

ANTI-REALISM AND REDUCTIONISM. The debate focusses on the cognitive status of the statement of some problematic class: statements about material objects, mathematical statements, statements about the past. [to be filled in in class] 358

TRUTH-VALUE LINKS. The anti-realist targets the conditions under which we recognise the meaning of a certain statement *S* of the problematic class. He claims that we recognise *S*'s meaning by recognising the conditions under which we accept it as true, but also that no notion of truth of *S* can be derived from this idea that would be *independent* of those very conditions of acceptance. 362

As an example, suppose that, for a mathematical statement \mathfrak{S} , no proof is available. Still, the realist insists, \mathfrak{S} is either true or false. That's precisely what the anti-realist denies. Under these conditions of the absence of proof, you can't assert the claim ' \mathfrak{S} is either true or false.'

Well, whatever we say about mathematics, statements about the past are naturally attractive to the anti-realist. For, on the face of it, whatever warrant we now have for asserting a statement like 'Socrates was drinking in 399BC', it is not the same warrant that we (or rather, Socrates or Crito) would have had in 399BC for asserting the statement about (their) present, 'Socrates is drinking now.'

But, the realist replies, this reveals the failure to appreciate the 'truth-value links' between differently tensed statements. Let's adapt Dummett's to our present and future. For example: 363

Statement A 'I am in Bilkent' [made by SB on 17th November 2021]

Statement B 'SB was in Bilkent' [made by someone on 17th November 2022]

The realist grants to the anti-realist the meaning-theoretic claim. But he argues further that *B* is true precisely because *A* is true. That is what we understand about their relation. And it is from understanding this relation that we learn what it is for a past-tense statement to be true.

The anti-realist's reply: Well, we do have situations where there *is* a warrant to assert a past-tense statement \mathfrak{B} —for example, when we remember the occurrence of a certain situation in the past. Still, there is no rule to give here to correlate \mathfrak{B} with a present-tense counterpart \mathfrak{A} . Hence there is no reduction. In any case, the notion of truth for past-tense statements that we could get in the course of our training is notion of their justifiability in the light of evidence. So we dig in our heels and simply say, truth-value links notwithstanding, the notion of truth also for the past-tense statements must be the same notion of verification. 363

THE CHALLENGE FOR ANTI-REALISM. Hence no statement about the past has a truth value independently of our possession, current or future, of a procedure to verify it. For a statement to be true is for it to be justifiably assertible 364

But what to do with truth-value links? Dummett's anti-realist is reluctant to dismiss them. He is willing to agree that they are basic to our understanding of past-tense statements. But then the task is: how to reconcile the existence of truth-value links and the anti-realist conception of truth? 364

THE REALIST'S CONCESSIONS. The realist, as construed by Dummett, is ready to make some concessions. One of them is that, in practice, when we say something about the past or the future, we can't tell between the truth of our utterance and its correct assertibility. Still, on the other hand, we may need to incorporate past-tense *sentences* into truth-functional combinations with other sentences. Then the two concepts come apart. 365

TWO VERSIONS OF ANTI-REALISM. The first version is:

Local anti-realism about the past (T) Statements about the *present* are true or false independently of our knowledge of their truth values, but the statements about the past are not so. 366

Remark 1. We skip the comparison with CH.

We may describe this situation by saying that there is a class of possible histories compatible with the present. ‘Compatible’ means compatible with our memories and (present) historical records. For example: 367

H_1 : {Socrates was vegetarian, Socrates was a philosopher, Socrates died in 399BC, ... }

H_2 : {Socrates ate meat, Socrates was a philosopher, Socrates died in 399BC, ... }

The statement ‘Socrates was vegetarian’ is true in H_1 and false in H_2 . But the law of excluded middle fails for it across all possible histories (compatible with the present). The statement is neither ‘absolutely true’ nor ‘absolutely false’.

The second version is this:

Global anti-realism about everything (G) No statement, about the past, the present, or anything else, are true/false independently of our knowledge of its truth value. 367

As Dummett observes, G entails that the classical two-valued logic should be abandoned. But that is not the reason, or not the main reason, why G may be problematic (so Dummett). The problem is rather this: if what I say now (like the statement A) is true because there is a way to verify its truth, then what I say later on in the past tense (like the statement B) should also be true. Yet, by the lights of G , it might not be so, since the evidence won’t then be available. Or in general, it is hard to give up the claim of the truth-value links in favour of G . 368

The way out for a G -realist is to avoid saying that:

(13-1) A past-tense statement S made at t is true at t only if there is at t some body of evidence justifying S .

Instead, the G -realist must say:

(13-2) A past-tense statement S is true iff there is now evidence justifying S .

The truth of a past-tense statement made at t is related not to the evidence available at t (if it was indeed available), but to the present evidence (i.e. the evidence available now). 368

Example 2. We imagine a conversation of the following kind:

- (13-3)
- a. Antioch: SB is talking (I can hear him). So if you say later on, ‘SB was talking’, you would be justified in saying so.
 - b. Rea: But wait! if I say later on, ‘SB was talking’, I might not have the evidence *then*.
 - c. Antioch: Well, as we see the things *now*, you *will* be justified in asserting that past-tense statement. All that I can tell you, I can tell you from the *present* perspective. By the way, this is not to privilege the metaphysical status of the present moment *per se*, but rather to insist on the central role of the *present* evidence.
 - d. Rea: Right, what about past-tense statements uttered *now*? What to say of the statement, ‘SB was talking one year ago’?
 - e. Antioch: I think you have no evidence at present one way or the other. So you can’t assert now, ‘SB was talking.’
 - f. Rea: Wait a minute! Perhaps one year ago I *had* evidence of him talking, but lost/forgot it since. Still, because I had it, really, objectively so, I may be able to assert *now*, ‘SB was talking.’
 - g. Antioch: Not so. Just as before, we look at the evidence *now* available to us. So we want to say what from *our, present* point of view you can assert. Our ‘now’ is not the past ‘now’, so there is no difference with the previous case. 373

Dummett concludes that the anti-realist takes seriously the reality of time, of the ‘immersion’ in time. He also, for the same reason really, believes in the reality of temporal change. Therefore, if we hold that a statement is true in virtue of some worldly fact, the worldly fact itself undergoes change. For example, if the claim of the truth-value links demands that the past-tense statement will be true *because* of some present fact, by the same token a past-tense statement is true of the present fact. All the worldly facts in virtue of which any statement may be true are *present* facts—exactly because the world really changes. 369
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By contrast, the realist surveys the world from an atemporal perspective and doesn't acknowledge the reality of change. So for him, the truth-value links must be based on some facts frozen in time and existing in eternity. 370

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