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A Pragmatist View of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy

Un punto de vista pragmático sobre la filosofia analítica contemporánea

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RESUMEN

En la primera parte de este artículo se discute el punto de vista del filósofo de las ciencias Arthur Fine, sobre el realismo y el antirealismo. Se establecen algunas relaciones semánticas y pragmáticas con D. Davidson y R. Brandon, sin dejar de insistir en que el lenguaje ya no puede seguir siendo considerado como un contenido de representación de la realidad. En la segunda parte, se exponen las dieciséis tesis metafilosóficas, de por qué se deben abandonar las nociones de "método filosófico" y "problemas filosóficos" propagadas por el racionalismo moderno.

Palabras clave: Pragmatismo, filosofía analítica, metafilosofía, lenguaje.

ABSTRACT

In the first part of this article Arthur Fine's point of view as to the philosophy of science, and specifically realism and anti-realism, is discussed. Certain semantic and pragmatic relations are established with D. Davidson and R. Brandon, but not without insisting that language can not go on being considered a collection of representations of reality. In the second part of the article the sixteen metaphysical theses which explain why the notion of "philosophical methods" and "philosophical problems", proposed by modern rationalism, should be abandoned, are presented.

Key words: Pragmatism, analytical philosophy, meta-philosophy, language.

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This paper has two parts. In the first I discuss the views of my favorite philosopher of science, Arthur Fine. Fine has become famous for his defense of a thesis whose discussion seems to me central to contemporary philosophy—namely, that we should be neither realists nor anti-realists, that the entire realism-antirealism issue should be set aside. On this point he agrees with my favorite philosophers of language, Donald Davidson and Robert Brandom. I see the increasing consensus on this thesis as marking a breakthrough into a new philosophical world. In this new world, we shall no longer think of either thought or language as containing representations of reality. We shall be freed both from the subject-object problematic that has dominated philosophy since Descartes, and from the appearance-reality problematic that has been with us since the Greeks. We shall no longer be tempted to practice either epistemology or ontology.

The second, shorter, portion of the paper consists of some curt, staccato, dogmatic theses about the need to abandon the intertwined notions of "philosophical method" and of "philosophical problems". I view the popularity of these notions as an unfortunate consequence of the over-professionalizaton of philosophy which has disfigured this area of culture since the time of Kant. If one adopts a non-represenationalist view of thought and language, one will move away from Kant in the direction of Hegel's historicism.

Historicism has no use for the idea that there are recurrent philosophical problems which philosophers have employed various methods to solve. This description of the history of philosophy should, I think, be replaced by an account on which philosophers, like other intellectuals, make imaginative suggestions for redescription of the human situation; they offer new ways of talking about our hopes and fears, our ambitions and our prospects. Philosophical progress is thus not a matter of problems being solved, but of descriptions being improved.

I

Arthur Fine's famous article "The Natural Ontological Attitude" begins with the sentence "Realism is dead". In a footnote to that article, Fine offers a pregnant analogy between realism and theism.

> In support of realism there seem to be only those 'reasons of the heart' which, as Pascal says, reason does not know. Indeed, I have long felt that belief in realism involves a profound leap of faith, not at all dissimilar from the faith that animates deep religious convictions….. The dialogue will proceed more fruitfully, I think, when the realists finally stop pretending to a rational support for their faith, which they do not have. Then we can all enjoy their intricate and sometimes beautiful philosophical constructions (of, e.g., knowledge, or reference, etc.) even though to us, the nonbelievers, they may seem only wonder-full castles in the air[1].

In an article called "Pragmatism as anti-authoritarianism"[2], I tried to expand on Fine's analogy. I suggested that we see heartfelt devotion to realism as the Enlightenment's

1 Fine, Arthur: "The Natural Ontological Attitude" in his *The shaky game: Eintein, realism and the quantium theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 116n.

2 *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, vol. 53, nº 207 (1999), pp. 7-20.

version of the religious urge to bow down before a non-human power. The term "Reality as it is in itself, apart from human needs and interests" is, in my view, just another of the obsequious Names of God. In that article, I suggested that we treat the idea that physics gets you closer to reality than morals as an updated version of the priests' claim to be in closer touch with God than the laity.

As I see contemporary philosophy, the great divide is between representationalists, the people who believe that there is an intrinsic nature of non-human reality which humans have a duty to grasp, and antirepresentationalists. I think F. C. S. Schiller was on the right track when he said that "Pragmatism….is in reality only the application of Humanism to the theory of knowledge"[3]. I take Schiller's point to be that the humanists' claim that human beings have responsibilities only to one another entails giving up both represenationalism and realism.

Representationalists are necessarily realists, and conversely. For realists believe both that there is one, and only one, Way the World Is In Itself, and that there are "hard" areas of culture in which this Way is revealed. In these areas, they say, there are "facts of the matter" to be discovered, though in softer areas there are not. By contrast, antirepresentationalists believe that scientific, like moral, progress is a matter of finding ever more effective ways to enrich human life. They make no distinction between hard and soft areas of culture, other than the sociological distinction between less and more controversial topics. Realists think of antirepresentationalists as antirealists, but in doing so they confuse discarding the hard-soft distinction with preaching universal softness.

Intellectuals cannot live without pathos. Theists find pathos in the distance between the human and the divine. Realists find it in the abyss separating human thought and language from reality as it is in itself. Pragmatists find it in the gap between contemporary humanity and a utopian human future. In which the very idea of responsibility to anything except our fellow-humans has become unintelligible, resulting in the first truly humanistic culture.

If you do not like the term "pathos", the word "romance" would do as well. Or one might use Thomas Nagel's term: "the ambition of transcendence". The important point is simply that both sides in contemporary philosophy are trying to gratify one of the urges previously satisfied by religion. History suggests that we cannot decide which form of pathos to is preferable by deploying arguments. Neither the realist nor her antirepresentationalist opponent will ever have anything remotedly like a knock-down argument, any more than Enlightenment secularism had such an argument against theists. One's choice of pathos will be settled, as Fine rightly suggests, by the reasons of one's heart.

The realist conviction that there just must be a non-human authority to which humans can turn has been, for a very long time, woven into the common sense of the West. It is a conviction common to Socrates and to Luther, to atheistic natural scientists who say they love truth and fundamentalists who say they love Christ. I think it would be a good idea to reweave the network of shared beliefs and desires which makes up Western culture so as to get rid of this conviction. But doing so will take centuries, or perhaps millenia. This reweaving, if it ever occurs, will result in everybody becoming commonsensi-

3 Schiller, F.C.S: *Humanism: Philosophical Essays*, second edition. London: Macmillan, 1912, p. xxv.

cally verificationist—in being unable to pump up the intuitions to which present-day realists and theists appeal.

To grasp the need to fall back on reasons of the heart, consider the theist who is told that the term "God", as used in the conclusion of the cosmological argument is merely a name for our ignorance. Then consider the realist who is told that his explanation for the success of science is no better than Moliere's doctor's explanation of why opium puts people to sleep. Then consider the pragmatist who is told, perhaps by John Searle, that his verificationism confuses epistemology and ontology. All three will probably be unfazed by these would-be knock-down arguments. Even if they admit that their opponents' point admits of no refutation, they will remark, complacently and correctly, that it produces no conviction.

It is often said that religion was refuted by showing the incoherence of the concept of God. It is said, almost as often, that realism has been refuted by showing the incoherence of the notions of "intrinsic nature of reality" and "correspondence", and that pragmatism is refuted by pointing out its habit of confusing knowing with being. But no one accustomed to employ a term like "the will of God" or "mind-independent World" in expressing views central to her sense of how things hang together is likely to be persuaded that the relevant concepts are incoherent. Nor is any pragmatist likely to be convinced that the notion of something real but indescribable in human language or unknowable by human minds can be made coherent. A concept, after all, is just the use of a word. Much-used and well-loved words and phrases are not abandoned merely because their users have been forced into tight dialectical corners.

To be sure, words, and uses of words, do get discarded. But that is because more attractive words, or uses, have become available. Insofar as religion has been dying out among the intellectuals in recent centuries, it is because of the attractions of a humanist culture, not because of flaws internal to the discourse of theists. Insofar as Fine is right that realism is dying out among the philosophers, this is because of the attractions of a culture which is more deeply and unreservedly humanist than that offered by the arrogant scientism that was the least fortunate legacy of the Enlightenment.

For all these reasons, I should not want to echo Fine's charge that the realist, like the theist, lacks "rational support" for his beliefs. The notion of "rational support" is not apropros when it comes to proposals to retain, or to abandon, intuitions or hopes as deep-lying as those to which theists, realists, and anti-representationalists appeal. Where argument seems always to fail, as James rightly says in "The will to believe", the reasons of the heart will and should have their way. But this does not mean that the human heart always has the same reasons, asks the same questions, and hopes for the same answers. The gradual growth of secularism—the gradual increase in the number of people who do not find theism what James called "a live, momentous and forced option", is testimony to the heart's malleability.

Only when the sort of cultural change I optimistically envisage is complete will we be able to start doing what Fine suggests—enjoying such intricate intellectual displays as the *Summa Contra Gentiles* or *Naming and Necessity* as aesthetic spectacles. Someday realism may no longer be "a live, momentous and forced option" for us. If that day comes, we shall think of questions about the mind-independence of the real as having the quaint charm of questions about the consubstantiality of the Persons of the Trinity. In the sort of culture which I hope our remote descendants may inhabit, the philosophical literature about real-

ism and anti-realism will have been aestheticized in the way that we moderns have aestheticized the medieval disputations about the ontological status of universals.

Michael Dummett has suggested that many traditional philosophical problems boil down to questions about which true sentences are made true by "facts" and which are not. This suggestion capitalizes on one of Plato's worst ideas: the idea that we can divide up the culture into the hard areas where the non-human is encountered and acknowledged and the softer areas in which we are on our own. The attempt to divide culture into harder and softer areas is the most familiar contemporary expression of the hope that there may be something to which human beings are responsible other than their fellow humans. The idea of a hard area of culture is the idea of an area in which this responsibility is salient. Dummett's suggestion that a lot of philosophical debates has been, and should continue to be, about which sentences are bivalent amounts to the claim that philosophers have a special responsibility to figure out where the hard stops and the soft begins.

A great deal of Fine's work is devoted to casting doubt on the need to draw any such line. Among philosophers of science, he has done the most to deflate Quine's arrogant quip that philosophy of science is philosophy enough. His view that science is not special, not different from the rest of culture in any philosophically interesting way, chimes with Davidson's and Brandom's attempt to put all true sentences on a referential par, and thereby further to erase the line between the hard and the soft. Fine, Davidson and Brandom have helped us understand how to stop thinking of intellectual progress as a matter of increasing tightness of fit with the non-human world. They help us picture it instead as our being forced by that world to reweave our networks of belief and desire in ways that make us better able to get what we want. A fully humanist culture, of the sort I envisage, will emerge only when we discard the question "Do I know the real object, or only one of its appearances?" and replace it with the question "Am I using the best possible description of the situation in which I find myself, or can I cobble together a better one?"

Fine's "NOA papers"[4] fit together nicely with Davidson's claim that we can make no good use of the notion of "mind-independent reality" and with Brandom's Sellarsian attempt to interpret both meaning and reference as functions of the rights and responsibilities of participants in a social practice. The writings of these three philosophers blend together, in my imagination, to form a sort of manifesto for the kind of anti-representationalist movement in philosophy whose humanistic aspirations I have outlined.

Occasionally, however, I come across passages, or lines of thought, in Fine's work, which are obstacles to my syncretic efforts. The following passage in Fine's "The Natural Ontological Attitude" gives me pause:

> When NOA counsels us to accept the results of science as true, I take it that we are to treat truth in the usual referential way, so that a sentence (or statement) is true just in case the entities referred to stand in the referred-to relations. Thus NOA sanctions ordinary referential semantics and commits us, via truth, to the exis-

4 These papers include, in addition to "The natural ontological attitude" and "And not anti-realism either" (both in Fine's *The shaky game*), the "Afterword" to *The shakey game* and "Unnatural attitudes: realist and instrumentalist attachments to science", *Mind*, Vol. 95 (April, 1986), pp. 149-179.

> tence of the individuals, properties, relations, processes, and so forth referred to by the scientific statements that we accept as true. (p. 130)

Reading this passage leaves me uncertain of whether Fine wants to read *all* the sentences we accept as true -the ones accepted after reading works of literary criticism as well as after reading scientific textbooks- as true "just in case the entities referred to stand in the referred-to relations" Davidson is clearer on this point. He thinks that the sentence "Perseverance keeps honor bright" is true in this way, the same way that "The cat is on the mat", "F=MA", and every other true sentence is true. But Davidson thinks this in part because he does not think that reference has anything to do with ontological commitment. The latter is a notion for which he has no use, just as he has no use for the distinction between sentences made true by the world and those made true by us.

Fine, alas, does seem to have a use for ontological commitment. Indeed, I suspect he drags in "ordinary referential semantics" because he thinks that the deployment of such a semantics might help one decide what ontological commitments to have. But it would accord better with the overall drift of Fine's thinking if he were to discard that unfortunate Quinean idea rather than attempting to rehabilitate it. NOA, Fine says, "tries to let science speak fo itself, and it trusts in our native ability to get the message without having to rely on metaphysical or epistemological hearing aids". (And not, p. 63) So why, I am tempted to ask Fine, would you want to drag in a semiotic hearing aid such as "ordinary referential semantics"? Fine recommends that we stop trying to "conceive of truth as a substantial something", something that can "act as limit for legitimate human aspirations"[5]. But if we accept this recommendation, will we still want to say, as Fine does, that we are "committed, via truth, to the existence" of this or that?

As support for my suggestion that the notion of ontological commitment is one Fine could get along nicely without, let me cite another of his instructive remarks about the analogy between religion and realism. Fine's answer to the question "Do you believe in X?", for such X's as electrons and dinosaurs and DNA, is "I take the question of belief to be whether to accept the entities or instead to question the science that backs them up. "(Afterword, p. 184) Then, in response to the objection "But does not 'believe in' mean that they really and truly exist out there in the world?" Fine says that he is not sure it does. He points out that "those who believe in the existence of God do not think that is the meaning [they attach to their claim] at least not in any ordinary sense of 'really and truly out there in the world'."

I take the point of the analogy to be that unquestioningly and unphilosophically religious people need not distinguish between talking about God as they do and believing in God. To say that they believe in God and that they habitually and seriously talk the talk are two ways of saying the same thing. Similarly, for a physicist to say that to say that she believes in electrons and to say that she does not question the science behind electron-talk are two ways of saying the same thing. The belief cannot count as a reason for the unquestioning attitude, nor conversely.

5 "And not anti-realism either", p. 63.

When Kant or Tillich ask the pious whether they are perhpas really talking about a regulative ideal or a symbol of ultimate concern, rather than about the existence of a being, the pious are quite right to be annoyed and unresponsive. Physicists should be equally irritated when asked whether they think that statements about electrons are true or merely empirically adequate. The theist sees no reason why he need resort to natural theology, or analyses of the meaning of "is", or distinctions between the symbolic-existential and the factual-empirical. For he takes God-talk into his life in exactly the way in which a physicst takes electron-talk into hers—the same way we all take dollars-and-cents talk into ours.

It accords with the overall humanist position I outlined earlier to say there are no acts called 'assent' or 'commitment' which we can perform that will put us in a relation to an object different than that of simply talking about that object in sentences whose truth we have taken into our lives.

The idea of ontological commitment epitomizes a confusion between existential commitment on the one hand and a profession of satisfaction with a way of speaking or a social practice on the other. An existential commitment, as Brandom nicely says in MAKING IT EXPLICIT, is a claim to be able to provide an address for a certain singular term within the "structured space provide mapped out by certain canonical designators".[6] To deny the existence of Pegasus, for example, is to deny that "a continuous spatiotemporal trajectory can be traced out connecting the region of space-time occupied by the speaker to one occupied by Pegasus". To deny that Sherlock Holmes' Aunt Fanny exists is to deny that she can be related to the canonical designators in Conan Doyle's text in the way that Moriarty and Mycroft can. And so on for other addresses for singular terms, such as those provided for the complex numbers by the structured space of the integers.

Putting the matter Brandom's way highlights the fact that metaphysical discourse, the discourse of ontological commitment, does not provide us with a such a structured space. For no relevant designators are agreed upon to be canonical. This discourse is, instead, one in which we express our like or dislike, our patience or impatience with, various linguistic practices.

As a safeguard against linking up referential semantics with ontological commitment, it is useful to bear in mind Davidson's insistence that we should not treat reference as "a concept to be given an independent analysis or interpretation in terms of non-linguistic concepts".[7] Reference is rather, he says, a "posit we need to implement a theory of truth"[8] For Davidson, a theory of truth for a natural language "does not explain reference, at least in this sense: it assigns no empirical content directly to relations between names or predicates and objects. These relations are given a content indirectly when the T-sentences are."[9]If one assumes that a theory which permits the deduction of all the T-sentences is all we need in the way of what Fine calls "ordinary referential semantics", then reference no longer bears on ontological commitment. The later notion will seem otiose to anyone who takes

6 Brando, Robert: *Making it explicit*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, p. 444.

7 Davidson, Donald: *Inquiries into meaning and Thruth.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, 219.

8 Ibid., p. 222.

9 Ibidem.

the results of both physics and literary criticism in (as Fine puts it) "the same way as we accept the evidence of our senses".

Perhaps, however, Fine would agree both with Davidson about the nature of the notion of reference and with me about the need to treat literary criticism and physics as producing truth, and reference, of exactly the same sort. That he would is suggested by his saying that those who accept NOA are "being asked not to distinguish between kinds of truth or modes of existence or the like, but only among truths themselves in terms of centrality, degrees of belief, and the like"[10].

This last quotation chimes with Fine's remark that "NOA is basically at odds with the temperament that looks for definite boundaries demarcating science from pseudoscience, or that is inclined to award the title "scientific" like a blue ribbon on a prize goat"[11]. It chimes also with the last paragraph of his recent Presidential Address to the APA, in which he says that "the first false step in this whole area is the notion that science is special and that scientific thinking is unlike any other"[12]. If we carry through on these remarks by saying that there is no more point in using notions like "reference" and "ontological attitude" in connection with physics than in connection with literary criticism, then we can shall think that nobody should ever worry about having more things in her ontology than there are in heaven and earth. To stop dividing culture into the hard and the soft areas would be to cease to draw up two lists: the longer containing nominalizations of every term used as the subject of a sentence and the shorter containing all the things there are on heaven and earth.

Before leaving the topics of reference and ontological commitment, let me remark that the passage I quoted about "ordinary referential semantics" has been seized upon by Alan Musgrave to ridicule Fine's claim to have a position distinct from that of the realist[13]. Musgrave would have had less ammunition, I think, if Fine had not only omitted this passage but had been more explicit in admitting that NOA is, as Jarett Leplin has lately said, "not an alternative to realism and antirealism, but a preemption of philosophy altogether, at least at the metalevel"[14]. Leplin is right to say that Fine's "idea that 'scientific theories speak for themselves', that one can 'read off' of them the answers to all legitimate philosophical questions abouit science, cannot be squared with the rich tradition of philosophical debate among scientists over the proper interpretation of theories." So I think that the Fine should neither take the Einstein-Bohr debate at face value, nor try to rehabilitate notions like "ontological commitment". He should grant to Leplin that "Philosophy of science in the role of interpreter and evaluator of the scientific enterprise, and realism in particular, as such a philosophy of science, are superfluous"[15]. We felt the need for such an in-

10 "The natural ontological attitude," p. 127.

11 "And not anti-realism either", p. 62.

12 "The viewpoint of no-one in particular", *Proceedings and addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, vol. 72 (November 1998), p. 19.

13 See Musgrave's "NOA's ark—fine for realism", in *The philosophy of science*, ed. David Papineau Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 45-60.

14 Leplin, Jarret: *A novel defense of scientific realism*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 174.

15 Ibid., p. 139.

terpreter, evaluator, and public-relations man only so long as we thought of natural science as privileged by a special relation to non-human reality, and of the natural scientists as stepping into the shoes of the priests.

II

So much for my broad brush-account of the wonderful new philosophical prospects that I see Fine, Davidson and Brandom opening up. In the time that remains, I want to explain why anyone who enjoys these prospects should be suspicious of the notion of "philosophical method" and of the idea that philosophy has always dealt, and will always deal, with the same recalcitrant problems. I shall offer sixteen metaphilosophical theses which sum up my own suspicions.

Thesis One:

A recent "call for papers" for a big philosophical conference, refers to "The analytic methodology which has been so widely embraced in twentieth century philosophy [and which] has sought to solve philosophical problems by drawing out the meaning of our statements". Such descriptions of twentieth-century philosophy are ubiquitous, but they seem to me seriously misleading. "Drawing out the meaning of our statements' is a pre-Quinean way of describing philosophers' practice of paraphrasing statements in ways that furhther their very diverse purposes. It would be pointless to think of the disagreements between Carnap and Austin, Davidson and Lewis, Kripke and Brandom, Fine and Leplin, or Nagel and Dennett as arising from the differing meanings which they believe themselves to have found in certain statements. These classic philosophical stand-offs are not susceptible of resolution by means of more careful and exacting ways of drawing out meanings.

Thesis Two:

The philosophers I have just named belong to, or at least were raised in, a common disciplinary matrix—one in which most members of anglophone philosophy departments were also raised. Philosophers so raised do not practice a common method. What binds them together is rather a shared interest in the question "What happens if we transform old philosophical questions about the relation of thought to reality into questions about the relation of language to reality?"

Thesis Three:

Dummett is wrong in thinking that such transformations suggest that philosophy of language is first philosophy. His picture of the rest of philosophy as occupied with the analysis of "specific types of sentence or special forms of expression"[16], analyses which can be guided or corrected by discoveries about the nature of meaning made by philosophers of language, has no relevance to the actual arguments which analytic philosophers invoke.

Thesis Four:

The diverse answers to the question of the relation between language and reality given by analytic philosophers do indeed divide up along some of the same lines which

16 Dummett, Michal: "Can analytical philosophy be systematic, and ought it to be?" in his *Thrut and other enigmas*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1978, p. 442.

once divided realists from idealists. But Dummett is wrong to think that this earlier division was marked by disagreement about which sentences are made true by the world and which by us. Rather, the division between Bain and Bradley, or between Moore and Royce, was one between representationalist atomists and nonrepresentationalist holists. The latter are the people whom Brandom refers to as his fellow inferentialists. They include all the people traditionally identified as "idealists", just as the representationalists include all those traditionally identified as "empiricists".

Thesis Five:

Anti-representationalists do not use a different method than representationalists, unless one uses the term "method" synonomously with "research program", or "leading idea", or "basic insight" or "fundamental motivation". Such uses are misleading. The term "method" should be restricted to agreed upon procedures for settling disputes between competing claims views. Such a procedure was what Ayer and Carnap on the one side, and Husserl on the other, thought had recently been discovered. They were wrong. Nagel and Dennett no more appeal to such a procedure than did Cassirer and Heidegger. Neither logical analysis nor phenomenology produced anything like the procedure for settling philosophical quarrels that the founders envisaged.

Thesis Six:

When "method" is used in this restricted sense, as meaning "neutral decision procedure", there is no such thing as either philosophical or scientific method. There are only local and specific agreements on procedure within such specific expert cultures as stellar spectroscopy, modal logic, admiralty law, possible-world semantics, or Sanskrit philology. There is no method shared by geologists and particle physicists but not employed by lawyers and literary critics. Nor is there any method shared by Kripke and Davidson, or by Nagel and Dennett, that is more peculiarly philosophical than ordinary argumentative give-and-take—the kind of conversational exchange which is as frequent outside disciplinary matrices as within them.

Thesis Seven:

The idea that philosophy should be put on the secure path of a science is as bad as the idea, mocked by Fine, of awarding prizes for scientificity as one awards blue ribbons to prize goats. It is one thing to say that philosophers should form a distinct expert culture, but quite another to suggest that they ought to be more like mathematicians than like lawyers, or more like microbiologists than like historians. You can have an expert culture without having an agreed upon procedure for resolving disputes. Expertise is a matter of familiarity with the course of a previous conversation, not a matter of ability to bring that conversation to a conclusion by attaining general agreement.

Thesis Eight:

If twentieth-century analytic philosophy gets favorable reviews in the writings of intellectual historians of the twenty-second century, this will not be because those historians are impressed by its exceptional clarity and rigor. It will be because they have seen that following up on Frege's suggestion that we talk about the statements rather than about thoughts made it possible to frame the old issue between representationalist atomists and non-representationalist holists in a new way. Representation in the relevant sense is a matter of part-to-part correspondence between mental or linguistic and non-mental or non-linguistic complexes. That is why it took what Bergman called the "lingusitic turn" to get the issue into proper focus. For thoughts do not have discrete parts in the right way, but

statements do. Frege's dictum that words only had meanings in the contexts of sentences will be seen by future intellectual historians as the beginning of the end for representationalist philosophy.

Thesis Nine:

The issue between the non-representationalists and the representationalists is not a matter of competing methods. Nor is the issue about whether a proper graduate education in philosophy should include reading Hegel and Heidegger, or mastering of symbolic logic. Both are matters of what one thinks it important and interesting to talk about. There is not now, and there never will be, a method for settling disputes about what is interesting and important. If one's heart leads one toward realism, then one will take representationalism and research programs for analyzing complexes into simples seriously. If it leads one elsewhere, one probably will not.

Thesis Ten:

The idea of method is, etymology suggests, the idea of a road which takes you from the starting-point of inquiry to its goal. The best translation of the Greek *meth' odo* is "on track". Representationalists, because they believe that there are objects which are what they are apart from the way they are described, can take seriously this picture the picture of a track leading from subject to object. Anti-representationalists cannot. They see inquiry not as crossing a gap but as a gradual reweaving of individual or communal beliefs and desires under the pressure of causal impacts made by the behavior of people and things. Such reweaving dissolves problems as often as it solves them. The idea that the problems of philosophy stay the same but the method of dealing with them change begs the metaphilosophical question at issue between representationalists and non-representationalists. It is much easier to formulate specific "philosophical problems" if, with Kant, you think that there a concepts which stay fixed regardless of historical change rather than, with Hegel, that concepts change as history moves along. Hegelian historicism and the idea that the philosopher's job is to draw out the meanings of our statements cannot easily be reconciled.

Thesis Eleven:

Anti-representationalists are sometimes accused, as Fine has been by Leplin and I have been by Nagel, of wanting to walk away from philosophy. But this charge confuses walking away from a certain historically-determined disciplinary matrix with walking away from philosophy itself. Philosophy is not something anybody can ever walk away from; it is an amorphous blob whose pseudopods englobe anyone attempting such an excursion.. But unless people occasionally walk away from old disciplinary matrices as briskly as Descartes and Hobbes walked away from Aristotelianism, or Carnap and Heidegger from neo-Kantianism, decadent scholasticism is almost inevitable.

Thesis Twelve:

Sometimes those who walk away from worn-out disciplinary matrices offer new philosophical research programs, as Descartes and Carnap did. Sometimes they do not, as in the cases of Montaigne and Heidegger. But research programs are not essential to philosophy. They are of course a great boon to the professionalization of philosophy as an academic specialty. But greater professionalization should not be confused with intellectual progress, any more than a nation's economic or military might should be confused with its contribution to civilization.

Thesis Thirteen:

Professionalization gives an edge to atomists over holists and thus to representationalists over non-representationalists. For philosophers who have theories about the elementary components of language or of thought and about how these elements get compounded, look more systematic, and thus more professional, than philosophers who say that everything is relative to context. The latter see their opponents' so-called elementary components as simply nodes in webs of changing relationships.

Thesis Fourteen:

The big split between "Continental" and "analytic" philosophy is largely due to the fact historicism and antirepresentationalism are much more common among non-anglophone philosophers than among their anglophone colleagues. It is easy to bring Davidson together with Derrida and Gadamer, or Brandom together with Hegel and Heidegger. But it is less easy to find common ground between somebody distinctively "Continental" and Searle, Kripke, Lewis, or Nagel, It is this difference in substantive philosophical doctrine, rather than any difference between "methods", which makes it unlikely that the split will be healed.

Thesis Fifteen:

Philosophical progress is not made by patiently carrying out research programs to the end. Such programs all eventually trickle out into the sands. It is made by great imaginative feats. These are performed by people like Hegel or Wittgenstein who come out of left field and tell us that a picture has been holding us captive. A lot of people on both sides of the analytic-Continental split are spending much of their time waiting for Godot. They hope someone will do for us what *Philosophical Investigations*, or *Being and Time*, did for our predecessors—wake us from what we belatedly realize to have been dogmatic slumber.

Thesis Sixteen:

Waiting for a guru is a perfectly respectable thing for us philosophers to do. One side of humanism, in the sense in which I am using the term, is the recognition that we have no duties to anything save one another. But another side is the recognition that, as Yeats put it, "Whatever flames upon the night/Man's own resinous heart has fed". Waiting for a guru is waiting for the human imagination to flare up once again, waiting for it to suggest a way of speaking which we had not thought of before. Just as intellectuals cannot live with pathos, they cannot live without gurus. But they can live without priests. They do not need the sort of guru who explains that his or her authority comes from a special relation to something non-human, a relation gained by having found the correct track across an abyss.