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Realism, Antirealism, Irrealism, Quasi-Realism

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CRISPIN WRIGHT

I

It is, as is familiar, difficult to be precise about what is involved in realism. The realist in us wants to hold to a certain sort of very general view about our place in the world, a view that, as I have put it elsewhere, mixes modesty with presumption.[1] On the one hand, it is supposed, modestly, that how matters stand in the world, what opinions about it are true, is settled independently of whatever germane beliefs are held by actual people.[2] On the other, we presume to think that we are capable of arriving at the right concepts with which to capture at least a substantial part of the truth, and that our cognitive capacities can and do very often put us in position to know the truth, or at least to believe it with ample justification. The unique attraction of realism is the nice balance of feasibility and dignity that it offers to our quest for knowledge. Greater modesty would mean doubts about the capacity of our cognitive procedures to determine what is true—or even about our capacity to conceptualize the truth—and, so, would be a slide in the direction of skepticism. Greater presumption would mean calling into question, one way or another, the autonomy of truth, and, so, would be a slide in the direction of idealism. To the extent that we are serious about the pursuit of truth, we are unlikely to be attracted by either of these tendencies. We want the mountain to be climbable, but we also want it to be a real mountain, not some sort of reification of aspects of ourselves.

It is a remarkable phenomenon that an issue of this degree of abstractness, whose proper formulation is unclear to the point where it is prima facie hazy what shape a relevant debate about it might assume, can so command intellectual curiosity. The conviction that a real issue is being presented is the conviction that metaphysics, in the most traditional sense, is possible: that there are genuine questions about the objectivity of human intellectual endeavor, and about the constitution of reality, which it falls to the traditional philosophical methods of critical reflection

and analysis to resolve, if resolution is possible. This conviction may be baseless, and may yet be shown to be so by the application of just those methods. But we should work very hard before drawing that conclusion. The intellectual satisfaction associated with properly formulating and responding to these questions will be far greater than that of a repudiation of them, however well motivated.

In any case, it is evident that progress can be consequent only on some clarifications, perhaps in unexpected directions. One deservedly influential attempt at such a clarification has been Michael Dummett's.[3] I shall begin by indicating certain causes for dissatisfaction with Dummett's proposal, and will then try to consider what more generally apt analysis of realism may be appropriate if the metaphysical issues are to emerge both as reasonably definite in content and as (at least potentially) tractable. I am bound to confess to a certain pessimism about the ultimate possibility of this project. But my suggestions here must, in any case, be sketchy. And the thought is always consoling that, often in philosophy, it is more instructive to travel than to get anywhere.

II

No one has to be a realist, or not *tout court*. It is open to us to regard only some of our commitments as apt to engage with reality in the appropriate way. Realism about theoretical science, for example, need not commit one to realism about pure mathematics—and, indeed, one may wish to be only eclectically realist within science, taking an antirealist view of quantum theory, for instance. Dummett's original view was that the distinctive and proper thesis of realism about a particular genre of statements is that each of them is determinately either true or false—that the principle of bivalence holds good for them. The point of the proposal is best appreciated if we concentrate on a class of statements—say, those concerning the past beyond living memory—for whose truth-values we cannot guarantee to be able to get evidence one way or the other. Holding that bivalence is valid for such statements is holding that each is, nevertheless, guaranteed to be true or false. It would appear to follow that what confers truth or falsity on such a statement must be something separate from and independent of whatever makes for the availability of evidence for the statement's truth-value—if anything does. Hence, in particular, such a statement's being true cannot be the same thing as its meeting even our most refined criteria for its truth. The truth is, thus, independent of human opinion, which is the key realist notion.[4]

This line of thought has its problems,[5] but here I shall assume that it is in good order as far as it goes. That, however, does not seem to be far enough. One drawback of Dummett's proposal, remarked by a number of commentators, is that a Dummettian 'realist' about a given class of statements may also be a reductionist about them. Someone who held, for instance, that statements about the mental may be exhaustively analyzed in behavioral terms could also consistently hold that the analysis would be bivalence-preserving; anyway, they would have to hold, presumably, that

the analysis would respect the lack of any guarantee of available evidence, one way or the other, for such statements. But, such a view would hardly involve what we think of as realism about the *mental*. Dummett, it should be emphasized, has never been under any illusions about this[6] and would be content to add, I think, that realism must be a view about what makes for the truth of statements when they are literally and nonreductively construed. But a more serious worry concerns vagueness. If the members of the germane class of statements are vague, then we precisely do not want to hold that each of them is guaranteed to be determinately either true or false. At the same time, vague statements are capable of truth and falsity, and a realist conception ought to be possible, it seems, of what makes for the state of affairs when they do possess determinate truth-values.[7]

One response would be to suggest that, when bivalence is inappropriate for this sort of reason, Dummett's proposal should reduce, in effect, to the claim that truth may be *evidence-transcendent*: The truth of a statement, vague or otherwise, need have no connection with the availability of any ground, even in principle, for believing it to be true. I believe that the appropriateness of so construing truth is the deep question that Dummett's writings on the topic raise, and that such a construal is, indeed, a cardinal feature of certain realist positions, notably the Cartesian philosophy of mind, the Platonist philosophy of mathematics, and certain forms of scientific realism. But it leaves the realist with no opinion to hold when it comes to statements for which evidence, one way or the other, can be guaranteed to be available—effectively decidable mathematical statements, for instance, or a statment concerning the observable outcome of an experiment. More important still, it represents as the distinctive realist thesis something that someone might well want to oppose, though still wishing to endorse the spirit of realism. *Antirealism*, in the sense associated with Dummett's work, is exactly the view that the notion of truth cannot intelligibly be evidentially unconstrained—or the view, at least, that once it is so unconstrained, it is no longer in terms of *truth*-conditions that the meanings of the statements in question can be interpreted. But someone who believes that has, so far, no motive to forswear all use of the notion of truth (whatever exactly that would involve), unless it is supposed that truth is always and essentially epistemically unconstrained—a supposition that falls foul of evident fact that, for a great many types of statements, we can make no sense of the idea of their being true if we have to suppose that evidence for their truth is not, at least in principle, available. Indeed, in contrast to the direction of much of Dummett's work on this topic, it is not clear that a general antirealist semantics must be other than truth-conditional, provided the truth of a statement is always taken to require the availability of evidence for its truth. The point remains that it ought to be possible to take a realist view of what makes for the truth or falsity of statements whose truth-values are not conceived as evidence-transcendent. Dummett's antirealist, who wishes to urge that truth-value should never be so conceived, seems to have no motive to reject realism in this more basic sense.

But what is the more basic sense? It would pass for a platitude, I think, that

whether or not a statement, envisaged as uttered on a particular occasion, would express a truth is a function only of the content it would have on that occasion and the state of the world in relevant respects. The more basic kind of realism involves, I suggest, the assumption of a sort of *mechanical* view of this Platitude. Truth-values are, so to speak, ground out on the interface between language and reality. What thought a particular sentence would express in a particular context depends only on the semantics of the language and germane features of the context. Whether that thought is true depends only on which thought it is and germane features of the world. At neither point does human judgment or response come into the picture. To be sure, the semantics of the language depends on institution; it is we who built the machine. But, once built, it runs by itself. Thus, of any particular statement of sufficiently definite sense, it is determinate whether it expresses a truth in any particular context, irrespective of any judgment we may make about the matter. A basic realist thought is that wherever there is truth, it is, in this way, *investigation-independent*.

Since this conception builds no epistemic constraints into the factors that determine truth, it will no doubt come easily to someone who subscribes to it to suppose that truth can transcend all evidence. And since no provision seems to be made whereby reality can fail to determine truth-values, so long as the statements concerned are of sufficiently definite sense, bivalence, too, will be a natural adjunct. But the conception is completely general, available both for the class of statements whose truth we conceive as requiring the availability of evidence for their truth and for its complement. And it does nothing to alter the essential character of this conception of truth to superimpose whatever verficationist constraints we please.

The conception remains very much at the level of metaphor. But at least it is clear that realism, as characterized by it, has two quite distinct areas of obligation. The belief that a class of statements are apt to possess investigation-independent truth-values depends on regarding meaning as strongly objective: What constitutes correct use of an expression in particular circumstances has to be thought of as settled somehow independently of anyone's actual dispositions of response to those circumstances. What fits the meaning is one thing; what, if anything, we are inclined to say is another; and any correspondence between the two is merely contingent. Naturally, one feels there has to be something to this thought, that if the notion of meaning, and with it the notions of truth and error, are not to collapse, there must be space for *some* kind of contrast between proper use of an expression and that use to which people may actually incline. But it is quite another question whether only a realist conception of the objectivity of meaning can avoid such a collapse. Wittgenstein[8] assimilated the relationship between meaning and practice to that between character and behavior. The parallel is suggestive: It is quite consistent with our attaching sense to the idea of someone's action being out of character to regard what it is true to say about character—as we do—as a function of the way the subject is actually inclined to behave. But I shall not consider further what notion of the ob-

jectivity of meaning may be appropriate to the realist's purpose.[9] My point is merely that someone who inclines to the 'more basic' realism owes an account of the matter.

A philosopher who had no qualms about the objectivity of meaning as such, however, might still be dissatisfied with this kind of realism about a particular class of statements. If there are to be things that it would be correct to say, irrespective of what anyone is actually inclined to say, then—in accordance with the Platitude—a contribution is called for from 'the state of the world in relevant respects'. Historically, the various forms of antirealism, in different areas of philosophy, have been fueled mainly by doubts about the capacity of the world to make the necessary contribution. One class of such proposals is associated with more or less austere, empiricism-inspired theories of concept-formation. Hume, for instance, believed that there is no way whereby we can form a properly perspicuous notion of causation except at the cost of not including all the features that popular thought attributes to it. Hence, understood as popularly intended, statements involving the notion of causation are of insufficiently definite sense, in the Humean view, to take on determinate truth-values. Since they, nevertheless, play a relatively determinate role in our ordinary thought and language, the proper account must be that their role is not to 'correspond to the facts'—we can attain no satisfactory conception of the relevant 'facts'—but is a nondescriptive one. The instrumentalism about scientific-theoretical statements espoused by many positivists had an essentially similar rationale: A preferred theory of meaning—here, the conviction that all significant descriptive language must ultimately be analyzable into a vocabulary of sense experience—transpired not to have the resources to accommodate such statements within the sanctuary of fact-stating respectability.

This kind of proposal has its primary motivation in the theory of meaning. The reality of causation, or of certain sorts of theoretical entities, is called into question only because it is doubted that we can form any genuine concepts of what such things could be. A second kind of proposal, to similar effect, has a more basic ontological motivation. Although it is true that nondescriptive theories of moral and aesthetic valuation, for instance, can be and were stimulated by positivistic views about meaning, they have, nevertheless, retained an attraction for many who find no virtue in positivism. Such philosophers simply find it metaphysically incredible, as it were, that the world might actually contain objective values to which our moral, aesthetic, and other value judgments may be seen as some sort of cognitive response. It is thought baffling what kind of thing an objective value could be—in what the objective value of a situation could reside—and what part of our nature might justifiably be considered sensitive to such a commodity. The alternative to so murky and pretentious a view of, for example, moral language is, again, to account for what appear to be its genuine assertions in terms of their possession of some other nondescriptive role.[10]

There are, no doubt, other kinds of motives for similar tendencies. The general conception to which they give rise is that the range and variety of our declarative discourse somehow outstrips the categories of states of affairs that are genuinely ex-

emplified by reality. We apparently talk as if there were moral, or scientific theoretical, or pure mathematical states of affairs, but in truth there are not. One response to that conviction, of course, would be to dismiss the 'language games' in question as mythology. What is common to the forms of antirealism in which we are interested here is that they eschew that response: What might be taken to be mythological descriptions are credited, instead, with some sort of different but valid role. I shall reserve the term *irrealism* as a marker for these tendencies in general, preferring 'projectivism' for a proper subclass of irrealist proposals with which we shall be concerned later. What opposes irrealism with respect to a particular class of statements is the view that the world is furnished to play the part in the determination of their truth-values, which the Platitude calls for, that there really are states of affairs of the appropriate species.[11]

III

Our concern, then, is with the philosophical topology of irrealism. What precisely are the commitments of irrealism concerning a particular class of statements? How best might it be supported? Is it ultimately coherent? For a time, during the hegemony of so-called linguistic philosophy, the irrealist tendency seemed to be channeled exclusively into various forms of *expressive* theory. Expressive theories were proposed not merely of judgments of value, but of claims about truth and about causation, professions of knowledge, descriptions of actions as voluntary, and much else.[12] The point of the notion of 'expression' here is precisely its contrast with and exclusion of assertion, properly so regarded. When one expresses something in this sense, the intention was, one makes no claim about reality,[13] even though the syntax of the utterance is superficially that of a genuine assertion, apt to agree or to fail to agree with some putative state of affairs.

The principal difficulties encountered by these theories were twofold. First, many of the positive suggestions concerning *what* was being expressed, or more generally what, in enunciating an 'expression', people were doing, were actually quite consistent with holding that the relevant kind of sentence effected an assertion. For example, those who held that to characterize an action as voluntary was to express one's willingness to hold the subject responsible for the consequences said something that no realist about the distinction between voluntary and involuntary action would have wanted to deny. Not that this has to be an objection to the expressivist's positive claim. The point is, rather, that if the positive account offered by an expressive theory nowhere goes beyond what an opponent would acknowledge as aspects of the 'pragmatics' of the relevant class of utterances, then the theoretical obligation remains to explain why it is that these pragmatic aspects actually *exhaust* the use of the relevant sentences and are not merely consequences of their possession of a genuinely assertoric role. Historically, this obligation has not, by and large, been properly met.

Second, the syntactic similarities between the sorts of 'expression' listed and what the theorists would have been content to regard as genuine assertions are actu-

ally far from superficial. Sentences, for instance, which, according to emotivism, are apt merely for the expression of evaluative attitudes, display all the syntactic possibilities enjoyed by, for example, descriptions of the weather. They allow, for instance, a full range of tenses, appraisal as "true," "false," "exaggerated," "justified," and so on; they may feature embedded in the ascription of propositional attitudes; and they admit of compounding under the full range of logical operations. In connection with the last, Peter Geach[14] argued, in an influential note, that expressive theories have no resources with which to explain the permissible occurrence of, for example, moral sentences as the antecedents of conditionals. If "Stealing is wrong" serves only to express moral disapprobation, how do we construe its role in "If stealing is wrong, encouraging people to steal is wrong also"?

Expressivism can give no answer to this question unless it is possible to construe the antecedent of such a conditional as doing something other than hypothesising its *truth*. Dummett has suggested that it is.[15] Each kind of sentence for which expressive theories have been proposed is used to mark the speaker's undertaking of a certain sort of commitment. Accordingly, rather than view the conditional just as a device for focusing attention on the range of circumstances in which its antecedent is true, we can see it, more generally, as a device for articulating the consequences of acceptance of the commitment that, if someone were to avow the antecedent on its own, they would undertake. For instance, the effect of the conditional at the conclusion of the preceding paragraph would be, roughly:

> If I were (to be brought to) to express a commitment to the wrongness of stealing, I should also (be willing to?) express a commitment to the wrongness of encouraging others to steal.[16]

Geach's point, it could be claimed, would hardly be philosophically fundamental, in any case. If moral irrealism did, indeed, have absolutely no prospect of a satisfactory construal of conditionals with moral antecedents, that could hardly be decisive. Rather, whatever case there was for moral irrealism would become potentially revisionary of our ordinary and moral linguistic practice — compare the relation between classical mathematics and the philosophical views of the intuitionists. But such radical revisionism — in effect, the proscription of all compound moral sentences — is best avoided, and Dummett's proposal, though in some respects imprecise, at least indicates a strategy for avoiding it in the present case.

The strategy has been taken further by Simon Blackburn[17] in connection with what he styles the general program of *quasi-realism*. This program comes into play by way of supplement to the irrealist (for Blackburn, 'projectivist') view of some given class of statements. Quasi-realism's goal is to show how the irrealist account of the content of these statements need not be revisionary. It proceeds by attempting to supply alternative analyses of what appear, from an irrealist point of view, to be problematic modes of construction — conditionals, embeddings within propositional attitudes, even the truth predicate itself, and so on — which are to harmonize with what the irrealist wants to say about the basic statements in the class in question. In

particular, therefore, the *quasi-realist* constructions have to proceed without any assignment of truth-conditions to these basic statements.

Actually, there are a number of significant differences between Dummett and Blackburn. Dummett's proposal consisted essentially in calling attention to the potential utility of a conditional construction that—unlike the ordinary conditional—hypothesize not the truth of its antecedent, but its utterance with a particular recognized illocutionary force. What is contemplated is a range of conditionals with antecedents like "if I were to be brought to ask whether P . . . ", "if I were to be brought to assert that P . . .", "if I were to command that P . . . ," and so on. The consequents of such conditionals may, then, either describe a further such utterance or may simply say something about the circumstances that would prevail if the speech act characterized in the antecedent were to be performed. This suggests, though it is not conclusive, that Dummett was tacitly viewing expressive theories as holding 'expression' to be an illocutionary operation on a thought, just as are assertion, wish, question, and command. Undoubtedly, this is one possible view. It promises perhaps the tidiest explanation of how 'expressions' fail candidacy for truth-value—one directly modeled on the corresponding failure of, for instance, an indicative sentence used to express a command. Of course, if one attempts to view 'expression' in this way, then there has to *be* an embedded thought, just as there is in the case of the command (namely, the thought whose truth it is commanded should be brought about). So, an account will be owing of what are the genuine, truth-value-bearing thoughts that are so embedded in, for instance, moral evaluation—a possible source of difficulty if the case is an example like "Stealing is wrong," rather than "You were wrong to steal that money."

Whether or not this was Dummett's perception of the matter, Blackburn's seems different. If an apparent assertion is not a genuine assertion, that is, a claim that something is true, it may be a different mode of illocution of something apt to be true; but it may also be construed as a different kind of speech act altogether, no sort of operation on a thought. Blackburn's reaction to the problem of construing moral compounds, and especially conditionals with moral antecedents, is in keeping with this second conception. For Dummett, such conditionals emerge as genuine assertions. Blackburn, in contrast, has it that a conditional such as

> If stealing is wrong, encouraging others to steal is wrong

is *itself* an evaluation; to wit, a positive evaluation of combining a negative evaluation of stealing with a negative evaluation of encouraging others to steal.

How do these proposals cope with Geach's challenge to explain the validity of such an inference as

> Stealing is wrong;
> If stealing is wrong, encouraging others to steal is wrong;
> So: encouraging others to steal is wrong?

On Dummett's account, the conditional premise becomes something like:

> If I ever (am brought to) negatively evaluate stealing, then I also (will be willing to) negatively evaluate encouraging others to steal.

If that conditional is true, then if I so perform as to realize its antecedent—that is, I endorse the first premise—then it follows that I thereby endorse, or at least that I will be willing to endorse, the wrongness of encouraging others to steal. So, it looks as though, modulo its inexactness, Dummett's proposal may well have the means to validate Geach's example. One might wonder, though, about whether the inference, even if valid as so construed, is properly represented by Dummett's account. The gist of the second premise ought to be not a description of a performance that I will actually (be ready to) carry out in certain circumstances, but rather, something *normative*: It is that a negative evaluation of stealing *ought* to be accompanied by a negative evaluation of the practice of encouraging others to steal.

In this respect, Blackburn's strategy of construing the conditional as itself an evaluation seems superior. But what, now, does the validity of the inference consist in—when it cannot be that the truth of the premises guarantees that of the conclusion?[18] Anything worth calling the validity of an inference has to reside in the inconsistency of accepting its premises but denying its conclusion. Blackburn does indeed speak of the 'clash of attitudes' involved in endorsing the premises of the modus ponens example, construed as he construes it, but in failing to endorse the conclusion. But nothing worth regarding as *inconsistency* seems to be involved. Those who do that merely fail to have every combination of attitudes of which they themselves approve. That is a *moral* failing, not a logical one.[19]

Generally, there is no difficulty in making out a notion of inconsistency for speech-acts other than assertion, provided they represent genuine modes of illocutionary force, that is, operations on a thought. Commands, for instance, are inconsistent just in case the thoughts are inconsistent whose truth they command be brought about; questions are inconsistent just in case the thoughts of whose truth they enquire are inconsistent; and so on. Even in these cases, the notion of inconsistency need not carry the stigma associated with assertoric case. Issuing inconsistent commands is irrational—at least if one intends that they be obeyed. But asking inconsistent questions is not. And, in any case, this seems to be, as noted, the wrong model for Blackburn's purposes. Evaluation, as he seems to conceive it, is not a mode of illocutionary force.[20]

Neither account, then, seems to cope entirely happily with the modus ponens inference. Dummett's account fails to reflect the normativity of the conditional premise; Blackburn's fails to respect the powerful prejudice that the failing of one who accepted the premises but repudiated the conclusion would not be merely moral. But there is, to my mind, a deeper cause for dissatisfaction with both approaches. What they have in common is that they see the presence of a certain kind of vocabulary—that of moral or aesthetic evaluation, for instance, or that of logical necessity and modality in general—as marking the performance of a certain kind of speech act,

distinct from assertion (at least when the latter is properly regarded as the purported depiction of truth). It does not matter, now, whether the speech act in question is strictly a mode of illocutionary force or whether it is something else. In neither case are the materials at hand, it seems, for an explanation of the role of *iterated* applications of the vocabulary in question.[21] So neither proposal promises any sort of satisfactory account of the kind of applications that we seem, intelligibly enough, to be able to make of notions like logical necessity and logical possibility *to statements* in which such modal notions are themselves the principal operators. Such applications may not be very important in ordinary inferential contexts; but they are tremendously important in modal logic, and they are, it should be stressed, apparently intelligible. If, in contrast, affirming 'necessarily P' is some kind of projection from my inability to imagine the opposite, or marks the adoption of P as some kind of linguistic rule, or expresses my resolve to count nothing as falsification of P—or whatever the preferred expressive account is—no space seems to have been left for a construal of 'necessarily: necessarily P'.

Blackburn himself is strongly committed to the progressive character of the projectivist/quasi-realist research program with respect to modal idiom,[22] but the point is not (merely) *ad hominem*. It is that modality undoubtedly raises the same kinds of problems, in this context, as does morality. There is the same kind of difficulty in seeing our judgments, modal or moral, as responses to objective features of the world. In both cases, we feel the want of a satisfactory account of the confidence that, on occasion anyway, we repose in such judgments; in both cases, philosophers have been tempted to invoke special cognitive faculties, sensitive to states of affairs of the problematic kind, as our ordinary senses are sensitive to many of the characteristics of our physical environment. In neither case has any account of this kind achieved anything but mystery. This is not to say that an irrealist account of either can be satisfactory only if it handles both equally well. But it is to suggest that the general form of an irrealist account of morals should at least be a starter in the case of modal discourse also. There may, in the end, be good reason for rejecting the irrealist account of either or both. But we can hardly suppose that we are entertaining the strongest possible version of such an account until it is fashioned in such a way that it can be adapted to any of the areas of discourse about which an irrealist (or, more specifically, projectivist) tale may seem worth telling.

The proper response to the forgoing considerations, it seems to me, is to recognize that the step in the direction of expressive, or more generally nonassertoric accounts of those areas of discourse that, for various reasons, have inspired irrealist suspicions, is a faux pas. The irrealist should seek not to explain away the assertoric appearance, but to sever the connection between assertion and the realism, which he wishes to oppose. This direction has been largely passed over, no doubt, because of the intimate connection between assertion and truth: To assert a statement is to present it as true. So if moral, or modal judgments rank as assertions, we are bound to countenance, it seems, some notion of moral, or modal truth. If this seems a fatal step from a would-be irrealist point of view, it can only be because it is being as-

sumed that where there is truth at all, realism is correct. But that is an error. Realism, even when characterized as impressionistically as above, evidently intends a conception of truth that should be understood along the line traditionally favored by 'correspondence' theorists. What else could be the point of the play with the idea of an 'independent' reality, one that 'confers' truth-values independently of our judgments? By contrast, it has yet to be understood why the notion of truth, which essentially engages with that of assertion, may not be the thinnest possible, merely 'disquotational' notion.

To assert a statement is to present it as true, but there need be no supposition that the notion of truth is uniform across all regions of assertoric discourse. The proper focus for the dispute between realist and irrealist tendencies in moral philosophy, the philosophy of science, the philosophy of mathematics, and elsewhere is on the notion of truth appropriate to these various kinds of statements. Actually, this is the conclusion to which Blackburn's quasi-realist program must, if successful, lead. The goal of the quasi-realist is to explain how *all* the features of some problematic region of discourse that might inspire a realist construal of it can be harmonized with objectivism. But if this program succeeds, and provides inter alia — as Blackburn himself anticipates — an account of what appear to be ascriptions of truth and falsity to statements in the region, then we shall wind up — running the connection between truth and assertion in the opposite direction — with a rehabilitation of the notion that such statements rank as assertions, with truth-conditions, after all. Blackburn's quasi-realist thus confronts a rather obvious dilemma. Either his program fails — in which case he does not, after all, explain how the projectivism that inspires it can satisfactorily account for the linguistic practices in question — or it succeeds, in which case it makes good all the things the projectivist started out wanting to deny: that the discourse in question is genuinely assertoric, aimed at truth, and so on. The dilemma is fatal unless what the projectivist originally wanted to maintain is actually consistent with the admission that the statements in question are, indeed, assertions, apt to be true or false in the sense, but only in the sense, that the quasi-realist explains. But if that is right, then the route through the idea that such statements are not genuinely assertoric but are 'expressive', or, one way or another, constitute some other kind of speech-act, emerges as a detour. Working with that idea, and pursuit of the quasi-realist program on its basis, may help us to focus on the notion of truth that *is* appropriate to the statements in question. But once that focus is achieved, we have to drop the idea — and it hardly seems credible that only by this somewhat circuitous route can the requisite focus be gained.[23]

IV

Naturally, it is questionable whether the notion of truth can, indeed, be divided up in the manner that the foregoing considerations anticipate, and also, if it can, whether reasonably definite criteria can emerge for determining which notion is applicable within which areas of discourse. And correspondence accounts, should they

prove to be the stuff of realism, have their familiar problems.[24] But, still, I think there is a program here, and that the beginnings of some germane distinctions can be sketched.

How 'thin' can something worth regarding as a notion of truth be? We do not have a truth predicate if we merely have a device of 'disquotation', since such a device could as well be applied to utterances that are not assertions. And, it may seem, it will hardly do to say that a predicate that functions disquotationally just for assertions is a truth predicate; that account, if it is not to be circular, will require us to separate assertions from speech acts of other kinds without appeal to the notion of truth, an unpromising project. Actually, I believe the commitment to avoid circularity of this kind would be an impossible burden in the quest for an account of truth. But, in any case, one essential aspect omitted by a bare disquotational account of truth is *normativity*: Truth is what assertions aim for. Now, if aiming at truth is to supply a substantial constraint on assertoric practice, an assertion's being true cannot be guaranteed simply by the assertor's taking it to be true. A constraint is substantial only if we can make sense of the idea of a misapprehension about whether or not it is satisfied, or of its being satisfied independently of any particular subject's opinion about the matter. The normativity of truth is respected by an assertoric practice only if a role is provided within that practice for the notions of ignorance, error, and improved assessment.

This, I think, is the least that must be asked. Nor is it very much. What is called for is only some *sort* of notion of a proper pedigree for an assertion, and correspondingly proper grounds for criticism of assertions. We do, indeed, practice these distinctions in all the areas of discourse about which philosophers have been drawn to an irrealistic point of view. Even the sort of affective judgments—concerning what is funny, or revolting, and so on—about which almost everybody's antecedent prejudice is irrealist are allowed to be capable of being better and worse made. Judgments about what is funny, for instance, may be in bad taste, or idiosyncratic, or insincere, or just plain wrong. (There is nothing funny about what happened at Chernobyl.)

There is a connection, here, with Geach's point. We should have, in general, no use for conditional or disjunctive compounds of such judgments unless it was sometimes possible to appraise the truth-values of the compounds independently of any knowledge of those of their constituents. Otherwise, knowledge of such a compound could never be of any practical inferential use, and its assertion would always violate Gricean 'co-operative' constraints. It is, thus, a condition of practically significant embedding of the kind Geach focused on that ignorance be possible concerning the status of the embedded statements. And ignorance is possible only if there is, indeed, a contrast in content between the claim that P is true and the claim that any particular subject assents to P—the contrast that, I have just suggested, is prerequisite for paying proper heed to the normativity of truth.

It appears, then—if I am permitted a somewhat swift conclusion—that truth, assertion, ignorance, error, and significant embedding constitute a package deal. We get all of them off the ground together, or none of them. And the real significance

of Geach's antiexpressivist point is that they are 'off the ground' in all the familiar cases where expressivists wanted to look away from the notion of assertion and to characterize practices in other terms. The question, then, is: What can, nevertheless, be missing? What may a region of discourse lack, even when it has all this, which may inspire doubts about its factuality?

The answer, in one unhelpful word, is "objectivity." I think that a number of separable ideas jostle each other here, and I have space only to advert to three of the more important. The first has to do with what I shall call the *rational command* of truth. The second concerns the distinction between (human) responses that, respectively, are and are not properly regarded às *cognitive*. The third I shall touch on at the end of this paper.

By the 'rational command' of truth, I mean the idea that truth commands the assent of any subject who has an appropriate cognitive endowment and uses it appropriately. Associated with this is the notion that belief is not an operation of the will. We do not choose our beliefs, but come to them involuntarily—though not necessarily, of course, as a result of involuntary processes—by putting ourselves at the mercy, so to speak, of our reason, our senses, any other 'cognitive receptors' we may have, and the external world. Truth, then, according to this feature of the concept, is what is at the origin of the beliefs we form when we function as, cognitively, we ought.

In describing this as part of our 'concept' of truth, I mean only that it is a feature of the way we ordinarily think about truth. One of the oldest philosophical lessons is that there are other, potentially destructive elements within the notion—elements that traditional skeptical arguments exploit—that threaten to reduce the correspondence, if any, between what is true and the deliverances of our better cognitive natures to inscrutable contingency. Even prescinding from skepticism, realists in the sense of Dummett will want to insist that we can understand, for at least a significant number of kinds of statements, how their truth might altogether fail to connect with any disposition on our part to believe them, no matter how meticulous and extensive our investigation. And, in the other direction, everyone must acknowledge that what we are induced to believe by meticulous and extensive investigation may still not be the truth in any examples where no such finite investigation can encompass all the material, as it were, in which evidence of untruth might be found. Explicitly unrestricted, contingent generalizations, and any statement that—like many ascriptions of dispositions—implicitly contains such a generality, are the obvious instances.

One response, which would continue to allot a dominant role to the aspect of rational command, would be to move in the direction of a Peircean conception of truth: We can mean by 'truth' only that which is fated to be agreed on by all who pursue rational enquiry sufficiently far, a "final opinion . . . independent not indeed of thought in general, but of all that is arbitrary and individual in thought."[25] Such a conception dismisses the total or partial epistemological absolutism involved in skepticism and in Dummettian realism. And it relaxes the sense in which the truth of an unrestricted generalization must command the assent of a rational investigator:

A well-founded investigation may, indeed, mislead, but if such a generalization is true, all rational investigators will, sooner or later, come justifiably to believe that it is.

This has been an influential construal of the notion of truth. But, insofar as some sort of preconception about the failure of certain statements to exemplify rational command is at work in the motivation for some kinds of irrealism, it is questionable whether the Peircean construct gets it quite right. For one thing, it very much *is* a philosophers' construct, building on but going a good way past anything that might plausibly be regarded as our intuitive understanding of truth. For another, the thought that only Peircean truths are true in the substantial sense we seek may seem to hold out too many hostages to fortune. If, for instance, Quine's famous thesis of the underdetermination of scientific theory by empirical data is true (fated to be agreed by all rational investigators?), then it seems that the hypotheses of such theories cannot pass the Peircean test. That would be too swift a resolution of the debate about scientific realism. Worse, any statement whose conditions of justifiable assent are a function of what else a subject believes are at risk in the same way. If whether you ought to believe a particular statement depends on what you already believe, Peircean convergence could be expected only among rational investigators who set out with the same baggage, as it were. And it has yet to be explained why their rationality alone should tend to ensure that that is so. Yet, almost all our contingent beliefs appear to be in this situation.

A Peircean can reply. The possibility adverted to is the possibility that there may be rationally incommensurable alternative systems of belief. If that is so, we can either retain the idea that one such system might contain the truth at the expense of the others, or we can drop the idea. To retain it is to render the connection between truth and rational enquiry utterly fortuitous. To drop it is to abandon or to relativize the notion of an accurate representation of the world. In neither case is room left for the idea that the truth is what commands the assent of an appropriately cognitively endowed, rational investigator. So the Peircean development of the notion of rational command should not be faulted on the ground that it cannot accommodate the possible consequences of the underdetermination thesis or of justificational holism. The fact is that whatever notion of truth survives for statements that fall prey to those consequences simply cannot have the feature of rational command. My own opinion is that not very much of what we are pleased to regard as factual discourse will actually fall prey to those consequences. In particular, a holistic conception of confirmation poses a global threat only if, at some level, the selection of background beliefs is unconstrained. There is no reason to suppose that this must be so, but the matter raises very large issues, which I shall not attempt to broach here.

Even so, I think the intuition of rational command should be explained along other than Peircean lines. For it is an intuition that coexists with our inclination (however unfortunate) to allow that truth may be evidence-transcendent. So, the intuitive point is not that what is true ultimately commands the assent of the rational. It is, I suggest, that what it is correct to think about any statement that is apt to be,

in the appropriately substantial sense, true or false is something about which rational investigators have no option at *any given stage of investigation*. It is, more specifically, determinate of any given body of evidence whether it supports such a statement, or supports its negation, or neither. Even that is too simple. Vague statements, for instance, may nevertheless be factual. But their vagueness consists precisely in the existence of a range of cases where rational subjects may permissibly and irreducibly disagree about their status in point of justification. A similar point applies to statements, vague or not, for which the evidence is probabilistic. Different subjects may, without putting their rationality in jeopardy, have different probability thresholds, so to speak. One may require a higher probability than another before being prepared to work on the expectation that a hypothesis is true. But, so far as I can see, only in these two respects is qualification necessary. If a pair of subjects disagree about the credibility of a particular statement, and if the explanation of the disagreement concerns neither of the qualifications just noted, then either they are operating on the basis of different pools of evidence—states of information—or one (perhaps both) is misrating the evidence they share. If the states of information are different, and neither is misrating the state of information, then one state must be superior to the other: Either it must contain bona fide data that the other lacks, or it must omit spurious data that the other contains. Accordingly, we may lay down the following as a criterion for the inclusion of a statement, or range of statements within the category of those apt to be true in the substantial sense—the sense which incorporates the aspects of rational command: Disagreements about the status of such statements, where not attributable to vagueness or permissibly differing probability thresholds, can be explained only if fault is found with one of the protagonist's assessment of his or her data, or with the data being assessed. The data must be in some way faulty or incomplete, or, if not, they must have suffered a prejudiced response.

It follows that reason to think that other kinds of explanation of disagreement are possible is reason to think that the statements disagreed about are not objective in the relevant sense, and so not apt to be substantially true or false. This is one of the primary motives that have fueled expressive theories. It is surely, for instance, the mainspring of the thought that judgments about what is funny are not genuinely factual: None of the envisaged explanations may be appropriate in the case of a disagreement about humor—it may be, as we say, that the subjects have different 'senses of humor'. It is for the same reason that importance is attached, in the debates about moral and aesthetic realism, to the (much exaggerated) cultural variability of moral standards and the often idiosyncratic character of standards of aesthetic excellence.

It is another question, though, how one would actually set about showing that a given region of discourse failed to pass the test. A model dispute must be constructed whose explanation falls within none of the alternatives noted: It is not, that is to say, to be owing to vagueness in the statement(s) disputed about, nor to permissibly different probability thresholds, nor to faulty data—including inferential or observational error—nor to one of the subject's possession of a relatively inferior state

of information, nor to a prejudiced assessment of agreed data.[26] But the question is, of course, what, for these purposes, counts as 'a state of information' or 'data'? What will tend to happen when this construction is attempted for a particular problematic class of statements—about humor, or value, or logical necessity, for instance—is that it will be relatively easy to construct a dispute that fits the bill, provided the 'data' are restricted to statements of *other* kinds whose factuality is not at issue. It is often possible, for instance, to give reasons for or against the judgment that some situation is funny, but, as just remarked, it seems perfectly conceivable that a pair of subjects may have an irreducible disagreement about such a judgment, although neither is under any misapprehension about any pertinent facts, or knows more than the other, or is somehow prejudicially over- or under-rating the facts that they agree about. But this way of describing the matter explicitly takes it that the 'facts' exclude whether or not the situation in question is funny. A similar possibility obtains in the case of logical necessity.[27] And it does not seem unlikely that moral evaluations, for instance, are in a like situation, although I shall not pause here to consider the construction of an appropriate dispute.

In any such case, it is open to the realist to accept the proposed criterion but to insist that the germane data may not legitimately be taken to exclude facts of the very species that the problematic of statements serve to record. The comic realist,[28] for instance, may accommodate the model dispute that opponent constructs by insisting that misappraisal of the data must, indeed, be at the root of it; it is just that the data misappraised may irreducibly concern the humor, or lack of it, in the situation.

The *structure* of this maneuver is not unreasonable. Plainly, it cannot always be the case that, for any particular class of statements whose factuality is not disputed, they would pass the test even if we restricted our attention to 'data' that excluded them; not all genuinely factual disagreements have to be owing to mistakes, or ignorance, or prejudice about other matters. But the upshot is not that the proposed test is useless, but merely that it has a part to play only in the first stage of a dialectic, which must now be pressed further. The test connects failure to agree about judgments that are apt to be substantially true or false with failure of *ideal cognitive performance*. Accordingly, the realist who responds in the way described now owes something by way of explanation of what ideal cognitive performance might be with respect to the *sui generis* states of affairs to which, as such a realist now contends, our judgments of humor, or value, or modality, or whatever, are responsive. We require to be told *how* it is possible for us to be in touch with states of affairs of the relevant kind. What is it about them, and about us, that makes them—at least ideally—accessible to us? It is no answer, of course, merely to introduce a word or phrase for some putative kind of special cognitive faculty—'the sense of humor', 'conscience', 'the reason'—that is to play the appropriate part. It is true that some of our judgments must be, so to speak, *primitively* factual, from the point of view of the test. But that is not to say that we have carte blanche to regard in this way any class of judgments that would otherwise fail the test. Where there is cognition, there

must be at least the possibility of a satisfactory theoretical account of how it is accomplished.

The first preconception about a substantial notion of truth was its possession of the feature of rational command. Now we have, in effect, arrived at the second: Statements are apt to be substantially true or false only if it is possible to provide a satisfactory account of the kind of cognitive powers that a mind would have to have in order to be in touch with the states of affairs that they purportedly describe.[29] But what should 'a satisfactory account' mean here? I take it that it would not be necessary to trouble ourselves with the question if it could be shown that the judgments that the realist wishes to take as expressive of special abilities could actually be satisfactorily simulated, without collusion, by a subject who had only cognitive powers that both the realist and his irrealist opponent are agreed about. Thus, if, for instance, assertibility conditions could be laid down for judgments of logical necessity that someone could recognize to obtain, whose cognitive faculties embraced only the capacity for empirical judgments and so excluded anything sensitive to logical necessity as such, it would be, on the face of it, simply a bad explanation of our handling of such judgments to view it as expressive of anything additional. *Facultates non fingendae sunt praeter necessitatem.*[30]

The irrealist, however, may not easily be able to make out such a case. This will be the situation when the ability to make acceptable, or at any rate, sincere and apparently well-understood, judgments of the kind in question will depend on the subject's capacity to be *affected* in some distinctive way: to be amused, for instance, or revolted. If possessing such affective capacities is a necessary condition of full competence with the judgments in question, the irrealist's question has to be, rather, why see such affection as cognition? And the thought is, of course, that no 'satisfactory account' either of the affective response itself or of its causes can be given that will legitimate the realist's view. Contrast the sort of story that can be told about our perceptual knowledge of our immediate environment. Our theories of the nature of matter and of the workings of our sense organs and brains are hardly complete. But we know enough to tell an elaborate story about my perception of the telephone on my desk—about the kind of object it is, and the kind of creature I am, and about why, accordingly, I am able to be aware of its being there in the way in which I am. However, we have not the slightest idea how to extend this prototype to the cases of value or humor or logical necessity. And, though that is so, it is perfectly idle to claim that, in our judgments of these various kinds, we express cognitive responses to objective states of affairs.

The likely realist reply will be to suggest that the kind of explanatory model invoked is question-begging. In insisting that the epistemology of a certain putative range of states of affairs ultimately be accounted for in terms of existing fields of natural science, the irrealist loads the dice in favor of a naturalistic ontology. The states of affairs that pass the test implicitly imposed can only be those to which natural science assigns a causal role. Accordingly, as before, it is open to the realist to claim that the suggested criterion—that a class of judgments is apt to be substantially

true or false only if a satisfactory account of the (ideal) epistemology can be given —
is in itself acceptable, but that it is being applied here in a tendentiously restricted
way. The moral realist can urge, for instance, that just as the 'data' that figured in
the statement of the first criterion should be allowed to include moral data, so a 'satis-
factory account', as the notion figures in the second criterion, should be allowed to
proceed by reference to a framework that includes not only natural science, but also,
inter alia, moral judgment.

Does this help? Well, it might be supposed that once moral judgments them-
selves are allowed to be explanatorily primitive, the account of our cognition of the
truth of some particular moral judgment may straightforwardly proceed by inducing
the kinds of consideration that incline us to that particular judgment, namely, a moral
argument based on both moral and nonmoral premises. This, though, will hardly do.
Such a model explanation of moral 'knowledge' would no doubt overestimate the ex-
tent to which our convictions on particular questions are principled, and would be
inapplicable, besides, to at least some of the moral premises that applications of it
would be likely to involve. But what is most basically wrong is that no real analogy
is constructed with the perceptual case. It is not to our *knowledge* of neurophysiology
and physics, for instance, that the explanation of my capacity to perceive the tele-
phone would appeal, but to relevant hypotheses *within* those disciplines themselves.
By contrast, the kind of 'explanation' of our moral knowledge, just canvassed ex-
plicitly, does appeal, not to certain moral premises, but to our knowledge of them.
So it cannot provide what was being requested: an explanation of what it is about
us, and about the moral realm, that makes for the possibility of cognitive relations
at all.

In general, then, though it would be, I think, a fair complaint by an evaluative
realist, for instance, that the original, explicitly naturalistic version of the second test
is unfairly loaded, the prospects for the position do not seem to become much
brighter if we grant, for the sake of argument, that *moral* theory be permitted to
figure in the *explanans*. Indeed, prescinding from the confusion just discussed, it is
unclear what, for these purposes, moral 'theory' might be taken to be, and how it
might be exploited by a more liberal style of explanation. Matters look hardly more
promising for modal and comic realism, but I cannot attempt a more detailed ap-
praisal here.

V

Blackburn writes:

> Suppose we say that we *project* an attitude or habit or other commitment which
> is not descriptive on to the world, when we speak and think as though there
> were a property of things which our sayings describe, which we can reason
> about, be wrong about, and so on. Projecting is what Hume refers to when he

talks of "gilding and staining all natural objects with the colours borrowed from internal sentiment", or of the mind "spreading itself on the world."[31]

I have spoken more often of 'irrealism' than of 'projectivism'. The latter, it seems, is best reserved for those species of irrealism that concern commitments—to borrow Blackburn's term—founded on some specific mode of 'internal sentiment' or affective phenomenology. The root projectivist notion is the Humean one that we have a tendency to seem to ourselves to find in the world qualities that, properly, are predicated of our responses to it; more specifically, that the range of our responses that we tend to talk about as though they were cognitive, apt to disclose real features of the world, is actually much broader than the range of those which really deserve to be so regarded. Projectivism is, thus, a possible and natural form for the irrealist cause to assume in the three areas—morality, modality, and humor—that this discussion has mainly had in view.[32] Irrealism about scientific theory, by contrast, is not, in any version worthy of attention, projectivist. The most powerful arguments against scientific realism concern not whether any appropriately local response we have to scientific theory is cognitive—there is no such local response—but whether theoretical statements can survive the first of the two tests adumbrated: Must disagreements about scientific theory, insofar as they are not attributable to vagueness in the concepts involved, or to rationally permissible variations in standards of evidence, invariably be explicable in terms of prejudiced assessment of agreed data, or faulty data, or ignorance? Not if the underdetermination thesis is accepted. And not, perhaps, if the received wisdom is correct that the acceptability of any report of observation is invariably theoretically conditioned. For, then, the acceptability of any pool · of data comes to depend on one's background theory. And that means that the data can exhibit the feature of rational command only if the ingredients in the background theories do. How is that to be provided for, if any data by which such theories might, in turn, be assessed will be theoretically conditioned in the same sense?[33]

In Blackburn's hands, as we have seen, projectivism starts out as an 'expressive' or nonassertoric thesis. I have suggested that this element of the view should be abandoned. The real question concerns what notion of truth is applicable to the 'projections'. The projectivist/irrealist thesis should be that only the thinnest possible notion is appropriate; we have seen, by contrast, two ways in which the notion of truth applicable to a class of commitments might, on the contrary, be 'thick'. I shall conclude by noting a potential instability in the projectivist position, and a third potentially germane distinction on the thinness/thickness scale.

The instability afflicts, paradoxically, just those cases where the projectivist line is intuitively most appealing. These are the classes of commitment that, like judgments about what is funny, seem to be most intimately associated with a well-defined kind of response, which we are already inclined to regard as affective rather than detective. The problem is that any such response can be construed as potentially detective—can be 'cognitivized', as it were—if the relevant projected 'quality' will

sustain construal as a *disposition*. Suppose, for instance, that some such biconditional as this holds:

> X is funny iff X is disposed to amuse many/most/normal people in many/most/normal circumstances.

There is, obviously, scope for consideration about which version of such a biconditional might be most plausible, about whether some reference to right-mindedness, or the like, might be wanted, and so on. But if *any* such biconditional construal provides the resources for a reasonably accurate descriptive account of the relevant parts of our linguistic practice, there can be no objection to the idea that judgments of humor do have the substantial truth-conditions that the biconditional describes. And the relevant response – being amused – will take on cognitive status only insofar as finding oneself so affected will constitute a defeasible ground for the assertion that the right-hand side of the biconditional is realized.

A defensible form of projectivism, then, in making good the claim that a certain class of judgments is based on a response that is better not regarded as cognitive, has to interpose sufficient distance, as it were, between the judgments and the response to prevent a dispositional construal. And this will be possible only to the extent that the original projectivist image – that we make such judgments merely by way of reading back into the world features that properly belong to our response to it – is strictly misplaced. Projectivism has, therefore, a delicate balancing act to perform. If it stays too close to the image, it is liable to be undermined by a dispositional construal; if it departs too far from it, it may become unclear in what sense the response in question provides the *basis* for the relevant class of judgments, and why an argument for an irrealist view of those judgments may properly proceed from the noncognitive character of the response. The difficulty is well illustrated, I think, by the case of moral judgments. It is prima facie very implausible to construe moral qualities as dispositions to produce moral sentiments – not least because the ascription of such a disposition does not seem to have the reason-giving force that properly belongs to a moral judgment.[34] But just for that reason, the belief that moral passion is not properly viewed as a state of cognition seems to have no very direct connection with moral irrealism.

Consider, finally, a case where such a dispositional analysis seems appropriate anyway: the case of secondary qualities.[35] To be red, for instance, consists in being disposed to induce a certain kind of visual experience in the normally sighted, under normal circumstances. (I prescind from the considerations to do with trans-galactic Doppler effect, and so on.) So, we have a biconditional comparable to those mooted for 'funny' above:

> X is red iff X would be seen as red by normally functioning observers in normal circumstances.

Now, there is a question about how 'normality' is to be understood for the purposes of the biconditional. Suppose we understand it statistically: Normally functioning

observers function like most of us actually do most of the time; normal circumstances are relevantly similar to those which actually prevail most of the time. So understood, the statement on the right-hand side of the biconditional would still qualify as apt for substantial truth by both the tests earlier considered. Disagreement about such a statement might well be owing to vagueness in its constituent concepts, or to personal probability thresholds — the disputants might, for example, each have used statistical sampling techniques. But it seems impossible to understand how there could be a disagreement that could not be explained along those lines and yet owe nothing to prejudice, ignorance, or misinformation. As for the second test, the sort of direction that an account of the ideal epistemology of such a judgment should take is, prima facie at least, clear. Nevertheless, to interpret the relevant notion of normality in this way is to impose a certain kind of reading on the biconditional — at least if it is held to be true a priori. In effect, we give priority to the right-hand side. What *makes* something red is how we, most of us, respond to it in the conditions that usually obtain.

It is possible to elicit a third and stronger respect in which the notion of truth may be substantial if we contrast with this right-to-left reading of such a biconditional an interpretation that assigns priority, instead, to the left-hand side. Such an interpretation would see redness as a property of things in themselves, connecting at best contingently with any effect induced in us under statistically normal circumstances. Accordingly, to give priority to the left-hand side of the biconditional, while retaining its a priori status, would be to impose a different interpretation on the normality provisos. The essential characteristic of a normally functioning observer will now be: one suffering from no internal impediment to the proper functioning of the capacity to *detect* red. And normal circumstances will be those in which there is no external impediment to the proper functioning of this same capacity.

I owe to Mark Johnston the suggestion of the possibility of these alternative readings of such biconditionals; he characterized them as 'projective' and 'detective' respectively.[36] I would rather reserve 'projective' and 'projectivism' in the way I have indicated. The distinction, if it can be properly elucidated, is nevertheless very important and does correspond, it seems to me, to a further aspect of our intuitive preconceptions about factuality and substantial truth. An interesting suggestion, which I suspect is not quite right, is that it also corresponds to the distinction between secondary and primary qualities. Primary qualities will sustain biconditionals for which the proper reading is detective; the biconditionals appropriate to secondary qualities, by contrast, will be properly read from right to left. However that may be, there is a distinction here — roughly, between our responses *making it true* that so-and-so is the case and their merely *reflecting* that truth — that the contrast between two ways of reading an appropriate biconditional, interpreted as holding a priori, seems to capture nicely. And this, as noted, is a distinction that comes into play for judgments that pass the tests earlier considered and are accordingly apt for truth in more than the thinnest sense. Of any such class of judgments, we can ask whether an appropriate biconditional does, indeed, hold a priori and, if so, to which side be-

longs the priority. If the way I introduced the distinction is appropriate, this is a question to be decided by reflection on the proper interpretation of the normality provisos. But that is not the only possible way of proceeding, and it may prove not to be best. I wish merely to suggest the thought that one important class of intuitions about objectivity—those reflected, in particular, in the attempt to draw a distinction between primary and secondary qualities—have no proper place in the disputes between realism and irrealism. Rather, when the dialectic is set up in the way I have suggested it should be, they are internal to realism.[37, 38]

Notes

1. In the introduction to my *Realism, Meaning and Truth* (Oxford, 1986). This introduction elaborates many of the themes of parts I and II of this paper.

2. A qualification even of this formulation would be necessary to make space for realism about self-intimating mental states.

3. See especially essays 1, 10, 14, and 21 in his *Truth and Other Enigmas* (London, 1978); chap. 20 of his *The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy* (London, 1981); and "What Is a Theory of Meaning (II)" in *Truth and Meaning*, edited by G. Evans and J. McDowell (Oxford, 1976), 67–137.

4. Again, a qualification is called for, to make space for realism about statements that *concern* human opinion.

5. As it stands, it involves a *non sequitur*, generated by substituting into an opaque context: 'it is guaranteed that P' and 'it is not guaranteed that Q' do not entail the falsity of the biconditional: P $ Q. See my *Realism, Meaning and Truth*, chap. 11, section 1.

6. See, for example, essays 10 and 21 in *Truth and Other Enigmas*.

7. Dummett notes the problems posed by vagueness for his original account of realism in chap. 20 of *The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy*, 440. This chapter substantially qualifies the original account (though for somewhat different reasons). For a useful discussion of the new account, see the appendix to S. Rasmussen and J. Ravnkinde, "Realism and Logic," *Synthese* 52 (1982): 379–439.

8. *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, I, 13.

9. For more on the objectivity of meaning, see my "Rule-Following, Meaning and Constructivism," in *Meaning and Interpretation*, edited by C. Travis (Oxford, 1986), 271–97, and "On Making Up One's Mind: Wittgenstein on Intention," in *Logic, Philosophy of Science and Epistemology*, edited by P. Weingartner and G. Schurz (Vienna, 1987), 391–404.

To avoid misunderstanding, let me emphasize that I see no *commitment* to the objectivity of meaning issuing from acceptance of the platitude as such: It all depends on what we see as determining the contents that, with assistance from the world and in accordance with the platitude, determine truth-values. See "Rule-Following, Meaning and Constructivism," 273–74.

10. A fascinating recent example of the second sort of proposal is provided, of course, by Saul Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein on rule-following and meaning in his *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Oxford, 1982).

11. However, someone who so opposes irrealism (about a particular class of statements) need not endorse the objectivity of meaning unless, contrary to my own belief, the Platitude requires it, so need not be a realist in the 'more basic' sense described in section II.

12. Thus, Austin on knowledge: "saying 'I know' is taking a new plunge. But it is *not* saying 'I have performed a specially striking feat of cognition, superior, in the same scale as believing and being sure, even to being merely quite sure': for there *is* nothing in that scale superior to being quite sure. Just as promising is not something superior, in the same scale as hoping and intending, even to merely fully intending: for there *is* nothing in that scale superior to fully intending. When I say 'I know', I *give others my word*: I *give others my authority for saying* that 'S is P' " (J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, 2d ed. [Oxford, 1970], 99).

Compare Strawson on truth: "The sentence 'What the policeman said is true' has no use *except* to confirm the policeman's story; but . . . [it] . . . does not say anything further *about* the policeman's story. . . . It is a device for confirming the story without telling it again. So, in general, in using such expressions, we are confirming, underwriting, agreeing with, what somebody has said; but . . . we are not making any assertion additional to theirs; and are *never* using 'is true' to talk *about* something which is *what they said*, or the sentences they used in saying it" (P. F. Strawson, "Truth," *Analysis* [1949]: 93).

But the classic example is Ayer on morals: "If I say to someone, 'You acted wrongly in stealing that money', I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, 'You stole that money'. In adding that this action is wrong, I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it. It is as if I had said, 'You stole that money', in a peculiar tone of horror, or written it with the addition of some special exclamation marks." (A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* [London, 1962], 107).

13. More accurately: no *additional* claim beyond the clause embedded within the expressive vocabulary if—as, for instance, in each of the examples cited in note 12—there is one.

14. P. T. Geach, "Ascriptivism," *Philosophical Review* 69 (1960): 221-25.

15. In his *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (London, 1973), chap. 10.

16. Ibid., 351-54.

17. See his *Spreading the Word* (Oxford, 1984), chap. 6, and "Morals and Modals," in *Fact, Science and Morality: Essays on A. J. Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic*, edited by G. MacDonald and C. Wright (Oxford, 1986), 119-41.

18. That still is the character of the inference when the conditional is construed in Dummett's way. The result is something on the model of:

I hereby ask whether Q;
If I ask whether Q, I expect an answer;
So: I expect an answer.

19. Bob Hale, in his excellent critical study ("The Compleat Projectivist," *Philosophical Quarterly* 36 [1986]: 65-84) of *Spreading the Word*, notes that Blackburn's construal of the conditional is, in any case, inapposite for examples like

If Jones stole that money, he should be punished,

whose role cannot possibly be to evaluate a combination of evaluations since the antecedent is not evaluative. His ingenious alternative proposal is, first, to refashion the account of

If stealing is wrong, encouraging others to steal is wrong

as a *negative* evaluation of combining a negative evaluation of stealing with *the lack of* a negative evaluation of encouraging others to steal; and, second, to include not just evaluations, but beliefs (and presumably propositional attitudes in general) within the scope of such second-order evaluations. The conditional about Jones would then emerge as a negative evaluation of the combinations of believing that Jones stole the money but fail to approve of (positively evaluate) his punishment.

No question but that this improves Blackburn's account, and may well indicate the only viable direction for it to follow. But, notwithstanding some suggestive remarks by Hale ("The Compleat Projectivist," 73-74), I do not think it deflects the criticism bruited that Blackburn must misconstrue the failing of one who accepts the premises of the modus ponens example, but does not accept the conclusion. Certainly, the character of the 'inconsistency' changes: It is now a matter not of *failing* to have every combination of evaluations of which one approves, but of *actually having* a combination—a negative evaluation of stealing and the lack of a negative evaluation of encouraging others to steal—of which one *disapproves*. However, though such conduct—"doing what you boo," as Hale describes it—is naturally described as 'inconsistent', it remains that this is *moral* inconsistency: conduct that is not true to moral principle. Someone who rejects Geach's inference is being, in addition, *irrational*—and this additional failing, separate from the moral one, is just as evident if he merely rejects the conditional:

> Provided that stealing is wrong, and that, if stealing is wrong, encouraging others to steal is wrong, then encouraging others to steal is wrong

without endorsing any particular evaluation of the conjuncts in its antecedent.

A related worry (acknowledged by Hale in correspondence) is whether a projectivist who follows Hale's direction can, once having construed 'mixed' conditionals as evaluations, avoid so construing *all* conditionals. Of course, expressive theories of the conditional have their supporters, too. But there is something unhappy about being pushed toward such an account quite generally, merely by the conviction that morals are of limited objectivity.

20. Actually, and independently of the illocutionary status of evaluation, there is, of course, a notion of inconsistency for evaluations quite similar to that mooted for commands: A set of evaluations, positive and negative, is inconsistent just in case no possible world realizes all the positives but avoids realizing all the negatives. But this is of no obvious help in the present case. Whether the conditional is construed as originally by Blackburn, or as proposed by Hale (see note 19), one who endorses both 'Stealing is wrong' and 'If stealing is wrong, encouraging others to steal is wrong', but denies 'Encouraging others to steal is wrong', commits himself to no such inconsistent set of evaluations. There is, I have urged, a logical inconsistency in such a performance, different from both the forms of moral inconsistency that, respectively, are disclosed by the Blackburn/Hale proposals. But neither the logical inconsistency nor those types of moral inconsistency are instances of this interevaluational species of inconsistency. The former has essentially nothing to do with the values the subject actually accepts (compare note 19). And the latter concern not the relations among his values, but those between his values and his conduct.

21. The point is made by Hale, "The Compleat Projectivist," 78–79.

22. See, for example, his "Morals and Modals," cited in note 17.

23. For pursuit of these misgivings, see my review of *Spreading the Word* in *Mind* 94 (1985): 310–19.

24. Of which the foremost is probably Frege's regress argument, given in his paper "Thoughts," Translated by P. T. Geach, in G. Frege, *Logical Investigations* (Oxford, 1977), 3–4. See Peter Carruthers's discussion, "Frege's Regress," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 82 (1981–82): 17–32. For a very illuminating analysis of the issues between correspondence and disquotational or 'deflationary' accounts of truth, see the contributions by Hartry Field ("The Deflationary Concept of Truth") and Graeme Forbes ("Truth, Correspondence and Redundancy") in *Fact, Science and Morality*, edited by G. MacDonald and C. Wright, 55–117 and 27–54, respectively.

25. From *Charles S. Pierce: Selected Writings (Values in a World of Chance)*, edited by Philip P. Wiener (New York, 1966), 82.

26. And 'dispute' here means, of course: genuine dispute. There must be no material misunderstanding.

27. For details of how such a dispute might run, see the dialogue with the Cautious Man in chap. 3 of my *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980). Compare my "Inventing Logical Necessity," in *Language, Mind and Logic*, edited by J. Butterfield (Cambridge, 1986), 187–209.

28. Not all realists are comic, of course.

29. I try to deploy this feature of substantial truth in the context of a strategy against traditional epistemological skepticism in "Facts and Certainty," in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 71(1985):429–72.

30. Compare *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*, chap. 23, 456–60.

31. *Spreading the Word*, 170–71.

32. There are important internal differences. The relation between moral sentiment and moral judgment is much more complicated than that between amusement and judgment about what is funny. For one thing, though we may wish to allow that certain moral sentiments are natural in the sense that they are untrained, the capacity for *moral* sentiment arguably presupposes possession of moral concepts. An infant's distress at his older brother's punishment is not yet a moral response. By contrast, possession of the concept of humor is not a prerequisite for the capacity to be amused. For another, judging that a cer-

tain hypothetical state of affairs would be funny involves an element of prediction missing from the corresponding moral judgment, and is defeasible by subsequent apathetic responses in a way that moral judgment need not be. Third, both moral and modal judgments are disciplined by principle: Moral sentiment, and the phenomena of conviction and unintelligibility involved, for example, in the ratification of mathematical proofs, are quite often quashed by appeal to what it is independently considered correct, morally or mathematically, to think. Humor affords a parallel to this only insofar as we moralize about it, by introducing, for example, the notion of a joke in bad taste.

33. For pursuit of this line of thought, see my "Scientific Realism, Observation and the Verification Principle," in *Fact, Science and Morality*, edited by MacDonald and Wright, 247-74.

34. But perhaps only prima facie. See the remarks on the 'Moral Sense Theory' in Michael Smith's "Should We Believe in Emotivism?" in *Fact, Science and Morality*, edited by MacDonald and Wright, 289-310.

35. The distinction I wish to use the case to illustrate is actually appreciable independently of the belief that a dispositional analysis is here appropriate, so it does not matter if the reader does not share that belief.

36. In graduate classes on ethics in Princeton, spring 1986. However, the explanation of the contrast in terms of the alternative interpretations of the normality provisos demanded if the biconditional is to hold a priori is mine and may not coincide with his own preferred account. I should emphasize that I do not, at present, regard the contrast as unproblematic.

37. Johnston wanted to commend the question whether appropriate such biconditionals for moral judgments should be read right-to-left as the pivotal issue for moral realism. Certainly, we need a more detailed examination of the relations among the three criteria of the capacity for substantial truth than I have here been able to attempt. But my present belief, to stress, is that the first two criteria are prior, and that the third comes into play only for judgments that satisfy them. However, that does not entail that Johnston was in error to lay emphasis on the third criterion. For the capacity to sustain the truth of *some* such biconditional may be regarded as the litmus test of whether a type of statement is apt for substantial truth at all—so, unapt for irrealism—with the first two criteria providing tests in turn—perhaps not the only tests—of this capacity. The correctness of such a view is one among a number of very interesting questions here in prospect.

38. I would like to acknowledge the stimulus of conversations on these matters with Mark Johnston, David Lewis, and Michael Smith, and to thank Simon Blackburn, Bob Hale, Mark Johnston, and Peter Railton for extensive and very helpful comments on a previous draft, most of which the deadline has prevented me from responding to as I would have wished.