

ON REFERENTIALITY AND ITS CONDITIONS

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1.* In the second chapter of his book *Word and Object*,¹ Quine has put forward his thesis of indeterminacy of translation based on the considerations that two different and incompatible conceptual translations in a home language of a native expression in the target language are always possible. This indicates that the meaning of a term is never fully determinate in a language but can receive different conceptual identifications in different translations, reproducible even within one language. In this manner the meaning of an expression in a given language is only to be relatively determined in another language. Since there could be different ways of characterizing the meaning of a native expression in a language as Quine strongly urges in the case of translating "gavagai" in terms of "rabbit," "rabbithood," "unattached rabbit part" or "rabbit stage," one might observe, first that different ways of characterizing the meaning of a native expression are differently meaningful only in the translating language, but not in the *translated* language. Thus they are incompatible to each other only relative to the translating language, because in the translating language they have different uses and different conceptual statuses. But relative to the translated language, these uses and conceptual identifications are irrelevant or extraneous, and therefore different ways of characterizing the meaning of the native expression form an equivalence class relative to the meaning of the given expression and because of this there is no reason to regard these different ways of characterization as internally incompatible.

Second, that the so-called internal meaning must be clarified in terms

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1. See Willard V. Quine, *Word and Object*, MIT Press and John Wiley and Sons (1969), pp. 26-29.