QUINEAN VIEWS IN ARGENTINE ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

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Se traza un panorama de la influencia que la obra de Quine ejerció en el desarrollo de la filosofía analítica argentina, atendiendo solamente a los trabajos sobre tesis y argumentos quineanos en semántica y ontología, que fueron discutidos en nuestro medio y pudieron ser publicados. En particular, se examinan los puntos de vista de R. Orayen y de T. Simpson sobre el rechazo de los conceptos intensionales, la indeterminación de la traducción y el compromiso ontológico de las teorías. Se presenta una moderada defensa del punto de vista antiintensionalista y relativista quineano en lo que hace a la explicación de la significatividad en los lenguajes naturales, aunque no como explicación del fenómeno global del comportamiento lingüístico. Finalmente, se hace una breve y crítica referencia al desarrollo davidsoniano del extensionalismo de Quine, que lleva a rechazar el correspondentismo realista.

Analytic philosophy developed in Argentina mainly during the sixties. There were then an increasing number of people with adequate professional standards interested in its themes. This was the source of the first original and rigorous papers. The pioneers of the fifties had been strongly interested by problems posed by

mathematics and the natural sciences. With the new decade, a new interest in semantics and the philosophy of language arose. We should not then be surprised to find that it was Quine's work that promoted most of the discussions in this new philosophical environment.

Except for the period 1960-66, and, up to a point, for the period beginning in 1984, the lack of professional experience and institutional support together with the absence of a tradition in polemical writings made it impossible to publish the products of most discussions. Consequently, activities in the seminars and discussion groups has not been preserved by publication[1].

A significant number of works were devoted to the more formal aspects of Quine's thought, although I shall not focus on them here. However, mention must be made of papers by Hugo R. Zuleta and Carlos Alchourrón, in which the philosophical import of theories NF and ML was analysed[2]. Zuleta considered them in

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[1] In the early sixties, at the Universities of Córdoba and La Plata some professors began to develop analytical issues and methods. But the main group of the incipient Argentine analytic philosophy worked at the Universisty of Buenos Aires. Most of these professors gave up their positions in 1966 when a military coup took political control of the country, abrogated the autonomy of the University, removed its authorities and attacked both students and teachers. Only in 1984 with the return of a legal government, did many of them return to their professorships. Until then, analytic philosophy was deliberately excluded from public and official institutions. Nevertheless, it remained in course through the private efforts of those professors, who, in spite of increasing political troubles, went on with their intellectual work and, in 1972 even organized the Argentine Society of Philosophical Analysis (SADAF).

[2] The paper by Alchourrón was published, in English, in a Spanish journal (Alchourrón (1987)). Zuleta's paper appeared in 1982 in volume two of *Análisis Filosófico*, a journal published in Buenos Aires by the Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Filosófico (SADAF). This

relation to the problem of universals and the Quinean criterion of ontological commitment, claiming that both the Quinean criterion and the theories have shortcomings that made them inadequate. Alchourrón studied the prospects of set theories as general theories about the membership – or predicative – relation and argued in favor of those theories that allow for the existence of the universal class, which led him to prefer NF over ML, as well as the theories of Zermelo, Von Neumann and Russell.

In what follows, I will focus on some aspects of the treatment that three basic themes in Quine's semantics and ontology received during the development of the Analytic movement in Argentina. These are the rejection of intensional concepts, the indeterminacy of translation, and the ontological commitment of theories. For understandable reasons, I will limit my discussion to works that have been published. Finally, I shall refer briefly to another issue, rooted in Quine, that has recently become a focus of attention.

I

Care about the quality of the language used to communicate knowledge so as to avoid mistakes and equivocations has always been a main concern of both philosophy and science. In this century, as we all know, this subject has become the principal focus of various philosophical lines of thought. In the

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volume, edited by the Uruguayan professor Carlos Caorsi, was completely devoted to Quine's philosophy and included replies by Quine to the papers presented. *Análisis Filosófico* is the main witness of Quinean influence in Argentina but by no means the only one at present: although there is no other journal specifically devoted to analytic philosophy, all journals systematically publish papers on this approach or which are indebted to it.

framework of Analytic philosophy it gave rise to the naive intention of "overcoming metaphysics by means of a logical analysis of language" (Carnap (1932)). Likewise, we have the less ambitious project of characterizing a canonical language that allows us to achieve the aim of "limning the true and ultimate structure of reality" (Quine (1960), p. 221). For such cases, we all know Quine's advice: get rid of all intensional concepts and constructions. Notions such as possibility, synonymity and sense are taken to be completely useless for the purposes at stake, but this is not the case with other notions, such as implication and logical truth. Even the most Quinean among Argentine analytic philosophers have manifested a certain degree of scepticism about this point.

In 1957 Strawson objected that intensional concepts are necessary to characterize logical notions (Strawson (1957)). In synthesis, his argument was: in order to ascribe a logical structure to a sentence, it is necessary to make certain presuppositions of an intensional character, even if the sentence belongs to the language regimented by Quine. For example, to believe that the logical form of '$(x)(x$ is an illuminated book $\supset x$ is an illuminated book)' – and, *a fortiori*, that of 'An illuminated book is an illuminated book' – is '$(x)(Fx \supset Fx)$', it is necessary to admit that the two occurrences of 'illuminated' have the same sense, i.e., are synonymous. Or else, to give an example from Quine himself, think of the relation between '$(p.q) \supset (r.q)$' and '(fishes swim and so do whales) $\supset$ (bats fly $\supset$ so do whales)'. Quine's reply was based on the idea of univocal regimentations of natural languages: according to this, univocity depends on each substitution – based on typographical identity – of logical laws being true. He then characterized the notion of logical law in terms of formally specifiable proof procedures, and the completeness of first-order logic was to complete the job.

In a paper published in 1982, Raúl Orayen (an Argentine analytic philosopher) took up Strawson's objection and argued that the application of the notion of logical truth to the sentences of a natural language plausibly requires the use of a notion of synonymity (cf. Orayen (1982)). The plausibility of such a claim rests on three ideas: (i) if one uses the notion of global cognitive synonymity, the applicability in question is warranted; (ii) in the case of a natural language, Quine's reply to Strawson does not work; and (iii) no one knows of a non-intensional way of warranting the applicability in question.

According to Quine, "the most conspicuous purpose of logic, in its application to science and everyday discourse, is the justification and criticism of inference" (Quine (1959), p. 33). However, his definition of logical truth can only be applied, at face value, to regimented languages. Consequently, while it may be said that:

$$(1) \sim (\exists x)\,(x \text{ floats} \, . \, \sim (x \text{ floats}))$$

is logically true, the same cannot be said of:

(2) There are no objects that both float and do not float.

Of course, Quine appeals to the notion of a paraphrase of a sentence to claim that (1) is a paraphrase of (2), and to that extent, they have the same logical status. But, what can count as an adequate paraphrase of a given sentence? A survey of both practice and books on logic enables Orayen to point out that "there are neither mechanical rules nor precise hints that make it possible to find a good translation" (Orayen (1982), p. 52); there are instead either explicit or disguised appeals to meanings or synonymity. Naturally, Quine's official line is different:

> In neither case is synonymy to be claimed for the paraphrase ...
> Typically, indeed, the paraphrasing of a sentence S of ordinary
> language into logical symbols will issue in substantial
> divergences. Often the resulting S' will be less ambiguous than
> S, often it will have truth values under circumstances under
> which S has none ... and often it will even provide explicit
> references where S uses indicator words ... [The relation of
> the paraphrase S' to the ordinary sentence S] is just that
> the particular business that the speaker was on that occasion
> trying to get on with, with the help of S among other things,
> can be managed well enough to suit him by using S' instead of S
>   (Quine (1960), pp. 159-160).

But, according to Orayen, if paraphrases are wanted to
"extend to ordinary language a notion such as the one of logical
truth – which has only been defined for the language of canonical
notation –, it is necessary to give strict conditions of adequacy"
(Orayen (1982), p. 53).

What must be required, at the least, is that once the
regimented paraphrase S' is established as a logical truth, we can
be certain on the basis of linguistic considerations that the
corresponding natural language sentence S is true. The relation of
global cognitive synonymity warrants the satisfaction of such a
requirement. Global cognitive relation can be said to be satisfied
by two statements when "however different they might be in
expressive power, they have the same truth-conditions -their
linguistic links make it impossible for them to differ in truth-value
with respect to the same situation" (Orayen (1982), p. 54). It is a
synonymity between whole sentences that is not based on term-to-
term synonymities (which are odd enough) but on other features,
such as the equivalence of grammatical constructions ('Diana and
Charles are British' and 'Diana is British and Charles is British') or
purely contextual equivalences ('John went to the movies or he
did not') or a contextual equivalence between a certain use of

ordinary logical expressions and the logical constants of canonical notation.

It seems pretty clear that Quine's reply to Strawson's objection cannot do the job here. As we have already mentioned, it relies on the fact that regimented languages have a precise grammar, easily accessible through Tarskian methods, which makes it possible to give a purely formal characterization of logical truth and valid scheme, in terms of proof procedures. None of these features can be found in natural languages.

Moreover, according to Orayen, the project of describing, without appealing to intensional notions, grammatical rules of transformation that make it possible to construct adequate paraphrases has no possibility of success. This is basically due to the fact – acknowledged by Quine himself – that "the same grammatical constructions must be interpreted differently according to the lexicon and the context of use". He then concludes:

> The Quinean approach teaches us to improve our language by means of the paraphrase but it does not teach us to [*logically*] *appraise* it. The conceptual framework of our logic is not apt to really evaluate ordinary language: it only makes it possible to appraise the paraphrases that such a language can be *substituted* with, without thereby transferring the results to the original language (Orayen (1982), pp. 54-55).

and:

> Since he has not stated the requirements to be met by admissible paraphrases (and given that he cannot accept our present proposal), Quine cannot consider the logical evaluation of an ordinary language sentence as merely uncertain: in fact, he must conclude *that it does not make any sense*. If a logician found that a certain paraphrase of a natural language sentence O is a canonical logical truth, then it would follow from my proposal that, if the paraphrase meets certain requirements, O itself will be a logical truth as well. The satisfaction of the requirements may be uncertain and the same may hold for the evaluation. But, if Quine wants to be

coherent, he must say that the problem does not make any sense. On his view, no feature of the paraphrase can be *transferred* to *O*, because Quine has set forth no conditions on *O'* for its features to be transferable to *O*. According to Quine, the logician cannot make mistakes regarding natural languages: he can make no claim about them. What he can do is something subtly different: he can tell someone that if he chooses to *stop using* a sentence *O* to start using *instead* a certain paraphrase *O'*, he will be or will not be using a logical truth, according to the character of *O'* (Orayen (1982), p. 59).

In his reply to Orayen, in the same 1982 issue of *Análisis Filosófico*, Quine agreed that "with my flight from intension and my reservations about translation, I am in no position to define ... a firm relation between sentences of ordinary language and their acceptable regimentations" (Quine (1982a), p. 166). He even manifested a disposition to concede that the notion of logical truth "is only a loose and programatic manner of speaking when it is referred to ordinary language" (*Idem*, p. 167), thereby giving up his previous use of the expression, according to which it could be applied "outright and absolutely to sentences of ordinary language" (*Idem*, p. 166).

Essentially, Quine was accepting Orayen's conclusion that he lacked a definition of logical truth for ordinary language. He did not accept, as one can easily predict, Orayen's definitional proposal in terms of an intensional characterization of the paraphrases. Not only did he deny the need for defining an objective relation of paraphrase, he did not consider it necessary to count on precise rules of paraphrasing in order to make sense of the application of logical theory to ordinary language. He then rejected the opposite conclusion drawn by Orayen. He grounded his position on the possibility of describing the applicability in question "in a straightforward way, without mentioning logical

truth" (Quine (1982a), p. 167). His idea may be put as follows: the aim of logic, as far as ordinary language is concerned, is:

> to generate, from hypotheses, sentences that can be counted on to be true if the hypothesis turns out to be true... [by] finding sentences in the regimented language that pretty clearly agree in truth-value with the colloquial sentences under consideration, and that can be linked up in a logical truth in the technical sense of the regimented language. The agreement in truth-value between the regimented sentences and the colloquial ones requires thought, in serious cases, because the truth-values are not given in advance. We have to get at the agreement through semantic connections, and this is where the paraphrasing comes in. (Quine (1982a), p. 167).

As we can see, Quine's dismissal of intensional concepts is oblique: he does so in sketching an alternative justification of the applicability of logical notions, i.e., one that is not based on the concept of logical truth, which, according to Orayen, demands a characterization in terms of synonymity. He has also provided us with a direct criticism of the legitimacy of intensional concepts. In so doing, he used the key concept of a *plausible causal* explanation. This is a concept replete with problems, the uses of which can easily involve circularity, and draw near to intensional waters. I will not pursue this point here.

In 1989, Orayen took the opportunity of commenting on Quine's reply. He agreed that:

> if colloquial sentences p, q have the same truth values as the regimented sentences p', q' and the [conditional] link between them $p' \supset q'$ is a logical truth, then we can warrant that if p is true so will q be. In so arguing, we have not talked of logical truth as applied to ordinary language (Orayen (1989), p. 128).

But Orayen also points out that on this approach:

it is left completely unexplained how I knew that p and p' had the same truth value (and the same holds for q and q') ... Quine admits that "we have to get at the agreement through semantic connections" but he does not say a word about such connections. Quine does not really give an alternative account of how logic can be applied to ordinary language (Orayen (1989), p. 128).

It seems that Orayen's point is a good one. But I think that the discussion can be taken further. We should remember that natural language matters, here, mainly as a means to express and transmit information. It matters as a means to expound (scientific) knowledge. This presupposes that the contexts that are useful for this objective – contexts where natural sentences play a theoretically significant role – are those contexts where sentences can be substituted with descriptions of their truth-conditions. This is based on the fact that we only want to assert such natural sentences when they happen to be true (and merely because we believe them true). In this sense, the Quinean assimilation of paraphrases, which make it possible for the logical theory to be applied to ordinary language, to the conceptual explications advocated by Carnap (Quine (1960), pp. 159 and 260) can be vindicated, *pace* Orayen. At any rate, if it were somehow possible to determine the truth-conditions of a natural language sentence without appealing to intensional concepts, then we would be able to know – *pace* Orayen – whether p and p' have the same truth-value without using the concept of global cognitive synonymity. As we all know, Davidson thinks not only is such a task feasible but also that it provides us with the only admissible concept of meaning for natural languages. We have to remark, however, that the acceptability of such a program requires us to believe that there is no further possible clarification of the concept of truth than the one provided by the Tarskian generation of truth

conditions for sentences and the role of such truth-conditions in understanding a language. On the other hand, a view appealing to the notion of fact as a means to reach that objective would be obscured, probably, by intensional notions (as we will see below).

I would like to point something else out. The Davidsonian project promises to avoid the notions of the *linguistic* intensional circle, but the promise cannot be extended to all intensional concepts. The idea of *holding* a sentence *true* or *believing* it *true* plays a decisive role. The problem of the eliminatibility of propositional attitude idioms turns up again. This is something that has always made Quine feel uncomfortable. In his 1982 paper 'Quine Bifronte: Vindicación y Condena de las Modalidades *De Re*', another Argentine analytic philosopher, Thomas M. Simpson, pointed out the serious consequences that the acceptance of such expressions – even on a *de re* interpretation – in canonical languages would carry for the Quinean view. More explicitly, the presence of propositional attitude expressions would prevent the indeterminacy of translation: "For, using the intentional words 'believe' and 'ascribe', one could say that a speaker's term is to be construed as 'rabbit' if and only if the speaker is disposed to ascribe it to all and only the objects that he believes to be rabbits" (Quine (1960), pp. 220-221). In his famous argument of Chapter Two of *Word and Object*, Quine had already concluded that translation is indeterminate; on this basis, he now concludes that *de re* attitudes must also be so.

Moreover, he has an independent argument for the same conclusion, as has been made explicit by Simpson, which consists in extending his views on indirect quotation to *de re* beliefs: "There is nothing approaching a fixed standard of how far indirect quotation may deviate from the direct one" (Quine (1960), p. 218). Consequently, all "the attitudes, both *de re* and *de dicto*, are in the same boat: opacity, which is an insidious version of semantic

indeterminacy". (Simpson (1982), p. 133). Propositional attitudes, notably *de re* ones – which do not break down the lovely simplicity of elementary logical laws – seem to be essential in the profane language of daily life, but only there, since they are "inadmissible in the austere formulation of scientific theory" (Quine (1982b), p. 172), in particular, in logico-semantical theory. Quine himself exemplifies this linguistic duality when he replies to Simpson in very profane language: "one *needed* to see *why* these idioms *must* be relegated to the profane language" (Quine (1982b), p. 172, emphasis mine).

But the lack of strict boundaries that made it possible to determine the deviation of indirect from direct quotation cannot be taken to constitute a sufficient reason to deny objectivity to the problem of belief attribution. Quine himself has repeatedly pointed out that it was not vagueness that led him to reject certain intensional notions (analyticity, synonymity); it does not seem to be clear why contextuality should be sufficient in the case of (some) propositional attitudes, especially, when it has been conceded that their presence in (profane) languages is more important than that of modal concepts. Quine's *modus tollens* from the thesis of the indeterminacy of translation remains, then, as his strongest argument against *de re* propositional attitudes. And his argument for such a thesis has brought about innumerable criticisms, reformulations, defenses and extensions. Among the Argentine echoes, we will be concerned with Orayen's opinion.

II

I will summarize Quine's argument for the indeterminacy of translation as follows: (1) the main intensional notions (meaning, synonymity, proposition, analyticity) are interdefinable; (2) in acquiring a language – and, in general, in understanding any

language – a person must rely on certain epistemic grounds: what she might come to know about the speakers' (publicly observable) behaviour as well as their dispositions to (publicly observable) linguistic behaviour in publicly observable circumstances; (3) such knowledge, even in the ideal case, does not univocally determine the reference (in general, the semantical value) of subsentential expressions (both the categorematic and the syncategorematic ones). From these theses, it is plausible to conclude: (4) in translating a language L_1 into another language L_2, there will be many sentences Q of L_1 for which there will be sentences O_1, ..., O_n of L_2, such that (i) each sentence O_i could be taken to be a translation of Q and confirmed as such by means of the ideal grasp of the relevant verbal dispositions, but (ii) no one could hold simultaneously two of them to be translations of Q (which suggests that sentences O_i are neither synonymous nor equivalent in an interesting sense). Let's call the last one, the "thesis of the *underdetermination* of translation" (TUT). Quine then goes on: (5) there is nothing in reality that could verify as *the correct* one any of the empirically adequate hypothesis of translation for Q; in other words, there is nothing objective that settles the issue between two adequate translations. Let's call this new conclusion the "thesis of the *indeterminacy* of translation" (TIT). Therefore, *a fortiori*, the idea of a sentence synonymous with Q lacks all theoretical value. Recalling (1), we will have: (6) no intensional concept can be used in an adequate theory of natural language.

Orayen concedes TUT (both in Orayen (1986) and Orayen (1989)); but he claims that Quine has illegitimately slipped into TIT. He then tries to find some more or less implicit premise to close the gap. He comes to the conclusion that Quine is tacitly supporting what he wants to call "local operationalism" (i.e., an operationalism restricted to the study of language): the thesis that "the relevant linguistic concepts must be susceptible of a

characterization in terms of dispositions to verbal behaviour" (Orayen (1989), p. 160). It is the conjunction of this last thesis and TUT that implies TIT. But, on what grounds can the hidden premise be supported? It seems that the only grounds Quine can count on is the assumption that has been previously assigned the number (2). But, again, (2) is not sufficient. Giving grounds for TIT would require accepting *not only* that language *is acquired* on the basis of the observation of behaviour in publicly observable circumstances *but also* that language *is nothing but* a system of dispositions for verbal behaviour. If this were true, we would have got all that we were in need of to infer TIT: the thesis that every explanatory linguistic notion must be operationally defined. This is precisely what is claimed by Quine in his reply to Orayen.

However, Orayen objects to the step from the language acquisition conditions to its constitutive features, along with the consequent conceptual restriction on semantical theory[3]. Using an analogy with the construction of physical theories, he comes to say:

> It could be claimed that in the case of language, as in any other case we also start off by observing verbal behaviour to then posit hypotheses of an increasing degree of complexity about linguistic meanings. Eventually, we end up by suggesting hypotheses that are built up by terms that cannot be defined in terms of dispositions to verbal behaviour but nonetheless serve to explain linguistic behaviour. There is no reason to think that the structure of our knowledge of language is simpler in this regard than our physical theory (Orayen (1989), p. 162).

The hypothesis that the structure of our language is simpler than the structure of the physical world may be worth examining.

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[3] I discuss the objection as it appears in Orayen (1989). In Orayen (1991) there is a reformulation taking into account some remarks in Quine's *Pursuit of Truth* (Quine (1990)).

Electrons can be said to be the product of a nonhuman nature; meanings or meaningfulness, on the contrary, are human products. Even overlooking such a probable reader of Vico, we could insist on the point: what else, other than observing the public domain, could be done by one who seeks to understand a language? Obviously, he could make inferences; as well as postulate the existence of hidden entities and processes that become manifest indirectly in the public sphere. But, how could those unobservable factors take part in the constitution of language, the public structure of verbal behaviour, or, if so preferred, meaningfulness? Which – let's say – mental facts (or non-mental but hidden ones) could take part in the phenomenon we call "language"?

At this point, it may be useful to distinguish the complete account of the phenomenon of uttering 'Gavagai' from the linguistic or semantic structure involved in this phenomenon. The former may use data and laws that we had better not take to be semantic. It may be worth having a concept of language based on those public features that are sufficient for a successful communicative practice. After all, we might think that reference is determined by the totality of the factors that take part in the utterance event. For instance, we might posit unobservables, such as the speaker's attention being kept on the whole rabbit, as something different from his attending to one of the rabbit's legs. But, if we were to see that had the focusing factor been different, communication would have been equally successful, would it not be convenient to exclude such factors from the set of characteristics that determine the success of linguistic behaviour? In other words, would it not be convenient to so restrict the set of concepts that constitute the properly linguistic or communicative structure of verbal behaviour? It could be even admitted that, once they reach a certain point, speakers go on learning by

positing meanings or references that are *determinate*. If we distinguish the *speaker's* successive "theories" – which enable him to learn the language – from the *plausible* theories that explain the phenomenon of verbal behaviour, we can concede that the behaviour in question is partly determined by the *concept* of objective reference and meaning while rejecting the idea that it is determined by the *existence* of entities of these sorts. If this is so, the problem will no longer be an *a priori* question, as suggested by the argument of Chapter Two of *Word and Object*: it will depend on labile criteria of acceptability for theories or on equally weak criteria of plausibility for causal explanations.

III

A way of positing the question of the relation between language and reality consists of finding out which entities must exist in order for us to believe that our descriptive sentences reach their aim i.e., they describe the world. The first problem to show up is the one of finding a language adequate enough to express as clearly as possible our intended representations (with a clarity compatible with the darkness of our physical and metaphysical intuitions). As we know, Quine has answered by pointing to the language of first-order classical logic. The second problem to be solved is the following: when someone holds certain sentences true, what must she believe to exist? The problem has two aspects that may be distinguished: (a) in which expressions should we look for ontological commitment? and (b) how can we determine which entities we are ontologically committed to by means of certain expressions?

As we know, Quine thinks that sentences, predicates, singular descriptions and names (of a language regimented in accordance with first-order logic) need not be interpreted as

names for entities. According to Quine, the existence of entities referred to is only demanded by bound variables. (By the way: it is essential to distinguish the explanation of the role played by the expressions *in linguistic interchange* – which leads, for instance, to accept or not that sentences should be (used as) names – from determining the *representational properties* of expressions. This distinction makes it possible to claim, for instance, that, although sentences are not names, they do correspond to specific entities). With regard to (b), Quine thinks that the question makes sense only in relation to a previously chosen language. Moreover, if the language in question were the language of the theory under consideration, then fixing references would be trivial; and if it were a different language, the determination of references would not be univocal – the thesis of the inscrutability of reference – and should be made further relative to some set of analytical hypotheses.

In his book *Formas Lógicas, Realidad y Significado*, published in 1964, Simpson (one of the first Spanish-speaking philosophers to be concerned with Quinean views) points out that Quine has wavered between two versions of his famous criterion of ontological commitment. After having claimed that the criterion demands that natural expressions such as 'exist' are to be translated by the quantifier '$(\exists x)$', Simpson remarks that Quine's first formulation (sentence S presupposes the existence of entity e if and only if S is true then e is in the range of the variables of S) cannot be applied to universal quantifications. And if it could be applied only to existential ones, "it would be reduced to the claim that we can only be ontologically committed by explicitly affirming an ontology. So formulated, Quine's criterion only holds for existential assertions. With this only exception, acknowledging entities ... does not constitute a necessary condition for truth". (Simpson (1964), p. 176). At this point, Quine suggests that the

presupposition of the existence of entities derives from "the very meaning of quantifiers" (letter to Carnap, published in Carnap (1956), § 44, pp. 196-7). If that were the case, all uses of bound variables would really imply an ontological commitment. But then the first formulation is superfluous. We should notice, by the way, that the subsequent question of how to determine the value-range for bound variables presupposed by a certain language is a metalinguistic question, which makes us get involved with the problems of ontological relativity.

On the other hand, even if we accept that the meaning of '(x)' or the meaning of bound variables requires associating them with a range of values, what prevents us from conceiving of this range as empty? Simpson outlines a Fregean treatment of variables, by distinguishing in them two aspects similar to the sense and reference of names.

> The sense of a variable is its determinant concept (it may be the general concept of *Individual*, or of *Number, Physical object,* etc.) and the set ... of objects the determinant concept is applied to corresponds to the reference [of a name]. But just as a name can have sense and no reference, so a variable is perfectly defined by its determinant concept, even if there were no object to be its value, that is, even if its domain were empty" (Simpson (1964), pp. 181-182).

Moreover this criterion, when applied to formalized languages, "is equivalent to saying that the rules that fix the domain of the variables determine the ontology of the system" (*Idem*, p. 182), and this is a controversial point as showed by Carnap, for whom "the content of semantical rules by no means implies the adoption of an ontology" (cf. Carnap (1956), § 10, and his "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology", appendix A of Carnap (1956)).

Besides these critical points, Simpson develops convincing arguments in defense of the Quinean view on the issue of

ontological commitment, against objections, new at that time (1964), by Martin, Sellars, Stebbing and Warnock. In doing so, Simpson posits the fundamental question "what is the criterion for the acceptability of translation from ordinary language to logical notation?" This question, as we have seen, is in the beginning of much of the work on Quine carried out by his ex-student Orayen.

IV

Quine's work has given prominence to a philosophical strategy built on the idea that unavoidable ontological commitments are confined in the values of bound variables. From this point of view, theoretical construction is restricted by the following overarching hypothesis: the ultimate explanation of a phenomenon requires neither (1) that abstract entities without a clear extensional principle of individuation be included within the values of the variables, nor (2) that concepts whose use call for restrictions in elementary logic take place in explanation.

According to this strategy – used in Argentina and elsewhere – clarifying the links between language and the world does not require any more entities and concepts than those that are manageable by standard extensional logic. For example, Davidson's Quinean philosophy (sometimes celebrated as a refreshing departure from analytical strictures that prevent philosophical dialog) involves the claim that the idea of truth can be sufficiently clarified in an extensional way. It is interesting to have a look at the force this approach has even now.

In his John Dewey Lectures "The Structure and Content of Truth" (Davidson (1990)) and in his 1994 lectures in Buenos Aires, Davidson withdraws, in relief, from any effort in favor of a realistic view on truth or in favor of the explanatory power of the idea of representation. His argument proceeds by, first, linking

the fate of realism to that of correspondence and then, by showing that the idea of correspondence is unintelligible. And the only evidence for the last step is a simple argument that Frege inspired in Church, and which Quine taught to Davidson. I mean the argument pattern that Barwise and Perry called "the slingshot".

The survey of this argument has been one of the most recent examples of Quine's influence in Argentina. Many aspects of it were discussed in a 1994 seminar directed by Simpson. The argument was not considered, in general, as a convincing one (cf. Moretti (1995)). I can only point out, now, that there are two ways of viewing it: (1) as showing that there is at most *one* fact corresponding to *all* true sentences, or (2) as if it has shown that the expression '...corresponds to the fact that...' is an intensional context. The first is naturally the one embraced by Davidson. Curiously, Quine's use of the argument – as opposed to that of Church or C.I. Lewis – is closer to suggesting the second way than the first.

A preference for (1) derives from an implicit assumption of the extensional strategy. It derives from that, it does not support that. (Fruitfulness could bring some support to the strategy, but the slingshot hardly exemplifies this feature). Preference for (2) is closer to the traditional correspondentist aim. Those who believe in the explanatory power (in linguistic matters) of the notion of correspondence with the facts will tend to prefer (2) but, then, they must give up the Quinean approach to the semantics of cognitive language. To express this in a colorful way, there is a dilemma: either there are no facts and realism is unintelligible, or our theories need intensional contexts. It's your choice.

As seen above, critical reflection on Quinean views was one of the first themes in Argentine analytic philosophy. Since then, that reflection not only remains as a direct influence in the development of philosophical analysis in Argentina, but also shows

an indirect relevance: the views of other important North American philosophers such as Goodman, Putnam and Davidson, were received in virtue and in the framework of the assimilation of Quine's main ideas[4].

Abstract: An overview of the influence of Quine's work in the development of analytic philosophy in Argentina is offered. Published papers on Quinean theses and arguments about semantics and ontology are taken into account. In particular, the views of Raúl Orayen and Thomas M. Simpson about rejection of intensional concepts, the indeterminacy of translation, and ontological commitment are examined. Although not as an explanation of the whole of linguistic behaviour, a moderate defense of the non-intensionalist and relativistic approach with respect to the explanantion of natural language meaning is presented. A brief and critical reference to the reception of the Davidsonian use of Quinean extensionalism is offered in the final section.

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[4] This paper was read at the 1995 meeting of the American Philosophical Association in San Francisco, in a special session on Analytic Philosophy in Argentina.

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