
THE TAMING OF THE TRUE

NEIL TENNANT

CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD

1997

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	The problem defined	1
1.2	The current state of the debate	3
1.3	The structure of this work	6
1.4	Historical reflections	10
1.5	Relationship to <i>AR&L</i>	13
1.6	A note on style and substance	14
2	The Realism Debate	15
2.1	The central role of truth	15
2.2	Five important contentions	19
2.3	Key theses	27
2.4	Superassertibility	42
2.5	Semantic anti-realism	45
2.6	A crescendo of concerns	50
2.7	Remarks on natural deduction	55
2.7.1	Arguments and natural deductions	56
2.7.2	Accumulating arguments	56
2.7.3	Rules of inference	58
2.7.4	<i>Reductio ad absurdum</i>	59
2.7.5	Regimenting philosophical arguments	60
2.7.6	A plea for tolerance in matters logical	61
3	Irrealism	63
3.1	A survey of various kinds of irrealism	63
3.2	Non-factualist irrealism <i>v.</i> error-theory	67
3.3	Notational preliminaries	75
3.4	A <i>reductio</i> of semantic irrealism?	77

3.5	Isolating the basic steps	77
3.5.1	The first basic step	77
3.5.2	The second basic step	79
3.5.3	The third basic step	79
3.6	Some simple arguments using the basic steps	80
3.7	Evaluating the steps	82
3.7.1	A stratificationist objection to Boghossian will not work	83
3.7.2	Objection to step (I)	86
3.7.3	Objection to step (II) from a projectivist's point of view	86
3.8	Conclusion	89
4	Against Meaning Scepticism	91
4.1	The impact of scepticism about meaning. The stress between materialist metaphysics and analytic intuition	91
4.2	Theses about content, and some orthogonal issues	93
4.3	What semantic determination thesis does the Kripkean sceptic try to undermine?	97
4.4	On past and future applications of rules	100
4.5	The sceptic is a non-factualist	102
4.6	Kripke's dialectic of reinterpretation	104
4.7	Uniformity of reinterpretation requires globality	108
4.8	Kripkean scepticism compared with Quinean indeterminacy: the new dogma of post-empiricism	115
4.9	Anti-sceptical responses emphasizing the first-person case	120
4.10	On Goodman's Paradox	122
4.11	The proper way to meet the sceptical challenge	125
4.12	A parable	127
4.13	From dispositional facts to normativity of meaning	130
4.13.1	On going wrong: competence v. performance	133
4.13.2	Alleged problems for a dispositional account: the argument from finitude	137
4.13.3	Alleged problems for a dispositional account: the argument from error	139
5	Avoiding Strict Finitism	143
5.1	Knowability in principle	143
5.2	The strict finitist's worry	148
5.3	Recognitional capacities and compositionality	150
5.4	Feasible verifiability	151

5.5	Aspectual recognition: competence as factorizable	152
5.6	Finding the right dispositional conditionals	155
6	The Manifestation Argument is Dead	159
6.1	A summary by way of introduction	159
6.2	Decidability, knowability and truth: picturing the positions . .	161
6.3	Dummett's construal of realist truth, and his blindness to Gödelian Optimism	168
6.4	Understanding the dialectic of debate	170
6.5	Bivalence and Decidability	173
6.6	Manifestationism	176
6.6.1	The original 'manifestation challenge'	176
6.6.2	Does Bivalence entail the possibility of recognition-transcendent truth?	180
6.6.3	Dummett's quantifier-switch fallacies	185
6.6.4	Independence results are no help to Dummett	190
7	Long Live the Manifestation Argument	195
7.1	A summary by way of introduction	195
7.2	A more convincing manifestation argument	196
7.2.1	The problem of undecidable sentences	196
7.2.2	The manifestation requirement made more precise	198
7.2.3	The principle of knowability made more precise	203
7.2.4	The principle of bivalence made more precise	205
7.3	Logical relationships among theses; the central inference	206
7.4	Decidability: demurral v. denial	214
7.5	The undecidability of arithmetic	216
7.6	Responses to undecidability	219
7.6.1	The anti-realist's response	219
7.6.2	The realist's response	221
7.7	Realist reconstructions of manifestation?	224
7.8	The central inference revisited; reconstructions rejected	232
7.9	Rubbing out the wrong pictures	235
7.9.1	Arguing against M-Realism	236
7.9.2	Arguing against the Gödelian Optimist	239
8	Truth as Knowable	245
8.1	Introduction	245
8.2	Rational thinkers	247

8.3	On wondering whether	252
8.4	On knowing every truth	259
8.5	Diagnosis of the underlying problem	266
8.6	Cartesian contents, and our proposed solution	272
8.7	The failure of the reconstrual strategy	276
8.8	Taking stock	278
9	Analyticity and Syntheticty	281
9.1	Logic and analyticity	281
9.2	A brief history of the two distinctions	282
9.3	The impact of Gödel's first incompleteness theorem	290
9.4	An alternative view	295
9.5	The wider logic of number	297
9.6	Necessary existents	299
9.7	The dogma of existence	303
10	Finding the right logic	305
10.1	On rational advocacy of reform	305
10.2	Systematicity, immediacy, separability and harmony	308
10.3	Epistemic gain in logic	322
10.4	The maxim of narrow analysis	325
10.5	Non-forfeiture of epistemic gain	328
10.5.1	The Sub-sequent Constraint	329
10.5.2	Truth-preservation is not enough	330
10.6	The Principle of Harmony	332
10.7	The Principle of Extraction for natural deduction systems	334
10.8	The Anti-Dilution Principle for sequent systems	335
10.9	Relevance	337
10.9.1	Uniquely determining rules for the logical operators	338
10.9.2	Intuitionistic Relevant Logic	343
10.9.3	Classical Relevant Logic	344
10.9.4	Benefits for computational logic	346
10.9.5	On choosing the right relevant logic: the method summarized	346
10.9.6	Prosecuting our principles further: a precondition on rule applications	350

11 Cognitive Significance Regained	355
11.1 Re-evaluating the problem of cognitive significance	355
11.2 Conditions of adequacy on a criterion of cognitive significance	360
11.2.1 Sentences are cognitively significant only within the context of a theory that makes them so	360
11.2.2 Basic sentences	361
11.2.3 Metalogical neutrality	362
11.2.4 Inductive levels, new vocabulary and extension	363
11.2.5 Verifiability and falsifiability	365
11.2.6 The principle of composition, or molecularity	366
11.2.7 Constrained extension: higher-level hypotheses	366
11.2.8 A remark on significance via compounding	369
11.2.9 Hempel's compositionality condition	370
11.2.10 The first-order case	372
11.2.11 The invariance of non-significance under reformulation	373
11.3 The formal theory	374
11.3.1 Extension	374
11.3.2 How sentences depend on the atomic facts within a model for their truth or falsity	382
11.3.3 Some inductive definitions	388
11.3.4 Main results	390
11.4 Comparison with Carnap's account	393
11.5 Blocking Church-Ullian collapses	399
12 Defeasibility and Constructive Falsifiability	403
12.1 Rationalism and relativism	403
12.2 On defeasible empirical claims	406
12.3 Refutation of empirical theories	414
12.4 Normal forms for disproofs	422
12.5 Validity of arguments	425
12.6 Validity of <i>reductio</i>	429
12.7 The anti-realist construal of empirical claims that cannot be proved	432
13 Summary and Conclusion	435
Bibliography	439
Index	449