Problem

In Word and Object, W. V. Quine presents a thesis of indeterminacy in radical translation. This paper will be a critical consideration of that thesis as it is presented in chapter two of Word and Object.

In the introduction, critical analysis done by Quine antecedent to Word and Object will be presented. This earlier work relates primarily to his work on theories of meaning. Secondly, a brief recapitulation of Quine's indeterminacy thesis will be presented. This recapitulation will be followed by three criticisms of that thesis. And finally, I will consider the cogency of the three criticisms and conclude with a few remarks of my own.

Introduction

In the preface to Word and Object, Quine states that language is a social art whose acquisition depends upon the available intersubjective cues as to what one should say and when. Because of this intersubjectivity, there exists no ground for collating linguistic meanings except through the dispositions of men to respond overtly to observable social stimulations. "An effect of recognizing this limitation is that the enterprise of translation is found to be involved in a certain systematic indeterminacy." To fully appreciate this problem of indeterminacy, it is necessary to understand previous analysis by Quine on meaning in general.

At the center of Quine's philosophical position lies his attack on accepted philosophical views about meaning. His attack on these accepted views revolves primarily around an objection to two clusters of views on meaning: the analytic-synthetic distinction, and the postulation of intensional objects and objects of psychological attitudes. The main import of these two clusters is that "sentences of a language have a definite meaning apart from any proposed scheme of translation from that language, such that if two quite
different ways of translating the language are proposed, at most one of these can be correct."3 And further, "any theory of meaning adequate to account for translation, ambiguity, objects of psychological states, etc., must permit an analytic-synthetic distinction."4

In denying the analytic-synthetic distinction, Quine is not only saying that there is no clear, sharp distinction, but rather the more radical assertion that "nothing is analytically true."5 The analytic-synthetic distinction resembles the witch-nonwitch distinction which does not distinguish anything, simply because there are no witches. This is important because the "ascription of analyticity, like the ascription of witchcraft, commits one to an incorrect explanatory claim."6 Mere philosophical talk about analyticity no more shows that there is such a thing as analyticity than mere talk about witches shows that there exist witches. It is also impossible to introduce the analytic-synthetic distinction through ostensive teaching by presentation of paradigm cases, in the same way it is impossible to teach the witch-nonwitch distinction ostensively. There is just simply no way to introduce the distinction.7 The analytic-synthetic distinction, intensional objects of psychological states, meanings, and propositions, "in short meanings as conceived by certain linguistic philosophers . . . is no better off than witches, the ether, phlogiston, or God; and God is dead."8

Quine's denial of the analytic-synthetic distinction rests primarily on the view that there are simply no analytic truths, and his main objection to propositions, meanings and intensional objects is that their proponents hold "bad empirical theories."9 The main problem for a person defending the notion of analyticity is showing how obviousness is a sign of truth or knowledge by virtue of meaning. The conventionalist's attempt to answer this has resulted in the assertion that meaning is determined by conventional usage or arbitrary assignment of meaning. The result of this has been a circularity or infinite regress in logic, because to "understand and apply conventions that give meaning to logical words one would already have to understand some logical words."10 Hence, conventionalism must fail to account for knowledge of truth via knowledge of meaning "since knowledge that something is true according to one's conventions . . . is not sufficient for knowledge that it is true."11
At best the notion of absolutely \textit{a priori} knowledge and absolutely necessary truth is obscure. We can always conceive of any statement failing to hold and can always imagine circumstances which would cause us to give up any view. The limits of what can be conceived can change one's attitudes about analyticity. For instance, one might believe that the statement "All cats are animals" is an analytic truth in the full-blooded sense of analytic. But the new knowledge that some cats are robots might change one's attitude toward the analyticity of the former universal statement. In another case, a person might believe that the proposition "Red is a color" is analytic. But where it is found that the color red is dependent on high frequency sound so that a deaf person might see grey instead of red, one's attitude toward the analyticity of the proposition would become negative.\(^{12}\)

We cannot vindicate the theory of analyticity by simple talk about meaning, synonymy, and definition. Instead one must explicitly justify the explanatory claim involved in 'equivalent by virtue of meaning.'\(^{13}\) The explicit conventional definition is that when we introduce a new expression into the language by defining it to be equivalent with an older expression, the two expressions are equivalent by virtue of meaning.\(^{14}\) However, the problem with such a definition is how it can ensure equivalence. Postulation can be of help in partially specifying meaning when one wants to introduce a new theory or explain an old one, but such postulation does not itself ensure truth. It is possible for two people to introduce the same theory in entirely different ways such that the synthetic statements of the two theories are equivalent "by definition plus logic according to the other, although the corresponding terms in the presentation of the theory will not for that reason differ in meaning. Therefore, definition does not hold the key to analyticity."\(^{15}\) And moreover, "the ascription of analyticity commits one to an explanatory claim . . . that something can be true or knowable by virtue of meaning."\(^{16}\)

Quine also argues against the notion of intensional objects which maintains that two sentences are equivalent by virtue of meaning if they express the same psychological attitude or belief; psychological attitudes are attitudes toward propositions and belief is the acceptance of a proposition.\(^{17}\) Such a view offers no explanation of equivalence by virtue of
meaning: first, because a person does not accept a sentence because of a proposition he accepts or a meaning expressed by that sentence, and second because philosophers who argue this way use a duplicitous form of meaning which muddles the ordinary use of the expression "means the same as." For instance, the ordinary usage would maintain that the sentence "Nixon traveled to Vietnam" means the same as the sentence "The president traveled to Vietnam"; the linguistic philosopher does not want to maintain this, although we would say he did in the ordinary sense of "means the same as." Therefore, a theory of propositional attitudes fails to account for the ordinary use of "means the same as" since it would find the two examples unequivalent in the common usage.*

In the translation, the dispute over meaning becomes more complicated, and there appears an indeterminacy which is inherently present in the nature of language itself. Many philosophers have argued that translation consists in finding a sentence in one language which expresses the same meaning or proposition as another sentence in another language. One cannot proceed without the background of a general scheme of translation. Without such a scheme, the notion of translation is indeterminate.\textsuperscript{19} The indeterminacy of translation can be compared to the indeterminacy of translation between number theory and set theory.

Following Von Neumann one may identify each (natural) number with the set of all smaller numbers. Following Zermelo one may identify each number with the unit set of its predecessor. Either series of identifications permits translation of all sentences of number theory; and apart from some such general scheme of translation, it makes no sense to ask what is the correct translation of an isolated statement of number theory or what is the correct way to identify number with sets.\textsuperscript{20}

The indeterminacy exists because there may be several possible different schemes for translating number theory into set theory which satisfy all reasonable conditions, and yet generate non-equivalent translations. Consider the following statement: "The number two has one member." Apart from any set theory the statement is neither true nor false. But according to Von Neumann's set theory the statement is true and
according to Zermelo's set theory the statement is false. From this Quine concludes that we are not free to think of translation apart from a general scheme of interpretation; "radical translation is always indeterminate; and consequently the postulation of meanings or propositions is not vindicated by the possibilities of translation from one language into another."22

There is, to be sure, an intimate connection between psychology and translation, because a good scheme of translation is one that attributes to people "beliefs, desires, etc., that are similar to our own and arise in ways similar to the ways in which our beliefs, desires ... arise."23 Translation does not require the existence of prior relations of meanings between sentences of different languages apart from some proposed scheme of translation. The fact that a person of our language will accept a sentence in another language "does not represent an underlying propositional attitude such that, apart from a presupposed scheme of translation, the same attitude could be said to underlie our acceptance of a sentence in our language."24

Throughout radical translation a type of ontological indeterminacy also obtains. This ontological indeterminacy is revealed when the field linguist approaches an alien culture equipped with his own predispositions about what objects really exist in the world. The field linguist's talk about objects is not just a trait of human behavior, but in the situation of translating alien sentences and expressions, he is necessarily bound to adapt any alien pattern to his own. In translating those alien sentences into his own, he is bound to apply his conceptual scheme to their language, imputing to them the existence of identical objects which his own ontological scheme recognizes.

This ontological indeterminacy is not fully appreciated until it is recognized that there can be exhaustive knowledge of the stimulatory conditions for every utterance in an alien language and still be no knowledge of what objects "the speakers of that language believe in."25 In gaining empirical evidence against the existential statements, knowledge of stimulatory conditions does tend to settle what is to count as empirical evidence for or against the truth of the sentence.
If we then go on to assign the sentence some import in point of existence of objects, by arbitrary projection in the case of the heathen language or as a matter of course in the case of our own, thereupon what has already been counting as empirical evidence, for or against the truth of the sentence comes to count as empirical evidence for or against the existence of the objects. 27

In the last analysis, one cannot conclude that what there is necessarily depends on words. Our acceptance of an ontology is similar to our acceptance of a scientific physical theory. Insofar as we are reasonable, we accept the scheme which is the simplest, and which orders the fragments of raw experience into the most coherent pattern or whole. 28 In radical translation, the field linguist accepts the ontology which best explains the raw material involved. For the sake of simplicity, he assumes that the native's ontology is not much different from his own. It is at this point that Word and Object begins.

"Translation and Meaning"

Quine considers the question of just how much sense can be made of language in terms of its stimulus conditions, "and what scope this leaves for empirically unconditioned variation in one's conceptual scheme." 29 This unconditioned variation can be visualized as two men alike in all of their dispositions to verbal behavior under all possible stimulations and "yet the meanings or ideas expressed in their identically triggered and identically sounded utterances . . . diverge radically . . . in a wide range of cases." 30 This means that manuals for translating a language could be devised in different ways such that they are compatible in terms of speech dispositions and yet incompatible with one another: i.e., could come up with different translations of certain sentences. 31 Radical translation is the locus for Quine's discussion of the unconditioned variable in language.

Radical translation is translation between our language and presently untouched and unrelated language. The field linguist is out to penetrate this language without the aid of an interpreter. The only tools at his disposal are the stimulatory influences upon the native and the behavior which the native exhibits in response to the stimulatory influence, vocal and otherwise. The correlations
obtained from this observation render meanings of the stimulus type, and it is in this way that the field linguist attempts to construct translations of all possible native sentences.  

The linguist begins by translating the most conspicuous utterances. If a rabbit scurries by and the native utters "Gavagai," the linguist might understand the utterance as an occasion sentence roughly translatable into our language as "A rabbit" or "Lo a rabbit." Assuming that the linguist has mastered the native's method for assent and dissent, he can query the native to find out whether or not his hypothetical translation of "Gavagai" is correct. The general law under which the linguist operates is that the native will assent to "Gavagai" under the same circumstances to which we would assent to "Rabbit" or "Lo a rabbit"; the same would hold for dissent. Usually the linguist will decide questions of causality by intuitive judgment based on the stimulus response of the native, but in his testing he can become more formal by asking sentence S and then quickly asking S again with an added variable Q, which, if it prompts a dissent the second time, can be assumed to be the variable that did the prompting. This is the general approach of the linguist in radical translation.

It is at this point that the linguist must construct a crude machine of empirical meaning. Meaning is the thing that the two languages are to share and at the onset everything hinges on the correlation with nonverbal stimulations. The affirmative stimulus meaning for the sentence "Gavagai" for a particular speaker is the "class of all the stimulations . . . that would prompt his assent." The negative stimulus meaning is the class of all objects which would for any particular speaker prompt his dissent. The full stimulus meaning is then the ordered pair of the two. "Fully ticketed . . . a stimulus meaning is the stimulus meaning modulo n seconds of a sentence S for a speaker A at time T." Stimulus meaning sums up the speaker's disposition to assent to or dissent from a sentence in response to certain stimulations.

Occasion sentences are important for the linguist's use of stimulus meaning. Occasion sentences as opposed to standing sentences are sentences such as "Gavagai" or "Red." These are sentences which command "assent or dissent only if queried after an appropriate prompting stimulation."
The synonymy of stimulus meaning between such sentences has serious shortcomings. The main problem is that the speaker's assent to or dissent from an occasion sentence, might be prompted by collateral information either not known or available to the linguist. However, stimulus meaning is the only path open to the linguist. He has to translate by approximation of stimulus meaning and not by identity. His assumption is that people who live in rabbit country have a term for an enduring entity called rabbit. He will test this term to make sure that it is not being used for "white" or "animal," and this is the best he can do.

The synonymy of sentences turns on the consideration of assent, but this is not the situation with terms. The stimulus synonymy of sentences does not mean that the terms are co-extensive or true of the same things. In considering the term "gavagai," one does not know whether the objects to which this term refers is a whole enduring rabbit, a rabbit part, a phase of a rabbit or rabbithood. Further, nothing is to be clarified by pointing. Point to a rabbit and you point to a rabbit phase, a part of a rabbit, and to rabbithood. When the linguist jumps from stimulus meaning to synonymy between the terms "rabbit" and "gavagai," he does so under the assumption that the native is enough like us to have a short general term for rabbits and not a term for parts or phases of rabbits.

Using the selective method of assent to and dissent from certain sentences, the linguist may obtain the translation of observation sentences, sentences whose behavioral definition turns on "similarities of stimulus meaning over the community." Truth functions can also be translated along with the recognition of stimulus-analytic and stimulus-contradictory sentences—stimulus-analytic sentences being sentences to which one would be prepared to affirm come what stimulation may, and stimulus-contradictory sentences being the same except only negatively. The question of intrasubjective synonymy for native occasion sentences can be raised but not translated; we cannot equate terms through intrasubjective stimulus synonymy except in our own language which presupposes more than the linguist has at his disposal. A bilingual does not know the synonymy of terms, say "bachelor" and "unmarried man," although there are synonymous occasion sentences for individual English speakers; "still either term to the exclusion of the other
might, so far as he knows, apply not to men but to their states or parts or even to a scattered concrete totality or an abstract attribute."

The only way to pass beyond these limitations set up by the methodology of assent and dissent is through the use of analytical hypotheses.

It is only by such outright projection of prior linguistic habits that the linguist can find general terms in the native language at all, or, having found them, match them with his own; stimulus meanings never suffice to determine even what words are terms, if any, much less what terms are co-extensive.

The analytic hypotheses are a means of catapulting the linguist into the native's language by means of his language's inertia. Even the bilingual linguist must proceed with the aid of such analytical hypotheses in attaching functions to native terms. The sentence translations are to include the earlier translations of truth functions and observation sentences. The sentences which are stimulus-analytic and stimulus-contradictory in the alien language are to carry into English sentences which are likewise stimulus-analytic and stimulus-contradictory, according to stimulus synonymy.

In the native to English dictionary, the semantic correlation beyond independent evidence is supported solely by analytical hypotheses. And that these "unverifiable translations proceed without mishap must not be taken as pragmatic evidence of good lexicography, for mishap is impossible."

The indeterminacy of translation becomes apparent, because one has only to reflect on the nature of possible data and methods to appreciate the indeterminacy. Sentences translatable outright, translatable by independent evidence of stimulatory occasions, are sparse and must woefully under-determine the analytical hypotheses on which the translation of all further sentences depends. To project such hypotheses beyond the independently translatable sentences at all is in effect to impute our sense of the linguistic analogy unverifiably to the native mind.

Rival systems of analytical hypotheses can
accomodate the complete domain of speech behavior
to perfection and dispositions to speech behavior,
and yet have mutually incompatible translations of
any number of sentences immune to independent control.
It is possible that one linguist through the use of
analytical hypotheses might translate a particular
native construction as meaning "are the same"; on
this belief he might question his informant about
the sameness of gavagais at different times, and
conclude that "gavagai" was the native term for our
term "rabbit" and not a stage of a rabbit. However,
if another linguist translated the same native
construction as "are stages of the same animal,"
the same querying of the native from time to time
would yield the position that the native term
"gavagai" meant rabbit stages. Both of these
hypotheses can be presumed possible.47

Thus the analytical hypotheses, and the grand
synthetic one that they add up to, are only in
an incomplete sense hypotheses . . . The point
is not that we cannot be sure whether the
analytical hypothesis is right, but that there
is not even, as there was in the case of
'Gavagai', any objective matter to be right or
wrong about.48

When we speak meaningfully about the truth or
falsity of a sentence, we do so only within the
bounds of some conceptual scheme or theory. And in
similar fashion, Quine maintains that "we may
meaningfully speak of interlinguistic synonymy only
within the terms of some particular system of
analytical hypotheses."49 Our success with the
translation of Frisian into English and Hungarian
into English are examples of success which have
contributed to the illusory view that "intertrans-
latable sentences are diverse verbal embodiments of
some intercultural proposition or meaning, when they
are better seen as the merest variants of one and
the same intracultural verbalism."50 At the heart
of the matter, there lies basically an indeterminacy
of correlation, because there is a paucity of ground
for comparison or "less sense in saying what is good
translation and what is bad--the further we get away
from sentences with visibly direct conditioning to
non-verbal stimuli and the farther we get off home
ground."51 And further:

To the same degree that the radical translation
of sentences is under-determined by the totality
of dispositions to verbal behavior, our own theories and beliefs in general are underdetermined by the totality of possible sensory evidence time without end.52

In summation, Quine adds that the principle of indeterminacy requires notice, because translation progresses a little at a time and sentences are believed to be conveyors of meaning severally. And this is "plainly illustrated by the almost universal belief that the object references of terms in radically different languages can be objectively compared."53

II

Criticisms

In this part of the paper, three criticisms which have been directed against Quine's indeterminacy thesis will be considered. For convenience, I have given each of the three arguments a name, and the presentation of that argument will be the same as the name's order. They are: 1) Non-denial of Intuitive Semantics, 2) Inadequacy of Stimulus Meaning, and 3) The Dilemma.

Non-denial of Intuitive Semantics In a critical article, Charles Landesman claims that Quine's thesis is a challenge to intuitive semantics, but that the way the thesis is stated does not support a denial of intuitive semantics, but rather, leads to a less interesting type of general scepticism.54

In developing his remarks, Landesman recognizes three formulations of the indeterminacy thesis. The first is that the thesis of "indeterminacy finds the very process of determining the various meanings itself problematic, because for any given set of analytical hypotheses, there is another set compatible with the behavioral evidence."55 This is normal inductive uncertainty. The second formulation is that the "behavioral evidence relative to which the indeterminacy exists is all the evidence there is."56 And finally, the third formulation is that for all analytical hypotheses there is just no objective matter to be right or wrong about.57

Against the first formulation, Landesman argues that inductive indeterminacy exists in any behavioral theory and is quite ordinary. However, he feels that Quine is not advocating this type of thesis, but is
attempting something a bit more radical. The second formulation is a bit more complex.

In the second formulation, the linguist is forced to invoke the principle of simplicity in deciding between analytical hypotheses. The question which is crucial in this instance is whether or not there is evidence for the support of these principles of simplicity—principles like: 1) people do not usually believe explicitly in contradictory things; 2) human beings have similar syntactical devices; 3) a whole object is usually an expression capable of one word structure; and 4) if people have a whole, enduring object in their environment, then they usually have a one word term for it. Landesman feels that if we can find evidence for these principles, then the second formulation of the thesis of indeterminacy is false. We must ask if we can apply these principles to other languages without first learning the language, and if there is evidence to justify our extension of these principles in learning a new language.

Landesman concludes that such evidence is not yet available, but that there is still “no good reason to believe that the inference from behavioral evidence to the analytical hypothesis is direct; it is just as likely to be mediated by hypotheses referring to underlying physiological and/or psychological mechanisms.”

In summation, Landesman claims that an incompatibility obtains between the three formulations of the indeterminacy thesis.

The first part does not entail the third: that there is a translation indeterminacy relative to the behavioral evidence leaves open the possibility that there is none relative to other evidence. Nor does the second entail the third: that there is only behavioral evidence leaves open the possibility that the indeterminacy is one of knowledge and not of reality. Certainly the claim that the only evidence for radical translation is behavioral does not of itself entail that there are not propositions or mental meanings.

Contrary to what Quine suggests, one cannot use the thesis of indeterminacy to argue against the existence of abstract entities or mental meanings. The first two formulations offer no evidence, and the last
formulation presumes the very proposition it is trying to prove. In the final analysis, the thesis of indeterminacy "does not provide a sufficient reason for rejecting intuitive semantics."\(^6^3\)

**Inadequacy of Stimulus Meaning**  In his critical article on Quine's notion of stimulus meaning, Paul Ziff notes that although Quine wants to argue against the notion of mental meanings, his replacement of such entities with his idea of meaning as disposition is no better off. Quine's locus of meaning is the ocular realm, and to treat meaning in this realm he has devised stimulus meanings. Ziff attempts to show that this "peregrine proxy" is a philosophical cul de sac.\(^6^4\)

According to Ziff, the most fanciful feature of Quine's stimulus meaning theory is the notion that speakers have dispositions to assent to or dissent from sentences. This notion is attributed to Quine's supposed belief that such dispositions are somehow built-in structural traits. If one accepts this notion of dispositions to assent or dissent, then the "proliferation of dispositions in language learning would proceed at an appalling pace."\(^6^5\) Take an example: suppose that a certain person K has a disposition to assent to or dissent from the occasion sentence "Bread" and another disposition to assent to or dissent from the occasion sentence "Butter," under Quine's thesis it can be wondered whether or not this person K would require yet another disposition for the sentence "Bread and Butter." Ziff states that there is no more reason to assume this than there "is to suppose that for each problem it can cope with a computer must somehow have a distinct, corresponding structural feature."\(^6^6\)

On the other hand, if we assume the validity of dispositions, it would be very hard to uphold the claim that stimulations are what activate the dispositions. For one could say that presently as I sit at my desk, I am having a certain kind of non-zebra stimulation, and a non-tiger stimulation, and so on to infinity for other no less exotic animals. It can be asked whether or not these stimulations activate me to assent to such statements as "Not one zebra" and "Not two zebra." At best, such a proposal is odd. However, Ziff thinks that this criticism can be amended to say that stimulations activate dispositions only under appropriate circumstances and this is when the linguist is querying me.\(^6^7\)
Quine wants to construe an informant's overt linguistic behavior as a response to stimulus of some sort; Quine assumes that the informant is responding to ocular stimuli. However, stimulus is a very complex thing and the study of psychology has shown that there are instances of filtration, amplification and some type of storage present in stimulation. It has been shown that some subjects who have undergone hypnosis were able to report details of a stimulus which they were unable to report before hypnosis. And further, stimulations may also be referred to some sort of dynamic storage and thus rendered immediately available for processing. But in consequence they may be subject to further processing in connection with the processing of other stimulations. Staring out of a window, I see a small animal dash by. What was it? I do not know. Someone asks, "Was that a rabbit?" and on hearing the query I at once reply, "Yes, of course," for of course I then see that it was. Can one ignore all of this? Quine does.

Quine wants to correlate sentences with stimulations, but there does not seem to be any linguistic significance in such a correlation. Such a correlation would let in a host of seemingly insignificant variables in determining meaning. With decaying eyesight, there might be a modification in the stimulus. Is one to assume that this difference in the stimulus would lead to a difference of meaning? "Must linguistics and ophthalmology merge?" There is also the possibility that an angry informant, upon being upset by the constant questioning of the linguist, might first assent to sentence S, and then a second time when given the same sentence S dissent. According to Quine's stimulus meaning, the meaning of S would have changed in the course of the two queries.

Quine's concept of stimulus meaning is just not experimentally designed. The switch from assent to dissent can be explicated in terms of processing stimulations and focussing attention; linguistic change is not needed to account for the switch. The "instability of stimulus meaning is not indicative of linguistic flux. It is indicative of the utter inutility of that concept for semantic analysis." It is mistaken to offer a causal account of linguistic behavior. The most philosophers can hope
for are tentative regularities which must be examined within the context of analysis for an entire language. But Quine’s concept of stimulus meaning is cast in such a causal mold: “thus it faces the wrong way: it looks from conditions to speakers, instead of from speakers to conditions. And it is inflexible. In consequence it is useless.”

The Dilemma In this third criticism, Stephen Davis argues that Quine is presenting a private worlds thesis when he advocates his special theory of indeterminacy. The private worlds thesis is not something for which Quine argues directly, but it is an analogue of the theory of indeterminacy. Such a theory of private worlds leads to grave consequences, because it follows “that we are unable to understand any people who lie beyond our linguistic and social continuum.” However, Davis attempts to frustrate Quine’s concluding such “grave consequences,” because he feels there is a basic weakness in Quine’s approach.

Davis interprets Quine as saying that different types of analytical hypotheses produce different types of translations, and that the indeterminacy of translation occurs because we have no way of choosing between these varying schemes of analytical hypotheses; “there is no way to determine what the translation of a language should be.” For this argument to make any sense, translations of Quine’s native term “gavagai” must have different meanings: i.e., two linguists using different analytical hypotheses come up with different interpretations of the term and still fulfill all the same behavioral criteria. “However, according to Quine’s behavioral criterion for synonymity they mean the same and supposedly this criterion is the only one available to determine synonymity.” This produces a destructive dilemma for Quine. If the terms are synonymous (according to Quine’s behavioral criterion), then they are not alternative translations. And it follows that any one of the terms is the same and correct. Therefore, there is no indeterminacy of translation as Quine puts the thesis forward.

Quine “can either accept the result of his behavioristic criteria produces when applied to terms or regard them as inapplicable to terms. Both alternatives are fatal to the argument for translational indeterminacy.” If Quine accepts the first option, then his indeterminacy thesis is without meaning, because terms treated by different analytical hypotheses which meet the same behavioral criteria will all mean the same thing. If Quine accepts the second
option, he is left without an argument for "it is only the application of the criterion (behavioral) to terms in the first place which provides support for translational indeterminacy." In the first alternative, Quine's thesis is meaningless, and in the second it is inconsistent.

III

Conclusion

The three criticisms have, I think, substantially shown the following: 1) Quine's attempt to deny intuitive semantics has failed; 2) Quine's advance over older theories of meaning via his concept of stimulus meaning has led to an incomprehensible linguistic flux of meaning; and 3) the way Quine states his thesis has led to a fatal dilemma which destroys the cogency of the thesis as stated.

At a higher level, the indeterminacy thesis does not make sense, because it leads to a general and indiscriminate scepticism which cannot make sense of language. If meaning is as Quine says it is, a combination of stimulus meaning and analytical hypotheses, then indeterminacy may occur inter- or intralinguistically. The indeterminacy occurs at the point of selection of analytical hypotheses, and such selection is determined solely on the principle of simplicity. But if this is so, to what criterion do we appeal within our own language to determine which set of analytical hypotheses another person or group of persons has assumed? If stimulus meaning can only take us so far and cannot decide what objects there are, to what then can we appeal to substantiate existential claims, much less meaning claims?

Most clearly, there does not seem to be any such criterion. The further we move away from sentences which have direct empirical content, the more reliance we must place upon analytical hypotheses. In very abstract conversation, I must assume via analytical hypotheses that what you mean by certain words is what I mean when I use those words. But this is further complicated because sentences at the occasion level are themselves indeterminate as to what they actually refer to; and if this is the case, reduction of highly abstract language to observation or occasion sentences will not relieve the indeterminacy. Remember, point to a rabbit and you point to a phase of a rabbit, a part of a rabbit and to rabbithood.
How much more indeterminate language must be, the further we move away from such observation and occasion sentences! But what is worse, the only means we have of determining differences in analytical hypotheses is through language itself. We are thus caught in an inextricable loblolly of indeterminacy which can decide nothing.

According to his thesis of radical indeterminacy—a thesis he must uphold to avoid the criticism of advocating a mundane, normal, inductive indeterminacy—Quine not only fails to deny intuitive semantics and present a more adequate view of meaning, but, more seriously, he eradicates the efficacy of language to mean anything at all! Quine's thesis does not make sense of everyday use of language where we quite adequately make existential discernments about what objects another person believes in, and where we make perfectly valid assumptions about the meaning another person imputes to a term. Such a criticism—not being able to make sense out of what we can do in everyday use of language—is one with which Quine would have to agree, or face the charge of inconsistency, because it is just such an argument he uses in criticizing the linguistic philosophers' notion of intensional objects.

In conclusion, Quine's thesis as it appears in the weaker form of normal inductive indeterminacy is uninteresting. As the thesis appears in the stronger and more radical form, it is false, because it cannot account for what we are able to do in everyday use of language. Therefore, Quine's thesis is either uninteresting or false. Either way, the thesis of indeterminacy does not do what Quine wants it to do.
NOTES


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., pp. 125-26.

8 Ibid., p. 127.

9 Ibid., p. 127.

10 Ibid., pp. 129-30.

11 Ibid., p. 131.

12 Ibid., p. 139.

13 Ibid., p. 139.

14 Ibid., p. 140.

15 Ibid., pp. 140-41.

16 Ibid., p. 141.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 142.

19 Ibid., p. 143.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p. 144.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., p. 145.

24 Ibid., p. 147.


26 Ibid., p. 11.

27 Ibid.


29 Ibid.


31 Ibid., p. 27.

32 Ibid., p. 28.

33 Ibid., pp. 29-30.

34 Ibid., p. 32.
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35Ibid., p. 33. 36Ibid., p. 34.
37Ibid., pp. 35-6 38Ibid., pp. 37-40.
39Ibid., pp. 52-53. 40Ibid., p. 45.
41Ibid., p. 66. 42Ibid., p. 54.
43Ibid., p. 70. 44Ibid., p. 68.
47Ibid. 48Ibid., p. 73.
49Ibid., p. 75. 50Ibid., p. 76.
51Ibid., p. 78. 52Ibid.
55Ibid., p. 325. 56Ibid., p. 326.
57Ibid., p. 331. 58Ibid., pp. 325-26.
59Ibid. 59Ibid., p. 329.
63Ibid.
67Ibid., p. 67. 68Ibid., p. 69.
69Ibid., p. 70. 70Ibid., p. 71.
71Ibid., p. 67. 72Ibid., pp. 72-3.
73Ibid., p. 73.
NOTES

75Ibid., p. 40.  76Ibid., p. 41.
77Ibid.  78Ibid.
79Ibid.  80Ibid., pp. 41-2.

81Quine argues that the linguistic philosophers do not make sense out of the ordinary usage of the phrase "means the same as." (See supra, pp. 97-98.)