

Chapter I

Introduction



1.1 The significance of the problem

Language is one of the most integral factors which engender the possibility and the growth of human knowledge. In any area where people are engaging themselves in contributing objectively to the body of human knowledge, language always plays an important part. Philosophy, for example, is human thinking-activity. And, in thinking, we need a language to think with, no matter whether it is true or not that we can think beyond the language. Scientists, for another example, need a language or languages to inform or communicate their findings, since an idealization of science's is that science is objective and communicable. If philosophy, to take a further step, is considered to be an activity in the pursuit of wisdom, then it is language by which wisdom is found or captured and through which wisdom is expressed. Recently, there has been a recognition among modern philosophers that discussion on truth and knowledge often involves our understanding of human linguistic behaviour and the linguistic phenomena. The most fundamental question which underlies the logical-linguistic difficulty is the query "What is language?" itself.

This thesis is not an attempt to give a complete answer to the fundamental question. The problem which this thesis is purposed to

tackle is the notion of the distinction between denotative and connotative meanings. This thesis purports to give a new perspective with a new view of our notion about denotative and connotative meanings. In general, to take the assumption that knowledge or truth is expressed and stored in language, with language or through language, this thesis will lead to a higher recognition of the relation between language, thought, and reality. In particular, for this thesis assumes that literature, especially the classic works of the mystic writers, is a source of truth or knowledge, this thesis proposes to defend the cognitive value of, and maintain an honorific place for, the language of literature.

1.2 Brief historical background.

The problem of truth in literature has been raised since Plato but the consideration and outlook was different or diverse from that being discussed in the present day. Hume viewed literary writers as liars. The edifice of literature, in respect as a construction having its stand in the justified area of human knowledge -- or an institution which helps give light to and guides man in his access to reality-- was attacked seriously after and as a result of the revolution in philosophy, launched by Wittgenstein, which brought about the linguistic turn of philosophy. I.A. Richards, a British critic and poet, made a remark that literature is an expression of emotion. The denial of truth as a property (or merit) of literature is systematically articulated by some logical positivists, e.g. Rudolf Carnap, A.J. Ayer, since these philosophers held logic to be the integral tool, and

inaugurated a close look and severe analysis of language. They found that putatively referential constructions have no apparent object of reference in the empirical stream of experience. Not only is its epistemic attribute denied, the fictional language itself is also considered meaningless; thus, the denial of the cognitive value. In their strict view, only the scientific and mathematical languages are regarded to convey meaning and truth. The main point of the doctrine, however, is meant to solve the problems in metaphysics, or indeed, to eliminate metaphysics from philosophy.

1.3 Objectives.

- 1.3.1 To make a study of the history of the problem of truth when regarded as a property of literature.
- 1.3.2 To make a survey and clarification of the arguments concerning the problem, and the contribution of literature to the body of human knowledge, when compared with that of science.
- 1.3.3 To find out if there is any possibility of making a warranted assertion of truth in literature, of an apparently empirical sort.

1.4 Methodology

The thesis will consist of six chapters. The present chapter is the introduction, stating the thesis's problems. The thesis's concern embraces literature which is a field outside normal philosophy. Usually, it is conceived as aesthetics.

Thus, chapter two is presented with the purpose to give a background concerning concepts of 'knowledge' both for those who are not accustomed to philosophical arguments and for the proper, better understanding of the discussion which will follow in the later chapters. This thesis assumes that the problem will be seen or recognized here clearly on the purview of the conceptual background thus presented.

Chapter three will provide a historical survey of the problem. The thesis is not meant to do any thorough analysis here. But mostly it will be a collection of relevant historical information, both from the primary sources and works on them or from the secondary sources. However, I will also try to give my own arguments and expositions where they are needed.

Chapter four will be the citation or presentation of the problems posed or stated by the logical positivists. The focus of intention will fall on some certain works of Rudolf Carnap and A.J. Ayer. Most of the information (or the overview) will be based on Ayer's book Language, Truth and Logic and on the anthology edited by him entitled "Logical Positivism". Besides, the chapter will present I.A. Richards' view of literature together with his theory of literary language. A brief and clear statement of the problem will consist in this chapter.

Chapter five will explore the literary writers' views of literature. A few contentions supporting literature and its status and claim to knowledge will be presented and discussed here. The main contention of my thesis consists in this chapter. It is expected that

the study of metaphor will yield a good answer to the positivist. This chapter will also consist of a brief survey of the progress in the field of literary interpretation. At any rate, this thesis will pay the most attention and give more room for the study of metaphor.

Chapter six is the conclusion. An intensive conclusion of the study of metaphor will be stated here. As it is what the matter appears to involve, it is presumed that the root of the problem is that of semanticism and aesthetics. Although no definite conclusion is expected to be reached, it is hoped that this thesis will contribute to a clearer understanding of the problem.

1.5 Relevant Theories and Hypothetical Statement.

The study will include : Plato's banishment of the artists; Hume's view of the literary writers; I.A. Richards' theory of emotion; and the logical positivist's citation of the problem of truth in literature, with, hence, an analysis of the correspondence theory, the reference theory, the verification theory and the meaning theory, etc.; Popperian position will be adopted for the argument; an examination of a few relevant literary factors and devices -- metaphor, rhetoric, imagination, and interpretation. The thesis will also include the empirical science of literature, a new paradigm of literary study, an attempt to reach an answer in the positivistic terms. It is presumed that a glimpse at two or three certain topics still being discussed in philosophy of science may help confirm or illuminate the thesis's conclusion.

1.6 Expected benefits.

The thesis is purposed to be a basic source of information for further research, for those who are interested in the problem of the connection or interrelation of epistemology, aesthetics or, here, literature, and metaphysics. Particularly, to those who teach literature, this thesis will shed new light on their work and give a new perspective for looking at literature. The thesis is expected to help give a clearer picture of the function and contribution of literature to the whole body of human knowledge. It is also expected that exploration into literature and its language in the light of philosophy will help guide to the settlement of concept of knowledge and its function.



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