THESIS

SEMANTIC AND GLOBAL IRREALISM

Submitted by

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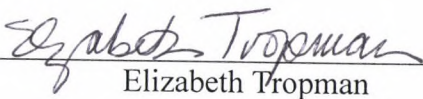
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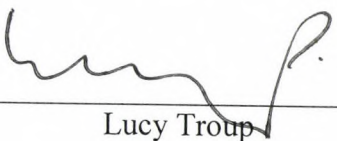
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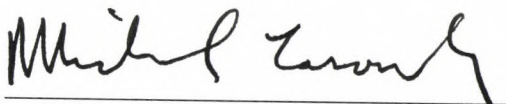
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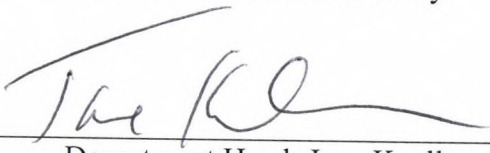
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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY ALEXANDER PERRY ENTITLED SEMANTIC AND GLOBAL IRREALISM BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

SEMANTIC AND GLOBAL IRREALISM

This thesis is concerned with skepticism about linguistic meaning and the consequences that follow from this view. After clarifying various positions that support skepticism about meaning – broadly classified under the umbrella term semantic irrealism – I weave a common thread through these different characterizations and use that formulation for the remainder of the thesis. In chapter two I examine the premises for the argument that semantic irrealism globalizes to the conclusion that no sentence is substantially true. After evaluating attempts found within the literature to block this inference, I argue that it cannot be blocked in the ways considered. Chapter three is a response to objections that the global irrealist position is both incoherent and unstable. I argue that it is neither and conclude that if semantic irrealism is the case, then this necessarily entails global irrealism.

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Introduction

Skepticism about linguistic meaning played an important role in 20th century philosophy of language. Essentially, arguments supporting semantic skepticism call into question the propriety of thinking about 'meaning' as a concept with determinate content or an underlying structure that yields positive results upon further analysis. This skeptical position is categorized broadly as semantic irrealism. This should not be misunderstood as the claim that language or words are meaningless. Everyone agrees words and sentences have meaning and that it is in virtue of this that communication is successful, or even possible. It is the relationship between words, sentences, and what they signify that is of interest to us here. Historically, this relationship (the meaning) has been analyzed in terms of the ideas or objects associated with particular words, or the properties of sentences and words. After weaving a common thread through some of the significant arguments supporting various forms of skepticism about linguistic meaning – as idea, object, or genuinely robust property – I argue that if semantic irrealism is the case, then it globalizes to the conclusion that there are no semantic properties and no sentence is 'substantially true'. This should not be taken as the view that we mistakenly employ words or expressions like 'truth', 'is true', or 'means that' within the linguistic practices of our everyday lives. Rather, it should be taken as support for the view that the traditional notion of objectivity is off-target, should be rejected, and that this position is neither incoherent nor unstable.

Chapter 1 – Semantic Irrealism

This thesis is concerned with the claim that if irrealism is true of meaning, then it is true of everything else, including molecules and mountains. This means that the truth-value of statements in which these terms figure is indeterminate. The argument for this conditional is called "the globalizing argument", because it aims to show that irrealism about meaning entails global irrealism, that is, irrealism for all domains. Roughly speaking, a semantic irrealist denies that there are semantic facts, just as an irrealist about numbers denies there are numbers, but how to make this precise is not completely clear, and thus the focus of chapter 1 is to clarify what it means to be a semantic irrealist. Chapter 2 analyzes the globalizing argument. I explain it and the inferences involved, look at attempts to block it, and argue that they fail. In Chapter 3, I defend global irrealism against two objections, both that it is incoherent and that it is unstable.

As characterized in the literature, semantic irrealism appears to be a collection of related but distinct views. These include the conclusions that: 1) there are no semantic entities, such as ideas or objects, that are equivalent to meanings; 2) there are no semantic facts, e.g., there is no fact what person S means by sign 'x' – so no fact that Jimmy means plus by '+'; 3) there are no facts that correspond to semantic sentences such as "The sentence 'x' as used by person S means that p" – so, for instance, no facts that correspond to the sentence "The sentence 'snow is white' as used by Keith means that snow is

white"; and 4) that semantic sentences do not have substantial truth-conditions. After surveying the philosophers associated with the particular conclusion for which he argues, I explain what it means for semantic sentences to not have substantial truth conditions. I then show that 1) – 3) entail conclusion 4), and use that characterization for the remainder of the thesis. It will be useful to introduce the notion of semantic irrealism through its historical motivations in the writings of Wittgenstein, Quine, and Davidson, and the more recent work of Kripke in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. I am not going to defend semantic irrealism, though I find the arguments for it strong enough to justify taking the view seriously, and the lack of consensus about how to respond to these arguments a point in favor of its intuitive appeal. I will present these arguments, sometimes verbatim, in order to streamline and present most clearly the semantic irrealist position.

1.1 Wittgenstein and Quine

The philosophy of the later Wittgenstein has been an important source for the notion of semantic irrealism. Though his views are a matter of much debate, Wittgenstein's arguments against meaning as objects and ideas provide support for the semantic irrealist claim that there is nothing constitutive or determinate about meaning. Wittgenstein argues against the notion of meaning as objects in the first pages of *The Blue Book*. In approaching the question of what the meaning of a word is, Wittgenstein directs our attention to what the explanation of the meaning of a word is; if we understand the meaning of "meaning" we should also be able to understand the meaning of "explanation of meaning" – for whatever *that* is will be the meaning; "Studying the grammar of the expression 'explanation of meaning' will teach you something about the

grammar of the word 'meaning' and will cure you of the temptation to look about you for some object which you might call 'the meaning'.[1]" It cures us because an explanation of meaning is not a thing, but a definition. If meaning were objects, i.e., if there were objects necessarily correlated with the meaning of any word or expression, then there would be an object corresponding to the meaning of "explanation of meaning". This would put us in a position to ostensively define "explanation of meaning" in virtue of a certain object that determined the meaning of the expression. But given that we understand the expression "explanation of meaning", and what it is to ask for an explanation of meaning without an object that determines the meaning of this expression, this shows that meaning is not simply a matter of correspondence between words and that for which they stand. There is a large class of cases in which words or expressions have meaning, but for which no object can or need be postulated to explain. Thus, meanings are not objects, according to Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein argues against meanings as ideas by way of a thought experiment. Imagine someone gives you an order, "Fetch me a red flower.[2]" You may go and look for a red flower with a certain image in your mind, hoping that this image corresponds to the word given. Perhaps you successfully carry out the order because of the idea associated in your mind with the word 'red', and this idea guides you to pick out the properly colored flower. But this isn't the only way of searching, and is not the usual way. Generally, you would go, look around, and pick the appropriate flower. To see the

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[1] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *The Blue and Brown Books*. pg. 1. This point is reiterated, though not as explicitly, in *Philosophical Investigations* sec. 560.

[2] Ibid. pgs. 3-4, reiterated in *Philosophical Investigations* sec. 53; in the case of 'yellow', see *Blue Book*, pgs. 11-12.

process of obeying an order in this way – as not involving an idea that one must consult before appropriate action can be taken – consider the order "*imagine* a red patch". One need not imagine a red patch prior to obeying the order as a pattern to which her action must conform; one just imagines the red patch. Thinking of meaning as an idea adds an unnecessary 'occult appearance' to the meaning of a word and the processes of thinking involved in language. The idea in our minds does no more to determine the meaning of a word than what is accomplished by just looking at the object that corresponds to our idea of that word, then attempting to understand how the meaning attaches to it by fixing our gaze sharply on the object and repeating the word to ourselves in an attempt to grasp the essence of the relationship[3]. Thus, there is nothing about an idea in our minds, or an object that corresponds to a word that determines what it is in virtue of that our words have meaning – nor are they necessary to a person's understanding. This amounts to the claim that meaning is not identified with objects or ideas, or as stated in conclusion 1) – there are no entities that are equivalent to meanings. Though Wittgenstein makes room for a doctrine of meaning as use, it is fair to characterize him as a semantic irrealist in that he denies that meanings are objects, not even mental objects such as ideas.

Quine levels a barrage of arguments against meaning in his seminal article "Two Dogmas of Empiricism". He argues against meaning as reference, extension, ideas, or concepts. Reference is the object picked out by a name or singular term. The reference of 'Evening Star' is the planet we commonly refer to as Venus. Extension is the set of all objects that satisfy a description or predicate. All red objects fall in the extension of 'red'; all creatures with a heart fall in the extension of 'creature with a heart'. Quine argues

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[3] Adapted from Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 113.

against meaning as reference through the examples of 'Evening Star' and 'Morning Star', both of which refer to the planet Venus. Since they name the same thing, if reference was all there was to meaning, the identity statement 'Evening Star = Morning Star' would be analytic (true in virtue of meaning alone). But that identity statement is not analytic, it adds to the relationship between the meaning of the two terms in a way that an identity statement of the form 'Evening Star = Evening Star' does not, and it required astronomical observation to establish. Thus, meaning cannot be reference. Similarly, 'creature with a heart' and 'creature with a kidney' share extension, but do not share meaning. Thus, meaning cannot be extension[4].

Quine argues against meanings as ideas, concepts, or entities. His objection to meaning identified with either of the three is that they are so elusive and debatable that there is little hope of 'erecting a fruitful science about them', there is no principled way (granting meanings) of distinguishing between when there is just one meaning or two, and it is reasonably expected that, were we to arrive at a standard of synonymy between terms, postulating meanings as these obscure entities would not have played a very useful part in explicating that standard. Thus, meaning cannot be identified with ideas, concepts, or entities[5]. This, as with Wittgenstein, is consistent with conclusion 1). However, Quine's conclusion is that there are no meanings, "In the course of these somber reflections we have taken a dim view first of the notion of meaning, then of the notion of cognitive synonymy, and finally of the notion of analyticity"[6].

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[4] Quine, W.V. "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" pg. 21

[5] Ibid. pg. 22

[6] Ibid. pg. 34

Quine's dim view on meanings and his arguments against the notion of semantic entities also entails our earlier stated conclusion 2), which is that there are no semantic facts. Quine's position that there are no semantic entities is an ontological claim about what there is not. Just as if there is no God, there are no God-facts or facts about the characteristics God possesses, then just so if there are no semantic entities, then there are no semantic facts or facts about meaning[7].

1.2 Davidson and truth conditions

Davidson argues against the view that meanings are entities in "Truth and Meaning". Davidson first argues that meanings cannot be identified with reference. Again, reference is the object picked out by some expression or name. The reference of 'McKinley Morganfield' is the late blues guitarist commonly known as Muddy Waters. If meaning just is reference, then both 'McKinley Morganfield' and 'Muddy Waters' have the same meaning, as both terms refer to the same person. Similarly, if meaning is only reference, then 'Morning Star' and 'Evening Star' are synonymous, as both terms refer to the planet Venus.

Davidson does not think that meaning can be reference, because if we tried to hold that as a theory we run into trouble when making two reasonable assumptions, 1) that logically equivalent expressions have the same reference, and 2) that a sentence does not change its reference when a contained singular term is replaced by another with the same reference. Now, suppose 'R' and 'S' are two sentences alike in truth value. Sentences alike in truth value share reference also. A formal description of 'R' is logically equivalent to 'R', and a formal description of 'S' is logically equivalent to 'S'.

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[7] Dr. Losonsky made this point to me in conversation.

So, 'R' and its formal description have the same reference, and 'S' and its formal description share the same reference. Since 'R' and 'S' share reference, and their respective formal descriptions share that reference, it shows that all four sentences have the same reference. And if meaning is only reference, then all sentences alike in truth value must be synonymous – and this is an intolerable result[8]. This is commonly referred to in the literature as the 'Slingshot Argument'.

Davidson argues against the traditional view that meanings are entities. The theory Davidson argues against claims that in order to give a satisfactory account of how the meaning of sentences depends upon the meanings of words, we begin "by assuming some entity as meaning to each word (or other significant syntactical feature) of the sentence. The problem then arises how the meaning of the sentence is generated from these meanings[9]". Davidson agrees that a theory of meaning must show how the meanings of sentences depends on the meaning of words, but it must also show what it is for a speaker to understand, learn, and master a language. Postulating meaning entities in no way solves the dilemma of how a speaker understands a language based on finite set of learned vocabulary and rules. So, Davidson objects to postulating meanings as entities not because "they are abstract or their identity conditions are obscure, but that they have no demonstrated use[10]". Davidson's arguments against meanings as reference or entities are consistent with conclusion 1), and similarly to Quine's, entail conclusion 2).

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[8] Davidson, Donald. "Truth and Meaning", in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*. pg. 19

[9] Ibid. pg. 17

[10] Ibid. pg. 21.

As Davidson finds meanings as entities unhelpful in explaining how speakers learn and understand a language, he gives a positive account of meaning through the truth conditions of sentences, in effect, that what a sentence means can be determined by the conditions under which it is true. It will be helpful to explicate this account, as truth conditions figure in an important role in the debate about semantic and global irrealism. Davidson's project is to give a theory of meaning that does not rely on an ontology of meanings or meaning entities. Davidson states, "We decided a while back not to assume that parts of sentences have meanings except in the ontologically neutral sense of making a systematic contribution to the meaning of the sentences in which they occur… Postulating meanings has netted nothing…[11]" Rather than give a theory of meaning that depends on meaning entities to explain how sentences or words mean what they do, Davidson's proposal is simple, though radical. Instead of meanings, we can use a recursive definition of truth in order to give an account of the meaning of sentences and the parts of which they are composed. The definition of truth that Davidson finds apt in this regard is given by T-sentences, which he adopts from Tarski's Convention T[12]:

(T) s is T if and only if p

where s is replaced by a quoted or named sentence of the language for which truth is being defined, and then that sentence is itself used on the right. So, the biconditional states that for any sentence s, it is T if and only if the conditions expressed by p are the case. In other words, T is predicated of the named sentence if and only if the state of affairs or proposition expressed by *using* that sentence on the right is the case. For

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[11] Ibid. pg. 22

[12] Convention-T was initially developed as a formal definition of truth, cf. Tarski, Alfred. "The Semantic Conception of Truth: and the Foundations of Semantics" especially part I.

example, "Snow is white" is *T* in English if and only if snow is white. If we get a truth from a T-sentence for every sentence in the language, then "is *T*" is equivalent to truth. So, the English sentence "Snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white. Davidson's theory of meaning relies on truth conditions to give the meaning of any sentence in a language – it does this by showing the conditions under which the sentence is true. To give the necessary and sufficient conditions under which any sentence is true, Davidson urges, is an account of meaning that does not involve postulating meaning entities, "for what I call a theory of meaning has after all turned out to make no use of meanings, whether of sentences or of words.[13]" So, although Davidson denies that meaning is reference or that there are meaning entities, he leaves room for the notion of meaning explicated through the conditions under which we can attribute truth to a sentence by the repeated application of a procedure.

Further discussion of truth conditions will be helpful before examining Kripke's more recent semantic irrealism, for it relates directly to his work. In the sentence "'Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white", truth is attributed to a quoted sentence in virtue of the conditions under which we determine if what the quoted sentence says is the case. With the sentence 'disquoted' and used on the right, it gives the condition that makes the sentence on the left true if it obtains, false if it does not. But the criteria for what 'makes the sentence on the left true' depends on a particular theory of truth. I will explain briefly the three main types of theory relevant to our present concerns; realist and antirealist – both of which attribute substantial truth to some sentence '*P*' – and

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[13] Ibid. pg. 24

deflationist, i.e., a non-substantial theory of truth, fleshing out the details in terms of the T-sentence "'P' is true if and only if P".

When we predicate 'true' to a sentence substantially, it means both that the predicate refers to a property[14] and the sentence on the right denotes a feature or property of the sentence[15]. According to substantial theories of truth, the predicate 'is true' refers to a real property when applied to the sentence on the right in the T-sentence above. The sentence itself is not merely disquoted and used, but denotes this substantial property that the sentence enjoys. This property, on a realist theory of truth, is that the statement corresponds to some (mind-independent) state of affairs[16]. For statements of the form 'a is F', such as 'snow is white', this correspondence is due to the predicational structure of the particular sentence and the reference relations between its constituent parts and the way the world is. As long as the syntax of a particular statement is of declarative form, and there is an object designated by 'a', of which we could say that it 'is F', then this sentence enjoys the property of correspondence with the world.[17] If 'P' is substantially true in a realist theory, then not only does '*is true*' refer to a real property – *truth* – but on the right hand side of the T-sentence, 'P' denotes this property and corresponds to some particular state of affairs.

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[14] Wright, Crispin, *Truth & Objectivity*. pg. 232

[15] Distinctions pointed out through email correspondence with Dr. Lososnky – also Devitt, Michael. *Realism and Truth*. esp. ch. 2., Kirkham, R.L. *Theories of Truth*. esp. chs. 2-3

[16] The state of affairs is only mind-independent if the statement does not refer to minds or their properties.

[17] This is an almost direct quote from Devitt, Michael. *Realism and Truth*. pg. 28

In an idealist or antirealist theory, the substantial property of the sentence (on the right) is that it coheres with a certain theory or system of sentences[18]. So, if '*P*' is substantially true in an idealist sense, it means that '*P*' enjoys a substantial property – not the property of truth, but coherence with a certain theory or system of sentences, only not of a theory or system true in its own right, i.e., not objectively true. It is this property of coherence to which 'is true' refers and that '*P*' denotes. So, even though the realist and antirealist theories dispute about the status of the sentence on the right hand side and what the predicate 'is true' refers to, they both attribute substantial truth to the sentence in virtue of a particular (substantial) property that sentence has.

A deflationary theory of truth holds that the truth condition (used sentence on right) does not denote a special property or feature enjoyed by that sentence, that there are no semantic properties, and there is no more to the meaning of the truth predicate than the meaning of the quoted sentence used. This claim may be arrived at by different means. For instance, by considering that the addition of 'is true' to any sentence '*P*' is a superfluous addition to the value of '*P*' for logical inference. Since two distinct variables that have the same value as propositions mean the same, for any '*P*', '*P*' and '*P*' *is true* mean the same[19]. Another route to the claim that both sides of the T-sentence are synonymous can be reached by arguments concluding that it is not in the business of the truth predicate to refer to properties, or because 'is true' denotes a substantial concept that 'aspires to refer', but fails to do so because there just are not these kinds of

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[18] For antirealist theories, the substantial property could be that '*P*' is what is agreed on, or what is useful, etc… For our purposes, the above characterization in terms of coherence will suffice.

[19] Both Ramsey and Wittgenstein make arguments similar to this in "Facts and Propositions" and "Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics", respectively.

properties[20]. In any of these cases, the predicate '*is true*' does not refer to a real property nor does it add to the content of '*P*'. So in the context of the T-sentence, '*P*'s *being true* is not a substantial property of the sentence '*P*' – and '*P*' *is true* and '*P*' mean the same.

1.3 Kripke's Wittgenstein

While Wittgenstein, Quine, and Davidson offer important arguments for semantic irrealism, Kripke made the most recent and most dramatic challenge to realism about linguistic meaning in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. Kripke presents a paradox about rule-following, which in his words, runs:

> There can be no fact as to what I mean by 'plus', or any other word at any time… This, then, is the skeptical paradox. When I respond in one way rather than another to such a problem as '68 + 57', I can have no justification for one response rather than another. Since the skeptic who supposes that I meant quus cannot be answered, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning plus and my meaning quus. Indeed, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning a definite function by 'plus' (which determines my responses in new cases) and my meaning nothing at all[21].

This paradox is meant to apply not only to arithmetical examples, though it is through them that Kripke's 'skeptical conclusion' is easiest brought to light, but for all uses of language and signs. I outline Kripke's argument before looking at the different formulations of his semantic irrealism, which he calls the 'skeptical conclusion'.

Kripke's rule-following paradox emerges from the arguments of a 'bizarre skeptic' who challenges an interlocutor to specify in virtue of what she meant addition by '+' in the past, and not some other function, and so is presently conforming to her previous linguistic intention in answering '125' to '68 + 57'. Since only a finite number

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[20] Boghossian, Paul. "The Status of Content", pg. 160

[21] Kripke, Saul. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language.* pg. 21

of addition problems have been performed by anyone, and for simplicity of exposition, Kripke limits the range of addition problems that the interlocutor has performed up to this point to involving numbers under 57. The skeptic supposes that rather than addition, his interlocutor has always meant 'quaddition', where the 'quus' function operates exactly as the 'plus' function up to 57, but diverges thereafter and results in the answer '5'. In other words, the skeptic supposes that his interlocutor's answer to '57 + 68', given what she has meant by the '+' sign in the past, should be '5' rather than '125'. Surely this is false, "but if it is false, there must be some fact about my past usage that can be cited to refute [the skeptic's hypothesis].[22]"

In order to show the skeptic's hypothesis false, his challenge must be met by an answer that contains 1) a constitutive account of what fact it is by which I mean plus, and 2) an account showing why '125' is the *only* answer I ought to give in response to '68 + 57' – *what* it is that compels '125'. If an answer does not contain directions that fix '125' as the answer nor meets these requirements, then the skeptic has not been answered who supposes that '125' is simply an arbitrary, unjustified response[23].

Kripke has invented a radical form of skepticism[24]. His arguments challenge an interlocutor to specify something that has the putative features of semantic properties – being normative and infinitely applicable in so far unconsidered cases – in order to demonstrate the existence of such a thing. He allows the interlocutor idealized access to the three areas we might suppose to find such a thing – our actual application, our

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[22] Ibid.. pg. 9

[23] Ibid. pg. 11

[24] The one that he, in fact, attributes to Wittgenstein, Ibid. pg. 7

dispositions to use signs, and our inner mental life. The skeptic's dilemma is: either S can specify the fact by which she meant one thing rather than another (after idealizing her access to those three areas) or there is no such fact[25].

When the skeptic, henceforth KW, asks for a fact by which we mean one thing rather than another, he is making a demand for an explanation of *what* fact about the content or 'meaning' of the symbolic representation '+' (or scribbles that compose a particular statement) uniquely picks out one particular property or function rather than nothing at all. We could call this a demand for a fact about meaning that *uniquely individuates* – picks out to within uniqueness – one particular property rather than another. So, among the conditions individually necessary for the substantial truth of any statement is that some fact related to the content of the statement uniquely individuates one particular property rather than another. We will call this condition 'referring to a property'. KW, proceeding by elimination, argues that no putative candidates to answer his challenge could satisfy this condition.

So, though Kripke's discussion looks as though it contains both a metaphysical and an epistemological dimension with Kripke's insistence on justification, it actually contains only a metaphysical dimension[26] composed of a semantic component; the 'justification' KW demands being merely a device for assessing reasons we might believe in the existence of substantial truth conditions for semantic statements.

To answer KW, we may first cite our actual application – when I learned how to use 'plus' I learned an algorithm that I can repeat the procedure of – take one stack 'x'

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[25] Wright, Crispin. "Kripke's Account of the Argument Against Private Language", pg. 767

[26] Practically all but McGinn point this out in their respective articles in *Rule-following and Meaning*.

and one stack '*y*', combine the two stacks and count the total. This is what the fact I mean plus consists in – the '+' refers to the addition function.

This answer is immediately off target. For, it assumes KW's challenge has been met. His challenge wasn't about '+' specifically, but about *content specifically*. The cited procedure works only if there is already assumed content for 'count' (or any of the other words) – but what is challenged is whether there anything substantial about meaning at all – so, it begs the question to be told meaning is substantial in virtue of a definition, because it assumes there is already a determinate fact about the meaning of those words!

Perhaps, we try to answer KW by another route. The fact about meaning plus is found in our dispositions to use linguistic signs – the fact that the interlocutor meant plus rather than quus is that were she given a specific problem, she would respond with the sum, rather than the quum.

This doesn't really address the skeptical problem at all. For, the semantic properties of meaning include that it is *normative* – I ought to apply this word rather than that – dispositions only tell what I have, would, will, or in fact do; this response doesn't address the normativity requirement of what I *ought* to do. And by hypothesis, all of my previous behavior is compatible with both functions, thus it begs the question to suppose one function rather than the other.

Also dispositions are finite, whereas meaning is infinite in character – i.e., if I understand the meaning of a word, there are literally an *infinite* amount of so far unconsidered contexts where I apply it correctly. But dispositions are finite, and cannot cover the entire spectrum of possibilities to which my meaning would extend. Another problem with the dispositional account is that people are disposed to make *computational*

mistakes. If I make a mistake, we say 'I didn't respond in accord with the function I meant', but a dispositionalist is supposed to 'read off' my meaning from how I respond – thus can't say I 'meant' one particular function rather than another without vicious circularity. So, there is no fact about past behaviour that is constitutive of meaning plus.

Finally, might we try meaning as ideas or our inner mental life as *what* it is in which my meaning plus consists? In a way, any putative response to KW based on an idea makes the mistake the dispositional account did. For, the challenge raised skeptical doubts about the existence of substantial content *in toto*. He questions *what* it is about the content of my idea, internal qualitative state, or irreducible *sui generis* state of consciousness that refers to my meaning plus and not quus. This response doesn't tell us *what* fact about our experience refers to addition rather than quaddtion.

If *qualia*, or a *qualitative state of consciousness* is constitutive of the fact I mean plus – then the fact is introspectible and irreducible – the state of meaning plus is attended by a unique quality like that of feeling a headache. But no fact about a thought refers to one function rather than another unless we assume exactly what KW is demanding an explanation for. A thought is just as compatible with my meaning plus as my meaning quus.

Maybe the *image* in my head determines the fact that I meant plus. This answers KW only if the image uniquely picks out one particular thing anterior to the image itself. But it does not, there is nothing about the content of an image that picks out *this*

suggested use rather than another[27]. One use was suggested, but it is possible to use it otherwise.

Perhaps we regroup – the fact is that my meaning addition by '+' is a *sui generis* state – a unique state of its own kind – not assimilated to sensations or headaches or any 'qualitative' states of consciousness. It is a primitive state – and the fact about 'meaning' a substantial but primitive, basic concept – we deny that meaning can be explained in non-semantic terms.

This is mysterious – how does the primitive state uniquely individuate my 'meaning addition by '+''? Just telling us it does is not an answer – it doesn't tell us *what* about this state refers to the addition function – and that is exactly what KW is demanding an explanation for. This state is not supposed to be introspectible – available by searching the contents of one's consciousness – because then we could say something about it and it wouldn't be *sui generis* – yet we're (supposedly) aware of it with complete certainty – how else could we be sure we mean addition by '+'; our certainty answers the skeptic. If we are sure, then it is a fact about the content of my experience that it refers to the property of *my meaning plus*. This, again, doesn't address the demand for an explanation of *what* fact about my experience determines that my experience refers to my meaning plus rather than my meaning quus. This response does not give KW something by which to justify belief in determinately meaning plus by '+' – thus, KW can drive a wedge in the response and point out it begs the question to suppose that my experience entails I mean addition without that *in virtue of which* my experience actually does. A *sui generis* state is also a finite state, located in finite minds. Anything that is finite is open to

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[27] Unless someone had an image of the infinite addition function before her mind, but that's impossible.

bizarre, quus-like interpretations, unless you assume anterior to the instance what the content of the meaning state signified.

KW's essential demand is for a fact about the nature and character of my experience of meaning that refers to the property of my meaning plus and not quus. Any fact we use to cite as an answer to KW involves our language – which involves meaning – and so is open to his radical skeptical interpretation. It seems my response is nothing but an arbitrary, unjustified leap in the dark, and there is no fact about what I mean.

1.4 KW's semantic irrealism

Having run the gamut of putative candidates as the fact that fixes '125' as the answer which the interlocutor ought to give to '68 + 57', KW concludes that there is no fact that determines what she means by any of her words at any times:

> If we suppose that facts, or truth conditions, are of the essence of meaningful assertion, it will follow from the skeptical conclusion that assertions that anyone ever means anything are meaningless… we cannot begin to solve [the skeptical paradox] if we remain in the grip of the natural presupposition that meaningful declarative sentences must purport to correspond to facts; if this is our framework, we can only conclude that sentences attributing meaning and intention are themselves meaningless[28].

The first thing to note is that the passage deals with "assertions that anyone ever means anything". 'Assertions that anyone ever means anything' are one type of semantic sentence. A semantic sentence is a statement that attributes some semantic property, e.g., 'truth' or 'meaning', to some other statement or proposition. To begin we need be concerned only with meaning attributing semantic sentences – assertions that anyone ever means anything. Meaning attributing semantic sentences are those of the form, "Person S means m by sign 'x'", or, "The sentence 'x' as used by Person S means that p". As we

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[28] Ibid. pgs. 77-79

saw earlier, examples of these kinds of sentences are, "Jimmy means plus by '+'", and, "The sentence 'snow is white' as used by Keith means that snow is white". I now unpack the different formulations contained in this passage in the order 2) – 4) as listed earlier.

The first sentence contains conclusion 2) that there are no semantic facts – so, no fact that Jimmy means plus by '+'. Given the skeptical argument, "If we suppose that facts are of the essence of meaningful assertion, it [follows] that assertions that anyone ever means anything are meaningless." Just as if omnipotence was of the essence of God, there would be at least one God-fact, namely, that God was omnipotent – just so if facts were of the essence of meaningful assertion, then there would be at least one semantic fact, namely, that meaning attributing semantic sentences stated facts. Kripke states that if we think facts are of the essence of meaning attributing semantic sentences, then these semantic sentences are meaningless. To say that if we suppose there are semantic facts, then meaning attributing semantic statements are meaningless is to say there are no semantic facts, for Kripke is arguing not that semantic sentences are meaningless – just that it is not in virtue of facts that they are meaningful[29]. Kripke, in effect, is not arguing that we cannot or should not say anyone ever means anything, but rather that there are no *facts* that determine what anyone means.

Kripke also exhibits conclusion 3) that semantic sentences do not correspond to facts. "We can't begin to solve the [skeptical paradox] if we [hold] the natural presupposition that meaningful, declarative sentences must purport to correspond to facts." It is important to note that Kripke explicitly uses 'corresponds to' in order to flesh out the natural presupposition that not only leads to the paradox, but also is of no help in

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[29] cf. Wright, Crispin. "Kripke's Account of the Argument Against Private Language" pg. 766-767 for discussion about the propriety of Kripke's use of 'meaningless' to formulate his 'skeptical conclusion'.

solving it. If there were facts corresponding to semantic sentences, this would give the interlocutor something constitutive and determinate in virtue of which her statement, "I mean addition by '+'", forced '125' as *the* answer to '68 + 57' and, in effect, blocked the argument that she does not mean anything. "If [the natural presupposition] is our framework, we can only conclude that sentences attributing meaning are themselves meaningless." Kripke explicitly refers to sentences attributing meaning, or meaning attributing semantic sentences. To say that sentences attributing meaning are meaningless if we suppose they correspond to facts means that semantic statements do not correspond to any fact despite their being meaningful. Thus, meaning attributing semantic sentences do not correspond to facts.

Kripke exhibits conclusion 4) in the first sentence of the passage, "If we suppose that truth conditions are of the essence of meaningful assertion, it [follows] that assertions that anyone ever means anything are meaningless." If it follows that 'assertions that anyone ever means anything' are meaningless when we suppose that truth conditions are of the essence of meaningful assertion, then it follows that truth conditions are not of the essence of 'assertions that anyone ever means anything', given that these assertions are meaningful. Now that Kripke has mentioned truth conditions, he introduces the second type of semantic sentence, those attributing the semantic property of 'truth' to some other statement or proposition. Truth attributing semantic sentences are those of the form, "'P' is true", or, "'S means that P' is true", where 'P' stands for any propositional variable – usually in the form of a simple declarative sentence – which can be replaced while preserving the syntactic integrity of the formula "'P' is true". Syntactic integrity is preserved when it makes grammatical sense in English to attribute 'truth' to the sentence

substituted in for 'P'. So, for instance, we can attribute truth to the sentence "snow is white" and make grammatical sense in English, whereas attributing truth to a command (or interrogative) such as, "close the door", makes no sense and does not preserve the syntactic integrity of the form "'P' is true". So, since Kripke is talking about truth conditions being of the essence of 'assertions that anyone ever means anything', he is referring to statements that attribute the semantic property of 'truth' to meaning attributing semantic sentences, for instance, ""The sentence 'snow is white' as used by Keith means that snow is white" is true", or, "Jimmy means plus by '+' is true".

Kripke's conclusion that meaning attributing semantic sentences are themselves meaningless if we suppose truth conditions essential to them should be understood as implying that there are no substantial truth conditions for meaning attributing semantic sentences. For semantic sentences to not have substantial truth conditions means that there is no fact in which meaning *consists* unless there are unique semantic properties. KW argues that there are no unique content-determining properties[30]. Failing specification of those, meaning attributing semantic sentences do not have substantial truth conditions, for content does not refer to one particular thing rather than another. This is semantic irrealism.

1.5 Semantic irrealism

Semantic irrealism is the view that there are no genuine semantic properties. It follows semantic sentences do not have substantial truth conditions. This means 1) when 'is true' is predicated to semantic sentences about meaning, e.g., 'S means that P' is true, that 'means' does not refer to a real property of S (the property of *meaning such and*

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[30] This is why we cannot substantially add to the conditions under which we attribute 'meaning' one thing rather than another to a person or statement – because there is *nothing* there.

such) by which the sentence '*S* means that *P*' could be assessed true or false. It also entails that 2) the sentence '*S* means that *P*' does not denote a special property of the semantic sentence when it appears on the right hand side of a *T*-sentence, e.g., "'*S* means that *P*' is true if and only if *S* means that *P*". For clarity of exposition, we will just say that semantic sentences do not have substantial truth conditions.

It follows that we can attribute only trivial truth conditions to meaning attributing semantic sentences. For, even if meaning is not a property, all statements have trivial truth conditions that we can express simply by naming a sentence and then disquoting it through use. For instance, because we use the sentence "*snow is white*", we can attribute trivial or non-substantial truth conditions to it while preserving syntactic integrity, then disquoting the sentence and using it again, e.g., "The sentence 'snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white". So, it makes no sense to deny that we can call a sentence trivially 'true' if and only if we use that sentence to express conditions, for whatever purpose that may be. Similarly, we can express the truth conditions for a meaning statement as "'*S* means that *P*' is true if and only if *S* means that *P*'. So, we should understand the semantic irrealists as arguing that semantic statements do not have substantial truth conditions. We are now in a position to see how conclusions 1) – 3) entail 4).

As shown earlier, conclusion 1) entails conclusion 2) – if there are no semantic entities, then there is nothing to which or in virtue of which we might ascribe semantic facts. If there are no semantic facts that, for instance, Jimmy means plus by '+', then the meaning attributing semantic statement, "Jimmy means plus by '+'", does not correspond to facts – which is conclusion 3). This entails that semantic statements are not 'genuinely

factual' – which means that there are no properties to which 'meaning' refers – and this is to say that semantic statements are not substantially true or false. This entails that semantic sentences do not have substantial truth conditions, which is conclusion 4).

Because we generally accept that we do mean one thing rather than another by our words and sentences, our intuitive position, as characterized in the literature, is that there is a fact in which meaning one thing rather than another consists, i.e., in semantic sentences in which 'means that' occurs, it refers to a real property. This fact about meaning is the fact by which we mean one particular thing rather than another – and is that in virtue of which 'truth' is substantially attributed to semantic statements. This is exactly what semantic irrealism denies is possible. Coupling KW's considerations with the historic motivations for semantic irrealism, we can state conclusively: semantic irrealism is the view that meaning is not to be identified with objects, entities of any kind, ideas or concepts, facts, properties or conditions. For the remainder of the thesis, we will use conclusion 4) – that semantic sentences do not have substantial truth conditions – as the clearest characterization of semantic irrealism. However we characterize meaning something by an expression, it cannot be in reference to any of the things listed above. We now turn to the globalizing argument, which argues that if semantic irrealism is the case, this necessarily entails irrealism about everything.

Chapter 2 – The Globalizing Argument

In this chapter I evaluate the globalizing argument that semantic irrealism necessarily entails irrealism for all domains. I consider Wright's argument from "Kripke's Account of the Argument against Private Language", and then evaluate it in light of Hale's attempts to block the slide from semantic irrealism to global irrealism. I will conclude that Hale's attempted blocks fail and that in light of this discussion, in tandem with an evaluation of Boghossian's version of the argument and a response from Wright, that semantic irrealism does entail global irrealism. In other words, if semantic statements do not have substantial truth conditions, then this entails no statement is substantially true.

2.1 Wright's version

Wright exhibits his version of the globalizing argument:

One immediate difficulty [with Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein] is presented by the meaning-truth platitude. If the truth value of S is determined by its meaning and the state of the world in relevant respects, then non-factuality in one of the determinants can be expected to induce non-factuality in the outcome. (A rough parallel: If among the determinants of whether it is worth while going to see a certain exhibition is how well presented the leading exhibits are, then, if questions of good presentation are not considered to be entirely factual, neither is the matter of whether it is worth while going to see the exhibition.) A projectivist view of meaning is thus, it appears, going to enjoin a projectivist view of what is for a statement to be true. Whence, unless it is, mysteriously, possible for a projectivist statement to sustain a biconditional with a genuinely factual statement, the disquotational schema ''P' is true if and only if P' will

churn out the result that *all* statements are projective[31].

Although Wright uses 'non-factual' to characterize a class of statements, we should understand this as 'not substantial'. For, if a class of statements is non-factual, then that class of statements does not correspond to facts. It follows, then, that nothing substantial corresponds to that class of statements, nor can those statements be genuinely true or false. So, a class of statement that is non-factual is a class of statements that does not have substantial truth conditions.

Wright makes use of the meaning-truth platitude to draw the inference from irrealism about meaning statements to irrealism about all semantic statements[32]. The meaning-truth platitude, henceforth [MT], is that the truth-value of any statement S is a function of its meaning and the state of the world in relevant respects[33]. In order to determine the truth-value of a certain sentence, say, snow is white, we consider the meaning of 'snow is white' and whether or not snow is white. If either the meaning or the state of the world is indeterminate, then so also is the truth-value. The rough parallel Wright makes is this: if it is necessary for something substantial to correspond to statements of the form 'The leading exhibit y is well presented', in order for it to be substantially true whether or not 'It is worthwhile to see exhibit z' (assuming questions of good presentation are among the determinants of whether it's worthwhile to see an exhibition), then just so it is necessary for something substantial to correspond to the

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[31] Wright, Crispin. "Kripke's Account..." pg. 769. For our purposes the claim 'all statements are projective' is to say that no statement is substantially truth-conditional.

[32] For clarification, this first inference is not the globalizing inference – rather, it formally demonstrates the consequence of irrealism about meaning-attributing semantic sentences to irrealism about truth-attributing semantic sentences. The conclusion of the globalizing argument follows from what Wright refers to as the 'disquotational schema' – discussed below.

[33] Ibid. pg. 767

meaning of a statement, in order for that statement to be substantially true (or not). This seems rather intuitive; there is no substantial truth condition for any sentence, for which there is no substantial meaning. Formally, we could demonstrate this by modus tollens (henceforth, ' ∴ ' means 'therefore'):

(1*) It is not the case that 'S means that p' has substantial truth conditions.

(2*) [MT] – If 'S has truth condition p' has substantial truth conditions, then 'S means that p' has substantial truth conditions.

(3*) ∴ It is not the case that 'S has truth condition p' has substantial truth conditions[34]. [1*, 2*]

This is consistent with our analysis of the semantic irrealist position that no semantic sentences – sentences attributing a semantic property of 'meaning' or 'truth' to another sentence – have substantial truth conditions.

Wright also uses 'projective' to classify types of statements, which we can also express as 'not having substantial truth conditions'. A projective statement, crudely, is one that functions as an expression of the non-cognitive attitude or sentiment a speaker takes towards something, even though the statement is significant and declarative. A statement is significant just in case it has a role in the language and is governed by norms of correct utterance, and declarative just in case it is a statement that has syntactical features that allow for coherent embedding within conditionals, negation, other connectives, and propositional attitudes[35]. In other words, a projective statement is one

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[34] As we will see, this is similar in form to Boghossian's argument.

[35] The distinctions are from Boghossian, "The Status of Content", pg. 163. At this point in the debate, where it is an open question whether any signs or symbols are to be understood in any substantial sense (including 'If…, then…' constructions), a statement allows for 'coherent embedding' in conditionals – is possessed of the appropriate syntactical features – so long as possessed by syntax of the form 'a is F',

that shares the same overt syntax of genuine declarative statements capable of truth and falsity, though is not itself substantially true.

If a statement is possessed of appropriate syntax to figure coherently within a connective like, say, a Tarski-style T-sentence 'P' is true if and only if P that we encountered last chapter, but is not itself substantially true, this means the statement does not have substantial truth conditions. Truth conditions are conditions under which a sentence is determined to be (substantially) true or false. In contrast, a sentence with no truth conditions that still figures coherently into a T-sentence is governed by assertability conditions. Assertability conditions are conditions that specify the rough circumstances under which a statement is warranted or appropriate to assert – the circumstances that legitimize assertion of the class of statement, often accompanied by the role and utility of the statements within our lives and linguistic practices. In this way, sentences governed by assertability conditions are not substantially truth-conditional, but at best enjoy a weaker surrogate we will call correctness. When a correct sentence figures as part of a T-sentence, 'is true' indicates conditions of correct use, rather than truth conditions.

To many philosophers it seems plausible that ethical statements function in this way. For instance, 'Murder is wrong', though a statement that allows coherent embedding in conditionals, 'If murder is wrong, then we shouldn't murder', and in negation, 'Murder is not wrong' – is not a genuine statement that is itself capable of truth or falsity. For, there are no real properties of 'wrongness' that could attach to murder in

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further inference being determined case by case. Interrogatives and commands are examples of syntactical structure that does not allow for coherent embedding.

such a way that the predicate 'is wrong' would be satisfied (substantially)[36]. 'Murder is wrong' is significant – but the semantic function of that statement is to express the non-cognitive moral attitude of the speaker towards the particular action of murder. It follows that 'Murder is wrong' is correctly uttered only if the speaker possesses the appropriate attitude toward murder, which we might explain as being somehow equivalent to 'Boo murder!'[37] As the input of a T-sentence, "Murder is wrong" is true if and only if murder is wrong, the predicate 'is true' only indicates conditions of correct use expressed on the right hand side of the connective. These conditions are ultimately, if an emotive-type theory of ethics is correct, governed by whether the speaker is possessed of the appropriate moral sensibility. In this way, 'Murder is wrong' is not determined (substantially) true or false, but is only governed by conditions of correct use.

Less controversially, statements of taste are thought to fall in the extension of projective statements, e.g., 'Chocolate ice cream is good'. On the assumption that there are no real properties of 'goodness' that attach to chocolate ice cream that would make the sentence substantially true, the sentence is used appropriately only if the speaker actually holds the attitude evinced through the statement. So, even if there is no property of goodness, we still exhibit the conditions of correct utterance for the sentence within the connective of a T-sentence. For instance, given appropriate tastes, 'Chocolate ice cream is good' is true if and only if chocolate ice cream is good. 'Chocolate ice cream is good' is a sentence that, when uttered sincerely, expresses a person's taste toward ice-

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[36] If true, this would entail that we abandon the idea that every significant, declarative statement asserts a positive relationship between terms – for whose satisfaction there includes the necessary existence of real properties to which the constituent terms refer – adapted from Ramsey, F.P. "Facts and Propositions", passim

[37] This is a crude simplification of the meta-ethical view advocated by Ayer called 'emotivism'.

cream, but not one that expresses a relationship between an object and actual properties. The sentence's correctness conditions are governed only by what a particular speaker holds to be the case, not independently of her beliefs or desires, and thus we express its correct use by disquoting it and reusing the sentence in a T-sentence, which, in effect, fulfills the function of expressing the sentiment of the particular speaker.

Since there is nothing substantial corresponding to projective statements, then statements of this class cannot be themselves true or false. So, a class of statements that are projective entails that class of statements does not have substantial truth conditions. Wright's claim, then, that a 'projective view of meaning enjoins a projective view of what it is for a statement to be true' should be understood as the semantic irrealist conclusion that semantic statements do not have substantial truth conditions, but at best enjoy the weaker surrogate correctness.

If someone is a projectivist in semantic discourse, this amounts essentially to the claim that putatively 'correct' class of statements is not substantially truth-conditional. Under one conception of projectivism, this is attended by the claim that there is nothing diseased about our normal semantic talk – and so we can continue to discourse as though semantic statements were truth-conditional, although as a matter of fact they are not[38]. Another conception could have semantic statements expressive of the expectation that someone will respond in accordance with the standards of her linguistic community or in appropriate ways determined by that linguistic community. The aspect of projectivism

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[38] Blackburn, Simon. "The Individual Strikes Back." in *Rule-following and Meaning*. pg. 31. "According to projectivism we speak and think 'as if' the world contained a certain kind of fact, whereas the true explanation of what we are doing is that we have certain reactions, habits or sentiments, which we voice and discuss by such talk... [Projectivism] holds that there is nothing illegitimate in our ordinary practice and thought... I have called this view 'quasi-realism'."

most important to the current discussion is that whatever the semantic function in our lives, either semantic statements or all statements are not substantially truth-conditional, i.e., for the semantic irrealist, semantic statements are correct, and for the global irrealist, any statement is at best correct.

Following the statement of the semantic irrealist view, Wright states, "Whence, unless it is, mysteriously, possible for a projective statement to sustain a biconditional with a genuinely factual statement, the disquotational schema "'P' is true if and only if P" will churn out the result that *all* statements are projective." Here Wright runs the remainder of the globalizing argument. Before unpacking this formulation, it will be helpful to discuss the disquotational scheme biconditional, henceforth, the DS.

2.2 Disquotational Schema and the globalizing inference

The DS is not entirely alien to our discussion to this point. It is best formulated with the same schema used by Tarski for his 'Convention T' and by Davidson to give his account of meaning through truth conditions. Very simply it states

(DS) 'P' is true if and only if P

where, on the right, 'P' is substituted with a sentence that is a translation of P or is that sentence *used*, rather than mentioned, so that the DS comes out true, e.g., 'snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white. It is important to note that the DS functions as a minimal constraint on the (proper) predication of 'is true' to any statement, and is accepted by any theory of truth. DS states explicitly the minimum conditions under which 'is true' is correctly attributed to a sentence. It applies to any notion of truth, for, whatever the status is of the predicate 'is true' or 'P' as used on the right hand side of the DS – i.e., no matter the character or nature of the notion of truth used by a theory or in

what sense it is determined whether P or not-P – 'is true' is minimally predicated to any sentence 'P' if and only if P. In other words, DS applies whether 'true' is held to stand for a language independent property existing abstractly in its own right, a property that signals coherence, a language-dependent property that operates as a device for semantic ascent, or whether it is only used to indicate conditions of correct use. Part of the attraction of DS is that it is metaphysically neutral on these issues.

When Wright refers to globalization following from a projective statement failing to 'sustain a biconditional', he means the failure of a correct statement to affirm the truth of the DS and its instances. Since 'P' is true if and only if P, then if 'P' is true, then P (left to right instance), and also if P, then 'P' is true (right to left). Wright, then, formulates the globalizing argument in terms of an exclusive disjunction: If one side of DS is only correct, then either the DS churns out the result that *all* statements are projective or a projective statement can sustain a biconditional with a genuinely factual one. It is exclusive, for, if a projective statement can sustain a biconditional with a genuinely factual one, then the substitution property of the DS will fail in the context of the globalizing argument in some principled way.

Wright does not think a merely correct statement can affirm the instances of the biconditional, and so there is no way of blocking the substitution property of the DS, which allows us to substitute the sides of the DS in contexts in which they occur, from entailing that, just as 'P' *is true* stands in a certain relation to real properties such that it does not have substantial conditions, any 'P' does not have substantial truth conditions. Thus, since 'P' is true if and only if P, and 'P' *is true* does not have substantial truth conditions, then 'P' does not have substantial truth conditions. We can formalize the

globalizing argument as follows; with 'x' standing for (a relationship to) real properties and 'G' standing for does not have substantial truth conditions,

1`) ' 'P' is true' does not have substantial truth conditions

2`) 'P' is true if and only if P

2a`) f(x)'P' is true → f(G)'P' is true if and only if f(x)P → f(G)P

3`) ∴ 'P' does not have substantial truth conditions

By substituting the right hand side of DS with what appears between the outside set of quotation marks in 1`), the globalizing inference follows. No statement has substantial truth conditions.

2.3 Designated values

To help clarify why the globalizing inference follows when a correct statement, 'P' is true, is incapable of sustaining a biconditional with a substantial one, it will help to formulate this failure in terms of the designated values attributed to each side of the DS. Designated values are the good values that a sentence (or theorem) can have that warrant assertion, belief, inference, and action. In regular two-valued logic, the designated value is 'True', while 'true' and 'false' operate as truth-values. In a basic if-then conditional, we express this as follows:

$$\underline{P} \quad \rightarrow \quad \underline{Q}$$
True   True

If both sides are designated true, then the conditional will hold – the inference preserved – as long as, at minimum, the truth-values of P and Q do not entail a contradiction.

In many valued logics in which there are more than two truth-values, the designated values can be a set of two values, for instance, [True, Indeterminate] or in this

case [True, Correct] [39]. It is important to note a difference between designating or assigning a value to the left or right side of the DS, and expressing the predication of 'is true' to that same sentence. The value assigned to one side of the DS does not determine the meaning of the predicate 'is true'[40]. So, 'snow is white' can be assigned the value of true and this be a substantial concept – one that aspires to refer to a property, but ''snow is white' is true' yet to be designated anything. So, 'P' can be designated true, while 'is true', though still a predicate that aspires to refer to a substantial concept, is governed only by correctness conditions because, say, the substantial predicate does not actually refer to a property. In contrast, 'P' on the right can be designated true, while 'is true' refers to a real property, and thus the left side also designated true. Lastly, 'P' can be designated correct because 'is true' does not refer to real properties or stand for a substantial concept, and thus the left hand side would also be correct. Wright is concerned with a projective, or correct statement sustaining a biconditional with a substantial one – the first position above. It will help if we think of the designated values as underwriting the left and right hand side of the biconditional, and formulate it is as

(DS$_{DV}$) 'P' is true if and only if P
          Correct   True

If a correct statement is incapable of affirming the truth of each instance of a biconditional, this means that the right to left instance fails. So,

P → 'P' is true
True   Correct

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[39] From email correspondence with Dr. Losonsky, characterization due to Graham Priest, also cf. Gottwald, Siegfried. "Many Valued Logic". *Stanford Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

[40] Dr. Losonsky pointed this out to me in conversation.

is not affirmed, it fails as a valid inference from the DS. The reason why is a quite natural one; that a conditional will not hold – be true or correct – if there is a descent in designated values from its antecedent to its consequent. This is motivated by considering that, if we have a notion of correctness that is distinct from truth, then it seems false that '*P*' is true – when *'P' is true* is at best correct. The conditional $P \rightarrow$ *'P' is true* fails then, since there is a descent from True to (merely) Correct. A correct statement also fails to affirm the truth of the left to right instance. So,

$$\text{'P' is true} \rightarrow \underline{P}$$
$$\text{Correct} \qquad \text{True}$$

also fails as a valid inference from the DS on the assumption that a correct statement cannot entail a genuinely true one. Since, then, neither instance of the biconditional is affirmed, there is no principled way of blocking the substitution property of the DS from entailing that no statement has substantial truth conditions. We can express the argument most tersely as

1`) '*'P' is true*' does not have substantial truth conditions

2`) *'P' is true* if and only if *P*

3`) ∴ '*P*' does not have substantial truth conditions

2.4 Hale's attempted blocks of the globalizing inference

In order to reconstruct Hale's attempts to block globalization, I restructure the blocks from "Rule-following, Objectivity, and Meaning" in conjunction with an email correspondence between Dr. Losonsky and Dr. Hale. In this exchange, we find explicit the principle used by Hale to block globalization. This is the principle of substitution salva veritate, and states that things mean the same when they are mutually substitutable in context while preserving truth. So, for instance, if '*P*' means the same as *'P' is true*,

then they can be exchanged in context while preserving the truth-value of both the statement in which the substitution is taking place and the components that are substituted. Hale attempts to defend semantic irrealism and to block the globalizing inference by preserving the truth of '*P*', and arguing that "instances of the biconditional scheme [DS] will not support substitution of their components in complex contexts such as that involved in the globalizing argument.[41]"

To begin, I will explain the first attempt Hale considers to block globalization and why he rejects this, and then explain the shift that he proposes as an alternative to how we should understand conditionals, including what counts as sustaining a biconditional. He proposes contra Wright that all we need to preserve the inference of a conditional is to preserve designated values. As we will see, in this way Hale can answer Wright's charge that a 'projective statement cannot sustain a biconditional with a genuinely factual one'. The shift Hale proposes is connected with his interest to block substitution salva veritate. This is natural, a shift in how we understand conditionals as true or correct, false or incorrect, is going to be intertwined with our understanding of what preserves truth. Consistent with Hale's position, we will consider how this shift accomplishes the following: 1) allows a projective statement to sustain a biconditional with a factual one by affirming its instances, 2) secures DS for the semantic irrealist, and thus 3) allows a salva veritate block of the globalizing inference. I will argue against Hale's salva veritate block on the grounds that he begs the question of synonymy between '*P*' and *'P' is true*, and thus the globalizing inference still follows from semantic irrealism, before looking at his third attempt to block the argument.

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[41] Hale, Bob. "Rule-following, Objectivity, and Meaning" pg. 379

The first attempt to block globalization comes by rejecting the DS on the grounds that its instances fail. In Wright's version of the argument, global irrealism followed from semantic irrealism when the right-to-left instance of the biconditional failed because of the descent in designated values. The first option open for the irrealist, then, is to reject the DS and its instances as valid forms of inference. As long as it is an open question, at this point, whether truth is substantial or deflationary, the irrealist can hold consistently that whether or not P is a substantial matter, while holding that semantic sentences involving 'P' are never themselves substantial and at best correct. In other words, by wielding both notions of truth the semantic irrealist can maintain that the designated value of ordinary statements is substantial, but the designated value of semantic sentences involving those statements non-substantial because, essentially, semantic predicates like '*is true*' do not answer to and are not satisfied by any real properties[42]. Sentences involving those predicates –though significant and declarative – are not genuinely true or false and at best correct. Thus, while the right-to-left instance still fails because of the descent in designated value, rather than accept the DS the irrealist rejects it wholesale. It follows that the substitution property does not take effect and globalization is blocked.

Hale rejects this line of thinking for two reasons: 1) he wants to affirm the DS and its instances as valid forms of inference, and 2) he rejects the assumption on which Wright's version and the first attempted block rely, i.e., he rejects the assumption that a conditional will hold – be true, or at least correct – only if there is no descent in designated value between its antecedent and consequent, "As against this, it may

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[42] The irrealist must wield both notions, for, having a concept of 'x' entails a concept of 'not-x', so a concept of truth that is 'not substantial' requires a concept of truth that 'is substantial' – the concept of 'substantial truth' has an empty extension, however, according to the deflationist. The issue of wielding both notions of truth is considered further in chapter 3.

plausibly be claimed that we should require only preservation of designated value (where true and correct are designated, the remaining values not).[43]" Shifting our understanding of conditionals and how we evaluate them entails a shift in the matrix of truth used in evaluating conditionals as true or correct. To clarify how Hale intends a preservation of designated values to block globalization, it will be useful to distinguish between a non-conservative and conservative truth matrix[44], in terms of the designated values assigned to the left and right hand sides of the DS, i.e., the good values that both 'P' and 'P' *is true* get that warrant assertion, belief, inference, and action.

In Wright's argument, the right-to-left instance failed because there was a descent in designated value. The requirement that there must be no descent in designated value for a conditional to hold is a condition on the satisfaction of a non-conservative truth matrix. A truth matrix is non-conservative just in case it preserves the inference of each instance of the biconditional only if both sides have the same designated value, i.e., either both the antecedent and the consequent are substantially true or both are merely correct, or else the conditional fails. This means that the value of a conditional will drop to false or incorrect, and is not an instance of proper inference, whenever there is a descent from a substantial value like 'true' to the weaker surrogate we are calling 'correctness'. In the case of DS, if 'P' is substantially true, then so also semantic sentences involving 'P' must be substantially true. As we saw, this view is not entirely unmotivated as a matrix by which to evaluate conditionals: it seems intuitive that if 'P' is substantially true and a component of a conditional, say, the right to left instance of DS –

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[43] Ibid. pg. 379

[44] The distinction between a conservative and non-conservative truth matrix is from Wright, *Truth and Objectivity*, pgs. 222-224.

<u>P → 'P' is true</u>
True   Correct

then the conditional as a whole fails of satisfaction if the entailment of a substantially true

matter is merely correct. This is because, simply, if we have a notion of correctness that

is distinct from truth, then it seems false that '*P*' is true – when '*P' is true* is at best

correct.

Hale rejects this view of the matter and proposes to replace it with a conservative

truth matrix. A truth matrix is conservative just in case it warrants the inference of each

side of a biconditional so long as we preserve designated values. If preserving designated

values is all that is required in order to hold a conditional, this means the semantic

irrealist can hold that the right to left instance of DS –

<u>P → 'P' is true</u>
True   Correct

is affirmed. For, if '*P*' is designated 'true', and '*P' is true* designated correct, then the

right to left inference preserves these designated values. So, in Wright's argument, where

the right to left instance fails, it is only on the assumption of a non-conservative truth

matrix. Since the irrealist can affirm the right-to-left and left-to-right instances of the DS

with adoption of a conservative truth matrix, this means that the biconditional is

sustained, and that the DS is secured for adoption by the irrealist. '*P*' enjoys the status of

designated substantially true, while semantic sentences involving '*P*' are at best correct,

and Hale has answered Wright's charge.

After securing the DS for the irrealist by preserving designated values, Hale can

block globalization in a principled way. The salva veritate principle states that things

mean the same when they are mutually substitutable in context while preserving truth.

So, when Hale states "instances of the biconditional scheme [DS] will not support substitution of their components in complex contexts such as that involved in the globalizing argument,[45]" he means that the context is too complex so that the DS does not support the substitution salva veritate[46]. This is to say that Hale hopes to block the inference in which the substitution is generally allowed by arguing that this context does not preserve the designated truth of the right hand side. He grounds this block by adopting the position, first encountered in chapter one in discussion of deflationary theories of truth, that since 'is true' is a predicate that aspires to refer to a property but does not on account that there are no such properties, and so does not add to the content of 'P', that 'P' and 'P' is *true* mean the same[47]. Hale has adopted the DS, and so can block globalization – reject the substitution – by preserving truth. So, consider that 3`) has it that 'P' is never substantially true, while by assumption 'P' is substantially true and means the same as 'P' is *true*. Since in the context of the globalizing argument the substitution property would not preserve the designated value of 'P', Hale rejects the globalizing argument as too complex for substitution salva veritate. The substitution property, which warrants the globalizing inference, is rejected in this context on the grounds that it fails to preserve the designated value of the right hand side. This, then, prevents semantic irrealism from entailing global irrealism by rejecting 2a`) – in effect blocking the inference from 2`) to 3`). The salva veritate principle preserves truth

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[45] Hale, Bob. "Rule-following, Objectivity, and Meaning" pg. 379

[46] Email correspondence 11/10/08 between Dr. Losonsky and Dr. Hale.

[47] Hale is not explicit; this seems charitable considering "Rule-following…" pg. 375, and that he wants to preserve a substantial notion of truth designated to the right-hand side of DS. Even if his concern is that 'P' and 'P' is *true* have the same value as propositions, the 'synonymy' between the terms follows.

because '*P*' cannot substitute in this context and preserve its truth-value – which is unaffected by the mere correctness of '*P' is true*.

The immediate difficulty with this response is that it begs the question that '*P*' and '*P' is true* are synonymous. While it may be true that '*P*' is by assumption substantially true, Hale's move to block globalization by preserving the truth of '*P*' relies on a notion of what '*P*' means. This, also by Hale's assumption, is non-substantial, at best correct or indeterminate. So, it begs the question that '*P*' is synonymous with '*P' is true*, when it is just not true that '*P*' means any one thing rather than something else. So, the global irrealist will point out to the semantic irrealist, truth is not preserved and this issues from considerations that '*P*' has no meaning. Global irrealism still follows.

Hale's third attempt to block globalization aims to stop the inference that relies on the meaning-truth platitude – that is, the move from 2*) to 3*). He does this by noting that semantic irrealism follows from irrealism about meaning only if the sense of 'statement' to which the platitude applies is one in which statements are taken to be *both* bearers of meaning *and* bearers of truth value[48]. Hale admits the irrealist can accept the possibility of such a notion, only provided he can work with another sense of 'statement' – one in which "statements have truth values, but cannot sensibly said to have meanings." To understand this block, we should not understand this as statements that do not mean anything, but rather advocating a notion of 'statement' whose meaning is neither factual in the demanded sense nor corresponds to any entity, "Concerning any statement in this sense, [the irrealist] can claim that whether or not it is true *is* a factual matter; or more precisely, that its being so is not threatened by the non-factuality of meaning." Hale

[48] Ibid. pg. 379

argues for this first by conceding that, in the irrealist's preferred sense of 'statement', what statements a sentence *can* make does depend on the sentence's having a certain meaning – and that this is not a factual matter (substantial). But the truth value of statements so conceived, however, does not depend on the meaning of anything – not on the meaning of the statement, because statements aren't the sort of things that have meanings – not on the meaning of a sentence either, because a sentence's meaning depends on what statements that sentence can be *used* to make. By introducing a different notion of meaning – one that does not rely on a statement having meanings (as entities) in the same way that it has, as in 'is composed of' symbols, Hale can deny that the truth value of any sentence S is a function of its meaning and the state of the world in relevant respects. Hale's irrealist will insist that the meaning is exhibited in what statement the sentence is *used* to make – and the truth-value of *that* has only to do with the further considerations about the relevant state of the world. Crispin Wright expressed this aptly, although in terms of thoughts rather than the statements made by using a sentence:

> Of course the question whether "*P*" is true in part turns on the semantic properties of the sentence "*P*"; but isn't it just a howler to suppose the same goes for the thought that *P*? The question whether the sentence "My lawn is green" is true depends on its meaning: but the question of the status of the *thought* that my lawn is green does not – in descending to the latter we have, as it were, gone past the contribution of meaning: all that remains is the worldly issue about the grass.[49]

This, then, is Hale's third block. The truth-value of a statement used is a substantial matter or not depending solely on the state of the world – the meaning having been given in use. So, even though no statement has a 'meaning', the truth-value of a statement is

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[49] Wright, Crispin. *Truth and Objectivity*. pg. 222 – this is not Wright's view.

factual and given through its use. This is consistent with both Hale's defense of semantic irrealism and his block of globalization.

There are two related but distinct objections to this attempted block. They both concern the idea found in Wright's discussion of *Truth & Objectivity* pages 222-226 that in whatever sense statements have substantial truth-values, this must be assessed by forming an opinion about the content of the statement. A statement's substantial truth is a function of that statement substantially meaning something. If the meaning of a sentence depends on what statements it can be used to make, then the meaning (in use) is determined by the content of the statement and the state of the world in relevant respects. If content is indeterminate (or at best correct), which Hale agrees is true, this entails the truth status of the 'tokening' of the sentence[50] – assessing the truth-value of a used statement – indeterminate. For, the truth-value of a used statement S is assessed based on its content as part of a language and is substantial only if that in virtue of which it is determined is substantial[51]. Similarly, if content is indeterminate, then it is indeterminate whether *this* symbolic representation (the particular symbols of which a statement is composed) uniquely means *this* when used rather than something else. It follows the statement cannot be substantially true - for, substantial truth-values of a statement entail that the symbolic representation composing that statement uniquely means one thing rather than another.

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[50] For our purposes, a token of a sentence is the physical entity – the spoken statement made up of sound waves as a sentence is used, Kirkham, *Theories of Truth*. pg. 56. 'Tokening of a sentence' is from Wright, *T&O*. pg. 223.

[51] This is a condensed version of Wright's objection from *T&O*. pgs. 222-226.

It will be helpful to clarify this second objection before looking at Boghossian's argument. Take KW as a proponent of the global irrealist view[52]. He has argued for and holds that no statement has substantial truth conditions[53]. This means he denies that there could be anything that has the features supposed of the semantic concepts 'meaning' and 'truth' anywhere to be found in the world, past behavior, or inner mental life. So, KW's conclusion is that even if a statement is significant, declarative, and generally successful in practice – this is not a function of genuine semantic properties that satisfy the predicates of 'means that' and 'is true'. It begs the question against KW – who denies the existence of substantial content because nothing has the putative features of semantic properties – to suppose that the content of our symbolic representations refers to any one particular property rather than another in context. KW raised skeptical doubts about the nature of our use or practice that justified belief in substantial content, and Hale does not tell us **what** feature about our use refers to one particular property rather than another. In other words, he assumes KW's challenge has been answered already when we 'read off' the meaning in context[54]. By arguing that the truth-value of the right hand side 'P' is substantial (or that 'P' has a factual truth-value), Hale assumes the content of any statement used already expresses a substantial and positive relation that objectively refers to one property rather than another. Thus, he begs the question again, and global irrealism still follows.

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[52] Since Kripke offers a skeptical solution to his paradox about meaning, this seems fair.

[53] Recall, from chapter 1, that substantial truth conditions are possessed only by statements whose content determinately refers to a semantic property of that sentence by which its truth-value is assessed.

[54] Hale's response amounts to 'settling how much a toss is to be worth by another toss'. – Wittgenstein *Zettel* 230.

2.5 Boghossian's version

Boghossian exhibits his version of the globalizing argument in six steps. His

argument runs thus:

> A non-factualism about meaning consists in the view that [for any sentence S
> and propositional content p],
> (1) For any S, p: 'S means that p' is not truth-conditional.
> Since the truth condition of any sentence S is (in part anyway) a function of its
> meaning, a non-factualism about meaning will enjoin a non-factualism about
> truth conditions: what truth condition S possesses could hardly be a factual
> matter if that in virtue of which it has a particular truth condition is not itself a
> factual matter. And so we have it that (1) entails:
> (2) For all S, p: 'S has truth condition p' is not truth-conditional.
> However, since courtesy of the disquotational properties of the truth predicate, a
> sentence of the form 'S has truth condition p' is true if and only if S has truth
> condition p, and since (2) has it that 'S has truth condition p' is never simply
> true, it follows that
> (3) For any S: 'S' is not truth-conditional.[55]

Although Boghossian uses the predicate 'is not truth-conditional', we should understand

this as 'does not have substantial truth conditions'. For, all declarative statements that are

meaningful have trivial truth conditions. Accordingly, we can reformulate Boghossian's

first premise as, for any sentence S and propositional content p,

(1*) It is not the case that 'S means that p' has substantial truth conditions.

The next premise Boghossian exhibits when he states that the truth condition of

any given sentence S is a function of its meaning. This is similar to the meaning-truth

platitude we saw in Wright's version of the argument, but distinct in that Wright states

the platitude in terms of the truth-value of a statement – which asserts a logical

relationship between the semantic properties of any statement and a (particular) state of

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[55] Boghossian, Paul. "Rule-Following Considerations" sec. 15 pg. 160 of *Rule-following and Meaning.* – I've shortened the argument as it appears in the text.

affairs that obtains mind-independently. Boghossian states it in terms of the truth conditions of semantic sentences, which, in contrast, is an ontologically objective relationship between the predicates of a discourse and the properties to which they putatively refer. For our purposes, it is fair to say that Boghossian assumes as obvious that if a statement has substantial truth conditions, then statements about its meaning must also have substantial truth conditions. Accordingly, if 'S has truth condition p' has substantial truth conditions, then 'S means that p' has substantial truth conditions. As a modus tollens by (1*) it follows there are no substantial truth conditions for statements giving the truth conditions of S. We lay out the steps explicitly as:

(1*) It is not the case that 'S means that p' has substantial truth conditions.

(2*) meaning-truth platitude – If 'S has truth condition p' has substantial truth conditions, then 'S means that p' has substantial truth conditions.

(3*) ∴ It is not the case that 'S has truth condition p' has substantial truth conditions. [1,2]

This is the semantic irrealist position.

The disquotational properties of the truth predicate are the same we encountered in Wright's discussion. Since 'P' is true if and only if 'P', then if 'P' is true, then P (left to right), and also if P, then 'P' is true (right to left). So, replacing 'P' with 'S has truth condition p', we can express Boghossian's application of DS as

(4*) 'S has truth condition p' is true if and only if S has truth condition p.

Boghossian states that given the properties of (4*) and since (3*) has it that 'S has truth condition p' is never simply true, the global irrealist conclusion follows. We can see

this easiest if we adapt the assumption implicit in Boghossian's formulation that only statements with substantial truth conditions can be true, and formulate (3*) as

(3*^) It is not the case that 'S has truth condition p' is true.

Now implementing the right to left properties of (4*) we have

(5*) If S has truth condition p, then 'S has truth condition p' is true.

Where, by modus tollens through (3*^), we get

(6*) It is not the case that S has truth condition p

which, as we have noted, is most clearly formulated as

(6*^) For any sentence S: S does not have substantial truth conditions.

This, is the global irrealist conclusion that no statement has substantial truth conditions. For any sentence S, there are no conditions that would determine its truth or falsity uniquely. No statement is ever literally true, but is (at most) merely correct. Q.E.D.

2.6 Wright's attempted block of the argument

Wright objects to the manner in which the globalizing argument is run, and focuses on the assumption implicit in Boghossian's argument that only a statement with substantial truth conditions can be true, i.e., Wright objects to the inference from 3*) to 3*^)[56]. As Wright expresses it, this assumption is grounded on what we will call the principle of conditional truth

(CT) If 'A' is true, then 'A' has a truth condition.

In the context of this discussion, 'A' is equivalent to 'S has truth condition p', which is itself correct. Wright's problem with the application of (CT) in this context is easiest

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[56] Wright, Crispin. *T&O*. pgs. 219-220. I've organized his objection around the present discussion.

brought to light by focusing on the way he formulates the move in Boghossian's argument from

(3*) It is not the case that '*S* has truth condition *p*' has a truth condition

to the next step required to run the argument

(3*^) It is not the case that '*S* has truth condition *p*' is true.

(CT) sanctions the transition from (3*) to (3*^) by modus tollens and grounds the assumption in Boghossian's argument. But, as Wright argues, (CT) is put in jeopardy when we hold a conservative truth matrix; for ''*A*' is true' is not true but merely correct, and thus the consequent of (CT) – that '*A*' has a truth condition – is now incorrect on the assumption that '*A*' has no truth condition when it is merely correct. So, (CT) breaks down, i.e., it fails of correctness, and there is no way to run the argument. This cannot be quite right, however.

The problem with Wright's discussion is that he fails to specify what kind of truth condition he is holding suspect in the context of the globalizing argument. Since, by Wright's admission, an irrealist can wield both notions of truth, even if ''*A*' is true' is merely correct, then '*A*' has at minimum trivial truth conditions. The claim, then, that ''*A*' has a truth condition' is correct – for '*A*' has trivial truth conditions and does not need to be substantially true. *A*'s being correct is consistent with the irrealist claim that ''*S*' has the (substantial) truth condition *p*' has a (trivial) truth condition'. This, then, warrants premise (3*) read properly as: 'It is not the case that '*S* has truth condition *p*' has a (substantial) truth condition'. The move to (3*^) is sustained still and reads properly as: 'It is not the case that '*S* has (substantial) truth condition *p*' is (substantially) true'.

Thus, even under a conservative truth matrix (CT) is preserved and the argument still runs its course. Global irrealism follows from semantic irrealism.

Chapter 3 – A Defense of Global Irrealism

In this final chapter I analyze two objections to the global irrealist view. I begin by evaluating Wright's objection that global irrealism is incoherent through Boghossian and my respective responses to this objection. We will then look at Boghossian's own arguments against the stability of irrealist views generally. After explicating my and Hale's responses to this instability objection, I conclude that global irrealism is neither incoherent nor unstable.

3.1 Wright's incoherence objection

Wright argues against the coherence of the global irrealist view in "Kripke's Account of the Argument against Private Language" right after exhibiting the globalizing argument. In terms of the distinction between 'factual' statements and 'non-factual/projective' statements that we saw in his globalizing argument, and classifying the proponent of the global irrealist view as a 'projectivist', Wright states:

> …it is doubtful that it is coherent to suppose that projectivist views could be appropriate quite globally. For, however exactly the distinction be drawn between fact-stating and non-fact-stating discourse, the projectivist will presumably want it to come by way of a *discovery* that certain statements fail to quality for the former class; a statement of the conclusion of the skeptical argument, for instance, is not *itself* to be projective.[57]

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[57] Wright, Crispin. "Kripke's Account of the Argument against Private Language," pg. 770.

Essentially, Wright is arguing that statement 3`)[58] must itself be substantially true – the projectivist surely wants it to be a fact that no statement has substantial truth conditions. Boghossian's response is to deny there is anything incoherent in stating any P has no substantial truth conditions. At most, "a global projectivist would have to admit that it is no more than *assertible* that no sentence possesses a truth condition. But what is wrong with that?[59]" By 'assertible' Boghossian means what we are calling correct. As we saw last chapter, projective statements are those that have assertability conditions rather than truth conditions. So, in the context of the present discussion, what the global irrealist is really committed to is that statement 3`) is like all others – at most correct and never substantially true.

I agree with Boghossian on this account and think there are additional grounds for dissatisfaction with Wright's objection. The dissatisfaction emerges from the position of KW and reaches the same conclusion as Boghossian, that there is nothing incoherent about the claim that all statements are at best correct. We can see the contention clearly by examining how Wright continues the block quote above after stating, 'a statement of the conclusion of the skeptical argument is not *itself* to be projective':

> But can Kripke's exposition make space for this admission? According to Kripke, what is distinctive of fact-stating is the possession of one's statements of "real truth conditions" (whatever that may mean). And how can the judgment, "*S* has (real) truth conditions," be genuinely factual if – in accordance with the platitude and the considerations of a moment ago – "*S* is true" is not?

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[58] The globalizing conclusion from Wright last chapter; for any P, 3`) 'P' does not have substantial truth conditions.

[59] Boghossian, Paul. "The Rule-following Considerations", sec. 15, pg. 161 of *Rule-following and Meaning*.

As we have seen, what is distinctive of fact-stating and what a 'real truth condition' is – is a substantial truth condition. Wright's contention is that "*S* has (real) truth conditions" need be genuinely factual in order for the denial that *S* has (real) truth conditions to be coherent. And it seems difficult to deny *P* has substantial truth conditions – assert 3`) – if there is no fact about any statement being true. In other words, given that the statement asserting the global irrealist conclusion entails that no sentence is factual and it makes no sense to assert '*P*' as true if to assert '*P*' is to deny that anything is ever substantially true – Wright charges the irrealist view with being incoherent.

The real ground of dissatisfaction is that this gets the irrealist position wrong. What the global irrealist is committed to is not that statements require meeting to quality as expressions that are 'genuinely factual' or 'true' in order to be coherent and meaningful[60]; rather, it is that given that there are no determinate facts or real properties corresponding to semantic notions such as 'meaning', then 'meaning' is ultimately indeterminate – this, in conjunction with the meaning-truth platitude and the properties of (DS), then globalizes and precludes any statement for quality of substantial truth – what Wright is calling 'genuinely factual'.

This is surely a discovery, but there is nothing incoherent in denying that either 'genuine (determinate) facts' or real abstract properties are required for the coherence of meaningful – read significant and declarative – semantics in (natural) language. In addition, until shown something that possesses the features supposed of semantic properties that justifies our belief in the literal existence of such things, it begs the

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[60] As Wright used 'fail to quality' in the block quote above to explain the discovery that a class of statements do not meet to appropriate standards in order to be classified as substantially true, by 'not requiring statements to meet to quality as… 'genuinely factual'… in order…' I'm referring to the irrealist denial of the claim that statements need be substantially truth-conditional in order to be coherent.

question to suppose that denying S has substantial truth conditions is meaningful or coherent only if there are determinate meaning facts and real abstract properties corresponding to semantic notions. If this were the case, it might be incoherent to assert 3`) – but we have no support for the claim that it is or *a priori* reason it must be. So, denying 'S has (real) truth conditions' is not, nor needs to be 'genuinely factual' in Wright's demanded sense. The most available through language are conditions under which it is warranted or appropriate to assert that 'S means that P' or that '"P' is true' – but there are not conditions under which the truth-value of these statements can be determined substantially true (or false). According to the calculus by which Wright is assessing the projectivist's conclusion, we can say that statement 3`) does not enjoy the property of *truth* or *falsity* – it is at most correct and never substantially true.

3.2 Boghossian's instability objection

As we saw above, Boghossian agrees that semantic irrealism globalizes and that there is nothing incoherent about denying conditions of substantial truth to any statement. However, he argues that there is an inherent instability about irrealist views that emerges from the tension between, "what one has to suppose about truth in order to frame an non-factualist thesis about anything, and what one has to suppose about truth as a result of accepting a non-factualism about meaning[61]". As we will see, Boghossian argues that a non-factualism about meaning is unstable because it is committed to contrary claims,

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[61] Ibid. sec. 16, pg. 161-162; argument full dress, Boghossian, 'The Status of Content'. I have amended the arguments around this discussion, though it is worth reminding that a 'non-factualism about meaning' is what we have been calling 'semantic irrealism'. I employ Boghossian's terminology throughout to help streamline and to flesh out his argument, but the terms should be considered equivalent per chapter one.

both that truth is robust and that it is not[62]. We will consider Boghossian's first argument that a non-factualist thesis about anything presupposes a robust conception of truth. After evaluating a response modified from Hale, we will look to Boghossian's second argument that if truth is robust, then judgments about whether or not a sentence is substantially true are themselves genuinely factual[63]. We will evaluate the claim that this commits the irrealist to contrary claims and makes the position inherently unstable. After laying out the argument formally and paraphrasing, I object to two premises. Finally, we examine a second response from Hale that leads to a brief discussion on univocal and pluralist conceptions of truth.

Boghossian begins by considering 'a non-factualist thesis about, say, the good'. A non-factualist thesis, as we saw in chapter 1, is one that argues a certain class of statements does not have substantial truth conditions; Boghossian refers to the statements of the putatively non-factualist class as 'not truth-conditional'. Framing a non-factualist thesis about the good, then, can be expressed formally as

$1^\wedge$) All sentences of the form 'x is good' are not truth-conditional.

Notice that it is a significant, declarative sentence to which conditions of substantial truth are denied. It follows that the notion of truth in which the non-factualist thesis is framed is not the deflationary conception of truth. For, on the deflationary conception of truth a sentence is truth-conditional so long as it is 'apt for semantic ascent', and it is apt for semantic ascent so long as it is significant and declarative. It follows, then, that a non-

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[62] The view that truth is not robust is part of the deflationary conception of truth. Since global irrealism is the view that no sentence is substantially true, it follows that it is committed to some species of the deflationary conception of truth, i.e., the view that truth is not a real property.

[63] I will assume as obvious that if truth is robust, i.e., a robust or genuine property that sentences enjoy, it follows those sentences are substantially truth-conditional.

factualist thesis presupposes a concept of substantial truth. Although it is not explicit, we can attribute Boghossian's next step as the conditional that if there is a concept of substantial truth, then truth is a robust property. We can demonstrate this formally by modus ponens as

2^) If 1^), then there are significant, declarative sentences that do not have substantial truth conditions.

3^) ∴ There are significant, declarative sentences that do not have substantial truth conditions. [1^, 2^]

4^) If 3^), then there is a concept of substantial truth conditions.

5^) ∴ There is a concept of a substantial truth conditions. [3^, 4^]

6^) If there is a concept of substantial truth, then truth is a robust property.

7^) ∴ Truth is a robust property[64]. [5^, 6^]

Accordingly, non-factualism (about any subject matter) presupposes a conception of truth richer than the deflationary: "it is committed to holding that the predicate 'true' stands for some sort of language-independent property, eligibility for which will not be certified purely by the fact that a sentence is declarative and significant". Boghossian's first argument concludes that in order to frame a non-factualist thesis about anything, one must presuppose that truth is robust, or as we have been calling it, substantial. This is because a non-factualist thesis denies that the significant, declarative statements of a certain type of discourse state facts, and that is to say those statements are neither true nor false, even though they share the overt syntax of propositions that do state facts and are true or false. Thus, non-factualism denies truth conditions to certain types of significant,

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[64] By 'robust property' I mean simply a mind-independent property.

declarative statements. But any sentence is apt for deflationary truth so long as it is significant and declarative; thus, to deny a significant, declarative sentence is deflationary true is to suppose that the concept of truth is robust – *truth* is more than a language-dependent property that operates as a device for semantic ascent, a condition for which a sentence is apt provided only it is significant and declarative. For instance, a non-factualist thesis about say, moral discourse, entails that significant, declarative moral statements such as, "Murder is wrong", are neither true nor false. But notice, Boghossian argues, that this entails one is committed to a notion of truth greater than the ordinary deflationary notion since, according to this notion, truth is not a property and a sentence is apt for deflationary truth so long as it is significant and declarative.

In the context of the present discussion, we can formulate Boghossian's objection as follows. The semantic sentence 'S means that p' is significant and declarative. To deny that 'S means that p' is truth-conditional – to frame semantic irrealism – one must presuppose a notion of truth that is substantial and more than the merely deflationary, since according to the deflationary notion of truth, sentences are truth-conditional and, thus, truth-apt so long as they are significant and declarative[65].

Hale concedes that irrealism does presuppose the intelligibility of a substantial, more than deflationary conception of truth, but for all that it is still perfectly consistent with retention of the thin surrogate called correctness. Hale's intuition here seems correct. Just as having a concept of 'x' entails a concept of '*not-x*' and having a concept of '*white*' entails I have a concept of '*not-white*', asserting truth is not substantial requires the

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[65] It is worth noting that the contestable claim that sentences are deflationary truth-apt so long as significant and declarative is compatible with global irrealism – any significant, declarative statement is trivially truth-apt (truth-conditional).

concept of substantial truth; one needs a concept to deny. However, the extension of the substantial notion in play over discourse is empty, and by wielding both substantial and deflationary notions of truth, the irrealist can hold that even though we can understand what substantial truth conditions would be, there just are not any such things anywhere[66]. Boghossian's argument shows that there is a concept of substantial truth conditions, but does not show that anything actually instantiates the concept. So, even though denying truth is substantial requires presupposing truth is robust, this is no problem for the irrealist. A rough parallel: just as denying existence of God does not require a real object referred to by 'God', denying substantial truth of statements does not require actual conditions of substantial truth.

Boghossian's second argument brings out the instability of which he accuses irrealist views by arguing that judgments about a sentence's truth-value must themselves be factual. He argues for the instability through his intuition that "judgments about whether an object possesses a robust property could 'hardly fail' to be factual." We express this formally as

8^) If P is some genuinely robust property, then there is a fact of the matter about whether an object has P.

This is not entirely unmotivated, e.g., if mass is a robust property, then whether or not something has mass will be genuinely factual. This entails Boghossian is committed to 'Object x has mass' or 'Object x does not have mass' being genuinely factual, i.e., in the

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[66] I have modified Hale's response, "Rule-following, Objectivity, and Meaning" pg. 378, from his defense of semantic irrealism against this charge to defend global irrealism; same for his next response below on page 66.

business of substantial truth or falsity, whatever the case may be[67]. Just as if being holy was a robust property, then whether or not something was holy would be genuinely factual, Boghossian argues that "so long as [a property] is a language-independent property, judgments about it will have to be factual, will have to be possessed of robust truth-conditions. In particular, if *truth* is a robust property, then judgments about a sentence's truth-value must themselves be factual." Laid out explicitly,

9^) ∴ If truth is a robust property, then judgments about a sentence's truth-value must themselves be factual. [7^, 8^]

10^) ∴ Judgments about a sentence's truth-value must themselves be genuinely factual. [7^, 8^, 9^]

Boghossian's second argument concludes that judgments about a sentence's truth-value must themselves be genuinely factual. This means not only that statements in which the truth-value of a particular sentence is assessed are genuinely factual, but also that statements assessing the truth-value of those statements are also genuinely factual. So, if '*is true*' refers to a genuine property, then not only will

(a) '*S* has truth condition *p*'

be genuinely factual, but whenever the truth-value of (a) is assessed, the statement asserting that judgment will also be genuinely factual, i.e., possessed of substantial truth conditions. So, assessing the truth-value of (a) in the statement

(b) '*S* has truth condition *p*' is true (or false)

the truth (or falsity) being attributed to the semantic sentence is substantial, and the judgment (b) expresses genuinely factual.

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[67] Boghossian provides no example.

This is problematic for the meaning non-factualist or irrealist. We saw last chapter that a semantic irrealism in conjunction with the meaning-truth platitude entailed

(3*) It is not the case that '*S* has truth condition *p*' has substantial truth conditions[68].

Whether or not or a sentence is true could hardly be genuinely factual if its meaning is not. So, neither statements of type (a) nor those of type (b) are genuinely factual. And if sentences in which a truth predicate figures are not genuinely factual, then the truth predicate is not robust, i.e., it is not substantial and does not refer to a property. From non-factualism about meaning it follows

13^) ∴ Truth is not robust. [3*]

So, semantic irrealism entails that truth is not robust. This is what has to be supposed about truth as a result of accepting non-factualism about meaning, and this is the tension Boghossian has been stalking. Semantic irrealism presupposes that truth is robust (7^), from which it follows that judgments about a sentence's truth-value will be genuinely factual (10^), but an irrealist thesis entails the contrary of that – (13^). Thus, the irrealist is inherently committed to contrary claims and the view is unstable.

Let's lay out all the steps and paraphrase before we respond to Boghossian. In the formalized argument, premises 1^) – 10^) are what Boghossian argues emerges from what one has to suppose about truth to frame a non-factualist thesis generally, and 11^) – 13^) are what one has to suppose about truth as a result of accepting a non-factualism about meaning:

1^) All sentences of the form '*x* is good' are not truth-conditional.

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[68] I implement both semantic irrealism and (3*) in the formal version of Boghossian's argument below.

2^) If 1^), then there are significant, declarative sentences that do not have substantial truth conditions.

3^) ∴ There are significant, declarative sentences that do not have substantial truth conditions. [1^, 2^]

4^) If 3^), then there is a concept of substantial truth conditions.

5^) ∴ There is a concept of a substantial truth conditions. [3^, 4^]

6^) If there is a concept of substantial truth, then truth is a robust property.

7^) ∴ Truth is a robust property. [5^, 6^]

8^) If P is some genuinely robust property, then there is a fact of the matter about whether an object has P.

9^) ∴ If truth is a robust property, then judgments about a sentence's truth-value must themselves be factual. [7^, 8^]

10^) ∴ Judgments about a sentence's truth-value must themselves be genuinely factual. [7^, 8^, 9^]

11^) All sentences of the form 'S means that P' are not truth-conditional. [KW]

12^) It is not the case that 'S has truth condition p' has substantial truth conditions. [11^, MT]

13^) ∴ Truth is not robust. [11^, 12^]

14^) ∴ Non-factualist views about meaning are unstable. [7^, 10^, 13^]

Boghossian argues that non-factualist views about meaning are unstable because they are committed to contrary claims, both that truth is robust and that it is not. Non-factualist views about meaning have to suppose truth is robust, since they deny truth conditions to a targeted class of significant, declarative statements – which is all that is required for

deflationary truth. Boghossian then argues that if truth is a robust property, then judgments about a sentence's truth-value will be genuinely factual – even if truth is only intelligible as a substantial property (which irrealism concedes), whether or not a sentence has that property is genuinely factual. But the judgment whether a sentence has the robust truth property cannot be genuinely factual on a semantic irrealist view, since a semantic non-factualism entails no statement is genuinely factual –and so, the view is unstable. Clearly, then, the instability relies on the assumption

8^) If P is some genuinely robust property, then there is a fact of the matter about whether an object has P.

3.3 Responding to Boghossian

We will now consider three objections to Boghossian's argument against the instability of irrealist views generally before looking at Hale's response. To begin we will look to undermine his intuition 8^) through counterexamples of robust properties whose obtaining is not genuinely factual. We will then evaluate the inference to 9^) and I will argue that even if 8^) is appropriate in many cases, there are two important issues surrounding genuinely factual statements, robust properties, and contexts of usage that do not allow for its adoption in semantic discourse[69]. We will look at Hale's response before moving to a discussion about the univocal and pluralist conceptions of truth.

Before looking at counterexamples to the principle in 8^), it will be helpful to clarify in what sense Boghossian must be holding 'genuinely factual', in order not to equivocate between the slide from 8^) to 10^). By 'genuinely factual' Boghossian means

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[69] Jackson, Oppy, and Smith note that beliefs play a role in contexts of usage that allows for a principled distinction between deflationary truth and deflationary truth-aptness. This line challenges the sufficiency of being significant and declarative for deflationary truth-aptness – and would reject premise 6^). This is an interesting issue, but not relevant to our concerns.

that statements in which the 'real property' figures enjoy an positive relationship between properties and the predicates that denote those particular properties, that this relationship holds objectively and the property instantiated independently of anyone's judgment or recognition that this particular instance is an occasion of the actual property. I will attempt to undermine this by examples of properties that are real features or characteristics of things in whatever way we can talk about properties, but whose obtaining is dependent on either a judgment or performative of a person to instantiate the property – and thus non-factual.[70]

Although 8^) may seem intuitive in some cases, e.g., 'mass' as a robust property, there are others in which it is just not the case that something's having a robust property is genuinely factual. For instance, 'scoring a goal' in soccer is a real, robust property in whatever way we might think of them, but 'scoring a goal' is not genuinely factual because a ball crossing a line is only a goal insofar as, at least in a formal game, the referee judges that it is a goal[71]. Similarly, 'being out of bounds' is a property of basketball, but non-factual in that a player's stepping on a line is only out of bounds insofar as the referee makes the call. In contrast, in soccer 'being out of bounds' is only attributed in play when the ball crosses the sideline, but the player may do so while keeping the ball in bounds and the game continuing. 'Checking the king' is also a robust, non-factual property, in that there is nothing about a particular piece's arrangement

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[70] Perfomatives may be understood in the sense that Soames uses in "Facts, Truth Conditions, and the Skeptical Solution to the Rule-following Paradox" pg. 322: "Rather than describing certain acts, performative utterances in appropriate circumstances are seen as constituting the performance of those acts." Performatives are not 'genuinely factual' in Boghossian's desired sense, for it is the actual utterance (or judgment) of the speaker that constitutes the instantiation of the property. At this point it should be considered an open question whether irrealism about the truth-value of statements in which properties figure entails irrealism about properties – which would amount to a type of global idealism.

[71] Dr. Losonsky made this point to me in conversation.

towards another that constitutes the king's 'being in check' other than a player's judgment of calling the king in check.

Another example is of a couple's being married. Being married is a robust property we attribute to particular couples, but non-factual in that the attribution of this property depends on the performative (judgment) of a particular person actualizing the matrimony. 'Being fashionable' or 'in style' may prove useful in clarifying these counterexamples. If 'being in style' is a real property, it is non-factual in that there is nothing about particular attire arranged in a particular way that constitutes an outfit's being fashionable outside of the judgment that it is so. There seem to be many cases in which we attribute robust properties to people, events, or things but the obtaining of these properties is non-factual. Thus, it is not always the case, even granting substantial truth, that an object's having some robust property P is going to be genuinely factual. This justifies our rejecting Boghossian's premise 8^), which is required to run the argument against the stability of irrealist views generally.

Additional ground of dissatisfaction arises even if we grant Boghossian his intuition 8^) but reject the inference that truth is an appropriate example of a robust property whose obtaining or not is expressed in a genuinely factual judgment. The problem emerges from two related but distinct objections surrounding the contexts of discourse about 'robust properties' and 'genuinely factual' statements. The first point of contention deals with issues relating to contexts of usage that Boghossian ignores; if judgments about a sentence's truth-value must be genuinely factual, then we are assuming that these judgments need refer to the very semantic properties in whose literal existence the irrealist has given arguable reason to disbelieve. Even though we talk about

'mass' or 'having 23 pairs of chromosomes' as being robust properties, and judgments about whether or not something has these properties as genuinely factual – so 'x has mass' or 'S has 23 pairs of chromosomes' as true or false – that does not entail there are actual semantic properties corresponding to the statements in which their significant and declarative nature consists. When deciding whether to correctly attribute mass to any particular object x, it does us well to remember that we do so on basis of assumed agreement about what 'mass' is, the procedures by which we measure for it, what any particular 'x' is, and how to measure for this particular x. This means that in these contexts we take for a granted a sort of objective relation between the predicates of 'mass' discourse and the properties to which we take them to refer. The case is different in semantic discourse, for the very relations supposed objective and properties calculated as robust in order to frame the putatively substantially truth-apt statements from other discourses are the very relations and properties whose nature is the matter of debate.

The second point of contention surrounds Boghossian's characterization of robust properties in terms of the role they play as constituent parts of fact stating sentences. If the only way to characterize a robust property is in terms of its role in a genuinely factual statement, then we cannot make sense of robust properties outside of (relying on) factual statements. So, we characterize P being some robust property by whether or not it is factual that 'S is P' – where 'P' stands for a real property that obtains of some thing denoted by 'S'. This platitude may be fine in contexts of ordinary discourse, whatever the ultimate semantic status of terms like 'robust properties' or 'factual statements' is. In semantic discourse, however, this platitude assumes that judgments of the disputed class always already enjoy the kind of objective relation to real properties necessary for the

possibility of characterizing judgments as 'genuinely factual'. But whether these properties or relations are real is the very matter of debate, and Boghossian needs to characterize robust *semantic* properties independently of the question of factuality; otherwise, it begs the question that *any* statement about a robust property must be genuinely factual.

When properties figure as components of significant, declarative statements used within a particular non-semantic discourse, there is assumed agreement about the status of the semantic relations between the predicates and properties involved in the statements belonging to that discourse. In these discourses, when we talk about what is genuinely factual, there is agreement about what this entails, e.g., the statement coheres with a certain theory, was arrived at by use of certain procedures, verified in some principally specified way, or agrees with particular standards defended or assumed as those by which we assess a statement's being 'genuinely factual'. In semantic discourse, however, language is itself the matter of concern – semantic properties are under the scalpel, so to speak, and meaningful discourse is compatible with the literal absence of objective relations to real properties, i.e., the literal existence of semantic properties is not necessary for generating meaningful – read, significant and declarative – statements about those properties specifically, or about anything generally. Intuitions from other regions of discourse cannot provide the appropriate intuitions about language *itself*. The considerations about contexts of usage – issues concerning the relations between predicates and properties, and how robust properties are characterized – justify our rejecting the inference to 9^), because all we have is

9^`) If truth is (intelligible as) a robust property, then judgments about a sentence's truth-value need only be significant and declarative – any further metaphysical issue remains an open question.

This then blocks the inference to

10^) Judgments about a sentence's truth-value must themselves be genuinely factual

because all that follows is that the judgments need be correct. Thus, once we reject Boghossian's inference from 9^) to 10^), we've been given no reason to suppose the irrealist is committed to contrary claims or that the view is inherently unstable.

3.4 Hale's response to Boghossian

Hale responds to 14^) by pointing out an assumption in Boghossian's argument that the irrealist will in no way accept – that a judgment about a sentence's truth must itself be 'genuinely factual' or possess substantial truth conditions. This is precisely what the irrealist denies – semantic predicates are not robust, language-independent properties that attach to sentences or propositions (or thoughts, for that matter). Semantic predicates do not point to 'genuinely robust' properties. It follows we shouldn't expect the statements in which they figure to have substantial truth conditions (or enjoy objective relations between predicates and actual properties) – denying a substantial concept does not produce a substantial fact. In denying determinate facts about meaning or the existence of abstract semantic properties we do not thereby create a sentence possessed of exactly what we deny is possible for a sentence to possess. Boghossian, in other words, assumes that truth is univocal and that there is only one truth predicate that operates in all

regions of discourse[72]. In contrast, the global irrealist can hold, with perfect consistency, that (semantic) sentences – and the truth or falsity, correctness or incorrectness of them – are at most correct and never true in the substantial sense.

Although Boghossian would consider the above response a pun on the word 'truth', Wright's objection can clarify the differing intuitions in play at this point of the debate[73]. In effect, Wright argues that Boghossian is slightly confused. Responding in defense of semantic irrealism (what he calls 'minimalism about meaning'), Wright states that the issue is not whether the concept of truth might involve both deflationary and substantial notions, nor whether there are distinct truth predicates in play over a single discourse, but whether distinct truth predicates might be in play over distinct discourses. So long as it is an open question whether truth is substantial or deflationary, the semantic irrealist can hold that the division between substantial or deflationary truth-apt discourses is eligible for at most correctness and statements classifying types of discourse as substantial or deflationary are never substantially true. This entails pluralism about truth; the differing truth predicates in play over distinct discourses may not be answerable to the same property or set of properties. For instance, as we saw in Hale's attempted blocks of the globalizing inference last chapter, in the DS formulated

'snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white,

'snow is white' can be assigned a value of substantial truth according to the procedure by which we designate the substantial concept of truth to sentences. ''Snow is white' is true', while pointing to a substantial concept, does not pick out any real properties and so

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[72] Boghossian, "The Status of Content", pg. 165 fn. 17. It is worth noting Boghossian admits as much.

[73] Wright, Crispin. *T&O*. pgs. 234-236.

is designated correct. In this case there are conditions of warranted assertability operating over a substantial concept. It follows that a single truth predicate is not applicable over distinct discourses – this is pluralism about truth.

3.5 Boghossian's argument and the univocal conception of truth

My own intuitions favor the idea of pluralism about truth, but the notion comes into play differently for the global irrealist. In order to clarify why the global irrealist must hold both conceptions of truth, it will be helpful to evaluate Boghossian's summary of his objection about the stability of non-factualist theses about meaning. We will examine this summary before I object to it. I then motivate the univocal conception of truth before looking at two objections to this notion, then explicate why the global irrealist must hold pluralism about truth.

Boghossian first notes that irrealist conceptions in other regions of discourse may not be particularly appealing, but that they are not incoherent as they are in meaning discourse. He then states:

> The source of the asymmetry is actually not that hard to track down. It consists in the fact that… non-factualist theories about *any* subject matter presuppose certain claims about truth and truth-conditions, that an error or non-factualist conception directed precisely at our talk of meaning itself ends up denying. Not surprising the ensuing result is unstable.
> Thus, an error thesis about any subject matter presupposes that the target sentences are truth-conditional. But an error thesis directed precisely at our talk about meaning entails the denial of that presupposition. Thus, also, a non-factualism about any subject matter presupposes a robust conception of truth. But a non-factualism directed precisely at our talk about meaning entails the denial of that presupposition[74].

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[74] Boghossian, Paul. "Rule-following Considerations", sec. 17, pg. 163 in *Rule-following…*

As we have seen, non-factualist (irrealist) theories presuppose the intelligibility of the concept of substantial truth. The ensuing result of a semantic irrealism – denying the existence of what must be presupposed (substantial truth conditions) in order to formulate the view – is unstable only if one assumes both that truth is univocal and, entailed from Boghossian's premise 9^), that simply by asserting a statement about a particular region of discourse, say, meaning discourse – that statement is automatically and necessarily substantially truth conditional.

I can make no better sense of Boghossian's claims in the next paragraph cited except by those two assumptions. For, I see no reason that a coherent denial about the factuality of a particular area of discourse is possible, even if that denial must involve the intelligibility of what is being denied, unless asserting anything about that particular area of discourse must conform to one particular way of looking at things. Specifically, it does not make sense to say that non-factuality about meaning is unstable simply because it requires the intelligibility of a particular notion of truth that it denies, unless one cannot assert *anything* significant and declarative about meaning discourse without thereby automatically invoking the substantial notion of truth. Again, a rough parallel: if 'good' necessarily denoted a robust property that obtained of actions independently of whatever we say about them and was in no business of expressing someone's approval of a particular action, it would make no sense to assert that the function of 'good' in language was to operate as an expression of a speaker's attitude. But in meta-ethical discourse, where the function 'good' plays in our language is the very matter of debate, it would beg

the question if someone accused a moral non-cognitive view[75] of being unstable solely on account that the conclusion asserting this view was not in accordance with realist standards of substantial truth. But the facts are that in semantic discourse this is not the case nor have we reason for thinking it is, and thus the instability of non-factualism about meaning arises only if there is an *a priori* reason why all discourse *must* be subsumed under the substantial truth calculus. It may seem counterintuitive that no statement can be what is called 'substantially true', but that it is counterintuitive to our pre-philosophical intuitions or commitments is not an argument against the view. It is neither philosophical, scientific, nor charitable to suppose meaningful semantic discourse has to operate in only one way and that the denial of this claim is unstable, because dogma has decreed that we must calculate according to one type of procedure – the substantial one that is being denied. This is just a hog trap around semantic discourse generally[76].

Let us consider briefly the univocal conception of truth before raising a couple objections to it. It bears mentioning that the univocal conception of truth is not entirely unmotivated; our naïve, pre-philosophical intuitions are more in tune with *truth* being a genuinely robust property that obtains of significant, declarative propositions or statements independently of what we may go on to say about the matter. So, for instance, 'Earth is the third planet from the Sun' is true whether or not that sentence had ever been asserted. Furthermore, given that the notion of substantial truth is intelligible and applies to all significant, declarative sentences – they either are or are not substantially true, this

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[75] By 'moral non-cognitive view' I mean any projective or hybrid view that holds (at least part of) the function of 'good' is to express something not truth-conditional.

[76] A hog trap is a device used for trapping that allows animals to enter to feed, but does not allow them to exit on account that the door opens in only one direction.

reinforces the intuitive necessity of basic laws like P v $\sim P$ (either P or not-P). Thus, it seems the fundamental commitment about the predicate 'true' must be as a substantial property and the statements in which it figures genuinely factual. In other words, any significant, declarative sentence must be assessed by standards for substantial truth simply because the intuitive notion of robust truth is intelligible and putatively universally applicable, and supports for any P: P v $\sim P$, in conjunction with the minimal way by which we assign truth – if P, then 'P' is (substantially) true.

The first problem with this is that irrealism accepts P v $\sim P$, only the irrealist denies it has the property of necessary truth. A truth is necessary only if one cannot assert its negation except on pain of contradiction – given what the constituent parts of the statement mean, they report something that cannot possibly be false, even if we had never gone to investigate the matter. In other words, the statement is true in virtue of what it means. Since non-factuality about meaning rejects the idea of actual meanings, the meaningfulness of basic laws such as Excluded Middle does not entail substantial truth without treating the practice to which it belongs as sacrosanct[77]. In other words, only if we treat fundamental logical laws as necessary by default, rather than by proof or demonstration of what the idea of necessity relies on, will we be inclined to support the claim that they indicate substantial truth. Furthermore, it begs the question that the Law of Excluded Middle could be significant and declarative only if it enjoyed the property of being substantially or necessarily true.

The second problem is centered on the commitment to treating truth as univocal and substantial due to that notion's intelligibility. The notion of substantial truth is

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[77] Hale raises this same objection in a similar context in "Realism and its Oppositions", pg. 280.

intelligible, but what we lack is a demonstration of the existence of the sorts of facts or properties on which it relies. No more should we be committed to substantial truth simply because the notion is intelligible than we should be committed to a literal spiritual realm because we can make sense, through looking at a painting perhaps, of the idea of the soul's continued existence outside of and after the death of the body. The notion of substantial truth is intelligible, but the world and language do not support belief in the literal existence of it unless there is something hidden or 'irreducible' behind our words that entail relations of the kind necessary for substantial truth. The global irrealist rejects the idea that language is meaningful only if there is some hidden connection to determinate meaning facts or 'genuinely robust' semantic properties at play over discourse by which statements can be assessed substantially true. There are no hidden connections, and there is nothing unstable about asserting – as correct by the standards of the substantial truth calculus – that no statement is substantially true. "The contrary supposition is a survival of magical thinking[78]".

Since the global irrealist argues that truth is not substantial, pluralism about truth is necessary to hold. Pluralism in this context is the view that there is more than one truth predicate in operation over all discourses – the substantial, univocal conception is only one, there being at least a deflationary notion as well. It is necessary for the irrealist to be a pluralist about truth for, as we have seen, irrealism presupposes that 'truth' is a predicate that designates a robust property. Holding pluralism about truth allows the irrealist to enter Boghossian's hog trap around semantic discourse and generate meaningful statements within the calculus by which sentences are measured for

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[78] Putnam, Hilary. "Brains in Vats". pg. 3. Putnam raises this charge against magical theories of name reference.

substantial truth, while keeping in mind the significant and declarative nature of that discourse need not meet to quality as substantially true in order to be stable and assertable. In short, pluralism about truth allows the irrealist to measure statements according to the substantial truth calculus while coherently denying that anything could meet to appropriate standards. So even though a particular substantial notion is intelligible, there's nothing actually within the concept's extension. To paraphrase: in order to engage in the debate at all, the global irrealist must hold a pluralism about truth, otherwise there is no way to assert *anything* about *this* region of discourse that is not held to the standards of the substantial truth calculus, i.e., that is not in the business of referring to semantic properties. For as we saw above, under a univocal conception, simply to assert a meaningful sentence is to assert a sentence as substantially truth conditional. Of course, if this is the only way that language is meaningful or can be assessed it will make no sense to deny substantial truth – but we have no reason to adopt this assumption.

3.6 Chapter summary

We have seen how the global irrealist can respond to Wright's objection to the coherence of the view – by arguing that the statement asserting the conclusion is itself like all statements, at most correct and never true. We have also seen how the irrealist can respond to Boghossian's objection about the stability of the view – only if there is solely one truth predicate in operation over all discourse and *any* statement necessarily subject to the demands of this substantial predicate will the view be inherently problematic. We have no reason to suppose the things exist upon which this substantial notion of truth

relies, or to suppose all statements meaningful only if subject to its calculus alone.

Therefore, global irrealism is neither incoherent nor unstable.

Concluding Remarks

In chapter one I exhibited various arguments supporting semantic irrealism and showed it is best characterized as the view that semantic statements, such as 'S means that P', do not have substantial truth conditions. In chapter two I analyzed the globalizing argument and concluded that it cannot be blocked. Lying out all the steps formally, the globalizing argument runs:

(1) It is not the case that 'S means that p' has substantial truth conditions. [KW]

(2) If 'S has truth condition p' has substantial truth conditions, then 'S means that p' has substantial truth conditions. [MT]

(3) ∴ It is not the case that 'S has truth condition p' has substantial truth conditions. [1,2]

(4) 'S has truth condition p' is (substantially) true if and only if S has truth condition p. [DS]

(5) If S has truth condition p, then 'S has truth condition p' is true. [right-to-left instance of DS]

(6) ∴ For any sentence S: S does not have substantial truth conditions. [3,4,5]

In chapter three I argued against the objections that global irrealism is incoherent and inherently unstable. Though it is counterintuitive to our pre-philosophical intuitions that no statement can be 'genuinely factual' or 'substantially true', I concluded that it is only under one possible conception of evaluating sentences (the calculus according to which

statements are assessed substantially true or false) that the global irrealist view is intolerable.

If what I have argued is correct and the arguments I presented valid, this would entail a shift in the status of the judgments we make about the world. We have been seduced by grammar into a bad philosophical picture regarding our attempts to understand and take account of what there is. Any attempt to do so relies on language, which is a function of meaning, and this is indeterminate – and so parasitic on stating any fact of the matter that is substantially true. The traditional notion of objectivity and pursuit of *truth* should be abandoned and replaced by one that takes a sober, honest and scientific look at the actual ways that natural language operates in our lives. If lack of semantic properties entails that all there is are procedures according to which statements are correctly asserted, it does not follow that there are not better or worse ways of proceeding or calculating. My intuitions are that it is simply the nature of language and its role in our lives to mean and that it does this through use; though we may be able to describe certain similarities or family resemblances between certain words and sentences, and then use those with affinities as objects of comparison, it is fruitless to engage in philosophical analysis of the ultimate nature of language itself. To borrow a line from the middle period of Wittgenstein, we can say, "What is incorrect is the idea that the application of a calculus in the grammar of real language correlates it to a reality or gives it a reality that it did not have before.[79]" In conclusion: meaning is not a thing or a function of abstract, determinate relations – it just happens as the vehicle of language.

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[79] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Grammar*. pg. 311.

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