reality on the one hand, and the criterion of that truth, on the other. Instead, by collapsing the former into the latter, after the latter had itself been identified with, depending on the occasion, either clear and distinct ideas, or sense data, or whatever, these traditions in epistemology and meaning theory have managed to exclude the questions about correspondence, to remain subjectivist in nature, and consequently, to invite scepticism.

Far from offering a well defined alternative, this paper will be exhausted in drawing some distinctions, and in pointing towards what may be new directions, leading away from what appears to be an article of faith in traditional semantics and epistemology, apparently even more deeply embedded than any of the recognized «dogmas» therein.

Quine writes elsewhere,

«Carnap maintains that ontological questions, and likewise questions of logical or mathematical principle, are questions not of fact but of choosing a convenient conceptual scheme or framework for science; and with this I agree only if the same be conceded for every scientific hypothesis[9]».

Now, to take things from the beginning, the analytic-synthetic distinction can be shown to be unacceptable for a reason different than the one Quine has invoked. He placed importance on revisability and showed, corectly, that all propositions are in principle revisable. Then, rather than, as one would have expected him to do, conclude that all propositions are synthetic a posteriori, he acts as though the only important question is revisability. As the above passage demonstrates, when the question arises about the truth status of propositions, Quine simply ignores it. Notwithstand-

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9. W.V. QUINE, «On Carnap's Views On Ontology», *Philosophical Studies*, II, No 5, 1951, p. 72.

ing the issue of revisability, Quine could indeed have argued that, rather than necessary a posteriori, *all propositions are analytic,* for they, in his words, are «not questions of fact». Thus, whereas the realists have always implied, being not bold enough to suggest, that analytic truths, unlike the synthetic ones, aren't really truths, insofar as they are not about anything, now, after Quine is done, one is forced to say that neither are the synthetic ones. Underneath this rather unfortunate situation lies Quine's acceptance of revisability, but without a notion of correspondence which would account for it to begin with. Despite his criticism of Carnap of failing to capture the essence of natural as opposed to artificial languages, Quine himself exclusively emphasizes a feature like revisability which any artificial language can conceivably display, while disregarding the dimension of representation which natural languages distinctly have.

The rejection by Quine of the analytic-synthetic distinction is a superficial one: he accepts its basic character and takes it to its logical conclusion; the force of that distinction was that, some truths being themselves immune from revision due to experience, can serve as the foundation of knowledge (with different degrees of emphasis, or in the characterization which the rationalist or the empiricist placed on it). Now Quine argues that all statements acquire their meaning from their connections with other sentences in the given language. But note that Quine has only achieved to show that the set «sentences which are true in virtue of their meaning» is much larger than we had thought; as a matter of fact, it contains all the sentences of a language. For, since they are all true in virtue of language (i.e., since their meaning depends on the meaning of other sentences, ad infinitum), not in virtue of their representation relation with the world, they share this peculiar characteristic with the so-called analytic truths. In other words, Quine's scepticism about the knowability of the world, which he inherits from the tradition he is supposed to criticize, proves stronger and deeper than his anxiety to reject the analytic-synthetic distinction. Which implies that a sure way to undertake that task can only be a realist one; namely, that which will reject the distinction along with its rationalist or empiricist assumption to the effect that, somehow, truth is not, at least not primarily, a question of correctly representing the world, but of reaching some notion of certainty via, put in very general terms, indubidable bits of language. For such a realist account all statements are synthetic a posteriori insofar as we take the trouble to attribute to them a truth-value; their truth-value is determined by the way the world is, not by how the language is set up. Note that a necessary corollary to that view is that the crucial level of analysis is that of language as a system of representation, not

the word or the sentence(s); such a system may (or may not) be constituted by one to millions of words, or an infinite number of sentences; still a language with just one word is conceivable, and it too would count as a system of representation. The point is that before one asks the question about any inter-linguistic relations, one must ask the question about the relation between the system and what it represents; ex hypothesi, what such systems have in common, regardless of differences in their respective internal organizations, beginning at the level of the one-word-language and moving upwards, is that they are about something other than themselves, i.e., the world.

Now, it is true that the whole category of sentences like «Bachelors are unmarried men» must itself be accounted for. One brief remark only: Language has truth-value given its relation to the world, something that we may want to take as essential to what language really is. At the same time, we do use language in order to, among other things, test a microphone, something that we may not wish to say is essential to its representational character. Similarly, then, that, from a point of view, bits of language are found to have no truth-value should not puzzle us; forgetting for a minute about the representational role of language, one can say that a sentence like «Bachelors...» is actually an instance of learning linguistic rules, some of which are phonetic, some syntactic, some pragmatic and so on, all being very important but, again, not essential to the crucial role that a natural language has, i.e., representation. Such kinds of rules can indeed be learned about artificial languages lacking any aspiration for representation. In other words, that a part of semantics does, as it were, take care of instances like «Bachelors...» is hardly problematic. That it should be treated as the basis on which the rest, the representational semantics, should be based is indeed strange. If anything, it should be the other way around: this inter-relational semantics, in the case of a natural language of course, acquires its status, indeed exists, in virtue of the representational semantics. The former type of semantics, to make the same point again, is neither typical nor central to what the semantics of a natural language (which purports to explain the language-world relation) ought to be; as a matter of fact it is not even necessary. For, like the semantics of metaphors, or the semantics of, say, the poetry of L. Carrol, it presupposes a representational semantics to begin with. And of course, we do not wish to say that such sentences, when viewed as mere meaning relations, have a truth-value on the grounds that they help in the representation of the world overall, either. At least not any more than we wish to say that because metaphors may prove helpful in making a point,

metaphors themselves have a truth-value status, closely related to, and influencing, the status of the point being made.

Quine argues that sentences as a whole face the tribunal of sense experience which in turn accounts for their revisability. So he offers a criterion which is supposed to contradict the received view about the non-revisability of some meanings. However his own account re-invokes an old belief to the effect that truth is founded on some aspect/level of the knowing subject. He replaces the tribunal of eternal meanings, categories, etc. with that of sense experience, which of course, as he himself aknowledges, may well be entirely hallucinatory. Thus the synthetic is not true/false in virtue of the world but of sense experience. (It is also difficult at this point to see what really makes it revisable, too). Therefore, with only a difference in the emphasis, once again the process of confirmation (here sense experience) is identified with what it is supposed to confirm, i.e., the truth/falsity of a given statement.

What is more, Quine's appeal to convenience, etc., undercuts his own distinction between sentences as a whole and sense experience because it presupposes something intrinsically linguistic about both. Indeed, for Quine to maintain that science gets confirmed as a whole through experience, and then unequivocally admit that «every scientific hypothesis is determined by choosing a convenient conceptual scheme[10]», one must construe «through experience» to mean linguistic/conventional/habitual experience, not the familiar link-with-the-world type. Once again then, it becomes clear that at a deeper level Quine remains loyal to his tradition by retaining a criterion of truth entirely subjectivist. After all, the realist will never be impressed if «true in virtue of linguistic rules» is replaced by «true in virtue of some other linguistic rules», especially not if the latter is offered as a radical alternative to the former.

Note too how significant it may be that despite his meaning holism Quine has remained throughout what I would call an ontological atomist, a point briefly referred to when I talk about revisability necessarily depending on the world. Quine, in his book titles, for example, formulates the problem as «Word and Object» (which, by the way, in order to be a well-chosen title should be, trivially, «Sound and Object», or, not-so-trivially, «Theory and Object», something that has more recently been taken care of in a selection titled, I believe, *Theories and Things*). He seems to presuppose that, whatever the status of our science is, it deals with atomistically selected objects, things, etc., never with the world as a whole. Whether or not this is

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10. W.V. QUINE, «Two Dogmas...», *op. cit.*, p. 213.

an additional article of faith for him it remains to a future paper to discuss though.

Finally, to show how deep is the notion of foundation in terms of an identification of the confirmation process with what it is supposed to represent (which was referred to above as the common error in the tradition), consider Putnam's own defense of Quine in terms of «alternative mappings in semantics as in geography[11]». Indeed, this notion is so deep that when someone like Putnam tries to argue against foundationalism he leaves it intact; actually he uses it himself. For «mapping» remains for him the only conceivable model of representation, only now he argues, we should allow for «equivalent mappings». The counter point is of course that «mapping» is no better a way to talk about the way language relates to the world than was the early Wittgenstein's version of correspondence, where world structure literally depicts the world structure. And it goes without saying that from the fact that a particular geographic description attempts to capture a particular (e.g., polar) aspect of the world it does not follow that we should settle for two alternative, hence competing, descriptions of one and the same aspect of the world. It makes sense to have polar, mercator, etc., descriptions, but it makes no sense to have two competing polar, or two competing mercator, etc., descriptions; or, to put it in more holistic —ontologically holistic, that is— terms, when our subject of investigation happens to be the world as a whole, then two alternative descriptions, say one theological and one materialist, of it are scientifically intollerable, although we can certainly live with them. And, what is more important, the metaphor of «mapping» does not apply there any more; as a matter of fact it never did outside of geography.

III

I turn now to the case of Fred Dretske, as that of a realist who, insofar as he commits the same error of identifying truth with a part of the cognizing subject, proves equally unable to avoid scepticism. Dretske's candidate for foundation is information; but he fails to distinguish between what he calls information present at the sensory level and information as it is available in nature at large. He espouses, as a result, a theory of error which blames internal influences on an otherwise pure perception for the occurrence of error, thereby perpetuating another traditional misconception.

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11. See p. 412, above.

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An important question concerning his theory is whether he can keep both his claim for objectivity, and that of the relativity of knowledge due to background information determining it. The strongest position he takes commits him to a version of perceptual knowledge theory that has direct observation as its foundation.

«The analysis may appear circular. Knowledge is identified with information-produced belief, but the information a person receives is relative to what he or she already knows about the possibilities at the source.

»...Eventually we reach a stage where the information does not depend in any way on prior knowledge about the source, and it is this fact that enables our equation to avoid circularity[12]».

It follows then for Dretske that perception ultimately, or at least some level of it, is pure, free of cognitive influence, a distinct phase in the whole process of knowledge, which, because of its purity can be used as the foundation of all knowledge. The notion of information is the new element in this otherwise traditionally empiricist solution to the problem of knowledge. Dretske offers it in order to account for the reliability of sense experience: information available at the sense level is necessarily true; false information is a contradiction in terms. But what exactly does it mean to say, as Dretske does, that information is available to our senses regardless of our knowing it or not?

For Dretske information is not only available to the senses but even present at the senses. He talks almost as though we extract it not from reality but from the senses which faithfully and in a rich manner carry it. There is a tendency for the amount of information that is available in reality to be identified with what is available at the senses, with the qualification perhaps that it is always a part of reality that the senses have necessarily true information about. Dretske's criticism of British empiricism of collapsing reality into sense-data and aknowledging only the latter is thus undermined by his own collapsing information as it is available in the external world into the information that is processed by sensory means. The common denominator is that neither is dependent on the subject's conciousness. He thinks of information «as an objective commodity, something whose generation, transmission and reception do not require or in any way presuppose interpretive processes[13]». However, it is one thing to say that facts carry

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12. Fred I. DRETSKE, *Knowledge and the Flow of Information*, MIT Press, 1981, pp. 86-87.
13. *Ibid.*, p. VII.

information independently of any consciousness —a premis that any decent realist would endorse— and another to say that information is available at the senses (in analog form), and what remains to be done is its extraction from there.

Implicit in Dretske's theory is a conception of knowledge by acquaintance. He reserves a place for it similar to that traditionally reserved. For what else does it mean to say that after the appropriate names have been provided, «the flowers do not look any different; the subject merely learns how to organize the information already available in its sensory experience[14]» other than to presume a distinction between «knowing something» and «knowing that»? And similarly with the idea that «one can have the concept robin, hence believe that the creature perched on yonder branch is a robin, without knowing that robins can fly or that robins are birds[15]». For certainly this view is reminiscent of Russel's formulation, according to which «we have knowledge of a thing by acquaintance even if we know very few propositions about it — theoretically we need not know any propositions about it[16]». Or, in Dretske's terms,

«What the child needs is not more information about the daffodil but a change in the way she codes the information she has been getting all along[17]».

Dretske shares with the empiricist tradition the view that knowledge is something that is decided at the level of the senses. Perception is based on certain experiences. In those experiences we are given information on which our knowledge about the world is then based. Although he rejects the notion of sense-data, along with its sceptic implications, he seems to inherit the wrong assumption behind it, namely that there can be no possibility of doubt about the sense-data, and offers it now in information-theoretic terms. Information is the foundation because its neccessarily true content is undeniable.

He also goes one step further by identifying the objectively available information with the information that a particular sensory experience has as its content. That the bell's ringing and the button's beeing pressed have a causal connection, and that this information is objectively available independently of any consciousness picking it up or not is true. But Dretske

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14. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

15. *Ibid.* p. 221.

16. Bertrand RUSSEL, *The Problems of Philosophy*, O.U.P., p. 144.

17. F. DRETSKE, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

claims that «our auditory experience represents the bell ringing and it represents the button's being depressed[18]», on the grounds presumably, that this information exists objectively. *But an auditory experience can have information only about its auditory cause*, not about something that requires a different sensory experience to pick it (i.e., the pressing of the button, in this case) up — let alone the problem of a mere sensory experience having an *independent* content. What seems to be necessary for the representation of both the ringing and the pressing is inference, and this takes one beyond the realm of sensory experience. Dretske writes,

> «our sensory experience is informationally rich and profuse in a way that our cognitive utilisation of it is not. Relative to the information we manage to extract from the sensory representation, the sensory representation itself qualifies as an analog representation of the source[19]».

Nevertheless, a *representation of the source*: it makes no sense to claim that something is a representation of something else without allowing for the former to be a more or less faithful one, an essential or a non-essential one, but still a representation, hence not identical with, or exhaustive of, its source.

The drive for absolute certainty has isolated one value, truth, from the dual character all representations have (i.e., true to some extent, false to some other), and has identified representation with truth. Dretske's version is expressed by identifying sensory experience with necessarily true information. But this way no plausible account of false beliefs can be maintained, neither will the sceptic stop challenging the assumption that our experience is reliable, which is the reason, presumably, why Dretske feels obliged to introduce the additional appeal to relevance in order to meet the sceptic's argument[20].

Unfortunately, Dretske doesn't go beyond a strong claim about the reliability of our experience, and he readily identifies the signal and its objectively carried information with the analog representation:

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

20. See ch. 5, where his procedure to achieve the one relevant possibility in order to have knowledge proves always incomplete and open to revision. Dretske leaves open the question about when do we decide that certain information «ceases to get through» (p. 132). Instead, he points at the variable way the relevant possibilities are determined by value, interest and purpose-loaded action.

«The system generates some internal analog representation of the red square on the basis of the information contained in the signal. This of course is meant to correspond to the perceptual phase of the total cognitive process. The information can now be digitalized in different ways[21]».

But more problems arise after such an identification of the information contained in the signal with the perceptual phase. For the claim that information is present «all along» at the internal analog representation without the subject actually knowing it becomes problematic when one considers a simple (and famous, thanks to Russel) example: The information that can in principle be extracted from a table visually, hence information which is contained in the signals generated by a table (i.e., from the smooth and even look, to the hills and valleys that a microscope would reveal, to infinite details, that closer and closer investigation would reveal); this possibly infinite amount of information cannot be said to be present «all along» at the sensory level on the grounds that the received signal objectively contains it. One needs to make a distinction between what is the content of the signal and what is the content of the representation. It is for that reason that extraction of information should instead be viewed as a process which involves on the one hand some form of consciousness, its sensory and cognitive phases used as a whole, and, on the other, reality, from which, and only from which, information is extracted.

The overestimation of perception on Dretske's part, and the distinction between truth and falsity on the grounds of the level of the «total cognitive process», rather than on the correspondence of the content of the representation as a whole with external reality, seems to be an echo of traditional empiricist assumptions. Thus Russel wrote,

«Knowledge of truths raises a further problem which does not arise in regard to knowledge of things, namely the problem of error... This problem does not arise with regard to knowledge by acquaintance, for, whatever may be the object of acquaintance... there is no error involved so long as we do not go beyond the immediate object[22]».

Suppose we first perceive the sun shining, which is a complex fact, and then proceed to make the judgement

«"the sun is shining". In passing from perception to judgement... it is

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21. F. DRETSKE, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
22. B. RUSSEL, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

possible to commit an error; hence, even where a fact has the first or absolute kind of self-evidence, a judgement believed to correspond to the fact is not absolutelly infallible[23]».

And in rather modern parlance, no errors take place at the perception level because information getting stored there is information about facts, and facts cannot be false. Error arises beyond the analogous representation.

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ΠΕΡΙΣΣΟΤΕΡΑ ΚΑΙ ΒΑΘΥΤΕΡΑ ΔΟΓΜΑΤΑ ΕΜΠΕΙΡΙΣΜΟΥ: ΠΡΟΣ ΕΝΑΝ ΟΛΙΣΜΟ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΚΕΠΤΙΚΙΣΜΟ

Περίληψη

Τὸ κείμενο ἐξετάζει τὸ ζήτημα τοῦ νοήματος τοῦ ὁλισμοῦ. Ἐπιχειρεῖ νὰ δείξει ὅτι μία σοβαρὴ κριτικὴ τῆς ἀπόψεως τοῦ Quine, ἀπ' ὅπου προκύπτει καὶ μία ὑποστήριξὴ καὶ ἀνάπτυξη μιᾶς ρεαλιστικῆς θέσης (λ.χ. ἡ θεωρία τοῦ Dretske), πρέπει νὰ ἀναζητήσει κάποιες βαθύτερες παραδοχὲς ποὺ νὰ τὶς συμμερίζεται τόσο ὁ Quine ὅσο καὶ ἡ παράδοση. Τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα μπορεῖ νὰ εἶναι ἡ ἔναρξη ἑνὸς φιλοσοφικοῦ ρεαλισμοῦ ποὺ θὰ εἶναι σὲ θέση νὰ ἀντιμετωπίσει τὴν ἰδέα τοῦ ὁλισμοῦ γιατὶ θὰ γνωρίζει πῶς νὰ ἀποφύγει τὸν σκεπτικισμό.

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Μετάφραση: Α. ΑΡΑΒΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ

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23. *Ibid.*, p. 136.