

## CRITICAL NOTICE

---

### SOAMES ON PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

MICHAEL BEANEY

*The University of York*

In the two volumes of *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century*,<sup>1</sup> Scott Soames offers us a detailed and penetrating account of certain central topics and themes in the history of analytic philosophy. Volume I takes us from G.E. Moore's defence of common sense to Quine's critique of analyticity, and Volume 2 from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* to Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*. Written by an analytic philosopher who has himself made major contributions to recent debate about the topics selected, the result is a *tour de force*. As one has come to expect from Soames, the writing exemplifies analytic philosophy at its very best: clear, rigorous, and with great attention paid to the exposition of arguments. The assumptions of the key arguments are carefully identified, so that each one can be subjected to critical scrutiny and modified, as appropriate, in offering a better argument. The discussion is marked throughout by depth of insight and sophistication of reasoning, and the narrative voice is both assured and authoritative.

However, the work is not, as it is billed, a history of analytic philosophy. There are too many issues and philosophers omitted for it to count genuinely as a history of analytic philosophy. What we have is a series of rational reconstructions and criticisms of selected arguments in the history of analytic philosophy, chosen for their contributions to the Whiggish story Soames wants to tell—a story unashamedly written from the perspective of a Princeton philosopher whose hero is Kripke. In his introduction to the two volumes, Soames states what he takes to be the two most important achievements in twentieth-century analytic philosophy: “(i) the recognition that philosophical speculation must be grounded in pre-philosophical thought, and (ii) the success achieved in understanding, and separating one from another, the fundamental methodological notions of logical consequence, logical truth, necessary truth, and apriori truth” (I, p. xi).<sup>2</sup> The first provides the underlying theme of the books, and lies at the heart of Soames's conception of analysis.

1. Scott Soames, *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century*, Volume 1: *The Dawn of Analysis*, Volume 2: *The Age of Meaning*, Princeton University Press, 2003. Pp. xx + 412, xxii + 480, £22.95 each volume.
2. Throughout his work, Soames uses the terms ‘apriori’ and ‘aprioricity’. I shall use the more common terms ‘a priori’ and ‘a priority’, except when quoting him directly.

The second provides the core set of issues which are explored in detail in the two volumes.

Soames's exploration of the latter is magnificent: clear, informed and instructive. For anyone who wants to understand ideas about analyticity, necessity and a priority in the twentieth century, many of the chapters in Soames's two volumes will be essential reading. His handling of the first theme is much less assured. Given that the title of his work is 'Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century', much more could and should have been said in defence of Soames's understanding of analysis. Soames does not subject the concept of analysis itself to analysis to anything like the extent that he subjects the concepts of analyticity, necessity and a priority to analysis. Nothing is done to motivate the conceptions of analysis that he takes to characterize analytic philosophy by locating them against the background of earlier philosophy; nor are alternative conceptions of analysis considered. This reinforces the point made above—that Soames offers a very partial reading of the history of analytic philosophy. In what follows, I will first provide a summary of the main elements of that reading, before returning to the question of Soames's conception of analysis and the broader methodological and historiographical issues concerning the nature of analytic philosophy and the writing of its history.

### 1. From Moore's Defence of Common Sense to Quine's Critique of Analyticity

Volume I is divided into five parts, one part each on Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, logical positivism, and Quine's 'Two Dogmas'. Part 1 contains four chapters, two on Moore's epistemology and two on his ethics. The first chapter is the shortest in the entire two volumes (at just over 8 pages), but as far as the underlying theme of Soames's account is concerned, is the most important, since it reveals the Moorean conception of analysis that lies at the heart of his own approach. According to Moore, Soames writes, "the job of philosophy is not to prove or refute the most basic propositions that we all commonly take ourselves to know. We have no choice but to acknowledge that we know these propositions. However, it is a central task of philosophy to **explain** how we do know them. And the key to doing this, Moore thought, was to analyze precisely **what it is that we know** when we know these propositions to be true" (I, p. 9). This captures Moore's conception of philosophical analysis precisely: analysis does not seek reasons for what we take ourselves to know, but aims simply to explain or clarify that knowledge. This key Moorean conception is what Soames primarily has in mind in claiming that one of the two most important achievements in analytic philosophy (as mentioned above) is "the recognition that philosophical speculation must be grounded in pre-philosophical thought". That philosophical speculation must be so grounded is a recurring theme in Soames's own discussions.

Moore's conception of analysis is illustrated in Chapter 2 in examining Moore's 'proof' of an external world. As Soames shows, though, it is not so much a proof as a denial that there is any need for proof in the first place.

The sceptic is refuted, according to Moore, by being shown that paradigmatic cases of knowledge, such as knowing that there is a hand in front of one as one holds it up, are more certain than any sceptic's claim about what knowledge is. However, when it comes to providing an 'analysis' of the perceptual statements that lie at the basis of our claims to knowledge, Moore's attempt is vitiated by his appeal to sense data, which, at the very least, raise problems about the relations between ordinary statements about material objects and the statements about sense data that are supposedly their analyses.

The basic issue here, which is essentially the paradox of analysis (although Soames does not mention it as such in discussing Moore in Part I), also surfaces in Moore's ethics, and in particular, in his open question argument. Soames examines this argument in Chapter 3, and formulates a key principle that underlies that argument, which he calls the principle of the transparency of meaning:

If two expressions  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  mean the same thing (e.g., if two predicates express the same property), and if, in addition, an individual  $x$  (fully) understands both  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  then (i)  $x$  will know that  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  mean the same thing, and (ii),  $x$  will know that any two sentences . . . that differ only in the substitution of one of these expressions for the other mean the same thing (I, pp. 46–7).

Consider an attempted definition of 'good' in terms of some (simple or complex) property  $D$ . According to Moore, whatever property we offer, it is always an open question whether what is  $D$  is good. I may (fully) understand the two expressions 'good' and ' $D$ ', but can still ask (legitimately) whether 'good' means ' $D$ '. If I can ask this at all, then they cannot have the same meaning, since if they did, I would know it—by the transparency principle. Soames writes that this principle "has intuitive appeal, and was accepted, either explicitly or implicitly, not only by Moore, but also by the great majority of analytic philosophers in the early to mid-twentieth century who dealt with substantial questions about meaning" (I, p. 47). Of course, whether the principle is true depends on the notion of meaning involved. But in the case of Moore, at least, he does seem to have thought of sameness of meaning as a matter of synonymy; and if synonymy is what is involved, then the principle is true.

Soames is prepared to allow that, on Moore's narrow conception of definability (as requiring synonymy), 'good' is indefinable. But this does not show that no claims about some relevant property  $D$  can provide any justification at all for claims about what is good. Corresponding to Moore's narrow conception of definability is a narrow conception of analyticity, according to which analytic truths are those that can be turned into formal logical truths by replacing synonyms by synonyms (I, p. 50). But as Soames points out, "two expressions can be conceptually connected even though neither is defined in terms of the other" (I, p. 54). He goes on to offer expanded conceptions of analyticity and entailment with which he reconstructs Moore's argument, but even in its strongest version, he contends, it nevertheless fails.

Soames continues his examination of Moore's ethics in Chapter 4, discussing certain related issues such as Moore's consequentialism and his argument

against subjectivism. But it is Chapter 3 that is the highlight of Part 1: he makes out a strong case for his main claim that Moore's philosophy was vitiated by "unclarity about the central modalities of analysis", as he puts it (I, p. 75). These unclaritys are also seen as impairing subsequent analytic philosophy in the first seventy years or so of the twentieth century, as the rest of his two volumes aims to show.

Part 2 is concerned with Bertrand Russell, and also contains four chapters, on the theory of descriptions, logicism, logical constructions, and logical atomism. Chapter 5 is the longest of the book, and offers an exposition of Russell's theory of descriptions, seeing it as motivated primarily by the problem of negative existentials. This is a good way to introduce the theory, and the associated distinction between grammatical and logical form, but the problem of negative existentials was only one of the problems with which Russell was occupied. Soames provides only a cursory outline of the background to the theory of descriptions (I, pp. 94–5), which fails altogether to mention Russell's earlier theory of denoting concepts. In recent years Russell scholars have shed a great deal of light on the period that led up to the theory of descriptions, but none of this is mentioned by Soames, let alone discussed. At the very end of the chapter, however, Soames does offer a good illustration of the usefulness of Russellian logical analysis by diagnosing what is wrong with the doctrine of the reality of internal relations, which was held by Russell's idealist predecessors. Soames characterizes this doctrine as the view that "the nature and existence of each object is so dependent on that of every other object that, had any entity lacked even a single property that it actually possesses, neither the universe itself, nor any part of it, would have existed" (I, p. 127). Reconstructing an argument for this rampant essentialism, he demonstrates convincingly how this trades on a scope ambiguity in the use of the word 'necessarily' (I, pp. 128–30).

Chapter 6 discusses Russell's logicist project, outlining his attempted reduction of arithmetic to logic and explaining his theory of types. Here the interesting section is the final one, on the philosophical significance of logicism, where the issue of the paradox of analysis is addressed (I, pp. 157–64). Consider any arithmetical proposition and Russell's 'translation' of it into his logical language. In what way does the latter offer an *analysis* of the former? Either the 'translation' captures the 'content' of the original proposition, or it does not. If it does, then how can the analysis be genuinely informative, or remove the philosophical worries that had motivated the analysis? If it does not, then how can the analysis be correct? Soames identifies two responses to this paradox (grasping one or other of the two horns): either we say that someone who understands ordinary arithmetic really does—'deep down'—understand the logicist analyses, or else we treat the analyses as *explanations*, aimed at *replacing* our ordinary (inadequate) propositions. Soames does not offer his own response to the paradox, but simply ends the chapter by suggesting that adherents of Moorean/Russellian analysis were unclear themselves which line they wanted to take.

This equivocation is illustrated in the following chapter, in discussing Russell's conception of logical constructions, as applied to the problem of the external world. Soames gives a brief explanation of how Russell construed material objects as logical constructions out of sense data, and shows how this view founders on

the problem of other minds. But even if Russell's account of statements about material objects had somehow been made to work, the complexity of the resulting analyses would have thrown doubt on any claim that our *ordinary* understanding was being analysed. Yet if Russell is just prescribing how such statements *should* be understood, then why should we go along with him? As Soames suggests, Russell seems to equivocate "over whether the doctrine that material objects are logical constructions out of sense data is supposed to be an accurate reflection of what statements about material objects really mean, in ordinary language, or whether it is what we, as philosophers, should mean by them" (I, p. 169).

Part 2 concludes with a short chapter on Russell's logical atomism, which really serves to introduce the discussion of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* in Part 3. Soames sketches Russell's conception of an ideal language and considers the issue of the isomorphism between language and the world. Russell denied that there are irreducible disjunctive and conjunctive facts corresponding to disjunctive and conjunctive sentences, but he did feel compelled to posit negative and general facts (along with atomic facts) to correspond to negative and general sentences.

Russell's and Wittgenstein's conceptions of logical atomism are compared in the first two chapters of Part 3, Chapter 9 on the metaphysics of the *Tractatus* and Chapter 10 on meaning, truth and logic. Unlike Russell, Wittgenstein denied that there are negative and general facts, explaining the sense of all complex sentences (if they have a sense) as resulting from their being truth functions of atomic sentences (elementary propositions). (Throughout his discussion, Soames ignores Wittgenstein's distinction between meaning (*Bedeutung*) and sense (*Sinn*), and talks of the 'meaning' rather than 'sense' of sentences. For Wittgenstein, a name has meaning and a sentence or proposition (*Satz*) has sense.) Soames gives an account of the main ideas of the *Tractatus*—Wittgenstein's appeal to simple objects, his doctrine of the logical independence of elementary propositions, his picture theory, and his views on logic. His discussion of the latter is the fullest, with a perceptive examination of the difference between Russellian and Wittgensteinian logical truth. Chapter 10 ends by identifying three Tractarian doctrines that he suggests had a major influence on subsequent analytic philosophy:

- (i) All necessity is linguistic necessity.
- (ii) All linguistic necessity is logical necessity.
- (iii) All logical necessity is determinable by form alone. (I, p. 233)

Soames offers a counterexample to the third doctrine in Chapter 10, in relation to Wittgenstein's conception of logical truth. But he considers the issue further in Chapter 11, in discussing what he calls the Tractarian test of intelligibility. On Wittgenstein's view, a sentence has sense (is meaningful, as Soames puts it) if and only if it is a truth function of elementary propositions. (Soames suggests that tautologies and contradictions are also meaningful, "in an extended sense" (I, pp. 234–5). But this is not Wittgenstein's view. For Wittgenstein, they are senseless, though not nonsense.) To test whether a given sentence has

sense, then, we need to know its logical form. But according to Wittgenstein, logical forms are hidden, and require analysis to reveal them. Since he gives no examples of elementary propositions, however, we have no real guide as to how to pursue analysis. So there is an obvious problem in applying the test. The problem first became clear to Wittgenstein himself in his 1929 paper, 'Some Remarks on Logical Form', when he considered the colour exclusion problem. Consider the two statements ' $x$  is red' and ' $x$  is green'. These *exclude* one another, and so cannot be elementary propositions, on Wittgenstein's Tractarian view (since they are not logically independent). But having attempted unsuccessfully to analyse them, Wittgenstein came to the conclusion (immediately after he had written his 1929 paper) that the doctrine of the logical independence of elementary propositions had to be abandoned. Furthermore, as far as Soames's interests are concerned, the problem shows that (iii) is false. Wittgenstein still regarded a proposition such as 'If  $x$  is red, then  $x$  is not green' as a logical (and hence necessary) truth; but it is certainly not true in virtue of its form alone. As Soames remarks, "This is just one example of a vast and pervasive problem . . . ordinary language is full of conceptual incompatibilities or necessities that are not in any obvious way determinable from the manifest linguistic form of the sentences themselves" (I, p. 238).

One way of characterizing Wittgenstein's views on three of the key 'modalities of analysis' is to say that the distinctions between necessary and contingent, analytic and synthetic, and a priori and a posteriori propositions all line up. This assumption was shared by the logical positivists, as Soames explains in the first chapter of Part 4. However, while Wittgenstein focused on explaining necessity in terms of analyticity (i.e. in terms of the idea of a tautology), Soames suggests, the logical positivists were at least as much concerned with explaining a priority in terms of analyticity (I, pp. 261–2). Soames takes Ayer as his main proponent of logical positivism. According to Ayer, as Soames puts it, "necessary truths are true no matter what way the world is **because** they are true in virtue of meaning; similarly, they are knowable a priori, without appeal to empirical evidence for justification, **because** this knowledge is nothing more than knowledge of meaning" (I, p. 263). Knowledge of meaning was in turn explained in terms of understanding linguistic conventions and being able to derive the consequences of those conventions. Drawing on Quine's 1936 paper, 'Truth by Convention', however, Soames argues that this account presupposes knowledge of logic, which cannot itself be reduced to knowledge of linguistic conventions. We then face a dilemma. "Either this logical knowledge is apriori or it isn't. If it is apriori, then some apriori knowledge is not explained linguistically; if it is not apriori, then our knowledge of logic isn't apriori. Either way, the positivist program fails" (I, p. 265).

According to Soames, then, logical positivism failed to provide a satisfactory account of necessity, analyticity and a priority. But it also encountered problems in explaining the meaning of empirical propositions, that is, propositions seen as contingent, synthetic and a posteriori. According to the logical positivists, an empirical proposition has meaning if and only if its truth or falsity can—in principle—be *verified* in experience. But the problem lay in articulating a conception of verification that could do the job required.

Soames discusses this problem in Chapter 13. After an initial clarification of the notion of an observation statement, he considers various attempts to formulate both 'strong' and 'weak' notions of verification, and shows what is wrong with each one. He concludes: "Either obviously meaningful sentences of science were wrongly characterized as meaningless, or obviously meaningless sentences were classified as meaningful" (I, p. 291). This shows, he suggests, the important role that our pre-philosophical judgements about what is meaningful play in assessing theories about meaning (I, p. 299), again illustrating the underlying Moorean theme of his two volumes.

The final two chapters of Part 4 are on ethics in the period in which logical positivism was dominant. Chapter 14 examines emotivism, as put forward by Ayer and Stevenson; and Chapter 15 considers Ross's anti-consequentialism. Here, too, Soames concludes by emphasizing the role played by our ordinary moral convictions in assessing ethical theories. But other than providing another illustration of this underlying Moorean theme, no further light is shed on his other main theme, concerning the development of our understanding of the various modalities of analysis.

In Part 5, however, Soames returns to this second main theme, in discussing what he calls 'the post-positivist perspective' of the early Quine, as reflected in Quine's classic paper, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'. This part has just two chapters, the first on Quine's critique of the analytic/synthetic distinction, and the second on his holistic verificationism. Quine's critique of the analytic/synthetic distinction, and the response by Grice and Strawson, is well trodden territory, of course. But Soames provides an excellent account of the debate, and makes out a convincing case for his main claim, that Quine's argument only works if one adopts two of the positivist's theses:

(T1) All necessary (and all apriori) truths are analytic.

(T2) Analyticity is needed to explain and legitimate necessity (and aprioricity). (I, p. 360)

Soames suggests defining analyticity in terms of a notion of synonymy based on intersubstitutability not just in modal contexts but also in intensional contexts such as '*X* thinks that . . .'. On this narrower conception of analyticity (which Quine himself presupposes in places), (T1) and (T2) are false, and Quine's critique fails.

Although Quine was (rightly) critical of the logical positivist's conflation of analyticity, necessity and a priority, he was less critical of the logical positivist's underlying theory of meaning. What he objected to in verificationism was not the connection between meaning and empirical evidence, but the assumption that the unit of confirmation and hence the unit of meaning was the individual sentence. Instead, Quine argued, the unit of confirmation and hence of meaning should be taken as the whole scientific theory. Soames discusses Quine's holistic verificationism in the final chapter of Volume I. Soames formulates a strong and a weak form of holistic verificationism, but argues that both are implausible, not least because they make the status of Quine's own philosophical claims problematic.

## 2. From Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* to Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*

Volume II is 70 pages longer than Volume I, and contains seven parts. Part 1 is on the later Wittgenstein, Parts 2 and 3 on ordinary language philosophy, Part 4 on Grice, Part 5 on Quine, Part 6 on Davidson, and Part 7 on Kripke. There is also a short introduction, which identifies two ideas from the later Wittgenstein that Soames sees as providing the agenda in the period from the publication of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. The first is that philosophical problems arise from the misuse of language, and the second that meaning is to be understood by paying careful attention to the use of language rather than by constructing a theory of meaning (cf. II, pp. xiii–xiv). The story of analytic philosophy, as Soames then tells it, is one of the deepening realization that these two ideas must be rejected.

Part 1 contains two chapters, one on Wittgenstein's later critique of his Tractarian conception of language and analysis, and one on the private language argument. These two chapters, in my opinion, are the weakest in Soames's two volumes. Wittgenstein's style of philosophizing is obviously not conducive to Soames's method of rational reconstruction, and Soames attributes views to Wittgenstein with inadequate textual support. In Chapter 1, for example, in discussing what he calls Wittgenstein's 'deflationary' conception of philosophy, Soames baldly asserts that Wittgenstein treated the necessary, the a priori and the analytic as one and the same (II, p. 29). Clearly, if this were true, then it would be grist to Soames's mill; but he provides no textual evidence that Wittgenstein held such a view in his later work, and proper reflection should have convinced him that such a conflation runs counter to Wittgenstein's emphasis on the actual uses of words. Since 'necessary', 'a priori' and 'analytic' have different uses (as Soames himself, as a good Kripkean, argues throughout his work), the default position to ascribe to Wittgenstein is that these are *not* to be conflated. (In fact, nowhere in the *Philosophical Investigations* does Wittgenstein discuss or even mention the analytic/synthetic distinction; so it is not at all clear what conception of analyticity, if any, can be attributed to Wittgenstein.)

Soames's insensitivity to the actual text of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* is also manifest in Chapter 2, where his account of the private language argument is marred by reading Wittgenstein through Kripkean spectacles. Although Soames departs from Kripke in repudiating Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein as explaining meaning in terms of assertability rather than truth conditions (II, p. 34, fn. 2; cf. p. 59, fn. 24), he endorses Kripke's central claim that, as Soames puts it, "at least for our most basic words . . . the standards of correctness governing them involve agreement with uses of them by other members of the linguistic community" (II, p. 42). Of course, what is crucial here is the construal of what it is for the standards of correctness to 'involve' agreement. In general, Soames seems to interpret Wittgenstein as holding that other members of a linguistic community must *actually* agree with someone's use of a given term for that term to have meaning (see, e.g., II, pp. 17, 25, 32, 34, 38–40, 50, 52). But this would rule out Robinson

Crusoe's legitimately speaking a language on his desert island, which was not Wittgenstein's intention. What is important is that there exists a practice of linguistic use in which there *could be* agreement in judgements.

Parts 2 and 3 are on various 'classics' of ordinary language philosophy. In Part 2, there are two chapters on Ryle, one on Strawson and one on Hare; and in Part 3, there is one chapter on Malcolm and one on Austin. In Chapter 3, Soames criticizes Ryle's abandonment of Russellian analysis in favour of what Strawson was later to call 'connective' analysis (though Soames does not use this term himself), that is, analysis which involves the tracing of the intricate connections between concepts. His criticism essentially consists in taking an argument for fatalism which Ryle discusses, and showing how Ryle goes all round the houses and misses the key scope ambiguity on which that argument trades. But this does not show that connective analysis is inferior to Russellian analysis, merely that in some cases using the tools of Russellian analysis may be more effective. What Ryle objected to in Russellian analysis was not the help it gives us in recognizing ambiguity but the (logical atomist) assumption that every proposition has an underlying logical form which it is the task of analysis to reveal. Analysis is context-dependent, and different conceptual connections may need to be clarified for different purposes.

In Chapter 4 Soames discusses Ryle's most famous work, *The Concept of Mind*. He criticizes Ryle's behavioural dispositionalism, and in particular, his tacit assumption that all necessity is conceptual necessity and hence linguistic in origin (II, p. 114). In rejecting Ryle's argument that beliefs and desires cannot be internal causes of our behaviour, for example, Soames writes: "The mistake inherent in it lies in thinking that because the connection between having a belief and being in a certain neurological or physical state is not a **conceptual** connection, discoverable by mere analysis and reflection, it therefore cannot be a **necessary** connection" (II, p. 99). Soames also suggests that there is a fundamental tension between Ryle's "ordinary language ideology about the nature of philosophy" and his "sweeping revision of our conception of the mental" (II, p. 93). Both main themes of Soames's account of analytic philosophy are thus illustrated here.

In chapters 5 and 6, Soames discusses two performative theories, Strawson's theory of truth and Hare's theory of goodness, as examples of ordinary language philosophy in operation. According to Strawson, to say that a statement is true is not to describe it but to perform the speech act of endorsing it; and according to Hare, to call something good is not to describe it but to perform the speech act of commending it. Soames criticizes both theories, essentially on the grounds that they ignore the systematicity of meaning and go too far in equating meaning with use. Variations in the actual use of expressions, Soames argues, can often be put down to pragmatic rather than semantic differences.

Part 3 continues Soames's discussion of ordinary language philosophy, with two chapters on responses to scepticism, Chapter 7 looking briefly at Malcolm's paradigm case argument, and Chapter 8 at Austin's *Sense and Sensibilia*. As far as the former is concerned, Soames's main point is that while Malcolm contributes to the task of diagnosing semantic incoherence in some forms of

radical scepticism, he does not succeed in refuting the sceptic on his own grounds (II, p. 168). A similar point is made in relation to Austin's critique of Ayer's theory of sense data, which also opens up radical scepticism about our knowledge of the external world (II, pp. 190–1). But Soames is generally sympathetic to Austin's critique.

Part 4 contains just one chapter, on Grice's logic of conversation, which Soames sees as bringing ordinary language philosophy to an end by demonstrating the importance of systematic theorizing about meaning. Soames outlines Grice's conceptions of conversational and conventional implicature, and returns to Strawson's performative theory of truth to illustrate how distinguishing between meaning and implicature undercuts the motivation for that theory. Since Grice's own work had developed *out of* ordinary language philosophy, Soames suggests, it genuinely showed that the ideas of ordinary language philosophy had run their course (II, p. 216).

Part 5 continues the discussion of Quine that broke off at the end of Volume I, with a chapter on the indeterminacy of translation and a chapter on the inscrutability of reference. Soames reconstructs Quine's arguments, but is critical of all of them. He considers two routes to the indeterminacy of translation, one through behaviourism and a better one through physicalism, but rejects both of them. He focuses on the determination relation invoked by the second route, and contends that here, once again, understanding of what might be involved (and hence appreciation of what is wrong in Quine's position) has been hindered by failure to distinguish between necessity and a priority (II, p. 252). In the second chapter, Soames argues that the consequences of Quine's views commit him to a radical semantic eliminativism which undermines his whole account. Quine's strategy of suggesting Tarskian *replacements* of our ordinary notions of meaning, reference and truth, Soames writes, render "his own indeterminacy and inscrutability theses either false, uninteresting, or unstateable" (II, p. 282).

On Soames's account, ordinary language philosophy recognized the importance of meaning but not that of systematic theorizing, and Quine recognized the importance of systematic theorizing but not that of meaning (cf. II, p. 286). So it is with relief that he turns, in Part 6, to Davidson, who was indeed concerned to develop a systematic theory of meaning. Soames discusses the Davidsonian program in Chapter 12, and Davidson's argument against alternative conceptual schemes in Chapter 13. He explains carefully how Davidson thought a Tarskian theory of truth could be used to provide a theory of meaning, but he is nevertheless critical of that approach. He appears sympathetic to the general project of providing truth theories for larger and larger fragments of natural language, but is sceptical that these can provide what he calls 'translational' theories (II, p. 310). He is more critical of Davidson's argument against the intelligibility of alternative conceptual schemes, rejecting Davidson's view that no sense can be made of the idea of there being a language containing true sentences that cannot be translated into our language. Davidson, he writes, "exaggerates the amount of truth telling we have to attribute to speakers in order to find their beliefs and other attitudes explainable" (II, p. 319). Nevertheless, he concludes, "Whatever the shortcomings

in conception and execution, his overall truth-theoretic approach to meaning in natural language represented a major advance" (II, p. 330).

The seventh and final part of Volume II is the longest of the whole work, and the discussion of Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* that it contains is obviously seen as the culmination of the story of analytic philosophy that Soames tells. There are four chapters, one on rigid designation, one on the necessary a posteriori, one on the contingent a priori, and one on natural kind terms. On his home ground, Soames turns in a masterful performance. The exposition is clear and penetrating, not only explaining Kripke's ideas and motivation but also articulating tacit assumptions in his arguments. This enables Soames to identify gaps in those arguments, and while generally sympathetic to Kripke, he is not uncritical. In the first of the chapters, Soames goes through Kripke's objections to two versions of the description theory of proper names, and shows how the idea of rigid designation can be used to defend essentialism against Quine's earlier attacks. He also suggests, in resolving an unclarity in Kripke's own account, that Kripke's remarks about causal chains of reference transmission should be seen as a contribution to pragmatics rather than semantics.

Chapters 15 and 16 are on the examples that Kripke offers to show that the necessary/contingent and a priori/a posteriori distinctions cut across one another. Soames agrees with Kripke that there are genuine instances of the necessary a posteriori, such as the proposition expressed by the sentence 'This table is not made out of clay' (II, p. 375). But he criticizes Kripke's argument for the claim that identity statements involving rigid designators, such as the statement that Hesperus is Phosphorus, are also examples. The difficulties here, he argues, arise from the assumption (formulated above, in connection with Moore) that meaning is transparent, an assumption that Kripke's own later paper, 'A Puzzle about Belief', shows is problematic. He also rejects the examples that Kripke offers of the contingent a priori, most notably, that concerning the metre stick. There are no instances of the contingent a priori, he argues, which depend upon names whose referents are semantically fixed by descriptions (II, p. 417). But he does suggest that Kripke was on the right lines, since for every Kripke-style purported example, he claims, there is a corresponding sentence involving the actuality operator that *is* an instance of the contingent a priori (II, p. 422). In the case of Kripke's example concerning the metre stick, Soames offers the following corresponding sentence as a genuine example of the contingent a priori (II, p. 418):

If stick *s* exists at *t* (and hence has a unique length at *t*), then the length of stick *s* at *t* is the actual length of stick *s* at *t*.

In the final chapter, Soames considers the extension of the idea of rigid designation to the case of natural kind terms, and discusses the modal status of what Kripke calls 'theoretical identifications', such as the statement that water is H<sub>2</sub>O, which are also offered as instances of the necessary a posteriori. Soames articulates a general objection to the idea of the necessary a posteriori, and criticizes Kripke's own response to this objection; but he defends Kripke by emphasizing the distinction between epistemic and metaphysical

possibility. He ends by claiming that Kripke's "discovery of the necessary aposteriori" was one of "the great philosophical achievements of the twentieth century", reshaping our understanding of the analytic tradition, and without which his own history would not have been possible (II, p. 456).

The book concludes with an epilogue entitled 'The Era of Specialization', in which Soames comments on the task of bringing his account up to date, a task that he suggests cannot be achieved. He writes: "In my opinion, philosophy has changed substantially in the last thirty or so years. Gone are the days of large, central figures, whose work is accessible and relevant to, as well as read by, nearly all analytic philosophers. Philosophy has become a highly organized discipline, done by specialists primarily for other specialists" (II, p. 463.) Any attempt at writing a history of the period "would look not like one linear and integrated story, but like many distinct and overlapping stories" (II, p. 464). Soames illustrates this by taking just one specialized area, the philosophy of logic and language, and indicating some of the work that has been done in this area, on truth and the Liar paradox, on vagueness, on intensional logics, and on reference and propositional attitudes. An account even of this area, he suggests, could yield "no single, unified story" (II, p. 467). However, while philosophy has certainly become more specialized, and there are far more professional philosophers than there were thirty or more years ago, the "single, unified story" that Soames thinks he has provided of developments from 1900 to the 1970s is entirely an artefact of his own philosophical education and interests. There have been "distinct and overlapping stories" in every period of the history of philosophy. The fact that philosophy may look fragmented now should have alerted Soames to the possibility that, at any earlier period, it might also have looked fragmented to those writing at the time. Soames admits that his account is "highly selective" (II, p. 461). But it is selective in far more ways than he seems willing to recognize.

### **3. Soames's Conception of Analysis and The Fregean Tradition**

It should be clear from the outline just offered that *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century* is not a history of analytic philosophy but a history of twentieth-century conceptions of the distinctions between necessity and contingency, a priority and a posteriority, and analyticity and syntheticity, interspersed with criticisms of various sceptical arguments in epistemology and ethics, and pursued through a broadly chronological discussion of certain classic texts. Indeed, it is only a 'history' in a very attenuated sense. There is no attempt to trace the actual development of ideas or to locate them in a broader context, and there are few comments even on what influenced each of the philosophers discussed. In introducing his comparison between Russell's and Wittgenstein's theories of logical atomism, for example, he writes: "This way of presenting things does not claim to be faithful to the history of how the two systems developed" (I, p. 183). And in the case of Kripke, there is just a brief admission *in a footnote* that "There were, to be sure, historical anticipations of Kripke's doctrines about rigid designators", and a handful of names are

mentioned; but it is obvious that Soames has no interest in doing justice to the actual historical story (II, p. 353, fn. 17). In a later footnote, in discussing Kripke's views on natural kind terms, Soames writes: "This picture should not be credited to Kripke alone. Substantially the same account was developed independently by Hilary Putnam" (II, p. 435, fn. 14). A few works are cited, but that is all we have about Putnam in the whole of the two volumes. Can there really be a history of analytic philosophy that fails to discuss anything whatsoever by Putnam, to take just one example of a glaring omission? (I shall return to the issue of omissions shortly.)

For anyone interested in the various modalities of analysis, sceptical arguments and classic texts, however, Soames's work will be required reading for many years to come. But not all chapters are equally important. As far as the story of the modalities is concerned, Chapters 3, 10–13 and 16–17 of Volume I and Chapters 4 and 14–17 of Volume II can be recommended as essential. As far as the sceptical arguments and classic texts are concerned, the relevant chapters can, in general, be recommended. With the exception of the chapters on the later Wittgenstein, the exegesis is solid and reliable and the criticisms acute and insightful. If one shares at least some of Soames's concerns, then the two volumes offer a good resource for courses in the history of analytic philosophy. All of the parts, and most of the chapters, can be read independently of one another, so in this sense, they provide useful teaching material. But in this regard, I do have one quibble. There is a section on suggested further reading at the end of each part, which gives both the primary sources and some "additional recommended reading". But in every case, with the sole exception of the part on Kripke, the suggestions for the latter are woefully thin and partial. Writings by Soames himself or close colleagues such as Nathan Salmon are cited, but little else. No attempt is made to indicate the breadth of interpretations that exist in the literature on each of the major philosophers that Soames discusses, which only reinforces the sense of a biased perspective that one soon acquires in reading his work.

Obviously, every account of a given field or topic is selective, and criticisms can always be made of the selection. No two people will ever tell the same story, even if they agree on the main ideas and themes. I have no problem with the decision to write an account, even a very Whiggish one, with a shamelessly Kripkean agenda, of the development of conceptions of the various modalities of analysis that Soames selects. But every account that someone offers can still be judged against its own aims and objectives. In this regard, I have two major (though related) criticisms of the story that Soames tells. First of all, even granting his Kripkean aim, there is a particularly glaring omission: the ideas of Gottlob Frege. Few dispute that Frege, Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein are the four founding fathers of analytic philosophy. Soames discusses Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein, but says nothing at all about Frege. Yet Frege's masterpiece was *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, in which his avowed central aim was to demonstrate that arithmetic is a system of analytic a priori truths, and concern with analyticity in the philosophy of logic and mathematics has persisted right up to the present time, as shown by the recent work of neo-Fregeans such as Hale and Wright. An account of this should

surely have been given. (Admittedly, Frege himself later drops talk of ‘analyticity’, and just refers to his project as one of showing that arithmetic is ‘reducible’ to logic, but this too deserves discussion. It is my view that Frege tacitly recognized problems with the idea of analyticity long before Quine.)

Soames’s account is also billed as a history of analytic philosophy. But how can a history of analytic philosophy be written at all, with whatever focus, without discussing any of Frege’s ideas and the influence they had? Soames recognizes, of course, that Frege is a major omission, and responds to the anticipated objection in his introduction to the two volumes. Much of Frege’s work and the tradition he inspired, he remarks, is highly technical, and requires a separate volume of its own, a volume that he intends, indeed, to write (I, pp. xvii–xviii). I shall certainly look forward to the companion volume. Yet I find this response bizarre. For Soames discusses Russell’s logicist project, for example, in Chapter 6 of Volume I, and Russell’s own logical system, with the theory of types, is far more complex than Frege’s. And Frege’s ideas on sense and reference are far from technical, and have been hugely influential on analytic philosophy, not least on Kripke himself (even if, arguably, Kripke misunderstood those ideas). So I see no justification at all in omitting Frege, and alongside Frege, the work, in particular, of Carnap and Tarski, who were firmly rooted in the Fregean tradition. Carnap was a major influence on Quine, and Tarski on Davidson, and indeed, Soames cannot help referring occasionally to Carnap and Tarski in his accounts of Quine and Davidson, even though he gives no proper account of their ideas. The omission of Frege also leads Soames to make a number of false or misleading claims. He implies in one place, for example, that it was Russell who gave us logicism (I, p. 193), and he mistakenly suggests that the idea of truth-conditions was first developed in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* (I, p. 217).

Of course, discussion of Frege, Carnap and Tarski would have made Soames’s two volumes even longer, but there is an obvious answer to this. Five of the existing chapters concern ethics, but with the exception of the chapter on Moore’s open question argument (whose significance extends far beyond ethics), these play little role in Soames’s overall account other than providing further illustration of his Moorean approach to philosophy. Four of these chapters, then, could easily have been omitted, as could a further chapter or two in Parts 2 and 3 of Volume II, on various classics of ordinary language philosophy, for the same reason. (A smaller selection would still have got the message across.) This would have made room for a discussion of Frege and the Fregean tradition that would have considerably strengthened Soames’s account (given his own aims and objectives).

As I see it, the history of analytic philosophy is *essentially* one of the intertwining in creative tension of its two main subtraditions, the Moorean and the Fregean. This is reflected in the two broad conceptions of analysis that characterize those subtraditions, which brings me to my second main criticism. The title of Soames’s work is ‘Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century’, yet there is surprisingly little appreciation of the range of conceptions of analysis that can be found even in analytic philosophy alone, and insufficient self-consciousness about his own methodology and a corresponding failure to properly defend that methodology. Phenomenology, for example, is also an

important tradition in twentieth-century philosophy, and involves interesting forms of analysis, but there is not a word about this, even to leave it aside in focusing on analytic philosophy. Soames is not interested in other traditions, of course, and takes his own conception of analytic philosophy for granted; but the assumption that analysis is only pursued by 'analytic' philosophers—and indeed, 'analytic' philosophers of a certain persuasion—is an egregious error.<sup>3</sup> At the very least, the title is badly misleading.

As far as his own methodology is concerned, Soames accepts a basically Moorean conception of analysis, according to which the aim of philosophy is to make clear what we already know, at the most fundamental level, acknowledging what we know and showing how philosophical speculation must be grounded in pre-philosophical thought. But grafted onto this is a Russellian conception, according to which the aim of analysis is to reveal the logical forms of propositions, with the associated assumption that there is always a unique logical form to uncover. In criticizing Ryle, for example, Soames seems to endorse this assumption, but nowhere does he provide any justification for doing so. (Indeed, his criticism of logical atomism seems in some tension with this endorsement.)

As Soames's own discussion of Ryle suggests, however, there are other conceptions of analysis. I referred above to Ryle's conception of 'connective' analysis, which Strawson has distinguished from 'reductive' analysis.<sup>4</sup> Soames reports that he is happy to allow different approaches to the analysis of concepts (II, p. 80), but he says very little about connective conceptions. He fails to mention it altogether, for example, in his discussion of the later Wittgenstein, despite its obvious centrality to Wittgenstein's whole approach. (The impression one gets is that Wittgenstein's main concern was to articulate his private language argument. Perhaps the fact that this is the only part of Wittgenstein's later philosophy that has come to be honoured as an 'argument' suggested to Soames that only this was worthy of rational reconstruction and critique. There is some discussion of what now tends to be called the 'rule-following considerations', but this is clearly seen as subservient to the private language argument.)

There is one other broad conception of analysis, however, an appreciation of which is crucial to understanding the nature and development of analytic philosophy. This is also alluded to in Soames's account, most notably, in his critique of Quine, where he talks of Quine's strategy of *replacing* our ordinary (supposedly defective) semantic notions with Tarskian substitutes (II, pp. 272, 281). It is here, in particular, that discussion of Frege and the Fregean tradition would have been helpful. For this strategy has its roots in Frege's logicist definitions of number terms, and was articulated most famously in Carnap's conception of explication.<sup>5</sup> Soames mentions none of this; but nor does he

3. Cf. Michael Beaney, 'Analysis', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2003), online at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/analysis>.

4. P.F. Strawson, *Analysis and Metaphysics* (Oxford University Press, 1992).

5. Rudolf Carnap, *Logical Foundations of Probability* (University of Chicago Press, 1950), Ch. 1. On the relationship between Frege and Carnap here, see Michael Beaney, 'Carnap's Conception of Explication: From Frege to Husserl?', in Steve Awodey and Carsten Klein (eds.), *Carnap Brought Home: The View from Jena* (Open Court, 2004), pp. 117–50.

even say anything about Quine's own account of his conception of analysis, in *Word and Object* (§§ 53–4), where Quine himself talks of 'explication'.

While Moorean clarificatory analysis treats our most basic ordinary notions as essentially reliable and coherent, Fregean explicatory analysis regards them as potentially defective and requiring replacement by rigorously defined notions. The tension between these two conceptions of analysis is reflected in the paradox of analysis which Soames mentions at the end of Chapter 6 of Volume I but which he fails to return to, let alone offer an answer to, in the 720 pages that follow. This is surprising, to say the least, given that philosophical analysis is what the title suggests his work is about. But it also represents a huge missed opportunity to integrate his various reconstructions and critiques and address questions about his own methodology. While no doubt useful as teaching material, the individual chapters are far too disjointed to constitute a satisfying whole. The only narrative flow is provided by the story he wants to tell about "the long and difficult struggle", as he puts it, to understand the various modalities of analysis (I, p. 75). But the key modality, of analysis itself, is not problematized to anything like the same extent as the modalities of analyticity, necessity and a priority. Discussion of the paradox of analysis would have been the obvious way to do so.

Soames's sympathy for the Moorean response to the paradox is reflected in his emphasis that philosophical speculation must be grounded in pre-philosophical thought. He concludes his critique of verificationism, for example, by remarking that "our ordinary pre-philosophical judgements substantially constrain even the most philosophically well-motivated theories" (I, p. 299). Yet he rejects the ordinary language philosopher's repudiation of philosophical theorizing. So what exactly *is* the relationship between our everyday beliefs and philosophical theories? What are the criteria of correctness and informativeness for philosophical theories? What is the nature and extent of the constraints that our ordinary beliefs provide? These are just some of the questions that naturally arise about philosophical methodology. The culmination of the story that Soames tells is the 'discovery' by Kripke of the necessary a posteriori. But in what sense is this a 'discovery'? Did Kripke really tell us what we meant all along by 'necessary' and 'a posteriori', or did he offer us *explications*? At various points in his account, Soames formulates different definitions of 'analyticity', 'logical truth', and so on. But which is the 'right' one, or what makes a particular one the appropriate one in a given context? In the rational reconstructions he provides, it often looks as if Soames, too, is doing explication. But then how is Soames's approach justified if Quine's is not?

Soames admits himself that he is not concerned with the *actual* development of ideas. But this, too, suggests that he should be taken to be offering an *explication* of that development, prescinding from the messiness of what really went on. For him, we might say, historical analysis is pursued as historical explication, rational reconstruction itself having an obvious eliminativist dimension. But if so, then how is this compatible with Soames's Moorean ideology? Shouldn't what actually happened substantially constrain even the most philosophically motivated accounts? At the very least, there seems to be a tension between Soames's official views about philosophical theory and

his methodological practice. For me, what is most fascinating and rewarding about working on the history of analytic philosophy are the issues that arise concerning the relationships and tensions between theory and practice, and the self-consciousness about methodology that this prompts. Soames seems not to appreciate that there are issues to address here that threaten his own account, magnificent as it is as an exemplar of rational reconstruction.