Chapter VI

Conclusion

My thesis eschews discussions on theories of truth itself. So far, this thesis has been examining the conditions in which truth or truths is/are determined. The problem of truth is in fact the most fundamental concern in most philosophical discussions. Truth is conceived to be the pivot upon which the notions or concepts of knowledge and belief are hinged. Eventually, discussions on the problem of truth will often impinge on the problems of faith and perception.

The word 'truth' itself is found to be problematic. Sometimes, it means the mystical or transcendental entity; in this case the word always begins with the capital letter T. (To mystics, the letter T looks like the cross, and the fact that it looks like the cross somehow confirms the validity of their belief - their Truth.) Truth is sometimes taken to mark a certain state of mentality. Often the word denotes relation between language and what is in the world called 'facts'. And quite often truth is believed to consist in relations of coherence among a set of beliefs. Signification of repeated success is also held to be a realization of truth. Lastly, it occurred in history that the word was fixed to a human individual unique being: Jesus Christ once claimed that he was the truth. After all, in philosophy, there are more than one theories of truth.

The fact that there are more than one theories of truth has an impact on the notion of knowledge. Since the general

concept of knowledge is that knowledge is "justified true belief", the fact of there being several accepted theories of truth entails that there are several accepted kinds of knowledge. The positivists, however, hold that only the scientific knowledge which applies the correspondence theory of truth is cognitive and valid knowledge. All the works of other enterprises, i.e. literature, are just expressions of attitudes which are matters of emotion or tend to be emotive. The difference between them merely consists in the differences of modes of expression. Their strategy is a logical analysis of language, having the principle of verification as the criterion or the basis of their theory of meaning. However, as a matter of fact, positivism flourished only in a short period and has been declined. And my thesis proposes to defend the view that literary art can be said to be a source of knowledge. My thesis's purport may be expressed in Herbert Read's words when he stated : "In the end I do not distinguish between science and art except as regards method. Both provide us with a view of reality and both are indispensable to a complete understanding of the universe".[1]

In fact, the central aim of the positivists is to distinguish between science and non-science or, in other words, between scientific knowledge and non-scientific knowledge. But the positivists, besides failing to recognize the grains of truth and the epistemic attribution of the non-scientific kinds

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[1]Quoted in Catherine Wilson, "Literature and Knowledge", in _Philosophy_, Ibid., p. 489.

of belief which is handed down from the ancient generations, were confused and were led to confound the notion of non-scientific belief with the notion of basic attitude. Beliefs, as it is recognized, have cognitive contents and can be justified as true or false; whereas justification and the notion of truth or falsity is not relevant to attitude. Although John Doe has realized that the rich are not happier than the poor, John Doe may still work hard in order to be rich; and he cannot be said to have a false attitude. It is irrelevant to truth or falsity of the logical sense whether Beethoven's or the modern Rock is more beautiful. But the case of literature is different from that of the attitude. Wellek noted that the whole controversy would appear, in large measure, semantic.[2] We use the same words whose meanings consist in different paradigms.

My thesis contends that whatever literature is it is something more than mere expression of the basic attitude. With the analysis of the language of metaphor which is regarded to be an essential feature of literature, my thesis proposes a better or clearer view for the recognition of the distinction between statements which express an attitude and statements which has an epistemic attribution. Statements which have an epistemic attribution are those which have or are uttered from an epistemic perspective. In the analysis of the language of metaphor, it is found in this research that the understanding or the apprehension

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[2]Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 2d ed., p.34.

of meanings and references depends on having the right or the
same perspective.

For example, to understand Quine's statement "My desk is
a swarm of vibrating molecules", we must also perceive that
Quine looks at his desk through a microscope, thus having a per-
spective. And the difference between this statement and that if
Quine would say "My desk (perhaps the same desk) is painted con-
crete although it seems to be made of wood" lies in that the
later has a different perspective, not because the later has no
epistemic attribution. Both denote Quine's acts of discovery.

But it is diverse or of a different matter if Quine
would say "My desk, despite of being old and having been used by
two generations, suits me better than Carnap's desk". The posi-
tivists did not stipulate or clarify the meaning of their term
"attitude", but it seems clear that this positivistic attitude
of the relegation of poetry, or literature in general, to atti-
tude may be traced back as being influenced by Plato when he
said 'literature is the music for the soul'. But it is diverse
in the case of Plato; for Plato, all kinds of education, except
for the 'gymnastic for the body', are the 'music for the soul'.

The premises of the positivists are that, firstly,
literature has the same origin with metaphysics, and, secondly,
while metaphysics is meaningless because it is ununderstandable
to the positivists, (in their words, the metaphysicians 'fail to
make us understand') literature or poetry is meaningless in the
sense that poetry has no real reference in the perceptible world.
Poetry or literature, to the positivists, is like music : both

assert or state nothing. And, to the positivists, the artists employ the right or proper modes of expression. Unlike the metaphysicians, the artists do not compose their works in the form of a theory in which the values must be judged in terms of truth or falsity.

The question of truth in literature is an old question. In philosophy, Plato was documentally said to be the first who raised the question, or in fact, it was Plato who first uttered a banishment against the artists. Plato was often referred by later philosophers as being hostile to artists, when the philosophers came to discuss the problem of truth in literature.

My thesis finds that in Plato's view literature can be either true or false. And that not all artists should be banished. The proper reference should be "Plato banished some artists". And why those artists should be banished because they compose false literature, they commit an act of telling lies. Telling lies, for Plato, means corrupting the minds of the young of the State. Notably, the banishment of the artists (those some artists) is related to the process of the education of the citizens of the State. Namely, false literature, or lies in the strong sense, diverses the people's minds, it involves the obstruction to the way in which the State is idealized to steer her citizens towards, in Plato's words, the ideal beauty or in another word, to the truth. In short, Plato is concerned with the establishment of an ideal, healthy or perfect state.

It is crucial that a better recognition of Plato's epistemology is required in order to acquire a clearer recognition

of Plato's view of truth. In Plato's employment of the term truth, the word is assigned with more than one senses. This is due to his metaphysics and epistemology. In Popper's terms, Plato holds the position which adopts both optimistic and pessimistic epistemologies. In Plato's view, truth is manifest. Truth is something outside our minds, something other than a certain state of our mentality. Truth is not a product of our conceptual or mental construction or the projection of our any mentally or conceptually constructed reality. It is possible for man to approach truth. In this sense Plato's epistemology is optimistic. Plato is also considered to have a pessimistic epistemology in the sense that he holds that it is not that all men who can behold the truth, but only some people - or, the true philosophers, in his words. Thus; for artists to tell truths, the truths must be prescribed by the true philosophers.

In short, the notion of truth, in Plato's view, even in the sense of the correspondence between language and facts is related to or depends on the recognition or perception of truth in the transcendental or the metaphysical sense. That is -- that a statement will be true or false is determined by whether or not it violates the transcendental truth as perceived by the true philosophers who belong to a special category of minds and who have reason as the integral instrument for cutting open the way to truth. Looked from a sociological point of view, it is suggested that the problem might be better understood if we recognize the social milieu, the historical, literary circumstance and the poetic genre of Plato's age. However, truth of the Platonic sense is highly obscure.

The point that some artists, particularly some poets, are regarded as liars is repeated again two thousand years later by David Hume. But to Hume all poets are liars. Hume, however, denies the legitimacy of poets' contribution to the body of knowledge from a different ground. Plato denies some poets on the ground of his metaphysics and epistemology. But Hume denies all poets from his own arbitrariness, or on a nihilistic ground. My thesis contends that Hume's denial of the legitimacy of poets to truth-claim is self-defeating since if Hume is consistent with his scepticism, he has no firm ground on which he can say that all poets or any people of a certain practice are liars. If lying means deceiving or distorting or distracting the audience from knowing the truth, then Hume's statement that poets are liars implies that Hume knows the truth. A sceptic like Hume is warranted to say merely, in this case, that 'poets tell something and they don't know whether their tales are true or false or a matter beyond the realm of truth or falsity'. It is contended in this thesis that Hume, to be consistent with his scepticism, is not justified to proceed from the recognition of some poets' ignorance of the epistemic values of their own works to the conclusion that all poets are liars.

My thesis regards the section "Metaphor and human knowledge" as the core of the research. On the general assumption[*] that the language of metaphor is one of the essential features of

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[*]The positivists also appreciate this assumption. Both Carnap and Ayer say that the poetic language is metaphorical language.

literature , this thesis contends that literature, in the context
when it is considered to have some contribution to the whole
body of human knowledge, does contain cognitive values. The
metaphoric language is not mere decorative language or language
without epistemic attribution. It is pointed out in my thesis
that some metaphors do contain what may be respected as 'grains
of truth". Mataphors are prevalent and pervasive in poetry or
literature, therefore, literature contains grains os truth re-
gardless of whether or not the poets claim to assert truths in
their works.

There is a growing recognition among philosophers that
it is often true that the speakers sometimes fail to recognize
meanings of their own utterances. J.R. Searle in his Expression
and Meaning agreed that there are some real references in some
pieces of literature,[3] and that metaphor gives us two ideas at
one time.[4] Scheffler ended his chapter on metaphor noting that:
"The process of finding out more about one's own meaning and
finding out more about the owrld are, however, one and the same."[5]
A. Kaplan once wrote in his paper "Referential meaning in the arts"
that : "A metaphor does not record the characters of things
already noted as applying to them : it invites the interpreter

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[3]John R. Searle, Expression and Meaning, (Cambridge :
Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 72.

[4]Ibid., p. 116.

[5]Israel Scheffler, Beyond the Letter, (London :
Routledge, 1979), p. 130.

to make the discovery for himself".[6]

In this research, I find that it is the paradigm which determines what is and is not metaphor as well as it ascribes truth-values to statements occurring in it. My prime cases which serve as the counter-examples for a dinial of the emotive theory of metaphor are these two statements : that "The earth is a planet", and that "The people (the primitive inhabitants) on the land (the American continent) are the Indians." Each of these two examples gives a contrast point by which a better view of what is metaphor is presented and realized. The former case is not a metaphor when the statement is uttered in the 20th century language, but it would be regarded as a metaphor if it was uttered in the pre-Copernicus language. Contrarily, the later case is a metaphor in the 20th century language, whereas it is not a metaphor in the Columbus language. In the present-day language, the statement "The earth is a planet" is verifiable and justified to have a truth-value as being 'true', whereas the later according to the positivist view of metaphor would lose its status of the statements which have a truth-value. However, these two statements are not actually recognized as metaphors. They are my inventions which function as an instrument which reflects a clearer view of what is metaphor as it breaks the mystery or ambiguity of the linguistic phenomenon of metaphor just as the prism breaks the sunlight. Truth-values are hidden

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[6] Abraham Kaplan, "Referential meaning in the arts", in Aesthetic Inquiry, edited by Monroe C. Beardsley and Herbert M. Schueller, (Belmont: Dickenson Pub. Co., 1967), p. 118.

in the metaphor just as colours are hidden in the colourless
sunlight.

The two examples above are considered to be cases of
metaphor because they have a metaphoric process, or they come
into being in the metaphoric process. In other words, their
forms are metaphors, they have the form of metaphor. The juxta-
position of words in the two sentences is metaphoric: the prima-
ry subject and the secondary subject (or the compliment) are
conceived to belong to different natural families or kinds. In
particular, the words 'the earth' and 'planet' in the pre-Coper-
nicus language was believed to refer to things which belong to
different natural families or kinds. This commitment may be seen
to extend the concept of metaphor to that of the model, but in
practice or in reality when we refer to something as 'man' or
'crocodile' or 'snake' we commit the reference not because we
know its essentiality or particularity or uniqueness but we put
'that something' in a natural family or a category on the ground
that we know its model, we perceive its appearance. It is con-
tended in this thesis that this discovery about the linguistic
phenomenon of metaphor has an impact on our notions of a few
fundamental concepts or entities in philosophy: they are
'reference', 'perception', 'substance', 'essence', 'appearance'
and 'reality'. This thesis is not meant to go so far as to
discuss these topics. This is only a discovery of a fact that
the problem of truth in literature has its roots in these philo-
sophical problems. The discussion of truth in literature will
eventually involves these fundamental concepts.

In the light of this discovery about metaphor, we are brought to realize that it is not essentially true that the language of metaphor is not referential. An act of refering does not consist only of the ability of making an utterance of a correspondence between a word or language and particular part of the world but also of an ability to identify the referent or the object of that reference. Concerning the capacity of using language, a man is different from a radio or a tape-recorder or a computer in that he is not deprived of the ability of making identification. Concerning the problem of reference and truth in literature, my thesis contends that we cannot leave out the factor or the problem of identify and identification. My point is that the earth (the solid world beneath our feet) was not identified to be a referent in the extension of the reference by the term 'planet'. The pre-Copernicus language speaking people failed to identify the earth as a planet. But their failure does not imply that the earth did not exist in the pre-Copernicus time. Nor does it imply that the earth is not a referent of the term 'planet'. Literally, our reference by the term 'man' is extended to cover every man - including those we never have a glimse of and even those who have ceased to exist and those who have not come into existence yet.

In the light of the fact that the earth was a referent of the term 'planet' although it was not recognized or identified as a planet, we are brought to recognize that there is a distinction between two essential features of reference : one is the case that a word or a gesture has its corresponding object or objects, the other case consists in the ability to identify the

the referent or the object being referred to. My radio can
fulfill the first requirement, 80% of its words does have cor-
responding objects. But understanding the reference in a lan-
guage requires more than just as what a radio can do. It can't
be said that the radio commits a complete task of referring
which is identical with understanding its own reference.
Moreover, referring is not essentially human and linguistic.
There is a fact that the dumb somehow succeed in their communi-
cation because they can identify the meaning or the reference
of their partner. The police-dogs can speak no word, but they
are better than men at the identification of the criminal, they
are better at referring to the proper person who is connected
with an action. In reality, the fact that we cannot find the
referent for our word 'criminal' does not imply that the criminal
does not exist. It implies only that we fail to identify our
referent.

My thesis does not state that the correspondence theory
of truth is inadequate. This thesis only points out that the
positivists, when they apply the correspondence theory to the
question of truth in literature, fail to recognize the task of
identification which constitutes the act of referring. That
referential identification is not essentially linguistic. The
radio may be better at giving long series of words corresponding
to (describing) the criminal, his situations and actions. But
it is the dog that gives the actual identification and thus the
actual reference. My whole point is that although it might be
true that a poet may give a verbal testimony confessing that he
refers to nothing in his poetry, his verbal testimony does not

imply that the referents denoted by the referential words in his
work do not exist just as that the speaker's failure to identify
the earth as a referent in his term 'planet' in the pre-Copernicus
language does not imply that the earth does not exist. In short,
it is pointed out in my thesis to distinguish between reference
and the discovery of the referent or referents. In principle,
the poet's words do refer just as the term 'man' is conceived to
cover even the deceased and the coming existence, but the readers
have to discover the referents by themselves.

The case of the mistake in reference about the primitive
inhabitants of America helps illuminate the point of the relation
between reference and identification. The point of the inter-
weaving between reference and identification is seen clearer in
this later case. The word 'Indian' was given to Columbus with
an affirmation of or a belief in the existence of the referents
of the term. The reference was given to him prior to his
knowledge of or his acquaintance with the referents. He was
right in his theory of navigation, that getting to India could
be pursued by going in the other direction. But he was wrong in
his fixing the reference. He commited a mistake in fixing the
term 'Indian' to the people who are not the Indian. Obviously,
he failed to identify the referents of the term 'Indian'. In
other words, he committed a mistake in his identification of
the corresponding objects of the word 'Indian'. The point is
that why we recognize that the statement is a mistake (which is
accepted to have a truth-value - and, thus, that the understanding
of the statement is cognitive not just emotive) is that because
we have a knowledge of the real Indians or the corresponding

objects of the word, or the state-of-affair for which the word
is originally meant. Conclusively, reference involves identifi-
cation.

The point above signifies that what is in a paradigm
regarded as a metaphor may be considered as a mistake or a true
statement in other paradigms. The factor which is the determi-
nant is that each has a different epistemic perspective. It is
found in this analysis of the linguistic phenomenon of metaphor
that metaphors are not merely expression of attitude. A metaphor
is respected to have an epistemic attribution since it has an
epistemic perspective. However, this remark involves transcen-
dentalism. The whole contention is meant to give a justification
for the view that poetic metaphors have or contain epistemic or
cognitive values. Namely, for some people, i.e. mystics,
Shakespeare's metaphor "Life is but a walking shadow" does have
an epistemic attribution and a cognitive value. This thesis
points out to distinguish between referring and identifying the
referent (or referents) which consists in the discovery of the
corresponding object (or objects). Failures to identify the
poetic referents do not imply that the referents do not exist
just as that we fail to see colours in the colourless sunlight
does not imply that there is no colour in the sunlight.

This novel recognition about metaphor, with more atten-
tion to semanticism, leads to a better recognition of the ontolo-
gical aspect of our ancient literary legacy, for example, the
epic Ramayana. In the epic, there are three different natural
families of beings that are involved in the battle. They are the
gods or in Thai "เทพ", the ravans or "ยักษ์", and the monkeys

or "วานร". All these three words have synonyms, which I think when considered all together are very significant with respect to their metaphysical and epistemic attribution. Their synonyms are "สุริย", "อสุริย", and "กระบี่" respectively. The significance is that all these words are in a respect metaphorical. The word "สุริย" means "the sun", or – to take the term as a synecdoche – "part of the sun, or that which belongs to the sun. "The word "อสุริย", then, means "not of the sun, that which does not belong to the sun". As for "กระบี่", the word means a "weapon". In other words, all the "วานร" or "กระบี่" are soldiers of the gods or the "สุริย". According to the epic, the วานร themselves are the สุริย who descend from "heaven" and take the "form" of "วานร". Thus, the epic Ramayana is a battle between the สุริย on one side and the อสุริย on the other side. Apparently, this recognition of the semantic aspect of the epic somehow portrays or presents a picture of the world. And this finding has some connection with Jesus Christ's metaphors of "the lost sheep" and "snake" and "wolve". What he said in Mathew 10 : 34-39 implies that the world is a battle-field.

The remark, I contend, in the light of my thesis, has an epistemic attribution in that it evokes our realization of the ontological aspect of the ancient intellectual legacy. In the light of this remark we find that the epic does speak something about the solar system and the universe. At least, it reveals that the literary work is not just an emotional result. My thesis does not state that the epic Ramayana or every piece of literature is true. This thesis only contends that we cannot say that the work has no referents or cognitive values. And

that why we think the epic has no cognitive value is because we
suffer from our failure to find and identify the referents, a
failure which sometimes results from lack of understanding of
what the words or the "codes" really mean. My thesis states
that our failure involves such concepts or notions as
"appearance and reality", and "substance and essence". Mostly,
the ancient literary works were composed by mystics. Mystics
even say that we suffer from the limitation of our sense-
perceptions.

It is rather the individual's conceptual scheme and
mental state than the truth-value which determines whether a
statement is cognitive or meaningful or not. The conceptual
scheme functions as a context of a background against which the
statement occurring in an appropriate mental state is judged as
to whether it has a cognitive value. Namely, it is not that
Carnap knows that the statement "มีข้อเท็จจริงประการหนึ่งที่รับรู้กันอยู่ในหมู่
มนุษย์บางคนแห่งสุริยจักรวาลว่า มีอสรพิษมาเที่ยวเทศนาสั่งสอนสุริยธรรม"
is cognitive because Carnap has been told by some authority that
the statement is true whereas he does not know Thai. A language
itself is a conceptual scheme. Language extends our perceptions
as well as it enlarges our perceptual sphere of reference. The
statement above will not be meaningless if it is translated into
the language of the positivists' conceptual scheme. But some
artists are not willing to do so. The question as to why the
artists are not willing to do so consists in the question :
"What is aesthetic expression?" The condition of the mental
state is important too for understanding and knowing the truth.
A Thai literary scholar will not understand the above statement

if he is asleep.

At any rate, the fact that the artists are not willing
to translate his language into the language of our conceptual
scheme does not imply that they tell us nothing. Equally,
understanding some meanings of the verbal utterances does not
imply knowing the truth of the artists' statements since the
matter of knowing whether a statement is true is other thing
from understanding the statements. My point is that some
artists, especially the ancient poets and mystics, have their
own language and conceptual scheme although their language
seems to be the one and the same with our language. Jesus and
his language is regarded to be the prime case. The difficulty
has its root in that each conceptual scheme is consisted in its
own paradigm. And the task of changing the paradigm, according
to Kuhn and some other philosophers, is not the matter of
rationality but of conversion. Ultimately, discussions on the
problem of truth in literature will impinge on the problem of
faith.

Suggestions for further research.

1. In the section which discusses Aristotle's view of
poetry, this thesis finds that for Aristotle poetry purports to
tell truths about life and the world. Poetry tells a higher
truth than history since truth in poetry is the universal truth.
Concerning the problem of reference in poetry, this thesis finds
that the referents of the poetic language is understood in terms
of "characters" rather than any corporeal men in the physical
world. Poetry is not history or biography. This thesis suggests

that further research be done for a complete view of truth in
literature and the focus be on the term "character". The
research may set out to find out different philosophical views
about the meanings of the term "character", the etymological
meaning, etc., in order to draw a conclusion concerning "truth"
and "character", "this world" or any other possible world. For
example, the Hindu view of character will probably be different
from I.A. Richards' view.

2. This thesis has omitted many things about metaphor.
The study of the linguistic phenomenon of metaphor is highly
expected to yield a fruitful result as philosophical findings.
There are more to study about metaphor, for example, the rela-
tion between metaphor and human thinking-process, or metaphor
and thought construction, etc.. The remark made in this thesis
about the relation between metaphor, perception, appearance,
substance, essence and reality itself needs to be elaborated.

3. My thesis has stated that the problem of interpreta-
tion is a big concern in philosophy. In my own viewpoint, the
real problem of philosophy is interpretation, whereas that of
religion is faith. We do not only perceive the world (no matter
of whether or not it is the same world) but we also interpret
(or have to interpret) our sense-data. And it is rather in the
interpreting-process where the diversity of views takes place.
I believe that the problem of interpretation relates closely to
questions concerning conceptual scheme and problems concerning
states of mentality. The problem of truth in literature is
deeply involved with the problem of interpretation. It is

expected that a good understanding of the process of interpretation will result in a better understanding of literature and truth.

4. My thesis leaves out the discussion of imagination. The problem of imagination is slightly touched on in the section on Hume. Imagination is indeed a very big topic and requires more intensive discussions and investigations concerning its relation to human knowledge. Obviously, the question as to what is imagination involves a knowledge of human thinking-process. A hypothesis which may be made here is that it will probably be fruitful if imagination is viewed in connection with thought and improvisation. Jesus Christ once said something which gives rise to a question concerning the suggestion made here. Telling his disciples, the twelve Apostles, about the coming persecutions, Jesus said :

When they bring you to trial, do not worry about what you are going to say or how you will say it; when the time comes, you will be given what you will say. For the words you will speak will not be yours; they will come from the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Mathew 10 : 19-20). Although he may not be believed, his words should be respected as suggesting a good hypothesis. His point concerns a puzzling knowledge of the faculties of the human mind. And this is important for a better understanding of poets and their works.