THE PREOCUPATION AND CRISIS OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

I propose to reconsider Gilbert Ryle's thesis in 1956 in his introduction to The Revolution of Philosophy that "the story of twentieth-century philosophy is very largely the story of this notion of sense or meaning" and, as he writes elsewhere, the "preoccupation with the theory of meaning is the occupational disease of twentieth-century Anglo-Saxon and Austrian philosophy." Ryle maintains that this preoccupation demarcates analytic philosophy from its predecessors and that it gave philosophy a set of academic credentials as a rigorous discipline with its own domain and method. I will maintain that Ryle, with some minor qualifications, was correct in his assessment of the nature of analytic philosophy at that time, and I will argue that the next 50 years continued to be, very largely, the story of meaning, exemplified by the groundbreaking work of Rawls and Kripke. However, I argue that this work also contains the seeds that contributed to the emergence of philosophies that represent a significant departure from analytic philosophy.

Keywords: analytic philosophy, logic, meaning, naturalism, Ryle, Rawls, Kripke, 20th-century philosophy

1. Introduction

What defines analytic philosophy, viewed as a historical phenomenon? In other words, echoing Gilbert Ryle, what is "the story" of analytic philosophy, or, what is its "preoccupation" or even "occupational disease"? This is the question I will try to answer. I will maintain that Ryle's characterization of analytic philosophy in terms of the "preoccupation with . . . meaning" (1957, 239) is correct, with some qualifications, and that philosophy naturalized is an exit from analytic philosophy that leaves analytic philosophy in a crisis. However, I suggest that there is still important work left to do for analytic philosophy, work that reclaims its identity and continues its project of understanding meaning.

2. Characterizing Analytic Philosophy

A challenge to any attempt to characterize analytic philosophy is that it does not have a unifying doctrine or set of doctrines. It is tempting to conclude from this that it only consists of "overlapping strands, with no usefully defining fibre or fibres running through its whole temporal length" (Hacker 1996, 4), a "family resemblance" (Stroll 2000, 7), or even that it is only "a trail of influence" (Soames 2003, 1:xiii). This suggests that the best we can do to characterize analytic philosophy is to find a starting point – typically a set of philosophers, such as Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein and perhaps Frege with a unifying agenda – but whatever

it is that unifies this starting point is wholly transformed and even dropped by succeeding generations, who themselves begin their own agendas that are equally overcome, and so on.

This suggestion is helpful only if we are able to individuate some unifying features of the starting agenda and then also identify some principles that allow us to trace the proper trails of influence. After all, in addition to the trails that remain within the territory of analytic philosophy, there are trails that lead out of it. For example, there is a trail that leads from Frege to Husserl and there is a trail that leads from Austin to Derrida (Derrida 1988, 38 and 130-1). If we are trying to determine the historical identity of analytic philosophy, we need to understand why some trails keep us in and others take us out of the analytic tradition.

This can be done in one of two ways. Appropriate trails of influence can be individuated intensionally, that is in terms of some overlapping concepts and attitudes that define the appropriate trails of influence. Or, defining content can be ignored and instead we can trace a history of reception and succession in terms of tutors, teachers, students, departments, institutes, journals, books, textbooks, and so forth. The latter would be a naturalized, empirical, and social scientific history of analytic philosophy. Hacker in Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-century Analytic Philosophy offers several brief but fascinating and enlightening sketches of such lines of influence (Hacker 1996, 148-182).

Hacker, however, is an exception. Analytic philosophers typically are not interested in such naturalistic histories of their own philosophy. Accordingly, my strategy will be intensional, that is, I aim to identify, in Soames' words, the "underlying themes or tendencies that characterize" analytic philosophy (Soames 2003, 1:xiii). Even if there are no unifying doctrines, there may be a set of concepts and attitudes that characterize analytic philosophy and distinguish it from other kinds of philosophy. I hope to characterize this content without begging the question, and in such a way that non-analytic philosophers might find my characterization instructive. Accordingly, I aim to avoid tendentious or 'churchy' characterizations, for example that analytic philosophy is defined by a commitment to "clarity, rigor, and argumentation" and that it aims at "truth and knowledge, as opposed to moral or spiritual improvement" (Soames 2003, 1:xiv).

3. Ryle's Thesis

My point of departure is Ryle's characterization of analytic philosophy in 1956 in his introduction to the publication of a series of eight lectures from BBC's Third Programme with the title The Revolution in Philosophy. An aim of this collection, Ryle writes, is to "trace our proximate origins" and to let the essays in this collection be like "memoirs" that "supply the future historian with those considered and marshalled reminiscences which they will need" (Ryle 1956, 1). This is exactly how I want to use this collection.

In this introduction Ryle distinguishes between "the vehicle and what it conveys," where vehicles are meaningful psychological or linguistic entities, and what they convey is their sense or meaning. It is in virtue of their meaning that the vehicles are "capable of being true or false...and capable of implying and being incompatible with other judgments." Ryle

then characterizes analytic philosophy in its roughly first fifty years as "very largely the story of this notion of sense or meaning" (Ryle 1956, 8). This claim is echoed in 1957 in his essay "The Theory of Meaning," namely that the question "What are meanings?" has "bulked large in philosophical and logical discussions," and that "preoccupation with the theory of meaning could be described as the occupational disease of twentieth-century Anglo-Saxon and Austrian philosophy" (Ryle 1957, 239).

Some clarifications and corrections are in order. First, Ryle does not intend to narrow the focus of analytic philosophy to what Frege isolates as "sense" or "Sinn" in contrast to "reference" or "Bedeutung". Frege's technical notions of sense and reference are part of his own analysis or distillation of meaning, that is, in Michael Beaney's useful phrase, his "splitting of content" into two components (Beaney 1996, 151-2). This distillation is only one answer, albeit a very fruitful and influential one, to the question "What are meanings?" and of course there are others.

Second, for Ryle it is essential that the vehicles are psychological entities, but meanings are not: instead they are abstract objects that belong to the domain of logic and philosophy. While the rejection of psychologism certainly defines early analytic philosophy, I do not believe that this is a necessary condition of analytic philosophy. As in the case of Fregean senses, anti-psychologism is just one strategy for answering the question "What are mean-ings?" It is preoccupation with this question that first and foremost characterizes analytic philosophy, not a particular answer.

Third, while Ryle's regional, national or linguistic references to Anglo-Saxon and Austrian philosophy might be useful as a rough and ready way to fix the referent of "analytic philos-ophy", these references include and also exclude too much. Austrian philosophy, strictly speaking, also includes Husserl, Hayek and Adler, none of whom are analytic philosophers. Moreover, Reichenbach, Hempel and Tarski were neither Austrian nor Anglo-Saxon. They were anglophone in that they spoke and wrote English, but English was not their native language and their early works that are already constitutive of analytic philosophy are not in English.

Fourth, Ryle is characterizing a major and perhaps even dominant trend of twentieth-cen-tury philosophy, but it certainly does not characterize all of twentieth-century philosophy. If we substitute "analytic philosophy" for "twentieth-century philosophy" or " twentieth-century Anglo-Saxon and Austrian philosophy," Ryle's thesis properly cleaned-up is that the history of analytic philosophy is 'the story of this notion of sense or meaning' and the 'preoccupation with meaning is the occupational disease of analytic philosophy'.

Fifth, while the publication of this collection coincides with what might be called the "second wave" of analytic philosophy or what is sometimes labeled "ordinary language philosophy" and some of the essays aim to locate this wave within the analytic tradition, it is a serious error to see this collection as a mere "manifesto" of ordinary language phi-losophy, and to assume that the revolution mentioned in its title refers to this second wave (Wright 1994, 16). Certainly this was not the intent of this collection, which aims to cover a movement that includes Frege, Russell, Moore, both late and early Wittgenstein, as well

the Vienna Circle. The collection does include an essay by Strawson that places particular emphasis on the significance of ordinary language philosophy. He characterizes two contrasting "courses", one a course of construction that he ties to the work of Carnap and Quine and the other a course of analysis that he ties to Austin and Ryle.[1] However, Strawson considered both trends as live options in analytic philosophy, and both, on his account, were devoted to the analysis of sentences and propositions (Strawson 1956, 100-1).

Finally and perhaps most importantly, Ryle suggests that there is a line between analytic philosophy and "the technical or semi-technical ideas" of the "new Formal Logic." Ryle writes that these ideas "were taken over by philosophers for the solution of their own problems," but he separates the philosophers' problems from those of the formal logicians (Ryle 1956, 9). This line of separation is also traced by Soames in his 2 volume history of analytic philosophy, which, by his own admission, treats the formal work of Frege and Tarski, among others, "rather sparingly" (Soames 2003, 1:xvii). For example, there are no individual chapters devoted to Frege, Tarski or Carnap. There are good practical reasons for this separation, but it must be underscored that this work in logic is not incidental or merely parallel to the development of analytic philosophy. This work is at its very core, as is evident from the fact that advanced formal logic and even set theory were requirements in analytic graduate programs.

The reason for this is that analytic philosophy's concept of meaning is the concept of something essentially constrained by truth-preserving inferential relationships between propositions. Ryle himself assumes this when he writes that it is in virtue of meaning that vehicles of meaning are "capable of implying and being incompatible with other judgments" (Ryle 1956, 8). Here Ryle is simply following Frege, who in his groundbreaking work on logic, the Begriffsschrift, identifies "conceptual content" in terms of logical inference, specifically deductive validity. For analytic philosophers, truth-preserving inferences and equivalences are essential to meaning, and hence a core feature of this preoccupation with meaning.[2]

Analytic philosophy's inferential conception of meaning is an important reason why Husserl is not a canonical figure in the history of analytic philosophy. While Husserl's Logical Investigations discuss, as the title indicates, logical issues, this is not a work on logic as Frege understood it, and it does not look like a book on logic or the philosophy of logic from our vantage point either. Frege's letter to Husserl written October 30, 1906 concerning logic explains this difference very clearly:

> In logic one must be determined to regard equipollent sentences as differing only according to their form. After the assertoric force with which they have been uttered is subtracted, equipollent sentences have something in common in their content, and this is what I call the proposition they express. This is the only thing that concerns logic. (Frege 1976, 101-3)

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[1]   He also calls one the "American School" and the other the "English School" (Strawson 1956, 101).

[2]   This leaves completely open the question about the appropriate type of this logic.

This common content, or what in the Begriffsschrift he calls the "conceptual content" consists only of that "which affects the possible inferences" (Frege 1879, 3; also iv). Logic is concerned only with "whatever is needed for a valid [that is, truth-preserving] inference" (ibid.). While for Frege conceptual content is "the only thing that concerns logic," in Husserl's Logical Investigations this is at best a very peripheral topic. Central to the Logical Investigations is an attempt to give a theory of intentional objects and contents that play a role in knowledge and experience, as suggested by the subtitle of the massive second volume: "Investigation of of the Phenomenology and Theory of Knowledge" (Husserl 1992, vol. 3, 3). Accordingly, Husserl's notion of meaning is from the very start not constrained by inferential relationships, but instead by the contents of intentional objects that are subject to an "immanent description" of these psychic acts on the basis of reflection. This will include a theory of abstraction, attention, intentionality, among other things. Similarly, Husserl's Formale und Transzendentale Logik discusses the concept of truth as an epistemic and phenomenological category, not in terms of truth-preserving relationships (Husserl 1992, vol. 7, 46-8).[3]

With these five provisos in mind, I take for granted that Ryle's characterization captures the first fifty years. Frege, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, as well as the members of the Vienna Circle were all preoccupied with meaning. Just to illustrate this with a simple instance, consider that Frege's Foundations of Arithmetic is entirely devoted to meaning. In the very first sentence Frege raises the question "what the symbol 1 means" (Frege 1978, i) and in the concluding paragraph he declares that the foundational problems of arithmetic, including the treatment of positive whole numbers as well as the difficulties of fractions and negative and irrational numbers are "just . . . a matter of fixing the content of a . . . judgment." (Frege 1978, 119).

What I wish to do here is make a case that this characterization holds for the second fifty years as well, by focusing on the two towering figures of this period: Rawls and Kripke. They are particularly interesting for my purposes because while they are defining fixtures in the history of analytic philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century, their work also motivated important new directions in philosophy that constitute a break with the past that, I will argue, constitute a departure from the analytic tradition.[4]

4. Rawls

I focus on Rawls' discussion of civil disobedience because it is a microcosm of his theory of justice and at the same time it is arguably an essay that plays a role in the emergence of applied ethics, which has an ambiguous status for many analytic philosophers.

The very title of this discussion highlights Rawls' preoccupation with meaning: "The

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[3]   I thank Sandra LaPointe for challenging me on excluding Husserl from analytic philosophy.

[4]   It is useful to distinguish analytical philosophy from analytic philosophy. The term "analytical philosophy" casts a much wider net than the term "analytic philosophy," a net that catches philosophers such as Husserl, who are analytical, but not part of the canon of analytic philosophers. However, the term "analytical philosophy" is an evolution from the narrower conception of analytic philosophy, and hence it is important to understand the narrower conception first.

Definition of Civil Disobedience" (Rawls 1971, 363). With this definition Rawls aims to, in his words, "illustrate the content of the principles of natural duty and obligation." His discussion of civil disobedience has two major components. The first is a definition of civil disobedience as a kind of dissent within the context of a "nearly just society," which Rawls believes conceptually requires a democratic regime. Accordingly, civil disobedience is defined as a certain kind of opposition, namely loyal opposition, to democratic author-ity. The details of Rawls' definition are not relevant here, but suffice it to say that Rawls maintains that "civil disobedience has been defined so that it falls between legal protest and the raising of test cases on the other side" (Rawls 1971, 367).[5] The second component of his discussion of civil disobedience is the stating of the necessary and sufficient condi-tions under which civil disobedience is justified. Within the confines of traditional analytic methodology, this is nothing less than a definition of a subset of civil disobedience, namely justified civil disobedience.

Of course, a definition of justified civil disobedience also serves to justify civil disobedi-ence in those instances that satisfy the necessary and sufficient conditions of justified civil disobedience. Thus it is tempting to emphasize the justification Rawls offers at the expense of the analytic task of defining justification. This can give a popular but misleading im-pression that Rawls' theory of justice is a "revolutionary" departure from earlier analytic ethics because it pays "almost no attention to meta-ethics and instead pursued moral argu-ments directly."[6] But this understanding of Rawls' project fails to distinguish two distinct kinds of justifications. One assumes a standard of justification and applies it to a certain set of cases, arguing that these cases match or satisfy this standard. The other aims first to of-fer the definition of a standard, and then sets out to offer the justification. Rawls' argument falls into the second category, and while Rawls' work does depart from his predecessors in terms of emphasis and inspires a new wave of work in ethics, his work does not depart from analytic philosophy's preoccupation with meaning.

Accordingly, Rawls offers three "conditions" for justified civil disobedience (Rawls 1971, 371). First, an act of justified civil disobedience is addressed to substantial and clear viola-tions of the principles of justice that define justice as fairness (Rawls 1971, 372). Second, "the legal means of redress have proved of no avail," and finally, the acts of civil disobedi-ence do not threaten the breakdown of the nearly just society (Rawls 1971, 373-4). It is worth noting how Rawls argues for this third condition. He considers cases that are, in his words, "conceivable...even if...unlikely" that there are many groups that satisfy the first two conditions, so many that their acts of civil disobedience would lead to serious disorder that threatens the just constitution. In other words, in accordance with the analytic pursuit of a definition, Rawls considers logically possible scenarios to tighten his definition of justified civil disobedience (Rawls 1971, 374).

The case of Rawls' analytic discussion of civil disobedience mirrors his overall project of

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[5]   It should also be noted that Rawls acknowledges that he gives a "narrower definition to civil disobedience" because he distinguishes it from what he calls "conscientious refusal," which he also aims to define (Rawls 1971, 368).

[6]   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normative_ethics Accessed March 31, 2012. and http://www.academicroom.com/topics/normative-ethics Accessed April 13, 2014

offering a theory of justice. Rawls maintains that "the concept of justice...[is] defined... by the role of its principles in assigning rights and duties and in defining the appropriate division of social advantages" (Rawls 1971, 10). The problem is that there are different interpretations of this role – competing principles for assigning rights and duties, and distributing social advantages. These different interpretations are alternative conceptions of justice, and Rawls' primary task is to offer a conception of justice as fairness as a "viable alternative" to then dominant conceptions, particularly utilitarian conceptions (Rawls 1971, 3). The demonstration of viability rests on a justification that rational individuals in the original position would choose the principles of the conception of justice as fairness. This is not intended to be a psychological claim. Rawls intends it to be the conclusion of a "strictly deductive" argument (Rawls 1971, 119 and 121) that follows from, among other things, certain propositions about what it means to be rational, which entail as a matter of meaning that rational individuals would make certain choices given certain epistemic states. While Rawls admits that he falls short of this analytic goal, it is nevertheless the pursuit of this goal that drives Rawls' justification of justice as fairness.

As indicated above, it is possible to abstract from the analytic component of Rawls' theory of justice and isolate a normative argument, for instance an argument for civil disobedience. This sort of abstraction inspired the development of applied ethics, that is, the project of using normative principles to argue for specific courses of action on important social and personal issues. However, minus the analytic preoccupation with meaning, this work ceases to be in the analytic tradition, and this is why much work in applied ethics strikes many readers as a "revolutionary" development in philosophy. In order to be a work in analytic philosophy, it has to be concerned with meaning. Applied philosophy that satisfies this criterion (for example, work on the concept of intrinsic value, in the case of environmental ethics, or on the concept of pain in bioethics) falls within the scope of analytic philosophy.

5. Kripke

Kripke is the other towering figure in the history of analytic philosophy of the second half of the twentieth century. Soames, for example, writes that "the two most important achievements that have emerged from the analytic tradition in this period [1900-1975] are (i) the recognition that philosophical speculation must be grounded in pre-philosophical thought, and (ii) the success achieved in understanding, and separating one from another, the fundamental methodological notions of logical consequence, logical truth, necessary truth, and a priori truth" (Soames 2003, 1:xi). I have doubts about the first claim and I think these two claims are actually incompatible, a case I wish I had time to make. Be that as it may, certainly the second claim is true insofar as it characterizes an important set of influential developments in the analytic tradition in the 1970s, and Kripke's work on meaning and modality is at the center of this development.

The locus classicus for this development is a series of three lectures Kripke gave in 1970 and that were first published in 1972 and then republished in 1980 in the form of a book under the title Naming and Necessity. These lectures begin with a massive critique of descriptive theories of the meaning and reference of proper names that is now a canonical part of analytic philosophy, but the background of this critique is equally important. As Kripke

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notes in his Preface to the 1980 edition, these lectures grew out of his groundbreaking model theoretic semantics for modal logic (Kripke 1980, 3), and this is another example of how formal studies are at the very core of developments in analytic philosophy.

Kripke's model-theoretic or possible worlds semantics of modal operators led to questions about how to interpret the terms of identity statements, especially ones that appeared to be contingent identity statements, such as that Aristotle is identical to the tutor of Alexander. If there can be contingent identities, then identities are not necessary, and Kripke held that as a matter of logic identical objects are necessarily identical (Kripke 1980, 3-4). To clear-up the appearance of contingent identities, Kripke introduced the technical notion of a rigid designator, namely a term that designates the same object across all possible worlds in which it exists. In 1963-64 Kripke began to apply this concept to proper names in natural languages, and this move allowed Kripke to decouple the meanings of proper names from descriptions. Once descriptions were expelled from their meanings, it was natural to question whether descriptions are even needed to fix the reference of proper names. If not, then names can succeed in referring directly without some intervening descriptive content. Moreover, the content or semantic contribution a name makes to the meaning of a sentence can be limited to its referent. These theses about the meanings of proper names were also extended to natural kind terms, separating the content of natural kind terms from the descriptive content of our beliefs and theories about those kinds.

As already indicated, these new theories of meaning for proper names and natural kind terms motivated important revisions in a wide range of areas of philosophy. A received view was that a priori knowledge rests on what can be known on the basis of reflection on the descriptive contents of our concepts, and that necessary truths rest on these descriptive contents knowable a priori. But if we assume that the terms "water" and "H_2O" both function as rigid designators and that identical things are necessarily identical, then it is necessary that water is identical to H_2O, but this is known a posteriori, not a priori. The traditional view that Ruth Millikan calls "Meaning Rationalism" (Millikan 1984, 10), namely that we know a priori, simply relying on Cartesian reflection, what we are thinking and intending to do when speaking or writing also suffered a setback. If we are thinking, speaking or writing with rigid designators, whose meanings "just ain't in the head," as Putnam famously puts it, then meaning rationalism appears to be false (Putnam 1975, 227). In short, rigid designators ushered in various forms of externalism according to which meaning was not at all or at least not entirely determined by the content internal to us.

6. Consequences

Beneficiaries of these changes in analytic philosophy's conception of meaning were realism and naturalism, particularly in the philosophy of science and ethics. However, a closer look at this development also reveals an exit from analytic philosophy that is the source of what has been characterized as an identity crisis (Wright 1994, 4).[7] The fate of Moore's Open Question argument in recent philosophy is a case in point. To simplify, Moore argued that the property of being good cannot be identical to a natural property, say, to use Moore's

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[7]   Reference to a crisis in analytic philosophy are not uncommon: Baz (2014), Glock (2008, 1), Preston (2007, 7), Preston (2005, 294), Leiter (2004, 1), and Biletzky and Matar (1998, xi).

example, the desire to desire. The reason is that the question "Is it good to desire to desire?" is intelligible and asks for new information. It is not equivalent to the trivial question "Is the good good?".   Moore also puts his case in another way: the mere fact that we can doubt that the desire to desire is good "shews clearly that we have two different notions before our minds" (Moore 2005, 16). This way of putting Moore's argument is particularly significant because it rests on the same principle Frege used in the opening paragraph of "Sense and Reference" regarding identity statements and that Gareth Evans called the "Intuitive Criterion of Difference" (Evans 1982, 19). Two sentences have distinct meanings if a competent speaker understands both but without being incoherent or irrational can affirm one while deny or remain agnostic about the other. More broadly, what Moore and Frege assumed is that in assigning meaning to a person's linguistic or mental states, we must take into account differences in their cognitive attitudes. I will call this "Frege's Constraint" (following White 2004, 213).

The canonical naturalist reply is to deny that the cognitive differences that play a role in Moore's argument are relevant to the individuation of properties. In Brink's terms, for example, the "Semantic Test for Properties" fails, and part of the reason is that terms or predicates can succeed in referring or denoting something without satisfying any of the cognitive content a person has in mind while using the term (Brink 1989, 163-6; 2001, 154-76). Just as the terms "water" and "H_2O" can be associated with cognitive differences (a person can rationally wonder if water is indeed H_2O while water and H_2O are as identical), "good" and some naturalistic term can be co-referential despite cognitive differences. What in the end underlies this response is the idea that moral terms can function as rigid designators as well as proper names or natural kind terms.

This is an example of how the preoccupation with meaning led to an influential and important shift in analytic meta-ethics. But it also points to a trail that leaves analytic philosophy behind once naturalists cease to care about questions of meaning and turn to explanatory projects constrained by results from the biological or social sciences at the expense of Frege's constraint.[8]

To elaborate, the canonical naturalist reply to Moore's Open Question Argument is not at all a refutation of his argument, but simply a change of topics. Moore was interested in the meaning of "good" and he assumed meaning was subject to Frege's constraint. This is evident when he writes that his argument "shews clearly that we have two different notions before our minds" (Moore 2005, 16). He was not concerned with matters of fact – for instance, in what kinds of things turn out to be good – but what it is that we understand – what is "before our minds" – when we use evaluative terms such as "good". Accordingly, as Akeel Bilgrami argues, the canonical naturalist reply does not show "that there is any fault in Moore's argument itself" because it remains "effective (and is only intended to be effective) against naturalisms that are definitional" (Bilgrami 2004, 129-30). Even if in fact good is identical to some natural property F, it is possible for a person without being irrational to doubt or even deny that good is identical to F, and this shows that the concept

[8]   I think Richard Boyd's essay "How to Be a Moral Realist" is an exemplar of this departure, beginning with a discussion of semantic issues and ending with a 'just so' story of empirically discoverable homeostatic property clusters.

of good and the concept of F are distinct.

In effect, a naturalist who is completely satisfied with the canonical naturalist reply and with no concern for the relevant cognitive differences ceases to care about meaning subject to Frege's constraint. But the concept of meaning that is essential to analytic philosophy's preoccupation is meaning that not only serves inferential relationships, but that is also subject to Frege's constraint. Hence, a loss of interest in this concept of meaning is a loss of interest in analytic philosophy.

Of course, there is a way to understand this naturalist turn in philosophy as still a kind of preoccupation with meaning, except that now " 'meanings' just ain't in the head". I think this move is only a Pyrrhic victory. Frege's constraint is now replaced by the results of the empirical and special sciences. Meaning now is assigned not on the basis of how people understand what they say and think, but on the basis of what science has to say about what people think they understand. In this sense of meaning, any special science is also concerned with meaning because its results determine what we mean, not what appears before our minds.

This is a Pyrrhic victory because it draws all blood from meaning as a special subject for analytic philosophy. Meanings that are subject only to the constraints of natural science leave nothing for analytic philosophy to do except perhaps to correct those who still think that philosophy has a special domain. This also leaves analytic philosophy without a clear identity. Ryle in his introduction to The Revolution in Philosophy maintained that analytic philosophy was partially a response to new institutional pressures on philosophers from secular colleagues, mostly natural scientists, to identify a domain of expertise and method for philosophy (Ryle 1956, 4-5). Meaning and its analysis was this special domain of expertise. But meaning without Frege's constraint drains this special domain of expertise, and this leaves analytic philosophy in crisis.

7. The Roots of Crisis

Von Wright suggests a different diagnosis of analytic philosophy's identity crisis, namely that it is caused by pair of competing commitments that can be found at the very roots of analytic philosophy (Wright 1994, 3-32). He explains these commitments in terms borrowed from Frederick Waismann's distinction between science and philosophy in his essay "What is Logical Analysis?" The scientist "searches for knowledge, i.e. propositions which are true, which agree with reality," and the highest goal of this attitude is the construction of theories about matters of fact, Waismann writes. Philosophers, in particular analytic philosophers, "cannot be satisfied with this" because they find "the very nature of knowledge and truth . . . problematic" and are interested in the "deeper meaning of what the scientist does". Consequently, analytic philosophers aim not at "propositions, but the clarification of propositions" (Waismann 1940, 265-6). While Waismann sets this as a line of demarcation between science and philosophy, von Wright argues that both of these "attitudes of mind" are found within analytic philosophy, and that these developed into an "unbearable contradiction" that "had to destroy its unity" (Wright 1994, 4).

The philosophies of Moore and Russell, von Wright argues, already are marked by these opposing poles. Russell, von Wright suggests, is motivated by the scientific search for true propositions about matters of fact, and this characterizes Russell's work on mathematics and logic as well as his work on the problem of induction. In Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy Russell proclaims that "the time has now arrived" to correct the "unsatisfactory state" that philosophy "has achieved fewer results than any other branch of learning," and von Wright cites this as the clearest expression of Russell's scientific attitude (Wright 1994, 6-7). Moore, on the other hand, is concerned with meaning. For example, it is not the truth of commonsense propositions that concerns Moore, but the analysis of their meaning (Wright 1994, 7-8).

While I think that von Wright's diagnosis points in the right direction, first I wish to correct some elements of this diagnosis. First, von Wright's discussion of Waismann's distinction is misleading. Waismann's distinction is not simply between questions of truth and questions of meaning because from his answer to the question "What is Logical Analysis?" it is clear that philosophy also involves the pursuit of true propositions. Philosophy, Waismann maintains, involves the assertion of tautologies, and a tautology, in his words, "expresses agreement with all truth-possibilities, i.e., that it is always true," adding that the truth of tautologies (as well as the falsity of contradictions) "no longer depends on the behavior of the real world" (Waismann 1940, 268-9). So Waismann's distinction is better understood as a distinction between different kinds of truths. Needless to say, this assumes that we can draw a distinction between these two domains, and Waismann assumes we can.

This assumption that there is a distinction between different kinds of truths is shared by Russell and Moore, although they drew this distinction differently over the courses of their careers. While both began with a Platonist ontology of meanings and Russell departs from this commitment in his theory of descriptions, Russell's turn to logical constructions and logical form preserves the commitment to a special domain for philosophy. Waismann expresses this quite nicely in his account of logical analysis, namely that philosophers aim at the "clarification of the sense of . . . propositions," and they do this by "demonstrating the purely logical relations between propositions" (Waismann 1940, 266 and 269).

Second, Russell's pursuit of scientific philosophy in 1914 in Our Knowledge of the External World and the companion essay "The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics" does not quite fit von Wright's divide between questions of truth and questions of meaning. For Russell, part of what makes philosophy scientific is his principle of construction. He writes: "the supreme maxim of scientific philosophizing is this: Wherever possible, logical constructions are to be substituted for inferential entities" (Russell 1986, 11). This is the principle that guides Russell's theory of descriptions, which is intended as an analysis of both the meaning and denotation of definite descriptions, and when Russell turns to the concepts of physics in 1914, he uses this principle to guide his account of the meaning of physical terms such as "matter" "object" or "place".

This principle gives philosophy a certain scientific character that Russell describes quite clearly in the essay "On Scientific Method in Philosophy" published as a pamphlet in 1914. He distinguishes between philosophy that aims to be scientific by seeking to base itself

upon the "results of science" or by adopting the "methods of science". Russell maintains that "much philosophy inspired by science has gone astray through preoccupation with the results momentarily supposed to have been achieved" (Russell 1986, 57). Russell cites the 19th-century naturalist Herbert Spencer, but surely this applies to trends in contemporary naturalism as well. For Russell, the appropriate way of making philosophy scientific is to transfer "not results, but methods" from "the sphere of the special sciences to the sphere of philosophy." That is, philosophy for Russell has a special sphere. According to Russell, "philosophy is the science of the possible", and possibility is studied by enumerating the logical forms of propositions and facts, and this is not an empirical investigation (Russell 1986, 65).

Moreover, the propositions of philosophy "must be a priori", which for Russell means that they are neither confirmed nor disconfirmed by empirical evidence because they hold "however the actual world were constituted" (1986, 65). So it is not the appeal to empirical evidence or the pursuit of contingent truths that makes philosophy scientific for Russell. What makes it scientific is that with a well-defined set of problems and a method, philosophy is in a position to deal "with its problems piecemeal, and . . . obtain, as the sciences do . . . partial . . . results . . . [that] subsequent investigation can utilize even while it supplements and improves them" (Russell 1986, 66). In other words, philosophy is scientific insofar as it is "progressive", which means that it consists of "successive approximations to the truth," but these are truths about logical form and possibility. So Russell indeed is concerned with questions of truth, as von Wright observes, but not with truths about empirical and contingent matters of fact, but with truths about logical form and possibility.

Russell's increasing interest in psychological matters could be seen as blurring the line between Russell and naturalism. Hylton (1990, 244) argues that after Russell's Principles of Mathematics, published in 1903, Russell begins "to take some interest in questions which he might have dismissed as merely psychological." Hylton maintains that the fact that for Russell after the Principles "philosophical theories . . . appear to be answerable to the data of experience, to facts about what is or can be plausibly supposed to be present to our minds . . . is clearly a considerable concession to psychologism" (1990, 330). While Hilton is correct about Russell's increased interest in psychological matters, an appeal to psychological facts and psychological plausibility does not constitute a concession to psychologism. After all, Frege's appeal to cognitive value or significance [Erkenntniswert] and his appeal to the distinction between what can be known a priori and what is a "valuable extension of our knowledge" (1980, 40) is a psychological appeal, but it is not a concession to psychologism. Finally, Hylton concedes that "Russell continues to think that the subject-matter of philosophy is wholly independent of psychology" (283). This is precisely what Russell delineates in his 1914 discussion of the scientific method in philosophy and that distinguishes Russell from contemporary naturalism. In general, a turn toward psychological facts is not, ipso facto, a naturalistic turn unless these facts, to use Russell's terminology, are results simply transferred from empirical psychology rather than facts pertaining to a philosophical psychology that is distinct from empirical psychology.

While von Wright is mistaken that Waismann's division between science and philosophy is a division within the origins of analytic philosophy and a source of its eventual disinte-

gration, he nevertheless points in the right direction. In the theory of descriptions, Russell applied his maxim "Wherever possible, logical constructions are to be substituted for inferred entities" (Russell 1986, 11) against Frege's and Meinong's ontologies of intensional entities. An essential feature of this intensional approach is that it is driven in part by a conception of meaning that aims to capture intuitive and cognitive differences in the understanding of language. This, of course, is Frege's constraint.

Russell's approach, especially in his theory of descriptions, suggests that in questions of meaning, ontological constraints can trump Frege's constraint. As Russell repeats several times, his analysis is "in obedience to the feeling of reality," and a "robust sense of reality is very necessary in framing a correct analysis of propositions," even if it comes at a cost of "apparently excessive complication," in particular the familiar complexity of analyzing definite descriptions into parts that only make sense in the context of a whole sentence with nested quantifiers in which there is no single unit that can be identified as a substitution for the definite description (Russell 1919, 48).

It is this weakening of the commitment to Frege's constraint and letting ontological considerations take its place that are the roots of analytic philosophy's crisis in the wake of Kripke's work on naming and necessity. Kripke's own case against descriptivism is guided by Frege's constraint. A gloss on one of his arguments is that someone can consistently believe that Aristotle is the tutor of Alexander while this is, in Kripke's words "not a necessary truth for him" (Kripke 1980, 63). Hence, the meaning of the proper name "Aristotle" cannot be identified with the description of him being the tutor of Alexander. Another argument is that a person can have beliefs about Einstein and meaningfully use "Einstein" without having any beliefs about him involving definite descriptions; hence a name can be meaningful without backing definite descriptions.

However, the irony of Kripke's achievement is that it prepared the decommission of Frege's constraint and inspired a naturalized philosophy that is no longer preoccupied with meaning constrained by cognitive differences. Instead, questions concerning matters of fact – for example "just-so stories" appealing to (borrowing from Russell) "results momentarily supposed to have been achieved," say, in evolutionary biology – replace questions about truths of meaning. If Ryle is correct that the preoccupation with meaning is essential to analytic philosophy and I am right that the relevant notion of meaning is one that is subject to Frege's constraint, then these kinds of philosophical projects, while they might borrow some of the standards and methods of analytic philosophy, are not examples of analytic philosophy anymore.

8. Conclusion

Stephen White made a trenchant parenthetical comment about the status of Frege's constraint today, namely that "the profession is currently in denial" about it. Current philosophical theorizing simply ignores Frege's constraint, White claims, "but not on the basis of cogent arguments" (White 2004, 222). White makes this point regarding current work in the philosophy of mind, arguing that a satisfactory account of agency needs to account for the "agential perspective," and that this in turn needs an account of meaning that satisfies

Frege's constraint. Without Frege's constraint, the perspective of the agent is ignored, and by ignoring this personal perspective, we ignore agency.

I would like to put this point somewhat differently. Frege's constraint is ignored on account of a major shift in philosophy that was made possible by rigid designators and direct theories of reference and meaning. Ignoring Frege's constraint is an unintended consequence and the profession has not come to terms with the fact that this marks a departure from previous philosophizing that is at least as dramatic as the inception of analytic philosophy itself. In fact, as I have been arguing, it is a way of doing philosophy that is not analytic anymore. Analytic philosophy is, at its core, preoccupied with meaning, where meaning is subject to Frege's constraint, but contemporary "naturalizing" philosophy is not.[9] Additionally, insofar as naturalized philosophy now dominates our profession, replacing the preoccupation with meaning with a preoccupation with the results of the natural sciences, analytic philosophy is not a dominant force in contemporary philosophy anymore. Nevertheless, contemporary analytic philosophy still has an important and yet unfinished task ahead, namely to revive and revitalize the intuitive criterion of difference and defend its essential role in any adequate account of our own self-understanding, particularly as subjects and agents. The revival of Frege's constraint, that is, the recognition that differences in our own understanding of what we mean have an essential role in determining what we mean, reclaims the identity of analytic philosophy, turns to its proper tasks, and makes analytic philosophy relevant again to the philosophical project of understanding what it is that we mean when we think, speak and act.

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[9]   I borrow the gerund "naturalizing" from Kornblith (1985), the root, of course, is Quine (1969). For critical discussions of the varieties of naturalism see De Caro and MacArthur (2004). The essays in this collection indicate a way out of the crisis of analytic philosophy.

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