TRUE TO THE FACTS *

A TRUE statement is a statement that is true to the facts. This remark seems to embody the same sort of obvious and essential wisdom about truth as the following about motherhood: a mother is a person who is the mother of someone. The *property* of being a mother is explained by the *relation* between a woman and her child; similarly, the suggestion runs, the property of being true is to be explained by a relation between a statement and something else. Without prejudice to the question what the something else might be, or what word or phrase best expresses the relation (of being true to, corresponding to, picturing), I shall take the license of calling any view of this kind a *correspondence theory* of truth.

Correspondence theories rest on what appears to be an ineluctable if simple idea, but they have not done well under examination. The chief difficulty is in finding a notion of fact that explains anything, that does not lapse, when spelled out, into the trivial or the empty. Recent discussion is thus mainly concerned with deciding whether some form of correspondence is true and trivial (". . . the theory of truth is a series of truisms" [1]) or, in so far as it is not confused, simply empty ("The correspondence theory requires, not purification, but elimination" [2]). Those who have discussed the semantic concept of truth in connection with correspondence theories have typically ruled the semantic concept either irrelevant or trivial.

In this paper I defend a version of the correspondence theory. I think truth can be explained by appeal to a relation between language and the world, and that analysis of that relation yields insight into how, by uttering sentences, we sometimes manage to say what is true. The semantic concept of truth, as first systematically expounded by Tarski,[3] will play a crucial role in the defense.

1, 2 J. L. Austin and P. F. Strawson, symposium on "Truth," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume XXIV* (1950), reprinted in George Pitcher, ed., *Truth* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964). The quoted remarks are from Austin and Strawson respectively, and appear on pages 21 and 32 of Pitcher.

3 Alfred Tarski, "The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages," in *Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics* (New York: Oxford, 1956).

It might be possible to prove that any theory or definition of truth meeting plausible standards necessarily contained conceptual resources adequate to define a sense of correspondence. My project is less ambitious: I shall be satisfied if I can find a natural interpretation of the relation of correspondence that helps explain truth. Clearly it is consistent with the success of this attempt that there be a formula for eliminating phrases like 'it is true that' and 'is true' from many or all contexts: correspondence and redundancy theories do not necessarily conflict. Nevertheless, we may find instruction concerning the role of correspondence by asking how well we can do in systematically replacing sentences with truth-words or phrases by sentences without.

The sentence

(1) The statement that French is the official language of Mauritius is true.

is materially equivalent to 'French is the official language of Mauritius'; and the same might be said for any two sentences similarly related. This encourages the thought that the words that bed the embedded sentence in (1) represent an identity truth function, the same in power as double negation, but lacking significant articulation. On this suggestion, it would be no more than a freak of grammar that (1) consists of a complex singular term and a predicate.

The trouble with the double-negation theory of truth is that it applies only to sentences, like (1) and 'It is true that $2 + 2 = 5$', that have embedded sentences. The theory cannot cope directly with

(2) The Pythagorean theorem is true.
(3) Nothing Aristotle said is true.

We might retain the double-negation theory as applied to (1) while reserving (2) and (3) for separate treatment. But it is hardly plausible that the words 'is true' have different meanings in these different cases, especially since there seem to be simple inferences connecting sentences of the two sorts. Thus from (2) and 'The Pythagorean theorem is the statement that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides' we can infer 'The statement that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides is true'.

It is tempting to think that the double-negation theory can somehow be extended to cover the likes of (2) and (3). The reasoning might go this way: the double-negation theory tells us there is a sentence that expresses every statement. But then (2) holds just in

case there is a true sentence that expresses the Pythagorean theorem, and (3) holds in case no true sentence expresses something Aristotle said. The seeming need, in this explanation, to use the word 'true' will be shown harmless by rendering (2) and (3) thus:

(2′) (p)(the statement that $p =$ the Pythagorean theorem $\rightarrow p$)
(3′) $-(\exists\, p)$(Aristotle said that $p \cdot p$)

We are now pursuing a line that diverges from the simple double-negation theory by accepting an ontology of statements, and by introducing quantification into positions that can be occupied by sentences. Not that the variables in (2′) and (3′) range over statements; it is rather expressions of the sort flanking the identity sign in (2′) that refer to statements. In the double-negation theory, putative reference to statements and putative predication of truth were absorbed into a grammatically complex, but logically simple, expression, a truth-functional sentential connective. By contrast, the present theory allows us to view 'is true' as a genuine predicate. It provides a principle, namely

(4) (p)(the statement that p is true $\leftrightarrow p$)

that leads to sentences free of the predicate 'is true' and logically equivalent to sentences containing it. Here, truth is not explained away as something that can be predicated of statements, but explained.

Explained, that is, if we understand (2′), (3′), and (4). But do we? The trouble is in the variables. Since the variables replace sentences both as they feature after words like 'Aristotle said that' and in truth-functional contexts, the range of the variables must be entities that sentences may be construed as naming in both such uses. But there are very strong reasons, as Frege pointed out, for supposing that if sentences, when standing alone or in truth-functional contexts, name anything, then all true sentences name the same thing.[4] This would force us to conclude that the statement that p is identical with the statement that q whenever p and q are both true; presumably an unacceptable result.

In a brief, and often mentioned, passage F. P. Ramsey puts forward a theory similar to, or identical with, the one just discussed. He observes that sentences like (2′), (3′), and (4) cannot be convincingly read in English without introducing the words 'is true' at the end, but seems to see this as a quirk, or even defect, of the language

[4] Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference," reprinted in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, edited and translated by Peter Geach and Max Black (New York: Oxford, 1952), pp. 62–63.

(we add 'is true' because we forget 'p' already contains a "variable" verb).[5] Ramsey then says

> This may perhaps be made clearer by supposing for a moment that only one form of proposition is in question, say the relational form aRb; then 'He is always right' could be expressed by 'For all a, R, b, if he asserts aRb, then aRb', to which 'is true' would be an obviously superfluous addition. When all forms of proposition are included the analysis is more complicated but not essentially different (17).

I think we must assume that Ramsey wants the variables 'a' and 'b' to range over individuals of some sort, and 'R' over (two-place) relations. So his version of 'He is always right' would be more fully expressed by 'For all a, R, b, if he asserts that a has R to b, then a has R to b'. Clearly, if "all forms of proposition" are included, the analysis must be recursive in character, for the forms of propositions follow the (logical) forms of sentences, and of these there are an infinite number. There is no reason to suppose, then, that Ramsey's analysis could be completed in a way that did not essentially parallel Tarski's method for defining truth. Tarski's method, however, introduces (as I shall argue) something like the notion of correspondence, and this is just what the theories we have been exploring were supposed to avoid. Paradox may also be a problem for Ramsey's recursive project. Where a theory based on the principle of (4) can always informally plead that a term of the form 'the statement that p' fails to name when a troublesome sentence replaces 'p', a theory that runs systematically through the sentences of a language will need to appeal to a more mechanical device to avoid contradiction. One wonders what conviction Ramsey's claim that "there really is no separate problem of truth" would carry after his analysis was carried to completion.

I have said nothing whatsoever about the purposes served in (nonphilosophical) conversation by uttering sentences containing 'true' and cognates. No doubt the idea that remarks about truth typically are used to express agreement, to emphasize conviction or authority, to save repetition, or to shift responsibility, would gain support if it could be shown that truth-words can always be eliminated without cognitive loss by application of a simple formula. Nevertheless, I would hold that theories about the extralinguistic aims with which sentences are issued are logically independent of the question what they mean; and it is the latter with which I am concerned.

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[5] F. P. Ramsey, "Facts and Propositions," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume VII* (July 1927). The passage under discussion is reprinted in Pitcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.

We have failed to find a satisfactory theory to back the thesis that attributions of truth to statements are redundant; but even if it could be shown (as it has not been) that no such theory is possible, this would not suffice to establish the correspondence theory. So let us consider more directly the prospects for an account of truth in terms of correspondence.

It is facts correspondence to which is said to make statements true. It is natural, then, to turn to talk of facts for help. Not much can be learned from sentences like

(5) The statement that Thika is in Kenya corresponds to the facts.

or such variants as 'It is a fact that Thika is in Kenya', 'That Thika is in Kenya is a fact', and 'Thika is in Kenya, and that's a fact'. Whether or not we accept the view that correspondence to facts explains truth, (5) and its kin say no more than 'The statement that Thika is in Kenya is true' (or 'It is true that . . .' or '. . . , and that's the truth', etc.). If (5) is to take on independent interest, it will be because we are able to give an account of facts and correspondence that does not circle back immediately to truth. Such an account would enable us to make sense of sentences with this form:

(6) The statement that p corresponds to the fact that q.

The step to truth would be simple: a statement is true if there is a fact to which it corresponds. [(5) could be rewritten 'the statement that Thika is in Kenya corresponds to a fact'.]

When does (6) hold? Certainly when 'p' and 'q' are replaced by the same sentence; after that the difficulties set in. The statement that Naples is farther north than Red Bluff corresponds to the fact that Naples is farther north than Red Bluff, but also, it would seem, to the fact that Red Bluff is farther south than Naples (perhaps these are the same fact). Also to the fact that Red Bluff is farther south than the largest Italian city within thirty miles of Ischia. When we reflect that Naples is the city that satisfies this description: it is the largest city within thirty miles of Ischia, and such that London is in England, then we begin to suspect that if a statement corresponds to one fact, it corresponds to all. ('Corresponds to the *facts*' may be right in the end.) Indeed, employing principles implicit in our examples, it is easy to confirm the suspicion. The principles are that if a statement corresponds to the fact described by an expression of the form 'the fact that p', then it corresponds to the fact described by 'the fact that q' provided 'p' and 'q' are logically equivalent sentences, or one differs from the other in that a

singular term has been replaced by a coextensive singular term. The confirming argument is this. Let 's' abbreviate some true sentence. Then surely the statement that s corresponds to the fact that s. But we may substitute for the second 's' the logically equivalent '(the x such that x is identical with Diogenes and s) is identical with (the x such that x is identical with Diogenes)'. Applying the principle that we may substitute coextensive singular terms, we can substitute 't' for 's' in the last quoted sentence, provided 't' is true. Finally, reversing the first step we conclude that the statement that s corresponds to the fact that t, where 's' and 't' are any true sentences.[6]

Since aside from matters of correspondence no way of distinguishing facts has been proposed, and this test fails to uncover a single difference, we may read the result of our argument as showing that there is exactly one fact. Descriptions like 'the fact that there are stupas in Nepal', if they describe at all, describe the same thing: The Great Fact. No point remains in distinguishing among various names of The Great Fact when written after 'corresponds to'; we may as well settle for the single phrase 'corresponds to The Great Fact'. This unalterable predicate carries with it a redundant whiff of ontology, but beyond this there is apparently no telling it apart from 'is true'.

The argument that led to this conclusion could be thwarted by refusing to accept the principles on which it was based. And one can certainly imagine constructing facts in ways that might reflect some of our feeling for the problem without leading to ontological collapse. From the point of view of the theory of truth, however, all such constructions seem doomed by the following difficulty. Suppose, to leave the frying pan of extensionality for the fires of intension, we distinguish facts as finely as statements. Of course, not every statement has its fact; only the true ones do. But then, unless we find another way to pick out facts, we cannot hope to explain truth by appeal to them.[7]

Talk about facts reduces to predication of truth in the contexts we have considered; this might be called the *redundancy theory* of facts. Predications of truth, on the other hand, have not proved so easy to eliminate. If there is no comfort for redundancy theories of

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truth in this, neither is there encouragement for correspondence theories.

I think there is a fairly simple explanation for our frustration: we have so far left language out of account. Statements are true or false because of the words used in making them, and it is words that have interesting, detailed, conventional connections with the world. Any serious theory of truth must therefore deal with these connections, and it is here if anywhere that the notion of correspondence can find some purchase. We have been restricting ourselves to ways of specifying statements that make no apparent mention of words. Thus 'Jones's statement that the cat is on the mat' irretrievably washes out reference to the particulars of Jones's language that might support a nontrivial account of truth, and the same may be thought to hold for the 'the statement that p' idiom generally.

Discussions of truth may have avoided the linguistic turn because it is obvious that truth cannot be pinned on sentences; but if this has been a motive, it is a confused one. Sentences cannot be true or false because if they were we should have to say that 'Je suis Titania' was true (spoken or sung by Titania), false (spoken by anyone else), and neither (uttered by someone with no French). What this familiar argument shows is not that we must stop talking of sentences and truth in the same breath, but that we must breathe a little deeper and talk also of the time the sentence is uttered, and its utterer. Truth (in a given natural language) is not a property of sentences; it is a relation between sentences, speakers, and dates. To view it thus is not to turn away from language to speechless eternal entities like propositions, statements, and assertions, but to relate language with the occasions of truth in a way that invites the construction of a theory.

The last two paragraphs may suggest that if we are to have a competent theory about truth we must abandon the view that statements are the proper vehicles of truth. But this is not so. If I am right, theories of truth must characterize or define a three-place predicate 'T s,u,t'. It will not matter to the theory whether we read this predicate 'sentence s is true (as English) for speaker u at time t' or 'the statement expressed by sentence s (as English) by speaker u at t is true'. Those who believe we must, for further reasons, retain statements as truth vehicles will find the second formulation, with its complex singular term ('the statement . . .') and one-place predicate ('is true') more perspicuous, while those who (with me) think we can get along without statements may prefer the more austere first formulation. But either party may talk either way; the

difference comes out only when the talk is seen in the light of a comprehensive theory. Whether that theory requires an ontology of statements is not settled, I think, by the matters under discussion.

There are excellent reasons for not predicating truth of sentences, but these reasons do not apply to speech acts, utterances, or tokens. It has been argued, and convincingly, that we do not generally, or perhaps ever, say of a speech act, utterance, or token, that it was true.[8] This hardly shows why we *ought* not to call these entities (if they exist) true. No confusion would result if we said that the particular speaking of a sentence was true just in case it was used on that occasion to make a true statement; and similarly for tokens and utterances. According to Strawson,

> "My statement" may be either what I say or my saying it. My saying something is certainly an episode. What I say is not. It is the latter, not the former, we declare to be true.[9]

I'm not sure a statement is ever a speech act, but in any case we may accept the conclusion that speech acts are not said to be true. But what follows? Certainly not that we cannot explain what it is to make a true statement in terms of the conventional relations between words and things that hold when the words are used by particular agents on particular occasions. For although 'my statement' may not refer, at least when truth is in question, to a speech act, still it may succeed in identifying its statement only by relating it to a speech act. (What makes it "my" statement?)

If someone speaking English utters the sentence 'The sun is over the yardarm', under what conditions has he made the statement that the sun is over the yardarm? One range of answers might include such provisions as that he intended to convey to his hearers the impression that he believed the sun was over the yardarm, that he was authorized by his status to issue information about the location of the sun, etc. Thinking along these lines, one might maintain that, if the speaker had no thought of the location of the sun, and wanted to announce that it was time for a drink, then he *didn't* make the statement that the sun is over the yardarm. But there is also a sense of making a statement in which we would say, even under conditions of the sort just mentioned, that the man had ("literally") made the statement that the sun was over the yardarm, and that what he said was ("literally") true provided the sun was over the yardarm at the time he spoke, even though he had no rea-

[8] See R. Cartwright, "Propositions," in R. J. Butler, ed., *Analytical Philosophy* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962).

[9] P. F. Strawson, "Truth," p. 33 in Pitcher.

son to believe it, and didn't care if it were true. In such cases, we are interested not in what the person meant by uttering the sentence, but what the sentence, as uttered, meant. Both of these notions of meaning are relative to the circumstances of performance, but in the second case we abstract away from the extralinguistic intentions of the speaker. Communication by language is communication by way of literal meaning; so there must be the literal sense of making a statement if there are others. The theory of truth deals with the literal sense. (Of course this point deserves to be discussed at much greater length.)

Cleaving to the literal, then, someone speaking English will make a true statement by uttering the sentence 'It's Tuesday' if and only if it is Tuesday in his vicinity at the time he speaks. The example invites generalization: every instance of the following schema will be a truth about truth when 's' is replaced by a description of a sentence of English and 'p' is replaced by a sentence that gives the conditions under which the described sentence is true:

(7) Sentence s is true (as English) for speaker u at time t if and only if p.

(An alternative schema apparently attributing truth to statements could be substituted.) Even if we restrict the descriptions we substitute for 's' to some stylized vocabulary of syntax, we may assume that there is a true sentence of the form of (7) for each English sentence. The totality of such sentences uniquely determines the extension of the three-place predicate of (7) (the relativized truth-predicate). We seem here on the verge of a theory of truth; yet nothing like correspondence is in sight. The reason may be, however, that we are *only* on the verge of a theory. Schema (7) tells us what a theory of truth should encompass, but it is not such a theory itself, and does not suggest how such a theory can be contrived. Schema (7) is meant to play for English a role analogous to that played for an artificial language by a similar schema in Tarski's convention T.[10] The role is that of providing a test of the adequacy of a theory of truth: an acceptable theory must entail a true sentence of the form of (7) no matter what sentence of English is described by the canonical expression that replaces 's'.

Schema (7) lacks an elegant feature of its analogue in the *Wahrheitsbegriff*. Tarski, not concerned with languages with indexical elements, can use this simple formula: 's is true (in L) if and only if p' where the sentence substituted for 'p' is the sentence described by the expression that replaces 's', if the metalanguage contains the

10 Tarski, *op. cit.*, pp. 187, 188.

object language; otherwise it translates that sentence in some straightforward sense. This uncomplicated formula cannot be ours; for when there are indexical terms (demonstratives, tenses), what goes for 'p' cannot in general be what 's' names or a translation of it, as witness the example in the first sentence of the preceding paragraph. The elaboration called for to state (7) in explicit syntactic terms would be considerable, but there is no reason to think it impossible since what replaces 'p' must be systematically related to the sentence described by the replacement of 's' by the rules that govern the use of indexical terms in English.

If the indicative sentences of English comprised just a finite number of elementary sentences and truth-functional compounds of them, it would be easy to give a recursive characterization of truth by providing a sentence of the form of (7) for each elementary sentence, and giving a rule corresponding to each sentential connective. This strategy breaks down, however, as soon as we allow predicates of arbitrary complexity to be built up using variables and connectives, as in quantification or complex singular terms; and it is just here that the theory of truth becomes interesting. Let us concentrate on quantificational structure at the expense of singular terms, not only because the latter are arguably dispensable while the former is not, but also because the point to be made will come through more simply. The problem presented by quantificational structure for a recursive theory of truth is, of course, that, although sentences of any finite length can be constructed from a small supply of variables, connectives, predicates, and quantifiers, none of the parts of a sentence needs to be a sentence in turn; therefore the truth of a complex sentence cannot in general be accounted for in terms of the truth of its parts.

Tarski taught us to appreciate the problem, and he gave an ingenious solution. The solution depends on first characterizing a relation called *satisfaction* and then defining truth by means of it. The entities that are satisfied are sentences both open and closed; the satisfiers are functions that map the variables of the object language onto the entities over which they range—almost everything, if the language is English.[11] A function satisfies an unstructured n-place predicate with variables in its n places if the predicate is *true of* the entities (in order) that the function assigns to those variables. So if 'x loves y' is an open sentence of the simplest kind, a function f satisfies it just in case the entity that f assigns to 'x'

[11] Tarski's satisfiers are infinite sequences, not functions. The reader in search of precision and deeper understanding cannot be too strongly urged to study Tarski's "The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages."

loves the entity that f assigns to 'y'. The recursive characterization of satisfaction must run through every primitive predicate in turn. It copes with connectives in the obvious way: thus a conjunction of two sentences s and t (open or closed) is satisfied by f provided f satisfies s and f satisfies t. The universal quantification of an open sentence s with respect to a variable v is satisfied by f in case f, and every other function like f except in what it assigns to v, satisfies s. (The previous sentence works with 'existential' replacing 'universal' and 'or some' replacing 'and every'.) Whether or not a particular function satisfies a sentence depends entirely on what entities it assigns to the free variables of the sentence. So if the sentence has no free variables—if it is a closed, or genuine, sentence—then it must be satisfied by every function or by none. And, as is clear from the details of the recursion, those closed sentences which are satisfied by all functions are true; those which are satisfied by none are false. [I assume throughout that satisfaction, like truth, is relativized in the style of (7).]

The semantic concept of truth as developed by Tarski deserves to be called a correspondence theory because of the part played by the concept of satisfaction; for clearly what has been done is that the property of being true has been explained, and nontrivially, in terms of a relation between language and something else. The relation, satisfaction, is not, it must be allowed, exactly what intuition expected of correspondence; and the functions or sequences that satisfy may not seem much like facts. In part the contrast is due to a special feature of variables: just because they refer to no particular individual, satisfaction must consider arbitrary assignments of entities to variables (our functions). If we thought of proper names instead, satisfiers could be more nearly the ordinary objects of our talk—namely, ordered n-tuples of such. Thus 'Dolores loves Dagmar' would be satisfied by Dolores and Dagmar (in that order), provided Dolores loved Dagmar. I suppose Dolores and Dagmar (in that order) is not a fact either—the fact that verifies 'Dolores loves Dagmar' should somehow include the loving. This "somehow" has always been the nemesis of theories of truth based on facts. So the present point isn't that 's is satisfied by all functions' means exactly what we thought 's corresponds to the facts' meant, only that the two phrases have this in common: both intend to express a relation between language and the world, and both are equivalent to 's is true' when s is a (closed) sentence.

The comparison between correspondence theories that exploit the concept of satisfaction and those which rest on correspondence

to facts is at its best with sentences without free variables. The parallel even extends, if we accept Frege's argument about the extensions of sentences, to the conclusion that true sentences cannot be told apart in point of what they correspond to (the facts, The Great Fact) or are satisfied by (all functions, sequences). But Tarski's strategy can afford this sameness in the finished product where the strategy of facts cannot, because satisfaction of closed sentences is explained in terms of satisfaction of sentences both open and closed, whereas it is only closed sentences that traditionally have corresponding facts. Since different assignments of entities to variables satisfy different open sentences and since closed sentences are constructed from open, truth is reached, in the semantic approach, by different routes for different sentences. All true sentences end up in the same place, but there are different stories about how they got there; a semantic theory of truth tells the story for a particular sentence by running through the steps of the recursive account of satisfaction appropriate to the sentence. And the story constitutes a proof of a theorem in the form of an instance of schema (7).

The strategy of facts can provide no such instructive variety. Since all true sentences have the same relation to the facts, an explanation of the truth of a sentence on the basis of its relations to other (closed) sentences must, if it sticks to the facts, begin where it ends.

Seen in retrospect, the failure of correspondence theories of truth based on the notion of fact traces back to a common source: the desire to include in the entity to which a true sentence corresponds not only the objects the sentence is "about" (another idea full of trouble) but also whatever it is the sentence says about them. One well-explored consequence is that it becomes difficult to describe the fact that verifies a sentence except by using that sentence itself. The other consequence is that the relation of correspondence (or "picturing") seems to have direct application to only the simplest sentences ('Dolores loves Dagmar'). This prompts fact-theorists to try to explain the truth of all sentences in terms of the truth of the simplest and hence in particular to interpret quantification as mere shorthand for conjunctions or alternations (perhaps infinite in length) of the simplest sentences. The irony is that, insofar as we can see quantification in this light, there is no real need for anything like correspondence. It is only when we are forced to take generality as an essential addition to the conceptual resources of predication and the compounding of sentences, and not reducible to them, that we appreciate the uses of a sophisticated correspondence theory. Theory of truth based on satisfaction is instructive

partly because it is less ambitious about what it packs into the en-
tities to which sentences correspond: in such a theory, these entities
are no more than arbitrary pairings of the objects over which the
variables of the language range with those variables. Relative sim-
plicity in the objects is offset by the trouble it takes to explain the
relation between them and sentences, for every truth-relevant feature
of every sentence must be taken into account in describing satisfac-
tion. The payoff is clear: in explaining truth in terms of satisfac-
tion, all the conceptual resources of the language in relation to its
ontology are brought to bear.

Talk of sentences', or better, statements', being true to, or cor-
responding to, the facts is of course as harmless as talk of truth.
Even the suggestion in these phrases that truth is owed to a relation
between language and the world can, I have argued, be justified.
The strategy of facts, against which I have just been inveighing, is
something else: a philosophical theory, and a bad one. It would be
a shame to discredit all correspondence theories, and in particular
Tarski's semantical approach, through thinking they must share
the inadequacies of the usual attempts to explain truth on the basis
of facts.

The assumption that all correspondence theories must use the
strategy of facts is at least understandable and, given the vagaries
of philosophical usage, could be considered true by fiat. There is
less excuse for the widespread misunderstanding of the role of for-
mulas like (7) in the semantical approach. The following example
is no worse than many that could be quoted:

> . . . unless there is more to the "correspondence" insisted on by clas-
> sical correspondence theories of truth than is captured by the formu-
> lations of current semantic theory and unless this more can be shown
> to be an essential property of truth (or, at least, of a significant variety
> of truths), then the battle over correspondence, instead of being *won*
> by correspondence theorists, has shown itself to be a *Scheinstreit*. For,
> as has often been noted, the formula
>   'Snow is white' (in our language) is true ≡ Snow is white
> is viewed with the greatest equanimity by pragmatist and coherentist
> alike. If the "correspondence" of the correspondence theorist amounts
> to nothing more than is illustrated by such equivalences, then, while
> pragmatist and coherentist may hope to make important points, . . .
> nothing further would remain to be said about "truth and correspon-
> dence." [12]

[12] Wilfrid Sellars, "Truth and 'Correspondence'," this JOURNAL, LIX, 2 (Jan. 18,
1962): 29–56, p. 29. The quoted passage is on p. 197 of the article as reprinted
in *Science, Perception and Reality* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963).

Whether or not there is more to the semantic approach to truth than Sellars is ready to allow, it may be the case that no battle is won, or even joined, between correspondence theories and others. My trouble with this passage hinges on its assumption that a sentence like ' "Snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white' (even when properly relativized and with a structural description in place of the quotation) in itself provides a clue to what is unique to the semantical approach. Of course, as Sellars says, such sentences are neutral ground; it is just for this reason that Tarski hopes everyone can agree that an adequate theory or definition of truth must entail all sentences of this form. There is no trace of the notion of correspondence in these sentences, no relational predicate that expresses a relation between sentences and what they are about. Where such a relation, satisfaction, *does* come into play is in the elaboration of a nontrivial theory capable of meeting the test of entailing all those neutral snowbound trivialities.

I would like now and by way of conclusion to mention briefly two of the many kinds of obstacle that must be overcome if we are to have a comprehensive theory of truth for a natural language. First, it is certainly reasonable to wonder to what extent it will ever be possible to treat a natural language as a formal system, and even more to question whether the resources of the semantical method can begin to encompass such common phenomena as adverbial modification, attributive adjectives, talk of propositional attitudes, of causality, of obligation, and all the rest. At present we do not even have a satisfactory semantics for singular terms, and on this matter many others hang. Still, a degree of optimism is justified. Until Frege, serious semantics was largely limited to predication and the truth-functional compounding of sentences. By abstracting quantificational structure from what had seemed a jungle of pronouns, quantifiers, connectives, and articles, Frege showed how an astonishingly powerful fragment of natural language could be semantically tamed. Indeed, it may still turn out that this fragment will prove, with ingenuity, to be the whole. Meanwhile, promising work goes on in many directions, enlarging the resources of formal semantics, extending the application of known resources, and providing the complex and detailed rules necessary to give a revealing description of the structure of natural language. Whatever range the semantic theory of truth ultimately turns out to have, we may welcome the insight that comes where we understand language well enough to apply it.

The second difficulty is on another level: we have suggested how

it might be possible to interpret attributions of truth to statements or to sentences relativized to occasions of use, but only in contexts of the sort provided by the left branch of (7). We have given no indication of how the analysis could be extended to apply to sentences like

(8) It is true that it is raining.
(9) The statement that it is raining is true.

Here is how we might try to meet the case of (8). We have, we are supposing, a theory of truth-in-English with truth treated as a relation between a sentence, a speaker, and a time. [The alternative version in terms of statements would apply to (9).] The problem, then, is to find natural counterparts of these elements in (8). A speaker of (8) speaks the words 'it is raining', thus performing an act that embodies a particular sentence, has its speaker, and its time. A reference to this act can therefore serve as a reference to the three items needed to apply the theory of truth. The reference we can think of as having been boiled down into the demonstrative 'that' of (8) and (9). A long-winded version of (8) might, then, go like this. First (reversing the order for clarity) I say 'It's raining'. Then I say 'That speech act embodied a sentence which, spoken by me now, is true'. On this analysis, an utterance of (8) or (9) consists of two logically (semantically) independent speech acts, one of which contains a demonstrative reference to the other. An interesting feature of these utterances is that one is true if the other is; perhaps this confirms an insight of the redundancy theory.

A further problem is raised by

(10) Peter's statement that Paul is hirsute is true.

Following the suggestion made for (8) and (9), the analysis of (10) should be 'Paul is hirsute. That is true, and Peter said (stated) it'. The 'that', as before, refers to an act of speaking, and now the 'it' picks up the same reference. What is needed to complete the account is a paratactic analysis of indirect discourse that interprets an utterance by a speaker u of 'Peter said that Paul is hirsute' as composed of an utterance of 'Paul is hirsute' and another utterance ('Peter said that') that relates Peter in a certain way to u's utterance of 'Paul is hirsute'. The relation in question can, perhaps, be made intelligible by appeal to the notion of *samesaying:* if u says what is true when he says 'Peter said that', it is because, by saying 'Paul is hirsute', he has made Peter and himself samesayers.[13]

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[13] I say more about this analysis of indirect discourse in "On Saying That," *Synthèse,* XIX, 1/2 (December 1968): 130–146.

One may, of course, insist that the relation of samesaying (which holds between speech acts) can be understood only by reference to a third entity: a statement, meaning, or proposition. Nothing I have written here bears on this question, except indirectly, by showing that, with respect to the problems at hand, no need arises for such entities. Is this simply the result of neglecting troublesome cases? Consider, as a final example,

(11) Peter said something true.

This cannot be rendered, 'Some (past) utterance of Peter's makes us samesayers', for I may not have said, or know how to say, the appropriate thing. Nor will it help to try 'Some utterance of Peter's embodied a sentence true under the circumstances'. This fails because (11) does not tell what language Peter spoke, and the concept of truth with which we are dealing is necessarily limited to a specific, known, language. Not knowing what his language is, we cannot make sense of 'true-in-his-language'.

What we can hope to make sense of, I think, is the idea of a sentence in another tongue being the *translation* of a sentence of English. Given this idea, it becomes natural to see (11) as meaning something like 'Peter uttered a sentence that translates a sentence of English true under the circumstances'. The exact nature of the counterfactual assumption barely concealed in this analysis depends on the details of the theory of truth (for English) as relativized to occasions of utterance. In any case, we seem required to understand what someone else would mean by a sentence of our language if he spoke our language. But difficult as this concept is, it is hard to see how communication can exist without it.

The conclusion I would tentatively draw is this. We can get away from what seems to be talk of the (absolute) truth of timeless statements if we accept truth as relativized to occasions of speech, and a strong notion of translation. The switch may create more problems than it solves. But they are, I think, the right problems: providing a detailed account of the semantics of natural language, and devising a theory of translation that does not depend upon, but rather founds, whatever there is to the concept of meaning.

Strawson describes Austin's "purified version of the correspondence theory of truth" in this way:

> His . . . theory is, roughly, that to say that a statement is true is to say that a certain speech-episode is related in a certain conventional way to something in the world exclusive of itself (32).

It is this theory Strawson has in mind when he says, "The correspondence theory requires, not purification, but elimination." I

would not want to defend the details of Austin's conception of cor-
respondence, and many of the points I have made against the strat-
egy of facts echo Strawson's criticisms. But the debilities of particu-
lar formulations of the correspondence theory ought not be held
against the theory. If I am right, then by appealing to Tarski's se-
mantical conception of truth we can defend a theory that almost
exactly fits Strawson's description of Austin's "purified version of
the correspondence theory of truth." And this theory deserves, not
elimination, but elaboration.

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REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATIONAL RELEVANCE *

J L. AUSTIN used to query the importance of importance. I want
here to question the educational relevance of educational rele-
vance.
To do so may seem paradoxical, even absurd. For if relevance is not
relevant, what is? And who, in his right mind, would wish learning
to be irrelevant? The air of obviousness about these questions mis-
leads, however. It derives, not from some mythical relevance axiom
of the theory of education, but from the characteristic value-laden
import of the word in its categorical use. To stand against irrelevance
is like opposing sin and to favor relevance is akin to applauding vir-
tue. The theoretical problem, with relevance as with virtue, is to say
in what it consists and why, thus specified, it ought to be pursued.
Relevance is, in particular, not an absolute property; nothing is
either relevant or irrelevant in and of itself. Relevant to what, how,
and why?—that is the question. That is, at any rate, the question if
the current demand for relevance is to be taken not merely as a fash-
ionable slogan but as a serious educational doctrine.

There being no single official elaboration of such a doctrine, I shall
sketch three philosophical interpretations that might plausibly be
offered in defense of current emphases on relevance, and I shall or-
ganize my comments around each of these interpretations. The first
is primarily epistemological, concerning the nature and warrant of
knowledge. The second is primarily psychological, having to do with

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* To be presented in an APA symposium on the Concept of Relevance in Edu-
cation, December 29, 1969. The second speaker will be Thomas F. Green, whose
article was not, unfortunately, available at the time this issue of the JOURNAL
went to press. The editors hope to publish this contribution early in 1970.