

# 行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 期中進度報告

## 三角測量戴維森的真理、客觀性和意義概念(1/3)

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## 報告內容

### (一) 前言

本研究為三年(91-93)期計劃，本(91)年度的計劃主題為戴維森的客觀性概念，規劃所欲回答的具體問題包括：（優先性依序遞減）

- a. 針對的戴維森的客觀性概念在他的語意理論裡扮演什麼樣的角色？
- b. 在客觀性乃至於語意的形成中，第二人乃至於社會性因素是否如戴維森所言必須扮演角色？如果是，扮演什麼角色？
- c. 戴維森的三角測量(triangulation)隱喻和其他的三角測量理論(如駱斯機和布蘭登的理論)之間有何不同？它在戴維森的哲學中扮演何種角色？如何扮演？
- d. 戴維森的三角測量隱喻是否有丐題的問題？
- e. 戴維森的三角測量隱喻是否與戴維森其他重要哲學理論不一致？

針對這些問題及其他相關問題，本人撰寫以下四篇會議論文加以探討之

1. Chung-I Lin (林從一), "Davidson on Objectivity", presented at: Conference on Analytic Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, National Chengchi University, Taipei., March 30, 2002.
2. Chung-I Lin (林從一), "External vs. Internal Interpreters", presented at: Conference on Davidson's Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, September 19, 2002.
3. Chung-I Lin (林從一), "Davidson's Triangulation and the Normativity of Meaning", presented at: Beijing International Symposium On "Wittgenstein and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Analytical Philosophy", Peking University, Beijing, October 11-14, 2002.
4. Chung-I Lin (林從一), "Triangulation: World, Society and Meaning Normativity", presented at: To be presented at: Conference on Neo-Pragmatism: Davidson, Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, December, 21, 2002.

這四篇論文的主題實質上是相同的，它們皆探討戴維森如何以他的三角測量來說明語言及思想的客觀性和規範性所必須具有的一些重要條件，譬如說，一個社會性的語言溝通脈絡。雖然這四篇論文的主題相近，但是歷次會議的討論，使得各論文的內容逐次獲得實質改善。於中研院歐美所新實用主義研討會上發表之"Triangulation: World, Society and Meaning Normativity"，比前三篇論文獲得

更堅實的結論。

## (二) 研究的主要發現

本研究的主要發現如下。我們發現三種對戴維森三角測量的既存的或可能的詮釋皆不恰當或使得三角測量無法達到它的目標。但是，我們發現在一個較廣的戴維森哲學脈絡中，亦即，輔之以戴維森其他重要哲學主張，將使得三角測量成功。

戴維森早期關於三角測量的論述容易讓學者陷入以下的詮釋模式。學者一般認為戴維森藉由三角測量進行以下的論證：所有命題思想或言說都具有**特定的內容**，或具有意向性；然而，詮釋者必須決定導致詮釋對象某類行為的導因，才能決定思想或言說的特定內容；但是，如果某人不與他人一個分享的世界中進行語言溝通，那麼詮釋者將毫無根據說詮釋對象的行為的導因為何，例如我們無法說他的某個想法是關於某個物理對象（類型）或是關於他神經系統上的某些刺激物（類型），因此無法說詮釋對象擁有具有特定內容的思想及言說；所以具有命題內容的思想或言說要求(require)社會性(人際(interpersonal, I-you))的溝通。以這個論證為基礎，思想及言說的客觀性和規範性得到適當程度的說明。以客觀性為例。客觀性之所以能獲得說明是因為，如果三角測量是成功的話，思想及言說一般而言是關於那些獨立於行動者而存在的物理對象，因此思想和言說的真假大體而言決定於那些獨立存在的物理對象，也因此我們有合理的基礎說，任何一個信念皆有錯誤的可能。

這種詮釋方式將三角測量視為一種因果測量，這種因果測量的目僅僅在於幫助詮釋者去定位他的詮釋對象的反應的導因。在這個理解下，三角測量的立即論證標的是：除非一個詮釋者的詮釋對象至少包含兩個在同一世界中（並且針對此世界的事物）進行互動的生物，否則深度的歧義問題，亦即詮釋對象的導因位於何方的問題，原則上將無法被回答，詮釋對象的意向性狀態的內容為何的問題，也將無法被回答。但是，在這個解讀將使得三角測量所面對的問題成爲一個不存在的問題，亦即，對於一個面對一個孤立的生物的詮釋者而言，深度的歧義根本不是一個問題。本研究發現這個以思想或言談的特定內容爲切入點對三角測量的解讀方式是不適當的，它弱化了戴維森的論證，使得三角測量過於容易被擊敗，它忽略了戴維森論述中的一些重要訊息，使得三角測量的一些哲學含蘊隱而不彰。舉例來說，如果三角測量的目的在於使得界定特定內容成爲可能，那麼另一個感覺器官便足夠扮演戴維森三角測量中第二人(a second person)的角色，思想和語言的社會性便無法被論證出。在舉例來說，戴維森不止一次強調，他以三角測量所要處理的問題是，行動者**視某物爲某類物時**，涉及了什麼要件。這個問題不是關於，從詮釋者的角度來看，行動者的思想或言說如何具有特定內容，而是關於，從詮釋者的角度來看，行動者如何能具有將事物歸類的能力。面對一個孤立的生物時，詮釋者或許可以具有必要的資源回

答第一個問題，但不一定具有必要的資源回答第二個問題。

能將事物歸類，就是具有概念能力，就是具有遵循規則的能力，就是具有掌握正確與不正確之間的區分的能力。戴維森的三角測量事實上直接針對的問題是，上述能力所必須具有什麼要件。晚近一些戴維森的詮釋者或批評者看出了這一點，但是他們的詮釋仍舊走岔了路。

許多晚近的戴維森的批評者認為，戴維森的三角測量主要處理的問題是所謂的**範疇的歧義**問題，更精確地說，此問題的核心為，詮釋者必須獲得什麼樣的資源，才能確定被詮釋對象使用某個而非其他的概念，或遵循某個特定的規則。戴維森的三角測量所欲達成的結論被理解為，除非詮釋對象與其他詮釋對象在同一個環境中進行語言互動，否則詮釋者沒有任何基礎說，詮釋對象的行為是一個遵循規則的行為，而非只是一個傾向性、無概念性的行為，因為，詮釋者無法說他的詮釋對象遵循了什麼規則。在這個解讀下，批評者認為戴維森的三角測量無法達成它的目的，其主要的理由可以整理歸結為：三角測量的策略將會面臨以下這個類似兩難的處境。一方面，如果詮釋者所能獲得的詮釋資料只不過是詮釋對象的外顯行為資料，特別是詮釋對象和外在世界的互動，在這樣的詮釋角度下，那麼加入數個彼此互動的被詮釋者，並不能根本地脫卸他們的行為不是意向性行為的疑慮，亦不能限定住他們的行為體現出麼樣的概念運用。另一方面，由於為了避免巧題，詮釋者似乎不能預先假定詮釋對象具有概念，那麼在這種情形下，詮釋者必須訴諸他自己的範疇或概念，來說被詮釋對象是根據什麼範疇來歸類事物，如此便產生了幾個疑慮：第一，如果詮釋者可以合法地訴諸自己的範疇來回答，被詮釋者根據什麼範疇作出行為這個問題，那麼我們沒有理由說，面對單一個詮釋對象時，詮釋者無法根據相同資源回答相同問題，這意謂被詮釋對象無須多於一人；第二，我們如何能確定詮釋者加諸於被詮釋者行為的範疇是被詮釋者本身所具有的範疇？詮釋者與詮釋者之間似乎有可能具有不同範疇。第三，範疇既然是詮釋者施加於被詮釋者的行為上以理解那些行為，那麼這裡總是存在著被詮釋對象的行為只是傾向性的行為，這個疑慮不會因為多加入些被詮釋者而排除。除此之外，相當重要的是，範疇歧義問題一開始對戴維森就不該是一個問題，這是因為戴維森拒斥徹底差異的概念網落的可能性。

第三個詮釋輔以三角測量兩個理論。第一個理論是意向性超過傾向性，而這個理論蘊含與詮釋相關的事物之間相似性判斷必須是從被詮釋者的角度作出來的，亦即詮釋者眼中的相似性。這點事實上蘊含，被詮釋者具有錯誤的概念。另一個想法是，被詮釋者必須感知到相似性。以這兩個理論為背景，我們將三角測量理解為對以下想法的一個論證：某個生物除非與另一個生物針對共同的對象進行互動，否則將缺乏足夠的必要規律性讓它去感知以產生一個歧出的行動的概念。但是，這個解讀亦不能使得三角測量盡其功。為省篇幅，在此不陳述我們的理由，評審者可見附件一。

雖然這些解讀都不能使得三角測量達到它的目的，但是，我們對它們的探究仍顯現一些與解讀戴維森三角測量相關的要點。第一，如第一個解讀所強調的，三角測量所要解決的一個問題，是關於如何定位不同反應所共有的導因的問題。我們可以合理地設想，共同導因這個概念在戴維森的三角測量和他關於規範性的理論中扮演一個重要角色。第二點是意向性超過傾向性，特別是這點所蘊含的這個要點：除非一個生物具有歸類事物的能力，否則它不能被詮釋為一個具有意向性狀態的生物。這兩個觀察加上一些戴維森對意義的看法，我認為將能讓我們構作一個脈絡，在這脈絡中三角測量將能說明意義的規範性和它的社會面向。

在我說明我的提案之前，必須先說明兩點。第一，我將在一個戴維森對意義的一般性看法下解讀三角測量。戴維森以三角測量所關心的主要問題是，意義的什麼構成要素使得意義的規範面向成為可能？為什麼一個分享世界的語言互動者，對於任何一個人之具有意向性是必要的？第二，明顯的，分類的能力和具有錯誤的概念是相互依憑的。這使得我們得以將三角測量解讀成一個處理一般性客觀性問題的方式。所謂一般性客觀性問題是，為何任何一個基本的信念都有可能錯誤？更具體地說，三角測量將被理解為一個方法，去說明意義的什麼構成要素使得一個人理解他的任何一個信念都有錯誤的可能。簡言之，三角測量將被理解為回答以下問題的方式：意義的什麼構成要素，使得一個人能理解他的任何信念都有錯誤的可能。這也就是說，三角測量是一個方法，讓我們理解，為何錯誤的概念和其他相關的概念，如真理的概念，可以運用到我們任何一個信念上。

如此一來，我們可以說，三角測量所關心的具體問題是，意義的什麼面向使得一個孤立的生物，一個沒有任何其他處於同世界的生物與之中進行語言溝通的生物，是不可能理解他的任何一個信念都有可能錯誤？

關於內容，戴維森有一個著名的主張，他認為一個信念不會具有任何內容，除非它內建於一個一般而言一致且融貫的信念網絡中。在這個想法中，一個人如果是理性的，亦即具有任何意向性狀態，那麼他的信念彼此之間一般而言就必須具有邏輯和認知的關係。這個限制是一個先驗的限制，因此任何一個信念系統都大體上是一致而融貫的。此外，身為一種外部論者，戴維森也主張，我們「最平常及最基本」(1983：317)的的信念的內容與真實環境中導致那些信念的事件彼此之間具有構成性的連結。這個外部論的想法加上上述關於語意整體論的想法，對於信念產生一個構成的原則，它要求我們大部分的信念不僅彼此之間大體為一致的，而且它們大體上皆為真的。語意整體論加上外部論，排除了任何一個系統具有廣泛錯誤的可能性。這是一個有力的論證，而我要進一步宣稱的是，正是由於這個原則，使得一個孤立的個體無法理解它的任何一個信念都有錯誤的可能。

從一個孤立的信念系統之內來看，將無法產生以下這個理解，理解這個信

念系統內的任何一個信念都有錯誤的可能。這是因為，根據上述原則，任何一個系統事實上都大體為真。從一個信念系統之內來看，一個信念只能從它是否與同系統內的其他為數極多的信念相互一致，來判斷它是否為真，而那些為數及多的信念的真是不能被質疑的。我們必須將我們大部分的信念毫不質疑的視為真，這個一般性的事實顯示，從一個信念系統內部而言，我們將缺乏一個一般性的根基作為對比，讓我們能說這系統中的任何一個信念都有錯誤的可能。

或許此時有人會認為，外在世界能從信念系統之外幫助我們解決難題。有人或許會論證說，既然我們大部分的基本信念是導致於外在事件，這些事件的堅實性質一旦成為信念的導因，它們將持續決定我們基本信念乃至於衍生的信念的真假。最後這點或許是真的，但是就算它是真的，它也不蘊含，外在世界可以成為一個孤立的生物產生客觀性概念的一個一般性的對比基礎。這是因為，外在世界可以扮演那個一班性的對比角色，只有當外在世界是從一個所謂的上帝之眼的角度(God's-eyes-view)被觀察，而這個觀點當然是戴維森所不允許的。對戴維森而言，我們不可能獨立於我們自己的信念系統，以無涉信念的方式描述世界，來產生形成客觀性概念的一般性對比基礎。我們所描述的只是我們所相信的，我們只不過再度掉入我們適才所描述的處境中罷了。

這裡是社會性因素必須進入意義的地方。上述的討論迫使我們處在一個位置上，讓我們只能說，信念之間一般性的對比基礎，只能存在於分屬不同信念集合的信念之間。換言之，一個個體要能具有客觀性的一般概念，亦即理解他的任何一個信念皆有錯誤的可能性，必須至少有一個不同的信念系統，讓他能拿之與他自己的系統相比較。但是，那種對比只有在他能理解其他個體的言談才是可能的。“We grasp the concept of truth [and the related concepts, such as the concept of error] only when we can communicate the contents - the propositional contents - of the shared experience, and this requires language.” (Davidson, 1997: 27) As early as 1975, Davidson has already said: (170)

We have the idea of belief only from the role of belief in the interpretation of language, for *as a private attitude it is not intelligible except as an adjustment to the public norm provided by language*. It follows that a creature must be a member of a speech community if it is to have the concept of a belief. And given the dependence of other attitudes on belief, we can say more generally that only a creature that can interpret speech can have the concept of a thought.”

要理解他人的言談，我們必須理解，那些言談與我們於類似處境種所作出的言談，具有相同的主題。在語意外部論的基本想法下，要理解他人的言談與我們的言談具有相同的主題，我們必須理解那些言談〈至少那些基本的言談〉是導致於一些相同的事物。而要理解他人的某些言談語我們的某些言談具有相同的導因，我們必須理解我們是處於一個人際之間的三角測量處境中。

現在應該很清楚了，並不是所有的三角測量皆有助於我們說明客觀性概念的產生。只有那種有助於語言溝通者決定他們思想或言談的共同導因的三角測量，才有助於說明客觀性概念的產生。人際之間的三角測量幫助語言溝通者將他們的言談連結到外在世界中的相同面向上，而這些相同的面向成爲他們溝通的共同主題。很明顯的，共同導因和相同主題這個概念在戴維森對客觀性的說明中，扮演關鍵角色。承認他人與你所談論的對象是相同對象，就算是以不同的字詞來言說，同時也就承認他人處在一個可以反對你的言談的位置上。易言之，每當你認爲他人所談論的與你所談論的是相同事物的時候，你都至少隱含的承認，在那個時候你相信爲真都有可能事實上是假的。

一個徹底詮釋者一開始所能獲得的詮釋證據，僅僅是詮釋者所顯示出來的傾向性反應。詮釋者當然能感知並判斷這些反應彼此之間的相似性關係，根據這些判斷，他能說被詮釋對象的某些反應是正確的某些反應是錯誤的。然而，當詮釋者理解只要那些反應彼此之間的相似性全然是根據他自己的相似性標準作出的，他將會理解他的詮釋釋過度的，因爲有可能那些反應不是概念性的反應。我們的詮釋者必須將那些使得他能做出相似性判斷的能力讓渡給他的詮釋對象，而無論這個讓度所需的條件是什麼，我們至少清楚的是，要使的詮釋持續進行，詮釋者必須一開始就預設，如果他的詮釋對象具有任何意向性狀態，它就必須具有感知何判斷相似性的能力。

此外，藉由反省意義的基本性質，我們的詮釋者也應瞭解以下關於詮釋的事實。一個生物具有客觀性的一般性概念時，它必須理解它所具有的任何一個信念都有錯誤的可能，而如果它從未與其他生物進行溝通，它將不能產生那樣的理解。它必須至少與另一個生物進行過語言溝通，至少必須存在著另一個生物以不同於它的方式擇出相同的對象作爲溝通的共同主題，它才能理解它任一個信念都有錯誤的可能。而對外部論者而言，說兩個信念關於相同事物，等於說它們可靠地導致於類似的對象，而一個個體要知曉另一個個體同它一樣針對相同的對象作出反應，它必須能做出如戴維森所描述的那種三角測量。事實上，如戴維森所言，那個個體必須能從那第二人、對象何他自己之間的那三角聯繫中獲得「認知的利益」(cognitive advantage)。獲得那樣的「認知的利益」是理解它與它的語言溝通者談論的是相同的對象，而那樣的理解涉及了另一個理解，亦即，理解它的任一個信念皆有錯誤的可能。因此，我們的詮釋者最後理解了，他的詮釋具有一個不可避免的預設，他的詮釋對象必須最少包含兩個進行語言溝通的生物。

當然，要能從對三角測量獲得「認知的利益」，或甚至要能進行語言溝通，或甚至要能三角測定自己的和溝通者的言談的共同導因，已經預設了具有概念的能力。戴維森的說明的確如他自己所言存在著循環的問題(“move in a circle”)。但是，循環的問題所必定阻礙的是化約的企圖，它不一定對戴維森造成傷害，因爲戴維森相信，理解哲學基礎想法的唯一方法，或許只能透過將基本概念之

間的連結顯示出來。

在我們對戴維森關於客觀性想法的說明中，意義的規範性和社會性因素的必要性，事實上是獨立於三角測量以一個先驗的方式從意義的性質導出來的，但是，我們必須透過三角測量，才得以理解那社會性因素如何具體成為意義規範性的構成要素。此外，我們的解讀，並不預設語意的外部論(semantic externalism)，事實上它可以說提供了語意外部論一個獨立的說明基礎。這一點將是相當有趣的，因為訴諸語意外部論來說明語言的客觀性，難免被攻擊為丐題之舉。

### (三) 計劃成果及進度自評

本研究本年度規劃所欲回答的具體問題包括：

- a. 針對的戴維森的客觀性概念在他的語意理論裡扮演什麼樣的角色？
- b. 在客觀性乃至於語意的形成中，第二人乃至於社會性因素是否如戴維森所言必須扮演角色？如果是，扮演什麼角色？
- c. 戴維森的三角測量隱喻和其他的三角測量理論（如賈斯德和布蘭登的理論）之間有何不同？它在戴維森的哲學中扮演何種角色？如何扮演？
- d. 戴維森的三角測量隱喻是否有丐題的問題？
- e. 戴維森的三角測量隱喻是否與戴維森其他重要哲學理論不一致？

基於本研究所作出的四篇會議論文，給於後四項問題相當實質的回答，並對戴維森相關哲學思想有實質的新發現。本研究計劃提及，本人將於三年計劃完成時，將研究成果集結成書，書名現暫定為『三角測量戴維森的客觀性、真理和意義概念』。此書現已完成大部草稿，其中的導論部份，對於問題(a)多所著墨。整體而言，本研究達成甚至超過原計劃預期進度。為取信評審者，特於報告後附上(1) "Triangulation: World, Society and Meaning Normativity"一文及(2)上述書籍導論草稿。

## 附錄一

### Triangulation: World, Society and Meaning Normativity



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## Triangulation: World, Society and Meaning Normativity

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### 1. Introduction

Thinkers create and entertain meaning; but thoughts and whatever they issue or conspire are bound by meaning. The bounding is normative, in the sense that meaning creates a space where thought and action can be said to be correct or incorrect. What is it about meaning that makes the normative dimension of meaning possible?

It is well known that Wittgenstein dismisses three accounts of the normativity of meaning (see, *e.g.*, 1958: §§ 139-42; §§193-4; §§ 218-9): the first bases it in private mental state of individual

speaker; the second has it homed in a use-transcendent, platonic realm; the third trades it in by regularity described in purely behavioralistic-naturalistic terms. The first two accounts conceive the mental state or the platonic entity as essentially possessing ultimate content, only in connecting to which can things acquire the contents they have. However, any of such ultimate contents is liable to further various interpretations for its applicability, since such a content is supposedly existent in isolation from its particular application and, thus, does not carry within itself its applicability to special cases which is infinite in number. The two accounts would then either launch a regress or end up with a termination of the very distinction between correct and incorrect linguistic practices they seek to explain. The futility of the first two accounts naturally makes the last account tempting. However, it also faces similar paradox and regress. Any set of verbal behaviors in this conception can be found regular according to some classifications, but irregular according to others. Seeking an answer to the pending question of which classification is correct spoils the spirit of the account and will further hang the normativity of meaning in the air. It does not fundamentally change the situation by appealing to regularity of external events causing those behaviors, or regularity of crowd identical behaviors, if the regularity is still couched in purely behavioralistic-naturalistic terms.

In fact, we may say that the behavioralistic-naturalistic account misplaces the subject matter at the very beginning. Explaining the normativity of meaning in terms of regularity is on the right track, but we have a good intuition that mere regularity does not manifest normativity. Daily sun rises and sets do not enter the domain of normative evaluation. It is certainly true that picking out any regularity involves classification and classification is essentially a matter of conceptualization, nonetheless we do not intend to discover anything conceptual on the part of the system depicted solely in behavioralistic-naturalistic terms. A concept user not only manifests in its behaviors reliable dispositional responses to stimuli, but also essentially embodies in its regular behavior application of concept to stimuli, namely, attitude of taking some stimuli as similar with respect to a concept. The regularity that matters here should be *normative regularity*, regularity constrained by the meaning of the term, or more specifically, by the agent's own understanding of the meaning. To release off this constraint is to downgrade conceptual behaviors to mere dispositional responses.

The three Wittgensteinian critiques suggest respectively the following three morals in regard to the nature of meaning. The first is the externalist thought that meaning must be anchored to something beyond individual speakers. The second is the pragmatism spirit that ongoing linguistic practices must be there from the start for meaning to emerge. The third is normative regularism, as we might call it, that regularity of linguistic practice, and any regularity internally connected to it, is essential to an explanation of meaning, especially its normativity dimension, but the relevant regularity must be made from the concepts in the eyes of their beholders.<sup>1</sup> We can expect that an account of meaning incorporating the three morals, or at least part of them, might render a satisfactory explanation of the normativity of meaning.

Some philosophers attempt to explain the normativity of meaning on the basis of the first two morals -- semantic externalism and pragmatism. They, however, carry out the attempt in different ways -- usually, they have various conceptions on the first moral, and therein tend to assign different theoretical weights to the second moral. Some externalists (Burge (1988) may be a case in point), whose position might, following Davidson, be dubbed *perceptual externalism* (2001b: 2), regard event or object in the external world as essential for the constitution of meaning and hence for its normativity. It is thought that the when causal correlation between some external events (of the same kind) and the uses of a word (of the same kind) is nailed down, the content of the word is determined and the standard of its further uses is set up. In Pears' words, when we set up a language "the criteria

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<sup>1</sup> The ideas of normativity of meaning and normative regularity are interrelated. One's taking some stimuli as similar with respect to a concept involves at least the understanding or awareness that one's so taking is under the constraint of the concept. It is in effect an understanding that what one takes to be correct might be not. Thus, the understanding must be involved with the distinction between correctness and incorrectness, which is just the main feature of the normativity of meaning. On the other hand, as the notion of meaning entity and the idea of truth as correspondence are rejected, the correctness and incorrectness distinction has its genuine application only in the case where an action is judged to be similar or not similar to some previous actions regarded as similar in accord to a rule or concept.

of identity of objects and their types are simply imposed on us" (1987: 30); "when a name is attached to a thing, the nature of the thing takes over and dictates its subsequent use" (1987: 65).<sup>2</sup> In this conception, linguistic practice of speaker is mere a complementary item needed for the completion of a causal correlation with external thing. On the other hand, for those externalists, whose position might be called in Davidson's term as *social externalism* (2001b: 20, emphasizing on social aspect of meaning, group behavior plays the crucial explanatory role on normativity. They take uniformity of linguistic behavior among speakers to be all that are needed for the normativity of meaning; causality of events or objects in the external world fade into or even fade out from the background of discussion. Dummett (1993) and a version tentatively promoted in Kripke's [1982] and are representatives of this view. However, both theoretical orientations take the third moral very lightly, if not completely ignored. This might due to their proscribing anything intensional to be a basis in their explanations.<sup>3</sup> With the notion of normative similarity missing from the scene, an explanation of the normativity of meaning cannot be satisfactory. The crucial defect of an account ignoring the moral is that it will fail to distinguish clearly, in Davidson's terms, the difference between "having a concept and simply having a disposition." (2001b: 4).<sup>4</sup>

However, it is not easy, if not of formidable difficulty, to come by a coherent picture weaving up the three morals in whatever version they are conceived. There are no jump-out conceptual connections among them -- externalism and the notion of normative similarity look even incompatible with each other. Davidson agrees in general, not necessarily in the same terms and for same reasons, with the three Wittgensteinian critiques and the respective lessons (see, *e.g.*, 2001a:37; 2001b: 2-3). But, in a series of papers from 1982 on,<sup>5</sup> Davidson endeavors to develop an externalistic picture aiming to make it clear the connections among the three morals and, thereby, to make intelligible the notion of the normativity of meaning.<sup>6</sup> The crucial element of the picture Davidson gives us is his famous triangulation.

Davidson's remarks are often succinct; crucial points sometimes are hidden between lines from commentators. It may, therefore, be a subject worthy of curiosity to inquire the nature of the triangulation to see whether and how it may shade lights on, if it may, the interconnections among semantics externalism, pragmatism, and the notion of normative similarity. There are two major parts in my paper. The first is both an exposition and an evaluation. Several existent and possible readings on the triangulation are put on the table to examine. It is found that the triangulation, in whatever version considered in our path, *stands by itself* suffers from various defects and fails to its immediate purpose, which is to vindicate the daring idea that a world-shared linguistic interlocutor is necessary for any one to have contentful state. But the discussion also paves a way, together with the resource available from some of Davidson's general ideas of meaning, allowing me to venture, in the second part of this paper, an account in which the triangulation would gain a position adequate to its purpose.

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<sup>2</sup> Pears' remark is attributed to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. I borrow Pears' words from Child (2001: 30).

<sup>3</sup> In fact, both accounts presuppose the unexplained notion of normative similarity. Any set of events will have endless properties in common. Talks of similarity make sense only by relating to concepts.

<sup>4</sup> The basic points of what I have said so far can be found in Davidson's "Externalisms" (2001b: 1-13). He criticizes two externalistic approaches on two points. First, they all fail to explain the notion of normative similarity, and, therefore, fail to make a clear distinction between "having a concept and simply having a disposition" (2001b: 4). Second, without an answer to the question of normative (relevant) similarity, the notion of causality or regularity alone does not suffice for an account of content.

<sup>5</sup> To mention only a few: [1982], [1983], [1989], [1991a], [1991b], [1991c], [1992], [1993], [1997], and [2001b].

<sup>6</sup> It should become clear as our discussion unfolds that the Davidson's externalism is different significantly from the foregoing kinds. The account, like perceptual externalism, takes external cause to be essential to meaning constitution, but, unlike perceptual externalism, it proposes that, without a social mechanism of linguistic interaction, external cause will fail to fulfill its constitutive role of meaning. On the other hand, Davidson's externalism differs from social externalism in that the former requires social interaction, but the latter requires only group behaviors, for a satisfactory explanation of meaning.

## 2. Basic strategy

Davidson's triangulation admits different conceptions. One reason is that the triangulation is utilized by Davidson to advocate various basic but interrelated ideas, including, in part, the interdependence of language and thought, the sociality of intentionality, the interdependence among knowledge of one's own mind, other minds, and the external world. But, for our purpose, we choose to conceive it as partaking in an argument for the following thesis: (see, *e.g.*, Davidson, 2001a: 129):

- (E) [1] One cannot have any intentional state if one does not acquire the concept of error, [2] which one cannot have unless one is in linguistic communication with a real second person.

Davidson says very little about thesis [1], but has the triangulation for the plausibility of thesis [2].

To have a germane understanding of the triangulation, one has to take into seriously consideration its purpose, the key concept of which is the concept of error. The concept of error, according to Davidson, comes in a package with the concept of truth, the concept of belief, the concept of objective world, the capacity of judging similarity and mastering the distinction between correct and incorrectness, and some other concepts. It is thus a good way to understand the concept of error by sketching out its connections to the other concepts. The concept of truth is a good place to cut in, since for Davidson there is a close and obvious connection between the concept of truth and meaning.

Davidson's conception of the concept of truth is meant to capture an essential feature of human cognition. A human being not only has the mental capacity to represent the world, but also has the mental capacity of appreciating that he is doing so. The latter kind of cognitive capacity is not the kind of disposition to directly respond to whatever comes up in the environment, but a kind of capacity to qualify some direct representations by way of comparing them with some concept, norm or principle. The mental capacity of comparing direct representations with some norms requires that the agent knows that the direct representations of the world are as the agent takes them to be, not as the way the world is. In other words, the agent must know that some representations are merely subjective and hence subject to error. Knowing something to be subjective and knowing something to be objective are two faces of a single coin. Thus, One cannot have the ability of appreciating that one is thinking of the world unless one is in command of the distinction between the objective and the subjective. In Davidson's words, one cannot know one is in a state of believing unless one has the concept of truth.<sup>7</sup>

Let's put the point from a different angle. Human cognition not only *represents things in accord with rules*, but also *applies rules to representations*.<sup>8</sup> We apply rules to representations because we know that our representations could be wrong. A rule is a normative conception, by means of which can one distinguish what is correct from what is wrong. One cannot know one has a belief without apprehending that the belief could be wrong. Davidson would say that if I have a belief that it is raining, since I know that it is a belief, I must know that it could be wrong. In its nature, the concept of belief is intrinsically connected to the concept of truth and the concept of error. In short, Davidson connects the concept of truth (and the concept of error) with the concept of belief, and takes them as essential features of thought.<sup>9</sup> We have seen that for Davidson, the concept of error, the concept of belief, the concept of truth, the concept of objective and the concept of a norm (and some others) are all intimately connected to each other. One cannot have one without any of the others and each of them is necessary for one to have thoughts and meaningful talk.

One more stroke is needed to the portrait of the purpose of the triangulation for our latter

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<sup>7</sup> As we have pointed out, Davidson has said little about thesis (1). But, if we consider the fact that human cognition is a process of constantly evaluating the quality of whatever comes to mind, it is hard to imagine that such a kind of cognitive capacity would be possible if we were not aware of the fact that we are thinking and believing and that we are consequently subject to error. As for linguistic practice, it is hard to imagine that one could have a language without the ability to apply rules that would distinguish the correct applications of words from the incorrect ones.

<sup>8</sup> The formulation of the two concepts is directly borrowed from R. Brandom's [1997].

<sup>9</sup> A qualification is needed here. In attributing Davidson with this view, we do not thereby force upon him the thesis that there are rules, norms, or the like, existing prior to successful communication which impose standards dictating what is correct and what is not.

discussion. Comparing direct representation to concepts can be understood as applying concepts to stimuli. And applying a concept to stimuli involves judgement on the similarity among them according to the concept. Correspondingly, (E) is, in effect, equivalent to the following thesis:

- (N) One cannot have any intentional state if one does not have the capacity of judging similarity, which one cannot acquire unless one is in linguistic communication with a real second person in a shared world.

With the purpose of the triangulation set, I choose, for two reasons, to probe the triangulation by conceiving it as a continuance of Davidson's project of radical interpretation. The first is a general reason that both of them are intended to reveal constitutive elements of meaning. It is well known that Davidson employs radical interpretation to reveal some crucial elements involved in the constitution of meaning. And, as (N) indicates, the triangulation is meant to vindicate the idea that a world-shared linguistic interlocutor is necessary for the constitution of anyone's capacity of judging similarity and hence intentionality.

The second and a more specific reason is that both are intended, partly, to show crucial elements of meaning by way of manifesting what must be added to disposition to make it into conceptualization. Radical interpretation reveals crucial elements of meaning by revealing some elements that a radical interpreter has to attribute to her creature to make any sense of it. It is a kind of enterprise of constructing a theory of meaning the evidence for the justification of which must be "described in non-semantic terms" (Davidson, 1984b:142). By a way of finding out what must be added into the behavioral evidence to make sense of a creature, the radical interpreter reveals corresponding constitutive elements of meaning. On the other hand, Davidson, in "Externalisms" (2001b), places the triangulation in a picture to "make sense of the transition from mere disposition to conceptualization." (2001b: 8) His way of making sense of the transition from mere disposition to conceptualization is built on the difference between "an external commentator slipping in his categories to make sense of an isolated creature" and "a participant observing another participant doing his or its thing," (2001b: 8) (or, "seeing the relevant similarity of one animal's responses through the eyes of another animal.") (2001b: 12) The reason why an external commentator has to slip in her categories, standards of judging similarities, in her interpretation is that what her creature provides her is nothing but dispositional response as resource of interpretation, but dispositional response is too thin to conceptualization. The transition from disposition to conceptualization is a process, like radical interpretation, of finding out what must be added into the initial evidence to make sense of the creature. Eventually, Davidson arrives at the conclusion that, for interpretation and hence intentionality to be possible, a social setting must be added into disposition as its embodiment. I shall spell out the detail of the transition later.

An external commentator and a radical interpreter share with each other the same initial position and the general goal of interpretation – both have to begin with nothing but dispositional responses of their creatures to arrive at some general claims on the nature of meaning. But the former approach, with the triangulation as an essential part of it, reveals social elements of meaning that are not explicitly told in the project of radical interpretation. On this very general reason, we may expect that triangulation is an extended part of the project of radical interpretation.

### **3. The ambiguity of the concept of cause**

So, let's set the first scene of our survey be a special kind of radical interpretation, which consists of an interpreter and an isolated creature to be interpreted. The plan, to repeat, is that if it is shown that this kind of radical interpretation founders, then it is shown that something crucial for meaning is absent from the isolated creature case – something essential for the constitution of meaning must lay besides individual speakers. And if it is shown that a second creature needs to be add into the picture as a world-shared linguistic interlocutor to the first creature for the interpretation to get going, then sociality is shown to be an constitutive part of meaning.

A radical interpreter is an externalist who believes that what determines the content of an intentional state, utterance or thought, is partially but essentially involved with the external things

causing the intentional state.<sup>10</sup> Thus, to make sense of a creature, our interpreter is required to be able to determine the typical external causes (hereafter, causes) of the creature's intentional states. That is, she must be able to correlate the creature's prompted responses, especially linguistic ones, with the circumstance that elicit them. To recognize the correlation, she is further required being capable of not only perceiving similarity of his creature's verbal responses and similarity of the stimuli, but also making judgments on the similarities.

Davidson suggests that here our interpreter faces the problem that he calls "the ambiguity of the concept of cause" (2001a: 129), which, he thinks, will block the interpretation. According to Davidson, in the present case, the cause of a response of the isolated creature is doubly ambiguous. "The first ambiguity concerns how much of the total cause of a belief is relevant to content"; the second has to do with the ambiguity with respect to the location, whether it is distal or proximal, of the relevant stimulus. (2001a: 129) Without the problem of double ambiguity being solved, "there is no answer to the question what it is in the world to which we are responding" (2001a: 128) and hence there is no answer to the question what specific content of our intentional state is. Let's call the first ambiguity the ambiguity of width, and the second, the ambiguity of depth.

The failure of resolving any of the two ambiguities will indeed render the content of an utterance indeterminate. They are nonetheless distinct -- one may persist when the other is removed. One might determine the relevant part or aspect of the total cause of a verbal response without being able to determine the whereabouts of the cause. On the other hand, one might find a way of determining the location of the cause of a verbal response without the part of the cause relevant to the response being delineated. Furthermore, the two ambiguities have bearings on different aspects of the issue of objectivity. Our beliefs can be said to be about things in the world external to us, and hence their truths to be determined by things independent of us, unless the location of the causes of our beliefs can be determined in the distal. Thus, an important sense of objectivity of content would be buried in the ambiguity of depth, even when we assume that the ambiguity of width is resolved. On the other hand, unless the relevant range of the total cause of a verbal response can be fixed, there is no way to tell whether a further response is to a similar cause and hence the distinction between correctness and incorrectness will be demolished. This is because that anything is similar with another thing in some respect. A different aspect, and perhaps a more fundamental one, of objectivity (and normativity) will be lost in the ambiguity of width even with the assumption that the ambiguity of depth is removed.

This is where Davidson explicitly wedges his triangulation in his explanation of the normativity of meaning. He introduces it to show why either ambiguity cannot be removed unless our interpreter has in her interpretation at least a world-shared, real, interlocutor to her previously isolated creature. To see why, for Davidson, the isolated creature case dooms at the two ambiguities, we have to see what, for Davidson, needed resource for the removal of the two ambiguities is available in the interpretations of multiple object in interaction, but not in the case of isolated creature.

Let's consider the ambiguity of depth first, since it is the problem Davidson deals with when he first employed the triangulation. In fact, the triangulation is often formulated explicitly as a solution to the problem of depth, but not obviously to the problem of width (1991b: 159, emphasis mine; see also 1993: 263):

What seems basic is this: an observer (or teacher) finds (or instills) a regularity in the verbal behavior of the informant (or learner) which he can correlate with events and objects in the environment. This much can take place without developed thought on the part of the observed, of course, but it is a necessary condition for attributing thoughts and meanings to the person observed. *For until the triangle is completed connecting two creatures, and each creature with common features of the world, there can be no answer to the question whether a creature, in discriminating between stimuli, is discriminating between stimuli at sensory surfaces or somewhere further out, or further in. Without this sharing of reactions to common stimuli, thought and speech would have no particular content - that is, no content*

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<sup>10</sup> See Davidson, 1985: 478-80; 1989: 195; 1991a: 200; 1996: 161-2. The adoption of radical interpretation as the main strategy of our discussion presupposes the idea that meaning requires something beyond speaker's skin. But the assumption is very minimal in that it does not involve what those external elements are and how they partake in the constitution.

*at all*. It takes two points of view to give a location to the cause of a thought, and thus to define its content.

The idea of the triangulation is this. Our radical interpreter observes that there are two causal lines, each of them consists of two sets of covering events, stretching from near to far, correlating with some response(s). Then by intersecting the two causal lines the interpreter can pick out an event from both sets of covering events as the common cause of the response(s) (if those responses have a common cause). The crucial but controversial point Davidson wants to make in the story is that it takes at least two creatures to establish the needed causal lines and the triangulation. If Davidson is right, then our radical interpreter must have as objects of her interpretation at least two creatures interacting with each other in a shared world for the determination of the causes and the references of their utterances, and the attribution of conceptual state, to be possible.

But why, in the first place, does the ambiguity of depth arise in the interpretation of an isolated creature? The answer indicated by the triangulation seems to be that it is the number of creature to be interpreted that somehow introduces the ambiguity. However, a careful inspection of the triangulation shows otherwise. The triangulation is a causal triangulation which, for our interpreter, consists of two causal lines from the two distinctive responses, issued at a given time, belonging respectively to her two creatures to a common cause. But, since it is a causal triangulation, what crucial for the determination of the common cause is the two distinctive causal lines, not the two different creatures. The second creature, in Davidson's picture, functions only as a response generator, a point in a causal line. The second creature is substitutable by some other response generator, say, a sense organ. That is to say, what matters for the triangulation is the *amount of different causal connections*, not the amount of different *creatures*.

To put the point differently, the resource of the ambiguity of depth is not the singularity of creature but the singularity of causal connection between response and stimulus. Given a single causal chain type between a type of responses and a type of stimuli, there are various regularities, covarying within the whole causal chain type, that qualify as candidates for the stimuli. The regular stimuli that prompt the response might be the similarity of things at a distance, or the similarity of the stimulation of its nerve endings, or any of various regularities in between. That is to say, a causal chain type by itself is *insufficient* for the determination of the common cause of those response instances. The insufficiency indicates the ambiguity of depth.

Thus, to say that an isolated creature does not offer enough resource for the triangulation of common cause of responses is presupposing that the creature at a given time can generate at most only one casual response to a given object. But this presumption is simply a fantasy. A single creature could, of course, generate simultaneously two distinctive responses from two different sense organs to a common object. Material things are accessible to more than one of the senses at a given time. You can see a table, but you can also touch, taste, smell or even hear it at the same time. In fact, you can generate two distinct responses to an object with just one organ. You can touch it with both hands and see it through both eyes.

The ambiguity of depth so understood then will not be a real problem for our radical interpreter as an observer. The interpreter observes the causal connections between responses of two creatures and stimuli and correlates them to determine the location of the stimuli, but the causal connections of the same kind are available to, and similar triangulation can be done by the interpreter even when she faces only one creature. The latter kind of triangle is often small in size or short in one side, but they are solid triangles nonetheless. As Dretske observes (1981: 160), if a system has two or more different sensory devices, then the system can single out the cause of the responses of different sensory devices by the "intersection" of the different "flows of information," causal lines, of the responses of the devices. Dretske here offers a kind of triangulation similar to Davidson's, when the latter is conceived as a kind of causal triangulation, and hence it is possible to understand it in a similar way. If this is the case, then the role of Davidson's second creature is the same as Dretske's second device *within a system*. And our interpreter of course can observe those causal connections and correlates them to locate the common causes of the responses.

Another possible answer to the question why the ambiguity of depth is a problem for the interpretation of an isolated creature is suggested in an analogy to the problem of depth from Davidson's [1982]. The analogy goes as follows. Suppose that there is a miserable creature (or, one-eye creature, for the case to be more plausible), say I, bolted in the earth without possibility of

any moving, it would be impossible for me to change my previous visual perspective to acquire the concept of a three-dimensional space. Likewise, in order to say that my mental state is about something in the external world, I must be able to abandon my perceptual perspective. But how can I abandon my perceptual perspective? No matter how I may move my body, what I perceive could be just something on my nerve endings. The change of my perceptual content does not provide me sufficient resource to determine the locus of the things I think of, just like the change of my visual content, when I am bolted to the earth, cannot determine the distance of the objects for me. But now this could only mean, as it seems, that I become another person who is related to the same content and has a different perspective on it. Since this is impossible, we need, it is argued, a *real* second person, someone whose “innate similarity responses are sufficiently like [his] own to provide an answer to the question of what the stimulus is to which the speaker is responding” (Davidson, 1992: 264; cf. Davidson, 1990: 77-8). “If we consider a single creature by itself, its responses, no matter how complex, cannot show that it is reacting to, or thinking about, events a certain distance away rather than, say, on its skin.” (Davidson, 1992: 263) A solitary person may be experiencing a feeling of sameness or discrepancy, but there is no answer to the question of what he takes this sameness or discrepancy to concern. Davidson puts this point with his customary verve and dash: “The solipsist’s world can be any size; which is to say, from the solipsist’s point of view it has no size, it is not a world.” (1992: 263) Davidson suggests that in addition to the discriminative mechanisms, we need some mechanism to fix right cause (in fact, fix it in the external world), and therefore content of speech. He argues, via the triangulation, that the mechanism must be a social interaction.

Here our interpreter imagines that she was in the position of an isolated creature with access to the world only through what happen in her nerve endings. Since what happen in her nerve endings, no matter how dynamic and complex, might just be there, she thinks that she alone cannot determine the locus of the causes of those nerve states. In a sense, she thinks she might be bolted in her own mind.

It should be clear that the triangulation by itself renders no solution at all to the ambiguity of depth so conceived. The problem now is not generated from the interpreter’s external perspective, but from the isolated creature’s internal perspective. But from the internal perspective, providing more creatures, or any thing, for the creature in question would be just give it more to discriminate. That is to say, the second creature and whatever it does, for the first creature, could be just some stimulation on its nerve endings.

The foregoing criticism will make it more difficulty to see how the triangulation works, but it does not defeat the triangulation, since what Davidson tries to demonstrate is only that a social setting is necessary, but not sufficient, for the content. The lesson the triangulation tells us should be that if content determination is based solely on what is available from *perceptual* discriminative mechanism, there is no way to solve the ambiguity of depth. It is said that, in addition to the perceptual discriminative mechanisms, we need some other mechanism to fix right cause and fix it in the distal. This is fine, but why must the additional mechanism be a social interaction as suggested by the triangulation?

It amounts to ask why do we need the social triangulation to save our isolated creature out of his mind? The answer should be that unless the social triangulation is available to the creature, it is unable to acquire a different perspective to contrast with its own and thus to realize that the whereabouts of the causes of its mental contents transcend its perceptual discriminative mechanism. It is not clear what the “different perspective” means. But if a different perspective means a perspective, whatever it is, of a different creature, then the argument simply begs the question at issue. One must have already realized that there is something outside of his perceptual discriminative mechanism before he realizes that there is a real someone other than him. The different perspective would thus be more plausibly be conceived as nothing but a different causal line, especially when we conceive the social triangulation as a causal triangulation served as a means to determine the common cause of various responses. However, if the social triangulation is merely a causal triangulation available to the creature, there is less reason to assume that the creature’s own “inner triangulation” is not available to itself. “Inner triangulation” means the triangulation of two causal lines issued from two organs of one’s own to a common cause. But we are simply in a position to have a better observation of our own responses than others’ responses. Even though it is too good a position on which we sometimes do not aware of that we have it.



In fact, even if the problem of depth so conceived is a real philosophical problem, there might be an individualistic account to solve the problem. It is not difficult to construct an evolutionary account to make the point that unless a creature is responding to distal objects rather than others, it will not survive long.<sup>11</sup> And, surely, many animals with a generally solitary life have survived long.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. The indeterminacy of category

Despite some obvious textual supports (*e.g.*, Davidson, 2001b: 4, 7-8), the ambiguity of depth conceived in either of the foregoing ways might not be what Davidson's triangulation is really meant to deal with. There are two different questions involved when we ask where the causes of some responses are, and it is important to keep them clear. When a scientist inquires for a general causal law and asks where the cause of a response of a system is, he is trying to locate the cause independent of how the system conceives it. But when our interpreter works on to rationalize her creature and inquires into where the cause of a verbal response is, she is trying to understand what the location the creature *takes* to be the location of the cause of his response. Since the triangulation concerns with meaning, it is the latter, not the former, question that matters for Davidson.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, our talks of locating cause of utterance should be completed by the talk of determining the whereabouts that speaker locates the causes of his own utterances. The matter is about how our interpreter understands how her creature *classifies* things, whether as the distal or the proximal.

The question we should, then, be concerned with is what must be involved in determining the causes taken by a creature to be the causes of its own responses? To see the ambiguity of depth as the problem of locating causes of verbal responses would substantially underestimate the force of Davidson's argument. Davidson might happily grant that it is an individualistically obtainable fact that our intentional states are about distal objects without yielding the point that there is no answer to the question of what a person in isolation takes to be the objects of his talk. Let me demonstrate this point.

Let our interpreter be P and the isolated creature S. Since the sets of covarying events typically cause the two person's similar responses are different, it is legitimate to suppose that what causes S's response R is some event in the covarying event set  $\langle S_{\text{distal}}, S_1, S_2, S_{\text{proximal}} \rangle$  and what cause P's response R is some event in a different covarying event set  $\langle S_{\text{distal}}, P_1, P_2, P_{\text{proximal}} \rangle$ . Now, suppose that it is indeed a naturalistic fact that S is responding to  $S_{\text{distal}}$ , P, by observing S, can indeed preclude  $S_1, S_2,$  and  $S_{\text{proximal}}$  from being the event that cause S's response R. However, this does not give P any entitlement to identify the remaining event as  $S_{\text{distal}}$ , since its covarying events in set  $\langle S_{\text{distal}}, P_1, P_2, P_{\text{proximal}} \rangle$ , *i.e.*,  $P_1, P_2, P_{\text{proximal}}$ , are not precluded by P. It might be a fact that P responds to  $S_{\text{distal}}$ , but, as a theorist, we, by P's similarity of responses alone, lack of any ground to say that P is taking the causes as  $S_{\text{distal}}$  but not others, since we know that different events might cause the same similar responses.

Now if what we concern becomes that what must be available to our radical interpreter to determine the whereabouts that her creature locates the causes of his utterances, we are concerned with the question what must be available to our interpreter to determine the way that her creature classifies things. Here, the ambiguity of depth and the ambiguity of width find their common ground. Recall that the ambiguity of width concerns "how much of the total cause of a belief is relevant to content" (Davidson, 2001a: 129). What is the relevant part of the total cause to content is the part that speaker take to be relevant to his own utterance. Both ambiguities are about how a speaker classifies things. Some textual evidences suggest this is the question that Davidson is dealing with,<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Davidson seems to express sympathy with evolutionary line of thought by his comment that "evolution had something to do with" (1991a: 200) the fact that we find it natural and easy to class things together in the ways that we do, and that we do classify distal things together.

<sup>12</sup> In "Progress on Two Fronts" (1996), Quine has proposed a detailed theory along with this line.

<sup>13</sup> Some critics of Davidson's triangulation are based on a confusion of this distinction. See, for instances, Talmage, 1997: 142-3, and Verheggen, 1997: 363-4.

<sup>14</sup> Davidson remarks: "The challenge is to put the lions in a position to distinguish these cases (actions in unison and in deviance). To do this we have to eliminate the dependence on *my arbitrary*

and for Davidson the necessary resource mentioned above must include a triangulation situation. Davidson seems to suggest that responses of an isolated creature do not force the interpreter to cite among various possible standards of classification one standard as the standard of the creature's classification.

However, it should be noticed that, as the above demonstration indicates, the causal triangulation by itself does not provide sufficient resource for our radical interpreter to determine how its creatures classify things. Neither creature might share the same standard with our interpreter. But, again, it is of no harm to Davidson, since he is merely arguing for necessity, not sufficiency.

Is an interpreter facing an isolated creature really doomed at the indeterminacy problem? Let's see what we can get from Davidson's answer to the question why an interpreter, after she triangulates the two causal lines issued from her two creatures, chooses distal objects rather than others as the subject matter of the responses? Davidson's answer to this question is both concise and suggestive: "because it is natural - to us." (1992: 262; cf. 1991a: 200) First thing to be noticed is that it is natural to us, not natural *tout court*. Second is that, taking into consideration Davidson's conception of citation of cause, the naturalness here must be normative. For Davidson, citing cause is interest related. What cause is cited or how cause is specified depends on what explanatory interest one is after. (cf, 2001b: 216) When semantics is the concern, the explanatory interest is normative, since the purpose of interpreting one's talks is to make one's talk and thought as intelligible and rational as possible. Accordingly, when Davidson says that it is natural to us to cite distal objects as the subject matter of our responses, the naturalness here must be our normative nature.

Now if this is really what Davidson has in mind about "natural to us", then, it is argued, Davidson's reason for the question why the radical interpreter chooses distal objects as objects of responses is that the choice is dictated by her normative standard, including standard of grouping things. Our interpreter has no choice but to cite distal objects as objects that her interpretee takes to be the causes of their responses. If this is so, then we may wonder why the problem of indeterminacy of standard of similarity arises for the interpreter who counters an isolated creature. The interpreter can do the triangulation, and classify common causes by her own categories, and the problem of indeterminacy is solved. That is to say, if the interpreter can solve the problem of indeterminacy of standards of similarity by appealing to her own standard of similarity, she can solve, by the same way, the problem generally, both in the social and isolated creature cases. Moreover, if our worry is that since the standard of similarity is projected by the interpreter, the creature might have different standard from hers, then the worry will not be dispelled by merely adding more creature into her interpretation.

In fact, some have argued that the worry of indeterminacy of standard of similarity should not even make sense to a philosopher like Davidson who rejects the notion of a radically different conceptual scheme. It is argued that the rejection of the notion of a radically different conceptual scheme implies a rejection of the notion of a radically different standard of similarity (on perceived objects). Thus, it is unintelligible, for Davidson, to say that the interpreter and the speaker might have different standards of grouping things, so different that the interpreter might lose track to the truth and reference of her speaker's utterance. As Yalowitz criticizes Davidson: "Without the possibility of 'alternatively' constituted interpreters [with different standard of similarity], the part of this remark ["because it is natural to us"] loses its power to elevate the importance of some particular interpreter, constituted in some particular way, in the determination of what the speaker is responding to." (1999: 117)<sup>15</sup> In a word, without the worry of the indeterminacy of standard of classification, the triangulation seems to lose its immediate target.

## 5. Intentionality outruns disposition

I am not sure that the rejection of a radically different conceptual scheme is incompatible with the admitting of different standards of grouping basic things. The rejection concerns more with the

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(or interested) choice of relevantly similar responses on the parts of the lionesses." (emphases mine, 2001b: 7)

<sup>15</sup> Fennell has a similar objection in his 2000: 149-50.

notion of uninterpretability than that of difference. We can imagine deviant similarity classes, like Goodman's 'grue' or Kripke's 'quus', to generate threat to the distinction between correctness and incorrectness in some particular cases. Admittedly, the imagination is possible only against massive number of similarity standards we commonly take at face value. But, fortunately, we can bypass this issue.

There is indeed a problem of classification, but it needs not to be conceived as being based on the assumption of the possibility of different standards of grouping things. A main point of the triangulation is that without interpersonal interaction, one cannot have any interpretable intentional state and therefore cannot be rational. It might be true that if a creature is interpretable, it must share the same standards of grouping things with its interpreter. But this by no means implies that a creature alone can acquire the standards, since it is possible that it takes at least two people in interaction to generate the standards of grouping. The point is not that we cannot, solely on the ground of responses, tell what is the way one groups things together, but that we have no way to tell solely on that ground whether he has a way of grouping things. Differently put, it is not that we cannot tell from responses alone what standard of grouping things one has, but that we in principle cannot tell whether one has any standard of grouping things at all – there is no answer at all to the question whether he has intentional states.<sup>16</sup> As Davidson says: “although the objective criterion of the determination of what objects or events the agent is speaking of is the similarity among the agent’s various responses to the same type of objects or events, the criterion of the similarity cannot be derived from the agent’s responses.” (1991b: 159)

Davidson spells out this point in terms of an external interpreter. An external commentator, or an external interpreter as I would call it, is an interpreter what available to her from her interpretee is nothing but his dispositional behaviors. (cf. Davidson, 2001b: 8) On that basis, she has no choice but to classify her interpretee's responses and their stimuli as similar *by her own categories*. But, if relevant similarity of a creature’s responses is made out through the standard of classification superimposed by his interpreter, it might be that the regularity manifested in the creature’s behaviors embodies no conceptualization at all. It is reasonable to say that a creature like a cow is capable of discriminating and reacting to things. It is also reasonable to suppose that a creature sharing a world with us discriminate and react like the way we do. (cf. Davidson, 2001b: 11) It might even be true that creatures of a kind share with one another the same standard of classification, if they have any. (cf. Davidson, 2001b: 5) But these by themselves are not sufficient for attributing conceptual thought. As long as the standard of classification is superimposed by the interpreter, there is always a possibility that the creature has no conceptual thought at all. The worry of the dependence of the interpreter’s choose of standard of similarity is the worry that the creature might have no conceptual state at all.

Consider Davidson’s remarks on this point:

Nothing in this story [triangulation] suggests the necessity of thought, conceptualization, or error, even if the creatures occasionally fail to act in concert. No doubt we can say, looking on our conceptual advantage, that one of the creatures has gone wrong when it reacts, perhaps verbally, to the fake cow as it does to real cows. The problem is to put the creatures in a position to think this. Something must be added which will make the difference between the cases where the creatures act in unison, and the cases where they do not, available to the creatures themselves.

This can be done by adding a further element of association or natural induction: each creature associates the other creature’s responses with stimuli from the shared world. (2001b: 6)

The challenge is to put the lions in a position to distinguish these cases (actions in unison and in deviance). To do this we have to eliminate the dependence on my arbitrary (or interested) choice of relevantly similar responses on the parts of the lionesses. A further element enters when the lions cooperate to corner their prey. Each watches the other while both watch the gazelle, noting the other’s reactions to the changes of direction. ( 2001b: 7)

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<sup>16</sup> This is hinted in Davidson’s remark: “The point [of the triangulation] is not to identify the norm, but to make sense of there being a norm.” (2001b: 7)

My interpretation is in effect to read, perhaps in a rather watering down way, “eliminate the dependence on my arbitrary (or interested) choice of relevantly similar responses on the parts of the lionesses” in the remark as “unload the dependence on my standard of judging relevantly similarity among responses onto the lions”.

On this understanding, the triangulation is understood as a way of unloading the worry of the dependence. It is to argue that unless the social triangulation is there for our interpreter, she will be lack of a necessary ground of attributing intentionality and deciding that her creature does have the capacity of appreciating the causes of its responses. However, we do not really have yet an answer to the question what contribution the triangulation makes to our interpreter enabling her to do so. With the question unanswered, we cannot decide whether the interpreter can do so when she facing an isolated creature.

But two points emerge from the discussion so far. The first is that whatever Davidson takes the second creature to contribute to the speaker’s appreciation of the causes of his responses, it cannot be mere a different causal line toward the same object. The second is that intentionality outruns dispositions. Regularity matters for interpretation must be involved with classification – this is the point of normative similarity. The capacity of classification, as have said, implies an awareness of the distinction between correctness and incorrectness, and vice versa. The second point opens an avenue that might lead to a new understand of the triangulation.

The initial resource of our radical interpreter is indeed very thin. What available to her is nothing but causal connections that she takes to be there among some stimuli and responses. However, even on this very thin basis, our interpreter has a lot to reflect on the nature of interpretation. First of all, she shall realize that her judgements of various similarity relations and her judgements of mistaken of responses depend on her own concepts. The dependence raises doubts as to whether her creature has conceptual states at all. But, the dependence also indicates that in order to say that her creature has intentional states, there must be a way for her, without any detailed knowledge of the creature’s intentional states, to say that the creature is capable of classifying things together. Or, interpretation cannot be carried out in purely dispositional terms; it has to be involved with classification on the part of creature to be interpreted. Or, to say the least, there is an assumption of interpretation that an interpretee must be a classifying agent. My reading is supported by the following remark from Davidson (2001b: 8):

The trouble is, we move in a circle when we appeal to what is natural for us in order to explain conceptualization itself – to explain, in other words, what is natural for us. Triangulation faces the problem in the only way it can be faced, by introducing the interaction of classifying agents.

But, even though the idea that conceptualization outruns dispositions implies that creature to be interpreted must be classifying agent, it does not obviously imply that the number of classifying agent must be more than one. Sociality is not yet in sight.

But, our radical interpreter tells us more. As have said, regarding a creature as a classifying agent implies regarding it as possessing the concept of error. And we find that our interpreter shall realize that in order for her to say some response is in mistake or deviance, she must perceive the similarity of the relevant stimuli, the similarity of the relevant responses, and the correlation among them. This in turn makes her realizing that for her creature to have the concept of error, it also must be able to perceive the similarities and correlate them. Our problem now turns to be that what similarity it must perceive; does it need a second creature to have the necessary similarity for the concept of error?

Given the assumption that an object of interpretation must be a classifying agent, our question is equivalent to this: Is it consistent to say that there might be an isolated creature, assuming that it is capable of classifying, who can possess the concept of error? As the Davidsean story I am about to tell, the triangulation can be construed as a way of giving a negative answer to this question. Imagine a case in which an isolated creature observes its own reactions to things in the world. Let’s ask then what resource must be there for the creature to judge that a particular reaction of its is mistaken? To make the judgement, the creature has to be able to classify some previous reactions as similar and some previous stimuli as similar, and to judge that there is a correlation between them. When the correlation is breakdown, the creature can say it is in mistaken. However, it might be

argued that there is no ground for the isolated creature to judge that the correlation is breakdown. The crucial point is that the needed two classifications cannot be done separately. Reactions are judged to be similar because they have similar causes. Causes are said to be similar because they prompt similar reactions. The correlation between the two similarity relations is internally built into each similarity judgement. When a reaction occurs, the creature has to decide that it is caused by an object of a type in order to say that the reaction is similar to those reactions typically cause by objects of the type, and vice versa. But then it should be obvious that the notion of a deviant reaction has no niche here. A reaction is judged to be mistaken on either of the following two grounds: first, it is deviant from a set of similar reactions which are said to have similar causes with the deviant one; second, it responses to a wrong object, an object which is not similar to those objects typically causing those reactions similar to the supposedly deviant reaction. Either case, however, cannot be established. The similarity relation in each case will not be sustained since one similarity relation in each case that are needed for the judgement of the other similarity is supposedly not obtained.

It is said that the situation changes significantly when a second creature participates in. The first creature observes that some of the second creature's reactions are similar and some stimuli are similar, and that the two similarities are correlated. The first creature also observes that those stimuli cause similar reactions of its own, and that there is a correlation between the second creature's reactions and his own reactions towards the same set of stimuli. (The two similarities of reactions do not have to be similar. This indicates that the two creatures do not have to share with each other a same language.) Now, we have three interrelated similarities. We need only the correlation between two of them to build up a standard to judge that the other similarity relation is broken down. In this reading, the triangulation is a causal triangulation functioning as a necessary means for the correlation of the three similarities and hence necessary for the concept of error to emerge.

No matter whether this is what Davidson's triangulation really wants to tell us, it does not work anyway. The reason is simply that a single creature could have different sense organs generating different sets of reactions to a set of similar objects. It appears that, in the case of isolated creature, the necessary correlations are obtainable and the notion of a deviant response will get a grip.

My complaint is that even if intentionality outruns disposition, it implies only that a creature can be interpreted as having intentional states only if it has the capacity of classifying things, but not obviously that we need at least two classifying agents. Moreover, even if the creature to be interpreted must perceive regularities to have the concept of error, it might require the necessity of a causal triangulation, but not obviously the necessity of a second creature.

## **6. Where the triangulation matters**

We have tried out three interpretations on Davidson's triangulation. None of them makes it live up to its purpose. The first reads it as a causal triangulation designed for showing that the problem of depth cannot be solved without a social setting -- there is no answer to the question what things that a creature is responding to without its having a world-shared linguistic interlocutor. But this reading renders the triangulation facing an illusory problem. That is to say, the problem of depth is not a real problem for an interpreter facing an isolated creature. The second reads the triangulation as a way of resolving the threat posing from the indeterminacy of standard of similarity. But there is a troublesome challenge questioning whether the threat is a genuine one for a philosopher like Davidson, who rejects the intelligibility of a radically variant conceptual scheme. It is also found that if an interpreter can solve the indeterminacy problem by appealing to her own standard of classification, she can solve the problem generally, whether in the multiple object case or in isolated creature case. The third reading implements the triangulation with two theses. One is that intentionality outruns disposition, so that relevant similarity must be made from the perspective of interpretee; the other is that the interpretee must perceive regularities. With these theses, the triangulation is read as arguing for the point that unless there is another creature a creature will be lack of some necessary regularity to perceive in order to generate the concept of a deviant action. But, as we have just shown, this reading also fails to make the triangulation work.

But we can still gather some observations from our discussion. First, on the first reading, the triangulation is introduced to deal with problem of locating the common causes of different responses. It is thus reasonable to expect that the concept of common cause plays a crucial role in

Davidson's account of normativity. Second, it is the point, again, that conceptualization outruns disposition, and the especially important idea it implies: a creature can be interpreted as having intentional states only if it has the capacity of classifying things together.

These observations, together with the resource available from some other Davidsonian ideas of meaning, allow us to construct a context in which the role the triangulation plays in accounting for the normativity and social dimension of meaning can be made intelligible.

Two points of my proposal should be mentioned beforehand. First, I am going to conceive Davidson's triangulation in a context of Davidson's general conception of meaning. Recall that we are concerning with the question what, for Davidson, constitutive elements of meaning that make its normative dimension possible -- why is a world-shared interlocutor necessary for one's intentionality? Secondly, since, as have shown in the second section, the capacity of classification and the possession of the concept of error are interdependent, the second observation allows us to conceive the triangulation as a means of dealing with a general problem of objectivity. It is to explain how each of our basic (empirical) beliefs could be false. To be more precise, it is to explain what is it about meaning that makes it possible for one to appreciate that each of his beliefs might be false. In other words, the triangulation is understood as a way of understanding how the concept of error, and other related concepts, such as truth, is applicable to each of our beliefs.

So, the specific question we now concern is this: what is it about meaning that makes a creature independent of any world-shared linguistic interlocutor impossible of appreciating that each of its beliefs might be false?

Davidson famously holds that a belief will not have the content it has unless it is embedded in a web of generally consistent and coherent beliefs. On this view, for one to be rational (*i.e.*, to have any intentional state at all) most of one's beliefs must have logical and epistemic relations among one another. This constraint is *a priori*, so each and every belief system is in general coherent and consistent. Moreover, as an externalist, Davidson holds that there are constitutive connections between the contents of our "plainest and... most basic" (1983: 317) beliefs and events in the actual environment that cause them. It is thus a constitutional principle of belief that most of our beliefs are consistent and true. Semantic holism and externalism together rule out global error in any belief system. This is a powerful argument, but, I want to claim, it is exactly because of this principle that makes it hard, in fact, impossible, for an individual, considered in isolation from others, to acquire the notion that each of his beliefs might be false.

*From within* an isolated belief system, the appreciation that any belief of the system might be false will not emerge. This is because that each belief system is *de facto* consistent in large. From within a belief system, a belief is ruled as error could only on the basis of its being inconsistent with some other beliefs (which is massive in number), the truth of which is not, and cannot be, questioned. It is a general fact that we take for granted the truth of most of our beliefs, and this indicates that there is no general ground of contrast for one to think, from within his belief system, that each of his beliefs might be false.

Still, it might be hoped that the world would lend some help *from outside* the belief system on this point. It might be argued that since most of our basic beliefs are caused by external events, the robust nature of those causes, once takes over, will continually dictates the truth of our basic beliefs. This last point might be true, but it does not render, in the case of an isolated creature, the external world a contrast ground for the emergence of the general concept of objectivity. External world can play the general role of contrasting only if it is viewed from a God's-eyes-view, and that Davidson will certainly not accept. It is futile to for one to intend to build up a general ground of contrast to one's own belief system via describing, belief-independently, how the world is. What one describes is just what one believes, and then we fall back to the position just described.

It is where the social elements must enter meaning. The above discussion forces us into a position to say that the possibility of general slack among beliefs only exists between beliefs belonging to different sets of beliefs. That means, in order for an individual to have the general notion of objectivity -- the idea that each of its beliefs might be false, there must be a different belief system available for the individual to contrast with. But the contrast is possible only if the individual understands the other individual's utterances. "We grasp the concept of truth [and the related concepts, such as the concept of error] only when we can communicate the contents - the

propositional contents - of the shared experience, and this requires language.” (Davidson, 1997: 27)  
As early as 1975, Davidson has already said: (170)

We have the idea of belief only from the role of belief in the interpretation of language, for *as a private attitude it is not intelligible except as an adjustment to the public norm provided by language*. It follows that a creature must be a member of a speech community if it is to have the concept of a belief. And given the dependence of other attitudes on belief, we can say more generally that only a creature that can interpret speech can have the concept of a thought.”

One's understanding of other's utterances requires the understanding of that those utterances share same subject matters with the utterances he himself would make in similar situations. In the externalistic spirit, the understanding of that one's talks are about the same things as other's talks requires the understanding of that those utterances in plainest and most basic cases are caused by the same things. The last understanding requires the understanding that one is in a situation of interpersonal causal triangulation.

It should be clear now that not any kind of triangulation works for this purpose, but only the kind of triangulation that helps interlocutors to determine the common cause of their talks and thoughts. The interpersonal triangulation helps to anchor their talks to common features of the external world and set same subject matters of their communications. The notions of common cause and same subject are crucial in Davidson's account of objectivity. This ought to be obvious. To admit that others are talking about the same things as you are, even by different words, is to admit that they are on the status of contradicting you. In other words, on any case in which you are aware of that others are talking about the same things as you are, you are aware of that, in each of those cases, what you believe to be true might turn out false.

A radical interpretation begins with nothing but evidence consisting of interpretee's dispositional responses. Our radical interpreter for sure can perceive and judge similarity relations among those responses, and thus to be able to say that her creature is responding in error or not. But she should realize that her interpretation is a false as long as the similarities of those dispositions are superimposed by her own standards of classification. This is because it is possible that those dispositions embody no conceptualization at all. Our interpreter must unload the capacities enabling her to make normative judgement of those dispositions onto her creature. They are the capacities of perceiving and judging similarities among dispositions. Thus, no matter what she needs to do the unloading, it is at least clear that for the interpretation to get going, she has to assume, from the very start, that if her interpretee has any intentional state, he must be a creature capable of both perceiving and judging similarity.

And, by reflecting the nature of meaning, our interpreter should also realize the following facts about interpretation. For a creature to have the general concept of objectivity, he must be aware of that each of his beliefs might be false. This awareness he will not have if he is alone all the time. There must be another creature having linguistic communication with him -- a creature who might pick out same objects in different ways from those that he might have. For externalism, to say two beliefs are about the same thing is to say that they are reliably elicited by similar things. For an individual to be aware of that the other is reacting to same things as he is, he must be capable of doing the triangulation as Davidson describes. In fact, as Davidson says, the individual must be able to take "cognitive advantage" of the triangular correlation between a second person, object and himself. The taking is an awareness of that he is talking about the same things as his interlocutor is. The taking is essentially involved with an understanding that each of his beliefs might be wrong. Thus, eventually, our interpreter realizes that there is an assumption of her interpretation that the interpretation must be an internal interpretation consisting of at least two creatures in a linguistic interaction.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> In our account, the necessity of social factor for meaning normativity is in effect derived, via a transcendental argument, from the nature of meaning independently of the triangulation. But the social factor cannot be embodied in meaning normativity unless the triangulation is added.

For sure, being able to take “cognitive advantage” of the triangulation, or even to communicate, or to triangulate common cause of one’s and interlocutor’s utterances, already presupposes having conceptual capacity. Our explanation are indeed, as Davidson says, “move in a circle”. But, the circularity fails only reductive attempt. It is not necessarily harmful to a philosopher like Davidson who believes connection is perhaps the only way to a genuine understanding of fundamental philosophical ideas.

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## 附錄二

### 戴維森詮釋理論的發展 -- 慈善原則的作用與證成

戴維森(Donald Davidson)的詮釋理論(theory of interpretation) -- 或他所稱的詮釋的方法論(methodology of interpretation) -- 主要的目的在於說明理解(understanding, make intelligible)一個語言必須涉及的要素。事實上，戴維森也將他的詮釋理論視為一個意義理論(theory of meaning)。戴維森認為，當我們說語言是有意義的(meaningful)，我們並不因此需將意義當作是一種抽象的實體(entity)或具體的對象，他認為，說一個語句或語詞是有意義的，只是說該語句或語詞是可以被理解的。在這樣的想法下，當理解一個語言所必須涉及的要素被充分說明時，那個語言的意義也就被充分說明。避免將意義對象化，並以語言理解的導向去說明意義，戴維森的意義理論，明顯的和英國經驗論(empiricism)到弗列格(Frege)的意義理論傳統脫鉤。

為了充分說明理解一個語言涉及了什麼要素，戴維森主要採取了**徹底詮釋(radical interpretation)**作為一個理論性的說明策略。徹底詮釋是以不預設關於對象語言的任何**特定語意知識(semantical knowledge)**作為起始點，而進行的一種詮釋，比方說，徹底詮釋者並不知道對象語言某個語句中的某個語詞是被詮釋對象用來表達什麼。用一個比喻的說法，對剛開始工作的徹底詮釋者而言，對象語言的言談在語意上是不透明的。是更具體的說，徹底詮釋一開始所訴諸的詮釋資料，是限定在那些詮釋者從詮釋對象的語言行為所能觀察到的(1993b: 84)，而且以「非語意語詞所描述」的資料(1984b:142)。這個關於詮釋資料上的限定，是為了充分揭發理解一個語言所涉及的各種要素，因為如果詮釋者對詮釋的資料已有某種語意上的理解，這些先存的理解要素，便會伴隨著那些作為詮釋基礎的資料，卻仍舊是詮釋的隱藏預設，不能被明白揭示出來。日常的詮釋可以以徹底詮釋來理解，但是它們並不是徹底詮釋，畢竟談話的人通常將彼此當作本地人而非異鄉人。但在日常詮釋中，許多重要的理解要素常常易被預設著、隱藏住，譬如，當一個說西班牙語的人詮釋一個說義大利語的人的言談，許多與詮釋者語言具有近似音的語句可以不經檢視它們的經驗條件而被視為同義，如此一來，在這種詮釋中，不僅言談的經驗條件在理解一個語言時所可能扮演的角色易被忽略，相關經驗條件可能涉及的更進一步的條件更容易被忽略。

戴維森不是一個行為主義者(behaviorist)，但是除了被詮釋對象的語言行為和相關的環境條件外，徹底詮釋者還能獲得什麼不涉及對象語言的特定語意知識的資源呢？戴維森說，「我不接受行為主義，而我明白的接受關於語句的意向性態度(intentional attitudes)[作為詮釋的證據]。」(1984f: 230-1)但是，若未先具有對象語言的特定語意知識，詮釋者可以從詮釋對象的語言行為和相關的環境條件，獲知什麼樣的關於語句的一般意向性態度？戴維森相信，「人們言談時意謂什麼，是從成功溝通的情境中推導出來的(derives from)」，因此，他將詮釋者所能獲得的證據，限

制在那些「觀察者在不藉助於儀器下可以明顯的(plainly)獲得的證據。」(1993b: 84)在這樣的限制下，蒯因(Quine)的刺激物(stimulus)不能算做詮釋證據。而戴維森認為，即使不理解對象語言中的語句的特定內容，我們仍舊可以從詮釋對象的語言行為和那些行為發生的環境中，認出他持他的語言中的哪些語句(言談)為真(holding...true)，亦即認出他認為哪些語句為真。「當然，可以觀察到的是關連到環境的言談行為，而從它，某種對於語句的態度可以被推導出來，就如同從選擇可以推導出偏好 -- 從那些行動中可以推導出，言說者是被某種類的事件(events)導致(cause)去持一語句為真。」(1990: 318)這個被戴維森視為一個外延(extensional)關係的持語句為真的態度，連同它所適用的語句和它所關聯的外在環境，將是戴維森詮釋理論的一個重要基礎，或更正確的說，一個最終能對意義現象作廣泛說明的切入點。

另一方面，如大家所熟知的，戴維森的詮釋理論是採用塔斯基(Tarski)式的真理理論(theory of truth)為架構。戴維森認為，一個針對某一語言的詮釋理論是適當的，當且僅當這個理論可以針對對象語言(object language)的任何一個語句導出一個作為該語句之詮釋的為真的定理，那些定理具有下列形式的語句：『R 為真當且僅當「S」』。這個要求就是塔斯基所謂的約定 T(Convention T)。符合上述形式的語句稱為 T 語句，其中 R 代表後設語言中的一個語句，S 代表對象語言中的一個語句。T 語句只表示語句 R 和語句 S 是邏輯上等值的(logically equivalent)，亦即它們具有共同的外延(co-extensive)，因此 T 語句本身也是外延的。在此，戴維森並不是將一個語句的意義等同於它的真值條件(truth condition) (1984c: 56)，他所主張的是，一個能將某個語言的所有語句的真值條件清楚的界定出來的理論，也將是一個能夠表明那個語言的所有語意內容的適當詮釋理論，而如果某個人具有針對某個語言的適當的詮釋理論的知識，他就理解了那個語言。在這個方案中，T 語句是作為一個詮釋理論是否正確的根據，因此，能否判斷某語句是否是為真的 T 語句，對於能否判斷一個詮釋理論是否正確的至為關鍵。

持為真的態度連同它所適用的語句，加上我們稍後將提到的一些預設，可以邏輯地轉換成 T 語句，因而與戴維森那以塔斯基真理理論為架構的意義理論緊密銜接。這個巧妙的搭合，使得雙方各自於語意說明上的潛質都得以充分的展現出來。詮釋對象持語句為真的態度，是徹底詮釋者剛開始詮釋時所收集的資料，所以他不能預設他理解那些語句的組成語素，語句對他而言尚未具有語意結構。但是一旦與戴維森那塔斯基真理理論為架構的意義理論搭合，詮釋者便得以以兼顧語言的構成性(compositionality)的方式，開始理解對象語言的語素的內容，以及從此衍生出的一些重要語意說明工作。這個重點值得稍微詳細地的重複一遍。戴維森認為，一個針對某一語言的意義理論必須具備一個語意結構，這個語意結構包括了一些語意公設(axioms)和一些構成規則(compositional rules)，前者賦予對象語言的字詞語意性質，亦即分別將指稱(reference)和外延(extension)賦予單稱詞和述詞，而構成規則則針對對象語言中的每一種語句類型，為它們決定它們的真值(truth values)是如何依憑於它們的組成元素的語意性質。我們可以從這些語意公設和構成規則，邏輯的推出一些語意定理(theorems)，它們將賦予語意性質給對象語言中的任何一個語句。(1984h: 26)而塔斯基的真理理論所提供戴維森意義理論的，正是這個破解語句結構的構成方法及語素的工具。對戴維森而言，一個字詞的語意角色，就是它對於它可能出現於其中的所有語句的真值(truth-value)所做出的貢獻，瞭解一個語詞的意義就是瞭解它對它可能出現的所有語句的真所做出的貢獻。而藉由塔斯基真理理論，戴維森可以比他的前輩蒯因，更明白的呈現出字詞

如何對它們可能出現的所有語句的真作出系統的語意貢獻。(1984d: 126 (n. 1), 130)如果這個理解語素之語意角色的作法是成功的，對於真理概念不能適用的語句 -- 如問句 -- 的語意說明工作明顯就往前走了一步。有一點值得在此強調，上述戴維森的意義理論中，作為語意說明的基本概念明顯是真這個概念，而非許多傳統意義理論視為語意基礎的指稱。對戴維森而言，字詞指稱何物，是詮釋者為說明所有語句的真值，而在一個意義理論中所作的理論設定，並非獨立於某個意義理論之外而有的文字與對象的一個關係，此外，由於語句的真值可以用具有不同的字詞語意設定的理論來加以說明(1984a: 48-9)，因此，如蒯因所主張的，戴維森認為，獨立於一個詮釋理論，我們不能說一個字詞指稱到何物，並且，由於許多針對同一語言的詮釋理論都是正確的，我們不能說一個字詞到底指稱的是何物，此即著名的指稱的不可測度說(the inscrutability of reference)。文字與世界的關係，對戴維森而言，嚴格說來只有真假關係。

另一方面，塔斯基真理理論本身的目的，是說明形式語言的真理概念的理論，戴維森將它當作一個針對自然語言的意義理論，是企圖以真理概念來說明意義概念。但是，這個真理概念不能只是詮釋者的真理概念，因為，在沒有提出進一步理由之前，我們至多只說能，詮釋者的真理概念只和他對他自己語言的意義和他對世界的看法有關，然而詮釋的目的在於理解被詮釋者的語言意義，詮釋者必須知道被詮釋者在什麼情境(occasions)下使用他的真理概念，才能從而理解他的言談和其他相關意向性狀態(intentional state) -- 如信念(belief)和欲望(desire) -- 的語意資訊。簡單的說，詮釋對象持語句為真的態度提供一個進路，使得戴維森的詮釋理論得以進入詮釋對象的意向性狀態領域。讓我們再詳細一點說明本段和上一段所提及的兩個面向。

詮釋對象持語句為真的態度提供了許多資源，讓詮釋者在理解對象語言的語意結構和語意內容(semantic content)兩方面的工作上，有很大的進展空間。在語意結構方面，持語句為真的態度本身就可以提供充分的資源，讓我們相當機械性地理解語句邏輯中的連結詞的意含。而如我們先前已說的，配合塔斯基的真理理論和其他稍後我們將提到的原則，持語句為真的態度將使得詮釋者破解語句的基本語素的語意角色和構成規則。當然，由於塔斯基的真理理論所運用的是初階邏輯(first-order logic)，以塔斯基的真理理論作為對自然語言的意義理論的語意表達架構，已經預設自然語言的邏輯架構是初階邏輯。但是自然語言真的服膺初階邏輯嗎？戴維森以一些實際的工作回答這個問題。戴維森對涉及內含性(intensional)脈絡的語句(1984p)、含副詞的語句(1980:245-52)、含指示詞的語句(1984o)、含因果概念的語句的作了邏輯分析，這些分析不僅本身極具新意，它們也呈顯許多傳統上認為不適用初階邏輯的語句種類，事實上是外延的，因此適用初階邏輯。這些成果仍有爭議，也不足以證明自然語言的所有語句真的服膺初階邏輯，但是似乎已足以讓我們對於，為一個自然語言構作一個以塔斯基真理理論為基礎的形式語意架構的可能性，保持相當的樂觀態度，也因此可以讓我們對，為一個自然語言構作一個詮釋理論的可能性，保持一定的樂觀態度。不可諱言，這個對語句邏輯和語意結構的分析工作，在許多理論細節上應當如何進行，還是一個尚待觀察的事。

持語句為真的態度所能提供建構形式語意架構的資源，已經非常耀眼，然而，它對於語意內容的詮釋工作所能提供的資源，將更令人吃驚。言說者持為真的語句，有些和言談的環境較為疏遠，有些則密切關聯。換言之，對於有些語句，言談者即使在相當不同的環境中都會認為它們是真的語句，它們的真較獨立於環境；而對於有些語句，言談者只有在特定的環境中才會認為它

們是真的語句，言說者持它們為真的態度相對緊密的受到環境的制約。這個相對的、程度的區分並沒有影響我們上個段落關於語句之語意結構的討論。但是這個區分對於理解徹底詮釋方案相當重要。詮釋一個語言當然不只是破解它的語意結構，更重要的是理解它的語意內容。要理解一個語言的語意內容，我們至少必須理解，這個語言用來描述世界的語句是關於世界的哪些部分。對戴維森而言，真理這個概念正是一個讓詮釋得以將意義和世界關聯起來的概念。就最基本的情形，我們可以說，一個人之所以持某些語句為真，是因為他認為它們如實的描述了世界的情況，它們所描述的世界和世界的實況是符合的。這也就是為什麼，對於詮釋者而言，詮釋對象持語句為真的態度將對象語言的語句和世界關聯起來，使得詮釋者有可能利用觀察詮釋者在什麼環境中持那些語句為真，來理解那些語句的語意內容，亦即理解詮釋對象以它們來談論什麼。這顯示，這個語意詮釋的工作中，那些在特定環境中的才會被持為真語句的語句，比其他語句扮演更為重要的角色。在實際進行詮釋時，只有在相當數量的前類語句中的語詞的語意內容被初步詮釋後，後面那類語句的語意內容，才能獲得初步詮釋，雖則詮釋工作在不久之後就明顯成為雙向性的，對後者的詮釋也能回過來對於前者的詮釋產生某種程度的影響。

一個人之所以持一個語句為真，受到許多因素影響，其中他對世界的認知狀態(包括觀察及信念)，以及他對該語句的語意內容的理解是兩個關鍵因素。持不同信念的人對同一句話，有些可能會認為它是真的，有些則可能不認為，譬如說，一個從你的角度看具有錯誤信念的人，對某些語句是否為真，將會與你有不同的意見。當然，當一句話的語意內容改變了，我們可能改變先前的態度，不再認為它是一句真的語句；換句話說，對一語句的內容有不同理解的人，便有可能對它是否為真，持不同的態度。(1984b: 142)讓我們舉一個特殊但與我們的討論直接相關的類型來說明。一個環境充滿了許許多多不同的事物，或是同時發生了許許多多不同的事情，因此在同一個環境中，對為數極多具有不同內容的語句，我們都可以認為它們是真的，那麼，當一個言說者觀察到不同的事物，因之產生不同的信念，他將會因而說出具有不同內容的話，亦即持不同語句為真。這種認知狀態和對語意的理解同時影響持語句為真的態度的情形，使得徹底詮釋者在認出被詮釋者持語句為真的態度時，仍須對被詮釋者的認知狀態有所理解，才有可能理解被詮釋者的言談的語意內容。然而，困難的是，我們必須了解一個人的某些特定言談的內容，才能了解他的特定認知狀態的內容。明顯的，這個認知狀態和語意認知的共生情形(conspiracy)似乎對詮釋造成了一個稱為詮釋的循環(hermeneutic circle)的困境。

在此，戴維森提出了著名的「慈善原則」(Principle of Charity)來解決這個認知狀態和語意認知的共生性所造成的詮釋問題。<sup>18</sup> (1975: 169; 1980: 221, 290; 1984b: 153; 1984d: 137; 1984c:

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<sup>18</sup> 威爾森(N. Wilson)在他的[1959]將慈善原則引入語言哲學。在 *Word and Object* 中，蒯因訴諸此原則去翻譯語句連接詞。而戴維森則將它運用在對整個語言的詮釋上。有時戴維森稱此原則為「理性的協議」(rational accommodation)原則(1982b: 18)。在戴維森駁斥概念的不可共量性(incommensurability)的論證中，和他駁斥信念的大體錯誤(massive error)的可能性的論證中，慈善原則扮演一個不可或缺的角色。(1984c, 1984g, 1986)

戴維森的慈善原則事實上具有不同形式。譬如說，有時候戴維森採取一個比我們先前所討論的那個更強的形式，這個更強的形式是，我們必須假設一個言說者相信為真的事大體而言將是**事實上**為真的。例如，他說，「在分享一個語言時，in whatever sense this

196-7)讓我們以信念為例，來說明慈善原則主要的一些內容與作用。關於信念，戴維森的慈善原則要求，詮釋者在詮釋時需假定，他的詮釋對象所具有的信念和詮釋者本身所具有的信念，大體上是相同的，而且詮釋對象大體上是理性的。比如說，詮釋者必須假設，在相同環境下，詮釋者的信念所關於的對象，和被詮釋者的信念所關於的對象，大體上是相同的。再比方說，詮釋者必須假設，被詮釋者如同他自己一樣，大體上會根據所相信的事而行動。戴維森認為，不遵守慈善原則將使得詮釋不可能進行，因此慈善原則是使詮釋成為可能所不得不遵循的一個原則。<sup>19</sup>

以慈善原則作為詮釋的一個原則，明顯的是企圖以某種方式先固定住信念/意義共生對當中的信念端(1984d: 137)，使得徹底詮釋者得以根據詮釋對象的持語句為真態度，來對那些語句的內容進行理解工作。但是慈善原則只對信念作一些**普遍的、原則上的**規定，它不針對**特定**信念的內容作規定，因此訴諸它來解決信念與意義的共生性問題，並非明顯是一個因題設事的作法(*ad hoc*)。這是慈善原則較為消極的作用，但它有更為積極的作用。慈善原則對信念所作的一般性規定，使得詮釋者得以放心的訴諸自己的信念和理性原則，加上以詮釋對象持語句為真的態度，作為詮釋資源，開始對被詮釋者言談的具體內容作系統性的理解。但也正是由於慈善原則是一個非針對特定信念內容的原則，詮釋者根據它而訴諸那些屬於他自己的具體信念來進行的初步詮釋，都具有一定程度的假說性質。然而，隨著詮釋者對被詮釋者言談的具體內容作系統性的理解的展開，詮釋者可以不斷修正這個關於信念的假說，並且因此獲得更為堅實的資源去構作進一步關於言談內容的假說。同時，隨著詮釋者對被詮釋者的信念的理解的進展，他對被詮釋者言談的具體內容的先前理解也可以得到修正而更趨於完善，並且因此獲得更為堅實的資源，以構作進一步關於信念的假說。在這不斷反覆的過程中，詮釋對象持語句為真的態度，總是扮演安定錨的角色，它使得對信念詮釋和對言談內容的詮釋，都固定在外在世界的面向上而獲得它們的語意內容，且不至於相互離散而不相關，而且它還使得兩種詮釋得以依附在塔斯基真理理論(及其他理論如決策理論)上，以一種系統性的方式相輔相成的達成。而慈善原則則在詮釋的過程中不僅也扮演一個啟動角色，而更重要的，它同時也扮演一個動力擴張和穩定的雙重角色：它的作用如一個使得詮釋得以往信念和言談語意兩個座標延伸的擴張機，它也作用如一個使得詮釋在那兩個座標的行進不致失衡的穩定器。

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is required for communication, 我們分享了一個大體上為真的世界圖像。」(1977: 244f)戴維森提出了一些論證去支持這個相當大膽的知識論主張，但這些論證健全與否相當有爭議。但是，因為慈善原則這個知識論上的形式並不直接和我們在此的討論相關，我將略過它。

<sup>19</sup> 除非對言說者的信念有所設想，事實上也包括對他的欲望和行動有所設想，否則徹底詮釋是不可能的。這些預設顯示出詮釋的整體論(holistic)性質。因為，既然意義、信念、欲望和行動彼此相互關聯在一起，一個詮釋理論必須藉由整合被詮釋者及詮釋者所擁有的實際的、想像的、可能的信念、意義、欲望和行動，才能充分說明意義。這點顯示出，一個完整的戴維森式的詮釋理論，必須將語意學整併入一個包括信念、欲望和行動三面向的統整理論中。這等於說，語意學並不是一個自足的學科。

當然，戴維森的慈善原則的內容不只是對於信念的規定，它還對詮釋者對被詮釋者的其他認知狀態作了一些相關的規定。舉例來說，詮釋者必須預設，在觀察上，對詮釋者而言是明顯的事物，對被詮釋者而言，亦會是明顯的，反之亦然。如果被詮釋者主要感知的對象是原子現象，我們便毫無詮釋它們的可能。詮釋者也必須預設，詮釋對象一般而言不會錯誤認知他自己的語言及其他意向性狀態的語意內容。沒有這個預設，戴維森的詮釋理論將無法作為一個一般意義下的意義理論。

我們已經提到，戴維森的徹底詮釋乃至於他的詮釋理論的主要的目的，在於說明對於一個語言的理解所必須涉及的要素。而如上所述，對戴維森而言，理解他人的語言，必須預設如上所述的慈善原則的內容，其中包括，詮釋如要能進行，(1)被詮釋者必須大體上是理性的，而他的信念大體上也必須和詮釋者所擁有的一樣，(2)對詮釋者明顯的事物對被詮釋者亦會是明顯的，反之亦然，(3)詮釋對象一般而言不會錯誤認知他自己的語言及其他意向性狀態的語意內容。

但是，慈善原則作為徹底詮釋的一部份，並非如看起來那樣理所當然的，而缺乏對它的證成似乎有可能使得徹底詮釋只能有限度的達成，或甚至有可能原則上不能達成它的目的，亦即揭發對一個語言的理解要素。讓我們從戴維森對詮釋的看法談起，來詳細說明這項憂慮。戴維森接受人文科學的目標在於理解、詮釋、或合理化(rationalize)人類的行動，亦即、找出人類行動的相關理由。然而，從一個人的外顯行為切入，我們可以賦予她不同理由，因而將她的行為理解為不同的行動，或者，我們可以說，從詮釋者來看，一個行動者可能基於各種不同理由而行動。要理解她的行動，詮釋者必須找到她的行動的那個(the)理由。戴維森認為，在諸多可能的理由中，只有那個導致(cause)她的行動的理由，才是我們理解她的行動的唯一合法基礎。而那個導致她的行動的理由，一般而言是她自己所認定的那個理由。換句話說，詮釋者必須以某人理解她自己意向性行為的方式，去理解她的意向性行為。對於言談的詮釋而言，真正的詮釋是，詮釋者以他的詮釋對象理解她自己言談的方式理解她的言談。

讓我以規則遵循(rule-following)為主題的一些討論作為類比來說明這點。當我在紙上寫下一系列數字，這一系列數字同時可以是許多不同數學規則的具體運用，這個數列符合(in accord with)任何一個上述數學規則。但是，明顯的，由於我可能只是於紙上塗鴉或練字，上述的情形並不蘊涵，我是根據對上述任何一條規則的理解而寫下那數列。事實上，數列只要稍微複雜一些，我甚至無力找出它所符合的規則。而就算我能找出它所符合的某一條規則，那也不蘊涵我是根據對那條規則的理解而寫下那數列，我可能只因嫌字醜為練字而寫下它。就算你能為我找出那數列所符合的某條規則，而我也的確根據對某條規則的理解而寫下它，這也不蘊涵它們是同一條規則。如果要解釋我寫下那數列，必須訴諸我對於我對於某條規則的理解，而非任何其他人對某條規則的理解。是我對某條規則的理解，而非其他人的理解，導致我那的書寫行動，也只有它才能作為理由去解釋我那的書寫行動。

然而，徹底詮釋者是一個語言使用者，因此他是一個已經擁有許多信念、(理性)原則和概念的人，這表示他對於那些詮釋初期所能獲得的資料所進行的理解或理性說明工作，無可避免的，必須涉及徹底詮釋者自己的原則、信念和概念。而從慈善原則的運用情形可以看出，詮釋對象被詮釋出的信念和詮釋者自己所擁有的信念，雖然不至完全相同，但是詮釋的結果一定呈現出它們是大體一樣的。詮釋受慈善原則的導引，詮釋結果自然不會違反慈善原則對詮釋所作出的規

定。這點可以讓人合理懷疑，他的詮釋一開始，甚至從頭到尾，都有可能只是他將他自己的原則、信念和概念強加入那些原始詮釋資料後所產生的理解。在這樣的想法下，慈善原則指導下的詮釋工作，有可能也只是詮釋者將他自己認為合理的信念，系統的投射到詮釋對象，而使得詮釋對象的行為整體看起來對他來說是合理的。據此，我們可以進一步產生一個質疑和幾點懷疑。

我們的質疑如下。作為說明詮釋者如何能理解一個語言的一般性方法，徹底詮釋似乎是有其界限的，它似乎最多指出詮釋者必須訴諸他自己的一些原則、信念和概念，才能理解**另一個語言**，但是，它預設卻未說明詮釋者如何能理解他**自己的語言**。換句話說，徹底詮釋似乎連作為一個一般性的語言理解理論，都似乎無法達成。在下面這個評論中，戴維森似乎看出這個問題，而且他似乎認為這個問題不嚴重(1984d: 130)：

A theory of interpretation for an object language may... be viewed as the result of a merger between a structurally revealing theory of interpretation for a known language, and a system of translation from the unknown language into the known. The merger makes all reference to the known language otiose; when this reference is dropped, what is left is a structurally revealing theory of interpretation for the object language – couched, of course, in familiar words.

可是，我們不清楚的是，詮釋中對已知語言的指涉或參考如何能去除？而這正是我們所要探求的主要問題。

假設戴維森說明了對於自我語言的知識，或者他成功的建構了一個關於母語習得的理論，或者他提出一致的理由，令人信服母語習得也是一種徹底詮釋，他仍須面對及解決另一些懷疑論的質疑，才能使得徹底詮釋作為一個說明語言理解的一般性方案成為可信可行。

徹底詮釋者必須訴諸自己的概念資源和理性原則，才能理解他自詮釋對象的語言行為所獲得的資料，但是我們有什麼理由可以排除，他的任何詮釋對象是以相當不同或完全不同的概念資源或理性原則去理解那些資料？換句話說，戴維森如何排除以下這種懷疑論：詮釋者理解言說對象的言談的方式，和言說者自己的理解方式可能不同。或更一般的針對意向性行為而言，戴維森如何排除下面這個命題的可能性：我們無法以某人理解他自己意向性行為的方式，去理解他的意向性行為。再進一步而言，由於一個人是基於他自己的理性原則去理解意向性行為，上述命題可以再精確的表達為：我們的詮釋對象據以理解他自己意向性行為的理性原則，和我們據以理解我們自己的意向性行為的理性原則，大部分是不相同的。（這個懷疑論可以以下這個或許比較不誤導的方式來表達：言說者的意向性行為所涉及的理性原則，有可能和詮釋者用以詮釋的理性原則有所不同。）這個懷疑論，事實上，要求戴維森對於詮釋的慈善原則本身給予一個獨立的證成。如果慈善原則不能獲得證成，則徹底詮釋無法作為一個一般性語言理解的模式，因此也就無法作為一個揭發語言理解要素的一般性模式。

這個懷疑論主張，可以進一步分成兩種。第一種主張，有可能存在下面這種詮釋對象：我們可以認出並描述出他的行為是意向性的行為（無論語言行為或非語言行為），亦即，界定出那些構成他那些行為的理理由的信念和欲望，但是由於他的理性原則極不同於我們的理性原則，使我們原則上不能理解他的行為。這種懷疑論允許，我們可以認出一個意向性存有，卻懷疑他的理性原



則和我們的理性原則之間的大致相似性。針對這種懷疑論，戴維森要做的，是去論證除非一個對象的理性原則和我們的大致相同，否則，我們根本無法認出並描述出他的行為是意向性的行為；換句話說，如果，我們可以認出並描述出一個對象的行為是意向性的行為，則他一定具有大體上和我們一樣的理性原則，亦即，他一定是一個可能的詮釋對象。

另一種懷疑論則直接主張，我們的詮釋對象大部分的理性原則和我們的理性原則可能是不相同的。如果，我們的詮釋對象大部分的理性原則和我們的理性原則可能是不相同的，那麼，我們有可能只是以理解我們自己的意向性行為的方式，去投射的理解我們的詮釋對象；根據我們對「理解某人意向性行為」的界定，這只能說是看起來似乎是理解了他們，而不是真正的理解他們。這種懷疑論可以接受下列這個條件句：如果一個對象的理性法則極不同於我們的理性法則，則我們無法界定出他的信念和欲望、無法界定出他的信念和欲望的主題、無法認出他的行為是意向性的行為、無法理解他的行為。然而，接受這個條件句，並不迫使懷疑論者放棄這個條件句的前提為真的可能性。換句話說，既使我們無法界定出他的信念和欲望的主題、無法認出他的行為是意向性的行為、無法理解他的行為，但是，這並不能證明他不具有信念、欲望和意向性的行為，因為，他的概念網絡(*conceptual scheme*)可能徹底的迥異於我們的概念網絡。[概念網絡可以被視為用來規範概念如何連結的一組相互關連的理性原則，這組原則所產生的東西主要是概念網絡擁有者的信念；本文為了方便陳述，將視一個概念網絡為它的擁有者所具有的信念組；相信這樣的做法不會對概念網絡這一概念在戴維森相關論證中的意含造成任何實質的誤解]。對於這種懷疑論，戴維森要直接去否定徹底差異的概念網絡的可能性。

事實上，徹底詮釋方案必須面對一種更極端的懷疑論。既然徹底詮釋者帶進了自己的概念資源和理性原則去理解那些初始詮釋資料，我們有什麼理由說那些資料的提供者本身具有意向性狀態？那些行為資料所代表的可能只是某無心靈生物複雜的傾向性的反應，而非言談者的意向性的行動。換句話說，徹底詮釋的對象可能只是一個無意向性狀態的生物，它可能是一個不能言談不能思考的生物，它只發聲但不言說，它只動作但無行動，這個可能性不排除，徹底詮釋如何合法的作為一個揭發並說明語言理解的構成要件的方法呢？畢竟，當徹底詮釋的對象是一個不具意向性狀態的生物時，理解它的言談的意義，便不是一個真實的理解，因為沒有任何有意義的東西可以理解，而既然沒有真實的理解發生，就沒有真實的理解條件被揭發。

這些懷疑論的質疑，可以以一個關連到真理概念的方式提出來。如我們先前所說的，對戴維森而言，一個針對某一語言的詮釋理論是適當的，當且僅當這個理論可以針對對象語言的任何一個語句導出一個作為該語句詮釋的為真的定理，那些定理具有下列形式並稱為 **T** 語句：『**R** 為真當且僅當「**S**」』。T 語句是作為一個詮釋理論是否正確的根據，因此能否判斷某語句是否是為真的 T 語句，對於能否判斷一個詮釋理論是否正確，至為關鍵。而決定某語句是否是為真的 T 語句，詮釋者當然必須具有真理概念。值得注意的是，後設語句 **R** 的真假，必須部分地依憑於 **R** 的意義，或至少詮釋者對 **R** 的理解，因此詮釋者據以判斷 **R** 為真的真理概念至少依憑於他對他自己語言意義的理解。懷疑論可以針對這個真理概念的相對性找到攻擊入口。

根據戴維森，一個徹底詮釋者詮釋之初所賴以詮釋的證據，是詮釋對象在可觀察的環境中對她自己的語句所顯示出的持真態度。而如我們先前所說的，詮釋者此持真態度所涉及的真理概念，至少部分的依憑於他對他自己語言的知識，易言之，對詮釋者而言，T 語句所顯示出的是，

詮釋對象持她的語言的某一個語句為真的條件，和詮釋者持他自己語言的某一語句為真的條件是相同的，但是，詮釋對象持一語句為真的態度，依憑於她對她的語言的意義的理解和她的相關信念。如果詮釋者和被詮釋者的信念是非常不同的，那麼詮釋者便不能利用 T 語句對詮釋對象的語言產生真正的了解，真理概念便不能做為詮釋的一個根據。

如我們已經指出的，戴維森訴諸慈善原則解決這個問題，亦即假設詮釋者和被詮釋者之間大致分享了相同的信念和理性原則。從真理概念的角度來看，慈善原則事實上是要求詮釋者和被詮釋者之間**共同享有了同一個真理概念**。這個分享的真理概念是一個一般性的真理概念，它的內容主要是，詮釋者和被詮釋者的信念大體上是關於並決定於一個他們共同分享的世界的事物。明顯的，這個分享的真理概念蘊涵了一個**互為主體的世界概念**(the concept of an intersubjective world)，亦即他們的信念都針對同一個世界的事物，他們的信念的真假都決定於同一個世界。自然的，假設詮釋者和被詮釋者分處於不同的世界，或世界以極不相同的方式呈現給他們，那麼他們的真理概念也將極為不同，戴維森的詮釋理論將喪失其基礎而無法進行。事實上，作為一個一般性的詮釋理論，戴維森的詮釋理論不僅要求一個互為主體的真理及世界觀念，它還須更強的要求**客觀的真理概念**(the concept of objective truth)和**客觀的世界概念**(the concept of objective world)，亦即，具有意向性狀態的存有，他們的信念大體上是關於一個獨立於他們而存在的世界，而它們的真假大體上是決定於那個世界。(這些討論開始於[1975]及[1982]。)需要這些客觀性概念的主要理由是，假設某個人的信念並非大體上關於一個客觀世界，它們的真並非大體上決定於客觀世界，那麼就存在著不可被詮釋的具有意向性狀態的人，這意謂，戴維森的詮釋不能理解那些人，而那些如何理解它們自己的意向性狀態，就無法透過戴維森的理論加以說明。

戴維森二十餘年來的哲學工作，特別是那些與他的詮釋理論有關的部分，主要是對慈善原則和客觀真理概念所進行的證成及說明工作。這些工作仍舊環繞在說明語言理解到底涉及什麼條件這個主題上。舉兩個戴維森所處理的具體問題為例。(一)凡是意向性狀態都是關於某些特定事物的，我知道我的談論或想法「台北今天風真大」是關於台北今天的風，而不是台東或昨天的風，如果我不知道我的談論或想法的主題是什麼，當然我就毫不理解我的所思和所言。但是在什麼樣的條件下，我才能說我的意向狀態是關於某些特定的事物呢？(二)凡是具有命題內容 (propositional content) 的意向性狀態都是真假的判斷的對象。如果我理解我的談論或想法「台北今天風真大」的內容，那麼我知道它是關於某些東西的，既然我知道它關於什麼，那麼我知道它什麼時候為真，什麼時候為假，或至少我知道它是真假判斷的對象。簡短的說，如果我理解我的談論或想法，那麼我具有真理的概念。但是在什麼條件下我才具有真理的概念？

戴維森的這個說明理解的條件，或思想的條件的工作，主要是透過他的**三角測量** (triangulation)。三角測量的一個結論是，我們的真理概念必然是一個客觀的真理概念，我們的思想和言談所關於的對象，是位處於一個獨立於我們存在的分享世界，一個客觀的世界，我們的基本想法和言談的內容都是決定於那個客觀的世界，因此我們的想法大體上相同。我們可以看到，這些結論涵蓋了慈善原則的大部分內容，因此三角測量事實上是一個對慈善原則的證成。

事實上，戴維森直接或間接在[1982a]、[1983]、[1989]、[1991a]、[1991b]、[1991c]、[1992]、[1993]、[1997]、[2001a]和 [2001b]中以三角測量說明他的許多重要觀點，可見他非常重視這個

三角測量。而三角測量主要的論證標的，是思想和語言的相互依憑性，思想和語言的公共性(社會性)，以及三類知識(自我心靈知識，他人心靈知識，與世界知識)的相互依憑性。

作為一個揭發語言理解所涉及的構成要素的方法，三角測量的一些結果很自然的對知識論上的一些爭議提出一些看法，而我們發現這些看法是相當重要的。舉例來說，如果三角測量的論證是成功的，慈善原則就得到證成，而慈善原則在戴維森駁斥概念的相對主義(*conceptual relativism*)的論證中，扮演一個不可或缺的角色。概念的相對主義主張，有可能存在著徹底不同的(*radically different*)概念網絡。戴維森的論證可以以一個非常精簡的方式陳述如下(1984c, 1990b)：要能宣稱兩個語言(代表兩個概念網絡)之間的不同，我們必須能將其中之一大體地翻譯至另一個，但是，那翻譯是可能的，只有當兩個言說者大體上分享了相同的信念。因此，概念的相對主義是不一致的。我們可以發現，如果慈善原則不能被證成，戴維森對概念的相對主義、「一個概念網絡的想法」(“the very idea of a conceptual scheme”)和「網絡/內容的二元論」(“the scheme-content dualism”)的駁斥，將沒有堅實的根基。

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