Deflationist Theories of Truth, Meaning, and Content

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When a philosopher proposes a semantic theory she commends for being deflationist,[1] that theory is intended to replace an entrenched theory that is predicated in part on what is thought to be the need to answer certain questions, and the philosopher objects to that theory not because it gives the wrong answers to those questions, but because she feels those questions are the wrong ones to be asked by a theory seeking to explain what the entrenched theory might legitimately hope to explain. Her alternative theory, she contends, is both to be preferred to the entrenched theory and deflationist relative to it because it doesn't bear the burden of needing to answer those questions.

Every deflationist semantic theory has its inflationist correlate: this is the semantic theory the deflationist theory is designed to deflate. Consequently, distinct deflationist semantic theories may differ from one another either by having different inflationist correlates or by having the same inflationist correlate but differing in their views of how its deflating should go. Some deflationist semantic theories are considerably more deflationist than others. For example, a deflationist theory of truth as applied to propositions needn't be at all deflationist about semantic notions in their application to sentences or utterances. The most interesting deflationist theories would be ones that are deflationist about all semantic notions in all their applications; but of such theories I am aware of only one. I'll call this theory *Radical Deflationism*, and I'll take its inflationist correlate to be a theory I'll call *Radical Inflationism*, although it will be obvious that there are a number of inflationist alternatives to Radical Deflationism that are less inflationist than Radical Inflationism. I shall present Radical Inflationism and Radical Deflationism as stipulatively defined theories, without regard to who might subscribe to them, or to one or another of their parts, but, as will become clear as I proceed, Radical Deflationism is based on a view worked out over a number of

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[1] I use 'deflationist' where others would use 'deflationary' or 'minimalist'.

important publications by Hartry Field.[2] This chapter is mostly structured around a discussion of Radical Deflationism, but part II briefly discusses another way of being semantically deflationist.

A. *Radical Inflationism*

The radical inflationist doesn't doubt that there are semantic and propositional-attitude facts, and she holds that semantic and propositional-attitude predicates such as 'means', 'is true', 'refers to', 'is true of', 'believes that', etc. both apply contingently to the things to which they apply and are univocally applicable both interlinguistically and interpersonally. For example, she holds that the properties ascribed by the italicized predicates in

- 'Brutus killed Caesar' (as used by English speakers) *means that Brutus killed Caesar*
- 'Brutus killed Caesar' (as used by English speakers) *is true*
- 'Brutus' (as used by English speakers) *refers to Brutus*
- 'Killed' (as used by English speakers) *is true of Brutus and Caesar (in that order)*
- I *believe that Brutus killed Caesar*

are exactly the same as the properties they ascribe in

- 'Брут убил Цезаря' (as used by Russian speakers) *means that Brutus killed Caesar*
- 'Брут убил Цезаря' (as used by Russian speakers) *is true*
- 'Убил' (as used by Russian speakers) *is true of Brutus and Caesar (in that order)*
- Vladimir *believes that Brutus killed Caesar*

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[2] Field (1986), (1994a; reprinted with a new postscript in (2001a)), (1994b), (2001b), and (2015). Proponents of Radical Inflationism include David Armstrong, Michael Devitt, Paul Grice, Jerry Fodor, David Lewis, Stephen Neale, Nathan Salmon, Scott Soames, Robert Stalnaker, and the time-slice of Hartry Field who wrote "Tarski's Theory of Truth."

She also holds, first, that semantic and propositional-attitude facts play indispensable causal-explanatory roles in explaining how we are able to use the utterances and beliefs of others as a source of information about the world, and in predicting and explaining human behavior, and second, that, because they play those causal-explanatory roles, our semantic and propositional-attitude notions must be explicable in terms of physically realizable functional or causal notions. In other words, the radical inflationist is on board with the view Hartry Field had when he wrote "Tarski's Theory of Truth," that our notions of reference and truth are correspondence notions that stand in need of physicalistic explications.[3]

It's not difficult to see the path that might lead a radical inflationist to the other extreme, the view I'm soon to call Radical Deflationism. First, she is apt to find that it proves "extraordinarily difficult to develop the details of an adequate correspondence theory"[4]—that is to say, extremely difficult to find plausible naturalistic explications of our semantic and propositional-attitude notions. Second, as we are about to see, Radical Deflationism avoids the needs to find physicalistically acceptable underpinnings of any kind for our semantic and propositional-attitude notions, and the frustrated radical inflationist is apt to find very strong appeal in "the prospect of avoiding the need to work out the details of [a physicalistically acceptable explication of our semantic and propositional-attitude notions], by declaring that [the interpersonally applicable semantic and propositional-attitude notions she thought were in need of physicalistic explication] serve no very important purpose."[5] And third, while the appeal of that prospect wouldn't carry much weight for a radical inflationist unless she had reason to doubt whether the intentional notions in question served any very important purpose, she is apt to give credibility to Radical Deflationism's claim that it's "extremely difficult to find a persuasive argument"[6] that we *need* the semantic and propositional-attitude notions that define Radical Inflationism.

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[3] Field (1972).
[4] Field (1986: 67).
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

B. *Radical Deflationism*

In presenting Radical Deflationism it's advisable to proceed in stages. This is because the theory takes as its core semantic notions certain egocentric use-independent disquotational notions, but those notions aren't themselves able to do all that the radical deflationist thinks semantic notions are needed to do, so the theorist finds it necessary to define certain non-egocentric semantic notions in terms of those core notions. Consequently, I propose to conceptualize Radical Deflationism as developing in six stages. Each stage will have the radical deflationist *stipulatively define* the semantic and propositional-attitude notions he takes himself to need at that stage, until by the end of the sixth stage he has all the intentional notions needed to do what, by his lights, semantic and propositional-attitude notions are needed to do. At that point he will leave open the question of to what extent his stipulatively defined notions might serve to explicate the intentional notions we actually use, for, while he doesn't rule out that his notions might do a passable job of capturing what is legitimate in their ordinary-language counterparts, he has little-to-no interest in accounting for the use of 'means', 'true', 'believes', etc. in ordinary language, a question he regards as being "of only sociological interest."[7] His primary interest in the notions that are to define Radical Deflationism is to determine whether they can do the work we might legitimately expect intentional notions to do, thereby showing we have no *need* for inflationist semantic or propositional-attitude notions.

Stage One: Unambiguous Eternal Sentences

Let's pretend for a while that every sentence of *my* language is an unambiguous eternal sentence[8] that, unlike 'This sentence isn't true', doesn't give rise to any liar-like antinomy. The predicates to be introduced at this stage are 'means$_{ss}$', 'true$_{ss}$', 'false$_{ss}$', 'refers$_{ss}$', and 'true-of$_{ss}$'. I intend the stipulations by which I will introduce them to make these predicates (nearly enough) what Field (in the works cited) would call "purely

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[7] Field (1994: 133).

[8] 'Eternal sentence' is Quine's expression for sentences whose truth-values must remain the same no matter when, where, or by whom they are uttered—e.g. 'Bernard J. Ortcutt owes W. V. Quine ten dollars on July 15, 1968', where 'owes' is stipulated to be tenseless. See Quine (1970: 13).

disquotational." The 'ss' subscript indicates that the subscripted predicates apply to all and only the expressions I "understand", as I "understand" them, where this implies, for example, that "if on my understanding of 'Der Schnee ist weiss' it is equivalent to 'E = mc^2', then for me this sentence is [$true_{ss}$] iff E = mc^2."[9] I have 'understand' in scare-quotes to indicate that the word is not being used as it's used in ordinary language, and certainly not as the radical inflationist would use it. On that, the inflationist use, for a person to understand an expression is for her to use, or to know how to use, it *correctly*, so that, for example, if I use 'Exercise is enervating' the way you use 'Exercise is energizing', then I have used it incorrectly and thus *mis*understand it. But for the radical deflationist there is nothing to count as my misunderstanding an expression that has a use in my idiolect; if I use 'Exercise is enervating' the same way I use 'Exercise is energizing', then that just shows that my understanding of the one sentence is the same as my understanding of the other. What the radical deflationist means by 'understanding a sentence' is roughly as follows.   Assume that I think in a language of thought, which may be the same as the language I speak (whatever exactly that is taken to mean), and let's continue to pretend that the languages with which we are at this point concerned are ones all of whose sentences are unambiguous and eternal. Whether or not my mentalese is a neural version of my spoken language, every spoken sentence of mine will, relative to our simplifying assumptions, be uniquely correlated with a mentalese sentence whose conceptual role is the conceptual role my spoken sentence would have if my spoken language were my language of thought, where a sentence's conceptual role is the role the sentence has in my perceptual belief formation and in my theoretical and practical reasoning. A sentence's conceptual role is determined by the conceptual roles of its syntactic structure and constituent morphemes, and those conceptual roles are the contributions those things make to the conceptual roles of the sentences in which they occur. A mentalese sentence may be prevented from playing its conceptual role if e.g. it's too long or convoluted for one to process owing to the computational limitations of one's brain. If we ignore those limitations, however, we can say, as for convenience I will say, that, for the radical deflationist, my understanding of a sentence just is the conceptual role of its mentalese correlate. If, consequently, the mentalese correlates of

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[9] Field (1994: 134).

my sentences 'Exercise is enervating' and 'Exercise is energizing' have the same conceptual role, then no invidious comparison can be made between my understanding of the two sentences; they merely happen to be the same.

The stipulations that define Radical Deflationism at this first stage are as follows.

'Means$_{ss}$' applies only to expressions I understand, and every instance of the schema

'S' means$_{ss}$ that S

(e.g. '"Snow is white" means$_{ss}$ that snow is white') is for me *a priori* and empirically indefeasible.

'True$_{ss}$' and *'false$_{ss}$'* apply only to sentences I understand, and every instance of the schemas

'S' is true$_{ss}$ iff S

'S' is false$_{ss}$ iff not-S

is for me *a priori* and empirically indefeasible in a way that makes instances of

'S' is true$_{ss}$

'S' is false$_{ss}$

cognitively equivalent for me to their corresponding instances of

S

Not-S,

where to say that two sentences are "cognitively equivalent" for a person is to say that "the person's inferential procedures license a fairly direct [and 'more or less indefeasible'] inference from any sentence containing an occurrence of one to the corresponding sentence with an occurrence of the other substituted for it; with the stipulation … that the occurrence to be substituted for is not within the context of quotation marks or an intentional attitude construction."[10,11]

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[10] Ibid.: 107, fn. 2.

[11] The radical deflationist may prefer explicit definitions of 'true$_{ss}$' and 'false$_{ss}$' that entail that they apply only to sentences I understand and that make every instance of 'S is true$_{ss}$' cognitively equivalent for me to the corresponding instance of 'S' and make every instance of 'S is false$_{ss}$' cognitively equivalent for me to the corresponding instance of 'Not-S'.   Field in effect suggests that, if we have "a theory of substitutional quantification that avoids the semantic paradoxes," then such definitions can be had by letting 'S' range over unambiguous eternal sentences I understand and then stipulating:

'Refers$_{ss}$' applies only to names I understand, and every instance of the schema

> If n exists, then 'n' refers to n

is for me *a priori* and empirically indefeasible. (Thus, my acceptance of the sentence '"Ned Block" refers$_{ss}$ to Ned Block' is entirely independent of whether or not anyone ever used 'Ned Block' to refer to Ned Block and of whether or not his parents gave him that name.)

'True-of$_{ss}$' applies only to predicates I understand, and every instance of the schema

> 'F' is true-of$_{ss}$ o iff o is F

is for me *a priori* and empirically indefeasible. Similarly for predicates of arity greater than one, although representing this in a schema would require special conventions for correlating instances of the right-hand side of

> 'R^n' is true-of$_{ss}$ $<o_1, …, o_n>$ iff $R^n(o_1, …, o_n)$

with sentences of my language, such as 'Jane gave her tiara to Oxfam'.

I trust it's clear that the foregoing stipulations have no implications at all as regards the truth conditions of any sentence of my language, or as regards what any expression in my language means, refers to, or is true of, as 'means', 'true', 'refers', and 'true of' are used by an English-speaking neutral observer of the inflationism-deflationism fray. Radical Deflationism gives every speaker of every language her own egocentric disquotational semantic notions. But knowing how, say, a speaker of Inuit uses her egocentric disquotational predicates would not enable you to infer anything about what her expressions mean, refer to, or have as their truth conditions. This is especially brought home by the following observation. If one thinks of a language as an abstract object that may or may not be used anyone—say, as a pairing of sounds and meanings over an infinite domain—then there are infinitely many distinct languages that share exactly the same expressions as English. For example, whereas in English

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- S is true$_{ss}$ iff $\Pi S'((S = {}\text{'}S'\text{'}) \rightarrow S')$
- S is false$_{ss}$ iff $\Pi S'((S = {}\text{'}S'\text{'}) \rightarrow \neg S')$

(Ibid.: 120, fn. 17). Definitions in the same vein would also be available for the other semantic$_{ss}$ predicates.

> 'Snow is white' means that snow is white
>
> 'Grass is green' means that grass is green
>
> 'Coal is black' means that coal is black

in another language, English*,

> 'Snow is white' means that coal is black
>
> 'Grass is green' means that snow is white
>
> 'Coal is black' means that butter is fattening

If the expressions of a person's idiolect are the same as those of English and English*, then the question arises as to whether she speaks English, English*, or another one of the infinitely many languages whose expressions are shared with those two languages. Now suppose that my use of the expressions in my idiolect is such that any informed neutral observer would confidently claim that my language is English*. Not withstanding that, it would remain the case that in my spoken language

> 'Snow is white' means$_{ss}$ that snow is white
>
> 'Grass is green' means$_{ss}$ that grass is green
>
> 'Coal is black' means$_{ss}$ that coal is black.[12]

A central claim of Radical Deflationism will be that we have no need of any inflationist semantic notions, and that the only semantic notions we need are ones definable in terms of the core egocentric disquotational notions (semantic$_{ss}$ notions, in my case). But what need do we have for the radical deflationist's egocentric disquotational notions, notions that apply only to expressions one understands? I'm not aware that the radical deflationist has at hand an answer for every one of the disquotational notions he recognizes, especially for his notion of meaning$_{xx}$ that applies only to sentences one understands, but he does have an answer as regards his egocentric disquotational notion of truth (in my case, the notion of truth$_{ss}$). It's an answer perhaps first made explicit by Quine:

> [T]he truth predicate is superfluous when applied to a given
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> sentence; you could just utter the sentence. But it is needed

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[12] Consequently, Field mischaracterizes his deflationism when he says that "a deflationist thinks that a homophony condition guarantees that we are speaking English rather than English*" (ibid.: 126).

for sentences that are not given. Thus we may want to say

that everything someone said on some occasion was true, or

that all consequences of true theories are true.[13]

Radical deflationists such as Stephen Leeds and Hartry Field understand Quine to be saying that the *only* reason we need a truth predicate is that it functions as a device for expressing certain infinite conjunctions and disjunctions,[14] and their point is that the purely disquotational egocentric notion of truth is sufficient to satisfy that need. For example, in my idiolect the sentences

(1) Ava said something $true_{ss}$

(2) Everything Bob said is $true_{ss}$

are equivalent, respectively, to

(3) Ava said 'Snow is white' and snow is white, or Ava said '68 + 57 = 5' and 68 + 57 = 5, or …

(4) If Bob said 'Snow is white', then snow is white, and if Bob said 'Fleas have souls', then fleas have souls, and …

This, however, needs qualification in at least three respects. First, as Field recognizes[15] (and no doubt Leeds as well), (1) isn't equivalent to (3) and (2) isn't equivalent to (4): nothing in (3) or (4) entails that the sentences referred to in them are all the sentences of my idiolect, so it's logically possible for (3) to be false and (1) true by virtue of the fact that the only $true_{ss}$ sentences Ava uttered are not among the sentences referred to in (3), and it's logically possible for (4) to be true and (2) false by virtue of the fact that none of the $false_{ss}$ sentences Bob uttered are among the sentences referred to in (4). Second, when Quine wrote that the truth predicate "is needed for sentences that are not given" he had in mind not only one's need to say things like 'I managed to say something true in my lecture today', where I am talking about my own sentences, but also such things as 'Not everything the Pope says when he's speaking *ex cathedra* is true', when I don't

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[13] Quine (1992: 80).

[14] Leeds (1978), Field emphasizes this in all the works cited in fn. 2. He qualifies his claim that we need a notion of truth as a device for expressing infinite conjunctions and disjunctions by noting that substitutional quantification affords another way of expressing them (ibid.: 120, fn. 17).

[15] Ibid.

understand a word of Latin. But of course as so far described the radical deflationist doesn't have the resources to say that. Third, it may be that while (1) and (2), *which use the stipulatively introduced predicate 'true$_{ss}$'*, are correct, they aren't useful characterizations of Ava or Bob. For it may be that, while (1) and (2), which use the predicate 'true$_{ss}$', are correct,

(5) Ava said something true

(6) Everything Bob said is true,

which use the ordinary language predicate 'true', are incorrect. For it may be that, while Ava's and Bob's sentences are the same as mine, they mean—now using 'mean' as its used in ordinary language—quite different things for Ava and Bob than they do for me. The radical deflationist needs to introduce notions that will enable him to claim that his notions are able to confer the benefits that our ordinary semantic notions may legitimately claim to provide. This is our segue to the next stage, but a final point is in order before we get to it.

This is that Radical Deflationism's claim *that the only reason we need a notion of truth is as a device of disquotation* is hostage to the theory's ability to meet what we will presently see is its greatest challenge—namely, to show that it has the wherewithal to account for the role of content in propositional-attitude explanations. For suppose I explain Olga's petitioning to have her marriage annulled by revealing that she has recently come to believe *that when her husband married her he was already married to someone else*. Since a belief that *P* is a belief that is *true iff P*, I have apparently explained Olga's petitioning for an annulment in terms of her being in a state with a certain *truth condition*—to wit, in terms of her being in a state that is true iff her husband was married to someone else when he married Olga. It's incumbent on the radical deflationist to show that he can account for the role of truth conditions in propositional-attitude explanation using only a deflationist-licensed notion of truth, and this is an issue we have yet to consider.

Stage Two: Foreign Sentences

Our egocentric disquotational notions can't apply to foreign sentences we don't understand, but if the radical deflationist is to show we don't need inflationist semantic

notions to get the benefits we actually get from the semantic notions we actually use, he will want to show how he can use his core egocentric disquotational semantic notions to define non-egocentric non-disquotational semantic notions to apply to foreign sentences we don't understand, and this because we will certainly want to be able to use the utterances and propositional-attitude states of foreign language speakers as a source of information about the world and to predict and explain their behavior. How is that to be done?[16] However the radical deflationist tries to show it can be done, he must take care not to end up in effect defining the very inflationist "correspondence" semantic notions the avoidance of which is the very point of the position he is trying to develop. At the same time, as Field points out, if he does find himself realizing that he does need inflationist notions to accommodate foreign language utterances (or, for that matter, anything else), then that would have the unexpected benefit of proving to him that what he thought couldn't be done could be done. That is why Field's official position isn't Radical Deflationism but is rather what he calls *methodological deflationism*: the methodological policy that "we should start out assuming [Radical Deflationism] as a working hypothesis; we should adhere to it unless and until we find ourselves reconstructing what amounts to the inflationist's relation 'S has the truth conditions p'."[17] Of course, Field wouldn't be justified in accepting methodological deflationism unless he thought there was a pretty good *prima facie* case to be made for thinking that the only semantic and propositional-attitude notions we need are those permitted by Radical Deflationism. The feasibility of methodological deflationism turns on whether there is a pretty good *prima facie* case to be made.

Field mentions two approaches the deflationist might take to accommodating foreign language utterances we don't understand. The first, which he says is the least satisfactory of the two approaches, is a weakening of Radical Deflationism that he calls "extended-disquotationalism." This would be "to use a notion of interlinguistic

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[16] I am only considering how the radical deflationist might legitimate talk of the truth or falsity of foreign sentences one doesn't understand. Field claims that for foreign sentences one does understand one may simply apply one's own egocentric predicate, as it applies to every sentence one does understand. So, for example, if 'Der Schnee ist weiss' is an unambiguous eternal sentence I understand, I can say:

'Der Schnee ist weiss' is true$_{ss}$ iff der Schnee ist weiss.

[17] Ibid.: 119.

synonymy: where '*S*' is a foreign sentence I don't understand, regard '*S* is true' as equivalent to '*S* is synonymous with a sentence of ours that is true in the pure disquotational sense',"[18] where 'synonymy' is a relation defined in terms of certain of the conceptual-role and indication-relation features of my own words.[19] The challenge for the deflationist disposed to take this option, Field says, would be to define a notion of interlinguistic synonymy without relying on a prior notion of truth conditions, and he is very skeptical that that can be done. I would have thought that an even bigger problem for extended-disquotationalism is that it's hard to see how defining a notion of interlinguistic synonymy wouldn't be tantamount to defining an inflationist notion of truth conditions. For suppose the radical deflationist were to devise a notion of interlinguistic synonymy. Such a notion would doubtless be defined using conceptual-role and indication-relation features of my sentences; but whatever features of my words were used to define a notion of interlinguistic synonymy, they would have to be physicalistically acceptable, and for every two sentences S and S' of my language whose truth$_{ss}$ conditions differed, there would have to be distinct properties φ and φ' such that (i) S has φ and S' has φ' and (ii) a foreign sentence was for me synonymous with S iff it had φ and synonymous with S' iff it had φ'. Suppose such a definition of synonymy at hand. Then for every sentence S of my language, the predicate '___ means that S' will be interlinguistically applicable and will ascribe the same use-dependent property to every sentence of which the predicate is true. Wouldn't that be one kind of inflationist conception of meaning and, *a fortiori* (since a sentence's meaning that S entails its being true iff S), one kind of inflationist conception of truth conditions? Field raises this question for a view he calls 'quasi-disquotationalism' apparently without noticing that extended-disquotationalism entails quasi-disquotationalism.[20]

The second option Field says is available to the radical deflationist is the one he thinks that theorist will need to adopt, so presumably it's an option he thinks might give the radical deflationist all that he can legitimately expect to gain from a way of assigning

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[18] Field (1994a: 128).

[19] An indication relation is a relation between a sentence and external state-of-affairs which makes believing or asserting the sentence a reliable indication that the state-of-affairs obtains.

[20] Ibid.: 131.

truth conditions to foreign sentences he doesn't understand. The option is based on the notion of a foreign sentence's being "*true relative to a correlation* of it to one of our sentences,"[21] where:

> For any foreign language L and any correlation C of L sentences with my sentences, an L sentence S is *true relative to C* iff there is a sentence S' of mine such that C correlates S with S' and S' is true$_{ss}$.

The deflationist will then explain that:

> There is no such thing as a sentence I don't understand being *per se* true or false.   Ways of correlating sentences of a foreign language with my sentences are in effect ways of translating that language into mine. There is no question of a translation being right or wrong, of being the *correct* or *incorrect* translation of a foreign sentence into my language, only of a translation's being better or worse in a way that is "highly context-dependent (since the purposes for which they are better or worse vary from one context to the next)."[22] If I'm unable to interpret a foreign sentence, then "it makes no sense [for me] to inquire whether it is true (except perhaps in counterfactual terms about how I would interpret it under definite conditions)."[23]

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[21] Ibid.: 128.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Field (1986: 62). Because I accept the deliverances of Google Translate, I interpret the Portuguese sentence 'Al e Betty dançou o macarena' as being equivalent to my sentence 'Al and Betty danced the macarena'—that is how I choose to interpret the Portuguese sentence. There is some unclarity in Field as to whether I can say that 'Al e Betty dançou o macarena' is true$_{ss}$ iff Al and Betty danced the macarena or whether the most I can say is that the Portuguese sentence is true relative to Google Translate's correlation scheme iff Al and Betty danced the macarena. I have decided to use the first option throughout: otherwise (a) Field's gloss of 'pure disquotational truth' as 'true as I understand it' becomes confusing (I *understand* 'Al e Betty dançou o macarena' as equivalent to 'Al and Betty danced the macarena'); (b) it's impossible to make sense of Field's allowing that 'Der Schnee ist weiss' is for him true in the pure disquotational sense iff der Schnee ist weiss; (c) he certainly doesn't want to say that utterances of ambiguous or indexical

This is pretty radical stuff. I don't understand a word of Arabic, but I would have thought that infinitely many Arabic sentences are true or are false irrespective of any way of correlating them with my sentences, and therefore irrespective of how I choose to interpret them or whether or not it's even possible for me to interpret them; and I would have thought that if a speaker of English translated 'La neige est blanche' as anything other than 'Snow is white', then he simply mistranslated it: the French sentence means in French what the English sentence means in English, and not to know that is not to know what at least one of the two sentences means. If, however, the only notion of truth I am able to apply to foreign sentences I don't understand is the one Radical Deflationism makes available to me, then I must accept that foreign sentences I don't understand have no truth conditions, and therefore no truth-values—except relative to this, that, or the other way of correlating those sentences with mine. The departures from common sense snowball. For example, I have for a long time taken myself to have a considerable amount of general knowledge about speakers of, say, Japanese, even though when I hear Japanese speech I can't even tell where one word ends and another begins. I know that many Japanese have bought iPhones, that many have been tourists in the US, that many have applied and gone to universities, that many get married, that many who get married later get divorced, that some join the army, that some quit their jobs, that some are orthopedic surgeons who specialize in knee replacements, and so on and on and on. But according to Radical Deflationism, it's impossible for me to know any of those things, and this because the theory entails that there can be no fact of the matter as to whether a speaker of Japanese bought an iPhone, quit her job, filed for divorce, performed a knee replacement or did any of the myriad other things I thought I knew they did. There can be no fact of the matter about such things because to do any of them requires acting with intentions with particular contents and Radical Disquotationalism entails that there can be no fact of the matter about the contents of the propositional-attitude states of speakers of

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sentences can't be true in the pure disquotational sense, but they, too, require deciding on a way of mapping such utterances onto sentences of one's mentalese; and (d) allowing that foreign sentences may be true$_{ss}$ in this way lessens a little some of the counter-intuitive consequences of Field's theory. At the same time, I don't see that anything important turns on which of the two options one uses, since each is easily translated into the other.

languages we don't understand. For if we were able to assign objective contents to their propositional-attitude states, then we would surely also be able to assign objective contents to the sentences they use to express those states.

Does the fact that Radical Deflationism entails these departures from common sense constitute an *objection* to it? Not if it can be shown that all the real benefits of having our commonsense conception of truth could just as easily be had if each person used only her own egocentric disquotational notions of truth and falsity together with whatever extended notions of truth and falsity it was permissible for her to define in terms of them.

Finally, we should note that the radical deflationist's line on foreign utterances can be used to deflect what is apt to seem to be another highly counterintuitive departure from common sense. Recall that, for me, Radical Deflationism's apparent substitute for 'means', 'means$_{ss}$', applies to all and only expressions I understand, and that e.g.

'Snow is white' means$_{ss}$ that snow is white

is for me analytic, i.e. *a priori* and empirically indefeasible. This entails that the displayed meaning$_{ss}$ statement would have been true even if I had used 'Snow is white' the way I actually use 'Coal is black', and that is apt to seem a capricious departure from our commonsense notion of meaning according to which 'Snow is white' would have meant *that coal is black* if I had used 'Snow is white' the way I actually use 'Coal is black'. While it's true that 'Snow is white' would have meant$_{ss}$ *that snow is white* however I used that sentence, the radical deflationist does have a way of capturing what the ordinary language notion of meaning would say: he can say that in interpreting my utterances in counterfactual worlds where I use 'Snow is white' the way I actually use 'Coal is black', I wouldn't, and shouldn't, interpret myself using my egocentric homophonic disquotational notion of meaning$_{ss}$ but would instead interpret myself as though I were speaking a foreign language, in which case I would no doubt use 'Coal is black' to "translate" my counterfactual utterances of 'Snow is white'.

Stage Three: Utterance Understanding

Relative to the pretense that all the sentences of my language are unambiguous and non-indexical, we could view the predicates stipulated to express my egocentric notions of

truth and falsity—viz. 'true$_{ss}$' and 'false$_{ss}$', respectively—as applying to *sentences* I understand, and I could represent the radical deflationist as saying that for me to understand a *sentence* is just for it to be, or to be correlated with, a sentence of my mentalese and thereby to have a conceptual role for me. But 'true$_{ss}$' and 'false$_{ss}$' must also have application to *utterances* I understand of sentences I understand, so we need to see what the radical deflationist should say about understanding an *utterance* of a sentence versus understanding the *sentence* uttered. The question presses because it's not sufficient for understanding an utterance of a sentence *S* that one understand *S*. For a start, one can't understand an utterance unless one knows that it occurred. But even if one understands *S* and knows that an utterance of it occurred, that still isn't sufficient for understanding the utterance. For example, the sentence

(1) The force of an allegory's bite can exceed 3,000 pounds

is (we may suppose) an unambiguous eternal sentence I understand (and, of course, know to be false$_{ss}$). Now suppose I hear Fester utter (1). It's very *un*likely that I will interpret his utterance of (1) as a statement that the force of an allegory's bite can exceed 3,000 pounds. If I were wearing my inflationist hat, then how I would interpret Fester's utterance would depend on what I thought his beliefs and intentions were in uttering (1), and no doubt I would conclude that, like Mrs. Malaprop, he confuses 'allegory' and 'alligator' and that what he meant in uttering (1) was that the force of an alligator's bite can exceed 3,000 pounds. But whatever interpretation I came up with, I would take that interpretation to be either objectively correct or objectively incorrect,[24] as determined by the intentions and beliefs Fester had in uttering (1). Now that I am trying on the radical deflationist's hat, however, I must recognize that how I interpret Fester's utterance isn't determined by what I think his beliefs and intentions were in uttering (1), for I will recognize that, just as there is no objective fact of the matter as to what his utterance means, so, too, there will be no objective fact of the matter as to what he believes and intends in uttering (1). How I interpret Fester's utterance is simply a matter of which sentence of mine I use to process the utterance, and *that* will be determined by which

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[24] Or I would take it to be indeterminate whether it was objectively correct or objectively incorrect, or indeterminate whether it's indeterminate whether …—but let's not get into that!

mapping of his utterance onto a sentence of mine will best satisfy my interests in interpreting him. If, for example, I process the utterance using my sentence

(2) The force of an alligator's bite can exceed 3,000 pounds,

then I am interpreting his utterance as a statement about the force of an alligator's bite. In other words, my saying that Fester's utterance is true$_{ss}$ doesn't mean that it's true on the objectively correct interpretation of it ("the idea of a 'correct understanding' of a sentence or utterance is a semantic notion that has no place when we are discussing purely disquotational truth"[25]); it means that it's *true-as-I-understand-it*, and I'm free to understand it any way I regard as appropriate in the circumstances. Evidently, then, the radical deflationist must say that the sense in which I must understand an utterance—even an utterance of a sentence of my own idiolect—in order for my predicates 'true$_{ss}$' and 'false$_{ss}$' to have application to it is simply that I process it with a sentence I understand, i.e. a sentence that has a conceptual role in my mentalese. Consequently, since I have decided to process Fester's utterance with my sentence (2), then that sentence represents my understanding of the utterance, and when I claim that the utterance is true$_{ss}$ I'm claiming that it's true-as-I-understand-it, which makes that claim cognitively equivalent for me to Fester's utterance of (1), which in turn makes it cognitively equivalent for me to (2). Ways of interpreting utterances even of sentences I understand are in effect ways of translating those utterances into sentences of mine. There is no question of a translation being right or wrong, of being the *correct* or *incorrect* translation of an utterance into my language, only of a translation's being better or worse in a way that is "highly context-dependent (since the purposes for which they are better or worse vary from one context to the next)."[26] If I'm unable to interpret an utterance, then "it makes no sense [for me] to inquire whether it is true (except perhaps in counterfactual terms about how I would interpret it under definite conditions)."[27] The radical deflationist's treatment of utterances of sentences we understand is essentially the same as his treatment of foreign language sentences we don't understand.

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[25] Ibid.: 134.
[26] Field (1994: 128).
[27] Field (1986: 62).

Stage Four: Belief

What can Radical Deflationism say about our talk of beliefs being true or false? It would, I believe, be something along the following lines.[28] We start with a stipulative definition:

> *x believes* S* iff *S* is a sentence of *x*'s mentalese that is
> tokened in *x*'s belief box.[29]

If we were Radical Inflationists we would then want some refinement of the view that:

- *x* has a belief iff for some proposition *p*, *x* believes *p*
- *x* believes *p* iff, for some *S*, *x* believes* *S* and *S* means *p* in
  x's mentalese,
  where 'means' expresses a certain use-dependent relation
  between sentences and propositions, and thus a relation that
  demands an explication in non-intentional terms.

There are a couple of reasons why the radical deflationist can't say that. One is that it requires a use-dependent notion of meaning and truth conditions (if *S* means *p* then *S* is true iff *p* is true), what Field calls *correspondence truth conditions*. The other is that the inflationist account of belief presupposes that there can be a fact of the matter about what someone believes, the content of her belief, even if we are unfamiliar with her and unable to understand the sentences she believes*; but the radical deflationist's unrelativized meaning and truth predicates can be applied only to sentences or utterances one understands.

Now, the only unrelativized radical deflationist truth predicates I have are 'true$_{ss}$' and 'false$_{ss}$'. What can I say about the truth conditions of (1)?

(1) Ralph believes that *S*.

Well, if Ralph believes* '*S*' and '*S*' is a sentence I understand, then if I'm going by what '*S*' means$_{ss}$, I can accept (1). But suppose that the sentence Ralph believes* is 'Exercise is enervating' and that he uses that sentence the way I use 'Exercise is energizing'. In that case I should no doubt decide my interests are best served by "translating" 'Exercise

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[28] See Field (2001b).

[29] For a sentence to be tokened in a person's "belief box" is for it to be tokened in a state that has the functional property responsible for a state's being a belief. See Schiffer (1981).

is enervating' in Ralph's mentalese as my sentence 'Exercise is energizing'. This is just to repeat what in effect we already knew—that the radical deflationist should recommend that, if 'S' is a sentence I understand and I know both that Ralph believes* 'S' and that Ralph uses 'S' the same way I do, then I should believe* 'Ralph believes that S', but if I decide 'S' in Ralph's language is best "translated" as my sentence 'S'', then I should believe* 'Ralph believes that S''. In any case, I must recognize that there can be no fact of the matter as to what Ralph believes that would make a belief report about him objectively correct or objectively incorrect, but should recognize that there is nothing to constrain what I take him to believe other than my pragmatic concerns in ascribing beliefs to him. This of course generalizes, *mutatis mutandis*, to every kind of propositional-attitude report.

Again, this is pretty radical stuff, even more radical than the Radical Deflationist's line on foreign language sentences I don't understand. If I know that Tamiko believes* the Japanese sentence S but I don't understand S, then, given Radical Deflationism, I must say that there is no fact of the matter as to the truth conditional content of the belief state Tamiko's believing* S realizes. The most I can say is that she has a belief that is true relative to certain ways, and false relative to other ways, of correlating S with a sentence of mine. The same is even true of a person who thinks in English when she believes* a sentence and I'm undecided about which sentence of mine I should use to understand that sentence. Since I can be said to understand only an extremely minute fraction of the sentences believed*, desired* or intended* by all the people there are, were, or will be, we see that Radical Deflationism's line on truth talk about propositional attitudes entails a pretty radical solipsism. For not only must I conclude that there can be no fact of the matter as to whether any native speaker of Japanese ever got married, bought a Honda or applied to graduate school, I must now conclude that for nearly every person who has ever lived there is no fact of the matter as to whether any of them ever bought anything, accepted a job, or told a lie, or did anything else the doing of which requires acting with particular intentions.

Stage Five: Indexicality and Ambiguity

Up to now I have been pretending that my language is unambiguous and non-indexical. Given that pretense I could say that the egocentric disquotational semantic notions Radical Deflationism licenses for me could be introduced with the stipulations that:

> 'Means$_{ss}$' applies only to expressions I understand, and
>
> every instance of the schema
>
> > 'S' means$_{ss}$ that S
>
> is for me *a priori* and empirically indefeasible.

> 'True$_{ss}$' and 'false$_{ss}$' apply only to sentences I understand, and every instance of the schemas
>
> > 'S' is true$_{ss}$ iff S
> >
> > 'S' is false$_{ss}$ iff not-S
>
> is for me *a priori* and empirically indefeasible, and therefore instances of
>
> > 'S' is true$_{ss}$
> >
> > 'S' is false$_{ss}$
>
> are cognitively equivalent for me to their corresponding instances of
>
> > S
> >
> > Not-S.

> '*Refers$_{ss}$*' applies only to names I understand, and every instance of the schema
>
> > If n exists, then 'n' refers to n
>
> is for me *a priori* and empirically indefeasible.

> 'True-of$_{ss}$' applies only to predicates I understand, and every instance of the schema
>
> > 'F' is true-of$_{ss}$ o iff o is F
>
> is for me *a priori* and empirically indefeasible.

But what will Radical Deflationism stipulate for my semantic$_{ss}$ expressions when it recognizes that my language is ambiguous and indexical, and therefore, presumably, has to provide completions for forms such as the following?

(1) 'Visiting relatives can be boring' means$_{ss}$ …

(2) 'She is ready' means$_{ss}$ …

(3) 'She' means$_{ss}$ …

(4) A token of 'she' refers$_{ss}$ to x iff …

(5) A token of 'She is a novelist' is true$_{ss}$ iff …

(6) 'Tall' means$_{ss}$ …

(7) A token of 'tall' is true-of$_{ss}$ of a thing iff …

It's not clear to me that the radical deflationist is able to provide completions of any of these forms that she would find acceptable. Consider (3), (4) and (5). Suppose the pronoun 'she' has only its referential use in my language. Then one sort of inflationist would say (at least to a first approximation):

The meaning of 'she' is that function f such that, for any token τ of 'she' and any x, $f(\tau) = x$ iff x is the female to whom the speaker referred with τ; nothing otherwise.

For any x and token τ of 'she', x is the referent of τ iff $f(\tau) = x$; otherwise τ has no referent.

A token τ of 'She is a novelist' is

   true iff for some x, x is the referent of the token of 'she' contained in τ and x is a novelist;

   false iff for some x, x is the referent of the token of 'she' contained in τ and x is not a novelist;

   neither true nor false iff nothing is the referent of the token of 'she' contained in τ.

What might the radical deflationist say?

Field discusses indexicality. He opens that discussion by saying he wants his notion of pure disquotational truth to apply to tokens of indexical sentences but that "one

substantial worry about [Radical Deflationism] is whether it can accommodate this."[30]

He doesn't say why this is a substantial worry, but he does say why he thinks it shouldn't

be any worry at all. Let '$S(i_1, …, i_n)$' be schematic for any sentence of mine with n

occurrences of indexicals or demonstratives. Field first defines a relativized truth

predicate for the sentence *type* '$S(i_1, …, i_n)$':

> '$S(i_1, …, i_n)$' is *true relative to a sequence of objects* $<a_1$,
>
> $…, a_n>$ iff $S(a_1, …, a_n)$.

For example, 'She never loved him' is true relative to <Jill, Jack> iff Jill never loved

Jack. That defined notion of truth-relative-to-a-sequence is then in effect used to define

the application of 'true$_{ss}$' to tokens of '$S(i_1, …, i_n)$':

> (A) A token of '$S(i_1,…, i_n)$' is true$_{ss}$ iff there are objects a_1,
>
> $…, a_n$ that I "associate" with the uttered tokens of
>
> 'i_1', …, 'i_n', respectively, and '$S(i_1,…, i_n)$' is true
>
> relative to $<a_1, …, a_n>$.[31]

Field goes on (nearly enough) to explain "association" in a way that implies that I

associate objects $a_1, …, a_n$ with the indexicals 'i_1', …, 'i_n' just in case I processes the

utterance of '$S(i_1,…, i_n)$' with a sentence '$S'(\alpha_1, …, \alpha_n)$' of my mentalese such that (i)

'$S'(\alpha_1, …, \alpha_n)$' is true$_{ss}$ iff $S'(\alpha_1, …, \alpha_n)$ and (b) $\alpha_1 = a_1, …, \alpha_n = a_n$.[32]

It may be that Field didn't really intend (A) as a proper definition, but merely as

an account of how I interpret utterances of indexical sentences when I'm actually party to

them, for as a definition, (A) is problematic. Read as a definition, there is prefixed to the

definition an implicit necessity operator: 'Necessarily, a token of '$S(i_1,…, i_n)$' is true$_{ss}$ iff

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[30] Field (1994: 134). Field uses 'utterance' where I use 'token'; I prefer 'token' because accounts of reference in terms of tokens lend themselves to slightly simpler formulations.

[31] Ibid.: 136. Field says that typically the objects he associates with the indexicals will be ones he takes "the producer of the utterance to have intended" (136, fn. 31). This is somewhat misleading, however, since for Field, as we have seen, there is no objective fact as to what objects the producer intended: from Field's perspective, what intentions a person has is determined by how he, Field, decides to interpret the sentences the producer intends*.

[32] Ibid. Field's idea here is not that he will have a name or definite description to replace every indexical or demonstrative, but that uttered indexicals or demonstratives may be thought of as represented by subscripted mentalese indexicals or demonstratives that arise on the spot and function in processing like names.

…'. But so read, (A) entails that the only tokens of '$S(i_1,…, i_n)$' that can have truth$_{ss}$-values are those that I interpret, and that would mean that if when I'm not around you say 'She was a novelist' intending to communicate that George Eliot was a novelist, then your uttered token of 'she' doesn't refer$_{ss}$ to anyone and your utterance has no truth$_{ss}$-value. But when Field said he wanted his notion of pure disquotational truth—which in my case is 'true$_{ss}$'—to apply to indexical utterances he clearly intended to include utterances in my absence of indexical sentences by those who speak my language. Would Field want to revise (A) to (A$'$)?

> (A$'$) A token of '$S(i_1,…, i_n)$' is true$_{ss}$ iff there are objects $a_1, …, a_n$ that if I were party to the utterance of that token I would associate with the uttered tokens of 'i_1', …, 'i_n', respectively, and '$S(i_1,…, i_n)$' is true relative to $<a_1, …, a_n>$.

I doubt he would want to make that revision. For one thing, counterfactuals like

> If I had been party to α's utterance of 'She's a novelist' I would have associated β with the uttered token of 'she'

rarely have determinate truth-values, and, for another thing, if at the moment of your utterance I were to have a cerebral infarction which causes me to associate your utterance of 'she' with Rosa Luxembourg, would Field really want to say that your utterance is true$_{ss}$ just in case Rosa Luxembourg was a novelist?

I'll skip what the radical deflationist (i.e. Field) has to say about ambiguity, since it runs pretty much along the lines of what he says about indexicality.

Stage Six: Radical Deflationist Truth in Explanation—Where Push Comes to Shove
Radical Deflationism's claim, we already noticed, isn't that the disquotational semantic notions it provides are the notions expressed by ordinary language semantic terms. Its claim is that the semantic notions it provides can do all the explanatory work that semantic notions can legitimately be expected to do. This is where push comes to shove, for the plausibility of Radical Deflationism rides entirely on the plausibility of that claim.

We need to be clear about what the issues really are. No one disputes that semantic notions play an important role in enabling us to acquire knowledge about the

world from what people write and say, and in explaining and predicting their behavior. What we want to know is what those roles are and what enables semantic notions to play them. There is also a question about *which* semantic notions we are talking about, and here we find an assumption that is sometimes made, but is wrong. To see the mistake I have in mind, suppose Jane offers the following two explanations:

> (A) I know that Clyde's middle name is 'Ignatz' because he told me it was; he wouldn't have told me that unless he believed he knew it; and his believing that he knows it is extremely good evidence that his belief is *true*.

> (B) Of all the many doctors Frank consulted, Dr. Jones was the only one who succeeded in relieving his symptoms, and that was because she was the only doctor whose belief about the cause of those symptoms was *true*.

Now suppose a radical deflationist were to argue that (i) egocentric disquotational truth can play the role truth plays in (A) and in (B), for (ii) the explanation (A) offers remains the same if we replace the sentence

> his believing that he knows it is extremely good evidence
> that his belief is true

with the sentence

> his believing that he knows that his middle name is 'Ignatz'
> is extremely good evidence that his middle name is
> 'Ignatz';

and the explanation (B) offers remains the same if, using substitutional quantification, we replace the phrase

> whose belief about the cause of those symptoms was true

with the phrase

> whose belief about the cause of those symptoms was such
> that $\Pi S(($ 'S' purports to identify the cause of Frank's
> symptoms & Dr. Jones believes that S$) \rightarrow$ S$)$.

The problem with this argument is that (ii) doesn't entail (i). The reason it doesn't is that *it doesn't address the truth-conditions entailed by the that-clauses in the explanations' belief ascriptions.* The heavy lifting in propositional-attitude explanations is done by the *contents* ascribed to the beliefs (and other propositional attitudes) cited in those explanations, and, as we have already observed, those contents are truth-condition entailing: the claim that Clyde believes *that his middle name is 'Ignatz'* entails that Clyde has a belief that is *true if and only if his middle name is 'Ignatz'*. The difficult task for the radical deflationist isn't to explain overt uses of 'true' like those in (A) and (B); it's to explain the use of *propositional content* in those and other propositional-attitude explanations.

The notions expressed by our ordinary language propositional-attitude expressions—'believes that such and such', 'desires such and such', 'intends to do such and such'—do a lot of extremely important explanatory work for us. The plausibility of Radical Deflationism turns on its ability to do the same work. Before we address that question directly we should first say something about some of the key features of our propositional-attitude expressions as we actually use them. Here is a brief annotated inventory of what some of those features appear to be.

a) Propositional-attitude predicates such as 'believes that Brutus killed Caesar' and 'intends to buy a villa in Cap Ferrat' apply interpersonally and univocally, even among monolingual speakers of different languages. We depend on this as when we say things like 'The vast majority of citizens of other countries believe that the U.S. had no legitimate reason for invading Iraq'. The same is true of predicates that entail propositional-attitude properties, such as 'bought a villa in Cap Ferrat', which apply to a person only if she acted with certain intentions.

b) Do propositional-attitude properties play a causal-explanatory role in propositional-attitude explanations, as, for example, when one explains that Ava passed the salt to you because she believed that you asked her to? Define 'causal-explanatory'. If Henry took pain medication because he was having a migraine, is the property of having a migraine playing a "causal-explanatory role" in that explanation? If you say yes, I have no trouble with that: I assume you say it because Henry's migraine was a cause of his taking the pain medication and that the cause's having the property of being

a migraine is a causally relevant property of it, in that, all else being equal, the cause wouldn't have been a cause had it not had that property. But if you say that being a migraine plays a "causal-explanatory" role in the explanation of Henry's taking pain medication, then parity of reasoning should require you to say that the property of being a belief *that you asked her to pass the salt* is playing a causal-explanatory role in the explanation of Ava's passing you the salt. It's less clear what you would mean if you said that the property of having a migraine isn't playing a causal-explanatory role in the Henry explanation. I might guess that you accepted something like Jaegwon Kim's "principle of explanatory exclusion," that two events can't have two separate and complete explanations[33] and that you thought the migraine explanation couldn't be identified with a more basic non-psychological explanation. In that case I would want to have a conversation with you about explanatory exclusion. The important question, of course, is what radical deflationists mean by 'causal-explanatory role'. I'm not aware of any place where Field tries to say what it is. Stephen Leeds implies that a notion plays a causal-explanatory role if it's needed in a causal law,[34] but I should think that if there are laws of our commonsense propositional-attitude psychology, then they are content-involving laws such as 'For any person x and state of affairs s, if x desires s to obtain and, for some act *A*, believes *that s will obtain only if x does A*, and if such-and-such other conditions are satisfied, then, ceteris paribus, x does *A*'.[35] The notion of a causal-explanatory role (whatever exactly that notion is) is important in the present discussion because the radical deflationist claims both that we need inflationist semantic notions only if we need semantic notions that are explicable in physical terms, and that they need to be so explicated if, but only if, they are needed to play a causal-explanatory role.

c) It's pretty clear that the properties expressed by the propositional-attitude predicates we actually use are use-dependent contingent properties. But are they physicalistically explicable? Define 'physicalistically explicable'. Field, who makes

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[33] See e.g. Kim (1988).

[34] Leeds (1978: 116).

[35] My own view (1991) is that there aren't folk psychological, or even special-science, laws because if there were such laws they would have to be "ceteris paribus" laws, and I doubt that generalizations needing ceteris paribus clauses are capable of stating laws. For an opposing view, see Fodor (1991).

heavy use of the expression, couldn't define it when he wrote his Tarski paper. There he is deliberately vague as to what it would be for a notion to be explicable in physical terms. He says it's "very hard to take seriously" the popular idea that explicability in terms of physical facts requires that "for every acceptable predicate '$P(x)$' there is a formula '$B(x)$' containing only terminology from physics, such that '$\forall x(P(x) \Leftrightarrow B(x))$' is true,"[36] but he admits not to having a precise characterization of his own and pretty much concludes that the notion is whatever scientific practice needs it to be. But in a paper published twenty years after his Tarski paper, he suggests that "if we are to accept a special-science explanation of something, we are committed to the possibility in principle of finding a physical explanation of that thing *in which the structure of the special-science explanation of it is preserved*."[37] This strikes me as implausible: 'Jack and Jill adopted a child because they wanted very much to have a child but learned that it was impossible for them to conceive one' might sketch a correct propositional-attitude explanation of the fact that Jack and Jill adopted a child, but what on earth would a physical explanation of that fact look like? I do think that if a propositional-attitude explanation E is correct it must in principle be possible to explain why E is correct in terms of underlying physical facts and their relation to the propositional-attitude facts E entails, where such an explanation would consist primarily in explaining why the propositional-attitude causes postulated by E are causes, and why the propositional-attitude properties of those causes are essential to their being causes. Such an explanation would no doubt necessitate myriad physical explanations of myriad and sundry physical facts, but I very much doubt that any one of those explanations would preserve E's structure. I don't take the fact that correct propositional-attitude explanations aren't shadowed by structurally identical physical explanations to show that propositional-attitude properties aren't reducible to physical properties in the sense that, for every propositional-attitude property Φ there is a logically complex property Π built up from physical properties such that having Π is metaphysically necessary and sufficient for having (some suitable precisification of) Φ. Field has said that one reason he came to doubt the correspondence theory of his Tarski paper was that it "proved extraordinarily

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[36] Field (1972: 11, fn. 9).
[37] Field (1992: 278; emphasis is Field's).

difficult to develop the details of an adequate correspondence theory."[38] This is misleading. What has proved difficult is getting a correspondence theory using only the tools available to a philosopher without having to leave his armchair. Why should we expect properties that are metaphysically equivalent to our propositional-attitude properties to be discoverable by the slow-moving and storage-limited information-processing of our brains?

So much for ground clearing. It is important to keep in mind that the question

Are semantic notions needed to play a causal-explanatory

role in psychological or linguistic explanations?

isn't the same as the question

Can the semantic notions provided by Radical

Disquotationalism do the explanatory work that is done by

the semantic notions we actually use?

For all we yet know the answer to both questions is no; for whether or not the propositional-attitude and other semantic properties expressed by our propositional-attitude and semantic expressions *as we actually use them* are "causal-explanatory" or "physicalistically explicable" properties, they are inflationist properties in that they have application to all people, regardless of the languages they speak, and are use-dependent contingent properties. It's therefore crucial for the radical deflationist to show that in some relevant sense the explanatory benefits we get from the propositional-attitude notions we actually use can be had by using the notions he would substitute for them. Here is one reason that may not be such an easy thing to show. Common sense supposes that there are billions of intentional actions performed every day, nearly all of them by people with whom I'm unacquainted, speaking languages I don't understand, and that nearly all of these actions enjoy correct propositional-attitude explanations. For example, common sense has no trouble allowing that the following explanation might be true, and even that I might know it, notwithstanding that Olga is a monolingual speaker of Russian and I don't understand a word of that language other than 'da' and 'nyet':

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[38] Field (1986: 67).

(E) Olga has petitioned to have her marriage annulled
because she learned that her husband was married to
someone else when he married Olga.

Explanations like (E) are extremely useful to us in myriad ways, but according to Radical Deflationism I can't allow that (E) is correct. In fact, if I accept Radical Deflationism I must conclude that the vast majority of propositional-attitude explanations thought to be correct are attempts to explain facts that don't exist in terms of other facts that don't exist. For I must suppose that the only people for whom there may be a fact of the matter as to the truth-conditional contents of their propositional attitudes are myself and the small number of people whose utterances I can understand—and then 'truth' in 'truth-conditional content' must be 'truth$_{ss}$' and 'fact' in 'fact of the matter' must be 'fact$_{ss}$', the very thin notion of fact that goes with truth$_{ss}$. As for the billions of other propositional attitudes, I must recognize that they can have truth-conditional content only relative to their being correlated in this, that, or the other one of infinitely many ways with my sentences, where no one of those way is the correct way of correlating them with my sentences. That is why I would have to conclude that the vast majority of propositional-attitude explanations thought to be correct are attempting to explain what they are attempting to explain by citing nonexistent facts; at the same time, in most cases the facts they are attempting to explain would also be nonexistent, because they would be facts, such as the fact that Olga petitioned to have her marriage annulled, about intentional actions that can be performed only by someone with beliefs and intentions with certain contents.

It might be thought that, while Radical Disquotationalism precludes me from accepting (E), there is something pretty close to (E) that I can accept, and which will serve me pretty much as well as (E) does. Wearing my commonsense hat, I have no trouble believing that Olga came to believe that her husband was already married to someone else when he married Olga, that her coming to believe that led to her intending to petition to have her marriage annulled, and that that led to her so petitioning. Wearing my radical deflationist hat, I can't, for example, say that Olga believes that her husband was already married to someone else when he married Olga, because according to Radical Deflationism my sentence

> Olga believes that her husband was married to someone
> else when he married Olga

is equivalent to

> Olga believes* a sentence of her Russian idiolect that is
> true$_{ss}$—i.e. true *as I understand it*—iff Olga's husband was
> married to someone other than Olga when he married Olga.

But for a sentence of Olga's Russian idiolect to be true as I understand it I must understand it, and in this case that would require me to have decided to interpret her sentence as equivalent to a certain sentence of mine. Of course, I do know that there is a standard way of translating Russian into English—no doubt a way of translating constructed by highly educated and linguistically sophisticated people who are completely bilingual in English and Russian—and I might have it on good authority that that method of translation would correlate the sentence Olga believes* with my sentence 'Olga's husband was married to someone other than Olga when he married Olga', and that, consequently, while I can't accept (E), I can accept something along the lines of

> (E*) (E) is true relative to the standard way of translating
>   Russian into English,

and if I'm determined to interpret Olga's sentences as equivalent to the English sentences with which they are correlated by the standard way of translating Russian into English, then I shouldn't be worse off than if I could accept (E) directly. There are, however, two problems with this response. The first is that it's question-begging for the radical deflationist to assume he can rely on the standard ways of translating foreign languages into English, because if those translation schemes were constructed on the basis of an inflationist notion of sameness of meaning, then the radical deflationist would find that the benefits of using his theory-approved notions were due to their unwitting reliance on an inflationist conception of semantic notions. For the radical deflationist, a translation scheme can be selected for interpreting foreign sentences only if it's selected on the basis of radical-deflationist-approved properties of sentences, such as conceptual-role and indication-relation properties, which are as available to the radical deflationist as they are to the inflationist. An inflationist who accepts the hypothesis that we think in a language-like system of mental representation will say that

> x believes *p* iff, for some sentence *S* of *x*'s mentalese, *x*
>
> believes* *S* and *S* means *p* in *x*'s mentalese,

and she will assume that which proposition a mentalese sentence means is determined by some yet unknown package of properties of *S* that will include conceptual-role and causal relation properties that may explain, inter alia, why *x*'s believing *p* is to some degree evidence that *p* is true. For the inflationist, the explanatory role that *x*'s believing *p* is able to play rides piggy-back on the explanatory role played at another level of explanation by the meaning-determining package of properties of the sentence *S* such that *x*'s believing* *S* realizes *x*'s believing *p*. The radical deflationist can agree with the inflationist that it's a conceptual-role/causal-relation package of the sentence *x* believes* that is really carrying the explanatory load without agreeing with her that that package is able to define that relation which a sentence in a person's mentalese must bear to a proposition in order for it to mean that proposition in that person's mentalese. Consequently, when he needs to interpret the sentences Olga believes*, desires* or intends* he will look for a correlation scheme that enables him to exploit the explanatorily relevant properties of those sentences.

That correlation scheme may not be so easy to find. For one thing, how will the radical deflationist know *which* conceptual-role and causal-relation properties are the one's doing the underlying explanatory work? In fact, he can't know. In order merely to know what the explanatorily relevant conceptual-role properties are would require a complete computational psychology, and we are years from having that. As for picking out the causal properties one would need to explain why certain of a person's beliefs reliably indicate their truth, just consider how much neurophysiology one would have to master even to begin making a dent in that task, not to mention that much of what one would need to know about the neurophysiological workings of the brain and central nervous system is nowhere near being known. An enormous advantage of our ability to give commonsense propositional-attitude explanations and predictions is that we can give them without knowing anything about the underlying properties that make those explanations and predictions possible, just as a person who knows nothing about how his computer works, or even the programs it's running, can explain and predict its behavior. Nor can the radical deflationist say with any degree of aplomb that he will select a system

of correlation that correlates a sentence *S* of Olga's with a sentence *S′* of his only if *S* and *S′* share more or less the same relevant conceptual-role and causal-relation properties, for how will he know which properties are relevant and how will he know that the conceptual-role and causal-relation properties that play a certain role in the explanation and prediction of Olga's behavior play the same sort of role in the explanation and prediction of his relevantly similar behavior?

So far I've been wondering what sort of an explanation, if any, of Olga's petitioning for an annulment Radical Deflationism makes available to me if I don't understand the sentences Olga believes*, desires* or intends*. But the most serious problem for the theory concerns how I might explain Olga's behavior when I *do* understand those sentences. To see what I mean, let's return to

> (E) Olga has petitioned to have her marriage annulled
>
> because she learned that her husband was married to
>
> someone else when he married Olga

and let's suppose that I can understand Olga's sentences so that I have no trouble accepting as true$_{ss}$ such sentences as 'Olga believed that her husband was married to someone else when he married Olga', 'Olga intended to petition for an annulment' and 'Olga has petitioned for an annulment'. Then it will be the radical deflationist's claim that he can accept (E) *when it's read in the way his theory requires him to read it*, thereby demonstrating that the only semantic notions we need in order to give such explanations as (E) are the ones his theory makes available. That claim, however, is false: the radical deflationist cannot accept (E) when the content-involving notions in it are taken to be his theory-approved notions. For (E) implies (a) that Olga's coming to believe that her husband was married to someone else when he married Olga was a cause of Olga's petitioning for an annulment and (b) that Olga's coming to have that belief was a cause of her petitioning for an annulment *because* it was a belief *that her husband was married to someone else when he married Olga*, where this implies that, all else being equal, she would not have petitioned for an annulment if her belief hadn't had that content. It ought to be clear that (b) is every bit as important as (a): without (b) we should have no explanation of why Olga's coming to have a certain belief was a cause of her petitioning for an annulment, and (b) helps to explain how someone who knew *that Olga learned*

that her husband was married to someone else when he married Olga might have predicted that she was likely to seek an annulment. When, however, we read (E) in the way the radical deflationist requires it to be read, we see that, while he can accept (a) he can't accept (b). For suppose the radical deflationist in question is myself. Then I can't accept (b) because I must say that

> Olga believes that her husband was married to someone
> else when he married Olga

is equivalent to

> Olga believes* a sentence that is true$_{ss}$—i.e. true as *I*
> understand it—iff 'Olga's husband was married to someone
> else when he married Olga' is true$_{ss}$,

but it's plainly false that she wouldn't have petitioned for an annulment if the explainer hadn't interpreted a sentence of Olga's in a certain way.

Field is sensitive to this problem, but nowhere does he explicitly offer his official response to it.   He acknowledges that "the most serious worry about [Radical Deflationism] is that it can't make sense of the explanatory role of truth conditions … in explaining behavior," but goes on to say that "unfortunately it is a big job even to state the worry clearly, and a bigger job to answer it; I must save this for another occasion."[39] Apart from some remarks in the postscripts to "Mental Representation" and "Deflationist Views of Meaning and Content" in *Truth and the Absence of Fact*, the job is still being saved. But in the postscript to "Mental Representation" he does suggest a response he may wish to develop. There he suggests that for the radical deflationist propositional-attitude explanation might be what he calls "projective" explanation. This alludes to the simulation theory of psychological explanation first proposed by Robert Gordon and further developed by Gordon, Alvin Goldman and others.[40] In a projective explanation I explain another's behavior not by subsuming it under the generalizations of a folk theory that applies equally to all folk, but by imaginatively putting myself in the other's shoes and asking what I would do if I were in them. Field's gloss on this is that:

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[39] Field (1994: 127),
[40] See e.g. Gordon (1986) and Goldman (1989).

> [A "projective" explanation of someone's behavior involves] reference to the explainer's language even though that is not causally relevant to the behavior. When explaining a person's behavior (say the raising of his gun) in terms of his belief that there is a rabbit nearby, what I am in effect doing is explaining the behavior in terms of his believing* a representation that plays a role in his psychology rather similar to the role that 'There are rabbits nearby' plays in mine…. Such an explanation is still basically non-intentional: truth conditions play no real explanatory role. Of course, there is a sense in which my *sentence* 'There are rabbits' plays an explanatory role here: obviously not as a causal factor in the explanation, but as a device we use in picking out the agent's internal representation (which is a causal factor).[41]

As regards (E), what this projectivist line suggests is that the radical deflationist should reject (E), which does give an explanatory role to truth conditions (whether or not that role is a causal-explanatory role), and, imagining Field to be the explainer, replace it with:

> (E′) Olga has petitioned to have her marriage annulled and a cause of that petitioning is that Olga believed* a sentence that plays a role in her psychology that is similar to the role 'Olga's husband was married to someone else when he married Olga' plays in Hartry Field's psychology.

I know Hartry Field pretty well, but I'm very reluctant to say I know the role that the sentence about Olga's husband plays in his psychology. But there is a bigger problem. A monolingual speaker of Hindi could accept the explanation expressed by (E′) without having any idea of how to translate Field's sentence about Olga's husband into *her* language. As Field happily acknowledges, the meaning or truth conditions of 'Olga's

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[41] Field (1978: 78).

husband was married to someone else when he married Olga' plays no role in the explanation (E′) communicates. (E′) gives no more of an explanation of Olga's petitioning for an annulment than does:

> Olga has petitioned to have her marriage annulled
> and a cause of that petitioning is that Olga
> believed* a sentence that plays a role in her
> psychology that is similar to the role a certain
> sentence plays in Hartry Field's psychology.

The use of 'true' as a device for expressing certain infinite conjunctions and disjunctions is a red herring. The most important case for inflationist semantic notions is that such notions go hand-in-hand with inflationist propositional-attitude notions, and the most important case for them is that they seem to be needed to account for the role those notions play in commonsense propositional-attitude explanations of behavior, such as the fact that Olga petitioned for an annulment *because she believed that her husband was married to someone else when he married Olga*. It's this role that Radical Deflationism seems unable to accommodate.

II

The classical notion of a *proposition* in analytical philosophy is the one first clearly articulated by Frege—namely, that a proposition is an abstract, mind- and language-independent entity that has truth conditions, and has its truth conditions both essentially and absolutely (i.e. without relativization to anything).[42] To say that every proposition has truth conditions is not to say that every instance of the schema

> The proposition that *S* is true iff *S*

is true. Frege himself would say that the proposition *that the present King of France is bald*, as well as the sentence 'The present King of France is bald' which expresses it, is neither true nor false owing to the fact that there is no such person as the present King of France. Consequently, he would say that

> The proposition *that the present King of France is bald* is
> true iff the present King of France is bald

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[42] Frege (1892) and (1918); Frege called propositions 'thoughts'.

is not true, because its left-hand side is false but its right-hand side is neither true nor false. The classical conception of a proposition does however entail that, whatever form a proposition's truth conditions take, it will be a necessary, and therefore use-independent, fact that it has those truth conditions. If, *pace* Frege, every instance of the schema

> The proposition that *S* is true iff *S*

which expresses a proposition is true, then those instances are necessary, and therefore use-independent, truths. It's also arguable—and has been argued at length by Paul Horwich[43]—that anyone who possesses the concepts required to understand a true instance of the schema would *ipso facto* implicitly know that it's true.

The preceding paragraph does *not* express a *deflationist* conception of propositional truth; it is what inflationists who use the classical notion of a proposition must say, and there is no "inflationist correlate" that the view seeks to deflate. Hartry Field formulates his deflationist theory without reference to propositions, but he acknowledges that there is a version of his theory that does refer to them.[44] That version would say that each of

> (1)   (ΠS)('*S*' means the proposition that *S*)
>
> (2)   (ΠS)(the proposition that *S* is true iff *S*)
>
> (3)   A sentence is true iff the proposition it means is true

is a use-independent conceptual truth, and from that it would follow that

> (4)   (ΠS)('*S*' is true iff *S*)

is also a use-independent conceptual truth. Had Field stated his theory this way, his theory would be deflationist by virtue of holding that (1) was a use-independent conceptual truth. No theory is deflationist just by virtue of holding that (2) and (3) are use-independent conceptual truths.[45] The theories of propositional truth of Frege, Frank Ramsey and Paul Horwich[46]—as well as the prosentential theory of Dorothy Grover,

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[43] Horwich (1998).

[44] Field (2015).

[45] This puts me in agreement with Field's remark at the beginning of (1986) about where "the real philosophical problem lies."

[46] Frege (1918); Ramsey (1927); Horwich (op. cit.).

Joseph Camp and Nuel Belnap,[47] which is a theory of 'true' as applied both to propositions and to sentences—all hold that (2) and (3) are use-independent conceptual truths, but they also hold that, since use determines meaning, (1), and with it (4), is a use-dependent contingent truth. Yet the literature labels these theories 'deflationist'. I have explained why no theory should be called deflationist *just* on the basis of holding that (2) and (3) are use-independent conceptual truths, but it may be that those theories say other things that warrant thinking of them as having inflationist correlates which they are out to deflate. Before saying another word, however, I must emphasize that I don't see that any issue worth arguing about turns on how anyone uses the word 'deflationist' (or minimalist'), and I do not intend in any way to disparage a theory by questioning whether it should be called deflationist. I do, however, want my use of the label to be clear.

Theories of propositional truth which are referred to as deflationist despite their holding that use determines meaning make claims in addition to those which don't on their own warrant pinning the label 'deflationist' on them, and some of these claims arguably do raise important issues possible responses to which invite an inflationist/deflationist division. I will close this chapter by briefly commenting on what I take to be the most important such issue: the issue of *truth-aptness*.

A sentence is *truth-apt* just in case it has truth conditions (and is therefore apt for being true).[48] Truth-aptness raises the question: What must be the case in order for a sentence to be truth-apt? The question is important because certain prominent answers to

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[47] Grover, Camp and Belnap (1975).

[48] Strictly speaking, we should say that a sentence is *truth-apt* just in case it's possible for tokens of it to have truth conditions, for few of the sentence types we utter have truth conditions. This is obvious as regards indexical and ambiguous sentences, but it also applies to vague sentences, and virtually every sentence is vague to at least some extent. Vague sentence types don't have truth conditions because of a phenomenon we may call *penumbral shift*. A vague term's *penumbra* is that area of logical space wherein the term's application is anything other than unqualifiedly determinately correct or unqualifiedly determinately incorrect. The penumbra of a vague term may shift somewhat from one context of utterance to the next, and these shifts entail shifts in the term's application conditions, so that, for example, 'bald' is true of Harry in one context of utterance, false of him in another, and neither determinately true nor determinately false of him in still another context of utterance. In this way, tokens of the sentence 'Harry is bald' produced in the those three contexts will have somewhat different truth conditions from the other two tokens. Having said that, however, I'm going to ignore it and join Jackson et al in simply speaking of a sentence's truth conditions.

it are in conflict with certain theories of the semantics of certain kinds of sentences, such as ethical sentences and indicative conditionals. The issue is of considerable concern to Field. On the one hand, his disquotationalism entails that a sentence S is truth-apt just in case

'S' is true iff S

is syntactically well formed, and, since

- 'Torture is wrong' is true iff torture is wrong
- 'The execution will be held indoors if it rains' is true iff the execution will be held indoors if it rains

are syntactically well formed, Field is committed to saying that ethical sentences and indicative-conditional sentences are truth-apt. On the other hand, he is sensitive to the appeal of theories which deny that such sentences are truth-apt. Field's article "Disquotational Truth and Factually Defective Discourse" is an attempt to show that he can capture what he likes about the theories to which he is attracted in ways that are compatible with his Radical Deflationism.[49] Frank Jackson, Graham Oppy, and Michael Smith are considerably less sanguine.

The radical deflationist's criterion for truth-aptness is an example of what Jackson, Oppy, and Smith call *syntacticism*. Syntacticism holds that:

> Truth-aptness is purely and simply a matter of syntax.… Provided the sentence can be significantly embedded in suitable constructions—for example, negation, conditional, propositional attitude and truth ascriptions—then, according to the syntacticist, that sentence is truth-apt.[50]

They are summarily dismissive of Field's view that truth is a property that a sentence has or fails to have independently of the way that the sentence is used by speakers, and their objection to syntacticism is that it's incompatible with the platitude that use determines meaning. More specifically, they argue that (i) a sentence S is truth-apt only if there is some set of truth conditions C such that S has C, but (ii) there is no set C of truth

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[49] The article also discusses vague discourse and discourse involving referential indeterminacy as other kinds of "factually defective" discourses that might appear to be in conflict with Radical Disquotationalism.
[50] Ibid.: 291.

conditions such that a sentence has *C* just by virtue of having certain syntactical properties; truth conditions can be determined only by "a rich enough pattern of usage."[51] For theorists who hold that a sentence's truth conditions are just those of the proposition it expresses, the question

> For any sentence *S*, what must be the case in order for *S* to
>
> be truth-apt?

reduces to the question

> For any sentence *S* and proposition *p*, what must be the
>
> case in order for *S* to mean *p*?

The theories of propositional truth that are both labeled 'deflationist' and hold that use determines meaning may nevertheless hold accounts of truth-aptness that Jackson et al would say are minimalist (= deflationist) accounts of truth-aptness by virtue of how little those accounts require in order for there to be a proposition that a sentence means. The only theory of this kind they discuss is one they say is held by Paul Boghossian and Crispin Wright[52] and which they call *disciplined syntacticalism*. For a sentence to be truth-apt according to disciplined syntacticalism it must have the syntactical properties required by syntacticalism, but in addition to that, they quote Boghossian as saying, the sentence's use "must be appropriately disciplined by norms of correct utterance."[53] Jackson et al call this a "minimalist" account of truth-aptness because, they claim, ethical sentences and indicative conditionals will pass its test for being truth-apt.[54] An objection one might raise to disciplined syntacticalism is that it doesn't say enough to enable us to

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[51] Ibid.: 293.

[52] Boghossian (1990) and Wright (1992).

[53] Op. cit.: 163.

[54] It's actually not clear that ethical sentences will be truth-apt on such expressivist theories as emotivism or R. M. Hare's prescriptivism (see e.g. Hare 1952). For on these theories, there are no norms of correct utterance to legislate between competing ethical claims, nothing one can say to the Nazi who says 'Jews ought to be exterminated' to prove to him that he is wrong. Jackson et al do say that "some might quarrel with the claim that the [norms of correct utterance] are firm enough in the ethical case," but the "some who might quarrel" can't be emotivists or prescriptivists, for their position is quite clear that on their views no ethical judgment can be objectively correct or incorrect (when one protests to the Nazi that his claim isn't correct, all one is doing is countering one emotive or prescriptive utterance with another).

see how standards of correct utterance determine *which* proposition a sentence means. The objection Jackson et al raise to disciplined syntacticalism

> is not to what it says, but to what it fails to say. It does not say enough about a central platitude governing truth-aptness and its connection with belief.… Our contention is that there is an analytical tie between *truth-aptness* and belief, specifically, the belief of someone who asserts the truth-apt sentence. Part of the story about rich patterns of usage required to confer truth conditions must be a story about using the sentence to express belief.[55]

This is an objection to disciplined syntacticism because, they claim, it's possible for a sentence to pass the disciplined syntacticist's test for truth-aptness but fail to meet the expression-of-belief criterion. For in order for a state to be a belief—in the sense of 'belief' they intend (they don't deny that there is a sense in which one can say 'I believe that torture is wrong')—it must have a certain functional role, and it's not clear that the state expressed by an utterance of, say, 'Torture is wrong' has that functional role. One reason that isn't clear (they mention others) is that two views each of which enjoys a positive degree of plausibility are incompatible with one another. One view is the "Humean doctrine … that no belief can have a conceptual connection with motivation;" the other is that the state we would express in uttering an ethical sentence does have a conceptual connection with motivation: it's arguable, for example, that the state expressed by an utterance of 'Torture is wrong' has "a conceptual connection with being motived against torture."[56]

The disciplined syntacticist may not be without a response. Jackson et al claim that it's possible for a sentence to satisfy the criterion the disciplined syntacticist says is sufficient for a sentence's being truth-apt even though uttering the sentence can't express a state with the belief-making functional role. The best strategy for the disciplined syntacticist is not to deny the functional-role criterion for being truth-apt but to argue, first, that satisfying her truth-aptness criterion entails satisfying the functional-role

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[55] Op. cit.: 294.

[56] Ibid. 298. See also Smith (forthcoming).

criterion, and, second, that a sentence's satisfying the functional-role criterion is compatible with the sentence's having the features that motivate denying that the sentence is truth-apt. For example, as regards the second part of the best strategy in the case of ethical sentences, the disciplined syntacticist might point out that Hume's doctrine isn't inviolate: nothing precludes a state from having a functional role that both makes the state a belief and a state that one can't be in unless one is also in a certain conative state; nothing, so to say, precludes 'Torture is wrong' from having a conceptual role that precludes the sentence from being tokened in one's belief box unless the sentence 'No one tortures' is tokened in one's desire box. After all, can one believe that one will now leave one's office to teach a class without intending to leave one's office to teach a class? Can one believe that one has an itch without having any inclination to scratch?[57] Now, if it can be shown that, for some proposition p, sentence S means p, then it should be easy to show that one who has command of S can be in a state that has whatever functional role is required for its being a belief that p. The difficult task for the disciplined syntacticist is giving *the right sort of* account of the nature of propositions generally and of the relation that must obtain between a sentence and a proposition p in order for the sentence, or an utterance of it, to express p, where the right sort of account is one that explains how little is required by way of the use of a sentence S in order to validate the "something-from-nothing" inference from 'S' to the 'The proposition that S is true', and, correlatively, how little is required by way of the use of a predicate F in order to validate the "something-from-nothing" inference from 'n is F' to 'n has the property of being F'.[58] It remains to be seen whether the disciplined syntacticist can meet this challenge, but if she can meet it, then showing that it's met might well reveal that her

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[57] See Schiffer (2003, Chapter 6), Michael Smith's (forthcoming), and my (forthcoming), which is a response to Smith.

[58] In (2003: 61) I explained that we have a something-from-nothing inference "when from a statement involving no reference to an F we can deduce a statement that does refer to an F …. [For example,] from the statement 'Lassie is a dog', whose only singular term is 'Lassie', we can validly infer the pleonastic equivalent 'Lassie has the property of being a dog', which contains the new singular term 'the property of being a dog', whose referent is the property of being a dog."

position isn't very far removed from the spirit, if not the letter, of Hartry Field's deflationism.[59]

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[59] I'm indebted to Hartry Field for his very helpful comments on a previous draft of this chapter.

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