

Quine and Kripke's Wittgenstein¹

Ólafur Páll Jónsson
University of Iceland

That there are important similarities between Quine's theses of indeterminacy of translation and inscrutability of reference and Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein is, I believe, generally accepted. And the reasons for this should be obvious. At the outset of his discussion of the solution to the skeptical paradox, Kripke remarks that:

Wittgenstein's skeptical problem is related to some work of two other recent writers who show little direct influence from Wittgenstein. ... The first is W. V. Quine, whose well-known theses of the indeterminacy of translation and the inscrutability of reference also question whether there are any objective facts as to what we mean.²

And in *Word and Object* Quine says that those who have found Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning in *Philosophical Investigation* may not find his indeterminacy thesis paradoxical at all:

Perhaps the doctrine of indeterminacy of translation will have little air of paradox for readers familiar with Wittgenstein's latter-day remarks on meaning.³

But not only is it generally accepted that there are superficial similarities between Quine's theses and Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein, it is also widely held that the similarities are not more than superficial. When we look close, the received view has it, we will see a fundamental disagreement between the two approaches.

Many philosophers find Quine's theses outrageous, some say it is a *reductio ad absurdum* of his position, in particular of his behaviorism, while at the same time they find Kripke's problem both interesting and relevant. Among linguists the situation is somewhat similar. Since Chomsky's review of Skinner in 1957, generative linguists have taken behaviorism as an untenable basis for linguistic theory. And even among those who are more sympathetic to Quine's methods, many have argued that meaning is merely underdetermined by evidence, just as any scientific theory, but not indeterminate. At the same time Kripke's problem is taken seriously and even regarded to impose limits on what a successful lexicon or semantic theory can and should do.⁴

¹ This paper is based on a part of my MA thesis which I wrote under the supervision of Ali Kazmi. I have also benefitted from advices from Patrick Hawley and Ásta Sveinsdóttir. Daniel Harbour read the last draft and made helpful comments.

² Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, Oxford 1982, p. 55. I will refer to this book as K.

³ W.V.O. Quine, *Word and Object*, Cambridge Mass., 1960, p. 77. I will refer to this book as WO.

⁴ I'm indebted to Daniel Harbour for this observation.

In the present paper I argue that the received view about the differences between Quine's theses and Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein is mistaken; these differences are not substantial and the two approaches go quite naturally hand in hand.

I. The views

Before I go any further let's recall briefly what the theses under consideration are. Quine's thesis about indeterminacy of translation is, in short, the following: Manuals for translating a language of one community into the language of another community can be set up in such a way that they are incompatible with one another but still compatible with the totality of speech dispositions of both communities of speakers. Two translation manuals are incompatible if they give as a translation of a sentence in the target language different sentences in the home language that stand in no plausible equivalence relation. A translation manual is compatible with the totality of the speech dispositions of a community if there is nothing in the latter which refutes the manual in a similar way as evidence may refute a scientific theory.⁵ Quine's thesis about inscrutability of reference is that once we have settled on which units to identify as names and what their stimulus meaning is, there is still room for divergent translations.⁶

To develop his paradox Kripke invites the reader to imagine the following scenario. You are asked to perform a simple computation: "What is $57 + 68$?". It is assumed that you have never added numbers as large or larger than 57, so the addition problem is new for you. Still, you reply, "It is 125". But along comes a bizarre skeptic who asks: "How can you be sure that this is the answer you should give provided you want to be consistent with your previous use of the '+' symbol?" The skeptic then suggests that you could just as well have meant quus in the past, where the quus function, ' \oplus ', is defined like this:

$$\begin{aligned}x \oplus y &= x + y, \text{ if } x, y < 57 \\ &= 5 \text{ otherwise.}\end{aligned}$$

The paradox appears when we realize that we cannot point to any fact to defeat the skeptic's bizarre suggestion.

II. Contacts

Both Quine and Kripke's Wittgenstein rejected what was a mainstream in the philosophy of language, the truth-conditional picture. According to it an explanation of the meaning of a sentence is given by the conditions under which the sentence would be true. But their affinities are not restricted to their criticism of other theories, their constructive accounts share important features. They agree more or less about (i) the role of truth conditions, (ii) what the basic facts about meanings are, (iii) whether there can be primitive semantic facts and (iv) what it is for non-intentional facts to determine facts about meaning.

⁵ See, for instance, *Word and Object* p. 27.

⁶ See for instance Quine's *Pursuit of Truth*, revised edition, Cambridge Mass., 1992, p. 50-52. Quine's use of "gavagai" was initially meant to highlight inscrutability of reference, though it has become a heading for his thesis of indeterminacy of translation.

First, both Quine and Kripke's Wittgenstein reject the notion of truth conditions as explanatory. Kripke's solution to the skeptical paradox involves a rejection of the claim that truth conditions and extensions explain the meaningfulness of sentences and predicates as well as peoples' understanding of such expressions. Quine's rejection is, however, more dramatic. In *Pursuit of Truth* he writes:

But I would not seek a scientific rehabilitation of something like the old notion of separate and distinct meanings; that notion is better seen as a stumbling block cleared away. (PT 56)

Quine's thesis of inscrutability of reference goes even further than rejecting the explanatory role of truth conditions, it explicitly rejects the idea that truth conditions are interpretive in the sense that they give the meaning of sentences. This follows from the fact that the truth conditions of sentences such as "There is a rabbit in the yard" and "There is an undetached rabbit part in the yard" are the same even if their meanings are different.

Second, further affinities between these two approaches are evident in their emphasis on communal agreement and their views about semantic facts. In Kripke's picture the justification for accepting sentences such as "Jones, like many of us, means addition by 'plus'" would be the fact that his use of the term 'plus' is in agreement with how the rest of the community uses it. Quine says strikingly similar things, for example in *Pursuit of Truth* where he is discussing the factuality of translation manuals:

What is utterly factual is just the fluency of conversation and the effectiveness of negotiation that one or another manual of translation serves to induce. (PT 43)

Third, central to the approaches of both Quine and Kripke's Wittgenstein is the assumption that semantic facts cannot be primitive. By a primitive fact I mean a fact that is not determined by some non-intentional facts. Quine, as is well known, claims that all facts must be physical facts or dependent on physical facts. Kripke's Wittgenstein does not make any such claim but his requirement that any candidate for a meaning-determining fact must show how I am justified in attributing meaning to utterances of mine or others and his subsequent discussion of various candidates for a meaning determining facts, makes it clear that he does not allow for primitive semantic facts.

Determining facts

The fourth point of contact has to do with what it means for a fact to be determined by some other facts. What is important in this respect is what notion of determination is at play. Let me draw a rather simple distinction between what might be called *a priori* determination and ontological determination. Some fact F determines *a priori* that, say, Jones means addition by 'plus', if it can be demonstrated that Jones means addition by 'plus' by using only F and basic logical principles. On the other hand, in order for F to determine ontologically that Jones means addition by 'plus', it is enough that it be impossible for F to be the case and, at the same time, that Jones does not mean addition by 'plus'.

In what sense does Quine claim that translation is not determined by any possible facts? Before we try to answer this question it is useful to recall Quine's thesis about underdetermination of scientific theory. In *Word and Object* Quine wrote:

[Molecular behavior is not determined by the behavior of ordinary things] even if we include all past, present, and future irritations of all the far-flung surfaces of mankind, and probably even if we throw in an in fact unachieved ideal organon of scientific method besides. (WO 22)

Quine's point here is that scientific theory is not determined by all possible evidence together with an ideal organon of scientific method. This is what we might call epistemic underdetermination; our theories about molecular behavior are not derivable from all possible evidence along with some ideal methodological principle. Is the relation between surface irritations and molecular behavior then contingent? Quine would say "No". He would maintain that this relation is in accordance with strict principles of nature. So, there are facts of the matter about molecular behavior, the problem is just that surface irritations do not reveal them.

Quine's thesis about indeterminacy of translation goes further than underdetermination of scientific theory. Not only are translation hypotheses epistemically underdetermined, they are also ontologically underdetermined. It is not that our surface irritations do not reveal certain facts – there are no facts to be revealed. Quine's reason for this strong thesis is his belief that any fact that is relevant to translation must be accessible to the child learning the language, and hence be observable. And since no observable facts determine translation, no facts at all determine translation.

This brings us to a point on which Quine has often been criticized, namely his behaviorism. The principle that facts that are relevant for translation must be observable, excludes certain facts that, according to Quine's critics, can determine translation. In this direction are Michael Friedman's remarks in his paper "Physicalism and the Indeterminacy of Translation".

[the causal theory of reference] contrasts with the Quinean skeptical approach according to which the only semantically relevant physical relations between words and non-linguistic entities relate our uses of words to sensory stimulations, stimulus meanings. Since different referents can yield the same stimulus meanings, we end up with the doctrine of inscrutability of reference.⁷

What is the alternative to Quine's behaviorism? Friedman suggests that there could be non-behavioral physical facts that determine reference. These facts would be hidden in the sense that they would not tell us, in overt circumstances at least, that we were referring to one thing rather than some other.

Let's now turn to Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein and see what he would say about the relevance of hidden facts for the determination of meaning. According to Kripke's Wittgenstein it is a basic requirement for any meaning determining fact that it must somehow 'tell' me how to apply expressions in new circumstances. But it seems rather obvious that for a fact to tell a speaker how to apply expressions it must be observable or somehow readily knowable. But hidden facts do not tell me anything. Kripke's Wittgenstein would argue that a fact that determined my responses without 'telling' me how to respond would not justify my

⁷ Michael Friedman, "Physicalism and Indeterminacy of Translation", *Noûs*, Vol. 9, No. 4 1975.

response. Such a hidden fact is, in that respect, no better than, say, my brute dispositions. Whether or not it somehow determines what my response would be, I cannot point to it in defeating the skeptic.

It seems then that both Quine and Kripke's Wittgenstein are talking about a similar kind of determination. We might perhaps, without too much simplification, attribute the following principle about meaning determination for sentences to Quine.

(D1) A set of facts F determines that a sentence S means the same as P iff the sentence $\lceil S$ means the same as $P \rceil$ is derivable *a priori* from F ,

where ' S ' and ' P ' are names of a sentences. Principles about predicate application would be similar.

In Quine's case the problem is that no fact determines how to correlate a sentence in one language with a sentence in another. In the case of Kripke's Wittgenstein the problem is that no fact determines how a certain individual should respond. The corresponding principle would be something like this:

(D2) A set of facts F determines that an individual I means that p by S iff the sentence $\lceil I$ means that p by $S \rceil$ is derivable *a priori* from F .

The crucial thing is that meaning determination – be it determination of translation or speaker's meaning – consists in *a priori* derivability.

Scott Soames has complained that this notion of determination is not consistent with Quine's physicalism.⁸ Quine holds that chemical facts are determined by physical facts even if we cannot derive chemical facts *a priori* from physical facts. The determination relation between physical facts and chemical facts would be that the latter supervene somehow on the former; they are ontologically determined even if they are not *a priori* determined. It appears then that Quine uses two notions of determination, *a priori* determination when he says that no facts determine translation, ontological determination when he argues for his physicalism. But does this threaten the validity of Quine's reasoning? As such, there is nothing wrong with using different notions of determination for different subject matters. The issue boils down to the plausibility of Quine's behaviorism, as Quine readily admits.

Critics have said that the thesis [of indeterminacy of translation] is a consequence of my behaviorism. Some have said that it is a *reductio ad absurdum* of my behaviorism. I disagree with this second point, but I agree with the first. I hold further that the behaviorist approach is mandatory. In psychology one may or may not be a behaviorist, but in linguistics one has no choice. (PT 37-38)

In Kripke's Wittgenstein's approach, similar questions about the idea of determination can be raised. Why could it not be a primitive fact that I mean one thing rather than some other? Such a primitive fact could determine my use of certain words in the sense of ontological determination. Kripke's Wittgenstein would not have to reject that the notion of ontological determination is intelligible, for, as Quine, he can hold that different notions of determination

⁸ Scott Soames, "Scepticism about Meaning: Indeterminacy, Normativity and the Rule-Following Paradox", *Meaning and Reference*, Ali A. Kazmi ed., Calgary 1998.

apply to different subject matters. In particular he might hold that ones dispositions are ontologically determined by some physical facts. But he would argue – or insist – that a set of facts does not determine that someone means one thing rather than some other by a certain expression unless it is an *a priori* consequence of those facts; i.e. he would argue – or insist – that if there are facts that determine meaning they must do so by way of *telling* us how to apply expressions in new circumstances.

There seem then to be four fundamental points about which Quine and Kripke's Wittgenstein agree: (i) they reject the notion of truth condition as an explanatory notion, (ii) they hold that the basic facts about meaning are facts about communal agreement, (iii) they also hold that there are no primitive semantic facts, and (iv) for non-intentional facts to determine an intentional fact, the latter must be derivable *a priori* from the former.

II. Alleged differences

Despite these important similarities, these two approaches are in many ways different. It is, however, not clear what these differences amount to. There are obvious methodological differences, but are there also substantial differences between these two approaches? Are these approaches perhaps incompatible?

Kripke identifies three differences between his understanding of Wittgenstein and Quine's theses. The first involves Quine's behaviorism and Wittgenstein's extensive introspective experiments, the second is that Quine formulates problems about meaning as problems about dispositions to behavior without touching on the normative character of meaning, and the third, which I will not discuss, is about Quine's concern about the degree to which even infallible and unlimited dispositions determine interpretation. (K 56-57)

Quine's insistence on behaviorism and Wittgenstein's extensive introspective experiments show an obvious difference between the two. But I think that this difference is neither as radical nor as important as sometimes is thought. Even in *Word and Object* Quine considers non-behavioristic facts and argues that they will not make any difference to the indeterminacy of translation:

. . . one can protest still that the sentence and its translations all correspond to some identical even though unknown neural condition in the bilingual. Now let us grant that; it is only to say that the bilingual has his own private semantic correlation – in effect his private implicit system of analytical hypotheses – and that it is somehow in his nerves. My point remains; for my point is that another bilingual could have a semantic correlation incompatible with the first bilingual's without deviating from the first bilingual in his speech dispositions within either language, except in his dispositions to translate. (WO 74)

This quote is not meant to be a justification for Quine's behaviorism. He is just answering the stubborn objection that bilinguals will certainly make the *right* correlations in virtue of their physical properties. But what kind of behaviorist is Quine? Quine's emphasis is on *describing* what words a child learns first, how it learns words, etc. or how a radical translator could proceed. Here Quine's emphasis is on the kind of evidence available to someone learning a language. Since the evidence in the case of, say, the child consists wholly of observable facts and

the child grows up to be as much an authority on correct use of the language as any other, Quine concludes that non-observable facts cannot add any relevant information about linguistic meaning.

There is nothing in linguistic meaning, then, beyond what is to be gleaned from overt behavior in overt circumstances.⁹

This does not mean that Quine endorses the verificationistic claim that the meaning of a declarative sentence is reduced to the mode of verifying it. That is a reductionism about meaning which Quine would never accept. Quine's point is rather that the evidence sufficient for learning an expression of one's own language, or for correlating an expression in a target language with an expression in the home language, cannot be anything over and above what is observable. This does not mean that Quine denies the existence of what is not observable, only that facts that are not observable in 'overt circumstances' are irrelevant as far as linguistic meaning goes.

How does all this square with Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein? There are three points in Kripke's interpretation that are relevant here: (i) the demand for outward criteria, (ii) the 'look, don't think' principle, i.e. the methodological principle that we should not argue *a priori* what meaning attributing statements ought to play, rather we should observe what circumstances actually license such statements and what role they play, (K 86-87) and (iii) the basic condition on a meaning determining fact that it must somehow *tell* me how to apply the expressions of the language. (K 11)

As Kripke notes, Wittgenstein does not assume at the beginning of his discussion that an inner process stands in need of an outward criteria, he deduces it towards the end, and the role of this principle (in Kripke's interpretation) is, therefore, significantly different from that of Quine's behaviorism. But the 'look, don't think' principle and the basic requirement for a fact to determine meaning are premisses. The question is whether they amount to some sort of behaviorism in Quine's sense. The 'look, don't think' principle does not determine what facts will be relevant and, in particular, it does not exclude non-observational facts. Looking need not mean looking with bare eyes. But the 'look, don't think' principle together with the basic principle that meaning determining facts should tell us how to apply expressions gives us, I believe, something close to behaviorism in Quine's sense. Facts that are not observable in 'overt circumstances' will not be able to tell us anything about how to apply expressions in actual circumstances and, hence, they will not be able to justify our language use. So, even if non-behavioral facts are not excluded from the outset, they are almost immediately thrown out.¹⁰

It appears then that Quine's insistence on behaviorism and Wittgenstein's extensive introspective experiments do not indicate as crucial a difference between these two approaches as is sometimes thought. It is a difference in appearance (and perhaps in application as well) rather than substance.

⁹ "Indeterminacy of Translation Again", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 84 1987, p. 5.

¹⁰ I have not dealt with the question whether introspection, as Wittgenstein uses it, could add *something* even if that would not go as far as to determine translation.

The normativity requirement

The most important difference, according to Kripke, between his interpretation of Wittgenstein and Quine's proposals is that Quine leaves no room for the normative character of the notion of meaning. Kripke writes:

The fundamental problem, as I have stated it earlier, is different [from Quine's fundamental problem]: whether my actual dispositions are 'right' or not, is there anything that mandates what they *ought* to be? Since Quine formulates the issues dispositionally, this problem cannot be stated within his framework. (K 57)

Kripke does not say whether this should be seen as a defect in Quine's approach. Dirk Koppelberg does, on the other hand, say explicitly that this shows a serious problem for Quine.

Kripke's stress on the normativity of meaning marks an important contrast between Quine and Kripkenstein. I am not quite clear as to how Quine would or could react to it.¹¹

The reason behind this complaint seems all too obvious, namely Quine's understanding of language as "the complex of present dispositions to verbal behavior, in which speakers of the same language have perforce come to resemble one another ..." (WO 27). According to this understanding, a description of a language would be exhausted by a description of the verbal dispositions of speakers of that language, and there seems to be no room for normative judgments. There is no standard in virtue of which we could say that even if the speakers have a disposition to do one thing rather than another, say to reply '125' to '68 + 57', they should do something else; there is no room to say that someone used a term wrongly. But normativity is at the heart of Kripke's understanding of Wittgenstein; a basic condition on a meaning determining fact is that it should tell me how I ought to reply in the future, whether or not I am disposed to reply that way.

Dirk Koppelberg concludes that Kripke's understanding of Wittgenstein and Quine's approach are incompatible because there is no room for the normative character of the notion of meaning within Quine's framework.¹² Koppelberg then raises the further question how Quine would or could react to this complaint. He suggests that Quine could respond in either of two ways: first, he could try to modify his dispositional account or, second, he might doubt that the normativity requirement is well defined by questioning whether there is 'a clear-cut demarcation between the correct and the incorrect use of a word or between understanding or misunderstanding a linguistic expression'. (342) Koppelberg then quotes a passage from Quine's *Pursuit of Truth* which he takes to be indicative of the latter option.

I'll come to the passage from *Pursuit of Truth* later, now I want to argue that the normativity requirement does not show that the two approaches are incompatible. This may look like an

¹¹ Dirk Koppelberg, "Skepticism about Semantic Facts", *On Quine: New Essays*, P. Leonardi and M. Santambrogio eds., New York 1995., p. 342.

¹² P.M.S. Hacker makes a similar point regarding the differences between Quine and later Wittgenstein: "Quine quotes the Wittgensteinian dictum 'Don't ask for the maning, ask for the use' with approval, construing the 'use' as mere behaviour, and concluding: 'Well, we can take the behaviour, the use, and let the meaning go' ... But 'the use' of an expression, for Wittgenstein, signifies not merely behaviour, but rule-governed behaviour or, more generally, behaviour subject to standards of correctness". (*Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Philosophy*, Blackwell 1996, p. 207f.)

unlikely task in the face of the glaring fact that Quine does not give a normative account of the notion of meaning – in his extensive writings on meaning he rarely, if at all, raises questions about normativity. But to see how this can be, we must make clear what the main aims of Quine and Kripke's Wittgenstein are and the role of the normativity requirement in the latter's approach.

Quine's thought experiment of radical translation is meant to show what we, in our home language, can say about the meanings of expressions in a target language. Quine does not raise questions about the meanings of expressions in the home language at the initial stage and neither does he question the appropriateness of independent utterances of the speakers of the target language. The question that Quine wants to answer is the following:

Q1 What justifies using one expression of our home language rather than some other as a translation of an expression of a target language?

Kripke's Wittgenstein is, on the other hand, not concerned with semantic relations between languages, but with the attribution of meaning to utterances of speakers in a community. So, Kripke's Wittgenstein's central question becomes:

Q2 What justifies the attribution of one meaning rather than some other to an individual's utterance?

These are very different questions. One questions the uniqueness of an interpretation of an alien language, the other questions the attribution of a certain intention to an individual.

The normativity requirement was that if I wanted to be consistent with my previous usage of an expression, say 'plus', then I ought to do one thing rather than some other when applying that expression, say reply '125' rather than '5' to the question '68 + 57?'. But as unquestionable as this may seem, in Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein there is no room for such a requirement for the speech community itself.

According to Kripke's Wittgenstein, the normativity requirement is necessary to distinguish between someone following a rule and someone acting at random. The point is that without a fact that would tell me how I ought to apply an expression in new cases I could not justify my novel applications of it. The thrust of the skeptical paradox was that as long as we consider an individual in isolation we cannot meet this requirement; nothing about my mental or physical state justifies my attribution of one meaning rather than some other to my utterances, and, hence, nothing about my mental or physical state justifies the claim that if I want to be consistent with my previous language usage, then I ought to do one thing rather than some other. The skeptical solution accepted this conclusion, but met the normativity requirement by considering the individual as a member of a certain community of speakers. But the nature of the community is left indeterminate. We might, perhaps, justify an attribution of a particular meaning to certain expressions by integrating the community of speakers whose expression it is into yet another community. So, we might justify an attribution of a certain meaning to a community of scientists by integrating it into a community of speakers of a certain language. But ultimately we reach a level where no such justification is possible, and we cannot say that the community ought to mean one thing rather than some other by an expression. If this is right, no normativity requirement can be applied to the whole community and the best we can do is,

perhaps, to describe how expressions are actually used in the community; i.e. describe the individuals' dispositions to verbal behavior and the standards for accepting individuals into the community. The former is what the radical translator tries to do, the latter is the task of the lexicographer.

Understanding and misunderstanding

Kripke's Wittgenstein maintains that my understanding of a term determines how I ought to use it in the future. So, in particular, if I understand that 'plus' stands for addition, this would uniquely determine how I ought to reply to any problem of the form ' $x + y$ '. In this sense there are strict boundaries between understanding and misunderstanding. This is perhaps what Koppelberg has in mind when he interprets the following excerpt from Quine's *Pursuit of Truth* as questioning the availability of such boundaries.¹³

Lexicography has no need for synonymy . . . and it has no need of sharp distinction between understanding and misunderstanding either. The lexicographer's job is to improve his reader's understanding of expressions, but he can get on with that without drawing a boundary. He does what he can, within a limited compass, to adjust the reader's verbal behavior to that of the community as a whole, or of some preferred quarter of it. The adjustment is a matter of degree, and a vague one: a matter of fluency and effectiveness of dialogue. (*PT* 59)

I think that Koppelberg misunderstands the whole point of this passage and, far from being a rejection of Kripke's Wittgenstein's claim, fits nicely into the skeptical solution.

What would it mean if the lexicographer could draw boundaries, if he could draw sharp distinctions between understanding and misunderstanding? Let's consider the original skeptical challenge. We want to say that someone who replies '5' to ' $68 + 57$ ' has misunderstood the '+' symbol, whereas someone who replies '125' has probably understood it, and in general, there is a uniquely determined answer for any two arguments. In this sense, there are clear cut boundaries between understanding and misunderstanding. But any finite formulation of a standard for correct use will leave the meaning of the '+' symbol underdetermined. The problem arises because of the infinity of the addition table and the fact that the criterion for correct use must be finite. It should be obvious from the discussion of the skeptical paradox, especially Wittgenstein's well known claim that an interpretation cannot determine meaning, that any such attempt will be incomplete. The lexicographer cannot hope to do any better than describe the standards of the community of speakers for accepting someone as a member and these standards do not determine the meaning of the expressions of the language.

If the lexicographer could draw sharp boundaries between understanding and misunderstanding, then Kripke's skeptical paradox would have a straight solution. When challenged by the skeptic, I could just point to the lexicographer's entry for 'plus' and say: See, that is and was my understanding of the plus sign! But, Kripke argues that such a solution is not available. So what then is the role of the lexicographer? We could say that the lexicographer's job is to compose a handbook of how to get accepted into a community of speakers, i.e. "to adjust the reader's verbal behavior to that of the community" as Quine puts it.

¹³ [Include a quote for Koppelberg] See his "Scepticism about Semantic Facts", p. 342.

From this it should be clear that Quine's understanding of the lexicographer's job, so far from being a rejection of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein, is in perfect coherence with it.

III. Concluding remarks

What I have been arguing is that (i) Quine's commitment to behaviorism and Wittgenstein's introspective experiments, and (ii) the emphasis on normativity in Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein and the utter absence of such requirements in Quine's philosophy, do not show any deep disagreement between their views on language. On the contrary, despite these differences, these two approaches are consistent with one another.

If the facts of the matter of meaning attribution are just facts about fluency of conversation or membership in a community and not anything about mental states, what does it mean to say that I know what I mean by a particular predicate? I think that both Quine and Kripke's Wittgenstein would give similar answers: "I know what I mean by a predicate if I know how to use the predicate." And the criterion for correct use is just fluency of conversation, as Quine would say, or, following Kripke's Wittgenstein, conformity with a certain linguistic community. Knowledge of meaning depends then, according to this view, on practical knowledge of how to use expressions, not on theoretical knowledge nor on conscious engagement with either properties or truth conditions.

Ólafur Páll Jónsson
Department of Philosophy
Nýja Garði
University of Iceland
101 Reykjavík
Iceland

opj@hi.is